

News and Notices

Awarding of the May Prizes for 2017

Craig Fraser, Chair of ICHM 2009–2017

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The International Commission for the History of Mathematics (ICHM) awards the May Prize every four years to coincide with the International Congress for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine (ICHSTM). The May Prize is given for outstanding contributions to the history of mathematics.

In the year preceding the ICHSTM, the Executive Committee of the ICHM forms a committee consisting of the Chair of the EC and three internationally recognized historians of mathematics to consider the candidates for the May Prize(s). That committee, after giving careful consideration to the full range of historical scholarship in the history of mathematics internationally, draws up a short list of no more than three candidates and makes a report to the EC for its consideration and vote. The EC and ICHM national members may make suggestions for consideration by the committee to the Chair. The Chair announces by a general email to the ICHM national members when May Prize deliberations will begin in order to give them time to offer suggestions for candidates.

The committee's report consists of reasoned arguments (including solid evidence of scholarly achievement such as books and significant articles published) for the selection of each candidate.

The EC then takes a confidential vote on the basis of the committee's recommendations.

The ICHM is proud to award the May Prize for 2017 to Eberhard Knobloch and to Roshdi Rashed.

The Prize was conferred to Eberhard Knobloch at the open meeting of the ICHM at the 25th ICHSTM in Rio de Janeiro in July of 2017. It will be conferred by Karine Chemla to Roshdi Rashed in a ceremony in Paris in November 2017. The citations which follow outline the careers of the two winners and document their contributions to the history of mathematics. (The selection committee is grateful to Ulf Hashagen, Shrikrishna G. Dani and Athanase Papadopoulos for their assistance in the preparation of these citations.)

Eberhard Knobloch

Born in 1943, Eberhard Knobloch studied mathematics, classical philology, philosophy, and history of science and technology. In 1972 he completed his PhD in history of science and technology, and in 1976 he passed the habilitation in this subject. Since 1981 he has been Professor of History of Science and Technology at the Technical University of Berlin, since 2002 Academy Professor at the University and at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (the former Prussian Academy of Sciences). He has promoted the history of mathematics as head of its most important societies, including the ICHM, and as editor of its publication series and journals including *Historia Mathematica*. Knobloch was President of the International Academy of the History of Science from 2005 to 2007 and President of the European Society for the History of Science from 2006 to 2008. His written record is truly impressive, amounting to some 300 books or papers on history or philosophy of science and technology.



Figure 1. Eberhard Knobloch (left) being awarded the May Prize by Craig Fraser in Rio de Janeiro (July 2017). Photo: Alison Brannen.

Knobloch started his career as a historian of mathematics and science with his pioneering studies on the mathematical work of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. The latter has remained a central point of reference for his scholarly research. He has carried out a series of studies of Leibniz's theory of determinants and contributions to actuarial mathematics, as well as an impressive number of groundbreaking articles on several aspects of the mathematical work of Leibniz. Particularly notable is his critical edition with commentary of Leibniz's "De quadratura arithmetica circuii ellipseos et hyperbolae cujus corollarium est trigonometria sine tabulis," published in 1993 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht). Some of Knobloch's insights into Leibniz's analysis are presented at a more general level in his article "Galileo and Leibniz: Different Approaches to Infinity" (*Archive for History of Exact Sciences*, 54 (1999), pp. 87–99).

Knobloch established series 7 and 8 of the Leibniz-Edition and served as its editor for many years. It is no exaggeration to say that he has gained an international reputation as a leading expert for the edition of works of scientists in the period from 1600 to the present. Besides the edition of Leibniz's works he was involved in the edition of the works of the astronomer Johannes Kepler and in the edition of the letters of the German natural scientist Alexander von Humboldt. As a historian of mathematics Knobloch has not only published on a broad range of topics and figures in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but also made important contributions to the history of probability theory, error theory, determinant theory and to measurement and integration theory in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Roshdi Rashed

Roshdi Rashed is an eminent historian of mathematics specializing in Islamic mathematics and its relation with Greek mathematics on the one hand, and influence on modern mathematics on the other hand. He has shed considerable light on the work of several important Islamic mathematicians, including Banū Mūsā, Ibn Qurra, Ibn Sīnā, al-Khāzin, al-Qūhī, Ibn al-Samh, Ibn Hud, and especially Ibn al-Haytham, who stands out as a towering figure of medieval Islamic mathematics. Rashed discovered, edited and translated a large number of manuscripts and through insightful analysis of their contents, has brought out their importance from the point of view of development of mathematics, their intricate relation with the Greek antecedents, and their influence and impact on the later European mathematics. The work has led to a sea change in our understanding of the significance of Islamic contributions, especially from what has now come to be viewed as the golden era of Islamic mathematics. It has also thrown new light on various aspects of Greek mathematics, especially of Apollonius and Diophantus, and their interrelation.

Born in 1936, Roshdi Rashed has spent the most part of his career affiliated with Paris Diderot University (Paris 7), as a researcher sponsored by the French CNRS. Among his several distinctions one may mention the CNRS Bronze Medal (1977), the distinction of Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (1989) awarded by the



Figure 2. Roshdi Rashed and Karine Chemla. Karine will award the prize to Roshdi in a ceremony in Paris in November 2017. Picture taken by Galina Zverkina.

President of the French Republic, the Alexandre Koyré Medal (1990), the Prize and Medal from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (1999), and the King Faisal International Prize (2007). He has also received several honors from Arabic countries. He has about 40 books and more than 100 papers to his credit. He is a member of several academies, the chief editor of the journal *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy: a Historical Journal* (Cambridge University Press), and of the collections *Histoire des Sciences Arabes* (Beyrouth) and *Sciences dans l'histoire* (Blanchard, Paris). He is a member of scientific committees of the journals *Revue de Synthèse* (France), *Bollettino di storia delle scienze matematiche* (Italy), *Istoriko-matematicheskii issledovaniia* (Moscow), *Islamic Studies* (Pakistan) and *Le Journal Scientifique Libanais* (Beyrouth).