

# **Asterisms – the relations among their verbal, numerical and visual representations across cultures in research and public outreach**

14–15 February 2024

White-Levy Room, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

Sponsor: Sabine Schmidtke, IAS; Convenor: Sonja Brentjes, IAS and MPIWG;

Coordinators: Uta Nitschke-Joseph, IAS; Rana Brentjes, MPIWG

## **14 February**

8:30 Breakfast at White-Levy Room

9:00 Opening Sabine Schmidtke

9:05 Introduction Sonja Brentjes

9:15-10:15 **Mesopotamian Forms of Representing Asterisms.** Chair: Sabine Schmidtke

**John Steele**, The Babylonian Uranology Texts: Instructions for Drawing or Just Descriptions of the Constellations?

**Francesca Rochberg**, Representing and Writing with the Stars: The Cuneiform Astroglyphs

10:15-10:35 Discussion

10:35-10:55 Break

10:55-11:55 **Greco-Roman Treatment of Constellations in Cross-Cultural Contexts.** Chair: Kim Plofker

**Mathieu Ossendrijver**, The exaltations of Greco-Roman astrology and their possible relation to stars

**Andreas Winkler**, Constellations and Signs in Graeco-Roman Egypt

11:55-12:15 Discussion

12:15-1:45 Lunch

1:45-2:45 **Star Catalogues in Greek and Arabic and their Perspectives on the Verbal, the Numerical, and the Visual.** Chair: John Steele

**Francesca Schironi**, Describing and visualizing constellations from Aratus to Ptolemy: some case studies

**Pouyam Rezvani**, Visualisation of mathematical astronomy in the medieval Arabic translations of Ptolemy's *Almagest*: diagrams and tables

2:45-3:05 Discussion

3:05-3:25 Break

3:25-3:55 **Constellations and Their Representations in Sanskrit Astronomy.** Chair: Andreas Winkler

**Kim Plofker**, Nakṣatra and Rāśi: Identifying and representing the lunar constellations and zodiacal signs in Sanskrit astronomy

3:55-4:15 Discussion

4:15-6:00 Recess

6:00-6:45 Public Lecture: **The astral sciences and early cultures: why do we study them, and how do we share our interest with the public?** Alexander Jones (ISAW, NYU) in conversation with **Sonja Brentjes**

7:00 Departure for Observatory – Strict time

7:30-9:00 Conversing with Astronomers at the Peyton Observatory

## 15 February

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Simons Hall (Dining Hall)

9:00-10:00 **‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi’s *Book on the Fixed Stars* – Goals, Contradictions, Impact.** Chair: Francesca Schironi

**S. Mohammad Mozaffari**, Among the Stars: A New Look at al-Sūfī’s Heritage

**Hamid Bohloul** and **Razieh Mousavi**, Versified Constellations: Ibn al-Şufī’s Urjūza at the Crossroads of Stellar Traditions

10:00-10:20 Discussion

10:20-10:40 Break

10:40-11:40 **Astral Imagery and DH.** Chair: Sabine Schmidtke

**Rana Brentjes**, The relationship of image, text, and tables/diagrams as represented on objects in VoH Database

**Jade Norindr**, Ptolemaic diagrams through computer vision: building a platform for research on astral sciences

11:40-12:00 Discussion

12:00-1:30 Lunch

1:30-2:30 **Star Lists in Latin Manuscripts and Their Numerical and Visual Elements.**

Chair: Mathieu Ossendrijver

**Mathieu Husson**, Compiling star lists in early 14th century Oxford: Cambridge, University Library, Gg.6.3

**Richard Kremer**, The “Alfonsine” star catalog in late medieval Latin manuscripts

2:30-2:50 Discussion

2:50-3:10 Break

3:10-4:10 **‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi’s *Book on the Fixed Stars* – its Goals, Contradictions and Impact.** Chair: Richard Kremer

**Sonja Brentjes**, What was ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi up to? On the relationships between text, numerical table, and visual representations of a constellation and its stars in his *Book on the Constellations*

**Heather Ecker**, A View from the Seventeenth Century of al-Sufi’s Mapping of Greek Constellations and Arab Asterisms in *The Book of Constellations of the Fixed Stars* (c. 965)

4:10-4:30 Discussion

4:30-5:00 Final Discussion Panel: Sonja Brentjes, Sabine Schmidtke, Rana Brentjes

6:00 Dinner