S-75 – Recording and communicating practical and theoretical branches of knowledge in the history of science, medicine and technology

The History of Science and Technology and Medicine

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Abstract:

Studies dealing with the relationship between science, medicine, and technology are relatively common within the History of Science. Grounded on different historiographical trends, these studies cover not only a wide range of specific topics and historical analyzes related to their interconnection, but also the rapport between theoretical and practical knowledge – often taking into account their relevance to the advent of modern science. Among other issues, historians of science have examined laboratory set ups and procedures; scientific experiments and instruments; and connections between science and industry, as well as technology and labor. Few studies, however, have focused on the process of recording and communicating practical and theoretical branches of knowledge.

There is no question that throughout history, at different times and places, mankind has relied on many ways for registering data. For instance, in the case of written texts alone, we have not only different material supports (like stone, bone, clay tablets, papyri, manuscripts, and printed matter), but also styles or genres (such as astronomical charts, dialogues, recipe books, methodological treatises, medical consilia, how-do-to books, epistles, manuals, commentaries, journals, and newspapers). Practically the same variety applies to images depicting, aside from man-made artifacts, elements and aspects of the three realms. Along with written texts, visual representations formerly were conveyed in cave paintings, ostraca, assorted utensils, portolanos, illuminations, woodcuts, metal engravings, lithographs, and the like. By means of such media, knowledge about nature, humankind, and the arts has been communicated in various situations, including teaching.

In the light of these matters, the aim of this symposium is to analyze processes related to the elaboration and disclosure of recorded information. Among other items, this subject comprises techniques employed in registering practical and theoretical data, and forms of communicating them. Just to give an idea, the latter includes artifacts, art-work, printed matter, lectures, public demonstrations, anatomical prelections, and apprenticeship in workshops and laboratories.

In other words, the analyzes encouraged in this symposium involve many approaches or fields of study. Some of them are archeology, natural history, iconographic studies, scientific illustrations, history of books, formal education, technical teaching – all of them necessarily establishing interfaces with the history of science, medicine and technology. Importantly enough, all these approaches contemplate both global and regional aspects.
Keywords: science and techné in history – recording scientific and technical information – disclosure of scientific and technical information – images in history of science, medicine and technology – history of science and education.

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