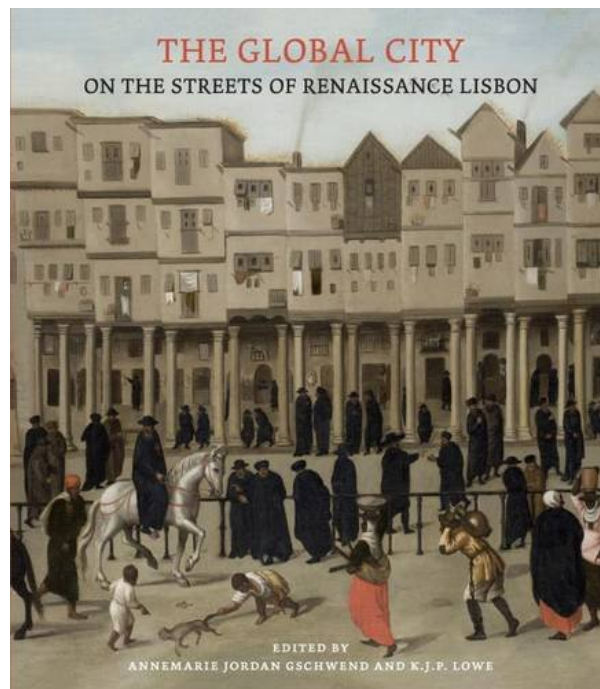
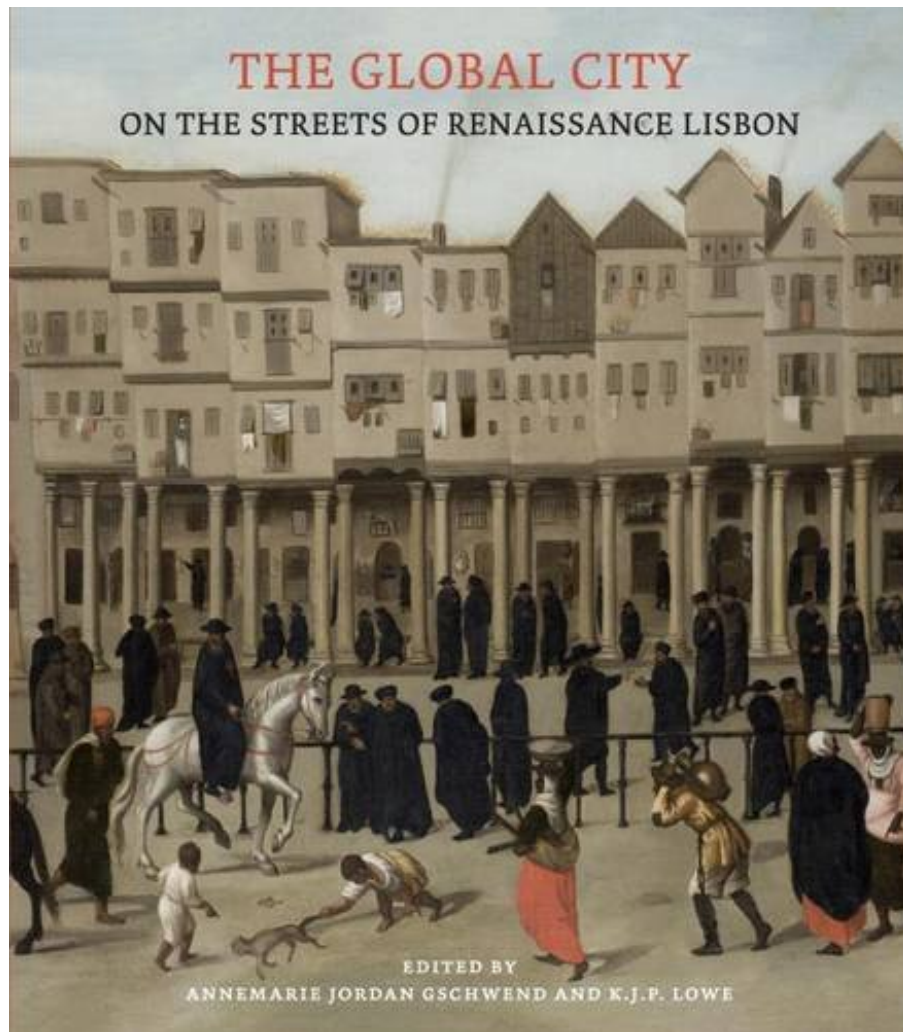


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Review

This handsomely illustrated book offers a tantalizing view of a vanished city that in its day, according to do Góis, 'reigned over the world.' (Apollo)

"A deeply important addition to its genre." (Arts of Asia)

This is modern historical inquiry at its best: clear, precise, forthcoming about problems of evidence, and relentlessly focused on its central questions...[The Global City] restores Lisbon to its rightful place as one of the most important centres in the history of the modern world. (Times Literary Supplement)

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Awarded an Honorable Mention by The Eleanor Tufts Award. The Award Committee called the book a "transformative scholarly contribution."

Recently identified by the editors as the Rua Nova dos Mercadores, the principal commercial and financial street in Renaissance Lisbon, two sixteenth-century paintings, acquired by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1866, form the starting point for this portrait of a global city in the early modern period. Focusing on unpublished objects, and incorporating newly discovered documents and inventories that allow novel interpretations of the Rua Nova and the goods for sale on it, these essays offer a compelling and original study of a metropolis whose reach once spanned four continents.

The Rua Nova views painted by an anonymous Flemish artist portray an everyday scene on a recognizable street, with a diverse global population. This thoroughfare was the meeting point of all kinds of people, from rich to poor, slave to knight, indigenous Portuguese to Jews and diasporic black Africans.

The volume highlights the unique status of Lisbon as an entrepôt for curiosities, luxury goods and wild animals. As the Portuguese trading empire of the fifteenth and sixteenth century expanded sea-routes and networks from West Africa to India and the Far East, non-European cargoes were brought back to Renaissance Lisbon. Many rarities were earmarked for the Portuguese court, but simultaneously exclusive items were readily available for sale on the Rua Nova, the Lisbon equivalent of Bond Street or Fifth Avenue. Specialized shops offered West African and Ceylonese ivories, raffia and Asian textiles, rock crystals, Ming porcelain, Chinese and Ryukyuan lacquerware, jewelry, precious stones, naturalia and exotic animal byproducts. Lisbon was also a hub of distribution for overseas goods to other courts and cities in Europe. The cross-cultural and artistic influences between Lisbon and Portuguese Africa and Asia at this date will be reassessed.

Lisbon was imagined as the head of empire or caput mundi, while the River Tagus became the aquatic gateway to a globally connected world. Lisbon evolved into a dynamic Atlantic port city, excelling in shipbuilding, cartography and the manufacture of naval instruments. The historian Damião de Góis bragged of the "Tagus reigning over the world". Lisbon's fame depended on its river, an aquatic avenue that competed with the Rua Nova, providing a means of interaction, trade and communication along Lisbon's coastline. Even for the cosmopolitan Góis, who traveled extensively for the Portuguese crown, Lisbon's chaotic docks were worth describing. Of all the European cities he experienced, only Lisbon and her rival Seville could be "rightfully called Ladies and Queens of the Sea". Góis contended that they had opened up the early modern world through circumnavigation.

Lisbon was destroyed in a devastating earthquake and tsunami in November 1755. These paintings are the only large-scale vistas of Rua Nova dos Mercadores to have survived, and together with the new objects and archival sources offer a fresh and original insight into Renaissance Lisbon and its material culture.

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A Sumptuous Book...

By PBjW

This is an absolutely amazing book lavished with beautiful photographs and blessed with well-written articles that reflect the latest in scholarship--a combination that is a rare treat in itself, much less when its topic is so fresh and little-known as Lisbon in the 16th century, when it was a global city bursting with exotica and luxury goods. The cover is a section of the Rua Nova paintings of Lisbon's main shopping street when at its height in the 1500s--a painting once lost and only found in the back room of a bookshop by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the famous pre-Raphaelite artist, in the spring of 1866. Its streets show black-robed citizens, chamber-pot bearers, religious figures, police, nobles, dark-skinned slaves (one carrying a large jug on his back in chains, sign of an attempted escapee), half-breed children, and even a turkey, newly brought to Lisbon from the New World. It was a world of exploration and colonisation and the riches that came with such foreign conquests, that lasted only 100 years when Portugal's monopoly of the Pacific Ocean was curtailed with the emergence of the Dutch and English East India companies. Lisbon's glory days came to a final climactic end when the city was destroyed in a disastrous earthquake and tsunami in 1755.

This is not a book about Portugal's maritime explorations and conquests, but rather a look into the financial and material rewards that came as a result. Begin with the epilogue, which tells the story of Rossetti's purchase, before dipping into the 14 articles, each on an aspect of Lisbon and its sensational exotic booty that

turned it into a global city, its shops bursting with foreign wares that were sought by the elite and crowned heads of Europe. The details are amazing--Queen Catarina of Austria's Ming Chinese porcelain shopping list, examples of rock crystal carvings of the baby Jesus probably made for India's wealthiest new Christians, Japanese Namban screens with their detailed scenes of the unloading of Portuguese ships with Martaban jars, porcelains and textiles. The focus is on the cosmopolitan nature of the city, and the goods available in its shops--ivories, crystals, textiles, bezoar stones, gems, porcelain, jewellery, lacquerware, and even exotic birds and animals. The articles are all richly illustrated, often with artefacts shown for the first time.

Kudos to the two editors of this handsome and intelligent volume (Annemarie Jordan Gschwend and Kate Lowe).

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A Real Achievement

By Amazon Customer

The scholarship under this effort really does illuminate the methodology and the mechanics of Portugal's leap into the age of exploration. The details could be considered overwhelming but should be thought of as enriching. A real achievement! Mike Foster

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

An excellent set of essays

By BMD

An excellent set of essays. I'm happy that I bought it as a hardback but I wish a future edition would be in paperback as well.

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