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HOMO - Journal of Comparative Human Biology

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EDITORIAL



Dear colleagues,

Editorials are usually written to communicate important changes for the future or to summarize a period in the journal's life when important changes occurred and finally, there is a time for reflection.

HOMO was first published under its current title in 1949. Initially all editors were from German language countries. Although the journal had an international, multilingual character, and papers were published in different major European languages, German was predominant (although abstracts were published in English and French). This editorial covers the period starting in 1998 when one of its authors (MH) joined the team of editors. Language policy was changed in 2001 when then Editor-in-Chief Professor Friedrich Rösing in his editorial (issue 1 vol. 52) acknowledged that English became the language of science and the use of German in the journal would be decreased in order to make it more visible to a broader readership. As he rightly stated, the other languages should not be ignored and scientific articles in any other language should be read with equal attention to their contents, but publishing in English makes articles easier to be read by a broader audience. Since about that time the editors also encouraged authors to publish abstracts in their native languages in addition to English. Although authors are given the opportunity to publish an abstract in their home language, in the last several years only a few abstracts were published in HOMO-JCHB in languages other than English, and most were in non-Latin-based scripts such as Arabic, Russian or Chinese. In future years this custom will most likely disappear, and sadly so, because English has become a *lingua franca* of general communication, trade and travel in the era of the internet and cheap air transport. These general World changes, directly or indirectly reflected in the life of the journal are, however, outside the influence of the editorial team.

For most its existence, until about 1998, the Homo-JCHB was predominantly a 'European journal' publishing mostly works of authors from various European countries. In the 21st century the journal has become 'fully' international with first authors coming from six continents and manuscripts reflecting international collaborations. Going by the first author's country does not show the true extent of this international collaboration. While in earlier years authors of a single manuscript were usually from one university/country, recently the co-authors of a single manuscript may each come from a different country (example: Piombino-Masali et al., 2015, Evidence of probable tuberculosis in Lithuanian mummies, HOMO-JCHB 66, pp. 420-431). This obviously reflects a new trend in scientific collaboration, an easier way of exchanging ideas and materials.

Large numbers of manuscripts published between 2001 and 2017 for which we have complete data, came from South America (26), Africa (29), Australia and New Zealand (42 together), Asia (70), North America (77); however, papers from Europe (237) comprised the largest part of the volumes, though they constituted less than half of all manuscripts. The greatest number of papers published in the last 16 years came from Poland, USA, Australia, Spain, India, Germany, Italy, South Africa and Switzerland (see [Fig. 1](#) for more details). These numbers are, very roughly, in proportion to the numbers of biological anthropologists working in the classical fields of human biology included in the journal's scope and, at least partially, also reflect professional contacts or collaborations of the editorial team. Authors contributing at least one paper came from eighteen countries including Sri Lanka, Kosovo, Iran, Armenia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Bosnia and Romania, to name a few usually less often represented in international journals of physical anthropology.

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Sum/country

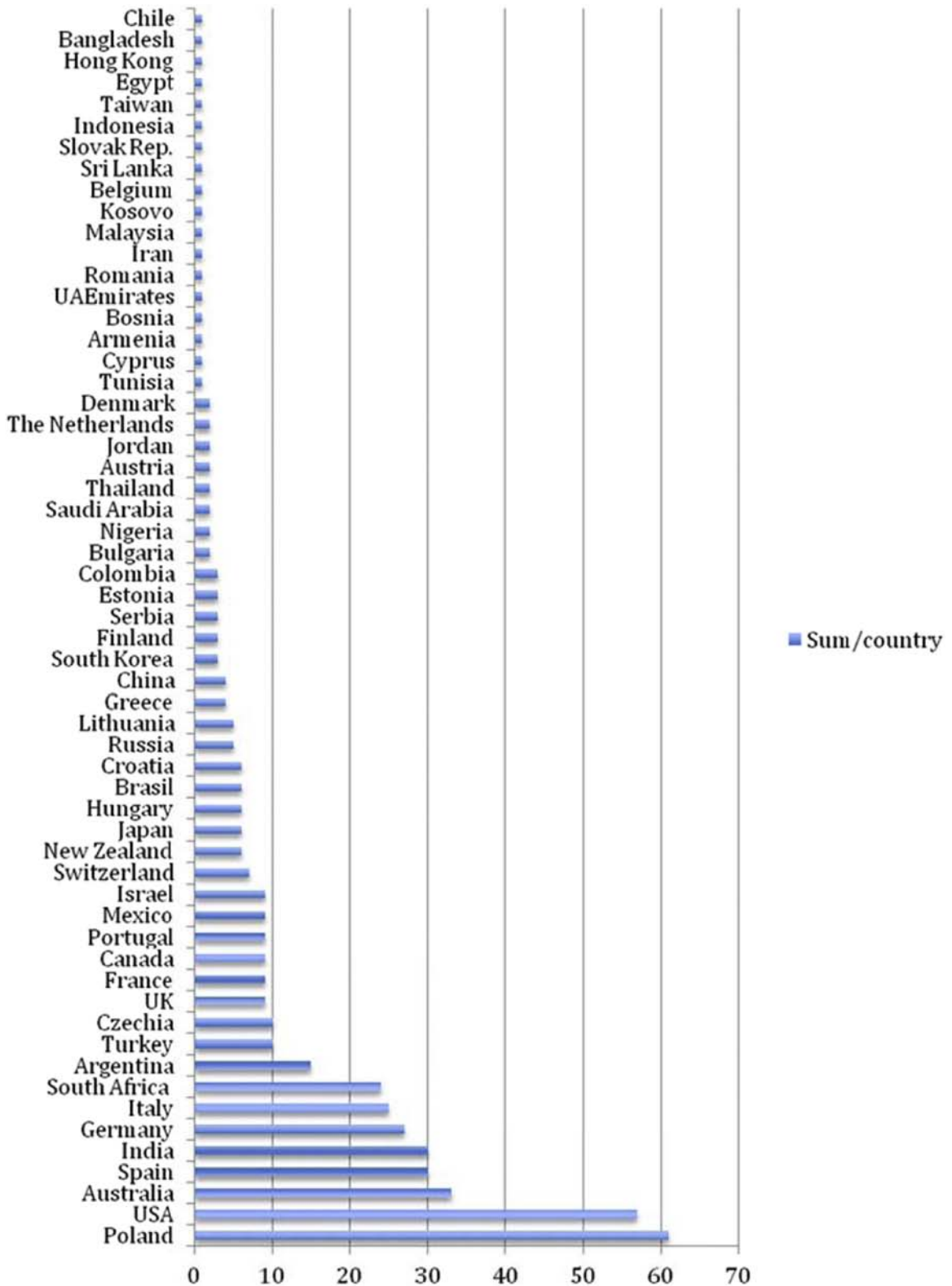


Fig. 1. Number of papers published in 2001-2017 according to the first author's university/country.

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