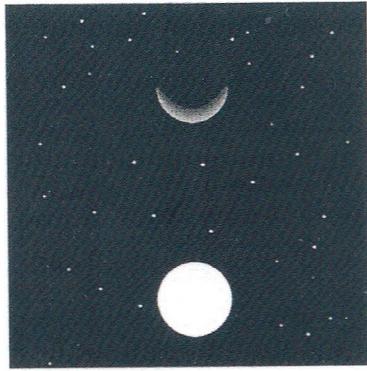


**A HISTORY OF
HOROSCOPIC
ASTROLOGY**



**From the Babylonian Period
to the Modern Age**

Second Edition

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others became aware that bacteria were the source of infections—the “germ theory of disease.” It is not usually recognized that by today’s standards every physician practicing prior to the latter discovery was to some degree a quack. Since that time, the application of advances in technology and specialized studies in medicine have equipped physicians with a good set of diagnostic tools. This has relegated medical astrology to a study mainly of interest to a few astrologers. Nevertheless, the few who are interested in it devote much time to their studies, and books on medical astrology continue to appear from time to time.

In the U.S. at least, the practice of medicine has been for most of the 20th century almost entirely in the hands of “doctors of medicine” (M.D.s), and in many states it has been illegal for anyone to “practice medicine without a license,” for which the principal requirement was an M.D. degree from an accredited medical school. During the last few decades, however, other forms of medical treatment have slowly become recognized to the extent that the laws have been changed to permit the practice of “alternative forms of medicine” in some states. Still, anyone who announced openly that he was using astrology the way that the physicians of the 16th century used it would make himself liable to prosecution in many places.

One result of this is that those astrological software houses that offer medical astrology software have felt obliged to place restrictions on the purchase of their products. And professional astrologers generally shy away from offering medical advice to their clients.

Fate vs. Free Will

If an astrologer can determine future circumstances from a natal horoscope, doesn’t that imply that future events are predetermined? Or, in other words, that there is such a thing as fate, and that an individual is fated to experience certain circumstances in his life? And if so, what good does it do you to find out what your future will be if you can’t change it?

This brings up the question of fate vs. free will, which is a vexed question. There does not seem to be any definitive answer. However, some thoughts on the subject may be helpful. First, the terms should be defined. Fate is generally taken to mean an immutable future, while free will is taken to mean that the individual has full freedom of choice at every moment, and, by extension that there is no such thing as fate. Actually, the two terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

For example, at any point in time a man may be faced with two or more choices of action. He may choose whichever he wishes; but his choice is obviously conditioned by his personality, his past history, his assessment of the ramifications of any choice that he may make, and his feeling about the suitability of each of his possible choices judged by his own ethical concepts. In other words, he will make his choice based upon his own character and his assessment of the desirability of each of the choices.

Now if we have some means of knowing the circumstances, the available choices, and the man’s character, we should be able to predict what choice he will make.

Hence, we can see that a man may have free will at every point and may in fact exercise it, but it might still be possible to predict what he will do in any given set of circumstances. Then, if we had some means of assaying a man’s character and of predicting what his circumstances would be at any given moment, we would be justified in assuming that fate is what the man will choose to do—that is, it is the result of the man’s free will choices. Thus, in effect, fate and free will are but two sides of the same coin.

Next comes the question of prophecy. Is it possible to know the future, either in outline or in detail? There are different answers to this question. Most religions assume the existence of an omnipotent deity who knows the future as well as the past. Hence, the future must be immutable, and fate is the answer. (This instantly brings up a serious problem, but religions prefer to gloss over it.)

Scientists on the other hand generally assume that the future is more or less random. Hence it is impossible (even for a hypothetical deity) to predict the future. If they are correct, then obviously free will is the answer.

How can we tell which of these answers is right? The touchstone is prophecy. If in the past there have been verified instances of specific, detailed prophecies of future events involving one or more humans, then we are forced to the conclusion that there is such a thing as fate, however we define it.

History is replete with instances of fulfilled prophecies, and many individuals have had the experience of receiving a forecast of future circumstances from someone—a forecast that later proved to be accurate. Scientists ignore these instances as long as they can, and, if challenged will deny that they ever occurred, or they will assert that the prophecies were so general that they had a good chance of being fulfilled, and therefore their fulfillment proves nothing. But this is simply refusing to face up to the facts.

It is, of course, true that some predictions or prophecies, even some famous ones, were sufficiently general to be easily fulfilled—a familiar example is the famous Biblical prophecy that “there will be wars and rumors of wars.” That was really a statement of fact and not a prophecy (although it was intended to be taken as one). Nevertheless, there have been many other prophecies that were narrowly specific and were later fulfilled. The scientific argument to the contrary is thus self-serving and unfounded. It is merely another instance of, “My mind is made up, don’t try to confuse me with the facts”—especially with facts that cannot be explained by current scientific beliefs.

But, for the sake of argument, let us suppose that there is such a thing as fate and predestination. One might then ask, “What good is an astrological life reading or astrological counsel when a decision must be made if the

outcome is preordained?" In the 2nd century, Claudius Ptolemy answered the question like this⁹:

To a general examination it would appear that those who find fault with the uselessness of prognostication have no regard for the most important matters, but only for this—that foreknowledge of events that will happen in any case is superfluous; this, too, quite unreservedly and without due discrimination. For, in the first place, we should consider that even with events that will necessarily take place their unexpectedness is very apt to cause excessive panic and delirious joy, while foreknowledge accustoms and calms the soul by experience of distant events as though they were present, and prepares it to greet with calm and steadiness whatever comes. A second reason is that we should not believe that separate events attend mankind as the result of the heavenly cause as if they had been originally ordained for each person by some irrevocable divine command and destined to take place by necessity without the possibility of any other cause whatever interfering. Rather is it true that the movement of the heavenly bodies, to be sure, is eternally performed in accordance with divine, unchangeable destiny, while the change of earthly things is subject to a natural and mutable fate, and in drawing its first causes from above it is governed by chance and natural sequence. Moreover, some things happen to mankind through more general circumstances and not as the result of an individual's own natural propensities—for example, when men perish in multitudes by conflagrations or pestilence or cataclysms, through monstrous and inescapable changes in the ambient, for the lesser cause always yields to the greater and stronger; other occurrences, however, accord with the individual's own natural temperament through minor and fortuitous antipathies of the ambient. For if these distinctions are thus made, it is clear that both in general and in particular whatever events depend upon a first cause, which is irresistible and more powerful than anything that opposes it, must by all means take place; on the contrary, of events that are not of this character, those which are provided with resistant forces are easily averted, while those that are not follow the primary natural causes, to be sure, but this is due to ignorance and not

⁹*Tetrabiblos*, i. 3 (Robbins's translation).

to the necessity of almighty power. One might observe this same thing happening in all events whatsoever that have natural causes. For even of stones, plants, and animals, and also of wounds, mishaps, and sicknesses, some are of such a nature as to act of necessity, others only if no opposing thing interferes. One should therefore believe that physical philosophers predict what is to befall men with foreknowledge of this character and do not approach their task under false impressions; for certain things, because their effective causes are numerous and powerful, are inevitable, but others for the opposite reason may be averted. Similarly those physicians who can recognize ailments know beforehand those which are always fatal and those which admit of aid. In the case of events that may be modified we must give heed to the astrologer, when, for example, he says that to such and such a temperament, with such and such a character of the ambient, if the fundamental proportions increase or decrease, such and such an affection will result. Similarly we must believe the physician, when he says that this sore will spread or cause putrefaction, and the miner, for instance, that the lodestone attracts iron: just as each of these, if left to itself through ignorance of the opposing forces, will inevitably develop as its original nature compels, but neither will the sore cause spreading or putrefaction if it receives preventive treatment, nor will the lodestone attract the iron if it is rubbed with garlic;¹⁰ and these very deterrent measures also have their resisting power naturally and by fate; so also in the other cases, if future happenings to men are not known, or if they are known and the remedies are not applied, they will by all means follow the course of primary nature; but if they are recognized ahead of time and remedies are provided, again quite in accord with nature and fate, they either do not occur at all or are rendered less severe. And in general, since such power is the same whether applied to things regarded universally or particularly, one would wonder why all believe in the efficacy of prediction in universal matters, and in its usefulness for guarding one's interest . . . but, on the other hand, as regards particular matters . . . some people believe neither that foreknowledge is still possible nor that precautions can be taken in most instances. . . . For the cause of this

¹⁰A common (but erroneous) belief of the ancients.

error is the difficulty and unfamiliarity of particular prognostication, a reason which in most other situations as well brings about disbelief. And since for the most part the resisting faculty is not coupled with the prognostic, because so perfect a disposition is rare, and since the force of nature takes its course without hindrance when the primary natures are concerned, an opinion has been produced that absolutely all future events are inevitable and unescapable.

In short, Ptolemy says fate may be divided into two parts: general fate that affects large numbers of people and is generally immutable; and individual Fate, that without foreknowledge and deliberate effort is also immutable, but with foreknowledge and conscious effort can be, at least in part, altered. And, as he says earlier, foreknowledge has the added advantage that it enables one to face the future with philosophic calm.

Astrologers have generally adhered to the latter point of view. Namely, that fate will likely take its course if the individual has no foreknowledge. But, with foreknowledge of the future and the timely use of astrological counseling to make appropriate decisions at critical times, an individual's fate can be altered somewhat to his benefit.

Psychology and Astrology

Psychology is the study of human personality. There are several schools of psychology which disagree with each other. They have each developed their own terminology, tests, and interpretations of observed behavior. Astrologers also have theories of personality based upon the significations of the various parts of the horoscope. There is not much common ground, since each discipline approaches the subject from different vantage points. It is therefore difficult to try to compare the results obtained by the two sciences. Since there are many more psychologists than astrologers, and since psychologists are academics who can obtain grants to fund their experiments, many more tests and published investigations of human personality are produced by psychologists than by astrologers. A few astrologers have also studied psychology, and a few psychologists (mostly Jungians) have studied astrology. But by and large psychology and astrology are like two religious sects that have different dogmas that they apply to questions of human behavior. Each can best be investigated within its own context, not by trying to correlate one with the other.

Computerized Astrology

The advent of powerful and affordable desktop computers has already had a considerable impact upon astrology, and the strength of the impact grows year by year. Prior to computers, an astrologer had to learn something about astronomy, geography, time systems, and the calendar in ad-

dition to studying astrology itself in detail. Today that is no longer necessary. A good computer and 300 or 400 dollars worth of software will do all the work. If you can start the computer and type in the client's name, place of birth, birthdate and birthtime, the machine will look up the geographical coordinates of the place, determine from that plus the birthdate what time zone the place was in, whether daylight saving time was in effect, calculate the sidereal time of birth, the house cusps, and the planetary positions at that moment, and print out the chart in any one of 100 or more "designer formats."

Some computer software will also calculate the positions of innumerable asteroids. In recent years some astrologers have become fascinated with asteroids and have ascribed all sorts of special influences to them. Since there are now 50,000 or so that the astronomers have discovered, it has even been suggested by some enthusiasts that an asteroid that has "your name" or a name similar to yours is "your personal planet" and is very important in your horoscope.

The availability of computer assistance has also enabled astrologers to compute reliable, or at least consistent, ephemerides for a number of hypothetical celestial bodies, including the eight "trans-Neptunians" of the Hamburg School and the "Dark Moon" Lilith (a supposed satellite of the Earth).

In addition to chart-calculation and ephemeris programs, there are programs available today that will type out a character analysis and a time-table and analysis of future prospects. Other programs will determine if 9:00 AM tomorrow is a good time to open the doors of your new business or a good time to ask your boss for a raise. Another will apply the rules of horary astrology to answer any sort of question you care to enter into it. Still others will type out daily guides like the ones in the newspaper but made especially for the person whose birthdata you have entered. In short, if you can afford a computer, a printer, and several hundred dollars worth of software, you can become an instant astrologer. You don't have to know anything other than how to operate the machine.

Similar software is now available for physicians and lawyers and probably for several other professions. If it weren't for old-fashioned licensing requirements, you could become an instant doctor or lawyer just as easily as you can become an instant astrologer. There is no question about it. Computers will eventually take over the world.

Just as you do not need to know how the tiny wheels fit together in a mechanical watch (or how the integrated circuit on a chip works in an electronic one), in order to tell the time, neither will you in the future need to know anything about astrology, law, or medicine in order to get useful guidance in those fields. This brings up an important question: should a "professional" be required to know something about his field, or will it be sufficient for him to have an adequate computer and software combination? Competent professionals of today will insist that the professionals of