

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

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A Choice of Microcosms: *Dodekatemoria* Models and the Calendar Text System

Abstract: This lecture builds on my presentation at the iCHSTM 2013 (Manchester), where I explained the construction of *hypsomata* drawings on cuneiform tablets published in E. Weidner's 1967 book *Gestirn-Darstellungen auf babylonischen Tontafeln* (hence, *GDBT*). The *GDBT* tablets assumed a schematic Babylonian year of 360 days that could be mapped exactly onto the sun's ecliptic of 360° , as well as a "micro-zodiac of 12" whereby a month or zodiacal sun-sign was divided into twelve equal parts. W. Hübner's 2005 article on the "Dodekatemorion" in classical sources, however, identified at least four different mathematical methods by which *dodekatemoria* were calculated. While Hübner's *Methods C and D* yield a "micro-zodiac of 12," *Methods A and B* actually result in a "micro-zodiac of 13" that scholars have largely ignored. The "micro-zodiac of 12" was attractive, since its twelve micro-zodiac divisions were a fitting microcosm of the twelve zodiacal signs, and since calculations involving 12 (rather than 13) were simpler to perform. I demonstrate, however, that the "micro-zodiac of 13" was instrumental in synchronizing sun, moon, and virtual moon in the Calendar Text System. Echoing the meaning of reciprocals in cuneiform commentaries, the virtual moon was reciprocal to the real moon and a signifier of therapeutic ingredients. In an obvious break from the medical zodiology of the *GDBT* tablets, the same ingredients prescribed by the sun's twelve micro-zodiacal signs in the *GDBT* tablets became associated instead with the virtual moon's thirteen micro-zodiacal signs in the Calendar Text System.