S-48 – Historical inquiry & intellectual transmission: How shall we write about how knowledge travels?

International Association for Science and Cultural Diversity (IASCUD)

Organizers:
1) Karine Chemla, (Université Paris 7 - CNRS, France), chemla@univ-paris-diderot.fr
2) Kenji Ito, (SOKENDAI - The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Japan), ito_kenji@soken.ac.jp / kenjiito67@gmail.com

Abstract:
One of the central features of science, technology and medicine is the purported agility with which these inquiries leap across cultural borders. Investigating the transmission of knowledge requires that we consider relations between the local and the global. Conversely, articulating the local and the global requires that issues raised by the circulation of knowledge be addressed. Since the 18th century, historians of science and technology have raised questions, not only about how knowledge originates, but also how knowledge gets from one part of the world to another. Presently, scholars tend to presume knowledge is produced locally and that what is known becomes global only after it travels to other places. Concurrently, scholars realize that what counts as a successful transmission of knowledge is closely connected with our assumptions about possible relations between the global and the local. Various models have been proposed to explain how knowledge travels: transmission, diffusion, circulation, dissemination, and so on. Each model both informs and depends upon how we write the global history of science, such as the model of the center and the periphery. Historiographical models have varying assumptions about how locality influences scientific inquiry and technological development. Also at stake in the historiography of knowledge transmission is the issue of cultural diversity in science, and not simply because the relocation of knowledge greatly affects the diversity and uniformity of scientific forms of inquiry. Thus, the International Association of Science and Cultural Diversity proposes a symposium to discuss historiographical questions related to transmission of knowledge in science, technology and medicine. The symposium aims at understanding the various settings in which historians have addressed these issues, and the concepts, methods and motivations with which they approach questions concerning transmission and circulation of knowledge. It will build bridges between methodological issues and concrete case studies.

Keywords: Historiography of science – Transmission – Circulation

Expected Participants:
• Pierre Chaigneau
• Agathe Keller, Sho Hirose
• Kenji Ito
• Madeline Muntersbjorn
• Martina R. Schneider
• Zhihui Chen