





EDITORIAL RCH 13 YEARS

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“Without helm, map, or treasure”
“...downstream, upstream, throughout the river, into the river”

The Critical Historical Journal (RCH) reaches its 13th volume, number 26, between the two banks of the river; or, to put it more precisely – as in the tale of Guimarães Rosa – on the third bank.

Created in 2010 at the initiative of Professor Irinéia Maria Franco dos Santos, RCH closes its 13th year while aiming at the horizon line of 2023. This is a dynamic line, always in motion, seen from the perspective of the boats’ play. There couldn’t be a better moment to pay tribute to our visionary founder.

A Special Dossier on the São Francisco River, organized by Professors José Vieira da Cruz (Federal University of Sergipe/PROFHISTÓRIA-UFS/PPGH-UFAL) and Pedro Abelardo Santana (Federal University of Alagoas/PPGH-UFAL/PROHIS-UFS), takes us back to the source of our protagonist. Just like Guimarães and the “Velho Chico”, Irinéia Santos came from Minas Gerais and anchored her boat in Alagoas, possibly brought by the waters of Opará, the “riomar” of the native peoples. It is no coincidence that it is precisely between Alagoas and Sergipe that Opará meets the sea.

In these brief yet long 13 years, the navigation was not a solitary one. Professors Ana Paula Palamartchuk, Michelle Reis de Macedo, and Professor Osvaldo Maciel also took turns as helmsmen, apprentices, and shipbuilders at the helm, with the essential support of external reviewers, revisers, and members of PPGH-UFAL, the current anchorage of the vessel after RCH set sail from its original dock - the Historical Documentation Research Center (CPDHis) - in the aforementioned year of 2010. Professors Flávia Maria de Carvalho and Raquel de Fátima Parmegiani made significant contributions, both in technical and academic matters. Joining the crew at different times were the writer of this piece, as well as Professors Elias Ferreira Veras (Review Editor) and, more recently, Luana Teixeira (Dossier Editor and responsible for the new layout) and Danilo Luiz Marques.

Over the past four years (2019-2022), while navigating the political storms and turmoil in the country – with Jair Messias Bolsonaro as the central character, who publicly attacked researchers and implemented, without reservation, a policy to dismantle the country’s scientific institutions – RCH remained active, day and night, in both hot and cold temperatures, with or without wind. For this, the support of the Research Support

Foundation of the State of Alagoas (FAPEAL) through their dedicated journal grants was of utmost importance.

We dare say that the Portuguese poet was mistaken when he declared that “to sail is necessary”, in the sense that navigators have a precision regarding the ports they wish to reach. For a long time, I thought Fernando Pessoa’s “preciso” was synonymous with “necessary”. It could very well be. Then, we would have complete agreement with the Portuguese bard. But no. Contrary to Pessoa’s proclamation, sailing in dark times is uncertainty, anguish, illness, “without helm, map, or treasure”, just as Geraldo Azevedo sang in the beautiful “Barcarola do São Francisco”.

Despite everything, with the strength and thirst of sailors (Ivan Lins), in search of a forsaken love at every port (Adriana Calcanhoto), once again, with Irinéia Santos as the helmswoman, during the Covid-19 pandemic, RCH was recognized by evaluation bodies and is now among the top academic History journals in the country. Obviously, numbers are just numbers. Criteria are always subject to debate, and evaluation mechanisms are constantly open to criticism and in search of necessary improvement, as they should be. Between a B5 and an A3 – the current stratum of RCH – there are countless shores, liquid roads, submerged sands moving, and aquatic lives forever changing. The river is all of this: a road, sustenance, suffering, provision, conflicts, shipwrecks, rescues, and endeavors.

But... the river is also a celebration, a procession, a drumbeat, signs that light up on the approaching horizon. We have already sighted our 14th anniversary, hoping that 2023 inaugurates a new era for Education, Science, Human Rights, and Historical Consciousness. It is with this tightrope hope, the hope of Paulo Freire, that from this issue onwards, I take on the challenging commitment as the editor of the flag-bearing vessel called the Critical Historical Journal.

I thank Irinéia Santos for her trust and my peers at PPGH for their encouragement and support. Let us sail together. Let us cleanse our dirty, tear-filled eyes and continue our journeys in the boat of the São Francisco, with the Gonzaguian desire to “strike in the middle of the sea”. I count on you in this struggle, under the protection of the figureheads, “...in this water that never stops, with long shores: [...] downstream, upstream, throughout the river, into the river”, just as in the tale of Guimarães Rosa.

By the Editorial Board

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