
Technological Nocturne

The Lisbon Industrial Institute and Romantic Engineering
(1849–1888)

TIAGO SARAIVA and ANA CARDOSO de MATOS

ABSTRACT: This article explores technology as romantic culture in the second half of the nineteenth century. It details how new urban nocturnal experiences emerged from the Lisbon Industrial Institute (Instituto Industrial) founded in 1852. It combines the interest in the space of science production, typical of history of science and science studies, with the attention to production and consumption of lighting more commonly found in history of technology and urban history literature. Engineers' practices are put in a cultural continuum with poetry, opera, and modern city life at large. Industrial Institute directors Vitorino Damásio and Fonseca Benevides are described as romantic engineers for whom technology overcame differences between humans through the forging of new social bonds, produced new aesthetic experiences and new ways of feeling, expressed nature's harmony, and led to heroic lives.

On 12 September 1849, the newspaper *Revolução de Setembro* (The September Revolution) reported the events of the previous two days that had taken place in the Boavista area located between the Santos and Cais do Sodré squares, the main industrial neighborhood of Lisbon, the Portuguese capital city:

The workers refused to work overtime at night and they demanded full payment as if they had worked the same hours they do in summertime. It would be convenient for the Government to take this issue in serious consideration, seeking to remediate this growing evil by conciliating the interests of workers and those of the owners. It is the question of work organization that always emerges with

Tiago Saraiva is assistant professor at the Department of History of Drexel University and Ana Cardoso de Matos is professor in the Department of History of the University of Évora and member of the research team of CIDEHUS (Interdisciplinary Centre for History, Culture and Societies). They co-edited, with Antonio Lafuente, *Maquinismo Ibérico* (Aranjuez: Doce Calles, 2007).

©2017 by the Society for the History of Technology. All rights reserved.
0040-165X/17/5802-0005/422-58
