

## Seminar SAW Rethinking Practices and Cultures in the History of Science

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*Makers, Readers, and Translators of Mathematical Diagrams*

**Abstract** - In general, classical philology is a discipline that studies transcribed texts. Philologists compare various readings of transcribed texts in order to reconstruct the archetypal text. Besides the text, diagrams are drawn in geometrical treatises. Shared diagrammatic errors found across manuscripts reveal that diagrams were also transcribed. Considering the plethora of studies on the scribal practices of copyists, it is surprising that diagrams are rarely studied in a similar manner as transcribed objects. The makers, readers, and translators who partake in the transmission of diagrams are shrouded in obscurity.

My talk will present preliminary research analyzing the practices of transcribing diagrams. In particular, my research investigates manuscript diagrams in Euclid's Elements, and discusses the features of the transcribed diagrams. Based on the analysis of the transcribed diagrams, several questions will be discussed: Who copies the diagrams; who has access to them; who reads and uses them; who translates them? How are the transcription, transmission, and dissemination of diagrams done? Can we find a common rule between the textual transcription and diagrammatic transcription? Through these questions, this talk aims at exploring the complex transmission of visual knowledge.