

“A Co-operation of Observers”

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Propositions belonging to the dissertation

“A Co-operation of Observers” Crafting Knowledge Infrastructures for Microscopy

Lea Beiermann

1. The microscope and its makers deserve a more prominent place in the historiography of late-nineteenth-century science. If we conceive of microscopy as the set of skills – or craft knowledge – that it was, then we need to pay more attention to the tools microscopists used.
2. The second half of the nineteenth century is a particularly interesting time for scholars who are keen to understand the formation of trade and communication infrastructures in the microscopy community, and how they made it possible for craft knowledge to travel.
3. A microscopist’s skill in making observations, preparations or instruments was inseparable from their skill in building and using knowledge infrastructures. Consequently, infrastructural inversion allows us to examine not only infrastructures, but also the craft knowledge that these infrastructures helped microscopists to share.
4. The history of late-nineteenth-century microscopy can help us reimagine present-day participatory research, as well as science and technology communication.
5. Business history is a vital part of history of science and technology, and historians should treat it as such.
6. Historians of science and technology should make their use of digital tools and methods more transparent in their work.
7. History of science and history of knowledge are mutually beneficial.
8. Historians cannot be unpolitical, so they might as well try to be on the right side of history.