

MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Introduction to Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Week 3: Astrology and Culture
Required Reading
Nick Campion

The reading for this week includes material by western astrologers, ancient and modern, and historians, and other commentators. Most astrology texts, and this is true going back to the earliest cuneiform records, are technical, offering guidelines or rules for interpretation. Discussions of what astrology or how and why it works by astrologers are therefore limited and, in recent literature, outnumbered by sometimes hostile accounts by outsider critics. This week's reading can be expanded by using any astrology book or web site, as long as you realise that such material constitutes the primary source material that you should be subjecting to a critical, scholarly eye.

A note on Primary Sources

It is important to distinguish between the secondary, scholarly, material, which is scarce, and the primary source material, which is extensive (less so for old print material, excessively so for current web-based material). It is necessary in academic work to use primary sources. This week the primary sources – the raw data – consists of any material, texts or artefacts, produced by astrologers. We have made a few suggestions, but you should also conduct your own search.

For this week, astrological texts are the primary raw material, like fragments of pottery to archaeologists, price-date to economists or laboratory results to chemists: they provide the source evidence on the basis of which academic theories about astrology's nature and function can be proposed and contested. We have separated the required reading into primary and secondary sources in order to make the distinction clear.

Because the modern web-based material is so extensive and accessible, particular discipline may be required to avoid too much reading. After the required reading, we suggest you confine yourself to checking out some of the sources in case you need to come back to them at a later stage.

However, a quick search of almost any link will reveal competing stories about the nature of the cosmos, the way astrology works, destiny and determinism, and so on.

As an example, relevant to early 2011, look at this discussion of the supposed birth time of Julian Assange, the founder of Wikileaks:

<http://mountainastrologer.com/tma/birth-time-for-julian-assange#comments>

One last word on the week's reading: it tends to be Eurocentric, with the exception of the two pieces by Kemper. This, again, reflects the fact that we are working in what is essentially a new academic area.

Required Reading: Primary Sources

The bias of our material is from western astrology because the vast majority of the available material is from the western tradition. Sources from other cultures will make their way into other modules, but until more material is available we can see the dominance of western material as a product of the dominance of western culture as a whole, as well as the restrictions of studying in the English language and therefore being dependent on English language sources. We have included a couple of papers on astrology in Sri Lanka in the optional secondary reading, and you can follow up other references in Campion, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions*

Claudius Ptolemy, Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. F.E.Robbins, Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 1940. book 1, chapters 1 -3.
Online access through the University library

This is one of the most important books in the western astrological tradition. Written in 2nd century CE Alexandria it is significant for a number of reasons: (1) it is one of the earliest compendia of classical Greek astrology, (2) it is the first work to put forward a naturalistic definition of astrology as based on lunar influences rather than divine intent and (3) because Ptolemy was regarded in the Islamic world, as well as medieval and Renaissance Europe, as one of the greatest, if not the greatest astronomer, his work on astrology was regarded as the core text in the discipline.

(The Robbins translation is also online at
<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Ptolemy/Tetrabiblos/home.html>

There is an older English translation by J.M. Ashman (Claudius Ptolemy, Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans.J.M. Ashmand, London: Davis and Dickson (1822)), <http://www.astrologiamedieval.com/tabelas/Tetrabiblos.pdf>, You should now use the Robbins translation, but the Ashmand translation tells us what English-speaking historians and astrologers had access to until 1940).

Rudhyar, Dane, 'The Birth Chart as a Celestial Message', An Address to the 1976 Convention of the American Federation of Astrologers',
<http://www.khaldea.com/rudhyar/astroarticles/celestialmessage.shtml>

We recommend Dane Rudhyar because he was one of the most influential of 20th century American astrologers, and was the first to effectively combine theosophy with depth psychology. This document summarises his views on the value of astrology. You should be routinely looking online for primary sources by astrologers, as well as reading articles and books.

Required Reading: Secondary Sources

Nick Campion's notes: 'Definitions of Astrology'.

Brady, Bernadette, 'The Horoscope as an Imago Mundi: Rethinking the Nature of the Astrologer's Map', in *Astrologies*, Nicholas Campion and Liz Greene (eds.), Sophia Centre Press, 2011, pp. 47-61.

PDF ON MOODLE

Campion, Nicholas, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), chapters 4 and 5.

Online access through the University library

Campion, Nicholas, 'Astrology as Cultural Astronomy', in Clive Ruggles, ed., *Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy*, Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2013, pp. 103-116. <http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4614-6141-8>

Online through the University Library

Campion, Nicholas, 'Defining Astrology in Ancient and Classical History', in 2015: (N. Campion, F. Pimenta, N. Ribeiro, F. Silva, A. Joaquineto and L. Tirapicos (eds), *Stars and Stones: Voyages in Archaeoastronomy and Cultural Astronomy – a Meeting of Different Worlds* (Oxford: British Archaeology Reports, May 2015), pp. 84-9.

<http://www.barpublishing.com/seac-2011-stars-and-stones-voyages-in-archaeoastronomy-and-cultural-astronomy.html>

Campion, Nicholas, *A History of Western Astrology*, Vol. 2, The Medieval and Modern Worlds, London: Continuum, 2009, chapter 20.

Online through the University Library

Campion, Nicholas, *Astrology and Popular Religion in the Modern West: Prophecy, Cosmology and the New Age Movement* (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2012; London: Routledge 2015).

Online through the University Library

You should read this book in its entirety during the course of the programme, but this week just read chapter 1,

Curry, Patrick, 'Grounding the Stars: towards an ecological theory', *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, 2007, Vol 1 no 2, pp. 210-9.

Online through the University Library

(You should use the version through the University library, but Patrick has also posted it on his website at

<http://www.patrickcurry.co.uk/papers/GroundingtheStars.pdf>)

Greene, Liz, 'Is Astrology a Divinatory System?', *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 12 no 1, Spring/Summer, pp. 3-29.

On line via *Culture and Cosmos*

Gunzburg, Darrelyn, 'The Horoscopic Place: The Encounter between Astrologer and Client' *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, 2019, Vol. 13 no 1, pp. 44-60.

Online access through the University library