

C 3.2. COMMUNICATION – ABSTRACT

Santo António Hospital and the Modernization of Medicine in Porto (1900–1950)

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ABSTRACT: The first half of the twentieth century represents a period of remarkable significance in the history of Medicine in Porto characterized by the modernization of scientific knowledge and clinical practices. Central to this process was the Santo António Hospital (HSA), founded in 1799 and historically linked to medical education since the establishment of the Royal School of Surgery in 1825. Although the Medical-Surgical School of Porto (1836) moved to its own building in 1883, clinical teaching remained institutionally anchored in HSA until 1959 thereby consolidating its status as a privileged center for medical education and research. Drawing on the heritage collections of the Centro Hospitalar do Porto Museum this presentation examines the evolution of hospital life from 1900 onwards with particular emphasis on two central dimensions: the introduction of new auxiliary diagnostic and therapeutic methods and the development of medical specialties, which contributed to increased differentiation and improved quality of care at the principal healthcare institution in Northern Portugal. Through medical instruments, archival documents and material culture that testify to clinical practice, scientific and technical progress and everyday hospital life, this research revisits key moments in the history and collective memory of HSA highlighting the decisive contributions of several of its most distinguished physicians. The museological evidence enables an understanding of how science, memory, and material culture intersect in the construction of a distinctive institutional identity. HSA emerges as an exemplary teaching hospital open to innovation and continually renewing its commitment to scientific advancement and humanistic values. This legacy establishes Santo António Hospital as a major reference point in the medical history of Porto and Portugal during the nineteenth century.

KEYWORDS: Santo António Hospital; Centro Hospitalar do Porto Museum; Medical Heritage; History of Medicine; Medical specialties; Material culture.

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