

Managing Editor's Column

Vol. 5, No. 1; January 28, 1999

Dear Readers:

Welcome to the first issue of Volume 5 of J.UCS. I trust you will find the papers of interest. Please try to advertise J.UCS a bit with your friends and colleagues: encourage them both to have a look at it once in a while and also to consider it as possible medium for publication!

Yours cordially,



Hermann Maurer
email: hmaurer@iicm.edu

PS: This is not only the beginning of Volume 5 of J.UCS, but also the beginning of the year 1999. We all have been reminded many times already that this is a very special year: the media keep calling it the last year of the millenium. But it certainly is NOT, it's only the last but one year! The reason for this is that there is no year 0. There is a year 1 B.C. (i.e. a year -1) and a year 1 A.D. (i.e. a year +1), but according to all large encyclopedias I checked no year 0! Have you ever thought about the other funny consequences, beyond the fact that the start of the third millenium is Jan.1, 2001 and not Jan.1, 2000? When you count how many years there are between two years you always just subtract: i.e. it took e.g. 4 years to get from August 1993 to August 1997, right? ($1997 - 1993 = 4$). However, such subtractions give the wrong result if you cross the border between B.C. and A.D.: the temple that was built between August 5 B.C. (i.e. year - 5) to August 3 A.D. (i.e. year +3) did not require $3 - (-5) = 8$ years to build, but just 7 years! Here is another curiosity: when was Jesus born? Since he was not born exactly at the time of change of years he was born at some point in some year. This year must be either 1 B.C. (But how can this be? Jesus lived already at the end of that year!) or 1 A.D. (But how can this be? At the beginning of 1 A.D. he was not born yet!). Thus, maybe there should be a year 0, after all (the year in which the birth of Jesus occured)... but this is NOT how years are counted in historical publications! There is one further complicating exception: in astronomy they use the year 0 (!) which makes the correlation of historic dates and astronomical dates dicey! Well, sorry for bothering you with such non-J.UCS related matters, but it is carneval time, so this is my excuse!