

Seminar SAW

Rethinking Practices and Cultures in the History of Science

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Mathematical Practices/ Mathematical cultures: perspectives from late medieval Europe

Abstract - During the last 2 years in the context of the SAW project I have explored through different cases studies the notions of mathematical practices and mathematical culture as methodological tools. These case studies include:

- a work on practice with coins in different contexts, in collaboration with Marc Bompaire (EPHE);
- a work on practice with numbers in astronomical and related mathematical treatises;
- a work on practice with diagrams and instruments, in collaboration with Sho Hirose (Saw project), Agathe Keller (SAW project) and Clemency Montelle (University of Canterbury, New Zealand);
- work on practice with numerical tables –in collaboration with Richard Kremer (Dartmouth College, USA).

On the basis of these research works I will focus on two specific questions: How is a set of practices framed and described as a mathematical culture? How to describe different relations and links between mathematical cultures? In this discussion I will pay attention to the type of corpus on which these case studies were built as well as to the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the elements and the diversity of practices found in these corpus.