Editorial Note

By Tiago Saraiva[*]

It is a pleasure to present the second issue of HoST, journal of History of Science and Technology. More so, considering that the current number materializes many of the purposes that justified the launching of the journal. First of all, it includes innovative and challenging, even provocative, ways of writing history of science not commonly found in more established journals in the field. Secondly, it contains contributions heavily indebted to other disciplinary approaches, namely Science Studies, which we deem crucial to enlarge the scope and sophistication of history of science. Thirdly, history of science and technology throws new light into well known subjects, demonstrating its relevance for the discipline of History at large. Finally, it keeps up to the journal´s commitment of geographical diversity, although the Portuguese presence has probably too much weight. But let us be more concrete by referring directly to the articles published.

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In "The Emergence of Early Modern Commons: Technology, Heritage and Enlightenment", Antonio Lafuente and Nuria Valverde develop a powerful argument of looking at the history of science of the Enlightenment as the history of inventing common goods as public patrimony. By following naturalists, archeologists or historians, they describe an all-embracing effort that converted stones, rivers or trees into scientific objects prone to be orderly kept in museums' chest-of-drawers or botanical gardens' plots. As the authors nicely put it, "to say that something acquires the status of a patrimonial good implies that the item is subject to various disciplinary rules." That was the immense task of enlightened scientists: to free native wisdoms or plants from local attachments in order to include them in the placeless space of scientific institutions ready to incorporate the public patrimony. Only after trees were brought to botanical gardens, could forests be governed by imperial bureaucracies; only after placing the Stone of the Sun into the museum did it form part of the collective memory necessary to build a modern State. What were the limits of such project? Apparently, there were none. Everything was susceptible to become public patrimony given that proper technologies were used. The numismatic, documental and archaeological expeditions the authors refer to is perhaps the best example of such enlightened hypertrophy. And this is another of the virtues of the article: subjects of inquire as familiar to historians of science as scientific expeditions are given unexpected twists under the light of this global invention of the commons. Also, the ways of dealing with the history of humanities place them side by side with other scientific

endeavors in a non trivial way, with History taken as a discipline dependent on "technologies of dating and localization" and agreements about the variables defining the signs of progress. The intense use of such technologies turned disconnected fragments of reality into a common good immediately defined as a public good. But by tracing the genealogy of these movements the authors suggestively question the necessity of identifying the common with the public, pleading for alternative ways of conceiving the Commons separated from state undertakings.

The treatment of the concept of Reality that sustains Lafuente & Valverde argument resonates nicely with the discussion carried out by João Arriscado Nunes in "Circulation or (Re)enactement? Performing the Variable Virulence/Pathogenicity of Helicobacter Pylori". By drawing heavily on Karen Barad's "agential realism" and Joseph Rouse's naturalistic approach to science studies, Nunes offers a narrative of the emergence of Helicobater pylori as a biomedical entity. As in the article previously discussed, scientific practices are not taken as simply aiming at disclosing an external reality, but scientists are instead actively involved in producing phenomena that can not be separated from the set of material-discursive practices that enact them. By paying close attention to the apparatuses and practices constitutive of the phenomenon of the variable virulence/pathogenecity of Helicobater pylory, Nunes is able to demonstrate how concepts are only meaningful by reference to those very same apparatuses. He thus rehabilitates the "Materials and Methods" sections of published papers as a crucial source for Science Studies scholars usually obsessed with material from

archives or personal interviews. And if following scientific material practices is a common methodology in studies inspired by Actor-Network Theory (ANT), Nunes is highly critical of the tendency of such scholarship to take the heterogeneity of the world as starting point, with scientists and machines making and unmaking attachments, instead of perceiving it as "the outcome of the practices constitutive of reconfigurations of the world". His paper is thus part of the ongoing effort of better grasping the modes of existence of biological and biomedical entities and how they are enacted as objects of knowledge.

Both Konstantino Chatzis' and Cristiana Bastos' articles have a totally different tone, more familiar to the practitioners of history of science and technology. This said, we consider them excellent examples of the kind of scholarship HoST welcomes. Beginning with Chatzis paper, "Rationalizing Maintenance activities within French Industry during the Trente Glorieuses", we are faced with two major challenges. First of all, it constitutes, to our knowledge, one of the first attempts to approach the rationalization process of the French Trente Glorieuses, trying to place the history of technology at the heart of any proper understanding of a period so crucial in France's history. Secondly, by focusing on maintenance activities it deals with a major issue neglected by historians of technology, usually too much concerned with the history of invention and innovation. When looking at maintenance we are obliged to think how technology really works and in its entire lifespan instead of being concerned exclusively with the moment of emergence of a new technology. Maintenance thus seems to offer new

relevant hindsight of the significance of technology in history, as Chatzis' well crafted paper clearly demonstrates.

Cristiana Bastos' contribution to this issue also sheds new light into a major subject for general historians, the so-called Third Portuguese Empire of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, that till now has received scarce attention from historians of science. By following the trajectory of the Goan physician Indalêncio Froilano de Melo the author is able to build a narrative that weaves together local health policies, Indian nationalism, Portuguese imperial policies, and colonial historiography. This is even more interesting taking into consideration that when dealing with the Third Portuguese Empire, historians are for obvious reasons normally much more interested in the African colonies than in the decaying oriental possessions. Bastos not only highlights the practices that allow for the circulation of the Goan physician through imperial networks, from Goa to the Metropolis, passing through Africa, but she integrates Brazil (the second empire) as well into her account which allows her to engage in a critique of imperial historiography from a post-colonial point of view. The "in-between" life of Froilano de Melo reveals his dual identity as agency and structure, as both active builder of new imperial networks and as product of a "long established, tense and contradictory society."

This revisitation of well known historical objects by historians of science and technology is a major purpose of HoST. Also Ana Paula Silva's work-in-progress peace, "Portugal and the Building of Atlantic Telegraph Networks", can

be read as a new look to the ways the Portuguese Third Empire was built, highlighting the major role of technology, in this case submarine cables. But her work aims further. The very same nature of her object of research enables the author to integrate the Portuguese empire in the more general history of European imperial history at the end of the Nineteenth Century. By following the political geography of submarine cables, Silva looks at the Portuguese empire through a transnational lens much more powerful than the traditional comparative studies of political historians. Her study not only makes the Portuguese case recognizable for international scholars, but it also suggests that those interested in the development of the British or French empires should pass through the Portuguese empire as well, just as their intercontinental cables did. Such argument fully justifies the weight given to the Portuguese case in the current issue of HoST.