

## Conference Shaping the sciences of the ancient world

Text criticism, Critical editions and Translations of ancient and medieval  
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### The impact of modern editions on the historiography of ancient scholarship

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*The Treatise of the Sun and Fitzedward Hall's Edition*

**Abstract** – One of the most widely known schools of Indian astronomical science in the medieval period, the school of the sun, or *saṛapakṣa*, has a history that is unusually conjectural, both textually and scientifically. A solar school is already described as one of five systems of astronomical thought in a doxography surviving from the sixth century, and there is reference there to a treatise of the sun, or *Sūryasiddhānta*. The school is usually taken, even in this first appearance, to be a composite of earlier systems, especially those of the fifth century astronomer, *Āryabhāta*. And yet the only manuscripts of a text with this title that survive are from a much later period, and describe a system of astronomy noticeably different in its cosmological models, time reckoning system, and parameters. It is usually hypothesized that an unknown author substantially reworked the *saṛapakṣa* and the *Sūryasiddhānta* around 800 C.E. The ‘modern’ work attracted many learned commentaries, and yet, through its treatment by later commentators, the text appears in so much variety that the ninth century text has so far escaped a secure reconstruction. This paper will examine two of the earliest published editions, the partial one by the Abbé Guérin in 1847, and the complete one by Fitzedward Hall and *Bāpu Deva Śāstrin*, in 1859. A good amount is known about all three of these figures and the context in which they worked. This paper will examine their work and their context, and will seek to consider what effect the process of editing for publication had on the historical understanding of the solar school of thought and its principal treatise. One might well wonder whether, in this case, the imaginary entities of school of thought and textual tradition, usually so helpful for the historical analysis of ancient scientific traditions, have created problems as much as they have solved them.