

## Seminar SAW : Mathematical practices in the context of the Astral Sciences

Abstract :

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*A Cognitive Perspective on a Babylonian Astronomical Text*

Texts in the astronomical scribal tradition of Mesopotamia date from the Astrolabes of the early second millennium through to the ACT corpus associated with the Hellenistic period. The series MUL.APIN, which appears early in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, is a composite that records diverse observable or measurable astronomical phenomena, and appears to be the first reasonably full exposition of the knowledge developed within that tradition. The series can be considered from the perspective of that tradition, for the observational astronomy that comprises its content, detailing the visibility and movement of celestial bodies; or from a related procedural perspective, as a source of knowledge on the varying lengths of day and night through the year, and for determining leap years and intercalary months used to align the luni-solar year with the civil calendar. This paper outlines a cognitive-historical perspective on the text, with particular reference to the role of writing and representation in cognition, and raises the question of whether cognitive considerations have the potential to shed further light on the nature of MUL.APIN.