

**MA Cultural Astronomy and Astrology**  
**Astrology, History, Spirit and Soul**  
**Week 2: Babylonian astrology and cosmology**  
**Optional reading**

The optional reading is not as great as in many areas but is still more extensive than it was twenty years ago. There is a good selection of material on JSTOR. As ever the trick is to be selective and select reading which may be useful for your second essay. Look for titles, authors and also, take into account when a paper or book was written as some material, while very useful for discussion, can embody preconceptions from an earlier era.

**Prioritising your reading**

The key names in the list below are Francesca Rochberg and Erica Reiner. We have placed an asterisk by the articles to prioritise. Remember, you are NOT expected to read everything, but to select those articles which reflect your areas of interest or, may enlarge your horizons.

**Optional Reading: Historiography**

Steele, John M. (2003), 'The Use and Abuse of Astronomy in Establishing Ancient Chronologies'. *Physics in Canada*, 59 (2003), pp. 243-48.

[https://www.academia.edu/2360690/The\\_Use\\_and\\_Abuse\\_of\\_Astronomy\\_in\\_Establishing\\_Absolute\\_Chronologies](https://www.academia.edu/2360690/The_Use_and_Abuse_of_Astronomy_in_Establishing_Absolute_Chronologies)

**Optional Reading: Primary sources**

Koch-Westenholz, Ulla, *Mesopotamian Astrology: An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination*. Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 1995, Appendix A, pp. 180-5. (Available on Moodle).

The Hymns of Enheduanna

<http://www.angelfire.com/mi/enheduanna/>

Enheduanna (c. 2300-2225 BCE) was daughter of Sargon, Akkadian emperor and high priestess of the moon god Nanna at Ur. The hymns illustrate the importance and role of a planetary deity.

Jiménez, E., 2015, "Commentary on Enūma Anu Enlil 20 (CCP 3.1.20.B.a)," *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (E. Frahm, E. Jiménez, M. Frazer, and K. Wagensonner), 2013–2023, <https://ccp.yale.edu/P348755>. DOI: [10079/fttdzc5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-9999-5_5)

Jiménez, E., 2014, "Commentary on Enūma Anu Enlil 1 (CCP 3.1.1.C)," *Cuneiform Commentaries Project* (E. Frahm, E. Jiménez, M. Frazer, and K. Wagensonner), 2013–2023, <https://ccp.yale.edu/P461268>. DOI: [10079/5mkkww1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-9999-5_1)

### **Optional Reading: Secondary sources - Priority**

Campion, Nicholas, *The Dawn of Astrology: A Cultural History of Western Astrology*, Vol. 1, The Ancient and Classical Worlds, Chapters 6, 7 and 8. NB These chapters contain discussion of astrology/cosmology in Egypt and Palestine, information which is not required for the assessment for this module, but which does provide context.

Koch-Westenholz, Ulla, *Mesopotamian Astrology: An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination*. Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 1995. (Available on Moodle)

Reiner, Erica, *Astral Magic in Babylonia*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1995, Chapter 1, 'The Role of the Stars'. (Extracts on Google Books).

Rochberg, Francesca, *The Heavenly Writing: Divination and Horoscopy, and Astronomy in Mesopotamian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Chapters 2.1, 2.2, 3 and 5. (Available on Google Books). These chapters update Sachs' work on the first horoscopes.

This book is well worth purchasing if you wish to write on Babylonian astrology. There are a number of reviews online in the University library. One recommended is

Alexander Jones, Essay Review: Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia: The Heavenly Writing: Divination, Horoscope and Astronomy in Mesopotamian

Culture, *Journal of the History of Astronomy*, 2006-8, Vol 37 (3), pp. 353-356.

Ross, Micah, 'A Study in the Early Iconography of Gemini', in Nicholas Campion and Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *Astrology in Time and Place: Cross-Cultural Currents in the History of Astrology*, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), pp. 98-105. (Available in the University Online Library)

Ross, Micah, 'The Iconography of Libra and Pisces in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece', in Nicholas Campion, *Astrology as Art* (Lampeter: Sophia Centre Press, 2017), pp. 199-42.

This continues Micah Ross's study of the transmission of zodiac signs from Mesopotamia to Greece.

Bidmead, Julie and Marilyn Love, 'Ištar's Journey: Above and Below', *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 22 no 1, Spring/Summer 2018, pp. 5-28.

[http://www.cultureandcosmos.org/pdfs/22/22-1\\_bidmead\\_and\\_love\\_istar.pdf](http://www.cultureandcosmos.org/pdfs/22/22-1_bidmead_and_love_istar.pdf)

### **Secondary Sources: JSTOR**

On JSTOR, also check reviews by and about Francesca Rochberg, Alexander Jones and Noel Swerdlow

Optional Reading: Additional

Aaboe, A.. 'Scientific Astronomy in Antiquity', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, Series A, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Vol. 276, No. 1257, The Place of Astronomy in the Ancient World (May 2, 1974), pp. 21-42. (Available on JSTOR).

Biggs, Robert D., 'The Babylonian Prophecies and the Astrological Traditions of Mesopotamia', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring, 1985), pp. 86-90. (Available on JSTOR).

Biggs, Robert D., 'More Babylonian "Prophecies"', *Iraq*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Autumn, 1967), pp. 117-132. (Available on JSTOR).

Robert D. Biggs Reviewed work(s): Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings. State Archives of Assyria, Vol. 8 by Hermann Hunger, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Jul., 1996), pp. 241-242. (Available on JSTOR).

Böck, Barbara, "An Esoteric Babylonian Commentary" Revisited', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 120, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 2000), pp. 615-620. (Available on JSTOR).

Bolton, H. Carrington, 'A Relic of Astrology', *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 11, No. 41 (Apr. - Jun., 1898), pp. 113-125. (Available on JSTOR).

NB This article, being published in 1898, predates most scholarship in Mesopotamian astrology, so needs to be treated with caution.

Goldman, Bernard, 'An Oriental Solar Motif and its Western Extension', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, no 4, October 1961, pp 239-247. (Available on JSTOR).

Goldstein, Jonathan A., 'The Historical Setting of the Uruk Prophecy', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Jan., 1988), pp. 43-46. (Available on JSTOR).

Harris, Rivkah. "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites." *History of Religions*, vol. 30, no. 3, 1991, pp. 261–278. (Available on JSTOR - [www.jstor.org/stable/1062957](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1062957)).

Horowitz, Wayne, Two New Ziqpu-Star Texts and Stellar Circles, *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 46, (1994), pp. 89-98. (Available on JSTOR).

Hoyrup, Jens, "'Remarkable Numbers" in Old Babylonian Mathematical Texts: A Note on the Psychology of Numbers', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Oct., 1993), pp. 281-286. (Available on JSTOR).

Jacobsen, Thorkild, 'Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, II (1943), pp 159 - 72. (Available on JSTOR).

NB the theory outlined in this article is no longer accepted by most scholars.

Jastrow, Morris, 'Hepatoscopy and Astrology in Babylonia and Assyria', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 47, No. 190 (Sep. - Dec., 1908), pp. 646-676.

Kramer, Samuel Noah, 'Man's Golden Age: A Sumerian Parallel to Genesis XI.1' in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. LXIII, 1943, pp. 191 - 4. (Available on JSTOR).

NB the theory outlined in this article is no longer accepted by most scholars.

Landsberger and Kinnier Wilson, 'The Fifth Tablet of Enuma Eliš', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Jul., 1961), pp. 154-179. (Available on JSTOR).

Neugebauer, Otto, 'The Alleged Babylonian Discovery of the Precession of the Equinoxes', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, lxx, 1950, pp 1 - 8. (Available on JSTOR).

\*Reiner, Erica, 'Astral Magic in Babylonia', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, Vol. 85, No. 4 (1995), pp. i-150 . (Available on JSTOR).

Reiner, Erica, A Sumero-Akkadian Hymn of Nanâ, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Apr., 1974), pp. 221-236. (Available on JSTOR).

Reiner, Erica, 'Fortune-Telling in Mesopotamia', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Jan., 1960), pp. 23-35. (Available on JSTOR).

Rochberg, Francesca, 'Personifications and Metaphors in Babylonian Celestial Omina', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 116, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1996), pp. 475-485. (Available on JSTOR).

\*Rochberg, Francesca, 'Empiricism in Babylonian Omen Texts and the Classification of Mesopotamian Divination as Science', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 119, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1999), pp. 559-569 (Available on JSTOR).

Beaulieu, Paul-Alain and Francesca Rochberg, 'The Horoscope of Anu-Bēlšunu', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 48, (1996), pp. 89-94. (Available on JSTOR).

Rochberg-Halton, Francesca, 'Canonicity in Cuneiform Texts', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Autumn, 1984), pp. 127-144. (Available on JSTOR).

\*Rochberg-Halton, Francesca, 'New Evidence for the History of Astrology', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 43, no 2, April 1984, pp 115-140. (Available on JSTOR).

Rochberg-Halton, Francesca, 'Stellar Distances in Early Babylonian Astronomy: A New Perspective on the Hilprecht Text (HS 229)', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Jul., 1983), pp. 209-217. (Available on JSTOR).

\*Rochberg-Halton, Francesca, 'Between Observation and Theory in Babylonian Astronomical Texts', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Apr., 1991), pp. 107-120. (Available on JSTOR).

Rochberg-Halton, Francesca, 'The Babylonian Astronomical Diaries', Reviewed work(s): Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia, Vol. I: Diaries from 652 B. C. to 262 B. C. by A. J. Sachs; H. Hunger *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 111, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1991), pp. 323-332. (Available on JSTOR).  
(See also the review by Robert Biggs)

Miller, Roy Andrew, 'Pleiades Perceived: MUL.MUL to Subaru', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 108, No. 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1988), pp. 1-25. (Available on JSTOR).

Clarke Hyde, 'On the Assyro-Pseudo-Sesostris', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 8, (1866), pp. 380-382. (Available on JSTOR).

(NB This paper is out of date but we have included it as an example of 19th century material)

Warren, William F., 'Babylonian and Pre-Babylonian Cosmology', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 22, (1901), pp. 138-144. (Available on JSTOR).

(NB This paper is out of date but we have included it as an example of early 20th century material)

Van der Waerden, Bartel, 'Babylonian Astronomy II: The Thirty Six Stars', in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. VIII no 1, Jan. 1949, pp. 6-26.  
(Available on JSTOR - <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.uwtsd.ac.uk/stable/542436?sid=primo>)

Van der Waerden, Bartel, 'Babylonian Astronomy. III. The Earliest Astronomical Computations', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Jan., 1951), pp. 20-34. (Available on JSTOR).

### **Secondary Source: Additional Books**

These books are recommended if you wish to specialise in Babylonian astrology. They can be bought, borrowed or, in some cases, you will find extracts on Google Books.

The literature on Mesopotamian astrology is more extensive than is often thought. It just happens to be difficult to obtain. Because these references are generally unfamiliar we are including an extensive bibliography. Most of the following books are in print. However some may be difficult to obtain or only available through academic libraries. All should be in the UWL library.

Baigent, Michael; *From the Omens of Babylon: Astrology and Ancient Mesopotamia*, London: Penguin 1994.

An excellent general history, published almost 25 years ago but still relevant.

Blacker, Carmen and Michael Loewe, *Ancient Cosmologies*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1975.

Brown, David, *Mesopotamian Planetary Astronomy-Astrology*, Groningen: Styx Publications 2000.

The most up to date study of Mesopotamian astrology - quite technical but very well written and reliable. It's an expensive hard back but if you're interested contact the publishers direct via E mail: [styxnl@compuserve.com](mailto:styxnl@compuserve.com)

Frankfort, H and H.A.; Irwin, William A.; Jacobsen, Thorkild; Wilson, John A., *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1946.

A well-written study of ancient thought, thought provoking but now considered old-fashioned by many younger scholars because it constructs theories which are not sufficiently rooted in the evidence. It happens, though, to be an easily-affordable paperback.

Frankfort, Henri, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1978 (1st ed. 1948).

The same comments apply as for the previous volume.

Heidel, Alexander, *The Babylonian Genesis*, Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1942.

The text of the Babylonian creation epic, the *Enuma Elish*.

Horowitz, Wayne, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns 1998. (Extracts on Google Books).

The authoritative work on the relationship between sky and land in Mesopotamia.

Hunger, Hermann and Pingree, David, *Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia*, Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill 1999. (Extracts on Google Books).

The latest authoritative study of Babylonian mathematical astronomy. Useful to search for particular topics, remembering that mathematical astronomy is not part of the course material.

Jacobsen, Thorkild, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1976.

The same comments apply as for the books by Frankfort.

Koch-Westenholz, Ulla, *Mesopotamian Astrology: An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination*. Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Near Eastern Studies, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 1995. (Extracts on Google Books).

Rochberg, Francesca, *Babylonian Horoscopes*, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1998.

Rochberg, Francesca, *In the Path of the Moon: Babylonian Celestial Divination and its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2010). (Extracts on Google Books).

A collection of Rochberg's other writings.

## **Journals**

Journal of Cuneiform Studies

<https://www.asor.org/asor-publications/jcs/>

Journal of Near Eastern Studies

(Available on JSTOR)