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## PROJECT

### Causes, Hypotheses, and Empirical Checks: Working Philosophies of Science in the German Lands Around 1800

My project will illuminate a neglected period in the history of philosophy of science, the period between Newton's death and the 1830s. It has long been assumed that these decades were the "Dark Ages" of philosophy of science and that modern philosophy of science emerged only in the second third of the 19th century. Focusing on the German lands, I show that this assumption is incorrect. In fact, throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries, scientific practitioners and philosopher-educators intensely discussed the particulars of scientific inquiry, the active search for causes, hypotheses and hypothesis testing, and uncertain experimental outcomes. It appears that the "economic" sciences – those fields of inquiry concerning human health and prosperity – were significant triggers for these "working philosophies." They presented problems that were both urgent and intricate, such as finding the causes of food spoilage or suspicious deaths; correctly analyzing rare chemical composites; or reliably testing the quality of olive oil and wine. Economic sciences also provided conceptual, methodological, and practical resources to address those problems. My book traces working philosophies in experimental reports and also in numerous treatises on "applied logic" authored by lesser-known philosopher-educators. The book will spell out how incorporating working philosophies transforms the historiography of philosophy of science.

#### Recommended Reading

Schickore, Jutta. *About Method: Experimenters, Snake Venom, and the History of Writing Scientifically*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

–. "'Dare Explanations' (Wagerklärungen): Hypothetical Thinking in Late Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century German Philosophy of Science." *HOPOS* 13, no. 2 (2023): 387–412. <https://doi.org/10.1086/726182>.

–. "Introduction: Practices, Strategies, and Methodologies of Experimental Control in Historical Perspective." In *Elusive Phenomena, Unwieldy Things: Historical Perspectives on Experimental Control*, edited by Jutta Schickore and William R. Newman, 1–19. Cham: Springer, 2024. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-52954-2\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-52954-2_1).