

Historical background of the Course of Medicine at the Federal University of Ouro Preto

Antecedentes Históricos do Curso de Medicina da Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto

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ABSTRACT

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Although the birth of the Course of Medicine at the Federal University of Ouro Preto is sustained in a long itinerary of historical background, the evidences and chronology of this past remain obscure. The aim of this study is, by means of historical sources and literature review, clarify and substantiate the facts that permeate and those that culminated with the implementation of the Course of Medicine in Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais.

Key words: Education, Medical/history; Schools, Medical/history; History of Medicine; Brazil.

RESUMO

Embora o nascedouro do curso de Medicina da Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto ampare-se em longo itinerário de antecedentes históricos, as comprovações e a cronologia desse passado permanecem obscuras. O objetivo deste trabalho é, por meio de fontes históricas e de revisão da literatura, esclarecer e fundamentar os fatos que permeiam e os que culminaram com a implantação do curso de Medicina em Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais.

Palavras-chave: Educação Médica/história; Escolas Médicas/história; História da Medicina; Brasil.

INTRODUCTION

The development of Brazilian Medicine was purposefully neglected by the Portuguese government during the colonial period to hinder local autonomy. With the arrival of the royalty, the interest and therefore, the need to formalize the teachings of medical practices was evident and even necessary. The alleged benefits with the coming of the Royal family in 1808 gained exaggerated adornments highlighting that year as the beginning of medical education in Brazil. However, this historical accommodation neglected the construction of a medical identity in the country before this milestone.

During the period before 1808, there were informal courses, and in some way secretive, such as those by José Xavier Dantas in Salvador, José Eustáquio Gomes in Recife, and Gervásio Lara in Lage (Minas Gerais).¹ Even before 1808, the Regent Prince issued royal letters for the authorization of Obstetrics, Surgery, and Anatomy courses, the most representative being in Vila Rica from 1801. In 1800, the Rio de Janeiro course started, and in 1803 or before, the São Paulo course started. The major-surgeon appointed to lead the Surgery Course in Rio de Janeiro did not show up.

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Thus, from the Anatomy classes, Ouro Preto hosted the first official Medical lessons in Brazil.

Out of these three courses established in the colony, the course from Vila Rica was the only one that stood for decades with the continuous training of professionals. Interestingly, two other courses from 1808, in Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, were consolidated as colleges in 1832, while the course from Vila Rica was not, being closed soon after. Instead, in 1839, the first school of Pharmacy isolated from the Iberian America was established in Vila Rica, perhaps as compensation. The School of Pharmacy in Ouro Preto, in addition to have contributed by training distinguished professionals for the creation of the Medical School of Belo Horizonte was also essential in the establishment of the Federal University of Ouro Preto, an institution that, dating back to the colonial period and conspiring desire, installed the so dreamed Medical School in Ouro Preto.

MEDICINE IN MINAS GERAIS UNTIL THE CREATION OF MEDICINE LESSONS IN VILA RICA

Shortly after the discovery in April 22, 1500 of the lands of “Vera Cruz”, the territory today called Brazil was primarily used by the Portuguese as a source of Redwood timber. The exploitation of this wood with littoral abundance (1500-1600) was succeeded by sugarcane (1600-1700) and by the extraction of riches from Minas Gerais such as gold, diamonds, and precious stones (1700-1800). In the “new land”, the indigenous were initially the workforce used by settlers. Several reasons contributed to the impossibility of sustaining the use of Indian enslavement, which led colonists to introduce black slaves in the colony.²

With the discovery of gold in the Minas region, there was significant movement of free people and slaves who quickly spread through this territory. Although precarious, the presence of doctors and surgeons was essential since the mineral exploration occurred out of hard work in crops and precarious conditions of life: “These men, who followed thousands of others in order to make a fortune, also faced the vicissitudes of a new social universe and many times, improvised a medical practice that could handle the presented demands.”³

During the 18th century, the captaincy of Minas Gerais became Brazil’s most populous region with special attention on the metropolis due to the pro-

vided high profits. Thus, Minas consolidated as the economic and financial center in the colony; and Vila Rica, its capital, as the center of colonial wealth represented by valuable minerals extracted from the earth by a workforce mainly of slaves.^{2,4}

The lack of doctors was evident until then and, therefore, Medicine was practiced in Brazil and in Minas Gerais by professionals such as barbers, midwives, and healers.⁵ Pieruccetti⁶ states that “the health of people from Minas was bad ... a doctor was rare to find”, the Medicine exercised as a popular art absorbed indigenous and African methods. Usually, foreigners who competently practiced Medicine came to Brazil to enrich or for the love of the profession, although generally without a diploma or documentation stating their license. These were preferred by the rich, even generating embarrassment by the fact of not having diplomas. Poor people sought treatment in the antics of quacks or healers, “who killed more than cured”.^{2,6}

Archives in the Conspiracy Museum of Ouro Preto⁷ highlight inguinal hernias, physical deficiencies, skin infections, goiter, leprosy, and psychic manifestations as diseases of slaves in the Mortes River area; undetermined diseases occupy most of the 29 listed cases. Although the number of registered sick people⁷ is not high, these records provide an idea of the diseases in the region, which, together with the remarkable lack of doctors, helps to understand the intense suffering of workers in mines and in the population in general resulting from their precarious recovery conditions.

In this meantime of irresponsibility, carelessness, and humiliation from the State towards the population, emancipation ideals emerged culminating with the establishment of the Mineira Conspiracy (1789).⁸ The first attempt at creating a Medical course in Minas Gerais dates back to this period in history and it was a conspiring ideal. The creation of a University in Vila Rica, city dedicated to the sciences and arts, while the capital would be transferred to São João del Rey, is in the proposed policy by the Mineira Conspiracy.⁹

The conspiring proposal of a medical course was certainly anchored in the ideals of 15 Brazilian students who in the late 18th century engaged in the liberation of their country from Portuguese domain, and had attended the Medical School at the University of Montpellier in France. They became known as the Montpellier Group and, upon returning to Brazil and full of enlightenment ideals, participated in several conspiracies, the Mineira Conspiracy being the most important. Only one out of the 15 students completed

the five-year course, two completed four years, and the others attended less than four years. The fact of remaining less than the necessary time for their graduation shows that their presence in France had a revolutionary goal. The surveillance against students who were supporters of enlightenment ideas was rigorous in Portugal, leading the most engaged to go to France, where surveillance was less intense.¹⁰

These 15 students were from different parts of Brazil, especially from the rich and illustrated region of Minas Gerais. Together with the medical studies, they tried to ensure the economic viability of the new republic they intended to found in South America. Therefore, they adopted aliases to which they relate from French and non-French revolutionaries such as the American Thomas Jefferson and the English Thomas Paine. Besides the Mineira Conspiracy, the Montpellier Group was also involved in movements such as the one in Bahia, in 1788; the conspiracy of the Literary Society, in Rio de Janeiro, in 1792; the Confederation of Ecuador, in 1824, and others. In history, there are still evidences that the libertarian ideal of Tiradentes was subsidized by these enlightenment concepts from the ex-medical students from Montpellier and also by alumni from the University of Coimbra in Portugal. Coincidentally, Tiradentes' work was connected to health because in addition to extracting and restoring teeth, he prescribed, in general, phytotherapy based medicines for sick people.¹⁰

The solid conspiring movement was betrayed by one of its participants. The seditious were processed and punished; only one condemned to death on the gallows. The death of Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, Tiradentes, in April 1792, initially prevented the continuity of the idea of creating a Medical School and Brazilian University.^{2,10} However, the condemnation of Tiradentes initiated the process that led him to turn into a martyr and the main Brazilian national hero, becoming an outstanding figure for future movements that would conquer our freedom. The medical course in Ouro Preto, even late, was established beyond that time.

ANATOMY CLASSES IN OURO PRETO

Given the precarious health situation in the Minas Gerais region, Governor Bernardo José de Lorena asked the Regent Prince D. João to create a Medicine Course in order to prepare competent professionals

that could soften the suffering of the population ensuring better healthcare and maintenance of the local workforce. There were two hospitals in the Vila, one civilian, maintained by the Mercy, and the other military and maintained by the Government, called Royal Military Hospital and established in Vila Rica in about 1740. This hospital would be the place for classes, which would help improving its services that were deficient in assisting the numerous cases of diseases in the captaincy due to lack of skilled personnel and other insufficient resources. There are documents that indicate that this idea of establishing classes were brought up before this time by Furtado de Mendonça (Viscount of Barbacena), the government of Lorena.⁶

By the Royal Letter of June 17, 1801 (Figure 1), the Regent Prince attended the request of Governor Lorena creating the "Surgery, Anatomy, and Obstetrics Class", better known as Anatomy Classes. The major-surgeon of the Cavalry of Minas Gerais, Antônio José Vieira de Carvalho, was appointed to lead these classes; he already practiced medicine in the Royal Operative Hospital of Vila Rica.⁶

There is little information regarding the Anatomy Classes. It is known that the theoretical content was transmitted to students in a reserved hospital room and the practical lessons were held in the franchised infirmary twice a week, however, without making comments close to sick's bed but in the respective room. The main books used were "The Art of Treating Venereal Diseases", "Medicine Treasure", "Medicine of Mirandela" and "Medicine of Buchan" since there are records that show the circulation of such books in houses and stores in Vila Rica. It is also known that these classes were thought for about 50 years with continuous training of professionals and, during all this time, there were only two owners: Antônio José Vieira de Carvalho and Antônio José Vieira de Menezes. After Menezes' death in 1848, there are no records of other regents.^{2,6}

Antônio José Vieira de Carvalho was born in Atalaia, in 1781. He began as the helper of the major-surgeon when he was 27 years old. In addition to the Medicine, he was the owner of a ceramics factory in Saramenha. According to documentation in the Oversea Files of Lisbon, Governor Lorena appreciated him, which favored his nomination in 1801.⁶ Interestingly, and perhaps as a returning favor from the Prince to the translation, Carvalho's nomination occurred in the same publication year of the Portuguese version of Dazille's work.¹¹

Bernardo José de Lorena, Governador e Capitão General da Capitania de Minas Geraes. Amigo do Príncipe. Regente no seu nome muito amado. Attendendo à grande falta que he de Cirurgiões habéis, e inteligentes nessa Capitania, por nelle não haver escolas publicas, em que se explicassem as doutrinas respectivas ao dito Facultadado; e conformando-me com o vosso parecer, e de vossos Antecessores, e o parecer do Officio, que a vossa Magestade Real se fez, em vinte e quatro de Maio, e seis de Outubro do mil e setecentos e noventa e sete. Sou servido estabelecer no Hospital Real de Vila Rica humo Cathedra de Cirurgia, Anatomia, e Arte Obstetricia, nomeando para elle o actual Comandante do Regimento de Cavallaria de Minas Geraes, Antão José Vieira de Carvalho, por nelle haverse em todas as circumstancias, e requizitos necessarios, para o bom reger e deitar a obra, e a qual se estabelecerá e computará de outro modo, que devesse ser pelo fôrto das Regendas d'essa Capitania. Expedito no Palacio de Queluz aos dez e sete de Junho do mil e oitocentos e humo.

Bernardo José

Figure 1 - Royal Letter from June 17, 1801 (295 Codice). Courtesy image provided by the Center for the Memory of Medicine of Minas Gerais (CEMEMOR-MG). Read: “Bernardo José de Lorena, Governor and General Captain of the Captainty of Minas Gerais. Friend. The Regent Prince and I sending a very welcome. Given the great lack of skilled Surgeons, and intelligent in this Captainty, and because there are no Public Classes in it, in which they explain the doctrines of this College; and conforming to your opinion, and that of your Predecessor, present in the documents that rose to My Real Presence on the twenty-four of May and October seven, seventeen hundred and ninety-seven: I am served to establish in the Vila Rica Hospital a Chair, Anatomy and Obstetrics Arts; naming to it the current surgeon-major of the Cavalry of Minas Gerais, Antônio José Vieira de Carvalho, for he is competent at circumstances and needed requirements, to well govern this Chair, to which I will establish the jurisdiction ordered, that must be paid by the Revenue Committee of this Captainty. Written in the Queluz Palace at seventeen of June, eighteen hundred and one.” Prince.

The French surgeon of troops in São Domingos island, Jean-Barthélemy Dazille, had published his book “Observations about Blacks’ Diseases: its causes, its treatments, and the means to prevent them” in Paris in 1776 through the French Crown. Carvalho, 25 years later with the sponsorship of the Portuguese Crown, released its translation (Figure 2) in Lisbon.¹² In the French colonial space, the Dazzille manual, written based on his professional experience in São Domingos, stood out for being one of the first medical texts whose knowledge could contribute to reducing the high rates of mortality in slaves. Dazille tried to make colonists acknowledge that the decrease in these rates would depend on their understanding of the need for humanization in their methods of exploitation of slave labor.¹¹

OBSERVAÇÕES
SOBRE AS
ENFERMIDADES DOS NEGROS,
SUAS CAUSAS, SEUS TRATAMENTOS, E OS MEIOS
DE AS PREVENIR.
POR MR. DAZILLE,
MEDICO, PENSIONARIO DO REI, ANTIQO CIRURGIÃO MÓR
DAS TROPAS DE GAYENNA, DOS HOSPITAES DA ILHA
DE FRANÇA,
etc. etc. etc.
TRADUZIDAS NA LINGUA PORTUGUEZA,
DEBAIXO DOS AUSPICIOS E ORDEM
DE
SUA ALTEZA REAL
O PRINCIPE REGENTE N. S.
POR
ANTONIO JOSE VIEIRA DE CARVALHO,
CIRURGIÃO MÓR DO REGIMENTO DE CAVALLERIA REGULAR
DA CAPITANIA DE MINAS GERAES; E LENTE DE ANA-
TOMIA, CIRURGIA, E OPERAÇÕES NO HOSPITAL
REAL MILITAR
DE
VILLA RICA.



LISBOA,
NA TIPOGRAPHIA CHALCOGRAPHICA, TIPOPLAS-
TICA, E LITTEHARIA DO ARCO DO CEGO.
M. DCCC.

Figure 2 - Cover page of the book Observations on the Diseases of blacks: its causes, its treatments, and the means to prevent them. Read: “...Translated into Portuguese, under the auspices and order of His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, N. S., by Antônio José Vieira de Carvalho, major surgeon of the regiment of the Regular Calvary of the Captainty of Minas Geraes; and professor of anatomy, surgery, and operations at the Royal Military Hospital of Villa Rica...”

Vieira de Carvalho was an updated and cosmopolitan reader (died in 1818, the surgeon’s testament¹³ includes a library with 127 crucial important titles in the Medicine of the time), moved by the same concerns of Dazille, made it clear — in his initial note in the translation – that not only the slaves’ high mortality but also their suffering were factors that justified the translation:

Fortunately my destiny led me to work as a Major-Surgeon of the Calvary Regiment in Minas Gerais, which tend to the Capital of that Captaincy; where exercising the practice of medicine together with my other profession, I could see with my own eyes, how the human species suffers in the crowd of blacks that carry on slavery and the market. The climate change, difference of treatment; a continuous and unmeasurable work; and even hunger, rarely interrupted, together with the sad consideration of their painful condition, are many among other causes of their simple and severe diseases that this unfortunate race of humans is subjected among us; and that by making their lives hard and causing them early deaths, they take their best features to the grave and that

of other Colonies of the Portuguese America; burying with them the same gold that their arms have dug up; and thus drying in their origin, one of the first wealth of the Crown and the State.

Stimulated by this fatal experience, and sincere and ardent desire to give my all to the service of the Royal Highness that gave me the zeal to translate the Treaty to Portuguese [...]

Anchored in his experience in colonial lands and also in theoretical knowledge, Antônio was not satisfied to be a mere translator of the work of the French surgeon.^{12,14} Along the pages of “Observations about Black’s Diseases”, Carvalho introduced explanatory notes, bringing the context of Minas Gerais to readers.^{12,14} As an example, when Dazille comments that the food for black people was based on mashed manioc root and generally not well cooked, Carvalho¹⁵ stated that:

In Brazil, especially in Minas Geraes, black people use different foods because instead of manioc, they have corn, which once ground in appropriate mills and sifted, they cook it simply with water, stirring it to the point of a good consistency dough, and call it angũ [...]

There are also notes that Carvalho talks about his experience in the surgical and dissection practice.^{12,15}

Through his observations, Vieira de Carvalho indirectly shows himself as a professional who acts for humanity in a typical posture of enlightenment.^{14,15} However, unlike the humanistic and scientific objectives of a surgeon, is the idea that the Portuguese Crown supported the translation and the creation of the Anatomy Classes in Vila Rica with the goal of both prolonging the life of slaves and trying to avoid the collapse in the colonial workforce when the world trade was disconnected from the slave trade. This moment culminates, even with the prohibition of Slave Trade in 1850, by the Eusébio de Queirós Law.¹⁴

Antônio José Vieira de Menezes was the second leader of the Anatomy Classes in the Royal Hospital of Vila Rica (Figure 3). He was the major-surgeon of the Army brigade, and was born in Minas Gerais in 1784. According to Pieruccetti,⁶ Menezes’ performance exceeded the limits of the Operative Medicine; according to the circumstances he assisted any case of disease.

The Anatomy Classes fits to today’s second grade since the Marquis of Pombal did not ponder the third grade instruction in 1774, the Individual Lessons (Royal) in Brazil. In 1759, the Jesuits were expelled

from all of the Portuguese Kingdom. Because the Jesuits were responsible for the largest portion of colonial education, the consequence of this act was the precariousness in the education system. This situation lasted for more than one decade until the Individual Lessons were imposed as isolated disciplines and mostly taught by alumni from the Jesuits colleges.¹⁶ It is possible that the fact that the Anatomy Classes from Ouro Preto had been taught as a Royal Class (discipline), inserted in the instruction for medium level education, had prevented it from being valued and considered as a pioneer initiative of medical training in Brazil.^{2,6} The Vila Rica course could not be determined at the time as a medical course or of Medicine because it was a Surgery course. Historians commonly are mistaken because they compare Surgery and Medicine at a time when they were separated and constituted different training levels, the technician (or secondary) and the university, respectively.¹⁷ Graduated surgeons received permission to exercise their activities by the Fiscatura, a maximum organ in Brazil, regulator of health issues at the time.⁵



Figure 3 - Current ruins of the facilities where the Royal Hospital of Vila Rica operated, in Ouro Preto, at Henri Gorceix Street (formerly Nova Street).

The Surgery Lesson in Salvador is the medical education lesson considered as the pioneer in Brazil, established by D. João in 1808. However, the same Regent Prince, D. João, created long before, through a Royal Letter from November 17, 1800, the Surgery chair in Rio de Janeiro, assigning the major-surgeon from the Royal Hospital of Lisbon, Teodoro Ferreira de Aguiar, to lead it. He did not attend, and maybe he even did not come to Brazil since he continued teaching in Lisbon at the Naval Hospital. Thus, seven months later, on June 17, 1801, Ouro Preto was privi-

leged of receiving through the Anatomy Classes from Vila Rica, the first official Medical lessons in Brazil.⁶

THE PHARMACY SCHOOL IN OURO PRETO —

With the arrival of the royalty in Brazil at the beginning of the 19th century, the interest in formalizing the teaching of medical practices was evident. By the Royal Letter of February 18, 1808, the Medical-Surgical College of Bahia, in Salvador was founded, later called as Medical-Surgical Academy of Bahia (1828) and Medical School (1832). In addition, with the transfer of the Court and capital from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro, the Surgery School of Rio de Janeiro was founded in November 5, 1808, later called the Medical-Surgical Academy of Rio de Janeiro (1828) and Medical School (1832).⁹ Interestingly, while these two courses in Salvador and Rio were consolidated to colleges in 1832, Vila Rica was not, being closed soon after. Certainly as a compensation, the Pharmacy School of Ouro Preto was prospered in its place as stated by Professor João Amílcar Salgado¹⁸: “In Minas, instead of its surgery course becoming of a higher level, by the pressure from coastal states that did not want to give up the hegemony of hosting a Medical course, the first Pharmacy School isolated from the Iberian America started in 1839.”

Pharmaceutical Education in Brazilian colonial times was in practice in the so-called boticas. They were a kind of drugs’ store responsible for the supply of medicines to the population in general. Because they were not too many until early 19th century, naturalists used to bring with them, during trips to Brazil, the “botica boxes”; landowners would have them in their farms or plantations. With acquired experience, the apothecaries were submitted to exams applied by commissioners of the major-physical in the kingdom to obtain the “examination card”, thus, competing with physicists and surgeons in the practice of medicine.¹⁹

Pharmacy classes were present at the Surgery School of Rio de Janeiro (1808) and Medical-Surgical Academy of Bahia (1828) but the pharmaceutical course was only founded after the reform of the medical education in 1832 however, linked to the Medical School of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. This reform established that no one could “cure, have a botica, or deliver” without an approved diploma granted by the mentioned schools. This reform also created the obligation to owners of pharmacies to pay a graduate pharmacist to name their establishments.^{4,19}

In 1836, the Pharmacy section of the Imperial Medical Academy, created in the previous year, presented a plan of reorganization of Pharmacy courses in the Medical School of Rio and Bahia and proposed the creation of Pharmacy Schools in the capitals of the provinces of Pernambuco, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Maranhão, Ceará, and Rio Grande do Sul. These should be subordinated to those from Rio de Janeiro and Bahia.^{4,19}

In 1839, by the Law number 140, voted on April 04 in the Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais and sanctioned by the Councilman Bernardo Jacinto da Veiga, president of the Province, the Pharmacy School of Ouro Preto was established. This law, in fact, created two schools, one in Ouro Preto and another in São João del Rey but only the first one was materialized. The inaugural lecture was given by Professor Eugênio Celso Nogueira, on September 7, 1840. The course had duration of two years and students were required to commit to a constant practice on one of the city’s pharmacies. The pharmacy owner gave them a certificate of habilitation, necessary to take the final exam in the course.¹⁹ According to Salgado¹⁸:

[...] we can even say that – knowing what was taught in the Medical schools compared with that in the Pharmacy School of Ouro Preto – pharmacists were more reliable than the few doctors in exercise, graduates from schools in Bahia, Rio, or abroad. This is because most of them lived as politicians, farmers, bureaucrats, and/or teachers, activities in which they used their doctor’s title, and the effective exercise alleged in the diploma was an exception.

Seeking the improvement of the physical and administrative structure, the School underwent several changes. On 04/01/1840, by the Law number 178, the school was linked to the Ouro Preto School under the direction of the educator Father Leandro Peixoto Rabello e Castro, in the Missions Congregation. In 1854, it was linked to the Liceu Mineiro, under the General Office of Public Instruction. In 1882, separating from that Board, it was linked directly to the Presidency of the province, becoming autonomous. Only in the early 20th century, after several changes in its installation, it was established in the building where the Mineiro Constituent Congress was working in 1891, staying there to this day (Figure 4).¹⁹

In 1893, the Senator Virgílio Martins de Mello Franco presented the project number 37 to the Senate proposing the creation at the then state capital, Ouro Preto, of

a Medicine and Pharmacy College. The college would have the purpose of conferring diplomas in pharmacy, Bachelor's degree in Natural and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Medical doctor, midwife, and dental surgeon.²⁰ In an article published in the institution's journal, the professor in the Pharmacy School Antônio Ribeiro da Silva Braga, was in favor of such an initiative.²¹ Although the project was approved in the Senate's first discussion in 1894, it was shelved when referred to the Committee of Public Instruction. Again, the conspiring dream of medical education in Ouro Preto was stunted. However, two distinguished graduates of the Pharmacy School, Aurélio Pires and Alfredo Balena, would be of the utmost importance to the creation of the first Mineira Medical School in 1911, the Medical School of Belo Horizonte, since the state capital had been transferred from Ouro Preto to the City of Minas since 1897, which in 1901 became known as Belo Horizonte.¹⁹



Figure 4 - Current headquarters of the School of Pharmacy of Ouro Preto, the first school of Pharmacy isolated from the Iberian America.

AURÉLIO PIRES

Aurélio Egídio dos Santos Pires (Figure 5) was born in Serro (MG), on March 23, 1862, and died in Rio de Janeiro (RJ) on February 25, 1937. In 1894, he graduated in Pharmacy from the Pharmacy School of Ouro Preto. In 1897, he moved to Belo Horizonte, a city still under construction, and opened the Pharmacy Aurélio Pires, that operated until October 1903. In the capital, he was the Rector of Ginásio Mineiro, director and professor of Geography, History, and Moral and Civic Education in the Normal Official School. Since when in Ouro Preto, by the attempts of creating the Medical School and Pharmacy in 1893, and later in Belo Horizonte, Aurélio Pires was one of the tireless fighter for the creation of a Medical School in the State of Minas Gerais.⁹



Figure 5 - Aurélio Pires on July 2, 1914. Image provided by Mineiro Public Files.

In 1902, the Medicine, Surgery, and Pharmacy Society in the new capital of Minas Gerais formed the Commission for the initiative to create a Medical Free School. The lack of financial resources for the school installation and lack of hospitals, patients, and staff were argued against this initiative. In a counter argumentation, Aurélio Pires, a member of the Committee, stood out.²⁰ He proposed the use of teachers and laboratories from the Pharmacy School of Ouro Preto and the participation of students in hospitals in neighboring cities such as Ouro Preto and Sabará.⁹ He also proposed the hospitalization of patients in the new hospital from the Humanitarian Society of Belo Horizonte opened in 1898, and later named Santa Casa de Misericórdia. In 1902, with the death of doctor Silviano Brandão, president of the state and in favor of the medical school, the movement weakened, which was exacerbated by the extinction of the Medicine, Surgery, and Pharmacy Society.

In July of 1910, the Medical-Surgical Association of Minas Gerais, recreated in the same year of the extinction of that society and represented by Cícero Ferreira and Cornélio Vaz de Melo, launched the plan for a Medical college in the city. The plan, authored by Cícero Ferreira, was submitted to a commission and approved in the plenary session of February 15, 1911. On March 5, 1911, the association stated the creation of the Medical School in Belo Horizonte.⁹ Aurélio Pires was not included among the 12 founders who signed the minutes of the School foundation. In 2006 when the institution celebrated its 95 years, Professor Ajax

Pinto Ferreira defended, in the Congregation meeting, the recognition of Professor Aurélio Pires as one of the School founders and the inclusion of his signature next to the others in the lobby of the main building. In the commemoration of the School's centenary, Professor João Amílcar Salgado, stressing Aurélio's merits, stated that "[...] *the School was conceived by Aurélio Pires and institutionalized by Cícero Ferreira*".

In addition to teaching Pharmacology and Toxicology in the Medical school of Belo Horizonte for almost 15 years, Pires was part of the group of people who founded the Federal University of Minas Gerais. On October 2, 1927, one month after the creation of the University, the Congregation of the Medical School elected Aurélio as one of the representatives in the University Council. Aurélio was also director of the Mineiro Internal Public Files between 1927 and 1930. He died at 76 years old, in 1937.²²

ALFREDO BALENA

Alfredo Balena was born in Naples, Italy, on November 17, 1881 and died in Belo Horizonte on December 23, 1949. He lived his childhood and youth in Ouro Preto, where he graduated in the Pharmacy School in 1901 (Figure 6). He also graduated in Medicine in Rio de Janeiro in 1907. In 1908, he opened an office in Belo Horizonte, where he practiced medicine until the last day of his life. He was the head of the service in the Veiga Infirmery in the Women's Medical Clinic of Santa Casa de Misericórdia of Belo Horizonte for over 40 years (1908-1949). Balena was the founder along with 11 other doctors who signed the minutes of the Medical School Foundation in Belo Horizonte.²³

In 1928, Professor Alfredo Balena, already the chairman of the Surgical Clinic course, was named director of the Medical School. He held this role for nearly 20 years (1928-1933/1935-1949), with a forced interruption of two years (1933-1935) based on the claim that non-born Brazilians could not be allowed the exercise of public positions. With his election and renamed as director in 1935, he occupied this position until his death, days after the decree that federalized the Medical School, one of his old dreams, for which he fought without limits.⁹ After his death, among the tributes given, the representative body of students at the time was named Alfredo Balena Academic Directory. Furthermore, the Mantiqueira Avenue was renamed Alfredo Balena Avenue.



Figure 6 - Alfredo Balena. Graduates of 1901 from the School of Pharmacy of Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais. Credits: Raiany Avlis.

THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF OURO PRETO

The Pharmacy School of Ouro Preto was federalized in 1950 becoming subordinated directly to the Ministry of Education and Culture. With the creation of the Federal University of Ouro Preto by the Decree-Law number 778 of 08/21/1969, the Pharmacy School and Minas School of Ouro Preto became their university units.⁴

The debates on the creation of the Minas School come from the early 19th century. Discussions of the Constituent Assembly of 1823, and the Province Council of Minas in 1832 approached the need to create an educational institution that would promote the exploitation of mineral resources in Brazil. However, the final regulations determining the creation of the Minas School of Ouro Preto was promulgated only in 1875 and classes began on October 12, 1876. Dom Pedro II had a leading role in the creation of this school. A member of the Sciences Academy of Paris, Dom Pedro II contacted French scientists on a trip through Europe during 1871 and 1872. Thus, recommended by the Director of the Minas School of Paris, the Emperor hired Claude Henri Gorceix to organize the Mineralogy and Geology teaching in Brazil. After excursions in the Brazilian territory, Gorceix chose the city of Ouro Preto, which offered good conditions for mineralogical practical studies.²⁴ Between 1876 and 1891, Gorceix became the first Director of the Minas School of Ouro Preto. The Pharmacy School was also one of the responsible for the choice of Henri Gorceix in the city where the Minas School was supposed to be founded.

According to a report about Ouro Preto presented to the Government on July 22, 1875, Gorceix says: “your Pharmacy School is attended by a sufficient number of souls and possesses a small cabinet of Physica and a start in a cabinet of Mineralogy”.⁴ Thus, the union of these two higher centenarian institutions in 1969, the Pharmacy and Minas School, represents a meeting with their own past (Figure 7).

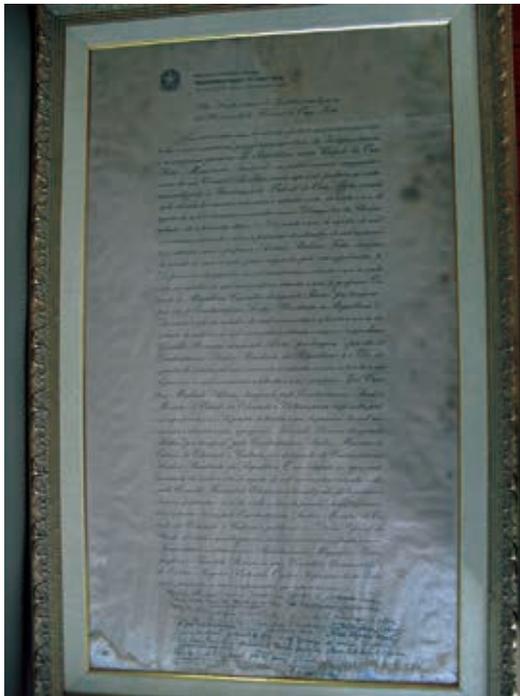


Figure 7 - Minutes of the Foundation of the Federal University of Ouro Preto. Framed picture located in the lobby of the University Rectory.

The Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP) expanded through the combination of tradition and modernity and creation of new academic units and implementation of several courses. The institution has libraries distributed in the Ouro Preto, Mariana and João Monlevade campuses with more than 62,000 titles and 101,688 volumes, excluding those from the Open and Distance Education Center. There is also the Rare Books Library, which has 20 thousand volumes. The University, geared to culture, science, and education, receives professors, students, speakers, and promotes seminars, congresses, shows, and concerts from all over the country.

The UFOP seeks to bring the 21st century to a city that is more than 300 years old, which has already received the title of Imperial City of Brazil granted by D. Pedro I. It was the seat of the Mineira Conspiracy, capi-

tal of the Province, and later of Minas State. In 1933, the city was elevated to a National Patrimony and, five years later, declared a patrimony by the institution that today is the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN). On September 5, 1980 in Paris, at the fourth session of the World Patrimony Committee of UNESCO, Ouro Preto was declared Cultural Patrimony of Humanity. No other Brazilian city has accumulated so many historical facts relevant to the construction of a national memory; and adding to this range of events, the UFOP rescuing a conspiring dream from the colonial period, inaugurated the so dreamed Medical Course in Ouro Preto on September 24, 2007.

MEDICAL SCHOOL COURSES AT THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF OURO PRETO

The journalist Ângelo Oswaldo describes the birth of the Medical Course at UFOP in his chronicle entitled “Meeting with our history”. In fact, the course has a long itinerary of historical background. It all begins with the conspiring desire, certainly anchored in the ideals of 15 students of Medicine from Montpellier, to create a medical course in Vila Rica. That idea did not disappear with the end of the Mineira Conspiracy, since on June 17, 1801 the “Surgery, Anatomy, and Obstetric Art” course was created in Vila Rica. The Pharmacy School and Minas School of Ouro Preto, as well as UFOP, also permeate the historical details that culminate with the emergence of the course.

The resumption of this conspiring dream only happened since February 2006, when UFOP formalized the interest and request for the installation of a Medical course in Ouro Preto to the Ministries of Health and Education. This was only possible with the interference of the then Minister of Health, José Saraiva Felipe, who took the responsibility to propose and carry out such a large enterprise. The cause was also embraced by local interlocutors such as Professor Dr. Márcio Galvão and the Mayor of Ouro Preto, Ângelo Oswaldo, whom presented the proposal to the Rector Prof. Dr. João Luiz Martins. Obstinate and historical defenders of the Brazilian public health, Dr. José Agenor Álvares da Silva, who came to succeed Dr. José Saraiva Felipe in the Ministry of Health, and Prof. Dr. Francisco Eduardo Campos at the time being the Secretary of Health and Work Management of the Ministry of Health, also contributed to the implementation of this proposal.

On September 24, 2007, the inaugural class of the so dreamed course began in Ouro Preto. The pedagogical project was based on the National Curriculum Guidelines, established in 2001 by the Ministry of Education and also by the guidelines of the National Program of Reorientation of Professional Health Training (Pro-Saúde), established in 2005 by the Ministries of Health and Education. The course proposes an integrated formation to local health public services with the purpose of seeking answers to concrete needs of the Brazilian population in the production of knowledge and health care (Figure 8).



Figure 8 - Current facilities of the School of Medicine of the Federal University of Ouro Preto.

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