

## HENRIQUE ARAGÃO BIOGRAPHY

Henrique de Beaurepaire Aragão was one of the first young doctors, or medical students, that gathered around Oswaldo Cruz in the first decade of this century, when the "Instituto Oswaldo Cruz" had only two monocular microscopes for its staff. His companions were Carlos Chagas, the discoverer of American trypanosomiasis, Henrique da Rocha Lima, who was later to discover the agent of epidemic typhus, Alcides Godoy, who developed a vaccine against blackleg, a serious cattle disease, and Gaspar Vianna, who discovered the treatment of leishmaniasis.

Aragão was born in 1879 and entered the Oswaldo Cruz group in 1903, as a medical student.

He started by studying blood parasites and, in 1907-1908, when 28 years old, made an outstanding discovery in the life-cycle of *Haemoproteus columbae*, a cosmopolitan parasite that was frequent among the numerous pigeons wandering around the Institute. By inoculating the pigeons parasitic flies *Pseudolynchia*, or allowing them to bite nestlings, he verified that the parasites developed in endothelial cells of the lung capillaries, forming segmenters from which the merozoites entered the red cells, this being a pioneer finding concerning the exo-erythrocytic stages of malaria parasites, discovered decades after. His interest in haemocytozoa led him to study the development of male and female gametocytes of *Plasmodium falciparum* and the plasmodia of birds, and to discover in 1909, with Arthur Neiva, the first reptilian malaria parasites. His curiosity carried him to many other fields: bovine babesiosis, *Phytomonas* flagellates, yellow fever, myxoma virus and ticks, a group in which he was one of the major Brazilian experts. He was also the discoverer of the first sandfly vector of leishmaniasis in the Americas.

He published over 150 papers, was Honorary member of many scientific societies in Brazil, Belgium, France, Britain, Germany and the U.S.A., and has been awarded the Noch Medal of the Hamburg Institute of Tropical Medicine.

He was the founder and head of the Protozoology Section of the "Instituto Oswaldo Cruz", and a very industrious Director of the Institute, from 1942 to 1949.

*Leonidas M. Deane*