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EINLADUNG ZUM KOLLOQUIUM

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Mathematics and mathematical textbooks
in eighteenth-century France

Textbooks were not used to teach mathematics in France until the eighteenth century. Their introduction in the classroom from the 1730s revolutionised the way the subject was taught and helps to explain the growing sophistication of the mathematics course taught in the collèges de plein exercice after 1760. This in turn goes a long way to explaining the fecundity of French physics at the end of the eighteenth century. The paper will discuss some of the leading textbooks and their authors and give an idea of the kind of mathematics course that Laplace would have followed at Caen under Christophe Gabled.

Laurence Brockliss is Professor of Early Modern French History at University of Oxford and Lecturer in Modern History at Magdalen College.

Principal themes in his work are the history of education and science and medicine in early modern France and Britain. Professor Brockliss has a general interest in the history of European ideas. He published numerous articles and several books, including French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Cultural History (Oxford, 1987), 'Curricula' in A history of the University in Europe (Cambridge, 1996), 'Classification des sciences dans le monde universitaire et les facultes de medecine (1540-1640)'in Nouvelle Revue du XVIe Siecle (2002), 'The moment of no return. The University of Paris and the death of Aristotelianism' in Science and Education (2004), 'The French Republic of Letters and English Culture, 1750-90' in Anglo-French Attitudes. Comparisons and Transfers between English and French intellectuals since the eighteenth century (Manchester, 2007), 'Contenir et prevenir la violence. La discipline scolaire et universitaire sous l'Ancien Regime (XVIIe-XVIIIe siecles)' in Histoire de l'Education (2008). He contributed to the Encyclopaedia of the Enlightenment (New York, 2003) with the article 'Universities'.

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