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History of Science, History of Text, 2011-2016

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**Working on ancient mathematical sources:
Textual environment and historiographic operations**

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On the Rediscovery of the Jade Mirror of the Four Origins, and its Interpretations by Luo Shilin and Shen Qinpei

Abstract – The *Jade Mirror of the Four Origins* (*Siyuan yujian* 四元玉鑑, hereafter *SYYJ*), which was completed by Zhu Shijie in 1303 and rediscovered in 1800s, is a mathematical monograph about the system of simultaneous equations of multi-unknowns (up to four). However, this treatise represents a form of “problem-answer-solution”, and Zhu Shijie just wrote a very concise solution for each problem. After its rediscovery, scholars made efforts to recover Zhu Shijie’s original intention in the solutions and to interpret the reason for the establishment of the method (立法之由). This talk analyses Luo Shilin’s (羅士琳 1789-1853) *Detail Account* and two manuscripts of *Detail Account* with different commentaries by Shen Qinpei (沈欽裴 fl. 1820s), to examine the ways in which they interpret the *SYYJ*.