Editorial Note

This theme issue of *Gesnerus* focuses on “Moving Images: Film in Medicine and Science – Medicine and Science in Film” and is edited by Iris Ritzmann, Hans-Konrad Schmutz and Eberhard Wolff. It proves in abundance that technical innovations, particularly concerning the technologies of mass communication, do not constitute an ordinary episode of the history of medicine and the sciences nor an external commodity, indeed useful for the public diffusion of the advances in the sciences, but deprived of a deep effect on its very development. They are maintaining a much more fundamental relationship with the objects to which they apply, i.e. medicine and the sciences. Film or moving images, far from being a simple technical aid, profoundly modify the social and cultural impact, the historical destiny, indeed, the very content and epistemology of sciences. The sciences, medicine included, in turn radically inflect the history of film, the medium of communication par excellence in the past century. The very ideology of progress, one of the first constituents of the dynamic of the sciences and medicine, takes shape in this play of reciprocal influences.

Looking back in that way on our past also permits us to start thinking about the present. Nobody today is still able to determine with certainty the global impact of digital technology on the general development of our civilisation and culture, in particular on that of the sciences and medicine. However, it is certain that traditional media, such as printed media, are facing a crucial change. *Gesnerus* did not want to stay outside this irreversible shift. Like many other scientific publications, similar specialised journals in particular, we have decided in collaboration with our publisher Schwabe AG to make the switch to the digital era. As a first step, we are providing free access to the content of our journal. The complete single issues (articles and book reviews) are available free of charge three years after publication, in the Archive of the *Gesnerus* website: www.gesnerus.ch (during the first three years after publication, however, the access is limited to the summary of the articles and a list of the books reviewed).

We encourage our readers to consult this very rich collection in our Archive, which will be completed progressively until covering the first years

of our journal, and to inform us of any suggestion in order to better the form and content of our website. Furthermore, the numbering of *Gesnerus* is simplified from N° 1/2 and 3/4 to N° 1 and 2 and henceforth corresponds to our biannual rhythm of publication. You are holding in your hands the Number 1 of volume 66 (2009) of *Gesnerus*, with a rich content that should contribute to a commitment with the history of medicine and the sciences, as well as the contemporary changes in which our discipline is fully engaged.

Vincent Barras