

SAW Seminar: Mathematical practices in the context of the astral sciences

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Emmanuel Poulle's distinction between geometrical equatory and mathematical equatory in Les instruments de la théorie des planètes selon Ptolémée : équations et horlogerie planétaire du XIIIe au XVIe siècle

Abstract: Emmanuel Poulle built his monumental study of the Latin tradition of equatories on a distinction between two types of instruments: the geometrical equatory, which follows closely the Ptolemaic geometrical model in order to produce numerical planetary positions, and the mathematical equatory, more closely linked to tabular procedures to obtain numerical planetary positions. We will present this distinction, its explicit motivations and its historiographical use by Emmanuel Poulle. On this ground we will open the discussion in order to see if and how the distinction can be adapted to other traditions of astral sciences instruments in any relevant way for the study of mathematical practices in relation to astral sciences to which the second phase of the SAW project is devoted.