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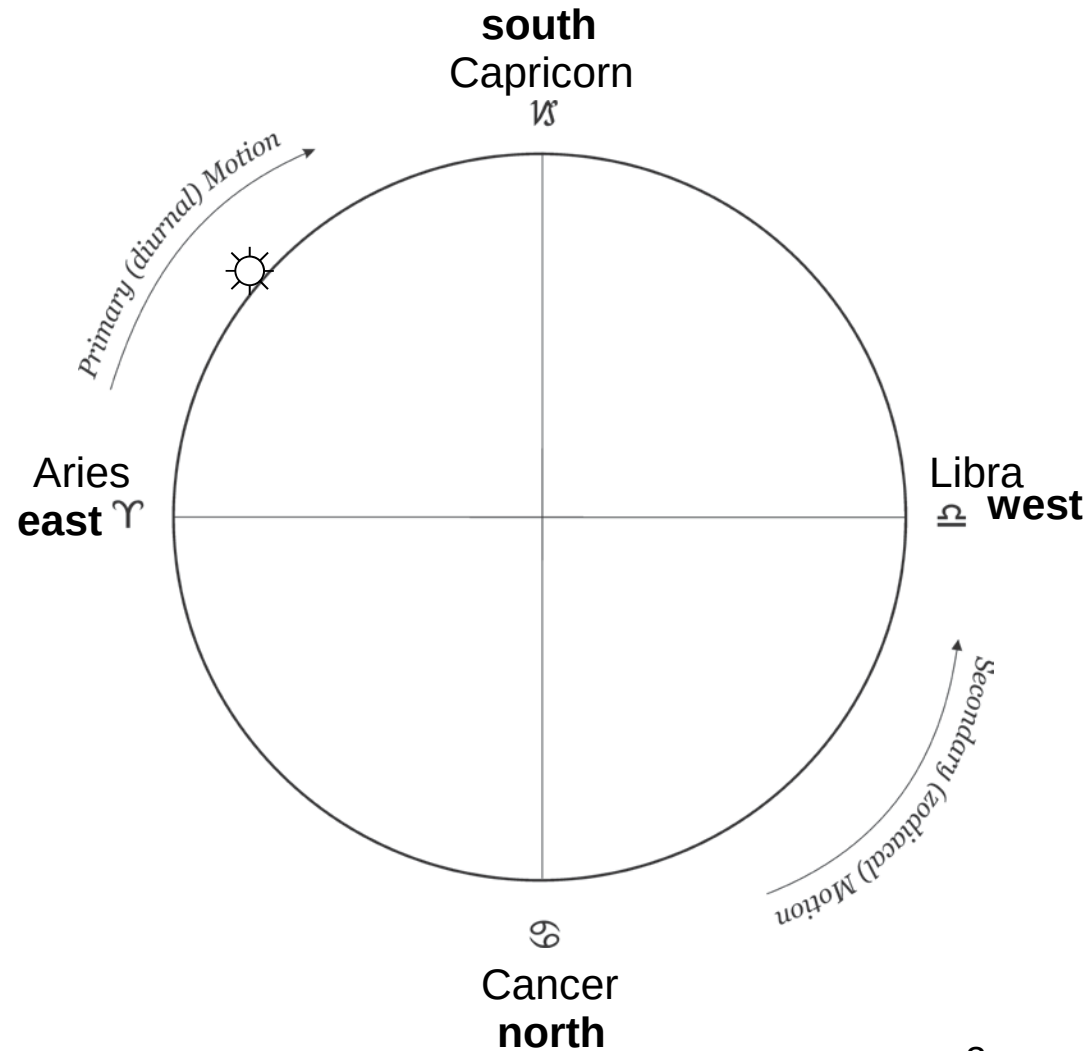
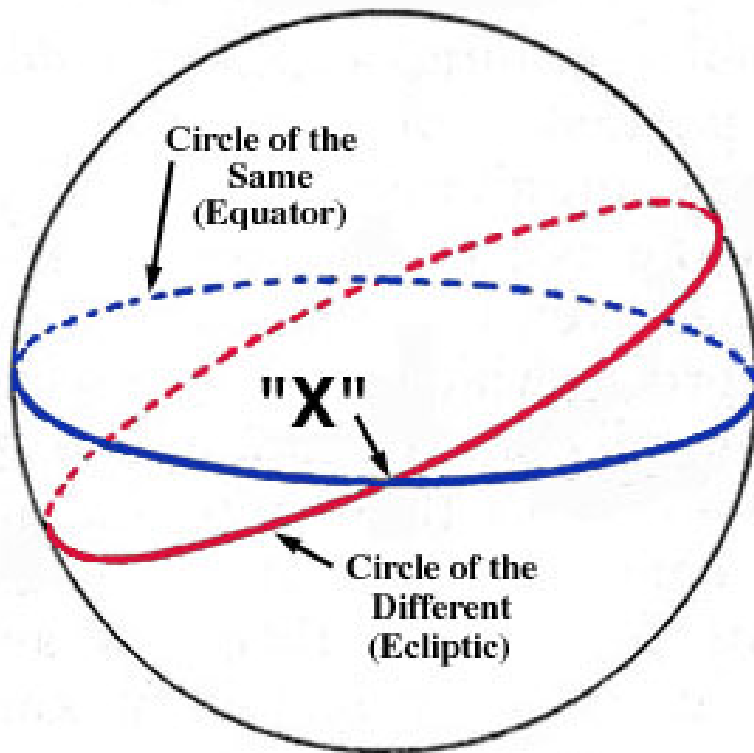
Hellenistic Astrology and its Place within Divinatory Practices

Dr Dorian Greenbaum
Cosmology, Magic and Divination
Seminar 7
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The Rise of Astrology in the Greco-Roman World (1)

- Plato (*Timaeus*)
- “What about which of [the gods] come into conjunction and opposition with one another, and in what order they pass in front of one another, and at what times any of them are veiled from our sight and then reappear, [so that] they send fears and signs of the future to those [un]able to calculate?” (40d)
(trans. Waterfield, modified)

Primary and Secondary Motion: The Same and the Other/Different (*Timaeus* 36b-d)



The Rise of Astrology in the Greco-Roman World (2)

- Plato (*Timaeus*)
- “heavenly kind of gods” (39e-40a)
- “the visible and generated gods” (40d)
- *Epinomis*: “let none of us ever idly suppose that some of them are gods while others are not...but let us all declare and say that they are all cognate.” (986b)

The Rise of Astrology in the Greco-Roman World (3)

- Stoics (Zeno as described by Cicero):
- [gods] “Moreover, they are endowed with supreme beauty of form, and situated in the purest region of the heavens, so that they move and regulate their courses in such a manner that they seem to be conspiring together to preserve and protect all things.” (Cicero, *De natura deorum* II, 23) (trans. Rackham, modified)

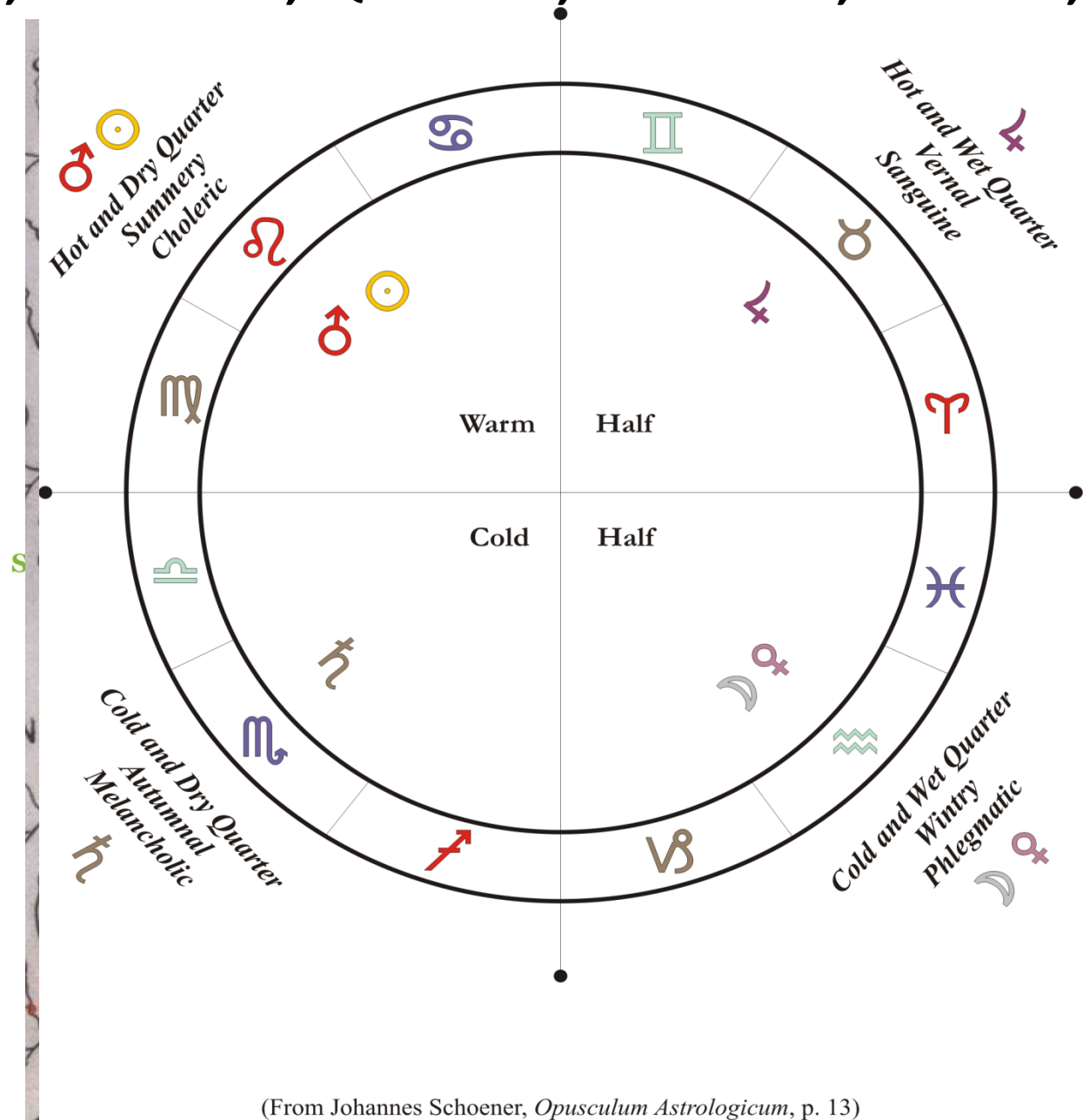
The Rise of Astrology in the Greco-Roman World (4)

The Physical World of Heaven and Earth

- Aristotle (qualities and elements)
- *On Coming-to-be and Passing-away* (a.k.a. *On Generation and Corruption*) II, 3 [330b])
- Fire = hot and dry
- Earth = cold and dry
- Air = hot and wet
- Water = cold and wet
- Stoics (elements and qualities)
 - Fire and Air are active; Earth and Water are passive
 - Fire and Air form *pneuma* (breath)
 - Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 7.137:
 - Fire = hot
 - Earth = dry
 - Air = cold
 - Water = wet

The Rise of Astrology in the Greco-Roman World (5)

Seasons, Elements, Qualities, Humours, Planets, Signs



Arrangement of the Places and their Names

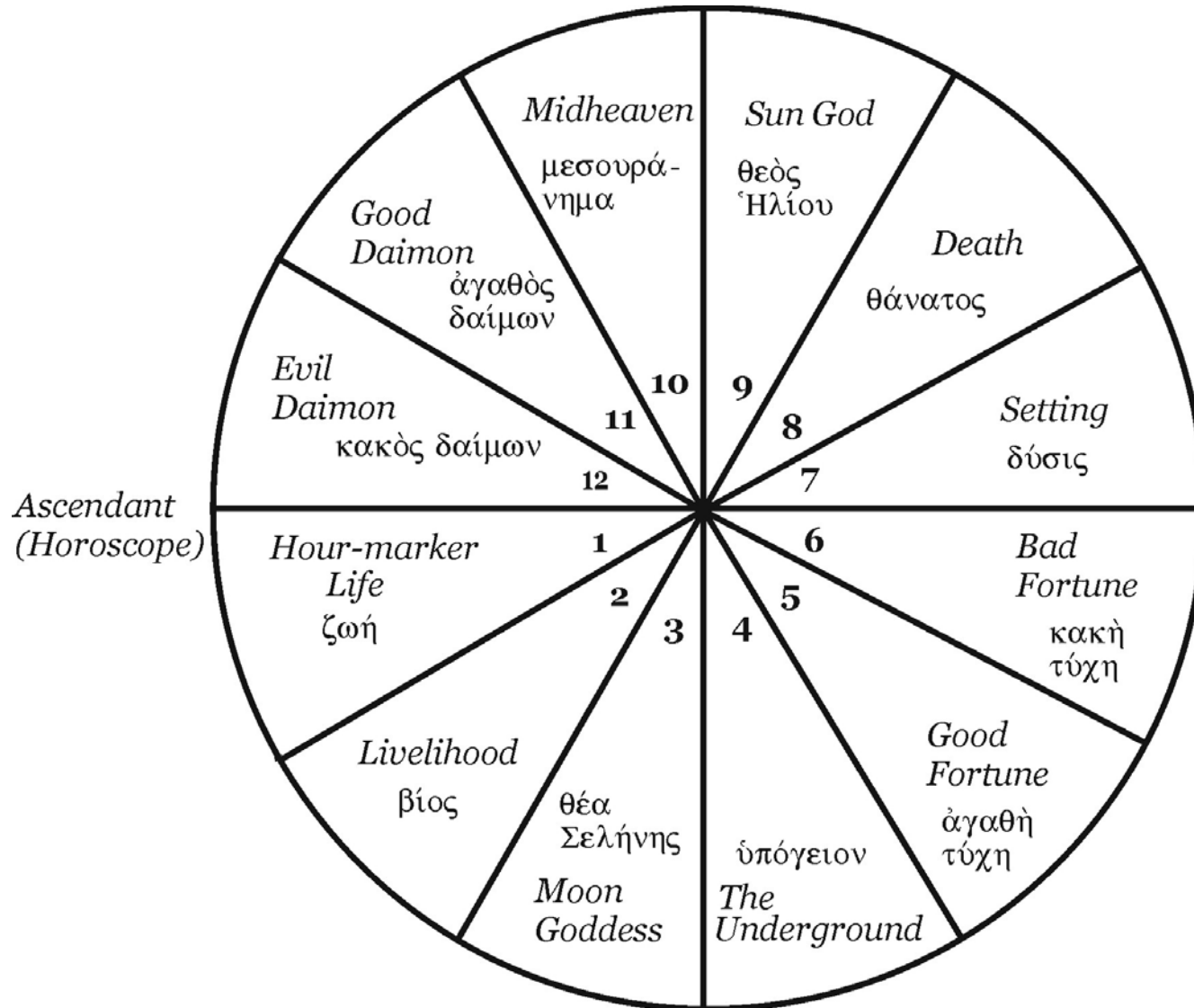


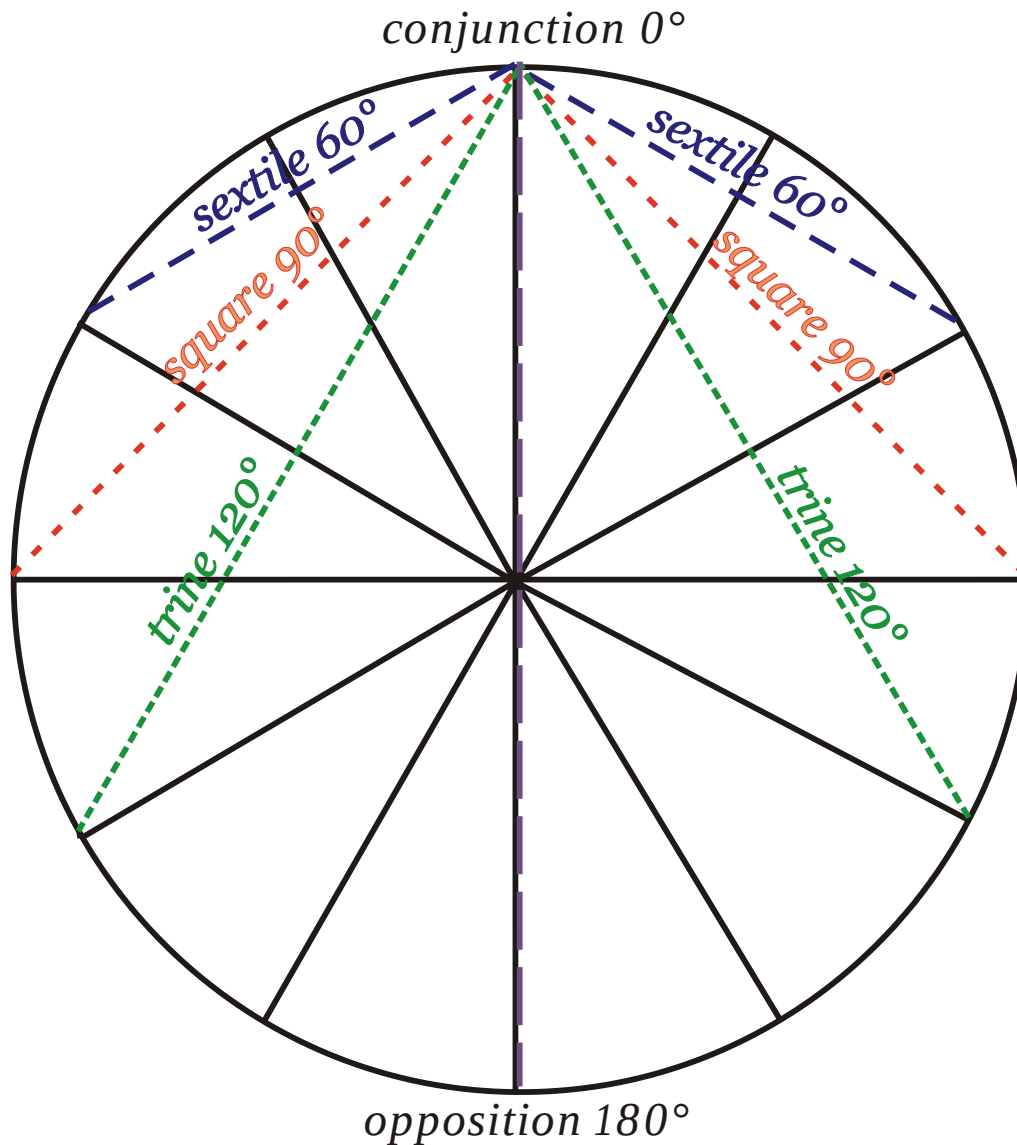
Table of Rulerships

Sg.	Houses of the Planets	Exalta- tion of the Planets	Triplcity Rulers		The Terms of the Planets According to the Egyptians						The Faces of the Planets			Detr.	Fall
			Day	Night											
♈	♂ D.	☉ 19	☉	♄	♄ 6	♀ 12	♂ 20	♂ 25	♄ 30	♂ 10	☉ 20	♀ 30	♀	♄	
♉	♀ N.	♌ 3	♀	♌	♀ 8	♂ 14	♄ 22	♄ 27	♂ 30	♂ 10	♌ 20	♄ 30	♂		
♊	♂ D.	♍ 3	♄	♂	♂ 6	♄ 12	♀ 17	♂ 24	♄ 30	♄ 10	♂ 20	☉ 30	♄	♌	
♋	♌ N. D.	♄ 15	♀	♂	♂ 7	♀ 13	♂ 19	♄ 26	♄ 30	♀ 10	♂ 20	♌ 30	♄	♌	
♌	☉ D. N.		☉	♄	♄ 6	♀ 11	♄ 18	♂ 24	♂ 30	♄ 10	♄ 20	♂ 30	♄		
♍	♀ N.	♂ 15	♀	♌	♂ 7	♀ 17	♄ 21	♂ 28	♄ 30	☉ 10	♀ 20	♂ 30	♄	♀	
♎	♀ D.	♄ 21	♄	♂	♄ 6	♂ 14	♄ 21	♀ 28	♂ 30	♌ 10	♄ 20	♄ 30	♂	☉	
♏	♂ N.		♀	♂	♂ 7	♀ 11	♂ 19	♄ 24	♄ 30	♂ 10	☉ 20	♀ 30	♀	♌	
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♑	♄ N.	♂ 28	♀	♌	♂ 7	♄ 14	♀ 22	♄ 26	♂ 30	♄ 10	♂ 20	☉ 30	♌	♄	
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♓	♄ N.	♀ 27	♀	♂	♀ 12	♄ 16	♂ 19	♂ 28	♄ 30	♄ 10	♄ 20	♂ 30	♂	♂	

Table Design by Robert Hand

Note: The degrees given in this table must be read as the ending longitude and should be interpreted as being an exact longitude X°00'00.00".

Aspects



Astrological Board from Grand, France, showing Signs, Terms and Decans



Origins of Hellenistic Astrology

- Developed out of astral omens and religious ritual involving stars and sky
- Babylon/Mesopotamia (astral omens, birthcharts)
- Egypt (Ascendant and Midheaven; decans)
- Greece (some cosmology, systematization, symmetry)
- Persia
- It is a mongrel

Pingree's Theory

However, sometime in the late 2nd or early 1st century B.C. someone, perhaps in Egypt, invented genethialogical astrology, which assumes an Aristotelian universe in which the earth at the center, consisting of the four sublunar elements, is surrounded by the eternally circling spheres of the seven planets in the so-called Hellenistic order (Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn).

From Astral Omens to Astrology: From Babylon to Bīkāner,
Rome: Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 1997, p. 26

Rebutting Pingree's Theory

- 'Someone...invented genethliological astrology'
- 'in the late 2nd or early 1st century BC'
- 'which assumes an Aristotelian universe in which the earth at the center, consisting of the four sub-lunar elements...'
- 'surrounded by the eternally circling spheres of the seven planets in the so-called Hellenistic order'

Astrology and Divination (1)

- Is astrology divination? Historically, yes
 - Uses words and practices similar to other forms of divination
 - Cicero
 - Modern scholarship (with exceptions)
- ‘Natural’ and ‘Judicial’ astrology
 - No ontological distinction between these two in antiquity: natural events (weather, moon, eclipses) could influence life on earth, but both natural and ‘judicial’ [making judgements] astrology were intrinsically connected by similar doctrines and practices

[Astrology and Divination (2)]

Student Presentation: Omens and Astrology

Pingree rejects connection between astral omens and astrology (*Astral Omens to Astrology*, pp. 21-22)

"...the notion that the planets, in their eternal rotations about the earth, transmit motion (change) to the four elements and to the assemblages of elements, animate and inanimate, in the sublunar world. This theory is completely different from that of celestial omens, in which the gods, whose physical manifestations are the constellations and planets, send messages concerning their intentions regarding kings and countries by means of celestial phenomena. That these divine intentions can be altered by the use of propitiatory rituals...emphasizes the fundamental conceptual difference between omens and astrology."

Astrology and Divination (3)

- Whether astrology is divination is a debate among modern astrologers
 - Why? Because of historic differentiation of parts of astrology?
 - Divination as fortune-telling?
 - Astrology as science more respectable?
 - Influence of Ptolemy? Pingree?

Astrology and Divination (4)

- Branches of astrology
 - Natal astrology (for Ptolemy, ‘seed moment’[?])
 - Mundane or universal (*katholikos*) astrology (includes weather, some medical, comets, earthquakes)
 - Katarchic astrology (inceptions) (elections, events, interrogations, decumbitures)
- Ptolemy’s position
 - Astrology is stochastic
 - Interested in physical causation; the physical relationship between the heavens and the earth
 - [Does not mention katarchic astrology in the sense of electing times, but does talk about the birth moment as a ‘katarche’]

Katarchic astrology (1)

- The word itself associated with religious ritual and beginning things at a propitious time (*kairos*)

kairos (καῖρός): propitious time; the 'right' time; critical time, season, opportunity*

- *Katarchē* means beginning, but a special kind of beginning, one associated with ritual – this word came into astrology

katarchē (καταρχή): (in religious sense) beginning of the sacrificial ceremony or rite; consecration of the victim first offered;* (in astrology) astrologically significant moment for beginning something

*Source: Liddell, Scott, Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. s.v. καῖρός, καταρχή

- Elections
- Events
- Interrogations (Horary)
- Decumbiture

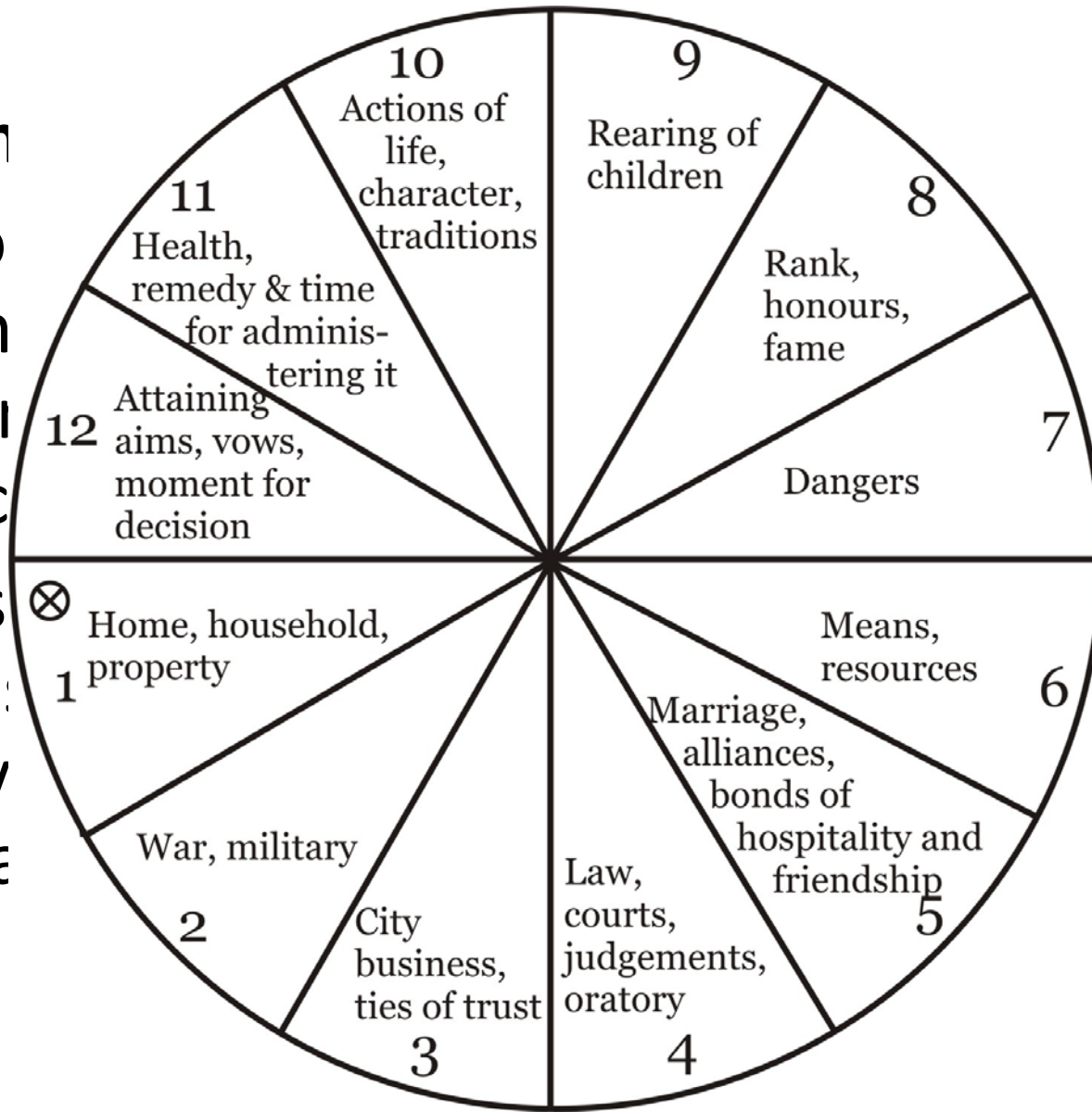
Katarchic astrology (2)

- **Porphry** on astrology in ritual:

““But these [who generate effective images],” the letter says, “observe the movement of the heavenly bodies, and they tell, from the presiding of a given star with another or others around the heavens, whether the divination will be true or false, and whether the rites performed will be of no purpose, or have annunciatory power and bring about the [desired] effects (*apotelestika*).”” *Letter to Anebo* 2.6c Sodano = *DM* III.30 [173.7-10] trans. Clarke/Dillon/Hershbell, modified

Katarchic astrology (3)

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Katarchic astrology (4)

- **Dorotheus**
- Pentateuch V, 17: '[title] The courtship of a woman, and what occurs between a wife and her husband when she quarrels and scolds and departs from her house publicly. If you want to know, if she returns to him, whether he will profit from her or will see joy and happiness or other than this in her, then look at the hour in which you are asked about this at the position of the Sun and of Venus.'
- Sim. in Heph. III, 11.2: '[According to] the *katarchē* in which the separation has come to be, or *even in which hour someone inquires of you* [my italics], look at Aphrodite and the Sun.' [my trans.]

Katarchic astrology (5)

- **Valens**

Astrology is provided by the gods to those with the proper outlook (like Valens):

“...but when I lit upon the divine and revered theory of the heavens, I wished to purify my way of life of every vice and pollution, and anticipate the immortal soul. From that point divine things seemed to converse with me, and I acquired the intellectual capacity for sober investigation.” (VI, 1.15-16) [my trans.]

Katarchic astrology (6)

For Valens, the *katarchē* must be synchronised with the ‘right moment’ (*kairos*):

Whence for every *katarchē* one must observe carefully, in putting out a fleet and military command.... Truly, it is useless to sacrifice to god or to consecrate offerings; for prayers will not be answered and god will not let himself be worshipped, but he will be called upon idly and ineffectively. (V, 2.22, 23)

And the right moment is coordinated with the movement of the stars:

“...the authority of the *katarchē* for beginning the action coming to be in accordance with the cosmic movement...” (IX, 12.31)

Katarchic astrology (7)

- **Hephaestio** devotes a whole book of his treatise to katarchic astrology

Apotelesmatika III, 4: title: “How one might know beforehand the questions of those wishing to investigate from a *katarchē*”

Apotelesmatika III, 4.1:

“Someone may learn the prior circumstances of those who are approaching and want to know predictions from a *katarche*, by making the inspection according to a general and panoramic form similar in method, especially, to that used for nativities.’

(My translation.)

Rituals and Timing

Mesopotamia

- Texts giving the appropriate time to perform a ritual: UD.DA.KAM (*adannu*) (Bodi 2019)
- These texts are based first on the month and day (STT 300, late 7th cent. BCE), and later correlated to zodiacal signs (BRM 4.19, BRM 4.20, late 4th cent. BCE)
- Erica Reiner: 'By determining the propitious time for initiating an activity, the genre represents an early example of the process known as catarchic astrology.' [*Astral Magic in Babylonia*, p. 111]

Katarchic astrology and Greek Ritual

- **Hephaestio**

Apotelesmatika III, 16.11:

“The composed *katarchē* points out each [part of the ritual] before the opening of the animal: the Hour-marker reveals the one making the sacrifice; the Setting [place] that which is sacrificed or the sacrificial victim; the Midheaven the god or gods; the Underground [place] the reason for the altar, the completion of the matter and how it is sacrificed. One must carefully consider the stars – in what places they are, their position and phase, and the four lots – Fortune, Daimon, Necessity, Love.”

Trans. Greenbaum

Katarchic Astrology and Greek Ritual (2)

Iamblichus, *Kairos* and Ritual

- The importance of the right time for **Iamblichus**:
‘Taking his cue from the Egyptian astrologers, he is aware of the opportune moment (*kairos*) at which theurgic rituals, leading the soul to realms beyond fate and toward the highest god, should be begun: but they recommend that we ascend through the practice of sacred theurgy to the regions that are higher, more universal and superior to fate, towards the god who is the creator, without calling in the aid of matter or bringing to bear anything other than *the observation of the opportune moment (kairos)*.’

De mysteriis VIII, 4, 267.6-10, trans.
Clarke/Dillon/Hershbell, slightly modified

Scholars on the use and antiquity of katarthic astrology

- **Richard Gordon:** 'To judge by the range of such issues, katarthic astrology must have been extremely important in practitioners' daily business.... ...There can be little question that this relative neglect [of katarthic astrology in astrology manuals] is due not to the lack of significance of katarthic astrology in daily life but to the social and intellectual interest focused on the relationship between genethliacal astrology, the imperial power and the struggle to control such knowledge by legal means.' 'Will my child have a big nose?', p. 101
- **Auguste Bouché-Leclercq:** '...clients who asked them [astrologers] if the moment was favourable or not for such an enterprise. This kind of method, known by the name 'Initiatives' (Καταρχαί) or opportunities, was the normal occupation and the fuel of popular astrology. It contains the germ of genethliology, which came from it and which returned as a hybrid combination, as we will see in due course.'
L'astrologie grecque, p. 83 (my trans.)
'...clients qui leur demandaient si le moment était ou non favorable pour telle entreprise. Ce genre de calculs, connu sous le nom d'"Initiatives" (Καταρχαί) ou opportunités, a été l'occupation normale et l'aliment de l'astrologie populaire. Il contient en germe la généthliologie, qui en est sortie et qui y est rentrée à l' état de combinaison hybride, comme nous le verrons en temps et lieu.'
- **Wolfgang Hübner:** 'By the middle of the 1st cent. CE at the latest, the doctrine [of katarthic astrology] was essentially fully developed.' *Raum, Zeit und soziales Rollenspiel der vier Kardinalpunkte in der antiken Katarchenhoroskopie*, p. 245 (my trans.)

'Spätestens seit der Mitte des ersten Jh. n. Chr. ist die Lehre im wesentlichen voll entwickelt.'

Oracles and Astrology: Different ways to answer the same questions

Oracle Topics

- Buying property, building buildings
- Business; trade; buying or selling property
- Marriage
- Travel
- Travel/Sea voyages
- Health and disease
- Journeys abroad
- Slavery
- Crime (esp. stolen property)
- Ritual activity
- Inquiry questions/What client is thinking
- Military campaigns
- Requests for truth
- Treasure

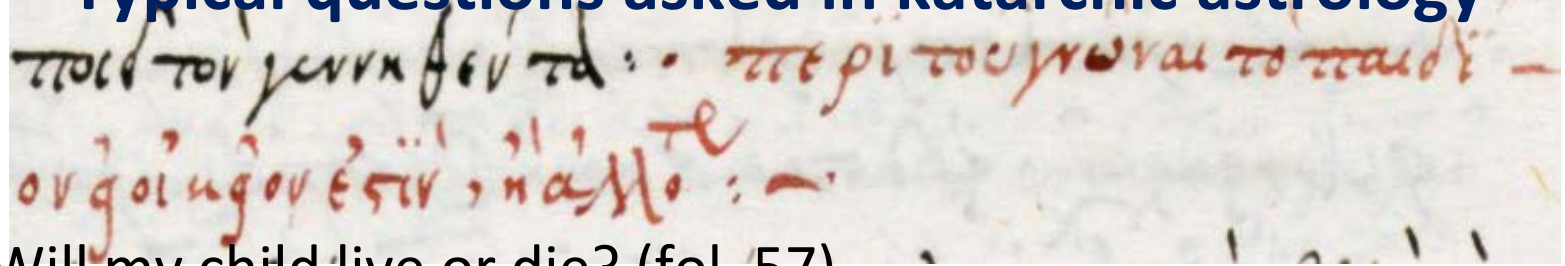
Topics from Eidinow 2007, pp. 72-121

Katarchic Question Topics

- Building
- Buying and Selling
- Marriage
- Journeys
- Ships/Voyages
- Letters
- Sickness
- Exile, foreign journeys
- Fugitives/Slaves
- Theft
- Rituals
- Thought-reading
- Adversaries/who will win (later Military)
- Truth of a report

Topics from Dorotheus V and Hephaestio III

Typical questions asked in katarchic astrology



- Will my child live or die? (fol. 57)
- Is the unborn child mine or from another? (fol. 66)
- What blessings and what harm will befall me? (fol. 199)
- Reading a sealed letter (fol. 206v)
- Finding a thief (Erasistratus fol. 210v; Dor. V 35; Heph. III 42-46)
- If you are asked about a time when goods are stolen... (Dor. V 35, 1)
- Moving house (fol. 220); moving residence abroad (fol. 223v)
- If two adversaries argue and plead before a judge, which will be successful (Dor. V 33 title)
- Will I find the slave/Will the slave return? (Serapion fol. 226v; Dor. V 36.77; Heph. III 47)
- Buying land and residing there (fol. 230)

Porphyry on trifling questions

- ‘Vain has their study of wisdom been, who worried the divine mind about finding a runaway slave, or buying a farm, or if a marriage or business deal should happen...’
 - *Letter to Anebo*, II.19b, ed. Sodano, p. 30 (my translation)

Astrology and Oracles

Oracle Topics/Questions

Topics: buying property, building, buying & selling, marriage, travel, health, journeys abroad, slavery, crime, rituals, military campaigns, requests for truth

of safety and fortune' [E, p. 111]

'Whether the child with which Annyla is pregnant is not from him? [E, p. 120]

'Whether he will do better if he migrates to Alyzea? [E, p. 76]

[asked by a slave] What will happen to me if I leave? [E, p. 102]

'Whether...what he has on his mind you also foretell as an oracle [E, p. 121]

'Did Dorkilos steal the cloth?' [E, p. 117]

Katarchic Topics/Questions

Topics: building, buying & selling, marriage, journeys, voyages, letters, sickness, exile, slaves, theft, ritual, truth of a report

What good or bad things will happen to me?' [fol. 199]

'Is the unborn child from mine or another?' [fol. 66]

'If you are asked about a man, whether he will depart from his land and his city or travel from it' [Dor. V, 34.1]

'the one inquiring about freeing slaves (slave's viewpoint) [Heph. III, 21.2-3]

'To know what someone wants to ask, from the Lot of Fortune [fol. 200 ch. 7]

'To know the name of the thief' [fol. 21v]

Astrology and Oracles

Oracular Language in Astrology

- **Maximus of Ephesus**, 4th c. CE (astrologer associated with the Emperor Julian)
- Astrological poem on katarche: *On Initiatives* Περὶ καταρχῶν – critical edition and translation (French) 2016 by Nicola Zito
- Maximus uses oracular language and style in his poem
- Formulaic words of the Pythia: *ameinon* and *loion*, ‘better’, ‘more desirable’ The Pythia says: ‘it is/will be more desirable and better’ λώιον καὶ ἄμεινον ἐστὶν/ἔσται
- Maximus uses these same words, and so does **Dorotheus** in a passage on buying and selling (poem: Heph. III, 16.13-17)
- The use of ‘if’ in katarchic questions recalls its use in oracles
- Plutarch, *The E at Delphi*, 386C: ‘IF they will be victorious, IF they shall marry, IF it is to their advantage to sail the sea, IF to take to farming, IF to go abroad...’ (trans. Babbitt)

Citations from Zito 2016, pp. lvi-lviii

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