

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

### A DOCTORAL SCHOLARSHIP IN THE HISTORY OF MATHEMATICS IN ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL INDIC SOURCES RELATED TO ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXTS

The European Research Council Project SAW: Mathematical Sciences in the Ancient World: New Theoretical Approaches to the Sources and Socio-Political Issues of the Present Day is calling for applications for a **full-time doctoral researcher**.

**General aims of the project.** The SAW project is dedicated to mathematical sources that have come down to us from the ancient world, specifically, though not exclusively, to the sources produced in **Mesopotamia**, **China**, and the **Indian sub-continent**. The ambition of SAW is to develop **new theoretical approaches to the history of ancient mathematics** in order to highlight a motley of practices within what at the present day too often are presented as homogeneous wholes, that is, “Mesopotamian mathematics”, “Chinese mathematics”, and “Indian mathematics”. To this end, SAW intends to concentrate systematically on the mathematical sources produced in relation to two sectors of activity in the ancient world: the practice of the astral sciences and the administrations in charge of financial matters. A goal of the project is also to shape methods that ground our interpretation of ancient sources in the critical awareness that a material and social history of the archives, libraries, and collections of sources provides. SAW intends to carry out a reflection on the history of historiography of mathematics. The main focus of SAW in that direction will be on the key general operations which are at play in the making of the historiography of ancient sciences, such as the shaping of critical editions.

**Description of the topic attached to the present scholarship.** The primary aim of this doctoral scholarship will be to do research on **Sanskrit or other Indic language sources**. **Striking parallels** can be made between **ancient and medieval law treatises** (*dharmasāstras*), the *arthaśāstra*, and related epigraphical documents on the one hand and medieval scholarly **mathematical texts**, especially those openly concerned with worldly practices (*lokavyavahāra*), on the other. The list of topics is large: from the leverage of taxes, to measuring units related to grain, from the minting of coins, rates for loans, to the rations with which to feed royal elephants! Is it possible to imagine a social context which explains such connections? Drawing on the existence of given local milieu dealing with temple administrations, merchants guilds, village administrations or local governments, can one identify specific required mathematical practices? In return, using law and administrative texts as a background, is it possible to shed new light on the complex classifications of mathematics involving operations, reductions of fractions, and numerous applications? Could such structures testify to attempts at giving a more global theoretical backdrop to the kind of problems administrations and guilds raised? Candidates will be expected to explore these questions with specific sources and topics.

**Applicants** must hold an MA degree or equivalent in history, history of science, Indian studies, Indology, Mathematics, or a related discipline. They should possess relevant knowledge in mathematics and philology (Sanskrit, pali, prakrt, or other Indic languages) or be able to demonstrate their ability to acquire such knowledge. They must be fluent in English and be willing to learn French. Researchers of all nationalities are welcome to apply.

**Applications** should include the following:

- a full CV (including a list of publications where appropriate)
- an outline (2 pages maximum) of the research project in line with SAW objectives
- one recent sample of academic writing
- a copy of the most recent diploma
- transcripts of academic grades
- names of two referees

The **deadline** for applications is: 1 June 2012 (for the post to be taken up as of 1 September 2012 or as early as possible thereafter). Short-listed candidates will be informed at the beginning of July 2012. Phone or Skype interviews with top-listed candidates are expected to take place during the first week of July 2012.

The scholarship is granted for one year renewable for two additional years, pending positive evaluation. The monthly stipend amounts to 1430 euros. It includes social security benefits and retirement provisions. The scholarship recipient will prepare a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Agathe Keller at the **Paris Diderot University, France**. He/she will need to complete all requirements for the doctoral degree at the University Paris Diderot.

Applications should be sent to the SAW Project Director **Karine Chemla** by email only: [chemla@univ-paris-diderot.fr](mailto:chemla@univ-paris-diderot.fr). It is recommended to request an email acknowledgement of receipt.

Information on the SAW project is available online at <http://www.sphere.univ-paris-diderot.fr/?-ERC-Project-SAW-&lang=en>

For informal discussion on the scholarship please contact Agathe Keller, [kellera@univ-paris-diderot.fr](mailto:kellera@univ-paris-diderot.fr)