draft contribution (10/11/26) under review for the Proceedings of the conference 'Medical Education in Europe, 1350–1750: Texts, Institutions, Practices' (Pisa, Oct. 2025), vol. II (Palgrave-Springer, 2028?)

Academic Mobility and the Circulation of Medical Knowledge in Renaissance Italy

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It goes without saying that students moved quite often in the late Middle Ages: we have accounts of their movements from Italy to northern Europe or (rather more often) in the opposite direction, from England, the Low Countries, or the Holy Roman Empire to Italian universities (*studia*) like Bologna and Padua.[1] Even more frequent are cases of students leaving their hometown in the Italian peninsula or the Holy Roman Empire to study at one or more of the nearby universities. This was clearly the more affordable option. This student mobility has attracted considerable scholarly attention, and studies on matriculation lists or degree-holders (whether in Germany, France, or Italy) continue to generate publications by scholars often particularly interested in social history and prosopographies.[2] But what happened to students once they became professors, as they sometimes did? We know that some of them remained tied to a specific locality, whereas others were more mobile. We do not, however, know what proportion of professors chose to teach in multiple universities, what the push/pull factors were, and – most importantly – what implications mobility or its lack had for the circulation of knowledge in the period. If anything, scholars have thought in terms of locally-fixed centres (or more often, 'schools') from which knowledge radiated out, for instance through students and publications. A famous example is the 'school of Padua', which supposedly modelled a particular approach to disciplines such as philosophy and medicine.

In this essay, I do not intend to dismiss altogether this understanding of differentiated centres of learning in the Italian peninsula. Although universities both in Italy and throughout Europe were united by a common set of assumptions, language of instruction (Latin), and curriculum (centred, in the case of medicine,

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[1] Fritz Weigle, "Deutsche Studenten in Fermo (1593-1774)," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 38 (1958): 243–265; Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Ad Tervoort, *The Iter Italicum and the Northern Netherlands: Dutch Students at Italian Universities and their Role in the Netherlands' Society (1426–1575)* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Suse Andresen and Rainer C. Schwinges, eds., *Über Mobilität von Studenten und Gelehrten zwischen dem Reich und Italien (1400–1600) / Della mobilità degli studiosi e eruditi fra l'Impero e l'Italia (1400–1600)* (Zurich: vdf, 2011); Gian Paolo Brizzi, "Europäische Studenten an italienischen Universitäten in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa: vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Klaus J. Bade et al., 2nd ed. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh / Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2008), 567–570.

[2] Matthias Asche, "Peregrinatio academica in Europa im Konfessionellen Zeitalter: Bestandsaufnahme eines unübersichtlichen Forschungsfeldes und Versuch einer Interpretation unter migrationsgeschichtlichen Aspekten," *Jahrbuch für europäische Geschichte* 6 (2005): 3–34; Kaspar Gubler, "Scholars from Spain and Portugal at Universities of the Holy Roman Empire (1250–1550): Perspectives and Results from Digital History," in *Tradición, memoria y progreso: retos actuales de la universidad desde la historia. XV Congreso Internacional sobre Historia de las Universidades,* ed. by R. Aznar i García et al. (Madrid: Dykinson, 2025), vol. I, 371–403; Maria Teresa Guerrini, *"Qui voluerit in iure promoveri": I dottori in diritto nello Studio di Bologna (1501-1796)* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2005); Jacques Verger, "Étudiants et gradués allemands dans les universités françaises du XIVe au XVIe siècle," in *Gelehrte im Reich: Zur Sozial- und Wirkungsgeschichte akademischer Eliten des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Rainer C. Schwinges (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996), 23–40; Joaquim Verissimo Serrão, *Les Portugais à l'Université de Montpellier, XIIe-XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Centro Cultural Poruguês, 1971).

on the works of Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna), it is also clear that local traditions, power structures, and other factors meant that differences of approach and emphasis could easily arise and even endure for several years or decades.[3] Yet a parallel reality was that professors did not necessarily remain tied to a single location. Especially at the level of the most prominent teaching positions, hiring outside professors was encouraged and sometimes even mandated. Thus, Bologna had *cattedre di eminente scienza* (chairs of eminent knowledge) in law, medicine, philosophy, and humanities. These were to be filled by 'foreigners', i.e. by non-citizens of Bologna.[4] A similar system was in use in Padua, where the first-rank 'ordinary' positions were to go to academic stars from elsewhere.[5] These and other professors were typically awarded temporary (though renewable) contracts of around three years, and many universities on the Italian peninsula were involved in a fierce competition to hire (even before their contracts had expired) the professors most likely to attract good numbers of students.[6] Such institutions were willing to be flexible on both pay and other benefits, which meant that candidates were known to negotiate simultaneously with several prospective employers, even though such initiatives (and subsequent refusals of offers) might put them at the centre of diplomatic incidents between powers.

This readiness to switch institutions is a given in the biographies of many professors (see below), but has never been addressed systematically as a phenomenon. This would be a desideratum from many points of view, including social and cultural history. Here, however, I suggest that it also has significant potential from the point of view of the history and especially the circulation of knowledge. So, while it is doubtless true that some professors dedicated themselves for their lifetime to a particular institution (producing works and teaching students that would carry their insights and approaches elsewhere), others not only did the same at multiple universities, but in moving elsewhere brought with them their ideas, personal libraries, collections of instruments, and sometimes even their students – with consequences that remain to be explored. It is this concomitant mobility of people and embodied knowledge that this essay emphasizes, particularly in the case of professors of medicine.

At the outset, it is worth noting that I treat physical mobility in three dimensions.[7] One, of the kind that I have just now referred to, is geographical. It is the type that usually springs to mind when we discuss

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[3] See, in relation to the teaching of moral philosophy, David A. Lines, *Aristotle's "Ethics" in the Italian Renaissance (ca. 1300–1650): The Universities and the Problem of Moral Education* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[4] David A. Lines, *The Dynamics of Learning in Early Modern Italy: Arts and Medicine at the University of Bologna.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 2023), 52, 82, 175, 209, 405n26.

[5] Jerome J. Bylebyl, "The School of Padua: Humanistic Medicine in the Sixteenth Century," in *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Charles Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 335–370 (here, 342–44); Paolo Rosso, "Studiare e insegnare *in studiis alienis*: la *peregrinatio medica* toscana negli *studia generalia* dell'Italia settentrionale (Padova, Pavia, Torino, secoli XIV-XV)," in *Umanesimo e università in Toscana (1300-1600).* Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Fiesole-Firenze: 25-26 maggio 2011), ed. by Stefano U. Baldassarri, Fabrizio Ricciardelli, and Enrico Spagnesi (Florence: Le lettere, 2012), 111–189 (here, 128–131).

[6] Not all were successful; see the cases of Lucca and Siena, discussed in Rosso, "Studiare e insegnare *in studiis alienis*," 126–127. But in later times, Siena became better at attract prominent professors; see Peter Denley, *Commune and Studio in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2006).

[7] I explain this distinction more in depth in "Teachers on the Move in Late Medieval Italy: The Case of Philosophy Professors" (forthcoming).

mobility and entails moving across either short or longer distances. The second involves teachers moving across settings or institutions such as universities, private practice, hospitals, and courts. The last kind of mobility is hybrid, involving a combination of the first and second types. In the first part of this essay I will briefly address each of these, starting with inter-institutional mobility, which is less studied and requires a bit more explanation. In the second part I will discuss the larger, trickier, but ultimately more rewarding question (at least for an intellectual historian) about how teachers and knowledge may have travelled together.

1. Mobility Patterns

Inter-Institutional Mobility

When we think of inter-institutional mobility in philosophy, matters are fairly straightforward. The most important Italian towns had, alongside the university, provincial schools of the mendicant orders, which offered teaching especially in philosophy and theology to their most promising members. (The most significant of these were the schools of the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinian Hermits, and Servites.) Members of these orders sometimes taught both in the religious *studia* and in the local university. This was the case for (among others) Agostino Favaroni da Roma (1360 to 1443), an Augustinian Hermit, who in Florence taught both in the convent of Santo Spirito (where the Augustinian Hermits had their main *studium*) and in the university, though the records indicate that he was active in the university for only a few years (between 1415 and 1419).[8] It may be that Favaroni was hired to remedy a shortage of staff able or willing to teach moral philosophy there. But inter-institutional mobility could also involve the courts of princes and popes. A good example is Galileo Galilei: he was hardly the first professor to move from a university appointment to one in the service of a powerful man, when he entered into the employment of the grand duke of Tuscany.[9]

In the case of medicine, such transversal moves were somewhat more limited. Mendicants, like members of the other religious orders, were not allowed to receive medical degrees; they therefore did not teach medicine in universities. Professors of medicine were, however, part of a dual reality, since they both taught medicine and usually practised it. As with law, a medical professor's income typically came mainly from private practice; their university salary was a welcome if substantial top-up that, among other things, consolidated one's status. In any case, private patients could be a rather more dependable source of income than the university, where payments were regularly put on hold or even cancelled if a city happened to be short on funds. Another important point is that senior professors of medicine could become part of a university's College of Medicine, which was composed of the most senior professors and in part functioned as a local health board: in addition to awarding degrees, it determined who could practise medicine and related arts in

[8] Daniela Gionta, "Favaroni, Agostino," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 100 vols (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960–2020), 45 (1995), 447–451; Marco Toste, "Augustinus de Favaronibus," *C.A.L.M.A.: Compendium Auctorum Latinorum Medii Aevi (500-1500)*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and Francesco Santi, vol. I.4. (Florence: SISMEL, 2001), 502–505; Lines, *Aristotle's "Ethics" in the Italian Renaissance*, 423 and 482–483.

[9] Mario Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993).

the local territory. From a financial view, membership of the College was highly profitable, since students' graduation fees were distributed among its members.

Besides seeing patients privately, medical doctors often practised their profession in a different setting. One of these was the local hospital, which could give professors the opportunity to take their students on rounds and discuss the characteristics of various diseases. There is an ongoing debate among historians as to who was the first to engage his students in bedside teaching, but we know of at least three significant figures that were involved: Giovanni Battista da Monte in Padua, Antonio Musa Brasavola in Ferrara, and Elideo Padovani in Bologna.[10] Particularly striking is the frequency with which da Monte, already in the 1540s, visited the Ospedale di San Francesco in Padua together with his pupils. One of these, Georg Handsch, wrote down plenty of evidence of these visits, but more is supplied also in da Monte's published *Consultationes*.[11] It seems that da Monte, though not employed by the hospital, often visited patients there and discussed their cases with his students who accompanied him. (In 1542 or 1543 the faculty of arts and medicine moved to the Palazzo Bò, which was just next door to the hospital.)[12] Similarly, Antonio Fracanzani saw plenty of patients at the hospital in Padua.[13] In Ferrara, evidence survives of visits by Antonio Musa Brasavola together with one or more of his students, but it is not clear whether these were always to patients' homes or to hospitals as well.[14] For Bologna, Stolberg finds mentions of hospital visits in Elideo Padovani's (d. 1576?) published work.[15] In addition to Padovani, however, one can mention at least Gaspare Tagliacozzi (1545–1599). Nowadays remembered especially for his work in rhinoplastic surgery, Tagliacozzi appears in the Bolognese documents as practising in the Ospedale della Morte already in 1568, two years before obtaining his medical degree.[16] The most detailed study on Tagliacozzi does not, however, pay attention to any further involvement he may have had either with the Ospedale della Morte or the Ospedale della Vita, preferring instead to focus on his most famous patients.[17] This is a case that demands further, targeted archival research.[18] In particular, one

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[10] Michael Stolberg, *Learned Physicians and Everyday Medical Practice in the Renaissance* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022), 388–389.
[11] Michael Stolberg, "Bedside Teaching and the Acquisition of Practical Skills in Mid-Sixteenth-Century Padua," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 69.4 (2014): 633-661 (here, 652–659).
[12] Bylebyl, "The School of Padua," 348.
[13] Stolberg, "Bedside Teaching," 657–658.
[14] Ibid., 642–643.
[15] Elideo Padovani, *Processus, curationes et consilia in curandis in particularibus morbis quae prosperos habuerunt eventus ... medicinae candidatis in praxi eum sequentibus communicata*, ed. by Johannes Wittich (Leipzig: N. Nerlich, 1607); Stolberg, "Bedside Teaching," 642–643 and 658–659.
[16] Jerome Pierce Webster and Martha Teach Gnudi, "Documenti inediti intorno alla vita di Gaspare Tagliacozzi," *Studi e memorie per la storia dell'Università di Bologna* 13 (1935): 3–149 (here, 90, n. XXXI); see also Lines, *The Dynamics of Learning*, 257–260.
[17] Martha Teach Gnudi and Jerome Pierce Webster, *The Life and Times of Gaspare Tagliacozzi Surgeon of Bologna 1545–1599* (New York: Herbert Reichner, 1950), 89–103 (37–38 on the two hospitals). It may be useful to consult the student notes of Johannes Brünsterer, *c.* 1550, in Padua and Bologna, found in Erlangen, UB, mss. 909 and 911 (Stolberg, *Learned Physicians*, 555).
[18] To my knowledge the only collection of modern studies on the two hospitals dates to over 65 years ago: *Sette secoli di vita ospitaliera in Bologna* (Rocca S. Casciano: Arti grafiche Cappelli, 1960); see in particular the following essays: Vittorio Sabena and Mario Maragi, "Dall'Ospedale della Vita all'Ospedale Maggiore" (55–100); Mario Maragi, "Gli antichi statuti dello Spedale di S. Maria della Vita" (111–147); Vincenzo Busacchi, "L'ospedale della Morte" (149–167); Vincenzo Busacchi and Francesco Lollini, "Dalla istituzione della Cattedra di medicina operatoria ad opera di Benedetto 14. alla creazione della industria italiana dei ferri chirurgici" (169–182); Luigi Samoggia, "Empirici litotomi e oculisti negli Ospedali della Vita e della Morte in Bologna nel 1600 e 1700" (183–201); Mario Maragi, "Le fonti archivistiche e bibliografiche per la storia degli ospedali bolognesi" (317–332).

would want to know whether the 1555 statutes of the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Morte were followed in their stipulation that the hospital should have one physician and one surgeon, along with other points about the frequency of their visits.[19] And how often were university professors simultaneously given a post at the hospital?

Another relevant context alongside the university was the local court.[20] In their capacity as doctors of medicine, university professors might be requested to call upon the local prince, his family, or indeed favoured subjects at court. This possibility was not, however, open to all, since universities such as Bologna and Padua lacked a local princely court for most of the period. (Bologna only had a court with the Bentivoglio in the second half of the fifteenth century.)[21] It was therefore easier to exercise one's profession simultaneously in university and courtly contexts if one was a professor in places such as Ferrara, Florence, Naples, or Rome. Pavia was also close enough to the court of Milan to make such inter-institutional arrangements work.[22]

This inter-institutional mobility raises a number of questions, such as whether the opportunity to operate across contexts somehow favoured exchanges of views or ideas between university professors and others, or whether the various contexts in which medical doctors worked gave rise to a productive cross-fertilization.

Geographical Mobility

Examples of geographical mobility among professors are clearer and easier to find. Sometimes we can also see them straddling institutional contexts as well.

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[19] *Statuti de M.S. Maria dalla Vita* (Bologna: Anselmo Giaccarello, 1555), f. 15r–v: "Ordiniamo et provediamo ch'el detto hospitale debbia havere due medici, uno phisico et l'altro chirusico, li quali debbiano visitare due volte il giorno, cioè l'uno la mattina et l'altro la sera tutti li infermi, et ciascuno di essi diligentemente interrogare della sua infirmità toccandoli il polso et ordinandoli le medicine secondo il bisogno di ciascuna infirmità, et similmente medicarli due volte il giorno et più, facendo bisogno così delle ferite come di mali nascenti, curandoli con amore et carità.

Li quali medici parimenti siano tenuti et debbiano anchora dar compenso et medicare così de ferite come d'altre piaghe tutte quelle povere persone che capitaranno di giorno in giorno al detto hospitale, le quali non sono accettati alla spesa ordinaria con gli altri infermi nel detto luogo. Et debbano detti medici havere il salario consueto, cioè di lire sessanta l'anno per ciascun d'essi medici. Et in caso ch'el medico manchi di venire ogni giorno due volte (la qual cosa torna in gran detrimento de' poveri infermi) vogliamo che per mano del Guardiano che per lo tempo serà si noti in un libro tutte le volte che esso medico mancasse di venire (sotto pena al detto Guardiano, quando mancasse di far tal nota, di perdere il suo luogo). Et vogliamo et ordiniamo ch'el detto libro dove si ha da far tal nota si presenti dal detto Guardiano una volta ogni mese nell'audientia publica del corporale della Compagnia, acciò si veggia se'l medico havrà fatto il debbito suo et quante volte si trovarà che il detto medico habbi manchato, tanti grossi della sua provisione se gli debbia ritenere senza remissione alcuna. Et inoltre vogliame che li detti medici siano obligati andare a visitare et curare senza altro premio tutti li poveri infermi di detta congregatione et Compagnia, secondo sarà loro imposto dal rettore di detta Compagnia."

[20] For a broad discussion, see *Medicine at the Courts of Europe, 1500–1837*, ed. by Vivian Nutton (London: Routledge, 1990). For an Italian example: Tiziana Pesenti, *Marsilio Santasofia tra corti e università: la carriera di un "monarcha medicinae" del Trecento* (Treviso: Antilia, 2003). Santasofia moved between Padua, Siena, Florence, and Pavia.

[21] Cecilia Ady, *The Bentivoglio of Bologna: A Study in Despotism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937).

[22] For a German example, see Gerhard Aumüller, "Professor in Marburg und Leibartzt in Kassel? Lebensbilder hessischer Ärzte zur zeit des Landgrafen Philipp (1504–1567) und die weitere Entwicklung der Medizin unter Landgraf Moritz (1572–1632)," in *Perspektiven der Medizingeschichte Marburgs: Neue Studien und Kontexte*, ed. by Irmtraut Sahmland and Kornelia Grundmann (Darmstadt/Marburg: Hessische Historische Kommission Darmstadt**,** 2011), 11–46. For helpful insights into the various contexts in which learned physicians might be active, see also Stolberg, *Learned Physicians*; Stolberg is, however, more interested in presenting the features of these contexts than in cases of particular learned physicians who straddled them.

One of the best-documented cases is that of Giacomo da Torre di Forlì the Younger (1360/62–1414), one of the most famous professors of his time. After teaching in Bologna until 1399 (during this period he turned down an offer from Florence), Giacomo taught in Padua (until 1402), then in Ferrara (1402–1405?), Siena (1405–1407), and again Padua (1407 until his death). He did not respect an agreement made with the University of Parma to go teach there in 1412, and the outcry from Parma required the intervention of the doge of Venice to smooth ruffled feathers.[23]

Mobility patterns in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries could vary significantly. A notable example is Baverio Bonitti of Imola (1405–1480). Bonitti's career is not entirely clear in all its details, but we know that he taught philosophy in Bologna from 1429 to around 1434. We then find him teaching the same subject in Florence around 1435. But by 1438 he had returned to Bologna, where he taught medicine for three years, until around 1441. We next find him teaching medicine in Siena (1443–1447) before becoming personal physician to Pope Nicholas V from 1447 until the pope's death in 1455. After that, Bonitti returned to Bologna, where he taught *medicina practica ordinaria* from 1455 until 1481, reaching the enviable salary of L. 1000 already in 1465.[24] One of his contemporaries, Albertino Chizzoli da Cremona († 1474), taught philosophy and medicine in Bologna, Ferrara and Pisa.[25] Gabriele Zerbi da Verona (*c.* 1435–1505) taught in Padua, Bologna, and Rome, but met a horrible end when the sons of a high-ranking patient in Constantinople killed him and one of his sons after accusing him of causing their father's death instead of curing him.[26] In the sixteenth century, one of many examples of mobility is Luca Ghini (d. 1556), who studied and graduated in Padua but then taught in Bologna and Pisa (where he also established the first botanical garden, in 1543).[27] Finally, we also have cases of professors moving across the Alps. Thomas Dempster, who taught medicine in Bologna in the seventeenth century, came from Scotland via Montpellier in southern France.[28]

Then there are counter-examples. One of the important ones is Alessandro Achillini, who obtained his doctorate in Arts and Medicine in Bologna in 1484 and immediately thereafter started teaching logic and natural philosophy there until, in 1494, he was finally offered a position in *medicina ordinaria de mane*, a subject he taught (often concurrently with philosophy) until 1512. Achillini seems to have taught elsewhere only for two years (1506 to 1508), when he taught natural philosophy in Padua in concurrence with Pietro

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[23] Primo Griguolo, "Per Giacomo Dalla Torre: la giovinezza, l'insegnamento, la cittadinanza padovana, il testamento," *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 46 (2013): 125–148 (here: 128–132); cf. Tiziana Pesenti, *Professori e promotori di medicina nello Studio di Padova dal 1405 al 1509. Repertorio bio-bibliografico* (Triest: Edizioni Lint, 1984), 103–104.

[24] David A. Lines, "Natural Philosophy in Renaissance Italy: The University of Bologna and the Beginnings of Specialization," *Early Science and Medicine*, 6.4 (2001): 267–323 (292, no. 59).

[25] Girolamo Tiraboschi, *Biblioteca modenese o Notizie della vita e delle opere degli scrittori natii degli stati del serenissimo signor duca di Modena*, 6 vols (Modena: Società Tipografica, 1781–1786; rpt. Bologna: Forni, 1970), VI.2, 711; Armando F. Verde, *Lo Studio fiorentino 1473–1503: ricerche e documenti*, 6 vols. (Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1973–2010), II, 8–13; Lines, *Aristotle's "Ethics" in the Italian Renaissance*, 408, no. 50; idem, "Natural Philosophy," 297, no. 93.

[26] Andrea Cristiani, *I lettori di medicina allo Studio di Bologna nei secoli XV e XVI.* Bologna: Dipartimento di Italianistica, Università degli Studi di Bologna, [1987?], no. 147; Michele Medici, *Compendio storico della scuola anatomica di Bologna dal rinascimento delle scienze e delle lettere a tutto il secolo XVIII: con un paragone fra la sua antichità e qualla delle scuole di Salerno e di Padova* (Bologna: Della Volpe e del Sassi, 1857), 42–46.

[27] Cristiani, *I lettori di medicina*, no. 148; Franco Aurelio Meschini, "Ghini, Luca," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 53 (2000), 767–771.

[28] Lines, *The Dynamics of Learning*, 176.

Pomponazzi.[29] Another stay-at-home professor was Giulio Cesare Claudini the Elder (†1618). Although he may have gone elsewhere immediately after obtaining his degree in Bologna in 1574, the rest of his career took place entirely within Bologna, where he taught logic, then philosophy from 1578 to 1587. Thereafter, he focused on medicine exclusively (at least according to the teaching rolls) until his death in 1618.[30]

This focus on relatively local teaching is something one sometimes also sees in other fields, such as philosophy. One good example of it is Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605), who did part of his university studies in Padua, but spent his entire academic career in his hometown of Bologna. It is possible that, in the second half of the sixteenth century, we start witnessing a slowing down of the pattern that tended to attract academic stars from one university to the next as they were offered ever better salaries and conditions.

Hybrid Mobility

A third category brings together inter-institutional and geographical mobility. In the case of medicine, this might involve travelling to see private patients while serving simultaneously as a university professor elsewhere. Another example is that of professors who left their university teaching (at least temporarily) to serve as a physician in someone's court, including in the entourage of princes or popes. All of these are examples of what we might call hybrid mobility (for an instance from the life of Michele Savonarola, see below).

2. The Circulation of Knowledge

Having discussed how professors moved across institutional or geographical borders (or both), it is now the moment to consider how their ideas, knowledge, and know-how travelled along with them. One can, of course, think of this in fairly abstract terms, if one considers ideas generated in one place to have reached another locality because they were "in the air." Here, however, I am interested in something much more concrete: that is, whether we can identify specific, embodied forms of knowledge that moved along with professors who held it. More specifically, did books and scientific or medical instruments travel together with their owners? If so, did this joint mobility disseminate certain methods or forms of knowledge in a way that would not otherwise have been possible?

This question seems straightforward enough, but answering it is complex, in part because we have yet to identify the professors and practitioners of medicine who chose not to stay in their native cities. Presumably one could, once one has found out which professors moved across universities and university towns, investigate their collections of books and medical instruments. This might allow one to ascertain to what extent books and instruments travelled with them when they moved from one university to another one. Yet getting to these instances of embodied knowledge is much trickier than one might think.

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[29] Lines, "Natural Philosophy," 301, no. 114.
[30] Umberto Dallari, *I rotuli dei lettori legisti e artisti dello Studio bolognese dal 1384 al 1799,* 4 vols. (Bologna: Fratelli Merlani, 1888–1924), *ad indicem*.

Secondly, much still remains to be investigated concerning how knowledge actually circulated across Renaissance Europe.[31] In recent years, research on this topic has taken interesting directions, but not all contributions are equally relevant to the question under investigation here. Two collections of essays have titles that overpromise while reflecting on the phenomenon in the *longue durée*. Michel Cotte's edited volume focuses on inventions and industrial processes from the eighteenth century onwards.[32] It is not particularly relevant to the questions examined here, apart from a essay by Liliane Hilaire-Pérez and Catherine Verna that was reworked in English for a rich and thought-provoking article in *Technology and Culture*.[33] The collection of essays edited by Dominique Barjot is somewhat more germane and concentrates on patterns of dissemination and circulation of scientific and technical forms of knowledge.[34] The first section of Barjot's volume focuses on the natural sciences and medicine in early modern (and modern) Europe. Professorial mobility is not regarded as a factor in the circulation of knowledge, unless one wishes to the scientific expeditions of the Cambridge professor John Ray and others a form of mobility.[35] When it comes to medical knowledge, the only essay in this volume for the early modern period gives particular attention to books (also in the vernacular) by eighteenth-century Parisian professors of medicine.[36] The topic is of considerable interest and is well developed, but again does not address the question of whether professors who themselves taught at different universities also had a function in spreading or circulating knowledge through their collections. As is often the case, writings (which might quite rightly include, as in Kraus's chapter, correspondence) are viewed as the principal means by which knowledge was shared and disseminated.[37]

Another example of an approach especially informed by book history is the edited volume *Transmitting Knowledge*.[38] One of the editors' achievements in this book was to gather a collection of essays paying attention to how pictures and visualizations in books (especially printed ones) could convey technical, philosophical, and medical knowlege. The contributors show that images in books had considerable explanatory, pedagogical, and persuasive power. As printed copies or manuscripts circulated and were read, their authors' ideas gained hold, especially in learned circles. Sachiko Kusukawa's essay shows how this could

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[31] One of the interesting questions raised is whether one should think of the "circulation" of knowledge rather than, as is often done, its "transfer" or "transmission." See Kapil Raj, "Beyond Postcolonialism ... and Postpositivism: Circulation and the Global History of Science," *Isis* 104.2 (June 2013): 337–347.

[32] *Circulations techniques en amont de l'innovation: hommes, objets et idée en mouvement*, ed. by Michel Cotte (Belfort Cedex: Université de Technologie de Belfort-Montbéliard / Besançon Cedex: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2004).

[33] Liliane Hilaire-Pérez and Catherine Verna. "Dissemination of Technical Knowledge in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era: New Approaches and Methodological Issues." *Technology and Culture*, 47.3 (July 2006): 536–565.

[34] *Transmission et circulation des savoirs scientifiques et techniques*, ed. by Dominique Barjot (Éditions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientificques, 2020).

[35] Sabine Kraus, "Les voyages et lettres de correspondance de John Ray, ou l'émergence des sciences naturelles dans l'Europe du XVIIe siècle," in *Transmission et circulation*, 51–77.

[36] Isabelle Coquillard, "Les médecins parisiens et la diffusion du savoir médical au XVIIIe siècle: des savants pédagogues," in *Transmission et circulation*, 38–50.

[37] See also Pamela H. Smith and Benjamin Schmidt, "Introduction," in *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400–1800*, ed. by Pamela H. Smith and Benjamin Schmidt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1–16, which points to an overemphasis on textual culture and an underestimation of the value of objects.

[38] *Transmitting Knowledge: Words, Images, and Instruments in Early Modern Europe,* ed. by Sachiko Kusukawa and Ian Maclean (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

be the case both for science (in the case of Leonhard Fuchs) and anatomy (with Andreas Vesalius's *Fabrica*) – although she is careful to note that the illustrations provided did not necessarily correspond to what one might actually find in nature.[39] Catherine Eagleton's essay and her later monograph show that images of sundials in books could be easily converted into working (and portable) scientific instruments.[40]

A point that deserves further reflection and study, however, is whether such explanations and visualizations (whether in manuscript or print) were sufficient to enable readers to put in practice the knowledge that had been disseminated. As several scholars have argued, instruments (and, presumably, their representations) needed not only to reach receptive audiences, but to be demonstrated and explained face to face. This required an element of oral communication on the part of the inventor or user, something that studies of book history do not capture. Stephan Epstein, who dedicated much of his research to the problem, claimed that "technological transfer could only be successfully achieved through human mobility."[41] According to Liliane Hilaire-Pérez and Catherine Verna, "The growing part played by written descriptions and prescriptions did not abolish the need for experts – the qualified technicians who traveled with new machines and equipment to set up, adjust, and repair them and to transmit specialized skills."[42] Or, as observed by other scholars, "the role of codified, or written, knowledge was much more limited than is often assumed."[43] If this was indeed the case, the corollary is that the communication of knowledge largely benefited from the mobility of people wanting either to share it or receive it and therefore from activities such as classroom teaching that transcended one specific locality.

It may be that the statements just reported are more relevant to some forms of technical knowledge than others and, furthermore, underestimate the power of print to aid in the circulation of knowledge. But on three points scholars should be able to agree. First, pictures in books did not necessarily convey knowledge as clearly and directly as we might think – in part because they were not always accurate, as is indicated both by Leonardo's sketch of a pregnant woman and Vesalius's depiction of the azygos vein, but also because these illustrations were often meant to be read together with the accompanying text.[44] In some cases, the pictures might not be complete or of high enough quality to enable the reader to reproduce and use the object in question. (See, among others, the case of Sartorio, below.) In other cases, the pictures spoke directly only to readers or viewers possessing craft knowledge, as Pamela Smith has argued.[45] Secondly, the emphasis on printed works that could easily be bought and read across Europe (or indeed packed into one's luggage for

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[39] Sachiko Kusukawa, "The Uses of Pictures in the Formation of Learned Knowledge: The Cases of Leonhard Fuchs and Andreas Vesalius," in *Transmitting Knowledge*, 73–96.
[40] Catherine Eagleton, "Medieval Sundials and Manuscript Sources: The Transmission of Information about the Navicula and the *Organum Ptolomei* in Fifteenth-Century Europe," in *Transmitting Knowledge*, 41–71.
[41] Stephan R. Epstein, "Transferring Technical Knowledge and Innovating in Europe, c. 1200–c. 1800," in *Technology, Skills and the Pre-Modern Economy in the East and the West: Essays Dedicated to the Memory of S.R. Epstein*, ed. by Maarten Prak and Jan Luiten van Zanden (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 25–68 (here, 55).
[42] Hilaire-Pérez and Verna, "Dissemination of Technical Knowledge," 541–542.
[43] Felicia Gottmann, Rémi Dewière, Oliver Gunning and Floris van Swet, "Migration and Knowledge Diffusion: Lessons from the Early Modern World," in *A Research Agenda for Migration and Innovation*, ed. by Francesco Lissoni and Andrea Morrison (Elgar, 2025). Online at https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap-oa/book/9781035308477/chapter1.xml (retrieved 1 November 2026).
[44] Kusukawa, "The Uses of Pictures," esp. 74–75 and 88–91.
[45] See, e.g., Pamela H. Smith, *From Lived Experience to the Written Word: Reconstructing Practical Knowledge in the Early Modern World* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2022).

travels to the New World or Africa or Asia) has meant a rarer engagement with the dissemination of scientific and medical instruments. This is now starting to attract attention particularly for high-profile figures such as Galileo, who sent versions of his telescope to various correspondents.[46] One must concede, however, that these kinds of study are still relatively few, and that the history of science is better served for now than the history of medicine: astrolabes, globes, and sundials, for instance, have attracted considerably more attention than surgical instruments. Finally, the welcome emphasis on the materiality of both books and instruments has led to overlooking – and in all likelihood underestimating – the importance of oral transmission in early modern science and medicine. This aspect may have been crucial not only for technicians who travelled together with their machines and instruments, but also for mobile professors of medicine. These not only brought with them their tools of the trade (such as reference books and equipment needed for private practice), but communicated their knowledge and craft in oral settings such as university lectures and bedside teaching.

The points just mentioned are of particular interest in the case of surgery. As mentioned earlier, Gaspare Tagliacozzi was among the most successful practitioners of rhinoplasty of his time. His book on the subject, richly illustrated especially in its second part, according to the author provided sufficient information that its craft could "be transmitted even in writings, and any man, even one of only moderate skill, can safely and successfully operate with its rules before him."[47] This suggests that the pictures included in his work were meant to be of immediate guidance to other surgeons (unlike the pictures of a hand prosthesis in Ambroise Paré, which were meant to be of use only to a craftsman trying to produce a similar object).[48] It would be helpful to know whether practitioners outside of Bologna were really able to operate using Tagliacozzi's techniques, with only his book in front of them for a guide, which included representations of surgical instruments as well as of phases of operations (see Figure 1). A similar question arises in connection with instruments developed for use in clinical medicine. A particular example that has been garnering increasing attention lately is Santorio Santori (1561–1636), a professor first of anatomy and then of theoretical medicine in Padua. His commentary on Avicenna's *Canon* (first published in 1625) included various figures of medical devices, including his thermometer and *pulsilogium*. But in the illustrations of these and other instruments included in his printed works, Santorio was not about to divulge all of his secrets. As Fabrizio Bigotti convincingly argues, he even obscured some of his techniques when instructing his students, whether at a patient's bedside or in the classroom, although of course they had much greater access to him than did outsiders.[49]

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[46] For an exemplary study, see Massimo Bucciantini, Michele Camarota, and Franco Giudice, *Galileo's Telescope: A European Story*, trans. by Catherine Bolton (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[47] G. Tagliacozzi, *De curtorum chirurgia per insitionem* (Venice: Gaspare Bindoni il Giovane, 1597), dedicatory letter (unpaginated): "Itaque in id, qua potui, cura et diligentia incubui, cum meae professionis esset ut aliquid etiam in hoc genere praestari et ad commodum publicum in lucem prodire possit. In quo id me effecisse credo, ut ego non solum aliis medendo profuerim, sed hanc partem ad veram artis normam tandem reduxerim, quo et scriptis tradi et iuxta eius leges unusquisque vel mediocriter exercitatus, tuto et feliciter operari valeat." See Lines, *The Dynamics of Learning*, 258–260. I have slightly adapted the translation of Virginia Burrell in Teach Gnudi and Pierce Webster, *Gaspare Tagliacozzi*, 453.

[48] See Heidi Hausse, "The Locksmith, the Surgeon, and the Mechanical Hand: Communicating Technical Knowledge in Early Modern Europe," *Technology and Culture* 60.1 (January 2019): 34–64.

[49] Fabrizio Bigotti and David Taylor, "The Pulsilogium of Santorio: New Light on Technology and Measurement in Early Modern Medicine," *Societate și Politică* 11.2 (2017): 53–113; Fabrizio Bigotti, "The Weight of the Air: Santorio's Thermometers and the Early History of Medical Quantification Reconsidered," *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, 7.1



(2018): 73–103; idem, “Intensity Meters: New Notes and Discoveries on the Invention of Early Modern Precision Instruments,” *Early Science and Medicine*, 28.6 (2023): 597-630; also his essay in this volume (I am grateful that I was allowed to read it in advance).

Fig. 1 Woodcut illustration for an operation of ear surgery. Gaspare Tagliacozzi, *De curtorum chirurgia per insitionem* (Venice: Gaspare Bindoni Jr., 1597), Appendix, Icon 21, p. 44. London Wellcome Collection, CC BY 4.0.

As Santorio's example suggests – and as several scholars have argued[50] – orality could therefore be a potent channel for transmitting technical information. In the case of teachers, such practice emphatically includes classroom lectures, even though these can today be accessed only through writings such as student notebooks, professors' notes, and printed works, none of which usually corresponds precisely to what a professor told his students.[51] Furthermore, Santorio's case indicates that a professor did not necessarily need to be mobile himself in order for his knowledge and discoveries to travel, particularly if students and publications could do the legwork instead. (Santorio benefited from having several German students who were eager to tell others about what they had learned from him in Padua and to disseminate his lectures and other writings, while Santorio himself rarely left the Venice area after 1600.[52]) It may therefore seem less important to study personal mobility and the circulation of knowledge together, but the opposite is the case. For, if Santorio and other prominent professors were so effective in sharing their knowledge with students and colleagues (not to mention patients and grandees) locally, how much more effective were he and other medical doctors likely to be when they graced several university towns with their teaching? In such cases, lectures and other sources can indicate developments in their thought that were presumably aided at least in part by their differing experience across localities.

An emphasis on orality and mobility need not, however, be something separate from material culture. It is highly likely that professors who moved, say, from Padua to Bologna would have brought with them all of their necessary household goods, including their collections of books and (where relevant) scientific or medical instruments. This would have been highly favoured by the university statutes' exemption of books in particular from any customs tax, in the case of people associated with the university.[53] There is great value in studies on the history of personal collections such as *Books on the Move.*[54] However, the attention many such studies show for the owners' collecting activities or the dispersals (or itineraries) of their libraries after their owners' death means that there has been comparatively little focus on other questions. Setting aside, for the moment, examples of scholars who sent their collections on travels independent of their own (as happened, with disastrous consequences, for Gian Vincenzo Pinelli), what happened when collections followed the

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[50] Nathan Rosenberg, "Economic Development and the Transfer of Technology: Some Historical Perspectives." *Technology and Culture* 11 (1970): 550–575.

[51] The observation applies in particular (but not only) to works printed after a professor's death. For an example connected with the Bolognese professor Lodovico Boccadiferro, see my "Philosophy Teaching and Filiations of Learning in Sixteenth-Century Bologna: Ludovico Boccadiferro's Early *De Anima* Lectures," in *Filosofia e medicina in Italia fra medioevo e prima età moderna*, ed. by Luca Bianchi and Luigi Campi (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), 201–237. But lectures printed during a professor's lifetime might also be revised by him in light of publication.

[52] Giuseppe Trebbi, 'Santorio, Santorio', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 90 (2017), 475–477.

[53] In the case of Padua, books brought in but not subject to customs tax were indicated by a note "conduxit" on the manuscript itself, at least in earlier times; see Rosso, "Studiare e insegnare *in studiis alienis*," 156–160 and especially the numerous studies of Luciano Gargan, starting from "L'enigmatico 'conduxit'. Libri e dogana a Padova fra Tre e Quattrocento," *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 16 (1983): 1–41; and idem, "Nuovi codici 'condotti' a Padova nel Tre e Quattrocento," *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 22–23 (1989–1990): 1–57.

[54] *Books on the Move: Tracking Copies through Collections and the Book Trade*, ed. by Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Press / London: British Library, 2007).

itinerant patterns of their owners? What were the effects of such mobility on the circulation of knowledge? When Federico Pendasio (d. 1603), for instance, left Padua to teach natural philosophy in Bologna in 1571,[55] he was privy to scholarly discussions in another city that not all his listeners had access to. Did he refer to any of these in his teaching? Was he able to comment on any instruments that had been developed in Padua while he was there? Did his book collection (assuming he brought it along) contain items that people in Bologna were not able to access earlier? And what about Galileo: as he moved from one university town to the next, how easily did his collections of instruments and books travel the same paths?

Similar questions arise in the case of medical doctors. The famed Michele Savonarola (c. 1385–1466) did his studies and early medical teaching in his native Padua, but from 1440 on was mainly in Ferrara, where he taught and became personal physician to various local lords, including Leonello d'Este. The grandfather of the Dominican Girolamo, who was to be strongly influential in Florence, he has received a fair amount of scholarly attention,[56] but much remains to be done, and to my knowledge no one has investigated the cultural transfer that may have been involved in his move to Ferrara. Likewise, Matteolo Mattioli (ante 1410–ante 1473) came from Perugia and taught philosophy there before studying medicine in Padua and spending many years there as professor. But he also returned for some stretches of time to Perugia and taught for another period (1443–1447) in Ferrara. His life and teaching are reasonably well documented, particularly for Padua, thanks to the written memories of his student Hartmann Schedel,[57] but we seem to know nothing about his belongings, especially whether he had many books and whether these travelled with him. In these and other cases, studies of correspondence, probate inventories, and notarial documents may be promising sources about the transmission of knowledge and expertise, but need to be combed in order to yield useful results.

Although there are several documented libraries for other medicine professors,[58] of particular interest is the case of Girolamo Mercuriale (1530–1606).[59] Mercuriale, who hailed from Forlì and did his studies in Padua, where his main teacher was Gabriele Falloppio. He returned to Forlì and practised medicine there before spending several years in Rome (1562–1569) under the protection of cardinal Alessandro Farnese, whom he served as personal physician. From 1569 to 1587 he was professor in Padua, before being called to Bologna, which attracted him with a twelve-year contract, a generous *anticipo*, a considerable package for moving expenses (300 *scudi*), and the usual exemption from customs taxes, in addition to honorary citizenship. In fact, however, the restless (and, according to some, greedy) Mercuriale stayed only five years. In November 1592 he broke his contract with Bologna and moved to Pisa, where the Granduke Ferdinand I recompensed

[55] See Charles H. Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. I: *Renaissance Authors* (Florence: Olschki, 1988), 305.
[56] Pesenti, *Professori e promotori*, 187–196; Remy Simonetti, "Savonarola, Michele," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 91 (2018), 150–153.
[57] Pesenti, *Professori e promotori*, 133–140; Regina Lupi, "Mattioli, Matteolo," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 72 (2008), 306–308.
[58] See the bibliography in Griguolo, "Per Giacomo Dalla Torre."
[59] On Mercuriale, see especially the publications commemorating the 400th anniversary of his death, including *Girolamo Mercuriale: Medicina e cultura nell'Europa del Cinquecento*, ed. by Alessandro Arcangeli and Vivian Nutton (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2008) and the special issue in *Medicina & storia*, 6 (2006), 5–119.

his teaching even more generously (2000 golden *scudi* vs. the 1200 he was paid in Bologna). In 1606 he moved back to Forlì, after trying unsuccessfully to regain his position in Padua.[60]

The dates above are important because the Biblioteca Ambrosiana holds a manuscript (Sussidio D 68) containing an autograph inventory of Mercuriale's books where the latest date of printing for the volumes itemized is 1587. The list, examined and edited by Jean-Michel Agasse, was probably, as Agasse suggests, prepared by Mercuriale on the eve of his departure for Bologna.[61] This would mean that Mercuriale had his library (containing some 1170 volumes) shipped from Padua to Bologna – one can only imagine the logistics and expense involved. Presumably the move also involved any instruments that Mercuriale also needed for private practice.

Is there any evidence that Mercuriale's moves to Bologna and elsewhere were associated with the circulation of embodied knowledge? As it happens there is. For in 1588 (the year after Mercuriale's arrival in Bologna) the indefatigable professor and book-hunter Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605) visited Mercuriale's home and library. As was his practice, Aldrovandi took note of the books missing from his own collection (which, at his death, counted a very respectable 4000 volumes, including manuscripts). In this case, he remarked that 504 authors were not represented in his own library and jotted down their names and titles, doubtless in order to plug gaps in his own collection.[62] Additionally, scholars in Bologna presumably were able to consult Mercuriale's collection with his permission. And it is safe to assume that his teaching made use of fairly rare works that had not previously been much used by Bologna's professors.

Conclusion

The various facets of mobility addressed in this essay require a few concluding remarks on the broader context. For, whereas the mobility of Italian university teachers in the late Middle Ages and in the early modern period has barely been addressed,[63] this is not the case for professors in the Holy Roman Empire. The Repertorium

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[60] This outline is taken from Giuseppe Ongaro, "Mercuriale, Girolamo," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 73 (2009), 620–625.

[61] Jean-Michel Agasse, "La Bibliothèque d'un médecin humaniste: l'*Index librorum* de Girolamo Mercuriale," *Les Cahiers de l'humanisme*, 3-4 (2002-2003), 201–253 (here, 202–203). I wish to thank Alex Tadel for supplying a copy of the article.

[62] Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. Aldrov. 136, vol. XIII, ff. 62–83: *Ex bibliotheca Mercurialis, 1588 ... Libri omnes quos non habeo sunt, ex hac bibliotheca Mercurialis, n. 504 authores* (Agasse, "La Bibliothèque," 202, n. 5). On Aldrovandi's library see most recently Maria Cristina Bacchi, "Ulisse Aldrovandi e i suoi libri," *L'Archiginnasio. Bollettino della Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna* 100 (2005): 255–366; David A. Lines, "La biblioteca di Ulisse Aldrovandi in Palazzo Pubblico: Un inventario seicentesco," in *Biblioteche filosofiche private. Strumenti e prospettive di ricerca*, ed. by Renzo Ragghianti and Alessandro Savorelli (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2014), 113–132; idem, "A Library for Teaching and Study: Ulisse Aldrovandi's Aristotelian Texts," in *Les labyrinthes de l'esprit. Collections et bibliothèques à la Renaissance / Renaissance Libraries and Collections*, ed. by Rosanna Gorris Camos and Alexandre Vanautgaerden (Geneva: Droz, 2015), 303–379; Caroline Duroselle-Melish and David A. Lines, "The Library of Ulisse Aldrovandi († 1605): Acquiring and Organizing Books in Sixteenth-Century Bologna," *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 7th Series, 16.2 (June 2015): 133–161.

[63] Maria Teresa Guerrini, "Docenti in viaggio: La mobilità dei docenti di diritto bolognesi in epoca moderna," in *Fonti per la storia delle popolazioni accademiche in Europa / Sources for the History of European Academic Communities, X Atelier Héloïse*, ed. by Gian Paolo Brizzi et al. (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2022), 285–296.

Academicum Germanicum (RAG), a project initiated and led by Rainer C. Schwinges of the University of Bern, has for many years now been recording and analysing the mobility of "the learned" (nobles, students who obtained higher degrees, and professors) within German-speaking territories of the Empire, leading to publications by numerous members of the research team.[64] There have also been some more geographically-delimited studies for particular parts of Germany.[65] In addition to the RAG project's remarkable outputs, including a freely-accessible database,[66] two points merit particular emphasis here. One is the project's resolve, already from its early phases, to treat the mobility of students and academics together, rather than in the discrete manner that has been characteristic of nearly all past studies of early-modern student mobility.[67] Although not everyone may agree with the decision to include only some students rather than all of them, this move made sense within a project dedicated to the history of elites. It can still be a model for future research, where the sources make it possible: after all, the distinction between students and professors is partly artificial, since all professors had previously been students.

Yet (and this is the second point) neither RAG nor its successor REPAC has accorded much attention to the circulation of knowledge, or to the intersection between it and mobility. Although the recent emphasis on *Person und Wissen* may suggest an intention to interlink personal mobility (particularly in the case of professors) with that of knowledge, books, and instruments, in fact the team seems to have something rather different in mind. This emerges in particular from the essays in *Person und Wissen* by Pauline Spychala, Matthias Asche, and Thomas Weolki. As Spychala's essay makes clear, debates and prohibitions in Paris (e.g., of Nominalism in 1474) can be studied from the standpoint of any effects they might have had on the number of German arts students who went to study there. (She concludes that there are no discernible changes in Paris's attractiveness for German students.)[68] Asche's essay, which is essentially a social analysis of the professoriat at Wittenberg University in Melanchthon's later years, does not investigate the relationship between its personnel and the knowledge economy, although there is some suggestion that students of professors such as

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[64] Rainer C. Schwinges, *Deutsche Universitätsbesucher im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte des Alten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1986); idem, *Studenten und Gelehrte: Studien zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte deutscher Universitäten im Mittelalter* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); *Gelehrte im Reich: Zur Sozial- und Wirkungsgeschichte akademischer Eliten des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Rainer C. Schwinges (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996). Among the many other relevant publications, see at least Tina Maurer, "La mobilité des savants germaniques au Moyen Âge et le résultat du Repertorium Academicum Germanicum," in *Les routes européennes du savoir. Vita peregrinatio: Fin du Moyen Âge-XVIIe siècle,* ed. by Jean Hiernard et al. (Paris: Indes savants, 2011), 39–47; *Über Mobilität von Studenten und Gelehrten*; Christian Hesse, *Studentenmigration, Gelehrtennetzwerke und Buchkultur. Basel und die Schweizer Hohen Schulen in ihren Bezügen zu (Ost)Mitteleuropa vom 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert* (Prague: Charles University, Karolinum Press, 2023); Gubler, 'Scholars from Spain and Portugal at Universities of the Holy Roman Empire."

[65] Stephanie Irrgang, *Peregrinatio academica. Wanderungen und Karrieren von Gelehrten der Universitäten Rostock, Greifswald, Trier und Mainz im 15. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002).

[66] See rag-online.org.

[67] Significant exceptions are Armando F. Verde, 'Studenti e professori fra l'Università di Ferrara e l'Università di Firenze: fine del Quattrocento–inizio del Cinquecento', in *'"In supreme dignitatis ...": Per la storia dell'Università di Ferrara 1391-1991,* ed. by Patrizia Castelli (Florence: Olschki, 1995), 75–105; Rosso, "Studiare e insegnare *in studiis alienis*."

[68] Pauline Spychala, "Person und Wissen: Die Verurteilung neuer Lehren durch die Pariser Universität zwischen 1339-1481 und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Anzahl deutscher Universitätsbesucher," in *Person und Wissen: Bilanz und Perspektiven*, ed. by Kaspar Gubler, Christian Hesse, and Rainer C. Schwinges (Zurich: vdf, 2022), 121–130.

Luther and Melanchthon spread their methods to the towns they later worked in.[69] The essay by Weolki, while interesting and richly documented, focuses on a figure whose speeches and sermons are not strongly tied to mobility factors.[70] In the end, the concept of *Person und Wissen*, as outlined by Christian Hesse for a new project centred on Switzerland (REPAC), enables researchers to study figures tied to the university milieu (and some others) mainly as *producers of knowledge* (hence the emphasis on works and letters written by them).[71] My proposal is to study professors rather as *transmitters of knowledge*, something that can be done with specific reference to their own personal mobility and that of their libraries and collections.

As Peter Denley has suggested, research of this kind can best be undertaken by linking mobility patterns with institutional contexts.[72] That will require a much deeper understanding of the Italian universities than what we presently have through synthetic works.[73] And it demands taking into consideration all universities, faculties, and teachers within them, regardless of how famous or obscure they were. This poses a significant challenge – one that can only be met through collaborative research.

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[69] Matthias Asche, "Verwandtschaft, Landsmannschaft, Tischgenossenschaft – zu den sozialgeschichtlichen Grundlagen der Funktionsweise der Universität Wittenberg zur Zeit des späten Philipp Melanchthon (1536–1560)," in *Person und Wissen*, 131–152.
[70] Thomas Woelki, "Die Wiener Universitätsreden des Thomas Ebendorfer († 1464)," in *Person und Wissen*, 153–169.
[71] Christian Hesse, "Vom RAG zum REPAC: Rückblick und Perspektiven," in *Person und Wissen*, 193–201.
[72] Peter Denley, "Academic Migration to Italy before 1500: Institutional Perspectives," in *Über Mobilität von Studenten und Gelehrten zwischen dem Reich und Italien (1400–1600) / Della mobilità degli studiosi e eruditi fra l'Impero e l'Italia (1400–1600)*, ed. by Suse Andresen and Rainer C. Schwinges (Zurich: vdf, 2011), 19–31.
[73] See especially Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

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