

SEMINAR REPORT

CNRS-NYU WORKSHOP ON EARLY MATHEMATICS: A REPORT*

A two-day workshop on the history of mathematics was held in New York City on November 24-25, 2008. It marked the formal beginning of a collaboration between Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, France) and New York University (NYU) that started in June 2008 with the creation of the Center for International Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (CIRHUS). It was organized by Karine Chemla (CNRS) and Alexander Jones (NYU).

The purpose of CIRHUS is to support a joint research program between NYU's Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW) and CNRS's research group Recherches Epistemologiques et Historiques sur les Sciences Exactes et les Institutions Scientifiques (REHSEIS). The collaboration between the two institutions focuses on a multidisciplinary approach to significant issues in the social and human sciences, such as the diversity of systems of thought and knowledge in different places and at different times. The particular focus of the workshop was the hypothesis that it is necessary to place mathematical developments in the proper context of distinct social groups in order to fully understand the variety of mathematical practices of the past.

The focus of CIRHUS was amply reflected in the presentations and subsequent discussions at the workshop. In addition to leading scholars from CNRS and NYU, a number of scholars from other institutions gave talks at the workshop as well. The result were broad and encompassing with presentations ranging in time from ancient Mesopotamia to twentieth-century India and spanning the civilizations of Mesopotamia, China, and India.

The workshop speakers and the titles of their talks were as follows:

1. Christine Proust (REHSEIS, CNRS): Structure of Series Texts — A New Approach of Cuneiform Mathematical Corpus

*by **Toke L. Knudsen**, State University of New York, College of Oneonta

2. John Steele (Brown University): Shadows in Babylonian Astronomy
3. Agathe Keller (REHSEIS, CNRS): Reflecting on the Different Social Groups that Produced Mathematical Knowledge and Texts in Ancient India: Different Research Perspectives, with a special emphasis on the History of Versified Problems and the perspectives
4. Toke Knudsen (State University of New York, College at Oneonta): The Direction of Down and Adhesive Antipodeans — Tradition and Innovation in Medieval Indian Astronomy
5. Michio Yano (Kyoto Sangyo University): Buddhist Astronomy and Astrology
6. Karine Chemla (REHSEIS, CNRS): Writing Down Texts for Algorithms: Views from Ancient China
7. Markus Asper (NYU): Narratives in Greek Mathematics?
8. Joseph Dauben (City University of New York): Archimedes and Liu Hui on Circles and Spheres
9. Alexander Jones (ISAW, NYU): Parapegma Puzzles: Reconstructing Greek Documents on Stellar Risings and Settings

In addition, many prominent historians of mathematics attended the workshop, and as a result, the discussions after each talk were long and fruitful. In fact, given the excellent organization of the workshop, the quality of the talks, and the enthusiasm of the following discussions, the collaboration between CNRS and NYU promises to be highly productive and valuable.

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**THE 69TH SESSION OF THE INDIAN HISTORY CONGRESS
— KANNUR 28-30 DECEMBER 2008: A REPORT***

The 69th annual session of Indian History Congress (IHC) was held at the Kannur University, Kannur (Kerala) during 28-30 December 2008. About 600 research papers were presented on various facets of history of science and technology. A special panel session organized by Aligarh Historian Society on

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