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978-0-521-52485-8 - Transformation and Tradition in the Sciences: Essays in Honour of I. Bernard Cohen

Edited by Everett Mendelsohn

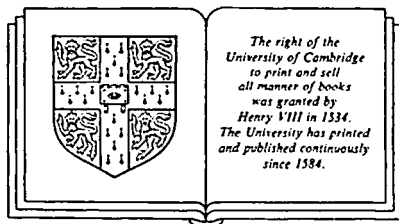
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TRANSFORMATION AND TRADITION IN THE SCIENCES

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF
I. BERNARD COHEN

Edited by
EVERETT MENDELSON



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This book is dedicated to
Frances Davis Cohen (1908–1982)
whose spirit was so important
to the career of her husband
I. Bernard Cohen

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Preface

These essays have been written and published to honor the career of I. Bernard Cohen. Although his activities in the history of science have touched the work of scholars in many parts of the world, this festschrift represents the efforts of those of us who have been Bernard Cohen's students and teaching colleagues in the Department of the History of Science at Harvard University.

The practice of presenting a festschrift to a senior colleague at an important career or life turning point seems to us a particularly appropriate way to express personal thanks for shared experiences through the activities that scholars most value, that is, research and production of the written word. A festschrift allows us not only to honor the intended individual but also to share more broadly the fruits of scholarly labors with the learned community. It reflects in a fundamental way the very role of the teacher and researcher who is being celebrated. The appearance of this volume should be a source of pride to Bernard Cohen ("I. B." as he is known to so many in the field) because it shows the degree to which his example has been successfully emulated by those whom he has trained and influenced.

The diversity of interests displayed in these essays aptly reflects the breadth of Bernard Cohen's interests; it also demonstrates the variety of directions and approaches currently taken in the history of science. Indeed, these productions can serve as an anthology of recent scholarship in the field.

The decision to create this volume was taken by the Department of the History of Science at Harvard, and invitations to submit contributions were sent to former students of Bernard Cohen and to past and present teaching colleagues. Many current members of the department read and commented on the papers as they were received and revised, and their help is gratefully acknowledged. The final responsibility, however, rests with the editor. As often happens in an enterprise involving so many individuals there have been false starts and difficult delays. All of these essays were written expressly for this festschrift, and the patience and understanding of the authors whose papers faced delayed publication deserve explicit recognition. Several contributions were published elsewhere before this volume actually appeared, and we appreciatively acknowledge permission to include them here.

Alongside the intellectual production involved in publishing a book there are

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the critically important technical tasks. The administrative and secretarial staff of the department willingly shared the numerous jobs of corresponding with authors, retyping manuscripts, and otherwise helping to prepare the volume for publication. Betsy A. C. Smith, whose tenure as the department's administrative assistant spans the full history of the department in its modern form, deserves special appreciation for her continued interest and encouragement, not only of the editor but, of equal importance, of many of the authors as well. Ruth Bartholomew, who has worked closely in the department with the editor on many tasks over the years, was particularly important in overseeing many of the technical details and keeping up the flow of correspondence. Valerie Lester, who was able to stay with the department only one year before leaving for Washington, was very helpful in the final stages of manuscript preparation.

It seems completely appropriate that Cambridge University Press, which has been so deeply involved in publishing much of Bernard Cohen's important Newtonian scholarship, should publish this festschrift. Richard Ziemacki, science editor for the Press in New York, immediately perceived the project's value and gave full encouragement through all its stages. The manuscript editor, Mary Byers, deserves our full gratitude for the careful and thoughtful manner in which she attended to the many details of manuscript preparation.

But finally it is to Bernard Cohen that we owe our fullest gratitude. His role in the department and in the discipline as a whole has made this volume possible. And as editor, I have special reason to thank him as my teacher, colleague, and friend for these many years.

Everett Mendelsohn

Berlin, 1984