

Seminar SAW : Mathematical practices in the context of the Astral Sciences

Abstract :

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Mathematical approaches to the gnomon in ancient China

The gnomon is an instrument that occurs both in some extant mathematical texts from early China and texts related to astral sciences. What can this link tell us about the gnomon and also about the mathematical writings mentioning it and providing procedures to use it. Which mathematical procedures were brought into play to use the gnomon in these various contexts? Which mathematical objects are intimately related to the instrument and its use? Which similarities and differences can we observe between the different writings mentioning the gnomon. These are the issues that the talk will address.