In order to reconcile modern science’s claim to be universal and European at the same time, historians of science have essential had recourse to one of two strategies, the Needhamian one to assume a continuity between non-western knowledge traditions and modern science, or the more widely spread diffusionist one. At the same time, recent research in science studies has brought to the fore the immense difficulties involved in making scientific objects travel any distance. Based on case studies of early modern scientific practices, this talk will try and bring to light the crucial role of circulation in the making and reconfiguration of scientific knowledge.

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