

# **The History of Astrology -- Another View**

## **by Robert Hand**

### **Part I**

#### **Introduction**

The material presented here originally was an introduction that I wrote to a volume of Project Hindsight translations called "The Record of the Early Sages in Ancient Greek." It consisted of fragments and quotations that either were directly from the oldest sources in Middle Eastern and Western astrology, or were paraphrases of material that \*derived from these sources.

Since there has recently been posted on alt.astrology an article called "A Brief Introduction to the History of Astrology" which contains a large number of factual errors. We at Project Hindsight thought it a good idea to present another view. We do not expect everyone to accept the views presented in this paper, but the readers should be aware that these views are close to those shared by the majority of responsible scholars in the history of astrology. (No, I am not calling all who disagree with these views irresponsible, although no doubt some may be.)

For those who may not be aware of it, Project Hindsight is a project which aims at nothing less than the translation of the entire corpus of surviving Greek astrology as well as the translation of as much of the Medieval Latin tradition as is practical. We are and will be also doing translations from Hebrew, Sanskrit, and we hope Arabic. At this point I believe that we can say that our collective work represents the largest available body of material on the History of Astrology in English today. Therefore I believe we have some idea of what we are talking about even while recognizing we may have to change our views based on what further research brings forth. We can be contacted at

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#### **The Paper**

The account which we present here is mostly derived from mainstream academic sources, although we will also present some of our own speculations in areas where there is no clear evidence. We do not present such speculations whimsically but only where internal evidence seems to justify them, and always they will be presented with

clear indications that they are speculations.

On the other hand, because we have drawn from Western academic sources, one could object that this account does not take into consideration possible alternate views that might be derived, for example, from the study of the astrologies of India. This might be a valid objection, but we would like to assure the reader that we do not accept academic positions on the history of astrology uncritically. We try to accept only what is consistent with the internal evidence of the texts themselves. We also recognize that what we say here is not to be taken as definitive. There is much to be learned about the history of astrology, especially now that it is being carefully studied by those who are not hostile to the subject.

Based on the above considerations, it is the thesis of this author that astrology as we know it came into being only once in time and in one place; the place is Mesopotamia (roughly modern Iraq) and the time is to be discussed below. Having said this, another point needs to be made; what we mean by "astrology as we know it" is horoscopic astrology, i.e., astrology the intention of which is the picking of favorable times for doing things, the answering of questions, the forecasting of mundane events, and the analysis of individual destiny, all based on a peculiar instrument, the theme, genesis, or birthchart.

And that chart has a particular degree or sign which is marked as the beginning point of analysis. It is usually the degree or sign ascending, although for particular purposes the Sun, Moon, or Lot of Fortune may be used as well.

The reason for making this very specific definition of "astrology as we know it" is that in a broader sense some kind of astrology is nearly universal among ancient peoples and is not limited to either one time or place as its point of origin. Almost every ancient people had some system of examining the heavens for divinatory purposes. Native Americans, Greeks (long before they encountered Mesopotamian astrology), the peoples of India, whoever it was that built Stonehenge and New Grange in the British Isles, and the ancient Nordic peoples, to give a partial list. Much of the controversy concerning the antiquity of various peoples' astrologies stems from confusion over this very point. The study of celestial omens without a chart does not constitute astrology as we know it.

### **Mesopotamian Origins**

Mesopotamia, the "Land between the Two Rivers," is one of the so-called "cradles" of civilization, along with Egypt, China, the Indus Valley and Meso-America. It also appears to be the oldest of these. The evidence indicates an urban civilization as early as 4000 B.C.E. The first people in the area were a people known as the Ubaidians. We know virtually nothing about these people except that at a fairly early period another people began moving into the area and intermarrying with them. These were the Sumerians who became dominant and whose language replaced whatever was the language of the Ubaidians. Also the Sumerians invented the oldest known form of writing, cuneiform, which is done by impressing wedge-shapes into soft clay.

After a period of time Semitic peoples began moving into the area as well. The first of these were the Akkadians centered around their city of Akkad. In about 2330 B.C.E. Sargon of Akkad conquered the Sumerians and created the first of several Semitic

empires that would dominate not only Mesopotamia but also the Mediterranean coast and eventually even Egypt. The language of the Akkadians was the direct ancestor of the Assyrian and Babylonian languages, these being in fact dialects of Akkadian.

The Akkadian Empire fell in about 2218 B.C.E. After this various Semitic and other peoples struggled for control of the area. This constant struggle among various peoples in fact marks the major difference between the Mesopotamian civilization and that of Egypt. Egypt had many centuries of relative peace with occasional periods of disturbance, but nothing like the chaos of Mesopotamia.

After a period of time in the second millennium B.C.E. two peoples began to assume dominance, the Babylonians who had been culturally dominant for many centuries in the south, and the Assyrians in the north. As it turned out, while both groups were politically dominant at times, in general it can be said that the Assyrians were more often politically dominant while the Babylonians were culturally dominant. In fact the Assyrians even used the Babylonian dialect of Akkadian for their own official records.

Here are some dates in Mesopotamian history from this point on. All dates assume that something like the modern system of chronology. Even in modern sources these dates vary. The ones here are from the 1994 version of Microsoft's Encarta®.

- 1792-1750 B.C.E. Hammurabi unifies the area around Babylon.
- 1350 B.C.E. The rise of the Assyrian Empire.
- 730-650 B.C.E. Assyrian Empire controls all of Mesopotamia, parts of Persia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. This is also notable as the first time that Egypt and Babylon were under the same regime.
- 612 B.C.E. The fall of Assyria and the rise of the Second Babylonian Empire. The Babylonian people that brought this about were also known as Chaldeans, hence the term Chaldean Empire.
- 539 B.C.E. The conquest of Babylonia by Persia. For a second time Egypt and Babylon were under one regime.
- 331 B.C.E. The conquest of Mesopotamia by Alexander the Great. The entire area becomes dominated by Greek language and culture. The Seleucid dynasty descended from Alexander's general Seleukos ruled the area including Mesopotamia.
- 126 B.C.E. The Parthians, a Persian tribe, conquered Mesopotamia.
- 227 C.E. The Sassanids, a people from the central area of Persia, overthrow the Parthians and establish the Second Persian Empire, or Sassanid Empire.
- 635 C.E. The Moslem Arabs overthrow the Sassanid Empire and Mesopotamia comes under the rule of various Caliphates.

Before moving on to a discussion of how and where astrology evolved, let us give a similar chronology for Egypt.

- 3200 B.C.E. First evidence of strong political forces in the Nile basin. Also the earliest hieroglyphic writings. Evidence of a fairly high culture in the area precedes this by several centuries.

- c.2755-2255 B.C.E. The Old Kingdom. The pyramids date from this time. The first solar calendar was developed.
- c.2255-2134 B.C.E. Interregnum.
- c.2134-1668 B.C.E. The Middle Kingdom.
- c.1668-1570 B.C.E. The second interregnum, the period of the Hyksos, a race of probable Semites dominated Egypt during this period.
- 1570-1070 B.C.E. The New Kingdom. This is the period of the Kings Amenhotep, Akhnaten, Tutankhamem, and the various Kings Rameses. The exodus of the Israelites is widely believed to have occurred in this period.
- 1070 - 671 B.C.E. The third interregnum. Various regional dynasties ruled. In 671 B.C.E. the Assyrians conquered Egypt for a time.
- 525 B.C.E. The Persians overthrew the last native ruler of Egypt.
- 332 B.C.E. Alexander the Great conquered Egypt. It then came under the rule of the Ptolemies descended from Ptolemy I, another of Alexander's generals.
- 30 B.C.E. Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemies, dies and the Romans take over.

Subsequently Egypt fell under Arabic rule at about the same time as the Sassanid Empire was overthrown.

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### **Part II**

#### **Mesopotamian Astrology First Stages**

In the beginning Mesopotamian astrology was much like that of other cultures, a simple examination of the heavens for omens that might affect the kingdom. Often these observations of omens would include weather phenomena intermixed with true astronomical ones. What made the Mesopotamians different is that they began at an early time to make systematic observations of phenomena with an eye to finding regular patterns in the heavens that might correlate with patterns in human events.

According to Van der Waerden (Science Awakening, Vol. II, Oxford Univ. Press) the earliest astronomical writings known in Mesopotamia are from the old Babylonian period, roughly the time of Hammurabi. It is not known whether the Sumerians were involved in astronomical studies or not, but it would seem plausible that they were. There are also some writings which refer to the Akkadian period and which may date from about 2300 B.C.E. Here is an example of one of these early writings.

**If Venus appears in the East in the month Airu and the Great and Small Twins surround her, all four of them, and she is dark, then will the King of Elam fall sick and not remain alive.**

The most extensive omen lore was contained in a compilation referred to as Enuma Anu

Enlil. These were assembled somewhere in the second millennium B.C.E. Another collection of omens is an important work, the dating of which is extremely controversial, the Venus Tables of Ammizaduga. This consists of systematic observations of the phases of Venus combined with their omen significations, the significations being clearly based on past observations. The general belief is that these tables date from the reign of Ammizaduga about 146 years after Hammurabi. Based on the astronomy, van der Waerden assigns the following years as possible dates for the observations, 1702, 1646, 1638, and 1582 B.C.E. One of the reasons that these dates have become controversial in certain circles is that if these dates are correct, then Velikovsky is seriously in error. That controversy is outside of this scope of this introduction however, and we will continue on the assumption that orthodox scholarship is at least reasonably correct. Still I urge readers to take the dates with extreme caution. The Babylonians themselves, much like modern Hindus, attributed an antiquity to themselves and their observations that seems fantastic by modern Western standards, hundreds of thousands, even millions of years. Such antiquity is not consistent with the evidence of scholarship, but we have to keep something of an open mind. Scholars are often limited by their very specialization with the result that one discipline, such as modern astronomy for example, may often have powerful consequences for another such as archeology. The work of Gerald Hawkins on Stonehenge comes to mind. But first someone has to bring the two disciplines together. This may yet happen in Mesopotamian studies in such a way as to radically alter our historical understanding.

Van der Waerden concludes that the Venus tables were compiled and preserved out of motives of astral religion, i.e., the Mesopotamians believed that the stars and planets were associated with, or were in fact themselves the gods. Ishtar-Venus was one of the major divinities of the Mesopotamian peoples. Many other ancient peoples had similar notions. The Egyptians identified the constellation of Orion with Osiris. But Osiris was a dead god who ruled the underworld. His transportation to the heavens was very similar to other transportations made in classical mythology. The Mesopotamians seem to have been unique in their emphasis on the stars and planets as being the primary indicators of divine will in the Here and Now. This is the probable motive of the studies that led to astrology.

Over the next centuries the Mesopotamians, especially the Babylonians, continued observing and compiling lists of phenomena eventually getting to the point where, based on observed recurrence cycles of the planets, they could reasonably accurately estimate the positions of the planets at any time in the future. Ptolemy records, and modern scholarship does not dispute this, that accurate and systematic eclipse records were kept from 747 B.C.E. onward into the Hellenistic period after the conquests of Alexander the Great.

An interesting question about which there is much controversy is what kind of zodiac were the Mesopotamians using? In the earlier material they simply recorded planets as being so many degrees from a star.

19 from the Moon to the Pleiades; 17 from the Pleiades to Orion; 14 from Orion to Sirius. . .

This is de facto a sidereal observation, but it is not a zodiac! A zodiac requires a fiducial point, a point on the circle from which measurements are made. Also normally a zodiac

has some fixed number of regular divisions such as the twelve signs of the modern zodiacs, the twenty-seven lunar mansions of the Hindu lunar zodiac and so forth. But all of these early observations are like this one in using individual stars as markers for positions.

Van der Waerden argues that the evolution of astrology went through three phases. The first phase consists of the omen lore that we have already described. The second phase is closely related to this but has a zodiac in the modern sense, twelve 30 degree signs. There is no personal horoscopy in this middle level, but great attention is paid to the transits of Jupiter through the signs at the rate of approximately one sign per year. From this is clearly descended the Chinese practice of assigning each year to a zodiacal sign, and probably also the system of annual profections in later horoscopic astrology. There are also of course no houses of any kind. Van der Waerden dates this middle phase as being from about 630 to 450 B.C.E.

The zodiac at this point is clearly a sidereal one and its ayanamsha is at least close to the Fagan-Allen value.

The third phase is horoscopic astrology. Various ancient sources mention "Chaldeans" who cast birthcharts for various persons, including Diogenes Laertius who said that according to Aristotle, a Chaldean forecast Socrates' death from his birthchart, and that Euripides' father also had his son's chart read getting a forecast of his brilliant career. The reference to Chaldeans of course refers to astrologers and makes it clear that the art in this period was completely associated with late Babylonians, i.e., Chaldeans.

Several birthcharts have been found written in cuneiform. Most of them date from well within the Hellenistic era, but the oldest has been dated by A. Sachs to April 29, 410 B.C. Here is the translation as given by Fagan.

1 Month (?) Nisan (?) night (?) of (?) the (?) 14th (?). . .

2 son of Shuma-usur, son of Shumaiddina, descendant of Deke was born.

3 At that time the Moon was below the "Horn" of the Scorpion

4 Jupiter in Pisces, Venus

5 in Taurus, Saturn in Cancer.

6 Mars in Gemini, Mercury which had set (for the last time) was (still) in (visible).

7 . . . etc., etc.

As the reader can see this is a very rough chart with only sign positions given, and no delineations at all. The other cuneiform charts, though much later, are almost as terse, although positions are given to much greater precision.

As Cyril Fagan correctly points out, the positions in the charts also correspond more nearly to those of the sidereal zodiac using the Fagan-Allen ayanamsha than to tropical

positions.

But do we have at this point anything like the elaborate horoscopic astrology of the later Hellenistic era? No we do not! Although academic historians have not uncovered much concrete information about the evolution of astrology after the early Babylonian charts, there is considerable internal evidence for the place of origin in the earliest texts. Many of these old texts are contained within this volume (referring to the Project Hindsight volume). According to these texts the birthplace of astrology as we know it is Egypt.

This would not have been a surprise to Cyril Fagan. He maintained almost alone that Egypt had been the birthplace of horoscopic astrology. The trouble with his theory however is that he believed that horoscopic astrology came into being in the Egypt of the pharaohs. For this there is very little evidence outside of Fagan's own somewhat questionable interpretations of the evidence. It was a later Egypt that gave birth to horoscopic astrology, an Egypt that had made close contact with the ideas of the Babylonians.

Pharaonic Egypt had a great interest in astronomy. This is evident in too many ways to mention. But it was the kind of astronomy that involved stars rather than planets. The Egyptians were masters of aligning buildings, temples and especially the pyramids to fixed stars, apparently in an effort to bring about sympathy between terrestrial structures and the stars with which they were associated.

Their ability to survey and align buildings with stars was incredibly accurate, often within minutes of arc of the perfect alignment. But they do not seem to have had any planetary theory, nor did they have the proper mathematical techniques.

The Mesopotamians inherited the sexagesimal system of numbers from the Sumerians, a system which used place notation in numbers much like our modern decimal system, and which had sexagesimal fractions very similar in kind to our decimal fractions. This enabled the Mesopotamians to do complex computations that would have been difficult in any other ancient system of numerical notation. The other ancient peoples paid Mesopotamian mathematical notation the supreme compliment. They used it whenever they had to do similar calculations of their own. The Egyptians had nothing like it. But they did have a strong sense of a need for terrestrial matters to be brought into synchrony with the heavens.

The critical factors in the fusion of Egyptian ideas with Babylonian astronomy was one or both of two historical events, the conquest of Egypt by Persia, and the conquest of both Persia and Egypt by Alexander the Great. On both of these occasions Egypt was brought under the same regime as the Babylonians. In the case of the Persian Empire, the Persians themselves became ardent devotees of astrology which no doubt assisted the movement of astrological ideas into Egypt.

And if you were to examine the texts included in the volume on the Sages, you would discover something that is not all obvious from history texts that deal with astrology. The ancients clearly knew that astrology had something to do with Babylon (after all they did call astrologers Chaldeans) but the principle credit was given to the Egyptians. It is customary among academics to pass this off as something that was merely a fashion among ancient writers with no real historical basis. And in fact the ancient writers did

often attribute astrology to persons dating back to the pharaohs such as Nechepso and Petosiris. Nevertheless, there is no reason to assume that the ancients were not correct as to Egypt's being the primary source of horoscopic astrology; it was just somewhat later than they supposed.

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### **Part III**

What did the Egyptians add to Babylonian astrology? We cannot say for certain, but internal evidence indicates the following. The use of a rising degree may or may not have been found in pre-Hellenistic Babylonian astrology. But the Hellenistic writers attributed the use of houses, or signs used as houses to Hermes. For Hermes we should understand a reference to Hellenistic Egyptian sources. It is probable that aspects are also Egyptian but we cannot say for certain. The lots are almost certainly Egyptian as well as most of the systems of rulership. Only the exaltations have a clearly Mesopotamian origin.

At any rate it is quite likely that the entire apparatus of horoscopic astrology was in place by 1 C.E., quite possibly several centuries earlier. One of things that we have found in our studies of the later Greek writers is that they are already dealing with a later era of astrology. They have their "ancients" and they have already begun to misunderstand some of the ancient teachings. One of these writers, Vettius Valens, actually went traveling through Egypt looking for masters of the old traditions, much like modern Americans have gone to India to study astrology and various sacred teachings. While most of the Greek writers seemed to have studied from books, Valens studied with at least a few living teachers of the old traditions. And it is clear from his work that much of what they taught would never have been written down but for Valens.

### **What Happened Next**

Whatever may have been the language of Egyptian astrology when it first began to come into being, by 1 C.E. it was Greek. This is not to say that there were no astrology texts written in Coptic, the last form of ancient Egyptian, but no clear reference to any has survived.

All of the Egyptian texts that are referred to in the later literature seem to have been written in Greek. Possibly some were translations from Coptic. The use of Greek had important consequences. Although the Persian empire was a truly cosmopolitan empire with a considerable level of equality among the races that made up the empire, no one language came to predominate. No doubt Persian was used for official purposes, but Babylonian and Egyptian also continued to be used in their own areas in preference to Persian. But when Alexander the Great conquered all of Persia and Egypt, and advanced



all the way into northwest India, Greek became the dominant language not only for official purposes, but also for any purpose that involved communicating from one ethnic area to another. The original languages continued to be used for local purposes, such as Aramaic (which completely supplanted Babylonian) and Coptic. But a scholar or traveler could go anywhere from Greece in the west to India in the east and Egypt in the south and be understood. Any idea expressed in Greek could have a similar range of travel.

Even after the Persian revival beginning first with the Parthians and later with the Sassanids (see chronology given earlier), the Bactrian peoples of what is now Afghanistan and Pakistan continued to have Greek speaking rulers until the early centuries C.E. Consequently the Babylonian methods embodied in Egyptian astrology as well as the Egyptian methods themselves could travel into India without difficulty. This accounts for the fact that all of the technical words in Indian astrology whose origins can be found in another language are Greek, not Babylonian, not Coptic, nor earlier Egyptian. What is also interesting is that there appear to be few, if any, technical words in Greek astrology that have their origins in any other language.

Below is a partial list of some of the terms in Hindu astrology that appear to have a Greek origin.

## 1. Zodiacal Signs

Sanskrit	Greek	English	Sanskrit	Greek	English
Kriya	Krios	Aries	Juka	Zugos	Libra
Tavura	Tauros	Taurus	Kaurpi	Skorprios	Scorpio
Jituma	Didumoi	Gemini	Taukshika	Toxotes	Sagittarius
Kulira	Karkinos	Cancer	Akokera	Aigokeres	Capricorn
Leya	Leon	Leo	Hridroga	Hudrochoos	Aquarius
Pathona	Parthenos	Virgo	Chettha	Ichthues	Pisces

## 2. Planets

Sanskrit	Greek	English	Sanskrit	Greek	English
Hermnan	Hermes	Mercury	Ara	Ares	Mars
Asphujit	Aphrodite	Venus	Jeeva	Zeus	(Jove)
Heli	Helios	Sun	Kona	Kronos	Saturn

All of the above had Sanskrit equivalents which probably preceded the introduction of the above words into India, and which also eventually completely displaced these words of Hellenic origin. The following are terms for which there are no previous Sanskrit roots and appear to have come completely from Greek. These words have remained standard astrological terms in India to this day.

### 3. House and Aspect Words

Sanskrit	Greek	English	Sanskrit	Greek	English
Hora	Hora	Hour	Kendra	Kentron	Angle
Liptaka	Lepta	Minute	Panaphara	Epanaphora	Succedent
Hiptaka	Hupogeion	Imum Coeli	Apoklima	Apoklima	Cadent
Jamitra	Diametros	Diameter	Drekana	Dekanos	Decan
Mesurana	Mesouranema	Midheaven	Sunapha	Sunaphe	Applying
Menyaiva	Meniaios	No Equiv.	Anaphara	Anaphora	Separating
Trikona	Trigonon	Trine	Dauradhura	Doruphoria	Doryphory
Dyuna	Dunon	Setting	Kemadruma	Kenodromia	Void of C.

As the heading at the top of Table 3 indicates, these are all house and aspect words, indicating that this was an area of Hindu astrology on which Hellenistic astrology had great impact.

The question of the debt or lack thereof of Hindu astrology to Hellenistic is an extremely controversial one. Many authors of the Hindu school would like to deny that there was any at all. This position is a bit hard to support given the above, and also given the very frequent references to the "Yavanas" who were Greeks or more precisely Greek speaking persons of various ethnic extractions.

On the other hand there are Westerners, of whom this author is not one, who believe that Hindu astrology comes entirely from the West (or more precisely Middle East). David Pingree in his study of the Yavanajataka does an extremely thorough job of cataloging the parallels between the astrology of that work and that of the Greeks, and even he is forced to admit that there are many differences. However such differences do not require two different origins. All it requires is a period of isolation between two branches of a tradition after an earlier period of unity, such that the two branches can diverge, and one, the eastern, merge with native traditions already in place. While we do not insist that Hindu astrology is entirely or even principally an offshoot of Hellenistic astrology, it must be said that the required period of isolation did occur which could have caused a single tradition to become two.

After 126 B.C.E. the Parthians, a Persian people, rose up against the Seleucids who succeeded Alexander the Great, and they reconquered most of the old Persian Empire except for the portion near the Mediterranean, and the portion in the northwest of India. The Parthians were extremely hostile to the Greeks (and later the Romans) and effectively cut off communication (or at least cut it down to a trickle) between the main body of Hellenistic peoples toward the West and the Bactrian Greeks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, who in turn remained in power until the early centuries C.E. The Bactrian Greeks eventually converted to Hinduism and their language disappeared. However as of about 200 C.E. they still existed as an identifiable group. These are the Yavanas of the Yavanajataka.

Still later the historian Kay mentions Hindu records from the 4th and 5th Centuries C.E.

of a new Sun God cult coming in from the West. Given that Christianity displaced the worship of Sol Invictus, the Unconquered Sun, it is tempting to postulate that Hindu astrology received a second burst of input from a new group of Yavanas fleeing Christian persecution in the West.

The central problem is how much of Hindu astrology is indigenous and how much comes from the West. Other than the few suggestions I have made here, this is not the place to attempt an answer. In any case it is very clear that whatever the Hindus got from the West they did not just take and passively apply. They altered, modified, and quite possibly improved whatever they may have received from the West and combined it with their own native traditions.

There is one other consequence of the Parthian separation. The Persian peoples had always been enthusiastic astrologers. It seems logical to conclude that they must have developed their own traditions from the astrology that they had inherited from the Mesopotamians and the Greeks. Then in 227 C.E. they were overthrown by the Sassanid Persians who would have continued the development of the Persian traditions of astrology.

Unfortunately when the Arabs came, almost all of the literature of the Zoroastrian Sassanids was destroyed. This includes their astrological works. However we do have a strong clue as to what their astrology must have been like. Most of the greatest astrologers in the Arab era were Persians! And the astrology they taught is quite different from both the Hindu and the Greek. It had orbs of aspect, the Great Cycles of Jupiter and Saturn, all of the elaborate systems of planetary interactions such as Refrenation, Frustration, Abscission of Light, Translation of Light and so forth. While Arab era astrology clearly owes a large debt to Hellenistic astrology, it is also clear that in the two or three centuries between the last known Hellenistic astrologers and the first known Arab era ones, something new had come into the stream. This could have been, and probably was the Persian stream of astrology. And Arab era astrology is the immediate ancestor of the Western astrology of today. Our astrology may be in fact the successor to that third stream of ancient astrologies.

### **A Final Note on Zodiacs**

We have mentioned previously in this essay that the first Babylonian birthcharts were cast in the sidereal zodiac. Also it has been traditional for Hindu astrologers to use one or another sidereal zodiac. This whole matter is as controversial as the issue of the indebtedness or lack thereof of Hindu astrology to Middle Eastern astrology. But there is not enough space in this essay to go into the matter at this time. In previous writings (in Project Hindsight) we have stated that the zodiac did not seem to be an issue of great import to the ancients. We still hold that position. But at some point in a future introductory essay we will go into that matter in some depth. For the moment it will have to suffice to say that the matter is far from closed in favor of either zodiac.

**The End**

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Our thanks to [tees.reitsma@astronet.idn.nl](mailto:tees.reitsma@astronet.idn.nl) (Tees Reitsma) for initiating contact with Mr. Hand and securing his permission to post this material to the Oracle-a list. And our thanks to Mr. Hand for giving us permission to post his material here.

Mr. Hand has been doing translations of ancient and medieval astrology texts now for almost three years with Project Hindsight and that effort has published over 2000 pages of translations and commentary. If anyone is interested in further information on Project Hindsight, they have a web page at [Project Hindsight](#). Small warning: have your modem at maximum speed. The graphics take a long time to load.