

The 2015 History of Science Society Annual Meeting

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Historiography of Cultural Diversity in the History of Science Victorian Room

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Reclaiming diversity: the paradoxes of « Vedic Mathematics »

Abstract - Bhāratī Kṛṣṇa Tīrthajī's "Vedic Mathematics" has come to the public eye fifteen years ago through highly polemical attempts in India (and the United States) to have it taught in primary schools. Against a curriculum perceived as simultaneously boring and western, the proponents of Vedic mathematics insist that its algorithms are not only « fun » but deeply different: holy, ancient, originating from the Indian subcontinent. In this communication we will trace the history of the book, its emergence in a religious and politicized context, and its popularization in the wider landscape of non-academic discourses on the history of science.