

Ars Computi

WESLEY M. STEVENS

University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Canada. email: w.stevens@uwinnipeg.ca

ABSTRACT. The discipline of reckoning was the basis for medieval education in mathematics and astronomy. Especially practical for the attention of masters and students was the calendar which had to coordinate the cycles of sun and moon by means of numeric formulae and geometric models. But which calendar? There were tables of data for different cycles and alternate ways of dealing with them. Some of those differences resulted in arguments between scholars and schools with different dates for the same events recorded in calendars. Those differences stimulated studies in every monastic school in Europe for several centuries.

From the evidence of Latin manuscripts, I shall illustrate actual classroom studies in mathematics and astronomy during the ninth century. Further, I shall suggest ways of improving our modern instruction by the introduction of some of those historic reckonings which were both theoretical and practical.

