

MA Cultural Astronomy and Astrology

Astrology, History, Spirit and Soul

Week 3

Required Reading

Astrology in Classical Civilisation

Note on primary sources.

There is an extra emphasis on primary sources this week as the Greek astrological worlds are the original sources for the whole western tradition of horoscopic astrology. It is therefore important to gain an understanding of their broad principles (but not their technical details). Remember that you are NOT learning how to be a classical astrologer. These texts can be complex, partly because the original texts are complex, partly because the translations are not as clear as they could be (as in Ptolemy), and partly because, unless you have already studied classical astrology, there will be words which are unfamiliar to you (if so, we suggest you use an on-line dictionary). If English is not your first language, then you may also find the sentence structure convoluted. Don't let such problems get in your way. You need instead, to note the style of argument, the kinds of meanings attributed to the planets and zodiac, and how they function, and any indications of philosophical context. If English is not your first language, feel free to use other translations. If you have any knowledge of Greek or Latin, you may consult the originals.

Please note

We have listed all the sources below as required. You should not read the entire works. Rather we mean that you should consult them so that you know where they are and what they contain so that you can use them, should they be relevant to your essay topic.

Required Reading for All Students

Historiography

Evans, Richard, *In Defence of History*, London: Granta Books 1997, Chapter 2.

Pingree, David, 'Hellenophilia versus the History of Science', *Isis*, 83 (1992), 554-563. (Available on JSTOR)

Secondary Sources

Campion, Nicholas, *A History of Western Astrology*, Vol. 1, The Ancient World, Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16.

Primary Sources: Astrology

Ptolemy, Claudius, *Tetrabiblos*, Book 1 Chap 1-18; Book 2, chaps 1-11; Book 3, chaps 1 to 13.

You should use the Loeb Classic Library edition online through the University Library.

Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* is in some senses idiosyncratic in the context of classical astrology, especially in his naturalistic justification for astrology. It is also often widely assumed that Ptolemy was not a practicing astrologer, and that the *Tetrabiblos* is a reference work compiled by someone with no practical experience. However, as we know nothing about Ptolemy's life, there is no support for this proposition. Regardless of its position in relation to classical astrology, the *Tetrabiblos* became one of the most important texts in the entire history of western astrology, probably due to Ptolemy's reputation as an astronomer.

Vettius Valens, *Anthology*, translated Mark Riley 2010.

<http://www.csus.edu/indiv/r/rileymt/Vettius%20Valens%20entire.pdf>

Book 1, sections 1-3.

Valen's Anthology was composed in the second century, so is roughly contemporaneous with the *Tetrabiblos*. The Greek text of the Anthology is available as Valens, Vettius, *Anthologarium*, ed. David Pingree, as Vettii Valenti Antiocheni Anthologarium, libri novem, Leipzig 1986. An alternative English translation of Books 1-4 was made by Robert Schmidt: Valens, Vettius, *The Anthology*, Books 1-4, trans Robert Schmidt, Berkeley Springs VA, Golden Hind Press 1993-1996.

Neugebauer, Otto and H.B. van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes*, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1959. NoL49, pp 79-80. (Available on Google Books).

This is the standard compendium of horoscopes from the Greek world. It gives technical details, and interpretative text where there is any. Consult more widely if you like but this is just one example.

Primary Sources: The Soul

Plato, *Republic*, 2 Vols., trans. Paul Shorey, Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press 1937, Book 10.

Book 10 includes the so-called 'Myth of Er', the account of the soul journey, the soul's descent from, and return to, the stars.

Your first option should be to use the Loeb classic edition, which should be the edition cited in your essays, and is online via the University library.

If this unavailable then access

<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.11.x.html>

Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R.G.Bury, Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press 1931.

Sections 29-37 describe the creation of the world and the emergence of the material world from the world soul.

Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans H.N. Fowler (Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 1914),

Phaedrus is a lengthy work on the nature of the soul. The most famous passage is the story of the chariot in 246A-247C: the charioteer is the rational soul, capable of freedom, and the two horses are the emotional and animal souls representing the forces which constrain human beings to fate.

Required Reading if you write about Greek astrology

Secondary Sources

Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the Gods* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, London: Routledge 2015).

Read the introduction and chapter 1 and refer to the rest as required.

(Available in the University's Online Library)

Campion, Nicholas, 'Astronomy and Psyche in the Classical World: Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Ptolemy', *Journal of Cosmology*, Vol. 9 (2010), pp. 2179-86.

<https://www.academia.edu/s/cd22a7f9f8?source=link>

Goodrick-Clark, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011), Chapter 1. (Available in the University's Online Library)

Joanna Komorowska, 'Philosophy among Astrologers', *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 11 no 1 and 2, Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter 2007 pp. 69-86.
http://www.cultureandcosmos.org/pdfs/11/11_Komorowska_Philosophy_Vol1_1.pdf

Greenbaum, Dorian Gieseler, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology: Origins and Influence*, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016, Chap 1. (Available in the University's Online Library)

This is the authoritative work on the concept of the daimon in astrology. Read Chapter 1 and then use the rest as appropriate.

Lorenz, Hendrik, "Ancient Theories of Soul", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2009 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/ancient-soul/>.

Primary Sources: the Soul

Corpus Hermeticum - John Everard, *The Divine Pymander in XVII books.* London 1650, translated by John Everard from the Ficino Latin translation, Book 2. 'Poemander'.

<https://archive.org/details/hermetica>

Two English print translations are

1. Copenhaver, Brian P., *Hermetica*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Copenhaver's translation is considered the most reliable.
2. Scott, Walter, trans. *Hermetica: the Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*, 4 Vols., Boulder: Shambala 1982. Vol 1 contains the actual translation. Vols 2-3 are commentary. Scott's translation is no longer considered reliable, but is an indication of the kind of text which has entered the wider literature.

In Copenhaver and Scott the Poemander is 'Libellus 1', or Book 1.