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BOOK REVIEW

Ana Simões and Maria Paula Diogo,
eds. *Science, Technology and Medicine
in the Making of Lisbon (1840-1940)*.
Leiden: Brill, 2022, 487 pp.
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Places (and cities, in particular) do matter in the way in which knowledge is negotiated and produced (David Livingstone, *Putting Science in Its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003). In an *Osiris* special issue (*Science and the City*, volume 18, number 1, 2003) Sven Dierig, Jens Lachmund, and J. Andrew Mendelsohn launched a research program for an “urban history of science.” They stressed the fact that cities should not anymore be seen as passive containers as they played an active role in knowledge making processes of “coproduction” between historical actors and the urban context itself. That framework even allowed being extended to the complexities of urban grids and its materiality in complex assemblages of human/non-human actors, from sanitary engineers to horses, bacteria and electric valves (Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Science, Technology and Medicine in the Making of Lisbon is an excellent result of the above cited historiographical trends. In a rich, well-written introduction Ana Simões and Maria Paula

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Diogo, the editors of the volume, present their collective endeavour to put the coproduction agenda into real practice. In addressing the role of science, technology and medicine (STM) in the construction of modern Lisbon (nineteenth and twentieth centuries) they skip traditional local actors and institutions, and a chronology of different political periods. Instead, the volume follows a thematic line, which includes several geographical scales and stresses the science of everyday urban life. It includes a total of fourteen chapters authored by sixteen different authors. Part 1, titled “The Fabric of the City,” covers the materialities of pavements, trees, neighbourhoods, and coastal roads. Part 2, “Port City and Imperial Metropolis,” opens new avenues to revisit the old centre-periphery polarization and provide convincing examples to show the different, complementary faces of the city, through lazarettos, quarantines, customs laboratories, colonial gardens and exhibitions. Part 3, “The Daily Life in the City,” reinforces the idea of the urban matrix as a seamless web of anonymous citizens whose habits and circulation matter for the knowledge production. Here, gardens, dogs, intellectuals, workers, students, and rollercoasters acquire similar historical agency. Finally, the supplement “Historical Urban Cartography of Lisbon” nicely complements the materiality of the city and the spatiality of the STM of the period under study (1840-1940).

The volume is also a major contribution to revisit rigid categories of cities of “first” and “second” rank and go beyond the traditional studies of Western metropolises such as Paris, London, Berlin, New York and Chicago. Through this work the list is now being extended to a wider range of urban centres. It covers networks and circulation of local and global dimensions and brings to the fore the double face of Lisbon, simultaneously regarded as a metropolis of a colonial empire and peripheral in STM for European standards. Moreover, the volume complements Tiago Saraiva and Marta Macedo’s brilliant *Capital Científica. Práticas da Ciência em Lisboa e a História Contemporânea de Portugal* (Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2019, see book review in HoST vol. 14(1), 2020, 199-201), a book that used the STM of the city to unveil several political aspects of the liberal, republican and dictatorial regimes in modern Portugal, as well as key “urbanized” institutions. We can definitely place Lisbon as one of the key academic centres of the new urban history of science, with the hope that other academic settings will follow similar research paths. Further research on urban history of science will provide readers with the enormous richness of every local context, and, at the same time, contribute to defining new (plural) modernities (Shmuel Eisenstadt, ed. *Plural Modernities*, New York: Routledge, 2002) from a postcolonial perspective (Sandra Harding, ed. *The Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies Reader*, London and New York: Duke University Press, 2011).

Although all chapters put their emphasis on different practices and materialities, more could probably be said about the scientific details of these endeavours. Providing the reader with the detail of scientific concepts and techniques would help readers to better understand the

coproduction processes of knowledge making in the urban context. But this is a minor remark that does not obscure at all the merit of this impressive collective effort. Despite the inevitable unevenness of some chapters, all are very well integrated in a solid, robust introduction, resulting from excellent team work at the Centro Interuniversitário de História das Ciências e da Tecnologia (CIUHCT). There is no doubt this is an important contribution to the urban history of science, a field of growing interest and high potentialities to open the history of science to its neighbouring disciplines.