

N E R V A L ' s D I A R Y

Le voyageur enthousiaste observe ...

April 21 (the legendary day Rome was founded), 1999

**In the Shadow of Aconcagua
or a pop visit to either side of the Andes**

Sunday into Santiago, Monday over the mountains into Mendoza, Tuesday back to Chile, Wednesday staying in the city of Santiago, Thursday flying back home. Wild, indeed.

Two-pronged as so many of my visits, also this one served both dermatology and the history of medicine, Prof. Christobal Parra, head of department in Mendoza, city of wine in Western Argentina, and Prof. Isidor Pasmanik, Emeritus in Santiago de Chile, both long-time friends from international dermatology as much as a more recent acquaintance, the medicohistorian and geneticist Prof. Ricardo Cruz-Coke, also in the Chilean capital, merited such an overseas endeavor. Not to forget Dr. Ana Viera S., who did part of her postgraduate studies in Vienna many years ago; she kindly took me all around in Mendoza.

It is 14 years since I last came to Argentina to attend a meeting; then it was S. Miguel de Tucuman and Buenos Aires. This time it was the west where I turned. Mendoza and its wine were on my mind. So I had a second point of interest, not only dermatology/history of medicine. Due to a delay in my flight I went directly from the airport to Prof. Parra and his staff and it became a lively noontime seminar, presenting and discussing matters of

'sun and skin'. Thereafter I could see the city of Mendoza with the fancy silhouette of the Precordillera overlooked by El Plata, a 6,500-meter giant. Altitude above sea level, geographic latitude and climate reminded me of Jerusalem. The enormous 75,000-liter vat and the vast array of barrels in the Giol Bodega concluded the day, sweetened by some glasses of Malbec.

Back in Santiago, as a city a bit older than its sister city over the Andean crest (founded 1541), I divided my time between seeing patients on two afternoons with Prof. Pasmanik and his grandson (carrying the family tradition of dermatology into the third generation), and Prof. Cruz-Coke who guided me through the medical faculty and the museum 'Enrique Laval' of the University of Chile. Here, I spoke on 'From Fame to Shame' (in the history of medicine in Vienna), focusing on some of this century's deeds by Austrian medical doctors. Meeting the dean, a number of other professors of the faculty and students alike made the occasion both profitable and entertaining. Highly gratified with what I could see and learn and the many personalities I encountered, the hospitality I met, I conclude my visit and head home, 13,000 km across the seas.

à bientôt,

K.H., Vienna