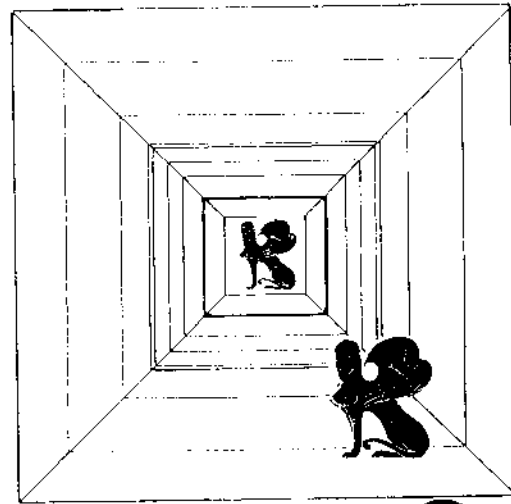


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it accomplishes all things and unites extreme parts with each other, through a medium including all things in itself, and thus reflecting itself to itself completely united. Indeed which function is imitated too by the circular motion of the world, and by the connection of the parts in the whole, and by a certain uniting of elements to elements in turn, and by virtue of higher things sending forth to lower things.²⁷

It is the linking of these unified motions with the motions of the human soul, or *musica humana*, that constitutes the art of attunement to the heavens (which Ficino was to call *De vita coelitus comparanda*), and he considered this astrological or magical art of self-adjustment to be therapeutically helped by the correct use of *musica instrumentalis*.

As part of the *circuitus spiritualis*, the divine light, or intelligible principle, will be present in objects specifically designed to receive and reflect it – such as statues of particular gods – as a ‘power point’ of spiritual energy. Again it is stressed that the power itself is uniform; the degree to which it is present will depend on the suitability of the material, the knowledge and skill of the operator or inventor, and above all on the quality of perception of the participator. “It is necessary”, says Ficino, “to be totally reverent to perceive the causes of the mundane gods in places [normally by nature] foreign to them.”²⁸ This recognition and use of *notio* is the only way in which the essence, strength and action of the gods in the world will be experienced and so understood, and is an act of intuitive comprehension, not a quantitative analysis of distinction and separation. By “determination of how much pertains to distribution according to place” and differentiation according to species and types, the possibility of apprehending reciprocal and mutual qualities and powers of occult properties in relation to their one source is severely inhibited.²⁹ In other words, the qualitative richness of the external world is dependent upon a unifying act of imaginative perception, not ‘scientific’ analysis. Any part of the world, says Ficino, receives something from God, according to its natural propensity; we can understand that people, in the same way as places, receive varying degrees and proportions of ‘divine light’ as it is refracted down through the elements and material world. The horoscope in

this sense becomes a symbolic representation of strengths and weaknesses according to the manner in which a particular individual, like a prism, reflects the original light. Ficino believed that this divine element could be made more wholly present and beneficially harmonised (“the gifts of the gods naturally attracted”) through purposeful invocations and ritual use of talismans and other material adaptations³⁰ – and particularly through music composed in specific accordance with the astrological ‘signature’ of the individual in a continuous process of tempering and refining his soul.

PART TWO

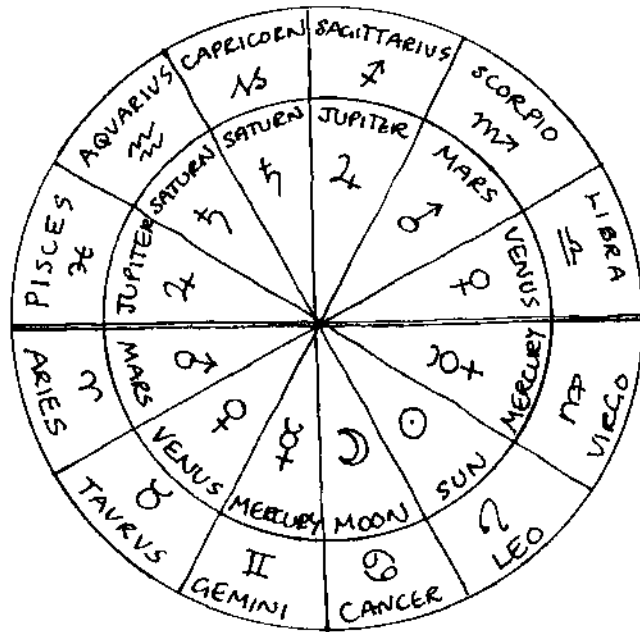
In his *Disputatio contra iudicium astrologorum* of 1477, Ficino appears to proclaim his firm opposition to astrological practices. It is as if, adopting an Aristotelian model of rational argument and writing in clear, exegetical prose, he wishes to sweep away all the deadwood of fatalism with a common-sense critique of rigid and arbitrary astrological systems. Yet in his very approach, ‘playing the game’ of the rationalist and ridiculing a superstitious, literalist interpretation, he is in fact making the point that the meaningfulness and *experience* of astrology is not to be found by attempting to reduce it to a natural-scientific system. In Ficino’s fervent humanism the human reason may potentially, and freely, attain to universal knowledge through transcending such a limitation. In astrology he found a unique means to bridge and thus to unite the external and the temporal, divine and human realms; for the empirical observation of universal motions and celestial phenomena and the mathematical calculation of the laws of regulation which arise, provide a framework within which the subjective imagination may freely range and find meaning. In fact it is precisely the impossibility of detaching the theories from the experiential effects which gives astrology such potential as a tool for attaining a holistic vision of the unity of heaven with earth – for it becomes “the translation of reality into celestial language.”³¹ In achieving this insight, a human may become master of his fate as he realises the union of the oppo-

sites within his own soul and ceases to be thrown off course by 'fated' external events.

In his *Etymology* the seventh-century encyclopedist Isidore of Seville attempted to clarify the classical Ptolemaic tradition of astrology, distinguishing between *astronomia* and *astrologia* as follows:

There is some difference between Astronomy and Astrology. For Astronomy is confined to the changing of the heavens, the rising, orbits and movements of the stars, or why they are so placed. Astrology is partly natural, partly superstitious. Natural, when it follows the courses of the sun and moon, or definite stations/placings of the planets' revolutions [*temporum*]. The superstitious kind is that followed by the mathematicians, who augur from the stars, and distribute twelve signs of the heavens to particular souls or members of the body, and strive to predict by the movements of the stars the births and customs of men.³⁷

DIAGRAM OF PLANETARY RULERSHIPS



According to this definition, the astronomer measures phenomena and traces their movements back to a first cause; the 'natural astrologer' considers the movements of the heavenly bodies in time and their reciprocal aspects, and the 'superstitious astrologer' adds *meaning* to such movements by relating them to the microcosm of the human being and making assumptions about the future from such observations of correspondence. However, in regarding as 'superstitious' all astrology which relates to the condition of the individual, Isidore is smoothing over a distinction which is fundamental to the neoPlatonic approach to the subject – that between true *divinatory* astrology and the attempt to reduce the 'superstitious' variety to a natural science. For the kind of astrological awareness demonstrated by the neoPlatonic philosopher/magus in his symbolic cosmology of spiritual hierarchies reflected within the soul of the individual is essentially divinatory, and of quite a different order from the traditional 'natural scientific' model of predictive and deterministic astrological judgement. We are dealing with two positions here which derive from the fundamental dichotomy in human nature between rational objectivity and intuitive, subjective insight. We might also view this distinction in relation to temporal and eternal time, or quantitative as opposed to qualitative modes of comprehension. I suggest that it is the possibility of a moment of fusion of the two orders which gives rise to the experience of unity of being and perception (the *unus mundus* of the alchemists?) by fully embracing the underlying paradox inherent in the two conditions of 'being' and 'becoming'.

Much of the confusion surrounding Ficino's apparently ambivalent attitude towards the value of astrological techniques and judgement may be clarified by bearing this in mind. He was a human being prey to all the inner tensions and confusions of an extremely melancholic temperament, which he understood to be signified by the presence of Saturn on his ascendant. He acknowledged the constant, inevitable fluctuation of human intellectual prowess, remarking "we are not always the same with respect to knowledge",³⁸ and it is surely unfair to attempt to evaluate his experience of meaningful symbolic correspondence with an expectation of rational consis-

tency. Magical activity of any sort, in its complexity and *radical subjectivity*, will of necessity elude all attempts at final categorisation and analysis. We should surely regard Paul Kristeller's opinion that Ficino's position is "ambiguous and full of contradictions"³⁴ not as a criticism of an inconsistent philosophical stance, but as an indication of the richness and subtlety of his astrological experience and the difficulties involved in both his expression of it and our clear understanding of what he means.

Eugenio Garin has effectively summarised the complex nature of the astrological dilemma which faced the humanist thinkers from Petrarch onwards. The two ways of approaching astrology, as a theoretical science or an occult art (that is, as an experiential 'moment') provided material for a debate which was to reach polemical proportions by the 1490's with Pico's massive outcry against a divinatory astrology based on pseudo-scientific assumptions. In the words of Garin:

[one way of interpreting astrology] is conceptual and mathematical and reduces the heavenly intelligences and the souls of things to necessary principles of rationality inherent in the picture of an absolute, completely predetermined. The other instead accentuates the personality of the divine and underlines the free individuality of souls, and gives life and humanity to everything, and is expressed in terms which are fantastic and emotive, imaginative and poetic. In the first case one risks losing human initiative and freedom; in the second the trap is the destruction of rationality and a nature which is regulated by laws. A continual tension emerges from this in the oscillations of the thinkers ... an ambiguity which is so deep that it is useless to think it can be resolved by the commonplace of the oppositions between astrology and magic.³⁵

It is useless, I would emphasise, because within each way of approach lie as many modes of understanding as there are individuals, and because ultimately both the objective and subjective viewpoints converge in a sense of personal awe and wonder when the unchanging laws of cosmic working are revealed. At the apex, the precision of 'scientific' examination and determination of natural law should, according to Platonic thought, give rise to true religious experience and intuition of the numinous.³⁶ But as the strands

diverge and separate, myriad positions may be tenanted, from blind adherence to rational 'scientific' norms, to the hysteria of religious fanaticism; from the Apollonian clarity of exact perception to the enchanting images of poetic approximations and musical analogies. For both Ficino and Pico astrology was "not so much a technique of prediction as a general conception of reality"³⁷ in which man as *magnum miraculum* triumphed in his self-determined freedom. In a letter to Poliziano concerning his astrological views³⁸ Ficino congratulates both him and Pico for disputing against the astrologers who "in the manner of the Titans, as vainly as wickedly struggle to tear away Zeus's heaven from him" – in other words, who attempt to de-mythologise and reduce to a quantifiable system an art which must depend on a symbolic, open-ended imaginative response for its effectiveness.

When the positions of heavenly bodies are observed and annotated at any given moment one is conducting a 'scientific' or astronomical, operation. When the result is taken up imaginatively in the act of divination, when the operator participates in a meaningful relationship with the quality of that moment, astrology becomes 'magic' – the wise astrologer observes, interprets and uses operative magic to 'negotiate with the gods' and transcend 'bad' fate; thus the formal structure provides the framework for the content of the experience. Unfortunately it is all too easy to lose the kernel of that irrational experience within a strict tradition which upholds rational objectivity and thus becomes bound within the view of structure as an end in itself. Ficino succeeded in maintaining a divinatory attitude within the craft of astrological procedure, together with a respect for the disciplined interpretation which he found in Ptolemy and the Arabic astrological writers. But he reacted against the tyranny of a purely formal approach, and his criticism fell heavily on both the rule-bound determinism and the superstitious, fanciful soothsaying of ignorant practitioners. It never fell on the potential of astrology itself, in the hands of the wise, as a tool for self-knowledge and, ultimately, for an experience of unity of religious breadth and intensity.

Ptolemaic Astrology

I shall now look briefly at the tradition of astrology as a natural science which Ficino would have inherited through medieval Aristotelianism. Although he respected such a view (Ptolemaic astrological theory unquestioningly formed the basis of his own practice) he recognised that it could, if it were allowed to impose its own hegemony, negate the possibility of a transcendental, eternal order which would thus deny any possibility of final psychological unity.

Ptolemy and Hermes Trismegistus can perhaps be viewed as the clearest upholders of the 'rational' and 'mystical' approaches to astrology. Apart from Manilius' didactic poem *Astronomica*³⁹ (in which he specifically presents astrology as a gift of Hermes) 'Hermetic astrology' is to be found chiefly in the treatises of philosophers. In contrast, the traditional Ptolemaic model of 'scientific' astrology is represented by a series of astrological 'text books', beginning with Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* in the late Hellenistic period (c.150 AD).⁴⁰ The formulation of a purely 'scientific' astrology was concerned with the correlation of effects from the heavens in 'objective time' which leads to the inevitable, concrete outcomes of future events. Ptolemy's work provides us with a definite exposition of the *conceptual* framework of astrology; an approach which developed simultaneously with the enthusiasm for astral and solar cults and for the deep subjectivism of experiential theurgic ritual in the early centuries A.D. Geoffrey Cornelius has pointed out⁴¹ that before Ptolemy astrology was essentially *katarchic* in that it was inextricably linked to the practices of auspices and augury – divinations and oracles which sought to clarify the relationship of human conduct with the will of the gods at any given moment of significance. He suggests that with Ptolemy, the *katarchic* elements became suppressed in favour of a rationalistic model – a 'protective overmantle' of natural-scientific rationalism⁴² was superimposed on this core of divinatory practice; a mantle which, I would add, is always in danger of stifling rather than protecting its vulnerable content.

Ptolemaic astrology firmly upholds a natural process of causation, following Aristotle,⁴³ but introduces an original concept of an ambient or ether, whose quality depends on the heavenly bodies and which is suffused throughout creation⁴⁴ (a 'scientific' equivalent of *anima mundi*?). Ptolemy promised man the ability to understand human temperament and predict events "both scientifically and by successful conjecture" through examining the quality of this airy, all-pervading substance. Of utmost importance is the 'seed' moment, or moment of origin – which may be that of birth itself or any moment in life from which predictions may be made – at which time the heavens stamp an impression which impregnates and marks, indelibly, the characteristics of the person or event.⁴⁵

Here there is no room for negotiation with the gods. Ptolemy regards any form of participatory divination using astrology as merely deceitful and profiteering soothsaying,⁴⁶ and rejects an intuitive, comprehensive 'ancient' form of prediction which takes all the stars into account (practised by "those who make their enquiries directly from nature")⁴⁷ as too difficult. He is much more concerned with "theorising on the basis of the traditions"⁴⁸ than attempting to account for what actually happens in the astrologer's experience. NeoPlatonic or Hermetic astrology fundamentally challenges the determinist stance by observing that the correlation of an event with a particular heavenly configuration is neither necessary or sufficient for the astrological effect to happen – that is, to be *experienced*. The degree to which a meaningful connection between the two is made will depend not on an empirical observation of external factors, but on the capacity of the individual for insight – which thus depends more on *notio* than *notitia*. This position remains in the realm of the possible and preserves the autonomy of the human will by allowing freedom of choice with regard to the taking up of the symbolism – there is room for manoeuvre, for the play of the imagination, as the responsibility is removed from an invariable 'out there' and placed in the realm of personal experience with its infinite variety of shades and intensities of subjective meaning.⁴⁹ Ficino was to continually stress that human beings inhabit a world of contingency. To reduce their experiences to either necessary or impossible outcomes

– to adopt a fatalist view of astrology or deny any possible symbolic signification – deprives man of the noblest part of his soul – his divinity – which is expressed through his capacity for creative imagination. As Salutati cried, a hundred years before Ficino's *Disputatio*: "Leave free will to humankind; if you take it away you will destroy both the human and the divine."⁵⁰

Arabic Astrology

It is important to realise that the Latin translations of Arabic texts available in the Medieval and Renaissance periods were generally overlaid with interpretations and elaborations by their translators, and certainly a thorough scholarly investigation of the vast amount of Arabic literature concerning astrology has hardly begun. But from the available texts it is clear that the Arabs were the great synthesisers of astrological tradition, translating into Arabic, Greek, Sanscrit, Syriac and Persian writings. It would appear that the Arabic trend was towards concretisation and the significance of particulars in both natal and horary branches of astrology – a trend which was easily obscured by the Platonic convictions of twelfth-century translators and commentators.

Persian astrology itself combined both Hellenistic and Indian doctrine. Persian astrologers writing in Arabic began to create a literature based on Persian translations of Greek and Sanskrit texts made in the third century A.D., and from the seventh to eighth centuries A.D. the two branches of divinatory and genethliological astrology are found represented in Arabic treatises. It has been assumed by modern scholarship⁵¹ that Arabic astrologers in general promulgated the Ptolemaic 'machine of destiny' in an attempt to justify their art scientifically. However, it would appear that already divination and horary practices, involving a subjective or 'experiential' dimension, played a large part in Islamic horoscopy in the eighth and ninth centuries. The earliest known Arabic text relating to astrology deals with celestial omens,⁵² which were also to predominate in the many Arabic translations of Hermetic texts. A feature of Arabic astrology

was that it established and clarified the different branches of astrological practice. One particular source, evidently known to Ficino, is the twelfth century *Liber novem judicum*,⁵³ a Latin compendium of Arabic astrological writings mostly from the eighth and ninth centuries A.D., some of which were translations of astrological authorities from both Greek and Persian traditions: Aristotle, Ptolemy, Dorotheus, Aomar, Alkindus, Zael, Albenait, Mesehella and Jergis.⁵⁴

Mesehella, a Persian Jew working in Iraq from 762 to 815, was the first astrologer to introduce elements of Aristotelian physics into Arabic, and his work on genethliology survives in a Latin translation by Hugo of Santalla.⁵⁵ In the text included in the *Liber novem judicum* he distinguishes between six categories of astrological practice: the astrology of generations and nations, of families and single households, kings and potentates, natal astrology, inceptions and elections, and horary.⁵⁶ The divinatory branch of interrogations, which depends on a subjective interrelationship between the condition of the inquirer and that of the heavens, is regarded as a particular application of astrology which may happily co-exist with the 'objective' methods of genethliology, for which Ptolemy and Dorotheus provided the chief models. We know that Mesehella, Aomar and two other astrologers cast the horoscope for the foundation of Baghdad on 30 July 762.⁵⁷

In his *Disputatio* Ficino's most-quoted authority is Ptolemy, whose name springs from almost every page. However, many of his references are to the spurious *Centiloquium* or *Liber fructus*, now believed to be composed by the tenth-century Arab Haly Abenrudian whose Commentary on the work was available in the Renaissance via the translation by Hugo of Santalla.⁵⁸ The Arabic astrologer quoted most frequently in the *Disputatio* is Albumasar, who had become a principal authority in the Medieval period through his *Introductorium maius in Astronomiam*, written in Baghdad in 848 A.D. and twice translated into Latin in the 12th century.⁵⁹ His justification of astrology as rooted in the principles of natural science carried through the principle of deterministic causation to embrace every aspect of the sublunar world, and Ficino frequently refers disparagingly to what he regards as Albumasar's

"silly similitudes" (*pueriles similitudines*) which cannot give any sound basis for judgement.⁶⁰

Albumasar firmly upheld astrological fatalism, establishing astrology as an *intellectual* discipline which could not in itself be subject to error – any inconsistency or contradiction in judgement was to be attributed to the shortcomings of the practitioner, not to his art. Albumasar's advice is that the astrologer "must have confidence in his science while avoiding to meddle with the unknown or with that which exceeds the power of reason in order not to bring legitimate astrology into disrepute."⁶¹ All human qualities of body and soul Albumasar understood as part of one natural movement, the ultimate source of which is God's will, but which are nevertheless totally determined by virtue of the heavenly bodies. Ficino would agree that, in the world of nature which included human bodies and emotions, results of planetary activity could be directly observed depending on the type of action and degree of receptivity of the material. But he was to protest indignantly at the assumption that the great variety of effects in this world could *all* be attributed to planetary movements, aspects and figures – both observable and imagined. Although Albumasar acknowledged man's capacity to deliberate and exercise choice, ultimately even contingency must for him be determined by the stars – for in what has been termed "the ominous inclination toward elimination of contingency so characteristic of Arabian philosophy"⁶² his conclusion is that man will choose what is of necessity already implied in planetary motion.⁶³ If God intervenes in this natural process through an act of providence, it does not disrupt the system of regular cause and effect. Although he professes to allow it, Lemay points out, Albumasar effectively does away with the notion of contingency altogether. No possibility of transformation through transcendence of 'fate' can be incorporated in this system – for the strict rationalist, magical operations claiming to do this would be considered illusory and dangerous, not least because to endow planets with the numinous qualities of divine personifications and to presume to summon them would be polytheistic and reveal a dangerous and presumptive faith in human, rather than divine, power. To this degree, the Ptolemaic

attitude would appear to stop short at the very moment when psychic transformation might become possible. By its refusal to enter the domain of the imagination (fearful perhaps of the consequences of an incomplete *notitia*-type knowledge), rationalistic astrology forces man to live in a strait jacket, prey to the infallible prognostications of fallible astrologers.

Even Al-Kindi's *De radiis*,⁶⁴ to which Ficino owed much authority for the 'natural' emphasis of his own astrological magic,⁶⁵ reduces all occult or mysterious forces at work in so-called magical operations to a rational theory of ray-emanation. For Al-Kindi the process of cosmic sympathy determines and explains all possible phenomena; in the words of his modern editor, "there is no shadow of esotericism in this system; once the premise has been adopted, that is the fundamental unity of the Cosmos and its harmony, everything unfolds from there according to rational norms."⁶⁶ Although Al-Kindi acknowledges the power of imagination, intention and faith of the practitioner to provide changes in other elemental things, his theory is that human emotions such as desire, hope and fear emit rays which may act on matter at a distance. Al-Kindi's explanation of ritual magic allows no supernatural agency or theory of occult synchronicity; rather, the *spiritus imaginarius* or seat of the imagination emits rays which conform to cosmic rays. To obtain an effect a mental image must be formed, and the man must desire the realisation of it (Al-Kindi does acknowledge that lack of faith would prevent success) then precise acts such as invocations and prayers may follow, designed to provoke specific movements of celestial rays.⁶⁷

Specifically taken up by Ficino was Al-Kindi's emphasis on the power of words to reinforce the effects of planetary rays.⁶⁸ The latter recognised that formulas could act on different kinds of beings according to time and place; and just as prayers recited in conjunction with an intense desire could achieve a more powerful effect, so the potency of astrological formulas was enhanced when they were linked directly to the stars which were themselves linked by sympathy to elemental nature.⁶⁹ Al-Kindi's theory of rays and sympathetic resonance provided a rational explanation for the efficacy of talismans, magical mirrors, sacrifice and images. He firmly believed that

the success of a magical operation depended on the favourable aspects of the planets and signs which governed its inception, and that their names and characters should be written or spoken to ensure the strongest concordance of cosmic rays for the operation. He was determined to present 'occult' phenomena as the natural consequences to be drawn from the overall principle of cosmic unity, maintaining that what man regards as 'hidden' does not therefore imply origins of an unnatural, or supernatural, kind.⁷⁰

Al-Kindi's natural-scientific theoretical position is often belied by the implications of what he approved of in practice. For example, his realisation that the 'meaning' of a ritual invocation is constituted from a dual source – a combination of cosmic harmony and human custom (*musica mundana* and *musica humana*) – would not seem totally divorced from the intuitive notion of the theurgists, that the gods perfect the work of humans:

Moreover when in any invocation the attribution of meaning from the harmony [already] created and from men concurs, the virtue of meaning of this invocation is doubled. For if this name, man, by its harmonic disposition may contain the meaning of man, just as it has been agreed by the Latins, it will operate through its rays in matter since it will be amplified by a double virtue, that is natural and accidental, and thus the effect will appear more strongly...⁷¹

In the *Liber de vita* Ficino refers to Albumasar, Al-Kindi, Haly Abenrudian, Haly Albohazen⁷² and most frequently simply to the *Arabes*.⁷³ Carol Kaske suggests that when he refers to these latter writers, Ficino means the authors of *Picatrix*, a treatise on sympathetic astral magic dating from the twelfth century with a strong Hermetic content.⁷⁴ Ficino would have been familiar with the Latin translation which, as is the case with the *Liber novem judicum*, differs somewhat from the Arabic original.⁷⁵ In this work he found a system of practical magic set in the context of Hermetic philosophical religion, with an emphasis on talismans, alchemy, statue-magic and demonology. In a remarkable passage in *De vita coelitus comparanda*⁷⁶ Ficino quotes "the Arabs" as saying that in the fashioning of images, the human spirit "if it has been intent on the work and

upon the stars through imagination and emotion" is joined with the spirit of the world and the rays of the stars through which the *spiritus mundi* acts. This notion was to form the basis of Ficino's astrological music therapy, and suggests that the most profound desire of man – to harmonise his soul – involves a return to the stars.⁷⁷

1. This paper is an edited extract from my doctoral thesis for the City University, London entitled *Magic, Astrology and Music: The background to Marsilio Ficino's astrological music therapy and his role as a Renaissance magus*.

2. Pseudo-Ptolemy, *Centiloquium* trans. in *Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos* ed. J.M. Ashmand (London 1917) aphorism 4.

3. Ficino, *Iamblichus de mysteriis Aegyptiorum, Chaldaeorum, atque Assyriorum, Opera omnia* (Basle 1576) 1873–1908

4. Iamblichus's treatise is a refutation of Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo* in which Porphyry severely questions the efficacy of theurgic practices, on the grounds of their irreconcilability with the fundamentally intellectual nature of Greek philosophy.

5. *Op.om.* 1874: *tactus quidam divinitatis*

6. *ibid.*

7. For an explanation of Platonic thought in relation to the psychological implications of the four elements, see C. G. Jung "A Psychological Approach to the Trinity" in *Psychology and Religion: West and East* (CW 11, Bollingen & London 1958) 177–193

8. Iamblichus, *De mysteriis Aegyptiorum* trans. T. Taylor & A. Wilder, ed. S. Ronan (Tunbridge Wells 1989) IX.2, 136

9. *ibid.* IX.3, 137

10. *Op.om.* 781: *nefarious gigantulos*

11. Ficino, *Op.om.* 1874

12. Ficino, *Liber de Sole*, *Op.om.* 965–975

13. *Op.om.* 965

14. *ibid.*

15. *ibid.* 966

16. See Plato, *Republic* 507c–511e

17. *op.om.* 971

18. C.G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis* para.226 (C.W.14, Bollingen & London 1963)

19. *Op.om.* 1882, *De virtute sacramentorum*

20. *ibid.*

21. *ibid.*

22. *ibid.*

23. *ibid.*

24. Ficino, *Liber de vita* trans. C. Kaske & J. Clark Ficino, *Three Books on Life* (New York 1989) III.21.47.

25. *Op.om.* 1876

26. *ibid.*

27. *ibid.*

28. *ibid.*

29. *ibid.*

30. *ibid.*

31. Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance* (London 1983) 74
32. Isidori Hispaniensis Episcopi, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, lib.3 (XXVII)
33. Ficino, *De amore* VI.11, S. Jayne Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love* (Dallas 1985) 12-13, *Op. om.* 1349-50
34. P.O. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* (New York 1943) 310
35. See Eugenio Garin *op. cit.* 28-96, on Pico 78-96. This reference, 61. See Pico's *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (ed. E. Garin, Florence 1946)
36. See Plato, *Epinomis*: science and religion are united by number.
37. Garin, *op. cit.* 93
38. Ficino, letter to Poliziano, *Quid sentiat de astrologia*; *Op. om.* 958. This letter can be interpreted as a warning to Poliziano that his life may be in danger. "You have known about these omens of the astrologers for a long time now" says Ficino, and urges his friend to overcome them with the strength of Hercules. He ends "Meanwhile on earth live a long time." In his reply (in *Supplementum Ficinianum II* ed. P.O. Kristeller, Florence 1937 278-9) Poliziano acknowledges the presence of "evil and envious people" who appear to be a cause for some anxiety, and thanks Ficino for his love and concern.
39. Manilius, *Astronomica*, Rome 1st c. AD. For modern edition see *Astronomica* trans. G.P. Goold (Cambridge Mass. 1977)
40. Ptolemy, (c.100-78 A.D.) *Tetrabiblos* (150 A.D.), trans. F.E. Robbins (Cambridge Mass. 1980)
41. G. Cornelius 'The Moment of Astrology' pt.III in *Astrology, the Astrologers' Quarterly* vol.58 no.1 (1984) 14-24
42. *ibid.* part I (vol.57 no.3) 98
43. For a succinct presentation of Aristotle's theories of causation, see J. Barnes, *Aristotle* (Oxford 1982) 51-7
44. Ptolemy *Tetrabiblos* I.2.1
45. *ibid.* III.1.103-4
46. *ibid.* I.2.6
47. *ibid.* III.1.107
48. *ibid.* III.1.107
49. Of interest here is the motto of the most famous of English astrologers, William Lilly, whose frontispiece to *Christian Astrology* (1647, facsimile ed. London 1985) pronounces definitively "non cogunt" - the stars do not compel.
50. Coluccio Salutati, *De fato, fortuna e casu* quoted in Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance* 33
51. Richard Lemay, 'The True Place of Astrology in Medieval Science and Philosophy' in *Astrology, Science and Society* ed. P. Curry (Woodbridge 1987) 70
52. This text is the *Apocalypse of Daniel*, preserved in a Greek translation by Alexius of Byzantium in 1245 AD "who reports that the Arabic text that he translates was turned into that language from a manuscript discovered by Mu awiyah (reigned 661-80) in the course of his campaign in the environs of Constantinople during the reign of Constans II (reigned AD 641-68)." See D. Pingree, 'Astrology' in *Religion, Learning and Science in the Abbasid Period* eds. M.L. Young, J.D. Latham & R.B. Sergeant (Cambridge 1990) 291
53. Ficino would appear to refer to this work in his references to Messalac and Zael (Masha'allah and Zael) in his *Disputatio contra iudicium astrologorum*, *Supp. Fic. II* 39,60
54. Aomar: 'Umar Muhammed ibn al-Farrukhan al-Tabari, d.185
Alkindus: Al-Kindi abu Yusuf Ya'Qub ibn Ishaq al-Sabbah c.800-873
Zael: Sahl ibn Bishr ibn Habib ibn Hani, d.822-850
- Albenait: also known as Abu Ali, Albohali, Alkhait, Yahya ibn Ghafib
Abu Ali al-Khayyat, active c.854
Mesehella: Masha'allah ibn Athari al-Basri, d.815
Jergis: unidentified
55. Extant works survive in Latin, Hewbrew and Persian. His book on genethliology, *Kitab al-Mawalid al-kabir* survives in Latin translation by Hugo of Santalla, 1141-51. See Pingree, *op. cit.* 294
56. From the Latin text (1509 edition), translation runs:
Of everything which has its being and, once created,
flourishes beneath the orbit of the Moon, God
the creator of worldly substance included in a six-fold
order certain universal groupings of equal distinction...
- Francis Carmody (*Arabic Astronomical and Astrological Sciences in Latin Translation: A Critical Bibliography*) (Berkeley 1956) 108 mentions that "the many important variant readings [of this text] indicate that the editions are very corrupt and unreliable for detail." See Carmody 107-112 for details of sources and variants. The *Liber novem iudicum* was published twice anonymously in the 15th century.
57. Pingree, *op. cit.* 293
58. *ibid.* 298; Lemay, 'The True Place of Astrology'. See also Lemay, 'The Origin and Success of the *Kitab al-Tamara, Liber Fructus*' in *First International Symposium of the History of Arab Science* (Aleppo, 1976), Proceedings vol.II, Contributions in European Languages 92-107
59. The two 12th century translators of Albumasar's *Introductorium in Astronomiam* were John of Seville (1133) and Hermann of Carinthia (c.1140). See Charles Burnett, 'Hermann of Carinthia's Attitude towards his Arabic sources, in particular in respect to theories on the human soul' in *L'Homme et son univers au moyen âge, actes du septième congrès international de philosophie médiévale*, ed. C. Wenin (Louvain-la-Neuve 1986); F. Carmody, *op. cit.* 88-91 (he calls Albumasar's work "one of the basic technical sources of Latin scientific literature" 88); K. Lemay *Abu Ma'shar and Latin Aristotelianism in the twelfth century* (Beirut 1962). For information on Albumasar and his ideas I rely on Lemay. Since writing, a new translation of Albumasar's "Abbreviation of the Introduction to Astrology" has appeared, ed. and trans. C. Burnett, K. Yamamoto & M. Yano (Leiden 1994).
60. *Supp. Fic. II* 77. Other references to Albumasar: 32,33,36,38,39,41,42,43,44,60,62. In the *Liber de vita* he is mentioned at 3.VI.79, 3.XVIII 8, 3.XXII 54
61. Lemay *Abu Mash'ar and Latin Aristotelianism* 54
62. *ibid.* 49
63. *ibid.* 50
64. Al-Kindi, *De radiis* Baghdad 9th century. The edition by M.-T. d'Alverny and F. Hudry in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littérature du moyen âge* 41 (1974) 149-260 is of an anonymous Latin translation, the only one extant. The original Arabic text has not been discovered.
65. See Ficino, *Liber de vita* 3.XXI.15. Carol Kaske draws attention to the similarity between Al-Kindi's and Ficino's chapter headings (3.XXI note 3 453)
66. *De radiis*, d'Alverny & Hudry edition 141
67. *ibid.* 143
68. Ficino, *Liber de vita* III.21
69. *De radiis* ch.6: 'De virtute verborum'
70. *ibid.* chs.7-9
71. *ibid.* ch.6, d'Alverny & Hudry 236-7
72. Haly Albohazen (1016-40) the son of Abenragel wrote *De iudiciis astrorum*. See Kaske, *Ficino, Three books on life* 412, 1.IV note 1.

73. Ficino mentions Al-Kindi at *Liber de vita* 3.XXI.15; Haly Abenrudian at 2.XVIII.142; 2.XX.23; 3.XIII.4, 13; 3.XVIII.183; Haly Albohazen at 3.III.23; 3.XII.36; 3.XVIII.18; 3.XX.21,36.

74. See F. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London 1964) 49-58

75. For a critical edition of the Latin version of *Picatrix* see David Pingree, (ed.) *Picatrix, the Latin version of the 'Ghayat al-Hakim', Studies of the Warburg Institute* 9 (London 1986). The treatise was translated into Latin from a Spanish intermediary translation, renamed *Picatrix* in 1256 at the court of Alfonso el Sabio and has been the most comprehensive work on astral magic available in Western Europe. See also Garin, *op.cit.* 46-55; Yates, *op.cit.* 49-56

76. Ficino, *Liber de vita* 3.XX.36

77. The etymology of 'desire' has profound implications for an inextricable connection between man's inner condition and that of the cosmos. The Latin *desidero* derives from *de sidero*, literally "from the star".

REMEMBERING EROS A Ficinian Response to Love in the Nineties (A Dialogue between an Astrologer and a Student)

DARBY COSTELLO
(London)

SYLVIE: Vita, hello! How unexpected to see you here in this café in the middle of a rainy Friday afternoon. I didn't know you lived in this area. But I won't intrude as I see you are working on something.

VITA: Not so much working as musing. Please sit down and join me for a coffee. How have you been? We last met at Erica's dinner, I think. You were with that interesting Russian man.

S: Yes. I was. No longer, I might add. Ah, this business of falling in love. I wish I could stop it happening. I begin to think it is some kind of trick. I fear that there is something I must figure out or I'll keep getting tricked forever. Somewhere I hear the Gods laughing - it's as if I keep missing the point; I don't know the secret. If only I could find the secret of this trick I'm sure I would be able to laugh with them.

V: Yes, wouldn't that be delicious! But what happens?

S: I seem to be caught in a loop and I have no idea how to break out. After the end of this last affair, in which I invested more of myself than even I imagined possible, I wanted to die. Day after day I thought of suicide, how I would do it, what it would mean to the various people I knew. For months I was numb with pain. I kept telling myself I was already dead, so what was the point of killing

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