

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

October 17, 2014

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Instructions for drawing on the ground in some Sanskrit sources

Abstract: There are hardly any diagrams preserved in Sanskrit astronomical manuscripts, but the texts tell us that it was a common practice to draw diagrams on the ground. For example: traces of gnomon shadows and auxiliary lines added to them for calculation; the positions of the sun, moon and earth (or its shadow) in an eclipse; orbits of planets and epicycles. I shall look into their roles in education, observation, and presumably, geometrical reasoning.