

Hirst Prize and Lectureship: Citation for Karine Chemla

Professor Karine Chemla of Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) is awarded the Hirst Prize and Lectureship.

Karine Chemla's academic career in the history of mathematics has covered some forty years. Throughout virtually all this time she has been based at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), where she is currently Senior Researcher within the research group SPHERE (Science—Philosophy—History, Université de Paris & CNRS) She is awarded the Hirst Prize and Lectureship in recognition of her outstanding and innovative work in the history of mathematics.

Professor Chemla's research has focussed on a number of areas within the history of mathematics, including the history of geometry in France in the nineteenth century, the historiography of non-western mathematics, and the history of mathematics in China. It is particularly in this last area of research that Chemla is widely recognised as a preeminent authority. With a combination of linguistic, historical and mathematical skills she has reframed our understanding of the depth and breadth of ancient mathematics in China.

Arguably her most important publication in Chinese studies is her translation, with Guo Shuchun, of the classic *Jiuzhang suanshu* (*Les neuf chapitres: Le Classique mathématique de la Chine ancienne et ses commentaires*, 2004). It is a monumental work of scholarship where in addition to the substantial achievement of translating and annotating such a crucial and difficult source, Chemla and Guo (both in *Les neuf chapitres* and in studies leading up to it) displayed strengths in collating diverse editions of the primary text, and in demonstrating the inadequacy of the idea that ancient Chinese authors and their commentators were solely interested in practical applications of mathematics.