

Histories of Scientific Observation



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Observation is the most pervasive and fundamental practice of all the modern sciences, both natural and human. Its instruments include not only the naked senses but also tools such as the telescope and microscope, the questionnaire, the photographic plate, the notebook, the glassed-in beehive, and myriad other ingenious inventions designed to make the invisible visible, the evanescent permanent, the abstract concrete. Yet observation has almost never been considered as an object of historical inquiry in itself. This wide-ranging collection offers the first examination of the history of scientific observation in its own right, as both epistemic category and scientific practice. "Histories of Scientific Observation" features engaging episodes drawn from across the spectrum of the natural and human sciences, ranging from meteorology, medicine, and natural history to economics, astronomy, and psychology. The contributions spotlight how observers have scrutinized everything - from seaweed to X-ray radiation, household budgets to the emotions - with ingenuity, curiosity, and perseverance verging on obsession. This book makes a compelling case for the significance of the long, surprising, and epistemologically significant history of scientific observation, a history full of innovations that have enlarged the possibilities of perception, judgment, and reason.

作者介绍:

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标签

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Scientific

评论

短篇论文集这种形式，把“科学的文化史”浅尝辄止的弱点都暴露无遗。这面大旗举起来，不知道又会有多少人跟风而上。参见Yves Gingras在今年三月Isis上的书评。

前面几篇关于observation这个概念或行为的semantic meaning怎样改变的还是挺有意思的，作为long duree历史起了一个很好的开头。从第二第三部分起依然没有摆脱microhistory的局限性。文章的质量和与主题的相关性还是参差不齐的。总的来说还是挺不错。

“观察”这个母题有点太大，所以感觉第一部分以后多样性有些收不住，但毕竟是edited volume有点松散不足为奇。个人最喜欢直面“观察”、“客观性”等问题的章节，如第九章Canales、第十一章Porter和第十四章Wilder。第七章讲青蛙的材料颇有喜感哈哈。

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书评

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