“Ta Panta Rei”

Jean Schoenen

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Dear Readers and Colleagues,

When I took over the editorship of the *Acta Neurologica Belgica* (ANB) with An Jansen as co-editor in 2009, the first paragraph of our editorial began with the following sentence: “This is the start of a new era in the long history of the ANB for several reasons...” and finished with “...we believe that the future of the journal is bright and that there still is room for improvement of its quality and impact”. Both concepts became reality and also fit with this editorial.

“Start of a new era”

It became genuinely a new era when at the end of 2011 the *Belgian Neurological Society* contracted *Springer* as the new publisher for the ANB. This clearly increased the international visibility of the journal and the *Editorial Manager* web-based site for manuscript submission and handling greatly eased the editors’ work. On the bright side, the number of submissions jumped to over 400 per year; on the dark side, up to 80 % of manuscripts are being rejected. As a plus for the journal, there was a consensus among readers that the overall scientific quality of publications increased. Unfortunately, this was not translated in an increase of the impact factor, although admittedly this Holy Grail may take more than 2 years to be reached. It was a great pleasure and satisfaction for myself as editor-in-chief to work with the extremely competent and dedicated co-editors Alain Maertens, Veerle De Herdt, Vincent Thijs and Jan Versijpt, as well as with the highly efficient, and nonetheless charming, Springer professionals Paola Teti, Ria Scheuermann and LeAnn Smiles. It was

somewhat disappointing to have few contributions from the ANB partner scientific societies, few, if any, review articles from the opinion leaders of the Belgian Neurological Society and hesitant participation of many of them in the reviewing process of submitted manuscripts. In contrast, most colleagues of the National Advisory Board responded when solicited and this was also the case for some International Advisory Board members.

The job of editor-in-chief of the ANB is thus interesting and rewarding in many aspects, but it also needs a great dose of idealism, altruism, and perseverance the more so that it still is an honorary function, contrary to editorship of most other international journals. This probably explains why the mean duration of editorships rarely exceeds 5 years, with the notable exception of that by André Capon. The good thing about this is that a change in editor heralds new ideas and initiatives, which may be one the reasons why the ANB are still alive.

“The future is bright”

Respecting the cycle, I have thus decided like most of my predecessors to step down as editor at the end of 2013. I do this with the feeling that I did my best to improve quality of the ANB. I leave without regrets, as I know that the journal will be in excellent hands with my successor Michel Van Zandijcke. Michel is well known to most of you. His exceptional background in the clinical neurosciences together with his humanistic qualities will be a precious asset for the journal. The challenge, as previously, will be to maintain the dual profile of the ANB as a neurological journal that is appealing to both international and national authors and readers. To achieve this, he can still count of four dynamic co-editors and on incentives like “fast-track” manuscript handling with possible online publication within 2 months after submission and a yearly prize for the

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best publication by a member of the Belgian Neurological Society. Thanks to the inexhaustible advances of knowledge in the clinical and basic neurosciences, including in emerging countries, the number of submissions will probably increase further. The challenge will be to attract those with the best quality in addition to review articles by internationally or nationally renowned experts. Another challenge is to find compliant and effective reviewers. Those that accepted and did the job in 2014 were numerous and ought to be sincerely acknowledged here (see list below). Last but not least, the financial survival of the ANB depends on sufficient support from advertising companies.

All things considered, the future of the ANB looks even brighter than in 2009! I wish my successor and friend Michel all success for this future he now has to manage. He can count on my full support, but what he needs most is the support you, as readers and authors, can give him by reading and citing ANB articles, and above all by submitting your best works for publication in the ANB.

Jean Schoenen
(Past) Editor-in-Chief
November 11, 2013

ANB reviewers of volume 113 (2013)

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