

THE MIGRATION OF IDEAS



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and

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Editors

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CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgments vii

Part One

COSMOPOLITANISM AND INTELLECTUAL NETWORKS

Chapter 1

All Knowledge in a Circle 1

From the Republic of Letters to Cosmopolitanism

Walter Tega

Chapter 2

German Nationals in Revolutionary France and
the Migration of Ideas (1791–1800) 35

Susanne Lachenicht

Chapter 3

History of Science 49

The Challenge of the New Media

Paolo Galluzzi

Part Two

CHANGING MINDS

Chapter 4

An End to Poverty 59

The French Revolution and the Promise of a World beyond Want

Gareth Stedman Jones

*Chapter 5*The Diffusion of Economic Ideas and
the Formation of the Market Tradition 73*Explorations in the Political Economy of the 19th Century*

Roberto Scazzieri

*Chapter 6*On the Theological Origins
of the Secular Market State 99

Adrian Pabst

*Chapter 7*Vito Volterra and the Making
of Research Institutions
in Italy and Abroad 123

Giovanni Paoloni and Raffaella Simili

Part Three

WARS AND NEW PLACES

*Chapter 8**Translatio studii* 151*Warburgian Kulturwissenschaft in London, 1933–1945*

Nicholas Mann

Chapter 9

Forced Migration and Scientific Change
after 1933 161

Steps Toward a New Approach

Mitchell Ash

Chapter 10

A Tribute to Janina
Hosiasson Lindenbaum 179

A Philosopher Victim of the Holocaust

Maria Carla Galavotti

Chapter 11

Circulation of Ideas and
Migration of Scientists 195

Hints from the Early Times of Nuclear Physics

Giovanni Battimelli

Chapter 12

Paul Feyerabend and the Forgotten
“Third Vienna Circle” 203

Friedrich Stadler

Chapter 13

Afterword 225

Roberto Scazzieri and Raffaella Simili

Notes on Contributors 233

Name Index 237

Subject Index 243

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ideas migrate across time and space, sometimes in conjunction with the migration of people and sometimes independently of it. The migration of ideas from one context to another is a central aspect of communication among scholars and scientists. It is one of the most important features of cultural, intellectual and scientific history. It is also an important feature in the history of institutions, organizations and technology.

This volume considers the migration of ideas in conjunction with the migration of scientists and scholars, and examines the critical role of political upheavals and major wars in that connection. The volume is the product of an international meeting of minds centered upon co-operation between the University of Bologna and the University of Cambridge. In the early years of the new millennium, contacts between interdisciplinary centers at the two universities (the “Federigo Enriques” Center for Epistemology and History of Science and the Institute of Advanced Study at the University of Bologna; the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Cambridge) set up a joint intellectual effort aiming at discussing issues of common interest such as: (i) the appearance of similar beliefs, theories, customs or material artefacts at different times and places; (ii) the seeming diffusion of ideas (either in their pure or disembodied form, or as ideas materially embodied in artefacts); (iii) the central role of context in determining which features of similarity are kept, and which features are lost in the course of migration; (iv) the puzzling persistence of certain prototypes as ideas get “activated” in different contexts.

The collaboration between the University of Bologna and the University of Cambridge has led over the years to mutual visits of scholars and to the joint arrangement of interdisciplinary colloquia. In the spring of 2004, Ludmilla Jordanova and Rosamond McKitterick convened for the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) at the University of Cambridge a first colloquium on the migration of ideas aimed at a wide-ranging

assessment of questions to be asked and frames of reference to be used. As it turned out, much attention was given to the analysis of the material support of ideas (be it a manuscript, a painting, a music score) and to the influence of means of communication in the transmission of content (meaning) from one context to another. The questions raised at the Cambridge colloquium were at the center of a second colloquium, which Roberto Scazzieri and Raffaella Simili convened at the University of Bologna in September 2004. This meeting was specifically devoted to the migration of ideas within scholarly and scientific networks. It addressed issues ranging from scholarly communication in early modern Europe to intellectual networks after World War II. One of its central themes was the role of changing context in the transformation of ideas across space and time.

This volume takes up issues discussed at the two colloquia, and particularly at the Bologna workshop. Its principal aim is to show the migration of ideas “at work” by concentrating upon the central role of scholarly and scientific networks both as a means of circulation of theories, beliefs, political agendas, and as a means of circulation of people between countries (or even between political and disciplinary boundaries). The volume is organized as follows. Part I (“Cosmopolitanism and Intellectual Networks”) addresses issues associated with the institutional set-up of the republic of letters, in its multi-faceted character from eighteenth century cosmopolitanism to twenty-first century global connections. Part II (“Changing Minds”) considers the general theme of a change in context as a situational challenge influencing the way in which systems of concepts (such as scientific theories) or patterns of interpersonal relationships (such as social arrangements and institutional set ups) are actually interpreted or implemented under different circumstances. Part III (“Wars and New Places”) concentrates on the personal displacement of scholars and scientists and its influence on favoring the migration of certain features rather than others across space and time. The volume has been conceived as a forum for the discussion of central themes in the migration of ideas. Its principal purpose is to highlight the multiple routes that the migration of ideas may take, and the manifold dimensions of what is, or *is not*, actually transferred from one context to another. As noted above, the volume is a product of international scholarly co-operation, and its contributions reflect an extensive background of discussion across different disciplines and academic environments. The Afterword contributed by the two editors has been conceived as a means to convey (albeit imperfectly) the general texture of intellectual exchanges that have made this volume possible.

The Bologna workshop was organized within the framework of the interdisciplinary research project “A multi-faceted world. Ideas, images, protagonists for cosmopolitan knowledge.” The project was sponsored by the Italian Ministry of the University and carried out through cooperation between the University of Bologna, the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) at the University of Cambridge, the Cité des Sciences et

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We are indebted to all the colleagues and friends who have discussed this project with us since its inception. In particular, we are grateful to Ian Donaldson, first Director of CRASSH, for having enthusiastically supported the Migration of Ideas project. We are also grateful to Ludmilla Jordanova, John Morrill, David Feldman and Rosamond McKitterick for their commitment to involve the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) of the University of Cambridge in co-operation with sister institutions at the University of Bologna. We are also indebted to Alessandro Freddi and Carlo Poni, of the Institute of Advanced Study at Bologna, for their support to the Migration of Ideas Focus Group at their institution, and to Maria Carla Galavotti for her contribution to the planning and realization of the above Focus Group. Pietro Corsi, Robert Friedman, Harald Hagemann, John Morrill, William O'Reilly, Carlo Poni and Birke-Siri Scherf contributed to workshop interaction and discussions that have helped with the conception and realization of this volume.

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Roberto Scazzieri and Raffaella Simili
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