Meton Encyclopedia Article

Meton

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fl. fifth century B.C.

Athenian astronomer who introduced the 19-year luni-solar calendric cycle known today as the Metonic cycle—the period after which the Moon's phases recur on the same day of the year. Possibly influenced by a similar Babylonian cycle, Meton's purpose was to provide a fixed calendrical system for recording astronomical observations. His observations, conducted with Euktemon around 433 B.C., are the earliest known serious astronomical observations by Greeks. They also established the solstitial points.