



L A B O R A T O I R E S P H E R E , U M R 7 2 1 9

SÉMINAIRE 2021 – 2022
Du CENTRE POUR UNE HISTOIRE DE LA PHILOSOPHIE ET DES SCIENCES
VUE D'ASIE, D'AFRIQUE, ETC (CHPSAA)

Seminar Center for a History of Philosophy and Science seen from Asia, Africa, and so on
<http://www.sphere.univ-paris-diderot.fr/spip.php?article2617>

Ce séminaire est une des activités du « Centre pour l'Histoire de la Philosophie et des Sciences vue d'Asie, d'Afrique, etc »

Renseignements auprès de : [Nathalie Sage Pranchère](mailto:nathalie.sage.pranchere@orange.fr) (CNRS, SPHere), [nathalie.sage.pranchere \[at\] orange.fr](mailto:nathalie.sage.pranchere[at]orange.fr).

Pour participer à distance, le lien Zoom sera disponible en écrivant 48h à l'avance à N. Sage Pranchère

PROGRAMME

Nous nous réunissons les lundis ou vendredis de 14h30 à 16h30, à l'Université de Paris, soit bâtiment Condorcet, 4, rue Elsa Morante, soit bâtiment Olympe de Gouges, place Paul Ricœur, 75013 Paris (plan d'accès)

Lundi 15 novembre, 14:30 - 16:30,
bâtiment Condorcet, salle Kandinsky, 631B

Najaf HAIDER (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi)

Thinking with numbers : Quantification and mathematical practices in early modern South Asia

Vendredi 3 décembre, 14:00 - 16:00,
bâtiment Olympe de Gouges, salle 324, & hybride

Lecture de l'ouvrage de Pascal Boyer *Tradition as Truth and Communication, A cognitive description of traditional discourse* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Réflexion collective sur la tradition

Vendredi 10 décembre, 14:30 - 16:30,
bâtiment Condorcet, salle Malevitch, 483A

Hilde De WEERDT (Universiteit Leiden)

Regionalizing Infrastructures in Chinese History

Lundi 3 janvier 2022, 14:30-16:30,
bâtiment Condorcet, salle Mondrian, 646A

Karine CHEMLA (CNRS, SPHere)

Peoples and civilisations in the historiography of mathematics : A critical approach

The talk will analyze some of the problems underlying two chapters in the current historiographies of mathematics : the history of numbers and that of symbolism. The common historical approach to these two mathematical entities tacitly supports the idea that peoples and civilisations would constitute relevant frames in the historiography of mathematics. I will show how, in these two cases, this tacit belief derives from methodological shortcomings, and I will suggest how one could reopen these two chapters of the history of mathematics using other assumptions.

Lundi 14 février, 14:30 - 16:30,
bâtiment Condorcet, salle Mondrian, 646A

Justin E. H. SMITH (Université de Paris, HPS, & SPHere)

Zera Yacub : A 17th-Century Ethiopian Philosopher Who May or May Not Have Existed

Considerable debate persists as to whether the extant works attributed to Zera Yacub were in fact composed by the 19th-century Italian missionary Giusto d'Urbino. There are several ways by which to approach the question of authenticity. One is philological, by careful attention to the linguistic hints in the manuscripts that the work is not by a native writer of Ge'ez, or that otherwise suggest a later invention or conscious fabrication. Another is so to speak psychobiographical, by close attention to the character of d'Urbino himself, particularly as revealed in his correspondence from Ethiopia with the Parisian manuscript collector Antoine d'Abbadie. In a series of articles, Anaïs Wion has compellingly adopted both of these approaches. Less developed in her work is the approach informed by the history of philosophy, to wit : are there philosophical concepts in Zera Yacub's work, the circulation of which in 17th-century Ethiopia we might have reason to doubt ?

In this talk I will argue that there are perfectly plausible pathways for the circulation of ideas in Ethiopia that appear to resonate more or less contemporaneously with those of René Descartes, and that indeed we might do well to see Zera Yacub's "meditations" as sharing a common ancestor with the more familiar Cartesian contribution to this genre: to wit, both derive from 16th-century Iberian approaches to the individual cultivation of Catholic spirituality, most notably in Teresa of Avila and in Ignatius of Loyola, which then radiate out towards France and Ethiopia at more or less the same speed. I will argue that our hesitation when confronted with this suggestion has to do with an enduring bad habit of thinking of early modern philosophy, particularly in its extra-European inflections, as something that happens in a vacuum, rather than in a world that is already significantly globalized and interconnected.

Lundi 21 mars, 14:30 - 16:30, hybride
bâtiment Condorcet, salle Malevitch, 483A

Agathe KELLER (CNRS, SPHere)

Brief Review of *L'événement anthropocène : La Terre, l'histoire et nous*, par Fressoz and Bonneuil

Célestin Xiaohan ZHOU (Institute for the History of Natural Sciences, Beijing)

The textual format of a 15th-century Chinese mathematical work: an ongoing reproduction version of Great Compendium (1450)

Vendredi 8 avril, 14:30 - 16:30, hybride
bâtiment Condorcet, salle Malevitch, 483A

Florence BRETTELLE-ESTABLET (CNRS, SPHere)

From the construction of TCM to the construction of 'Minority nationality medicine

This presentation will be based on the book *Gathering Medicines, Nation and Knowledge in China's South Mountains*, published in 2021 by the University of Chicago press. This book, written by the anthropologists Judith Farquhar and Lili Lai, explores the processes at work in the transformation of complex sets of healing practices found among several minorities in the mountains of southern China into a stable entity, recognized by the Chinese state, and named "minority medicine shaoshu minzu yiyao 少数民族醫藥." The discussion of this book, and of one of its major points - the transformation of 'nomad' sciences into 'royal' sciences - will lead us to an earlier episode, but one that is fundamental to the constitution of this new 'thing' that is 'minority medicine', that of the creation of TCM (traditional Chinese medicine), which Kim Taylor has studied particularly well in her book *Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945-1963*

Vendredi 13 mai, 9:30 - 17:30 (horaire ac), hybride
bâtiment Condorcet, salle Malevitch, 483A

Séance en interne (à confirmer)

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Lundi 30 mai, 16:00 - 18:00, hybride
bâtiment Condorcet, salle Valentin, 454A

Alexander JONES (New York University, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World)

Relations in astral sciences between Babylonia, Egypt, and the Greco-Roman world

In his 1975 *History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy* Otto Neugebauer presented a restrained picture of relations among the astral sciences of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Greco-Roman world, with transmissions of mathematical astronomy from Babylonia to the Greeks largely limited to observational records and a few numerical parameters, practically no involvement in mathematical astronomy in Egypt, and astrology playing no significant role except as generating a market for astronomical tables and as supplying the modern historian with indirect traces of otherwise superseded astronomical concepts and methods. My talk will outline an ongoing revolution in our understanding of the interactions between the traditions since the late 1980s, which began with the study of a greatly expanded corpus of known Greek astronomical papyri, and is now entering a new phase with the intensive study of late Egyptian, chiefly Demotic, papyri and ostraca relating to both astronomy and astrology.

Lundi 27 juin, 14:30 - 16:30, hybride
bâtiment Condorcet, salle Mondrian, 646A

Minakshi MENON (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science)

What is colonial science?

The title of this talk draws on the title for a *Focus* section that appeared in *Isis*, the journal of the History of Science Society, in 2005. The editor of the *Focus* section, as well as four other contributors, offered short historiographic essays on 'science considered from a colonial or imperial point of view.' The editor defined 'colonial science' as 'any science done during the colonial era that involved Europeans working in a colonial context, including work done in Europe on colonial resources, and science done in areas of Europe's territorial or trading empires.' What united all the essays was the perception that colonial science and its associated practices were primarily European activities driven by epistemologies developed through European knowledge-making practices. Remarkably, none of the essays sought to define 'colonial', 'colonialism', 'imperial' or 'imperialism'.

My talk will quickly survey the dramatic shifts that have taken place since 2005 in how historians of science understand 'colonial science.' It examines the effects produced on the historiography of the history of science through the introduction of postcolonial studies from the Global South, especially postcolonial science and technology studies. It addresses (among others) the following questions: What does it mean to talk of globalizing the history of science? What is 'Asia as method' in science and technology studies? How do we understand the current move to 'decolonize' the history of science?

Réflexions sur le programme de l'année prochaine