

Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science, 2026 (20): 1-10
ISSN 2526-2270
Belo Horizonte – MG / Brazil
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Commemorative Issue:

***Transversal* at Ten – Historical and Historiographical Reflections from Within**

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Abstract: This commemorative contribution reflects on the intellectual trajectory and historiographical significance of *Transversal* since its foundation in 2016. Written from the perspective of a longstanding collaborator, Editorial Board member, Associate Editor, author, and Guest Editor, it situates the journal within a broader international effort to consolidate a serious and interdisciplinary space for the history and philosophy of science. Particular attention is given to the journal's formative moments, its thematic dossiers, and its contribution to contemporary historiographical debate, especially through the interplay of conceptual reconstruction, epistemological reflection, textual analysis, and historical contextualisation in the history of the mathematical and physical sciences.

Keywords: *Transversal*; Condé; Agassi; Pisano; History and Historiography of science

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24117/2526-2270.2026.i20.02>



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Opening Remarks

Raffaele Pisano: It is a particular honour to contribute to this commemorative issue of *Transversal*. My association with the journal reaches back to its earliest phase and is bound up both with my longstanding intellectual exchange and personal friendship with Mauro Condé, the true driving force behind this remarkable achievement, and with my sustained involvement in the journal's scholarly life over the years. From the outset, I have had the privilege of contributing to its intellectual construction, accompanying its development, and helping to sustain its broader academic ambitions. My place in this story has been both editorial and scholarly, through my work as a member of the Editorial Board and as an Associate Editor, and through my own contributions as an author, Guest Editor, and participant in one of the journal's first and most intellectually significant moments: the interview with Joseph Agassi published in the inaugural issue of *Transversal*. That contribution carried particular meaning for me, given my longstanding scholarly relationship with Agassi, including our collaboration on the co-edited Springer volume, *Hypotheses and Perspectives in the History and Philosophy of Science: Homage to Alexandre Koyré 1892–1964*. (Pisano 2018; Agassi 2018; Condé 2018; Pisano and Bussotti 2018). I therefore write from within a

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shared intellectual enterprise whose formation, growth, and consolidation I have had the privilege of helping to shape from the beginning. That position naturally lends these reflections a particular tone. They are offered both as an anniversary contribution and as a considered historiographical assessment of a field to which *Transversal* has contributed in a serious and distinctive manner. Over the years, the journal has established itself as an international forum for the historiography of science understood in a broad and demanding sense, bringing into sustained conversation the history of science, the philosophy of science, and related disciplines. Its continuity since 2016, its semiannual rhythm, its thematic dossiers, its open-access model, its double-blind review procedures for articles and dossier contributions, and its presence in major indexing and abstracting services have all contributed to the formation of a recognisable and respected intellectual space within the wider community of historians and philosophers of science. These reflections are also informed by a line of research to which I have long sought to contribute: the history and historiography of the mathematical and physical sciences, approached through the interplay of conceptual reconstruction, epistemological reflection, textual analysis, and historical contextualisation. In that respect, both my broader scholarly work and my contributions to *Transversal* have been guided by a common concern with the conditions under which scientific knowledge in mathematics and physics is formed, transmitted, interpreted, and historically understood.

Transversal: Considering the past ten years – the period of *Transversal*'s activity – how do you assess the main shifts in the historiography related to the theme of the dossier you organised for the journal? Which theoretical, methodological, or problem-oriented developments in your field do you find most significant?

Raffaele Pisano: Over the past decade, one of the most significant developments in the historiography of science has been the consolidation of approaches capable of holding together dimensions that earlier scholarship often handled in relative separation. The field has become more assured in treating scientific knowledge at once as conceptual construction, historical practice, material activity, textual production, pedagogical transmission, and institutional formation. This seems to me one of the most important maturations of recent historiography. It reflects a stronger awareness that scientific knowledge acquires historical density through a plurality of operations: reasoning, calculating, experimenting, modelling, teaching, translating, diagramming, and circulating. The most stimulating scholarship of recent years has therefore shown a far greater readiness to reconstruct science in its full intellectual articulation and in its full historical texture.

Within this broader development, conceptual and epistemological analysis has regained a particularly fruitful centrality. Historiography has become more capable of treating scientific concepts, methods, and argumentative forms as genuinely historical objects rather than as abstractions hovering above time and practice. This shift matters a great deal. Scientific ideas do not simply reside in texts awaiting extraction; they are produced, stabilised, transformed, and transmitted through historically situated practices. Their intelligibility depends both on contextual reconstruction and on conceptual precision. Recent historiography has advanced most convincingly where it has shown that these two requirements belong together. Historical depth gains clarity when the problems at stake are reconstructed with exactitude, and conceptual reconstruction gains substance when it is anchored in linguistic, institutional, pedagogical, and practical conditions.

Equally important has been the increased attention devoted to circulation, mediation, and transformation. Scientific knowledge is now more often studied as something that moves across languages, institutions, pedagogical settings, and disciplinary formations through processes of translation and re-elaboration. This has enriched the field by showing that ideas are reshaped in motion. Their meanings are recast as they enter new intellectual environments, new curricular frameworks, and new cultural horizons. Such work has opened particularly promising lines of inquiry for scholars interested in the history of concepts, in the formation of educational structures, and in the transnational lives of scientific traditions.

A further development, especially close to my own concerns, lies in the growing historiographical seriousness accorded to education and pedagogy. It has become increasingly clear that the teaching of science belongs fully within the history of science itself. Lecture courses, textbooks, notebooks, examinations, diagrams, demonstration practices, and explanatory routines are now more widely recognised as constitutive elements in the life of knowledge. Through them, science is ordered, codified, normalised, and rendered reproducible; through them, scientific communities shape habits of reasoning and standards of intelligibility. This development is of fundamental importance because it restores to historiography one of the principal settings in which scientific culture acquires both continuity and authority.

The field has also benefited from a more sustained engagement with visual, material, and representational practices. Historians of science have become more attentive to instruments, images, models, tables, graphs, and technical devices as active components in the formation of knowledge. This has broadened the archive in valuable ways and has helped recover dimensions of scientific activity that cannot be reduced to verbal formulation alone. The strongest work in this area, however, has been that which has combined this welcome enlargement of sources with analytical discipline, reconstructing the precise scientific, epistemological, and pedagogical problems with which historical actors were engaged.

More broadly, the last decade has seen a strengthening of historiography as a field capable of joining plurality to rigour. Such plurality includes geographical, linguistic, disciplinary, and methodological plurality. It includes greater sensitivity to multilingual traditions, to circulation beyond canonical centres, to neglected corpora, and to the interplay between scientific knowledge and educational or institutional forms. At its best, recent historiography has become both broader and sharper. It has widened its archive while refining its questions, and extended its horizons while deepening its sense of intellectual exactitude. In this respect, *Transversal* has itself formed part of the story. By defining historiography of science in a broad sense and by publishing dossiers, articles, reviews, and interviews across those intersecting terrains, the journal has both reflected and encouraged this wider and more exacting scholarly horizon.

Transversal: In this same way, to what extent does the dossier you organised situate itself within this historiographical field and seek to intervene in it? What specific contributions—whether in terms of approach, objects of analysis, or analytical frameworks—would you highlight?

Raffaele Pisano: The dossier I organised was conceived as a direct intervention within these historiographical developments, especially with regard to the relations between



the history of science, the philosophy of science, and scientific education. Its central ambition was to contribute to a more articulated understanding of scientific knowledge as a historically situated mode of rationality, formed through conceptual work and through practices of transmission, teaching, representation, and cognitive organisation. In that sense, the dossier participated fully in the wider movement towards a more integrated and methodologically self-aware historiography. Its place within *Transversal* was also particularly fitting, since the journal's editorial mission has consistently encouraged work attentive alike to historical, theoretical, conceptual, and methodological questions.

This orientation also reflected a line of research that has long stood at the centre of my own work: the history and historiography of the mathematical and physical sciences. More precisely, I have sought to examine the ways in which conceptual structures in mechanics, physics, and related domains are historically constituted, epistemologically framed, and pedagogically transmitted. The dossier therefore emerged from a sustained scholarly concern with the historical formation of scientific rationality in fields where the relations between mathematics, physics, method, and teaching are especially intricate and historically revealing. In that respect, it formed part of a broader intellectual trajectory visible both in my work for *Transversal* and in my longstanding scholarly collaboration with Joseph Agassi, whose presence in the inaugural issue, in an interview conducted by Mauro Condé, Michael Segre, and myself, gave early expression to the level of historiographical seriousness and ambition that the journal was prepared to sustain from the beginning (Condé, Pisano and Segre 2016).

One of the dossier's main contributions lay in the way it foregrounded the historical importance of method. Method is frequently invoked in broad terms, whereas its historical specificity is far less often explored with sufficient care. The dossier sought to address this issue more directly. Scientific methods are historically elaborated ways of constructing problems, arranging evidence, regulating explanation, establishing legitimacy, and forming judgement. By placing method closer to the centre of analysis, the dossier argued that scientific rationality should be reconstructed through the forms of reasoning and mediation that make scientific results possible, rather than through results alone.

Its contribution also resided in the treatment of educational and cognitive structures as constitutive dimensions of scientific life. Scientific knowledge becomes durable because it can be taught, learned, reformulated, and transmitted. It acquires continuity through institutions of learning, through forms of didactic simplification, through diagrams and explanatory models, through exercises and curricular routines, and through repeated acts of interpretation. By taking these mediating structures seriously, the dossier sought to enlarge historiography in a principled way. It did so by identifying science with the formation of habits of thought, the organisation of intelligibility, and the shaping of trained reasoning, alongside discovery and innovation.

The dossier's interdisciplinarity was equally important. It was designed to place historians of science, philosophers of science, and scholars of science education in substantive dialogue. This dialogue was conceived in a spirit of intellectual exactitude. The history of science contributes archival depth, contextual precision, and sensitivity to temporal change; the philosophy of science contributes conceptual clarity and analytic rigour; science education contributes insight into pedagogical structures,

cognitive mediation, and the practical formation of knowledge. The dossier sought to bring these strengths into contact in ways that could enrich each domain while preserving their disciplinary seriousness.

Its objects of analysis were chosen in the same spirit. It gave sustained attention to conceptual structures, explanatory procedures, cognitive models, and pedagogical forms as historical objects worthy of analysis in their own right. Such objects are sometimes treated as secondary or derivative, whereas the dossier insisted on their centrality. They reveal how science becomes thinkable, teachable, and coherent within a disciplinary tradition. In that respect, the dossier aimed to widen the historiographical field with discrimination, selecting objects that illuminate the architecture of scientific reasoning rather than merely multiplying topics.

Its most enduring intervention perhaps lies in its defence of a view of knowledge in which conceptual content, historical context, and pedagogical transmission are understood as inseparable dimensions of a single intellectual process. It proposed that a serious historiography of science should address both the structure of knowledge and the historical means by which that structure is formed, stabilised, taught, and transformed. That mode of inquiry seems to me especially consonant with the contribution of *Transversal* over the years. Through the continuity of its dossiers and the breadth of its editorial programme, the journal has helped give visibility and legitimacy to precisely such work within the wider community of historians and philosophers of science.

Transversal: From the standpoint of our field of historiographical studies of science, which gaps, tensions, or problems still require further development? Are there themes, authors, intellectual traditions, or theoretical approaches that, in your view, remain underexplored or in need of critical reassessment?

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Raffaele Pisano: The field has undoubtedly become richer, more nuanced, and more methodologically alert over the past decade, yet several areas still call for deeper development and more sustained reflection. One of the most important, in my judgement, concerns the place of scientific and technical content within historiography. Recent scholarship has greatly expanded our understanding of institutions, circulation, material culture, visibility, colonial contexts, and social formations. These developments have brought considerable vitality to the field. The strongest future work will be that which combines this widened historiographical horizon with renewed precision in reconstructing scientific concepts, formal structures, technical arguments, and disciplinary problematics. Such work is especially necessary in fields such as mechanics, thermodynamics, engineering, astronomy, mathematical physics, and related domains, where scientific content itself forms an indispensable part of historical explanation.

A further area that calls for much fuller development is the historiography of scientific education. Much remains to be done if we are to understand fully how scientific cultures are reproduced through teaching, training, and institutional transmission. Textbooks, curricula, lecture notes, examinations, diagrams, practical exercises, and didactic models offer an extraordinarily rich terrain for inquiry. They provide access both to the diffusion of knowledge and to its reorganisation, normalisation, and pedagogical shaping. They also reveal how scientific reasoning becomes socially and intellectually sustainable across generations. Education thus stands as one of the



central historical sites of scientific life, and its fuller integration into historiography remains one of the most promising tasks ahead.

Our field's relation to its own historiographical traditions also deserves further work. The history of science possesses a powerful and diverse intellectual inheritance, including figures such as Pierre Duhem, Alexandre Koyré, Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem, Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, and others whose work continues to resonate in contemporary debates. The greatest benefit now lies in modes of critical reassessment that engage these traditions as sources of still-living questions. Such reassessment can illuminate what remains fertile in them, what requires refinement, and what may be reconsidered in light of more recent concerns. Historiographical maturity depends upon this capacity to inherit, rework, and deepen one's intellectual past.

The multilingual character of scholarship is another area where further development would be especially welcome. The historiography of science has become more international in visible ways, yet many of its operative debates still move within relatively narrow linguistic circuits. A more genuinely multilingual historiography would offer a richer intellectual landscape and a more exact appreciation of the categories through which scientific knowledge has historically been studied. French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and other traditions have developed distinct conceptual resources, historiographical sensibilities, and methodological vocabularies. Their fuller integration into wider debate would strengthen interpretation by making available a broader range of questions and perspectives. In this respect, journals that have cultivated an explicitly international profile and a broad historiographical remit have had an important role in shaping better habits of exchange. The composition of *Transversal's* editorial structures, spanning scholars and institutions across Europe, Latin America, and beyond, has itself contributed to this wider horizon.

I should also stress the importance of further work on the historical study of reasoning. By this I mean the ways in which scientific actors learned to define legitimate problems, frame demonstrations, calibrate evidence, and cultivate standards of judgement within specific intellectual settings. Such inquiry offers a particularly fertile meeting point for historical epistemology, the history of practices, and the history of education. It enables us to understand scientific rationality as historically situated, culturally formed, and pedagogically mediated. This line of work seems especially promising because it brings into focus the concrete operations through which knowledge becomes both intellectually credible and historically transmissible.

A final point concerns the balance between breadth and precision in contemporary historiography. The widening of historical objects has been one of the great achievements of recent scholarship. The next step lies in consolidating that breadth through renewed commitment to conceptual sharpness and documentary care. The future of the field will benefit most from work that combines an enlarged sense of context with disciplined reconstruction of the specific scientific and historiographical problems at issue. The task ahead is therefore less a matter of choosing among approaches than of articulating them more rigorously and more productively.

Transversal: Finally, and in partial continuity with the previous question, how do you envision the future developments of your field of study? Which research agendas seem particularly promising to you?



Raffaele Pisano: I view the future of the field with considerable confidence, above all because the historiography of science now possesses both a wider archive and a more refined methodological consciousness than at many earlier stages of its development. The most promising research agendas, in my view, will be those that unite archival depth, conceptual rigour, linguistic competence, and historiographical self-awareness. The future belongs to work that moves confidently across texts, ideas, practices, institutions, and traditions while preserving the precision proper to each level of analysis.

One especially fertile line of inquiry concerns multilingual and transnational scientific trajectories. Scientific concepts do not simply pass across borders; they are reshaped in motion. Their meanings are reformulated as they enter new linguistic settings, pedagogical structures, institutional frameworks, and disciplinary cultures. Future scholarship will gain much by reconstructing these processes with greater precision. Such work can illuminate the historical life of concepts in their translations, transformations, and recontextualisations. It can also deepen our understanding of science as an intellectual activity whose development has always been bound up with linguistic plurality and cultural movement.

A further agenda lies in the deeper integration of conceptual analysis with documentary and material history. Manuscripts, printed works, correspondence, visual schemes, instruments, laboratory practices, and institutional archives all belong to the same historical field, even when they demand different kinds of expertise. The most fruitful historiography will be that which can read across these materials with discipline and coherence, showing how scientific reasoning, material practices, and historical conditions illuminate one another. Such an approach promises a particularly rich future because it strengthens the field both analytically and archivally.

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I attach particular importance to the history of scientific education in its fullest sense. This includes the teaching of disciplines, the pedagogical codification of methods, the explanatory devices by which concepts are made intelligible, and the institutional mechanisms through which scientific authority is reproduced. Here future research can make decisive contributions to our understanding of how science defines itself over time. By examining educational forms closely, historians can recover the processes through which scientific communities shape both what is known and how knowing itself is trained, regulated, and transmitted. This field seems poised to become one of the most dynamic areas of historiographical development.

Historical epistemology also retains, in my view, a central place in the future of the field, provided it remains closely anchored in sources and in historical practice. It offers a particularly powerful framework for asking under what conditions forms of knowledge become possible, credible, and transmissible. It enables historians to analyse scientific rationality while preserving its relation to time, institutions, language, and practice. Properly pursued, it can deepen our understanding both of scientific concepts and of the changing standards by which scientific communities define valid knowledge.

Digital methods will also have an important role to play, especially in the management of large corpora, in textual comparison, in tracing conceptual recurrences, and in mapping networks and circulations. Their contribution is likely to be most valuable



where they are combined with the traditional strengths of historical scholarship: philological care, contextual judgement, conceptual reconstruction, and critical interpretation. In that sense, digital work appears as an extension of the historian's craft. Its future importance lies in the support it offers to disciplined scholarship.

More broadly, the future of the field seems especially promising, where it can bring together plurality and exactitude. The historiography of science is now well placed to become at once more international, more conceptually ambitious, and more attentive to the diversity of scientific cultures and languages. Its next phase will be strongest where it preserves intellectual discipline while extending its reach, where it cultivates methodological openness while maintaining analytic rigour, and where it treats science both as a historically situated practice and as a field of ideas demanding precise reconstruction.

Seen from this perspective, *Transversal* has played an important part in shaping precisely such a horizon. Over the years, it has offered a stable, semiannual, open-access, peer-reviewed venue with a broad editorial remit; it has developed an international editorial structure; it has sustained a continuous sequence of thematic issues since 2016; and it has gained visibility through indexing services such as IsisCB, DOAJ, PhilPapers, and Latinindex. These are concrete achievements as well as editorial ones. They indicate that the journal has acquired both intellectual and institutional standing within the wider historiographical community.

To have participated in that history from its earliest phase, both through editorial work and through my own publications, remains for me a source of genuine satisfaction. It also sharpens the sense in which this anniversary belongs both to commemoration and to continuation: a continuation of serious historiographical work, of exacting intellectual dialogue, and of the broader scholarly aspirations that have helped define the journal from the beginning.

Concluding Remarks

Raffaele Pisano: To reflect upon the first decade of *Transversal* is, in an important sense, to reflect upon the consolidation of a serious historiographical space: one in which the history of science, the philosophy of science, and cognate forms of inquiry have been brought into sustained and fruitful relation. Over these years, the journal has helped to show that historiography of science flourishes most fully where breadth of intellectual horizon is joined to precision of method, and where scholarly ambition is sustained by editorial seriousness. That achievement deserves to be acknowledged with both gratitude and clarity.

For my own part, this anniversary carries a particular resonance. My relationship with *Transversal* has been bound up, from the outset, with its formative trajectory: through intellectual exchange, through editorial commitment, and through scholarly contribution. It has therefore been especially meaningful to revisit, in these pages, some of the historiographical developments that have marked the field during the same period. What emerges most clearly, I think, is the strengthening of a mode of inquiry able to hold together conceptual reconstruction, historical contextualisation, pedagogical mediation, and methodological reflection. The future of the field will depend in no small measure upon our capacity to preserve precisely that demanding equilibrium. In this respect, *Transversal* has offered more than a venue for publication.



It has helped shape an intellectual community. It has given visibility to problems, methods, authors, and traditions that require patient analysis rather than fashionable simplification. It has sustained a form of scholarly conversation in which the sciences are approached both as historically situated practices and as domains of concepts, arguments, and rationalities requiring exact reconstruction. Such an undertaking is neither minor nor incidental. It belongs to the very conditions under which the historiography of science may continue to develop as a mature and internationally significant field.

There is, moreover, something especially fitting in marking this anniversary through reflection rather than through celebration alone. A journal such as *Transversal* is best honoured by continuing the work it has made possible: the work of reading more carefully, thinking more historically, arguing more precisely, and engaging more generously across disciplinary and linguistic boundaries. That has been one of its distinctive strengths from the beginning, and it is also one of the reasons why its contribution has carried genuine weight within the wider scholarly community.

It is especially fitting, in this connection, to recall that one of the journal's earliest and most intellectually distinctive gestures was the interview with Joseph Agassi in its inaugural issue, a contribution in which I had the privilege to take part and which also resonated with a longstanding scholarly collaboration that culminated, among other things, in our co-edited volume on Alexandre Koyré.

It therefore seems to me that this tenth anniversary should be understood both as a moment of recognition and as a point of renewed commitment. Recognition, because *Transversal* has earned a respected place within the broader community of historians and philosophers of science. Renewed commitment, because the questions that animate the field remain as vital as ever. In bringing these remarks to a close, I should like to add a final word of personal and academic appreciation to Mauro Condé. His intellectual generosity, editorial dedication, and remarkable capacity to sustain a demanding scholarly project over time have been central to the making of *Transversal*. Under his guidance, the journal has acquired continuity, distinction, and an intellectual profile of genuine international standing. To him, therefore, go my warmest congratulations and my sincere collegial thanks.

Transversal: Thank you very much for the interview and, above all, for your valuable contribution to the history of the journal *Transversal*.

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