

Report on the 35th Novembertagung on the History and Philosophy of Mathematics for the International Commission on the History of Mathematics (ICHM)

Host institution:	Université de Lorraine, Nancy, France
Dates:	17 - 19 November 2025
Venue:	Amphithéâtre de la présidence Leopold, 34 Cr Léopold, Nancy
Theme:	Mathematics and Communities
Keynote Speakers:	Jingyu Wu (LSE), Christophe Eckes (Université de Lorraine)
Organising Committee:	Rémi Blondel (Nancy), Pierre Chatelard (Nancy), Salomé Chauvet (Lyon), Elisa Dalgalarondo (Paris), Rami Jreige (Bristol), Frederike Lieven (Paris), Mireia Martínez i Sellarès (Utrecht), Paul-Emmanuel Timotei (Paris).
Conference Website:	https://novembertagung.wordpress.com/novembertagung-2025/

The latest edition of the Novembertagung proved, once more, to be an esteemed meeting for young researchers in history and philosophy of mathematics and a valuable learning opportunity for all scholars involved, from the very start of the organisation process to the closing words of the conference. Even though the organisation of the 35th edition of the Novembertagung only took off in the late spring of 2025, it became quickly clear that Nancy would host the conference and that there would be enough financial support to let the conference take place, and so the Call for Abstracts was sent out at the beginning of the summer. By August 15th, a total of 37 abstracts had been submitted and, after the reviewing process two weeks later, a total of 20 abstracts were selected to give a presentation at the Novembertagung. Participants were encouraged to present in person, and two selected participants who were not able to travel to Nancy were allowed to present and attend the Novembertagung via videoconference. Furthermore, two scholars kindly accepted the invitation to give keynote lectures: from the side of philosophy of mathematics, Jingyi Wu (LSE); from the side of history of mathematics, Christophe Eckes (Université de Lorraine). Not only active participants expressed their interest in attending the 35th Novembertagung: a further 6 young scholars attended the conference without presenting, yet also benefitting from the shared knowledge, friendly atmosphere and valuable networking that the Novembertagung offers.

The conference took place over 3 days, starting in the afternoon of the first day and ending after midday on the third day. The conference presentations each lasted approximately 20 minutes and were followed by 10 minutes of questions and discussions; the keynote lectures were each roughly 45 min with another 15 min for interaction with the audience.

“Mathematics and Communities” was the chosen theme for the 35th Novembertagung, a theme that the organisers hoped could be approached from interesting angles both from the perspective of the history as well as the philosophy of mathematics. Not only was this goal achieved with a variety of talks rooted in both disciplines, but the conference presentations also examined communities at various levels, from classroom settings to national networks and from informal collaborations to

formal institutions. Over three days, participants explored an impressive range of historical periods and geographical locations.

The conference opened with Ho Truc Chi's investigation of epistemic values in mathematics education, emphasising the fundamentally social nature of mathematics. Eva Henke examined scholarly communities in early China, comparing third-century commentaries and raising methodological questions about the relationship between networks of texts and communities of scholars. Taro Tokutake explored the transmission of numerical tables in South India through *eñcuvati* manuscripts, revealing how arithmetic knowledge was preserved through manuscripts bundled with diverse genres. Mia Joskowicz shared her research on title pages of Euclid's 'Elements' in early modern Europe, using digital humanities to examine over 200 editions of this work. Nicolas Joannes examined mathematical illustrations in 18th-century France, illuminating the role of engravers in the circulation of mathematical knowledge. Emma Baxter analysed language and mathematical culture in the Russian Empire and early Soviet Union, revealing how Russian both connected and divided communities while functioning as a tool of colonial power.

Several presentations explored contested notions of mathematical rigor. David Bakker's examination of Joseph Fourier proved how changing conceptions of proof marginalised geometrical approaches. Marieke Gelderblom's presentation on the graphic method in Dutch national statistics revealed how new forms of representation became sites of epistemic conflict, with graphics valued by some for conveying interpretation but rejected by others as imprecise. Anshula Gandhi addressed contemporary publishing practices, arguing that hiding discovery processes in mathematics prioritises conciseness over understanding. Aoife Kearins investigated how the Royal Society's peer review shaped a specialised 'language of expertise' that excluded general readers.

A number of presentations highlighted traditionally marginalised voices. Terika Harris showcased Black mathematicians at Howard University, particularly Elbert Frank Cox and Dudley Weldon Woodard, using social network analysis to reveal how they created supportive communities. Arundhati Velamuri offered a phenomenology from the margins, exploring 'invisible' labours sustaining mathematical practice through her study of mathematicians who are also women of colour. Thomas Glasman examined how antisemitism intertwined with intuitionist argumentation, influencing both community exclusion and scientific development.

Other presentations explored networks and practices. Kate Hindle studied D'Arcy Thompson's informal network despite his claim to be 'no mathematician'. Asya Ciftci explored Lakatos's 'Proofs and Refutations' as community-building through dialogue, staging mathematics as democratic conversation. Agathe Rolland examined group theory in the French *agrégation*, revealing evolving knowledge among prospective teachers.

Jingyi Wu's keynote on 'Rigor Capture' illuminated how marginalized academics face elevated standards of rigor, harming group inquiry by limiting epistemic benefits of diversity. This resonated with presentations addressing marginalisation and power dynamics. Christophe Eckes examined Nicolas Bourbaki, showing how this collective drew on *École Normale* traditions while strategically developing institutions like the Institut Élie Cartan in Nancy to gain international recognition—a fitting conclusion bringing together themes of community formation, institutional power and mathematical practice.

Beyond the academic talks, an important part of the Novembertagung is the chance for young researchers in history and philosophy of mathematics from all over the globe (this year: France,

Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Italy, the USA, Vietnam, Canada and Norway) to get to know each other and each other's work. The friendly and lively discussions that took place for the entire duration of the 35th Novembertagung, either after each presentation or over a cup of coffee and a pastry, not only revealed a genuine intellectual engagement with the conference theme, but in fact embodied the very sense of community that was being explored from different angles. In order to facilitate these discussions, the organising committee decided to dedicate part of the funding to provide lunch and dinner on the second day of the conference, as well as coffee, tea and snacks for all of the breaks. These shared moments proved to be instrumental in allowing participants to actually speak to each other and establish new and hopefully fruitful connections.

The organisers wish to thank all funding bodies for their generous contributions, without which the 35th edition of the Novembertagung would not have taken place: the Université de Lorraine for hosting the conference; the Archives Henri Poincaré for providing us as much coffee, tea, and snacks as we needed; the SPHERE Laboratory and RT HiDiM for covering accommodation costs for all those participants who requested it, and travel costs for the keynote speakers; the BSHM for allowing us to offer lunch for all participants on the second day; the Descartes Centre for letting all participants enjoy dinner together on the second night; and last but certainly not least the ICHM for funding travel costs for all participants who needed it and who would not have been able to join the Novembertagung otherwise. A heartfelt thank you from all young researchers who benefitted from such generosity!

To finish this report, we are pleased to announce that the preparations for the 36th edition of the Novembertagung, expected to take place in 2026, have already started: the first online meeting has taken place and the organising committee has been formed! The organising team of the 35th Novembertagung wishes the next group of motivated young scholars a lot of fun in organising this wonderful event, and a very successful next edition of the Novembertagung.



Group picture of the 35th Novembertagung in Nancy, France.



One of the talks.



Group picture at the conference dinner.