

SAW Conference Scholars and Scholarship in Late Babylonian Uruk

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"Star Anu, Lord of Heaven": The influence of the celestial sciences on temple rituals in Hellenistic Uruk and Babylon

Abstract - The final stages of cuneiform scholarship saw the emergence of mathematical astronomy and zodiacal astrology not only as disciplines in their own right, but also as the foundation of a newly conceptualized, integrative world system. The zodiacal signs and the behaviour of the planets came to be seen as fundamentally interconnected with the Babylonian scholars' other spheres of expertise, such as medical practice and the proper rites of interaction with the divine realm, especially the daily worship in the temples. This paper will further explore the intersection of astrology, astronomy and religious worship in ritual texts from Late Babylonian Uruk, situating these texts within the context of scholarship at Uruk, and investigate how the growing prominence of the celestial sciences in Babylonian scholarly thought influenced conceptions of the divine and the organisation of the temple cults. In addition, the texts from Uruk will be compared to those from Babylon in order to identify any particularly Urukean responses to these influences.