

SAW Seminar: History of Science, History of Text

May 22, 2014

Agathe Keller (ERC Project SAW & SPHERE, CNRS)

Mathematical and textual practices in Sanskrit mathematical commentaries, 7th-10th century

Abstract: This presentation will be an informal survey of the different perspectives by which Sanskrit mathematical commentaries can be approached with the aim of understanding and describing the mathematical practices (including textual practices) of both the commentator and the treatise it glosses. Such perspectives range from understanding how a working surface-- on which diagrams are drawn or numbers written -- is represented in the text of commentaries and interacts with the text itself; to using speech act theory to recover how both the treatise and commentary not only execute an algorithm but also how they understand it; studying modalities of justification and grounding of algorithms in such corpuses; and reflecting on what such studies tell us of the conceptions of what a mathematical text should be.