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THE HOROSCOPE AS AN IMAGO MUNDI: RETHINKING THE NATURE OF THE ASTROLOGER'S MAP

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ABSTRACT: Field work into belief in determinism within contemporary western astrology has revealed a wide diversity of opinion and philosophy amongst astrologers. This diversity encompasses beliefs that range from a fatalistic expectation or acceptance of God's Providence to a humanistic position of the self as the sole creator of one's life. Despite this diversity there is, however, a common unifying theme—that of the role of the horoscope, the astrologer's map. This is viewed, not as a mill-stone of determinism, as suggested by critics of astrology, but rather as a symbolic or sacred map suggestive of what Mircea Eliade defined as an *imago mundi*. That is to say a map of sacred space, where time is non-linear—*illud tempus*, used to locate an individual in a unique position within their world while at the same time providing a personal link to the cosmos.¹ In this light the horoscope can be reappraised: instead of a profane object, a simple tool or map of the solar system open to criticism for its lack of rational representation of the sky, it for the astrologer, is a sacred map belonging within the tradition of other cosmological maps from the medieval period. Such a reappraisal of the nature of the horoscope as a personal, unique cosmological map can contribute to the debates on the role that astrology plays in contemporary culture.

¹ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. and ed. Willard R. Trask (1957; repr. London: Harcourt, Inc., 1987), [Hereafter Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*], pp. 42, 70.

Astrology's existence in popular culture is considered an enigma in that it persists despite its ongoing dismissal by the scientific community. Patrick Curry writes that 'it has attracted as many as it has repelled, springing up afresh after every apparent defeat whether by science, religion, or simply "reason"'.² A less sympathetic view is expressed by Martin Ince who, after defining astrology as a form of superstition, commented: 'Astrology is apparently immune to extinction despite scientific advances and spread of education'.³ This persistence in popular culture over millennia has led scholars to attempt definitions. One such definition, put forward by David Pingree, was 'the study of the impact of the celestial bodies - Moon, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the fixed stars and sometimes the lunar nodes - upon the sublunar world'.⁴ But such clarity is not so easily found when one is looking for definitions amongst its practitioners. The English astrologer Margaret Hone (1892-1969) prefaced her definition of celestial influence on life by saying 'there are as many angles of approach to astrology as to religion or art'.⁵ Prior to this, another English astrologer, Alan Leo (1860-1917), wrote that astrology was 'the soul of astronomy, and by it the inequalities of humanity are explained'.⁶ Nicholas Campion addresses this diversity by pointing out that astrology 'will always be plagued by problems of definition' and states that astrology 'may be speculative, but it can also be operative; it involves not only myth and ritual, but also action...'.⁷

² Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 1.

³ Martin Ince, *Dictionary of Astronomy* (Teddington, Middlesex: Peter Collins Publishing, 1997), p.12.

⁴ David Pingree, 'Astrology', in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (1968; repr. New York: Scribner, 1973), p. 118.

⁵ Margaret E. Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, 5th ed. (London: L. N. Fowler & Co. Ltd, [1951] 1973), p. 16.

⁶ Alan Leo, *The Complete Dictionary of Astrology* (C 1900), ed. Vivian Robson (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1989), p. 8.

⁷ Nicholas Campion, *The Dawn of Astrology. A Cultural History of Western Astrology, the Ancient and the Classical Worlds* (London: Continuum Books, 2008), p. xi.

This diversity was apparent in my own investigation into the belief in determinism amongst practitioners of twentieth and early twenty-first century western astrology. The result of my doctoral field work, in which I surveyed over 1300 astrologers and interviewed 21 professional astrologers within the English speaking world from the period of 2007–2010, revealed that the practice of astrology contains a highly personalized and diverse set of expectations, applications and techniques. Indeed, as Campion had found earlier, with personal nuances added by each individual's spiritual beliefs or life philosophy, the idea of a single definition of astrology, or a single idea of what astrologers believed, proved difficult to sustain.⁸ However, even in the face of this diversity, the field work revealed two recurring themes. One of these themes is the prime subject of my research, that of the perceived link between the order of nature, in this case celestial determinism, and the perceived determinism of life. The second common theme was the construction and use of a map—a horoscope—to provide a unique view of the individual in time and space. All astrologers who took part in my field work constructed and worked with maps. Furthermore, while personal philosophies varied considerably, the actual diagram used to make the map was universal amongst these western astrologers. In the periphery, along the margins of my research notes, astrologers reported how they would construct diagrammatical horoscopes, carry them as mental images, discuss them with other astrologers and pursue a lifelong journey of understanding their own personal and unique map. The importance of the astrologer's map was unspoken and so accepted that it could easily have been overlooked in the research. It became apparent that, far from being an artefact of astrology, the map seemed to provide the base on which all other astrological philosophy and techniques stood.

⁸ Nicholas Campion, 'Prophecy, Cosmology and the New Age Movement. The Extent and Nature of Contemporary Belief in Astrology' Bath Spa University College, 2004), p. 257; Nicholas Campion, *What Do Astrologers Believe?* (London: Granta Books, 2006), pp. 1–11.

The diagrammatical horoscope itself appeared to be the *prima materia* of the astrologer's world. In discussing how astrologers read horoscopes, Curry commented that 'surely a horoscope is a symbolic map of someone's psyche a soul-map...' ⁹ A symbol according to Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) can be 'a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning.... Thus an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning'. ¹⁰ Additionally Jung considered that, 'the symbol is alive only so long as it is pregnant with meaning'. ¹¹ With Jung's definitions therefore the map of the sky which to the astrologer's eye was embodied with the meaning of their life became a symbol, a map that moved beyond the mundane into the sacred.

Francesca Rochberg notes that the first horoscopes came from Mesopotamia and they were list maps, a text based description of the sky, with the earliest known being dated from 410 BCE. ¹² Johannes Thomann points out that the tradition of the horoscope as a written list perpetuated into the Hellenistic period, arguing that there are only eleven known diagrams existing in more than one hundred Greek astrological documents. ¹³ He suggests that the horoscope, as a diagram rather than a list map, remained scarce in the West until Arabic influences reached the west in the twelfth century. His argument is that the diagram of the square

⁹ Roy Willis and Patrick Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture: Pulling Down the Moon* (New York: Berg, 2004), p. 62.

¹⁰ Carl G. Jung, 'Approaching the Unconscious', in *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung, et al. (London: Aldus Books, Jupiter Books, 1964), p. 20.

¹¹ Carl G. Jung, *Psychological Types*, trans. and ed. R. F. C. Hull (1923; repr., Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 815.

¹² Francesca Rochberg, *Babylonian Horoscopes* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1998), p. 3.

¹³ Johannes Thomann, 'Square Horoscope Diagrams in Middle Eastern Astrology and Chinese Cosmological Diagrams: Were These Designs Transmitted Through the Silk Road?' in *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road*, ed. Andreas Kaplony and Philippe Forêt (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 98.

horoscope was of Chinese origin and moved into the Islamic world and hence to the West via the trade of the Silk Road.¹⁴ However, once the horoscope as a diagram was established within the western astrological tradition, whether it was represented as a square diagram (see fig. 1) or in its later nineteenth-century version of a circular form (see fig. 2), it maintained its dominant position in Western astrology.¹⁵

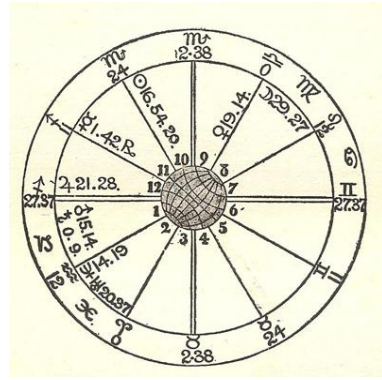
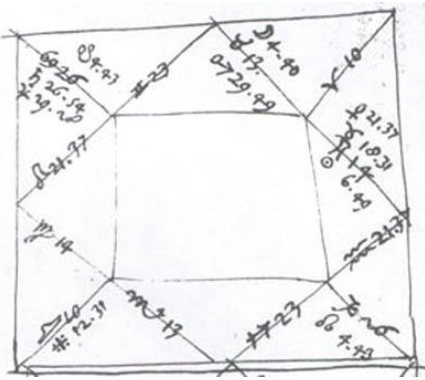


Figure 1 (left) A square chart. Galileo's self-drawn natal horoscope (dated 26 February, 1564, Pisa Italy).¹⁶ Figure 2 (right) A circular horoscope - the horoscope of King Edward VII published by Alan Leo in 1908 Data: 9 November 1841, 10:48 am, Buckingham Palace, London.¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 107–13.

¹⁵ Robert Hand argued that the circular form of the horoscope was drifting into western astrology by the time of William Lilley in the seventeenth century but was firmly established in the nineteenth century by the English astrologer Zadkiel, the pseudonym of Richard James Morrison (1795–1874). 'Astrologies' conference, Bath, UK, 24–25 July 2010.

¹⁶ Image from the *Astrologica nonnulla*, a collection of some fifty pages in Galileo's own hand and is the first volume of the sixth part of Galileo's Manuscripts at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence.

¹⁷ Alan Leo, *How to Judge a Nativity* (London: Modern Astrology, 1908), p. 282.

Whether the map is drawn as a square or a circle, it locates the zodiac, tropical or sidereal, around the perimeter of the diagram. The planets are then placed onto the zodiac band representing their celestial position at the time of birth or a moment of time. Additionally the planets and zodiac signs are aligned to represent their orientation to the individual at this moment. Unlike the earlier list maps, this style of representation places the individual in the centre. The horoscope as a diagram thus embraces the individual, inviting one into the map itself. The astrolabe and the horoscope are both orientated in a similar manner with the observer in the centre of the instrument, facing south with east on the left. In the northern hemisphere the ecliptic is located south of the observer so this orientation allowed for the planets to culminate overhead. The heavens are thus seen to move from left to right in the movement that we now define as clockwise motion. This matching orientation between a horoscope and the astrolabe may well have been due to their close association, with the astrolabe, a time finder, being used to construct horoscopes, a time marker.¹⁸ Additionally, the astrolabe and the square diagram of the horoscope were introduced into Europe at the same time.¹⁹ The similarity between the astrolabe and the horoscope potentially implied that the horoscope was meant to be a simplified map of the heavens. However this assumption was seriously challenged when European astrologers moved into the southern hemisphere.

When European astrologers, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, began to cast their maps for southern hemisphere locations, the northern hemisphere astrolabe had already been put to one side as the major instrument of time, and astrologers used sets of printed tables to orientate the zodiac around an individual.

¹⁸ Silke Ackermann, 'The Astrological Scales on the National Maritime Museum Astrolabes', in Lippincott, *Astrolabes at Greenwich*, p. 73.

¹⁹ Koenraad van Cleempoel, 'Representations of Astrolabes in Western Art', in Lippincott, *Astrolabes at Greenwich*, p. 99.

However, to create a horoscope for a birth in the southern hemisphere, a different methodology was needed with these tables.²⁰ However, even though astrologers made these adjustments to compensate for their southern latitudes, they ignored the fact that the sun actually moved in an anti-clockwise direction during the course of the day. They continued to place east on the left of their horoscopes and the point of culmination of the planets (which was now north) above the head of the individual. In doing this the astrological community revealed that they were comfortable with, or ignorant of, the contradiction that the southern hemisphere sky presented. Such disregard for the actual sky challenges the very idea that the horoscope is intended to be a simplified piece of celestial cartography and suggests instead a drive, almost in a Platonist manner, for an object's ideal form; the astrologer was seeking to create or reveal a symbolic ideal form of the individual relationship to the sky.

Indeed the map as a purely factual representation of a landscape or topography is an eighteenth-century construct. As Matthew Edney states, 'The later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries constitute a period of profound significance for modern Western cartography. From this period dates the widespread acceptance that cartography is an empirical, objective and unproblematic science concerned only with the presentation of geographic information'.²¹ Edney argues that to the eighteenth-century cartographer the world was 'deemed to be ultimately knowable through active investigation by humans...Each new investigation

²⁰Astrologers used what was known as Tables of Houses. They would, firstly, using a particular algorithm, calculate the local sidereal time, then use this, linked with the latitude, to consult a set of tables to find the rising and culminating degrees of the ecliptic. For the southern hemisphere the algorithm needed to be adjusted by 12 hours and all the zodiac signs read from the Table of Houses needed to be reversed. See Alan Leo, *Casting the Horoscope* (London: Modern Astrology, 1908), p. 41.

²¹ Matthew Edney, 'Mathematical Cosmography and the Social Ideology of British Cartography, 1780-1820', *Imago Mundi* 46 (1994): p. 101.

would add to the existing body of knowledge; that corpus would not need revision and would never become outmoded because the world was fixed'.²² This classification process of the eighteenth century sought total knowledge of the world with both natural historians and encyclopaedists pursuing full understanding, a pursuit based on the assumption of the absolute perceptibility of the world.²³ From this the concept of a map became synonymous with the idea of knowledge. For example, the eighteenth-century naturalist Carl von Linnaeus (1707–1778) eventually created a *mappa naturae* to show the outline of his taxonomic system in an attempt to bring order to the biological and geological world. As Gunnar Broberg states, Linnaeus sought to map from 'God to gravel as he aimed for a complete inventory or encyclopaedia of the world'.²⁴ The pursuit of an entire inventory of the world was also the desire to understand God's Creation, and in this way the spiritual nature of a map, once represented symbolically in medieval maps, now embraced the pursuit of factuality. These factual maps of an idea (evolution, for example) or place would produce gaps which then became the quest of explorers to fill, usually with species or places or ideas linked with the explorer's name. In this way the map became the bedrock of science, a symbol of unchangeable and fixed truth, a rock on which to stand, that which was fixed and known about the world.

However, a map in the medieval period could be as much concerned with philosophy and theology as with geography, and represent all of these positions within a single diagram. David Woodward argues that the *mappae mundi* of the medieval period were 'primarily to provide a visual narrative of Christian history cast in a geographical framework'.²⁵ In discussing the philosophy of map-making

²² Ibid., p. 104.

²³ Gunnar Broberg, 'The Broken Circle' in *The Quantifying Spirit in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. J. L. Heilbron, Tore Frängsmyr, Robin E. Rider (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), p. 45.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 55.

²⁵ David Woodward, 'Reality, Symbolism, Time and Space in Medieval World Maps', *Annals of the Association of American*

from the medieval period. Evelyn Edson states ‘... world maps were philosophical rather than practical, providing a cosmic overview rather than information for some mundane journey’.²⁶ She points out that these maps were a mixture of metaphor, history, spiritual realms and physical places arranged in a manner to help the individual undertake a lifelong spiritual pilgrimage physically or mentally.²⁷ Eliade also described such maps; for him they were traditional sacred maps. He called these maps *imago mundi* and defined their features as maps divided into quadrants by the cardinal points, which placed the sacred or known world in the centre and enabled the individual to communicate with the transcendental world by a ritual iteration of the moment of birth or origin of the world.²⁸ This constant activity of returning to the moment of origin placed the map, in Eliade’s opinion, in circular time, which he defined as sacred time, ‘indefinitely recoverable, indefinitely repeatable’.²⁹

In the nineteenth century when scholars turned their attention to medieval maps, as Woodward points out, they completely misunderstood the *mappaemundi*. From their cultural perspective they considered that all maps attempted to show factual knowledge. This anachronistic approach led to the assumption that the medieval knowledge of the world was simplistic as it appeared ill-informed – believing in a flat world and assuming that Jerusalem was located in the centre.³⁰ Today it is recognised that such maps offer information at a symbolic level, yet such an anachronistic approach is still encountered when it comes to assumptions

Geographers 75, no. 4 (1985): p. 519. [Hereafter Woodward, ‘Reality Symbolism, Time and Space in Medieval World Maps’]

²⁶ Evelyn Edson and Emilie Savage-Smith, ‘An Astrologer’s Map: A Relic of Late Antiquity’, *Imago Mundi* 52 (2000): p. 21.

²⁷ Evelyn Edson, *The World Map 1300–1492: The Persistence of Tradition and Transformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), pp. 14–15.

²⁸ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 42–45, 52.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³⁰ Woodward, ‘Reality, Symbolism, Time and Space in Medieval World Maps’, p. 510.

concerning the nature of horoscopes. Contemporary western astrologers are accused of being simplistic or ignorant because their maps are geocentric, placing the earth or more precisely the individual in the centre of the map, as well as inaccurate since they locate the planets in a way that does not represent the actual placement of the constellations. This style of judgment was displayed by Richard Dawkins when he wrote in the *Independent on Sunday* on 31 December 1995:

My birthday (26 March) is listed in the papers as Aries but this is the sun sign which somebody with my birthday would have had when Ptolemy codified all that stuff. Because of the processional shift....my sun sign is in fact (if you can call it that) Pisces. If astrologers were doing something that had any connection with reality, this presumably ought to make a difference. Since they aren't, it doesn't...³¹

Dawkins has assumed that astrologers are seeking perfection in celestial cartography. If this was the case then he would be justified in his assumption of ignorance. However, the nature of the construction of southern hemisphere horoscopes implies that the horoscope is indeed not a modern map fitting into Dawkins' idea of knowledge. Since historically the western astrologer's map has remained largely unchanged in its layout and concept since the twelfth century, it may share more with the encyclopaedic and symbolic medieval *mappaemundi* and/or Eliade's concept of an *imago mundi* than with modern cartography.

In an interview conducted in August 2009, Melanie Reinhart, a professional consulting astrologer and author who lives in England, mirrored Eliade's concept of a sacred map with which one personally engaged as well as used to transcend the mundane world. She commented on the horoscope by saying it '... describes our unique portion of participation in this constantly unfolding universe. And in this sense we neither own our charts nor are we our charts

³¹ Richard Dawkins, 'The Real Romance in the Stars', *The Independent on Sunday*, 31 December 1995, p. 2.

but the chart describes a process that we fully participate in'. This view of the chart as something that provides access to a cosmic whole was a repeated theme in other interviews. Stephanie Johnson, an Australian astrologer and director of Esoteric Technologies, one of the world's leading providers of astrological software, when interviewed in 2010, replied to the question of what she gained from astrology by saying 'I think we belong in the same sense that all nature belongs so I do like the idea of belonging to this earth and sense of uniqueness and cooperation and community on this earth'. For Johnson, as for many astrologers, the horoscope provided simultaneous uniqueness and citizenship in the cosmos. Other astrologers I surveyed talked of 'Being able to see the intelligence of poetic mapping playing out', or 'It connects my little life with a bigger picture and provides understanding combined with awe'. In the manner of Eliade's concept of circular time an English astrologer wrote that what she liked about astrology was 'The feeling of being in touch with the cosmos; the feeling of being in touch with something ancient; the feeling of picking up on a cycle which helps to explain the whys and wherefores of life'.

If the horoscope operated within the tradition of the medieval *mappaemundi*, a spiritual or sacred map, it would also be used as guidance throughout one's life journey. In an interview in 2010, Barbara Dunn, an English horary astrologer³² who has been practicing, writing and teaching for the last 25 years, answered the question of what astrology gave to her life by saying, 'Well I suppose ... I suppose... well by doing any type of chart or by looking at your own nativity it gives you ... well I suppose it gives you an idea of how your life is going to be and what your areas of strengths are'. Similarly Dutch astrologer Karen Hamaker-Zondag, author and teacher and Jungian specialist who has been practicing astrology since 1975, when interviewed in 2008 about what astrology gave to any individual, replied, 'The chart is a road map, it tells you about your dynamics and

³² A Horary astrologer is one who seeks to answer questions by casting horoscopes for the moment of the asking of the question.

what you need to become you, and so the more you fulfil your chart the happier you will be. This does not mean that you will have less difficulties but you can handle them better and so for me living the chart is actually the key'. Both astrologers are using the map as guidance, one for finding one's strength; the other for finding a form of happiness. An anonymous English astrologer with over 22 years of study in astrology also talked of this when she wrote in her survey form:

The natal blue print [the horoscope] will often bring us back to our evolutionary path through transits or progressions - when we have strayed from it by exploring another side road or seemingly taken a wrong turning but what we have learnt through our experiences of making such 'mistakes' will enhance our understanding of ourselves and others and enable us to choose more wisely the route we take in the future to reach our evolutionary goals in this life.

Adding to this picture were comments within interviews and on survey forms concerning the use of circular time. In this respect, Mircea Eliade talked of non-linear time, *illud tempus*, which was used to locate an individual both in the mundane as well as sacred world.³³ In an interview Robert Hand, who has been studying astrology since 1960 and works as a consultant, translator, author and lecturer, replied to a question about his use of cycles in his own horoscope, by saying, 'Yes, but they are, nevertheless, only a pre-figuration, they are not going to be repeated. Nothing is ever repeated. For example both Saturn returns, interestingly enough, coincided with the same style of personal problems but the second one worked out fine'.³⁴ Here Hand is expressing a common theme amongst the astrologers I surveyed and interviewed. Cycles and the events which occurred at an earlier time were used to give insight into the likely

³³ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 42, 70.

³⁴ The Saturn return for astrologers is the time that Saturn returns to its location at the time of the person's birth, a cycle that takes 29 and a half years.

expression of future events when that cycle returned. For astrologers involved in the investigation, time past and future was cyclic in nature and its theme, which was predefined by astrological symbolism, was placed firmly into the chronological perimeters defined by the individual's horoscope. Some astrologers saw the resulting events in a more fateful light while others tended to agree with Hand's opinion that the timing was certain but the expression of the event was not.

The ability of the horoscope to provide a private chronology which could then be used to give feedback on one's life journey was referred to in a comment by an American astrologer who had been working with astrology for 34 years. She wrote that she liked astrology because of 'The cyclical quality that it presents to us. If you live long enough, you see those cycles coming back. If you've learned anything at all, then when the tough ones come back, you handle them better and when the great ones come back, you appreciate them more'. This theme of watching cycles and using them as a way of gaining greater alignment to perfection (however defined by the astrologer) was referred to in an interview with Roy Gillett, current President of the Astrological Association of Great Britain and involved with astrology since the 1970s. He commented on free will and fate by saying '... I think you do have a certain amount of control over your destiny. If you are conscious of the cycles [to your chart] as they are and you approach them with a selfless but mindful compassion, ... you are free up to a point within the range of possibilities. But if you approach them with, "Oh God how can I get as much as I can out of them", then you are just going to be tossed and blown'.

Unlike a mundane map the sacred map also embodied emotions. For most of the astrologers involved in the project this emotion was hope. One Norwegian astrologer who had worked in astrology for 12 years replied that what she liked about astrology was 'When life is difficult, astrology gives it meaning and hope, even in the darkest hours. You know that soon this too will pass'. This astrologer was referring to timed events in her horoscope, the coming and going of life

events as indicated by her private chronology. Another comment from an English astrologer of 20 years, when talking about what she liked about astrology, referred to this same idea when she wrote, 'It shows me that the bad times won't last forever and the ability to make "lemonade out of lemons" and to make the most of the good times when they are here'.

As well as hope, however, it can also inspire fear. Some astrologers talked of the fear of the knowing. One US astrologer wrote, 'For some people it would be better they do not use it at all, for it scares them...' One male American astrologer expressed concern with the actions of some astrologers when they worked with their own horoscope by commenting, '...you can feel the fear rolling off them as they work to arrange every detail of their lives so that nothing untoward will ever occur'. The astrologer was referring to the philosophy that one can mitigate foreseen negative events by undertaking evasive action. Talking more personally, an Australian astrologer wrote of both her fear and her approach to that fear: 'At times I am fearful of the future transits [to my chart], but I can prepare for crisis points, and know that there is purpose for going through difficult times. Usually things don't turn out as badly as I fear they will, and I try to use the energies in a positive way, rather than to let them work negatively'.

This small sample of voices of astrologers is reflective of the majority of comments, notes and conversations of the whole project. The field work revealed that contemporary western astrologers use the horoscope as a symbolic map which, for them, contains information about their times of joy and their times of sadness. This personal map establishes their uniqueness in the world, providing them with a personal chronology based on a version of circular time. However, at the same time as it gives uniqueness to each individual, this uniqueness was viewed within the larger set of planetary cycles which enables membership of the cosmos in the past, present and future. It also became apparent that most of the astrologers viewed their own map as a reflection of their perfect self and used it as a guide to help achieve this

perfection. Moreover, in the same way as Eliade described the need to return to the point of origin by revisiting the birth of the world, each astrologer constantly revisited their personal moment of creation, returning to their birth horoscope for guidance, timing and understanding. At least for the astrologers who took part in this field work, the horoscope had moved beyond its simplistic representation of the sky and become instead an encyclopaedia of the self, written at birth but never finished being read.

This paper has argued for a reconsideration of the nature of the diagrammatical horoscope, seeing it as it is seen by contemporary western astrologers, as a sacred map having more in common with the medieval *mappaemundi* than with twentieth-century celestial cartography. In this regard the horoscope, rather than the sky itself, may have a greater claim to being the *prima materia* of astrology. In addition, by recognising the role of the horoscope in astrology, insights can be gained into its resilient nature for, having been offered an independent, unique personal guide for life which reflects back to its owner a perfect form of the self, never judging but always guiding, it is possible that few astrologers put it back down again. As summed up by an anonymous astrologer in 2008: 'I like having a map, a place where I can turn to understand and manage my life'.

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