

SAW Seminar: Mathematical practices in the context of the astral sciences

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The tree of jyotiṣa and its branches. Ritual and therapeutic uses of astral sciences in contemporary India

Abstract: This talk will aim at exploring how far astral sciences (*jyotiḥśāstra*) can be said to be “astral”. In doing this, I will first show that *jyotiḥśāstra* is an epistemologically heteroclitic scholarly tradition that includes different kinds of knowledge, more or less related to astral bodies and to mathematical sciences. Secondly, I will show that even when dealing with astral bodies, astral sciences deal with much complex entities such as *graha*, that are not only planets, but also Hindu gods and demons. Thirdly, on the basis of the fieldwork I conducted among astrologers in Banaras, I will discuss the practical uses of astral sciences in Hindu daily life and focus on the relationship between astrology, medicine and ritual.