

Editorial

Cultures and Practices of Knowledge in History

The editors of “Cultures and Practices of Knowledge in History” are delighted to see the first volume of this new series in print. The series aims to investigate the procedures of producing knowledge, and emphasizes the social, political, and cultural contexts of knowledge practices. “Cultures and Practices of Knowledge in History” gravitates around three main questions: How was knowledge produced by different people at different times and in different places? How was knowledge stored, managed, classified, organized, deployed, forgotten, and recycled? Finally, how did such practices affect what counted as knowledge? Rather than regarding knowledge as static or disembodied, the series seeks to highlight its dynamic character. Knowledge exists only in the form of being constantly re-worked.

While the series’ focus is primarily on the ‘long’ early modern period in Europe, we welcome work on global cultures of knowledge and their European encounters. The series privileges the investigation of practices – that is, habitualized and often only semi-explicit protocols of dealing with knowledge. This includes (but is not limited to) questions of infrastructure, economics, social and political frameworks, and the everyday. We encourage work that explores the relationships between the practices and the content of knowledge. ‘Knowledge’ is employed here in a broad sense: our series is interested in knowledge of many different kinds, whether academic, pragmatic, domestic, or bureaucratic. By ‘cultures of knowledge’, we mean sets of practices that are historically specific, spatially grounded, and attached to particular social contexts and functional purposes. We invite studies that critically address the varying ways in which knowledge can be postulated and re-packaged, whether as ‘data’, ‘information’, ‘tacit knowledge’, ‘theory’, or ‘wisdom’.

