

Seminar SAW
History of Science, History of Text, 2011-2016

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Genres of writing in the history of ancient science

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Listing biographies in histories of mathematics of the Indian subcontinent

Abstract – The first published text devoted to the history of mathematics in the Indian subcontinent authored by an Indian scholar, was a list of biographies of important Indian mathematicians and astronomers. I would like here to look at the kind of text S. Dvivedin's (1855-1910/11) sanskrit Gaṇakatarāṅgiṇī (River of mathematicians; 1892) produces, reflecting both on its models and its posterity in later histories of mathematics written in the Indian subcontinent. What is the structure of such a biography? What are the historical tropes associated to it? are among the questions that will be raised.