



SΦHERE

Laboratoire de Philosophie et d'Histoire des Sciences
UMR 7219



Séminaire histoire des sciences, histoire du texte

organisé par Karine Chemla et l'ensemble du groupe HSHT

Université Paris Diderot - bâtiment Condorcet - Salle 647A - 9h30 à 17h30

<https://sawerc.hypotheses.org/seminars/hsht-2019-2020>

18 juin 2020 – Topic: Diagrams—2

Alexei Volkov ((Institut d'Etudes Avancées Paris and National Tsing-Hua University, Taiwan)
Mathematical texts from Dunhuang: The problem of filiation

Abstract - In 1900, a large collection of old manuscripts was discovered in the Buddhist monastery in Dunhuang (Gansu Province, West China) in a cave sealed between 1006 and 1035. The majority of the manuscripts were copies of Buddhist scriptures, yet the collection also included numerous non-Buddhist texts related to traditional sciences, such as astronomy, astrology, medicine, divination, and mathematics. These mathematical manuscripts are representative samples of the texts used for mathematics instruction in China in the late first millennium AD.

In my presentation I will discuss the works devoted to the mathematical manuscripts authored by Chinese and Western authors, and offer analysis of several mathematical problems found in them. I will also attempt at restoring connections between these problems and those found in other Chinese mathematical texts of first and early second millennium AD.

Samuel Gessner (SYRTE, Observatoire de Paris, France)

Between astronomical diagrams and instruments: spatializing numerical data of astronomical tables

Abstract - Astronomers have connected their computational methods with geometrical representations in various ways. The ways these connections were elaborated on are not universal, but historically contingent of the local astronomical practice. Parchment instruments to graphically determine (approximate) positions of the planets, i.e. the family of planetary “equatoria” instruments, saw renewed developments in the 15th century. We will start with a European case study about a particular type of instrument that emerged in manuscripts from Erfurt and Leipzig termed “Theorice nouvelle”. In discussing this material the talk proposes to look into possible connections between the representation of computed data in tables and corresponding diagrammatic representations on the “Theorice nouvelle” and similar instruments. More generally, it raises the question of how the use of tables was preparing the minds for experimenting with new types of instruments and whether this trait can be used to characterise a specific astronomical practice.

Discussion sur le programme de l'an prochain
