

**Seminar SAW History of Science, History of Text, 2011-2016
SAW Three-day Meeting**

**How do writings in the astral sciences
document mathematical practices and the practitioners?**

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Astronomical tables of the spread sheet type

Abstract - Among the various types of astronomical tables which can be found in the ACT documentation some can be described roughly to be of a “spread sheet type”. In these tables, values are computed from columns to columns according to a fixed algorithm. They raise many interesting questions including questions of accuracy, methods of rounding/truncating, selection of quantities to be tabulated versus to be left out of a table, selection of those parameters that must be modelled accurately vs those that can deviate more strongly from empirical behaviour etc. We will present these tables in the context of the ACT documentation and discuss how they can be examined so as to give historians clues concerning the type of mathematical practices of which they are the outcome.