

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-40386-3 - Nationalism and internationalism in science, 1880–1939: Four studies of the Nobel population

Elisabeth Crawford

Frontmatter

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Elisabeth Crawford's new study departs from the commonly held notion that universalism and internationalism are inherent features of science. Showing how the rise of scientific organizations around the turn of the century centered on national scientific enterprises, Crawford argues that scientific activities of the late nineteenth century were an integral part of the emergence of the nation-state in Europe. Internationalism in science, both theoretical and practical, began to hold sway over scientists only when economic relations and transportation and communication facilities began to cross national boundaries.

The founding of the Nobel prize in 1901 confirmed the internationalization of science. The workings of the Nobel institution rested on an international community of scientists who forwarded candidates for the prizes. Along with the candidates and eventual prizewinners, they constituted the Nobel population, which, in the fields of chemistry and physics between 1901 and 1939, numbered more than a thousand scientists of greater and lesser renown from 25 countries.

Crawford uses the Nobel population for prosopographic studies that shed new light on national and international science between 1901 and 1939. Her four studies examine critically the following problems: the upsurge of nationalism among scientists of warring nations during and after World War I and its consequences for internationalism in science, the existence of a scientific center and periphery in Central Europe, the effective use of the Nobel prizes in an organization whose primary purpose was to further national science, and the elite conception of science in the United States and its role in the success of the national scientific enterprise. Two introductory chapters provide necessary background by discussing research methodology, and national and international science between 1880 and 1914.

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