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**SYMPOSIUM ON THE HISTORY OF HEALTH SCIENCES:  
PHÁRMAKON. “FROM THE COMBAT OF INFIRMITY TO THE  
INVENTION OF IMMORTALITY“**

**(Lisbon, Portugal, October 26–28, 2016)**

In the last week of October 2016, Pharmacy Museum in Lisbon hosted three-day *Symposium on the History of Health Sciences: Phármakon. ‘From the Combat of infirmity to the invention of immortality’* (*Congresso de História das Ciências da Saúde: Phármakon. Do combate da enfermidade à invenção da imortalidade*). It is one of the most distinguished cultural institutions of Lisbon located in Alfama district, renowned for their impressive collection of artefacts related to 50 centuries of history of pharmacy in civilizations from Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Rome, Greece, Islam, South America, China, Tibet, Japan, Africa to Modern Europe. Symposium was organized by Prometheus Institute from Lisbon in collaboration with several prominent scientific and academic university institutions from Portugal: Instituto IPAETHI – Associação para Estudos Históricos Interdisciplinares, CIDH-Cátedra Infante Dom Henrique Para os Estudos Insulares Atlânticos e a Globalização at University of Alberta, CITCEM-Transdisciplinary Research Centre/Centro de Investigação Interdisciplinar, CLEPUL-Research Centre of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon/Centro de Literaturas e Culturas Lusófonas e Europeias da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, National Pharmacy Association and Pharmacy Museum, and IECC PMA – Instituto Europeu de Ciências da Cultura Padre Manuel Antunes. Unconventional, but nonetheless attractive idea of the organizers was to host an interdisciplinary symposium based on primarily thorough historical research of participants, and to encompass overall humanities (and arts) and social sciences medical debates on the health sciences. It was a resounding success.

Around sixty participants, mainly from Portugal (Lisbon, Coimbra, Porto, and Alberta), but also from Spain, England and Serbia, took part in fourteen sessions of this three-day conference, and also in additional didactic and plenary sessions intended for students and scholars. Official languages of the conference were Por-

tuguese and English. Most of the participants prepared interesting presentations accompanied by visual or video material. Each session had an intriguing title; they were mainly quotations of ancient philosophers and religious thinkers such as Aristotle, Hippocrates, St. John etc. There were many topics and disciplines ranging from Pre-history up to the World War II.

After first session on health in the ancient Roman province Lusitania (José d'Encarnação *The cult of health divinities in western Lusitania*; Amílcar Guerra and Sara Henriques, *Being a doctor and learning Medicine in Lusitania*; Armando Redentor, *The spa tourism in western roman Hispania*; Pedro Marques, *Medics, Archaeologists and Epigraphists in the second half of the nineteenth century*), conference continued with primarily thematically arranged sessions.

There was one session dedicated to nutrition and diet from prehistoric to Antique period entitled *Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food* (Hippocrates): Alimentation and nutrition since the beginning of Mankind to Antiquity (Joana Carrondo, Sara Garcês, Nadine Oliveira, Pedro Cura, *The nutritional value of the paleolithic diet*; Carmen Soares, *"Personalized cuisine" a therapeutic proposal of the Hippocratic treaties*; Joaquim Pinheiro, *Plutarch's De tuendas aninate praecepta: health and food*). Hygienic practices, prevention and divulgation were also considered in one session of this conference (Catarina Pereira, *Against the generational evil – Legislation and health practices in Oporto (1550–1700)*; Teresa Nunes, *Divulgation of hygienic practices to the young people in the beginning of the twentieth century*; Maria Armanda Rodrigues, *Pharmaceutical and physiotherapeutic sciences in the 30s – "Fisioterapia" magazine*)., There was only one session dealing with highly specialized medical history, and it was dedicated to evolution of medical technology (Cleia Detry, *Similarities and differences between animal and human health: some animal paleopathology examples*; Analisa Candeias, Luís Sá e Alexandra Esteves, *Nursing and the opening of Count Ferreira alienated hospital of Hospital de Alienados in Porto*; Sérgio Valente e Joana da Fonseca e Oliveira, *The evolution of radiation in healthcare: Technical changes and medical-scientific relevance*).

Three sessions of this conference took as their subject one historical period of medical history. For example, healing and magic practices in the Ancient World (José Ramos, *Medical and philosophical schools in Ancient Greece*; Maria do Sameiro Barroso, *The medical-cirurgical instruments of the Latin medic tombs /I B.C. - II A.C./*; Jose Carlos Fernandez, *The magical squares in ancient therapy: China, Islam, Middle Ages and Paracelsus*), or in the Middle Ages (Mário de Gouveia, *Food in the Mozarabs penitential in the IX-X centuries*; João Neto, *Healthcare in the Crusades*, Francisco Isaac, *Between contest, honour and death: Jousting and the evolution of death's*; Jorge Fonseca, *Slaves and healthcare*). In addition to being related to extensive historical research, the 5th session on medicine "beyond Empires" brought in front of us four papers on specific circumstances migration of disease and medical practices (Aires Gonçalves, *The introduction of Western Medicine in Japan by the Portuguese*; Eliane Cristina, Deckmann Fleck, *Evidences of the appropriation and circulation of health*

*practices know-how in Paraguay Natural. Ilustrado, of the Jesuit priest José Sanchez Labrador; Helena da Silva, The Red Cross ambulance in Mozambique /1916–1918/; Sandra E. Guevara, Looking at the past: The socio cultural approximation to Cocoliztli in New Spain /1545–1548).*

Belonging to the realm of social sciences, but also concerned with medical history, there were three sessions of this symposium dedicated to influence of architecture of medical institutions, urban space organization and migrations on human health (Augusto Moutinho Borges, *Military hospitals and daily life: healthcare furniture in Portugal /XVII–XX/*, Fernando Larcher e Madalena Larcher, *Assistance in the Order of Christ: Luz's House and Hospital*; Ana Catarina Necho, *The practice of military aid: Military hospitals in war time XVI–XIX centuries*; António Santos, *Some aspects of the assistance contexts of Oporto's Clérigos Pobres brotherhood hospital between the last quarter of the XVIII and mid XIX century*; Kevin Carreira Soares e Maria Alexandra Carlos, *The transformation of the Porto de Mós' Santa Casa da Misericórdia hospital in the third decade of the twentieth century*, Helena Gonçalves Pinto, *Healing Landscapes: From the imaginary genesis of the eighteen century to the consolidation of the thermal micro cosmos as innovative healthcare territory in Portugal*; Maja Vasiljević, Nikola Samardžić, Vladimir Abramović and Haris Dajč, *The Challenge of Living in Belgrade 1918–1941: Housing, Diseases and Malnourishment*; Rui Maia, *Cities as natality transformation spaces in the contemporary epoch: The influence of geographic mobility in the regulation of the reproductive capacity*).

On this event, interdisciplinary approach was especially accomplished through 11th and 14th sessions on mental illness and diverse significance of madness in social and artistic practices over the centuries (Telo Ferreira Canhão, *Physical and mental health objects in Ancient Egypt*; Pe. Aires Gameiro, *Five hundred years of historical landmarks of mental health in Azores and Madeira*; Sérgio Gomes, *Ergotherapy in the Portuguese alienated hospitals /1843–1910/: Myth or reality?*; Abhimanyu Kumar, *Healing the Mind: Buddhist Response towards Anger*; Maria José Figueiredo, *Disease, time and death in Thomas Mann's "Magic Mountain"*; Paulo Ricardo Kralik Angelini, *Memory, sickness and decrepitude in Lobo Antunes and Chico Buarque*; Samuel Carvalhais de Oliveira, *Aspects of the concept of Health and its absence in Plato's Republic*; Sara Carvalhais de Oliveira, *Melancholy, hysteria and the opaque character of the human being in Søren Kierkegaard*). This interdisciplinary and wide understanding of topic was also the case with the session on the problem of representing, understanding and thinking of beauty and ugliness of the human body or visions of sickness in arts (Vanda Figueiredo, *The body in excess: an interpretation of "A Farsa"*; Patrícia Ferrari, *The contribution of Art to the development of Health sciences and Education*; Susana Vieira, *The silence of Maina Mendes – literature as a breaking point; conciliation with deformity*; Paulo Mendes Pinto, *The God that hurts at a distance: Apollo, Troy and disease in mythological narratives*; Teresa Fonseca, *Pneumonic in Montemor-o-Novo*; Amélia Ferreira, Alexandra Esteves e Amélia Simões Figueiredo, *The wounded in the 1755 earthquake in Lisbon*).

Session which attracted the most attention, constructive debate and questions referred to the long history of sexuality and gender identity from ancient times to today (Cristina Santos Pinheiro, *Two sexes, one nature? The discourse on the feminine body in the treaties of ancient medicine on feminine*; Elisa Groff, *Negotiating women's sexual identity with a scalpel. Ancients' and WHO's views on female genital mutilation*; Patricia González, *Crocodile and starling contraceptives. Commerce, experiment and falsification in Roman gynaecology*; José Malheiro Magalhães, *Paedophilia in Ancient Greece: Consequences to the victim's health*).

The organizers also made sure that free time of participants was marked with the history of health sciences. Beside visit to Pharmacy Museum's permanent exhibition of five centuries of pharmacy with exciting reconstruction of pharmacies from 18–20th century in Macau, which happened on the second day of conference, it was noteworthy how organizers conceived first day. The first day of conference started with an in-depth presentation of the history of anatomy in the 16th century by keynote speaker Carlos Fiolhais, physician and professor at the Coimbra University and visiting professor in US and Brazil, and that long conference day was rounded by the broadcast of the movie *The Physician (Der Medicus, 2013)* at the Pharmacy Museum with plot focused on the eleventh century medical history battles for opening of the human body and consequent advancement of anatomy.

This symposium was titled by organizers as first and they intend to continue with similar events in the future. This time it encompassed wide range of topics and approaches to health history, hosted many different generations of researchers from several disciplines, and also stimulated them to achieve good academic atmosphere with captivating and motivating discussions.