

1077-01-455

John Steele*, Department of Egyptology and AWAS, Box 1899, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912. *Mathematical Schemes in Babylonian Astral Medicine.*

During the last five hundred years BC astronomy came to be used increasingly in the practice of medicine in Babylonia. Medical remedies were sometimes 'activated' by being exposed to the light of particular stars, planets or the moon, and the timing of their application to the patient could be governed by astronomical circumstances. Perhaps more significantly, however, the remedy used in curing a patient was itself sometimes determined by astronomical means. In particular, mathematical astronomical schemes could be used to give associate signs of the zodiac with days of the year and remedies made from ingredients related to those signs would then be applied on the appropriate day. In this paper I will discuss the mathematical schemes used in Babylonian astral medicine and what this tells us about the connection between mathematics, writing, the sky, and people in the Babylonian world-view. (Received September 02, 2011)