

MATHEMATICS SEMINAR

COUNTING AND CALCULATING IN ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL EUROPE

While advanced mathematics in Europe flourished, withered, and was eventually reborn in the 16th century, the more mundane arts of counting, calculating, and accounting continued as tools of commerce and administration from classical times onward.

In this talk we will give an overview of what we know of the number systems, notations, and calculating methods used by various European societies to do the mathematics necessary to keep track of accounts and to manage estates, beginning with classical Greece and continuing up to the early Renaissance. While the mathematics will be elementary, the various methods to be discussed are interesting and not widely known or appreciated, and in some cases are still not fully understood.

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Thursday, December 1st
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm
Seidler Room 220

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