

John Z. Wee

Assistant Professor of Assyriology at the University of Chicago

Oriental Institute Office 320 ▪ (773) 702-0131 ▪ johnwee@uchicago.edu

EDUCATION

- Yale University — Ph.D. (*with distinction*) awarded William J. Horwitz Prize in Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations (2012) & M.A. in History (Classical Greece) (2008)

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

University of Chicago, Faculty in the Oriental Institute, the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations (NELC), and the College, and Associated Faculty in the Department of Classics

- Assistant Professor (2015–) & Director of Grad Studies in NELC, Ancient Programs (2016–2019)

Fellowship Awards

- Provost's Career Enhancement Postdoctoral Scholar (2012–2014), University of Chicago
- Samuel K. Bushnell Fellow (2010–2011) & Teaching Fellow (2007–2012), Yale University
- Landesstiftung Baden-Württemberg Scholar (2008–2009), Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

BOOKS

- Author of *Knowledge and Rhetoric in Medical Commentary. Ancient Mesopotamian Commentaries on a Handbook of Medical Diagnosis (Sa-gig)*. Cuneiform Monographs. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Author of *Mesopotamian Commentaries on the Diagnostic Handbook Sa-gig. Edition and Translation*. Cuneiform Monographs. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Editor of *The Comparable Body: Analogy and Metaphor in Ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Greco-Roman Medicine*. Studies in Ancient Medicine 49. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES & ESSAYS

- "Five Birds, Twelve Rooms, and the Seleucid Game of Twenty Squares." Pp. 833–876 in *Mesopotamian Medicine and Magic: Studies in Honor of Markham J. Geller*. Edited by S. V. Panayotov and L. Vacin. Ancient Magic and Divination. Leiden: Brill.
- "Pan-astronomical Hermeneutics and the Arts of the Lamentation Priest." *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 107/2 (2017): 236–260.
- "Earthquake and Epilepsy: The Body Geologic in the Hippocratic Treatise *On the Sacred Disease*." Pp. 142–167 in *The Comparable Body: Analogy and Metaphor in Ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Greco-Roman Medicine*. Edited by J. Z. Wee. Studies in Ancient Medicine 49. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- "A Late Babylonian Astral Commentary on *Marduk's Address to the Demons*." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 75/1 (2016): 127–167.
- "Virtual Moons Over Babylonia: The Calendar Text System, Its Micro-Zodiac of 13, and the Making of Medical Zodiology." Pp. 139–229 in *The Circulation of Astronomical Knowledge in the Ancient World*. Edited by J. M. Steele. Time, Astronomy, and Calendars 6. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- "Discovery of the Zodiac Man in Cuneiform." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 67 (2015): 217–233.

- "Phenomena in Writing: Creating and Interpreting Variants of the Diagnostic Series Sa-gig." Pp. 247–287 in *In the Wake of the Compendia: Infrastructural Contexts and the Licensing of Empiricism in Ancient and Medieval Mesopotamia*. Edited by C. Johnson. Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Cultures 3. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015.
- "Case History as Minority Report in the Hippocratic *Epidemics* 1." Pp. 138–165 in *HOMO PATIENS: Approaches to the Patient in the Ancient World*. Edited by G. Petridou and C. Thumiger. Studies in Ancient Medicine 45. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
- "Grieving with the Moon: Pantheon and Politics in the Lunar Eclipse." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 14/1 (2014): 29–67.
- "Lugalbanda Under the Night Sky: Scenes of Celestial Healing in Ancient Mesopotamia." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 73/1 (2014): 23–42.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS & HANDBOOKS

- "Medicine and Healing, Ancient Near East." *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

POPULAR ESSAYS

- "Wretched Subjects, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Ancient Science." *Oriental Institute News & Notes* 230 (2016): 4–14.

ACADEMIC CONFERENCES & LECTURES

- Chair of Session on *Measurement and Calculation*. Meeting of the History of Science Society (Seattle, Washington), 1–4 November 2018.
- "Epistemics, Curriculum, and Scholasticism in Mesopotamian Commentaries on a Handbook of Medical Diagnosis." Conference on *5000 Years of Comments: The Development of Commentary from Ancient Mesopotamia to the Age of Information*. Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University (Washington, DC), 7–10 August 2018.
- "Ancient Commentaries on the Mesopotamian Diagnostic Handbook." Ancient Civilizations Workshop. University of Chicago, 25 May 2018.
- "Scholasticism and Technical Writing in Late Babylonian Medical Education." Meeting of the History of Science Society (Toronto), 9–12 November 2017.
- Invited Chair and Respondent of Session on *Mesopotamian Timekeeping and Its Relationship to Greco-Roman Practices*. Conference on *Down to the Hour: Perspectives on Short Time in the Ancient Mediterranean*. University of Chicago, 24–25 February 2017.
- "Sundering the Beast: From the Babylonian Micro-Zodiac to Dodekatemoria in Greco-Roman Late Antiquity." Invited Lecture for Workshop on *Scale in Ancient Astrology*. Durham University, 9–10 December 2016.
- "Knowledge and Inquiry in the Mesopotamian Diagnostic Handbook." Conference on *The Form, Utility, and Professional Technê of Practical Handbooks in the Ancient World*. Magical Knowledge Project sponsored by the Neubauer Collegium. University of Chicago, 12 November 2016.
- "On Mesopotamian Planets and Star Maps." Wednesday Lunch Series for Faculty at the Franke Institute for the Humanities. University of Chicago, 12 October 2016.

- "Pan-astronomical Hermeneutics and the Arts of the Lamentation Priest." Invited Presentation at Workshop on *Pre-Medieval Commentaries in Medicine and Mathematical Sciences*. Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (Berlin), 25–27 August 2016.
- "An Esoteric Babylonian Commentary, Explained." 226th Meeting of the American Oriental Society (Boston), 18–21 March 2016.
- "Houses of Secret and the Meanings of Planetary Exaltations." Session on *The Heavenly Bodies in Image and Text*. 61st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Geneva and Bern), 22–26 June 2015.
- "Straight from the *Ummānu*'s Mouth: Serialization, Classification, and Cuneiform Text Commentary." Session on *How to Build a Long-Term Text in the Ancient Near East*. 225th Meeting of the American Oriental Society (New Orleans), 13–16 March 2015.
- "The Roots of Commentary: From the Ancient Near East to Alexandria to Rabbinic Palestine." Invited Lecture, sponsored by the Liss Lectures in Judaica Fund. University of Notre Dame, 28 Jan 2015.
- Invited Seminar on "Mathematical Models for the Micro-Zodiac" and Lecture on "A Choice of Microcosms: *Dodekatemoria* Models and the Calendar Text System" for the Program *General Mathematical Practices in the Astral Sciences and Their Relation to / Contrast with Mathematical Sources*. Mathematical Sciences in the Ancient World (SAW) Project. Université Paris Diderot, 15 and 17 Oct 2014.
- "Air and the Physiology of Intelligence in the Hippocratics." Symposium on *Body and Metaphor in Ancient Medicine*. Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1–3 May 2014.
- "Stranger Beasts in the Zodiac: Kalendartexte and the Astrological Table in BM 56605." 39th International Conference on *Astrology in the Near East*. Aram Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies. University of Oxford, 23–24 April 2014.
- "Late Babylonian and Greco-Roman Medical Astrology." Conference on *The Circulation of Astronomical Knowledge in the Ancient World*. Brown University, 12–13 April 2014.
- "Measurements in Babylonian Drawings of Planets and Star Constellations." Symposium on *Mathematical Facets of Measurement, Measuring Units, Measured Quantities and Their Uses*. Mathematical Sciences in the Ancient World (SAW) Project. 24th International Congress of History of Science, Technology and Medicine (Manchester), 22–28 July 2013.
- "Medical Signs as Signs: The Immediacy of Experience in the Diagnostic Series Sa-gig." BabMed Session on *Empiricism in Mesopotamian Technical Literature*. 223rd Meeting of the American Oriental Society (Portland, Oregon), 15–18 March 2013.
- "The Patient as Variable: Presuppositions in the Writing of Case Histories." Conference on *HOMO PATIENS: Approaches to the Patient in the Ancient World*. Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, 29 June – 1 July 2012.
- "Argumentation in Mesopotamian Medical Commentaries." 222nd Meeting of the American Oriental Society (Boston), 16–19 March 2012.
- "Lugalbanda In the Mountain Cave: An Early Mesopotamian Model of Celestial Healing." 57th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Rome), 4–8 July 2011.

PUBLIC LECTURES

- Cornerstone Lecture on "The World's Oldest Board Game Rules" and Mind-bender Lecture on "Journeys of Ancient Planets" for Renaissance Weekend (Santa Monica), 15–19 February 2018.

- "Stone Ducks: Weights and Measures in Ancient Mesopotamia." Oriental Institute Lunchtime Gallery Talk. University of Chicago, 7 December 2017.
- "The Royal Game of Ur from Ancient Mesopotamia." 39th Annual Humanities Day at the University of Chicago, 21 Oct 2017.
- "Mathematical Astronomy from Babylonia to Chicago." Invited Public Lectures for *A Night of Astronomy, Astrology, and Magic at the Oriental Institute*. Sponsored by the James Henry Breasted Society and the Adler Planetarium's Webster Institute for the History of Astronomy (Chicago), 13 April 2017.
- Cornerstone Lecture on "A (Very) Brief History of Ancient Astronomy" and Mini-lectures on "Discovery of the Zodiac Man" and "Herodotus and the Ever-present Past" for Renaissance Weekend (Santa Fe), 16–20 February 2017.
- "How to Play the Mesopotamian Game of Twenty Squares." Invited Lecture for the Oriental Institute Volunteer Program. University of Chicago, 11 April 2016.
- "Mapping Stars and Planets Until the Zodiac." 37th Annual Humanities Day at the University of Chicago, 17 Oct 2015.
- "Astronomy and Medicine in Ancient Mesopotamia." The Program *Adler After Dark: Terra Firma*. Adler Planetarium (Chicago), 15 May 2014.
- "Mesopotamian Texts and the Knowledge Assumptions of Medical Diagnosis." Fall 2012 Mini-series on *Medicine and Magic in the Ancient World: A Search for the Cure*. Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 27 October 2012.

COURSES TAUGHT — University of Chicago (2012–)

- *Science, Culture, & Society in Western Civilization I: Ancient Greek and Roman Science*
— Annual Undergraduate Core Course in the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Science and Medicine Program
- *Before the Zodiac: Astronomy and Mathematics as Ancient Culture*
— Signature Humanities Undergraduate Course
- *Akkadian Astronomical Texts*
- *Cuneiform Mathematics*
- *Akkadian Medical Texts*
- Lecturer in "Historiography of Ancient Science and Medicine"
— Module for the Annual Core Course: *Approaches to the Study of the Ancient Near East*
- *Akkadian Literature: Late Period*
- *Assyrian Dialect*
- *Intermediate Akkadian: Myths of Creation and Destruction*
- *Introduction to Babylonian III: Divinatory Texts*
- *Elementary Akkadian*
- *Elementary Sumerian*

LANGUAGES STUDIED

- Conversant in English (native), Chinese, Japanese; Proficient in the Academic Use of Sumerian, Akkadian, Classical & Koine Greek, Latin, German, French; with Secondary Proficiencies in Egyptian, Aramaic, Hebrew, Ugaritic, Phoenician, Canaanite dialects, Old Persian.