

Department of History & Philosophy of Science (MIΘE), University of Athens
Department of Mathematics, University of Athens

International workshop

Mathematical Continuum: Perspectives through History and Philosophy

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Department MIΘE, Classroom Δ

**Bolzano's Conceptions of Continuum: Geometrical, Numerical
and Physical**

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Bernard Bolzano (1781 – 1848) lived and worked in Prague, initially as a Professor of 'Religionswissenschaft' at the University until his liberal views (on theology and politics) led to his dismissal by the Habsburg Emperor in 1820. Then working with the support of his patron Josef Hofmann he produced his major 4-volume 'Theory of Science' (1837) which was a radical work on logic and the foundations of science with a remarkably modern semantic approach. From his student days until his death he was producing – in spite of his isolation - original works on mathematics, from neighbourhood definitions of geometric objects (1817) to work on measurable numbers prefiguring the construction of real numbers (1830's) but not published for nearly 150 years. Throughout his life he was occupied with the continuum – whether geometric, numeric or physical – and its relation to the infinite. We shall give a brief sketch of some his most significant contributions and some of the sources for further study – some of which are even now becoming available for the first time in a definitive form in the Bernard Bolzano Gesamtausgabe.