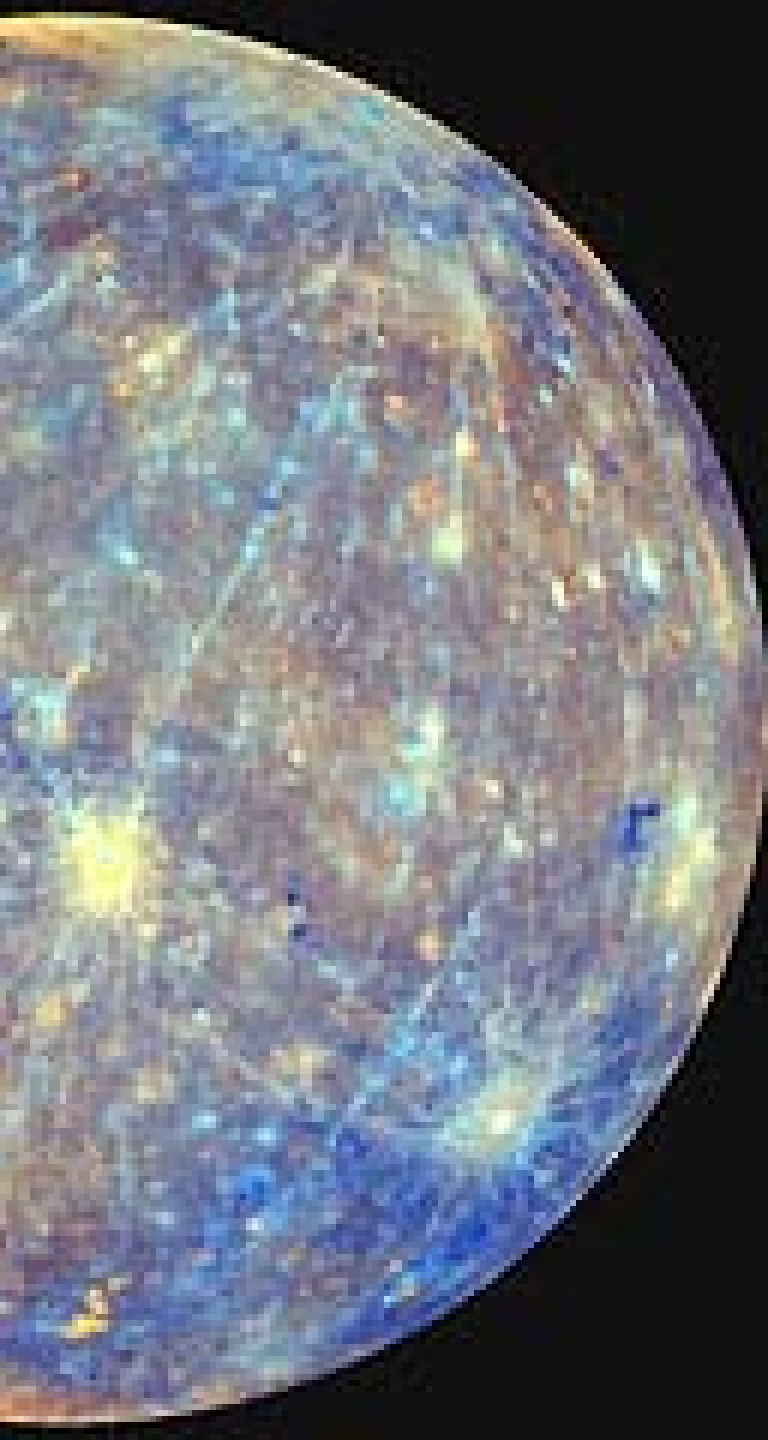


Mercury (neutral)

*We are not troubled by things, but
by the opinion we have of things*

- Epictetus



Yet the great advantage of Mercurial intelligence is its power to keep the soul in motion, spiraling down toward a vortex of significance. Mercury keeps the carousel of interpretation moving, feeding wonder and curiosity instead of granting the stupor of final conquest.

Thomas Moore,
The Planets Within
(p. 153)

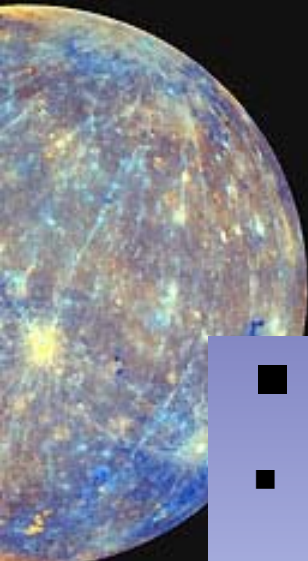


♿ Mercury - Astronomical

- Moves approx. $0^{\circ} - 2^{\circ}12'$ a day
- Spends 15 days to 2 months in a sign (due to retrograde motion)
- Orbit: 87.96 days
- Returns to natal position in chart in approx. 1 year (never more than 28° from Sun)



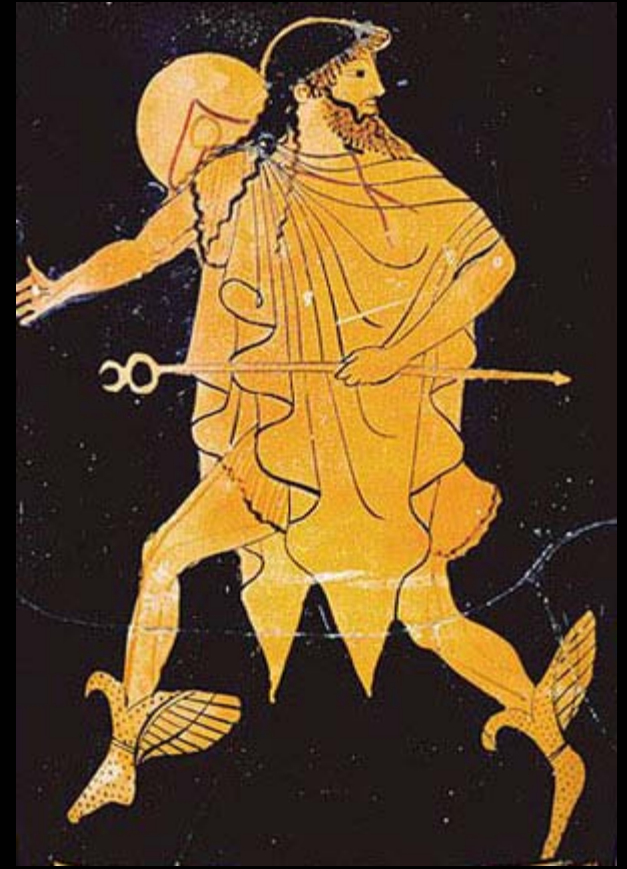
According to the Greek historian Hesiod, as soon as Hermes was born, he was bored and restless



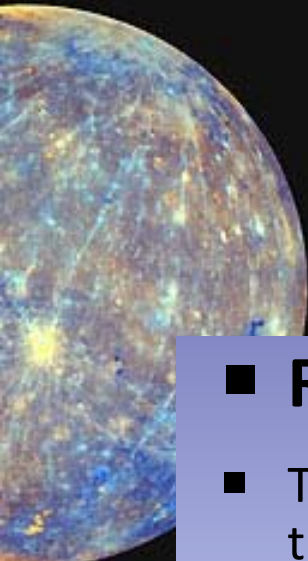
♿ Mercury - Mythology

■ Greek: Hermes.

- Messenger of the gods, son of Zeus, inventor of fire and a daughter of the Titan Atlas.
- His symbols are the rooster, tortoise, his pouch, winged sandals, winged cap and the herald's staff. Patron of boundaries and the travelers who cross them, protector of shepherds, cowherds, travelers, rogues, thieves, orators, wit, literature, poetry, music, athletics, sports, and commerce
- Homer and Hesiod portrayed Hermes as the author of skilled or deceptive acts, and also as a benefactor of mortals and Mercury was often described as “the bringer of luck” and “excellent in all tricks” (Illiad)



Greek Hermes

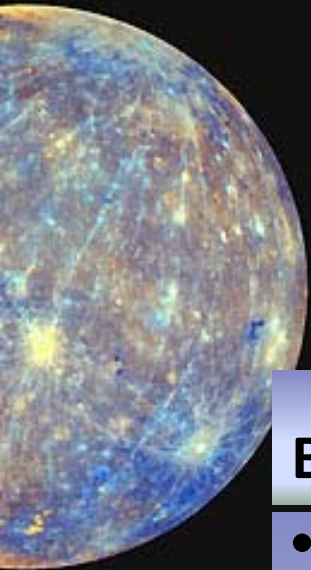


♿ Mercury - Mythology

- **Roman: Mercury**
- The spirits of wealth (dei lucrii) were the ancestors of Mercury in early belief.
- Later he was associated with commerce and trade. As the Greek Hermes became blended with the Roman Mercury, you get the caduceus, winged hat and sandals.
- His expanded domain included animal husbandry, knowledge, travel, communication, thieves, luck, gamblers, weights and measures, divine heraldry, invention, and the passage of souls to the underworld



Mercurius with a rooster and goat, his sacred animals



Mercury in the Chart (Green & Saporatas)

By Sign

- Mercury's placement by sign indicates something about the way our mind works – how we think, learn, perceive and digest experience
- Mercury's sign also describes something about how we communicate and exchange ideas and information.
- Mercury's sign indicates the kinds of concerns that occupy the mind.

By House

- Mercury's house shows an area of life where we are likely to be restless, curious, inventive, inquisitive, adaptable, fluctuating, cunning, possibly deceitful and good at making bargains. Ideally it is a domain where we stay fresh and open to experience rather than boxing ourselves in by thinking too narrowly or rigidly.

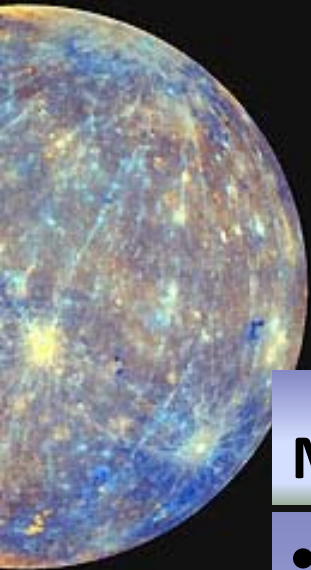
Mercury in the Chart (Green & Saporatas)

By Aspect

- Mercury is highly influenced and colored by the nature of any planet aspecting it (especially the planet in closest aspect).
- Planets aspecting Mercury will also influence how we communicate and exchange information.



The image of Mercury on the U.S. dime



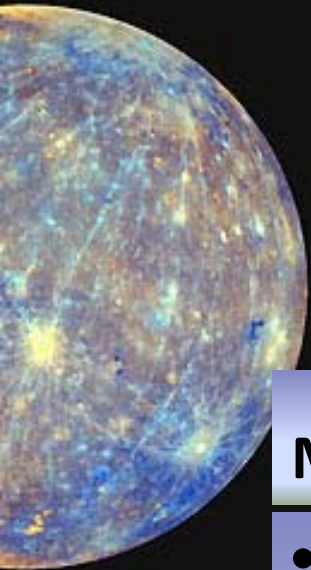
Mercury in Fire Signs

Mercury in Fire Signs

- Impulsive & impetuous
- Sudden shifts & changes in viewpoint
- Flashes of intuition
- Able to solve problems but may ignore details
- May be quick tempered or show tendency to exaggerate

Fire Types: Choleric

- Choleric: Fire, hot and dry. They have a strong will, ambition and even some of the irascibility for which their temperament is known (they don't care if they are the most popular, like the sanguines, as long as they can be in charge).
- Fire: bright, enthusiastic, spontaneous, forceful, bossy



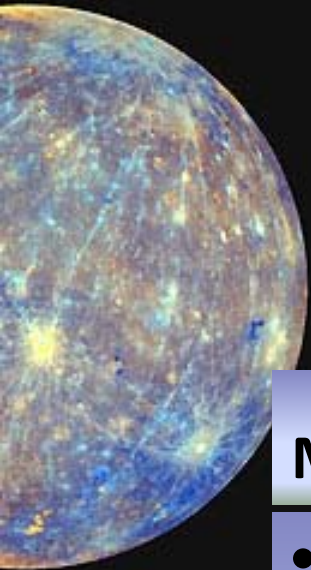
Mercury in Earth Signs

Mercury in Earth

- Mentally conservative, methodical, cautious and constructive, detailed
- Practical; generally display common sense
- Can dig deep for insights, penetrating
- Can be intolerant and stubborn; mental inertia, critical

Earth Types: Melancholic

- Melancholic: Earth, cold & dry. The detail person, deliberate, logical but also with depressive tendencies.
- Earth: Practical, stable, conservative, sensual, stubborn, harsh



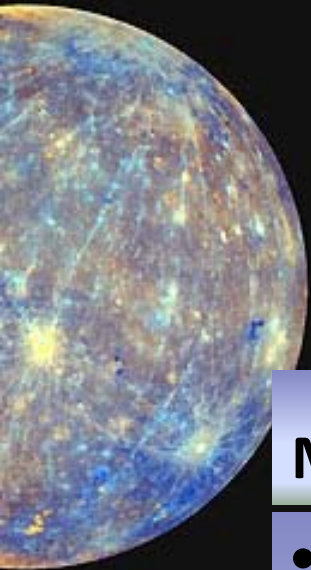
Mercury in Air Signs

Mercury in Air

- Versatile, rational, diplomatic, resourceful
- Impersonal in ability to see the truth, objective
- Witty, talkative
- Fond of intellectual pursuits and attainments
- Curious about thinking & behavior of others

Air Types: Sanguine

- The active and connecting qualities of hot and wet. Social and friendly, but not tending to remain with one thing for too long. They like to be in charge.
- Air words: Logical, intellectual, communicative, social, cold, superficial, insensitive



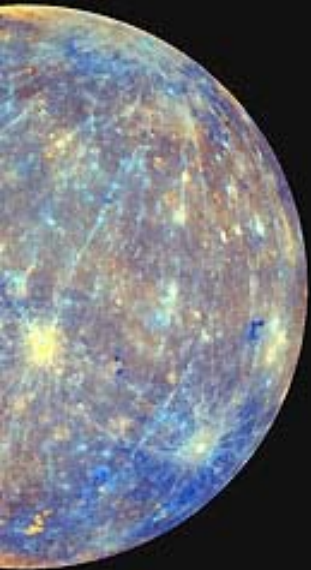
Mercury in Water Signs

Mercury in Water

- Impressionable, perceptive, intuitive, reflective
- Mind is retentive, probing; thinking is creative
- May have trouble thinking objectively, moody, instinctual
- May use words to wound others or protect yourself

Water Types: Phlegmatic

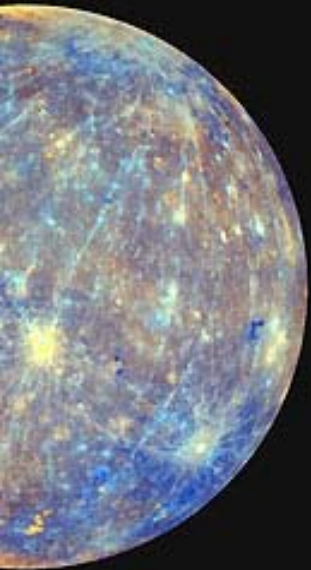
- Phlegmatic: Water, cold & wet. Stolid and emotionally contained but with a strong feeling nature.
- Water: Sustaining, receptive, emotional, intuitive, sensitive, self-protective, self-centered



Additional thoughts

Green & Sasportas, 1993

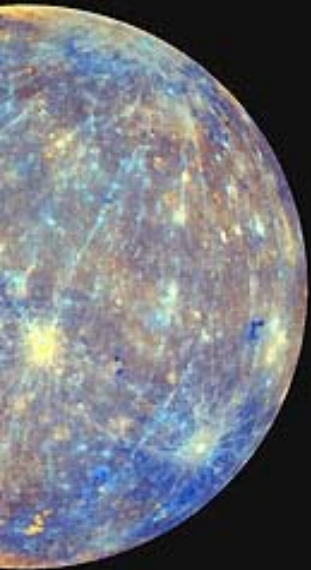
- [T]he astrological Mercury symbolizes a part of us which is able to identify almost at random with the varying principles represented by the other planets.
- Mercury ultimately functions most positively if he has a set of guidelines to go by, or if he has moral or ethical standards to which he tries to adhere.
- Mercury's house position could be an area of life where we are prone to distorting the truth, or where we can be very persuasive to the point of resorting to devious tactics to win over others.



Additional thoughts

Green & Sasportas, 1993

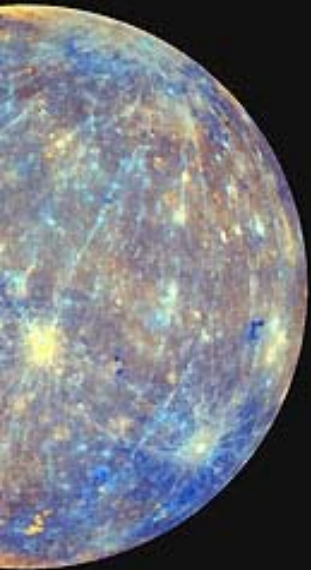
- One of the functions of Mercury is to keep “the divine child” alive in us... Mercury’s house as an area of life in which we are meant to stay young, open and childlike in the best sense of the word.
- Mercury equips us with the capacity to take any “higher” insights or spiritual visions we have and apply them in everyday life.
- We shape our lives according to our beliefs, precepts and perception of “reality,” and then we get stuck in our own creation: we are limited by our own perceptions. ... Our mental set determines how we interpret sensory data.



Additional Thoughts

Joseph Crane 2007

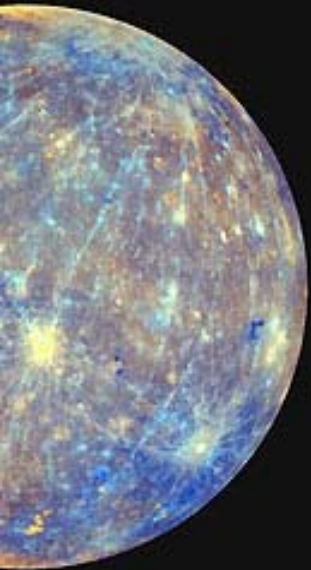
- **Finding the soul in the chart.** Since the soul's impulses are many and various, Ptolemy [2nd C CE] says, one should be careful to use many factors when delineating the qualities of the soul in a natal chart. ... On the surface, Ptolemy's formula for soul (*psyche*) appears quite simple. He looks at the place of natal Mercury, symbolizing reason; this he combines with Moon, "the most body-like of the lights," which governs our non-rational faculties. He then notes whether Mercury and Moon are in cardinal, fixed or mutable zoidia [signs], what planets aspect each of them, and their phase relationships with the Sun.



Additional Thoughts

Joseph Crane 2007

- Ptolemy tells us that Mercury is *logikon kai noeron*, logical and reasonable. Mercury represents more what today we might call “mind”, especially in its capacity to use language and make judgments. Moon, on the other hand, is more sensory and *alogikon* – that is, Moon symbolizes more what we feel and sense and less what we say to others and to ourselves.
- Ptolemy does not set up a polarity between Mercury and Moon, between *logikos* and *alogikos*. He does not evaluate these two planet separately, but instead regards them as functioning cooperatively to manifest a person’s “soul.” It appears that Ptolemy regards these functions as continuous, not separate from each other.



Additional Thoughts 1

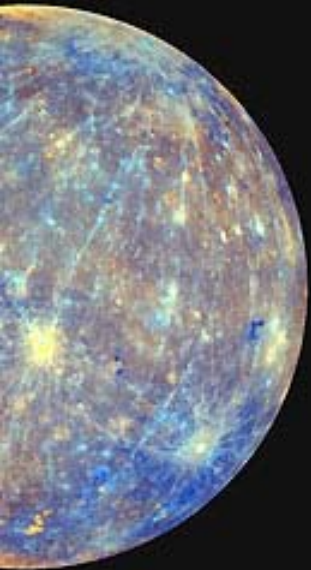
Thomas Moore (1990)

- *[commenting on Marsilio Ficino's (1433-1499) work]* Although Mercury offers a kind of knowledge, insight, and understanding, his form of soul activity differs strikingly from that of other deities associated with knowledge. Saturn, for example, offers deep intuitive insight, but the way of Saturn is distant, aloof, cold, heavy, and dark. Mercury, in contrast, is most often depicted as bright, quick and light...
- Ficino observes... that Mercury is always “filled with Apollo.” ... but the short wings usually attributed to this god loft him only a short distance into the air. ... In Greek mythology Hermes and Apollo had a rather close, if not trouble-free relationships.

Apollo

- Apollo has been variously recognized as a god of light and the sun, truth and prophecy, healing, plague, music, poetry, and more.
- Apollo is the son of Zeus and Leto, and has a twin sister, the chaste huntress Artemis.
- In Hellenistic times, especially during the 3rd century BCE, as Apollo Helios he became identified among Greeks with Helios, Titan god of the sun, and his sister Artemis similarly equated with Selene, Titan goddess of the moon.
- The Roman worship of Apollo was adopted from the Greeks as they had no direct equivalent.

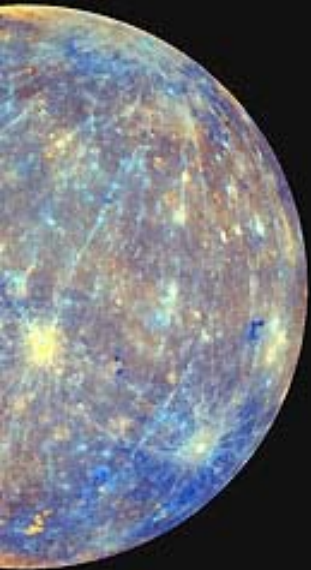




Additional Thoughts 2

Thomas Moore (1990)

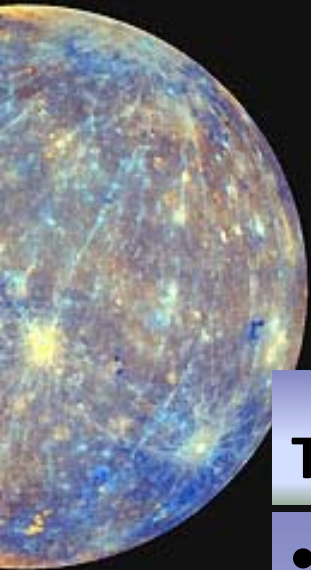
- [In a letter to cardinal, Ficino writes]
“Venerable Father, it is no secret to you that Mercury is concerned not only with the communication of words but also with the interpretation of the speaker’s mind. ... To Mercury is attributed the fortunate gift of reminiscence – in no way an injustice. For when he stimulates perception in the *animus*, one is seen to speak. But when he provokes reason, one interprets. When he excites memory, one raises up a reminiscence. ... What Mercury cannot explain... Apollo can present in vaticinium (the prophetic state of consciousness) and Jupiter can fulfill by deed.”



Additional Thoughts 3

Thomas Moore (1990)

- Soul comes to life in the turn from the literal into the imaginal, a twist Mercury effects. Literalism, as we have already seen, is tantamount to sleep, for in literalism the psyche doesn't have to do its job of seeing everything twice, working for significance and digging for depth.
- [Ficino states] "Mercury has the power to put souls to sleep or waken them with his staff; that is, in some way or another, by *putting himself into a certain shape*, he can dull or sharpen the mind, or weaken or strengthen it, or upset or calm it."
- In Mercurial consciousness form is everything, the shape a thing takes in our imagination betrays its significance.



Fun Facts

The Caduceus

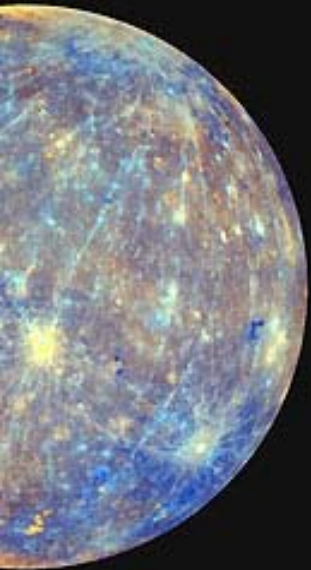
- Symbol of Mercury – commerce & negotiation. Mistakenly used as a symbol for medicine, primarily in North America



Rod of Asclepius

- Asclepius was the god associated with medicine & healing. His staff has only a single entwined snake.





Resources

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- Green, Liz & U Howard Sasportas. *Seminars in Psychological Astrology Vol. 4: The Inner Planets* (1993)
- Robert Hand, *Horoscope Symbols* (1981)
- Karen Hamaker-Zondag, *Astro-Psychology* (1980)
- Moore, Thomas. *The Planets Within: The Astrological Psychology of Marsilio Ficino*. Lindisfarne Press (1990).