

Seminar SAW
**Exploring 19th and 20th centuries historiographies of mathematics in
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**Historiography of ancient mathematics and astral sciences
in India before its professionalization**

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Crossing Borders: Henry Thomas Colebrooke and his European readers

Abstract - This contribution will attempt to analyze the reception of the pioneering work by Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1837) on ancient Sanskrit mathematical sources, in nineteenth-century France and Germany.

Who read Colebrooke? And how? While pursuing which agendas? Did crossing borders change the way Colebrooke's scholarship was approached? Did it prompt new questions and inquiries? Did crossing boundaries between disciplines or scholarly practices change the prism through which Colebrooke's work was read?

By putting the emphasis on the complex dynamics of cultural transfers involved in that multifaceted reception, I will provide an overview of the various actors who played a significant part in this story and the distinctive contexts in which they happened to operate.

I will attempt to characterize the main differences – if any – between the French and German receptions of Colebrooke, by analyzing how philology and mathematics interacted in a specific way in Germany, in contrast to what occurred in France. However, as will be shown, questions and concerns nonetheless migrated from the French to the German context.