

The Katarchē of Horary

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“The hypothesis cannot be accepted in the total absence of corroborative evidence.”

David Pingree¹

The question of the origin of horary astrology is one that has eluded the astrological community for some time now.² Several prominent astrologers and historians of astrology have made explicit statements over the past two decades claiming that horary was a Hellenistic innovation that goes back to the earliest strata of the horoscopic astrological tradition. Indeed, this appears to be the prevailing view within the astrological community at the present time. The evidence for this claim relies almost entirely on a translation of an ancient astrological text that appears to point to the use of horary as early as the 1st century of the Common Era. This text is the astrological poem of Dorotheus of Sidon (c. 75 CE), who wrote one of the earliest works on Hellenistic astrology to have survived largely intact into the present day. The extant text is not written in its original language however, but rather the text as we have it today is an English translation of an Arabic translation of a Pahlavī (Sasanian Persian) translation of Dorotheus’ original Greek work, which was written in the form of a didactic poem. This English translation, which was published by the noted historian of science David Pingree in 1976, has been the primary source of this controversy because it makes several apparent references to interrogational (i.e. horary) astrology in the last book of the five book series, which is collectively known in Greek as the *Pentateuch* (‘Five Books’) or sometimes in Latin as the *Carmen Astrologicum* (‘Song of Astrology’).

This paper addresses the general question of the existence of interrogational astrology in the Hellenistic tradition, as well as the specific sections in the Arabic translation of Dorotheus’ work where explicit references are made to interrogational astrology in an effort to determine their legitimacy. This will be accomplished by studying the internal textual evidence and consistency within Pingree’s English translation of the Arabic, as well as by comparing this translation to other surviving Dorotheus fragments, including the lengthy quotation of Dorotheus’ fifth book by the early 5th century astrologer Hephaistio of Thebes (b.380). While Pingree’s English translation of the Arabic version of Dorotheus contains many clues which clearly indicate that there are major problems with the surviving text, the ultimate confirmation

¹ David Pingree, “Astronomy and Astrology in India and Iran,” *Isis*, University of Chicago Press, Vol. 54, No. 2. (June, 1963), pgs. 229-246, pg. 230.

² A version of this paper was originally published as “The Katarche of Horary,” in the National Council for Geocosmic Research’s *Geocosmic Journal*, Summer 2007, pgs. 23-34.

of the extent of these issues becomes undeniably clear once the questionable areas of the text are compared with the excerpts of Dorotheus' fifth book by Hephaistio which still survive in something very close to the original Greek poetical form. The point of this analysis is to dispel a persistent historical myth about a major branch of the tradition, which, although superficially plausible, does not hold up under close examination. The result will be to gain a greater understanding of the development of horoscopic astrology in classical antiquity, as well as to clarify and mend some of the technical terminology that has recently begun to corrode due to a significant misunderstanding that has occurred in recent times.

Interrogational Astrology

Interrogational astrology, also known as horary astrology, is the study of determining the answer to a specific question through the examination and interpretation of a horoscopic chart cast for the moment that the question is posed to an astrologer. The theory is that since the question exists and is formulated and posed at a specific moment in time, then the answer must also exist at that moment and this answer is reflected by the alignment of certain celestial bodies in a horoscopic chart cast for that point in time. By following a very specific set of rules and adhering to the logic that is inherent in the system the answer to the question is sought to be derived primarily, if not exclusively, based upon the chart of the question itself.

Interrogational astrology is one of the four main branches of horoscopic astrology, and it is from these four branches that almost all other applications, techniques, and practices are derived. The first branch is genethliology or natal astrology, which is the practice of casting and interpreting astrological charts for the moment of the birth of an individual in the attempt to ascertain specific information about the nature and course of their life. The second branch is universal or mundane astrology, which is the application of astrological principles to groups of people such as cities and nations, as well as to natural phenomena such as weather and earthquakes. The third branch is katarchic astrology, which is the application of astrological principles to determine an auspicious moment to begin a venture or undertaking, as well as to interpret the auspiciousness of an inception that has already taken place.³ While each branch is related inasmuch as they are all based upon the same fundamental premise of horoscopic astrology and they operate largely within the same basic technical framework, they are each quite distinct in their specific application and scope. The technical terminology used to define them serves an important role in reflecting the differentiation in application between the separate branches, and the distinction becomes especially important when dealing with specific

³ The latter application is more commonly referred to as "inceptional astrology" in modern times, although in the Hellenistic and Byzantine traditions the term *katarchē* was used to refer to both electional astrology as well as what modern astrologers refer to as inceptional astrology. For example in a passage attributed to Serapio titled *Peri Katarchē* or "Concerning Inceptions" it begins "For every inception [katarchē] of those things which have already had a beginning and those that are about to begin, it will be necessary to see..." *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum* [henceforth CCAG], Vol. 1, ed. F. Boll, F. Cumont, G. Kroll, A. Olivieri, Brussels, 1898, pg. 99, trans. Robert Schmidt, *The Astrological Record of the Early Sages in Greek*, ed. Robert Hand, The Golden Hind Press, Berkeley Springs, WV, 1995, pg. 45. The term *katarchē* is used in this paper so as to retain the original fluidity of the application of the term to both "elections" as well as "inceptions," although the word "inception" is probably the most appropriate English translation of this term, as long as this fluidity is kept in mind.

theoretical and philosophical issues, as well as when pursuing comparative studies between different traditions.

However, in the past 20 years the distinction between two of these branches, katarchic and interrogational astrology, has been treated with a large degree of fluidity to the point that the terms are said to be interchangeable in many modern astrological texts today, even though the scope and application of the two, as well as the ancient usage of the terms, is clearly very different. In order to understand the origin of this problem and the manner in which it might be corrected, we must first examine the history behind the current state of affairs.

The Revival of Interrogational Astrology in the Modern Period

Although interrogational astrology was not a major part of the 20th century astrological tradition in the west because the focus and technical structure of modern astrology did not sustain it, this branch of astrology has seen a major resurgence over the past 20 years largely due to the revival of traditional methodologies and techniques that has taken place; the so-called post-modernist movement. Indeed, one of the most influential events in the formulation of this movement was the reintroduction of “traditional,” pre-18th century horary to the modern astrological community in the 1980’s. Nick Campion points out in his article *The Traditional Revival in Modern Astrology: A Preliminary History* that

The origins of the traditional revival proper, as an influential movement in late twentieth-century astrology, lie in the UK, chiefly with Olivia Barclay.⁴

According to Campion, one of the most crucial events in this recent revival was the acquisition of a copy of William Lilly’s *Christian Astrology* by Olivia Barclay in 1980, and her subsequent efforts to circulate it that led to its eventual republication in 1985. During the same period Geoffrey Cornelius and Maggie Hyde founded an organization called *The Company of Astrologers*, which took an active role in teaching and promoting a more traditional style of horary astrology that was derived from Lilly, as well as delving into the subjects’ philosophical implications. Ms. Barclay eventually started a correspondence course which mainly focused on methods derived from Lilly, and through this directly influenced many other astrologers such as Lee Lehman, Deborah Houlding, Anthony Louis, and John Frawley who would later go on to play major roles in spurring the traditional revival across the west through their popularization of traditional techniques and methodologies. This proliferation of interrogational astrology, and traditional forms of horoscopy in general, helped to pave the way for the further expansion of the traditional movement with the establishment of Project Hindsight by Robert Schmidt, Robert Hand, and Robert Zoller in 1992, and then the subsequent foundation of Archive for the Retrieval of Historical Astrological Texts (ARHAT) by Hand in 1997.

⁴ Nicholas Campion, “The Traditional Revival in Modern Astrology: A Preliminary History,” *Astrology Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 1, Winter 2003, pgs. 28-38.

It is important to note that the initial zeitgeist of the traditional revival was largely focused on interrogational astrology, specifically of the type practiced in the 17th century, and it is still a major part of the focus of those within this movement at the present time.

This traditionalist movement was concurrent with one that emphasized the study of the history and philosophy of astrology, as well as a greater focus on academic studies within the astrological community in general. There have been several notable works produced by those within the astrological community during this period by people such as Nick Campion, Patrick Curry, Geoffrey Cornelius, Nick Kollerstrom and James Holden, as well as by academics working outside of the astrological community such as Otto Neugebauer, David Pingree, Jim Tester, Charles Burnett and Francesca Rochberg. At a time when the academic community was making great strides in understanding the history and origins of astrology, the astrological community itself had reached a point when it began to cultivate intellectuals who were actually interested in the material being produced by those outside of the community with its historical, philosophical and practical implications.

Pingree

By far the most towering figure in the field of the history and transmission of astrology in the 20th century was the late David Pingree. In the words of one biographical article written about him, Pingree

Devoted his life's work to understanding the transmission of mathematics, astronomy and astrology from the cultures of ancient Mesopotamia through Renaissance Europe, and the ways the recipient culture would alter the ideas to render them accessible to their people. "Each time there is a transmission there is a transformation," he said. "It is only in modern times that Western science is transmitted without being changed."⁵

Pingree was fluent in ancient Greek, Arabic, Sanskrit, Latin, Persian, and Akkadian, as well as several other languages. He directed a major portion of his career to studying, cataloging and translating ancient astrological and astronomical texts and he produced numerous books and articles over the years on various eastern and western astrological traditions including the Mesopotamian, Hellenistic, Indian, Persian, Arabian and Medieval European traditions ranging from the 3rd millennium BCE to the 18th century CE. Although Pingree did not believe in astrology as a legitimate phenomenon,⁶ he did acknowledge its place as a legitimate science in the ancient world that is deserving of serious academic study,⁷ and he did more than any other

⁵ Richard P. Morin, "One of a Kind," *Brown University News Bureau*, October 7, 1996, online article last accessed March 1, 2011 at http://www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/1996-97/96-033i.html

⁶ "It pains me not because I believe that astrology is true; on the contrary, I believe it to be totally false." David Pingree, "Hellenophilia Versus the History of Science," *Isis*, Vol. 83, No. 4, December, 1992, pp. 554-563, pg. 559.

⁷ In reference to astral omens and astrology he once argued that "All of these subjects, I would argue, were or are sciences within the contexts of the cultures in which they once flourished or now are practiced. As such they deserve to be studied by historians of science with as serious and thorough a purpose as are the topics that we usually find discussed in history of science classrooms or in the pages of *Isis*. This means that their intellectual content must be probed deeply, and not simply dismissed as rubbish or interpreted in the light of modern

person, perhaps in the history of the subject, to investigate and reconstruct its history. His expertise in ancient languages and his exposure to all of the ancient astrological traditions ensures that his opinions on matters concerning the history and transmission of astrology are not to be taken lightly.

It could be argued that Pingree's disbelief in astrology as a legitimate phenomenon actually reinforced his work and many of the conclusions that he came to because his lack of emotional investment in the subject freed him from making mistakes of interpretation which could have occurred by projecting his own ideas, beliefs and desires onto the subject matter. Instead his main focus was on philological issues concerning the variations in manuscripts and the transformation of specific concepts as they were transmitted to different cultures and as they passed through different languages. This would be in contrast with someone who actually believes in astrology as a legitimate phenomenon and perhaps would approach the ancient texts and authors with preconceived notions about what *should* be there. Such an approach could incline a person more towards making mistakes of interpretation in regards to the ancient material, especially if they are not paying attention to the philological content or history of the texts and if they are not familiar with ancient languages that they were written in. Robin Waterfield summarized one aspect of this tendency aptly in his article *The Evidence for Astrology in Classical Greece* by stating that

...there is always a tendency for enthusiasts in any subject to want to trace their interests as far back in history as possible, to give them an aura of respectability.⁸

Ultimately it would seem that Pingree's objectivity freed him from making some of the anachronistic mistakes that were made over the past 20 years by astrologers whose subjective opinions colored their perception of the material. It would seem that many of these mistakes were partially rooted in the underlying focus on horary astrology that many astrologers had during the course of the early the traditional movement.

Pingree appears to have initially assumed that interrogational astrology existed in the Hellenistic tradition largely due to the apparent references to it in the fifth book of the Arabic versions of Dorotheus. In 1969 he wrote in the *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* that

“...in the West interrogations seem to have developed naturally from catarchic astrology...” and that the “...primary text is Dorotheus' fifth book” although “interrogations are fairly infrequent before the Byzantine period.”⁹

historical mythology; and that the intellectual content must be related to the culture that produced and nourished each, and to the social context within which each arose and developed.” Ibid., pg. 554.

⁸ Robin Waterfield, “The Evidence for Astrology in Classical Greece,” *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Autumn/Winter 1999, pp. 3-15, pg. 3.

⁹ David Pingree, “Astrology,” in the *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Philip P. Weiner, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, NY, 1969, pg. 124.

This was actually a bit of an understatement because what Pingree meant by “fairly infrequent before the Byzantine period” is that, outside of Dorotheus’ apparent references to the subject, the list of Hellenistic authors who made no references to interrogational astrology in any of their surviving works runs the entire gambit of the early western astrological tradition from its mythical founders, through the early expositors, all the way to the later compilers and commentators. The list of Hellenistic authors who do not mention interrogational astrology anywhere in their surviving works would include such names as Hermes, Asclepius, Nechepso, Petosiris, Abram, Orpheus, Critodemus, Serapio, Timaeus, Antiochus of Athens, Manilius, Thrasyllus, Teucer of Babylon, Balbillus, Claudius Ptolemy, Vettius Valens, Anubio, Antigonus of Nicaea, Manetho, Porphyry, Pancharius, Maximus, Paulus Alexandrinus, Anonymous of 379, Firmicus Maternus, Hephaistio of Thebes, Olympiodoros, and Rhetorius of Egypt.

The sheer number of Hellenistic astrologers who did not make any references to interrogational astrology should be enough to elicit a certain degree of suspicion about the ‘infrequent’ sources that allegedly did.

Aside from the astrologers themselves it should be noted that not even the critics of astrology such as Cicero (106-43 BCE), Favorinus (early 2nd century CE), Sextus Empiricus (late 2nd/early 3rd century CE) and Saint Augustine (354-430 CE), who all wrote sharp polemics against astrology, mentioned interrogations, even though they made explicit references to genethliology, mundane and katarchic astrology.

Cicero’s polemic is mainly directed against genethliology, although towards the end he mentions mundane and katarchic astrology in reference to an astrologer who predicted the future of Rome based upon the a “starting point” when “Romulus laid the first stone.” He dismisses both saying

And was the city’s natal day also subject to the influence of the moon and stars? Assume, if you will, that it moments in the case of a child under what arrangement of the heavenly bodies it draws its first breath, does it also follow that the stars could have had any influence over the bricks and cement of which the city was built? ¹⁰

Sextus Empiricus, who seems to be the most familiar with the technical apparatus of Hellenistic astrology out of the three critics, focuses almost entirely on disputing genethliology largely due to issues related to the accuracy of horoscopic charts, which resulted from astronomical and timekeeping issues during that period.¹¹

Augustine, who gives the most interesting an extensive disputation of astrology between the three critics, criticizes genethliology specifically in relation to the issue of twins, but he also attacks katarchic astrology saying

¹⁰ Cicero, *On Divination*, Book 2: 99, trans. W. A. Falconer, *Cicero: On Old Age, On Friendship, On Divination*, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2001 [1923], pgs. 481-483.

¹¹ For his work see *Sextus Empiricus IV: Against the Professors*, trans. R. G. Bury, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1949. Specifically book V titled *Against the Astrologers*, pgs. 322-371.

Now who could tolerate the assumption that in choosing lucky days people manufacture new destinies by their own acts? ... Can a man by the choice of a day change the destiny already decreed for him?¹²

It is extremely significant that none of these men mentioned this particular branch of astrology, since it would later become the focus of numerous attacks by both skeptics and astrologers alike during the Middle Ages and even in modern times. The popularity of interrogational astrology has waxed and waned in astrological circles throughout history due to changing philosophical and religious trends, but the assaults upon it by skeptics have generally stayed constant since it is a relatively easy target with no immediately apparent theoretical foundation in the natural sciences with which to establish itself. The practice of interrogational astrology has often historically been seen as a divinatory application of astrology, which often elicits objections both on scientific and religious grounds, and the silence of the skeptics in this area is quite telling.

What Pingree would later realize was that references to interrogations were not merely infrequent in the Hellenistic tradition of astrology, but they were actually non-existent.

Dorotheus

In 1976 Pingree published his translation of Dorotheus' text from an Arabic original that was translated from Pahlavī by 'Umar ibn al-Farrukhān al-Tabari (d. c. 815) sometime around the year 800. There had been another prior Arabic translation of the Pahlavī work of Dorotheus done by Māshā'allāh sometime in the 770's, but it only survives in fragments and the purpose of Pingree's English translation of 'Umar's edition of Dorotheus was to make that specific version available for the first time so that it could be used as a control in further comparisons, and not to attempt to recreate the archetype of Dorotheus' original manuscript. That is why he included other Greek and Latin fragments from different versions of Dorotheus' text in the original 1976 publication along with his English translation of the Arabic; so that they could be compared with one another in order to study the variations in the transmission of the text. The inclusion of these other fragments was not done arbitrarily because, as he would later note

“Umar's version is not a complete translation of the Pahlavī, for fragments of Māshā'allāh's correspond to citations by Hephaestio of Thebes of Dorotheus' views that are omitted by 'Umar; and it represents a contaminated version, contaminated, most noticeably by two horoscopes introduced into the text by Sasanian redactors...’ in addition to other ‘added materials’ including ‘references to Hermes, Valens, and Qītrīnūs al-Sadwālī, and a few Indian concepts, as usual.’¹³

¹² Augustine, *City of God*, Book 5, Ch. 7, trans. W. M. Green, *Augustine: City of God*, Vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1963, pg. 159.

¹³ David Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology: From Babylon to Binaker*, Istituto Italiano per L'Africa e L'Oriente, Rome, 1997, pg. 46.

What Pingree eventually realized was that there had been a major revision made to the Arabic version of Dorotheus' text in addition to the obvious interpolations by the Persian translators before it even reached the Arabian era astrologers in the late 8th and early 9th century.

Sometime after the foundation of the Sasanian Empire in 226 CE there was a transmission of Greek and Sanskrit astrological texts into Persia, which were subsequently translated into the Sasanian Persian language Pahlavī.¹⁴ These texts included Dorotheus' *Pentateuch* and the *Anthology* of Vettius Valens, as well as works by Hermes, Ptolemy, a one Quīdrūs (likely Qītrīnūs), an author referred to as Farmās̄b the Indian,¹⁵ and eventually some works by the renowned 6th century Indian astrologer Varāhamihra.¹⁶ Pingree dated the early transmission of texts into Persia to the 3rd or 4th century partially due to the inclusion of two charts in the third book of the Arabic version of Dorotheus which he dated to October 20, 281 and February 26, 381.¹⁷ It should be noted that James Holden has disputed Pingree's dating of the October 281 chart and put forward a plausible date of October 2 44 CE¹⁸ which, if accurate, would serve to place the date of the transmission of Dorotheus' text more firmly in the late 4th or early 5th century around the time of the second chart which Pingree securely dated to 381. According to Pingree this period of

¹⁴ Due to a text titled the *Kitab al-mawalid* or 'Book of Nativities' attributed to Zaradusht, Pingree was able to determine that "...one path by which Greek astrology was transmitted to Sasanian Iran was through Harrān..." in northwest Mesopotamia, although he notes that even though "...we know from other sources that the astrological poem of Dorotheus and the *Ανθολογία* [*Anthology*] of Vettius Valens were translated into Pahlavī in the third century..." we still "...do not know where these translations were effected..." Pingree, *The Sābians of Harrān and the Classical Tradition*, International Journal of the Classical Tradition, Vol. 9, No. 1, Summer 2002, pg. 12

¹⁵ Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 50. Also see Pingree's introduction to the *Carmen Astrologicum* where he quotes the Arabian bibliographer Ibn al-Nadim's citation of a history composed by Nawbakht that names a few of these authors whose books were translated by the first two Sasanian kings and then revised under Khusrō Anushirwan in the 6th century: "Mesopotamia until the reign of Ardashir ibn Babak lacked science. It was he who first sent envoys to India, China, Rome, so that they could copy and thereafter translate into Persian, works which had been destroyed in his own kingdom; which work Sabur ibn Ardashir also supported. Among the books written in antiquity and then translated were works of Hermes of Babylon former Kind of Egypt, Dorotheus of Syria, Cedrus (Cedrenus?) of Greece, from the city of Athens, illustrious in science, Ptolemy of Alexandria, Farmasb of India; which works Kisra Anushirwan afterwards elaborated." Dorotheus of Sidon, *Carmen Astrologicum*, trans. Pingree, 2005, republication by Astrology Classics with translation of Pingree's Latin preface by Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, pgs. xii-xiii.

¹⁶ "During the Sasanian period in Iran astrological texts from both the Greek tradition (e.g. Dorotheus [ca. 75 A.D.] and Vettius Valens [ca. 175 A.D.]) and the Indian tradition (e.g., Varāhamihra) were translated into Pahlavi." Pingree, *From Alexandria to Baghdad to Byzantium. The Transmission of Astrology*, International Journal of the Classical Tradition, Vol. 8, No. 1, Summer 2001, pg. 5. Also see Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 49.

¹⁷ See Pingree, *Carmen Astrologicum*, preface, pg. xiii

¹⁸ See Holden, *A History of Horoscopic Astrology*, pgs. 34 & 37.

“...initial translations from Greek and Sanskrit in the early Sasanian period” was followed by a program of “massive revisions of the texts under Khusrō Anūshirwān (531-578) in the 6th century.”¹⁹

This program of revisions in the 6th century accounts for the out-of-place references to Valens, Hermes, and Qītrinūs in the Arabic version of Dorotheus, as well as other interpolations such as the references to navāmśa, and the additional horoscope(s) placed in the third book. Most importantly the revisions account for the references to interrogations that occur in several places in the fifth book of the *Pentateuch*, which even in its corrupted form clearly focuses on katarchic astrology, despite the few scattered references that seem to indicate otherwise. Pingree points out that

...Already Māshā'allāh repeats these same catarchic subjects and astrological techniques [in his translation of Dorotheus] transformed into interrogations: for example, chapters in Dorotheus on choosing the time to launch a ship or buy land become in Māshā'allāh chapters answering the question of whether or not someone will do these things.²⁰

This process of transforming works on katarchic astrology into works on interrogations is one that Pingree thought to have “run its course in Sasanian times”,²¹ for example with the Pahlavī version of Dorotheus' text, but it was also one that was still in the process of being carried out in the 8th and early 9th centuries, for example in the works of Māshā'allāh and Sahl ibn Bishr, and even as late as the 14th century in the work of Eleutherius Zebelenus of Elis.

The Yavanajātaka

Two years after completing his publication of Dorotheus and the accompanying fragments in 1976, Pingree published his translation and commentary of another immensely important astrological work known as the *Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*. The *Yavanajātaka* or ‘*Horoscopy of the Greeks*’ is a Sanskrit astrological text that was written in verse in 269/270 CE based on a prose translation of a Greek text on horoscopic astrology that was probably written in Egypt sometime around the early 2nd century CE and then translated into Sanskrit by someone known as Yavanśvara or ‘Lord of the Greeks’ in 149/150 CE. Pingree was convinced that not only was the translation of the original Greek text into Sanskrit, which was carried out in the mid 2nd century, “the basis of all later Indian developments in horoscopy”²² but that the versified text made by Sphujidhvaja in 269/270 was also the point in which “the transformation of Greek catarchic [astrology] into interrogational astrology took place...”²³ According to Pingree

¹⁹ Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 49.

²⁰ Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 47.

²¹ Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 47.

²² David Pingree, *The Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, 2 vols., Harvard Oriental Series 48, 1978; vol. 1, pg. 5.

²³ Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 47.

This branch of astrology was an Indian invention, drawing upon both *jātaka*, for the subjects of the query, and Greek catarchic astrology, for the answer; if not devised by Sphujidhvaja himself, he must have been able to derive it from some Indian astrologer writing in the century before he composed the *Yavanajātaka*.²⁴

Thus according to Pingree's later opinion in the mid-1990's, not only did Dorotheus not practice interrogational astrology, but the branch was not even devised until two centuries after he lived, and the innovation took place not in the Hellenistic tradition, but in India.

The material that Pingree identified as interrogational astrology, or *praśna*, which is presented in the *Yavanajātaka* appears to be somewhat rudimentary when compared with what would later develop in the Medieval Persian, Arabic and Indian traditions of interrogations, although one could argue that this is to be expected of a recently developed application of astrology that was perhaps not even a century old when Sphujidhvaja appended it to the *Yavanajātaka* in the 3rd century.

The treatment begins directly after the completion of the main portion of the work on genethliology, and comprises 20 short chapters, or about 40 pages in Pingree's translation, on different delineations of planets, angles, signs, *navāmsas*, *dvādaśāmsas*, *vargas*, and decans at the time that a client *approaches* an astrologer, although it is important to note that the focus of this section of the work is not necessarily the delineation of a question that is posed to the astrologer. Instead, the main emphasis of this section of the work is on determining the *thoughts* of the person approaching the astrologer through an examination of placements in the angles at the time of a consultation and there appears to be little attention paid to determining the actual outcome of the situation that the client's thoughts dwell on. As such the vast majority of the so-called "interrogational" section of the *Yavanajātaka* consists of straightforward delineations that read

If the Sun is in mid-heaven, he *thinks* of authority, starting enterprises, or the money pertaining to business...²⁵ [emphasis added]

If a *navāmsa* of Aries is in the ascendant, he is *thinking* of lands or gold because of the strength of Mars; if a *navāmsa* of Taurus, of quadrupeds or women...²⁶ [emphasis added]

These delineations and instructions in the "interrogational" portion of the *Yavanajātaka* seem to be more reminiscent of what modern astrologers refer to as a 'consultation chart', which is a chart cast for the moment that an consultation between an astrologer and a client begins, and it seems likely that this was this basic concept which eventually led later astrologers to develop the

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, Ch. 54: 9, trans. Pingree, vol. 2, pg. 135.

²⁶ *Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, Ch. 59: 1, trans. Pingree, vol. 2, pg. 145.

independent branch of interrogational astrology. This is why the delineation material in this portion of the *Yavanajātaka* seems to focus on determining the thoughts of the client at the time that they approach the astrologer for a consultation, because the fundamental theoretical basis for this proto-interrogational astrology at this early stage, and in the later interrogational astrology in general it is here argued, seems to be closely associated with the inception of the consultation itself.²⁷ Sphujidhvaja says quite poetically that

Time, which is the inner soul of the moving and stationary triad of worlds, originates, they say, in a wink; the wise man, impelled by this (fact), approaches the foremost (astrologers at a time) when the results are assured.²⁸

This close association with the inception of the consultation is the reason that the moment of importance in later interrogational astrology is not simply the abstract ‘birth’ of a question as it occurs to an individual, but rather it is when the question is actually posed to an astrologer with the specific intent of learning the answer, *and* is accepted by that astrologer thus initiating the consultation.²⁹ It would appear that later astrologers in the west held this conceptualization as well to some degree, and it explains the Medieval era injunction by Māshā’allāh that

...It is not suitable for a sage to look on his own behalf. It is necessary that he asks of another.³⁰

It also explains the 13th century astrologer Guido Bonatti’s later insistence that

“Whenever you are asked about something concerning which a questioner wishes to question...” you should determine the time “...as exactly as possible, immediately without any delay or any intervening interval when the word goes forth from the mouth of the one asking the question. And beware lest you should deviate in some way, lest some error should fall into the matter about which there is a question for you because of delay.”³¹

²⁷ This would be in contrast to Geoffrey Cornelius’ position, which rejects the notion of ‘moments of origin’ or inceptions as the conceptual basis for interrogations, and astrology in general. Note that this new conceptualization of interrogations, as presented here, which approaches the question itself as being a derivative of the inceptional chart of the consultation, still acknowledges the participatory nature of the subject and certainly does not require some sort of causal model in order to explain its mode of operation. A discussion of the implications of this model of interrogations is somewhat outside of the scope of this paper, but it will be taken up in another that is currently in preparation tentatively titled *The Astrology of Moments, Divination in Origins*.

²⁸ *Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, Ch. 53: 2, trans. Pingree, vol. 2, pg. 133.

²⁹ Although he wasn’t necessarily thinking along these same lines as far as the theoretical basis of interrogations is concerned, Cornelius makes an important point when he says “It does not ‘exist’ as a horary until it is so taken up.” Geoffrey Cornelius, *The Moment of Astrology, Origins in Divination*, The Wessex Astrologer Ltd., Bournemouth, England, 2003, pg. 107.

³⁰ Masha’allah, *On Reception*, Ch. 2, trans. Rob Hand, ARHAT Publications, Second Printing, 1999, pg. 6.

³¹ Guido Bonatti, *Liber Astronomiae, Part IV On Horary, First Part*, trans. Rob Hand, ed. Rob Schmidt, The Golden Hind Press, 1996, pg. 21.

Such a conceptualization explains the way in which interrogational astrology was able to evolve from genethliology and katarchic astrology to form a distinct branch of the tradition, not through casting charts for some sort of abstract moment in time when a question occurs to an individual, but rather through a very specific application of horoscopic principles to render the thoughts of the client at the time of a consultation into an external medium. Once this basic premise had been established, where the thoughts of a person could be determined from a horoscopic chart cast for the moment that the astrologer was approached, it was possible for later astrologers to make a bit of a conceptual leap in order to develop a specific technical structure around this framework so that they could establish the eventuation of a specific question at hand.

However, contrary to Pingree's assertions, it is not particularly evident that this was a step that the early Indian astrologers made, particularly given the fact that the majority of the delineations in the *Yavanajātaka* are focused on this "consultation chart" framework where the focus is *not* on how to determine the outcome or answer to a specific question, but instead the emphasis is simply on determining the thoughts of the person approaching the astrologer at a given moment in time. It is unclear as to what Pingree thought was particularly interrogational about this text given that the focus is not on determining the outcome of specific questions. Indeed, this distinction between the 'consultation chart' framework and the more specific conceptual and technical framework of interrogational astrology is an important one because without it we would have no way of determining what sets the *Yavanajātaka* apart from other texts in the Hellenistic tradition which display the same "consultation chart" framework, for example in the introduction to the third book of Hephaistio of Thebes' *Apotelesmatics*. For this we can only look to the *Yavanajātaka* itself in order to attempt to distinguish between the 'consultation chart' framework that was apparently common to both the Hellenistic and Indian traditions, and the later development of this framework with its specific application to interrogations or questions.

It may be notable to point out that the "consultation chart" procedure in the *Yavanajātaka* was not a completely isolated application of astrology at this early point in the tradition, and an interesting feature is the degree to which it still relies on genethliology, or jātaka. The opening chapter of the "interrogational" portion of the *Yavanajātaka* gives rules for determining the positions of planets in the querent's natal chart based solely upon the chart for the consultation itself in a way that is similar to the Hellenistic procedure of determining the moment of conception based on the natal chart.³² Later chapters emphasize the importance of using the natal chart in conjunction with the chart of the consultation by giving delineations

³² For example, see Valens section titled *Concerning Conceptions* in Book I of the *Anthology*: Vettius Valens, *The Anthology*, Book I, The Golden Hind Press, trans. Robert Schmidt, 1993, pg. 61. Also in Book VI, chapter 10 titled *The Finding of the Moon and Horoscopes at Conception*: Vettius Valens, *The Anthology*, Books V & IV, The Golden Hind Press, trans. Robert Schmidt, 1997, pg. 86. Also Hephaistio of Thebes' lengthy discussion in Book II of his *Apotelesmatics*, chapter 1, trans. Robert Schmidt, The Golden Hind Press, 1998.

for the placement of the ascendant of the consultation chart in relation to the houses of the client's natal chart. For example

If the ascendant of the nativity is in the ascendant (at the time of the query), he is thinking of the care of his body, good health, or happiness...³³

If the ascendant of the nativity is in [the] mid-heaven, one should find that he is thinking of position, victory, honor, nobility, lordship (aisvarya), command, or being treated courteously and taken seriously by others.³⁴

The importance of taking the natal chart into consideration when interpreting the consultation chart is also underscored by the significance ascribed to the current time-lords, or daśās, operating in the client's natal chart at the time of the consultation and their placement in the consultation chart:

If a planet is in an upacaya of its own house or in its own house, it is strong; if it is also aspected by benefic and helpful planets, it is the best; but if it is lord of the (current) daśā as well, it is even better than that.³⁵

Thus, that which is appropriate to the results of time, whether it be good or bad, and which involves the determined significance of the already known daśā, birth-sign, ascendant, and aṣṭavarga, is to be described as favorable to one who is righteous (dharmātman).³⁶

In trying to determine if the *Yavanajātaka* does indeed show evidence of interrogational astrology proper, that is, the answering of specific questions, as Pingree argues, it is important to point out that there is no elaborate system of applications and separations as is later used in the later Arabic tradition in order to determine the answer to a question. Indeed, the only explicit reference that we have in this text which may deal with the eventuation of the thoughts of the client is a brief passage which somewhat inadequately outlines a mathematical technique which is used to affirm or deny the eventuation of the thoughts of the querent by selecting a specific planet: if this planet is a benefic, then the eventuation of the client's thoughts are positive or affirmative; if a malefic, then the eventuation of the clients thoughts are negative.³⁷ But interestingly, here Sphujidhvaja indicates that there is still some fermentation occurring in the astrological community in India at the time when he notes that some astrologers think that

³³ *Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, Ch. 61: 1, trans. Pingree, vol. 2, pg. 155.

³⁴ *Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, Ch. 61: 4, trans. Pingree, vol. 2, pg. 155.

³⁵ *Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, Ch. 53: 6, trans. Pingree, vol. 2, pg. 133.

³⁶ *Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhvaja*, Ch. 53: 7, trans. Pingree, vol. 2, pg. 133.

³⁷ See *Yavanajātaka*, Ch. 63. Note Pingree's statement in his commentary (vol. 2, pg. 378) about having to rely on later horary authors in order to emend and reconstruct this chapter.

simply having a planet in its own varga³⁸ and in an angle is enough to indicate the fruition of the client's thoughts:

Some (astrologers) desire that a planet in its own varga in a cardine should cause the fruition of such things as thoughts...³⁹

Ultimately while the fundamental framework of the budding interrogational astrology that is used in the *Yavanajātaka* relies on the basic principles of Hellenistic katarchic and genethliacal astrology, the apparent application towards the eventuation of the thoughts of the client appears to be unique to the Indian tradition. This approach is also somewhat unusual when compared to the more mature forms of interrogational astrology that would later develop in the Persian, Arabic and Tajika traditions, but in this regard it may be very much in the sense that the *Yavanajātaka* was a precursor to what would later develop. According to Pingree, from this point forward praśna (interrogational astrology) was practiced and developed in India as a distinct branch of horoscopic astrology in addition to jātaka (genethliology), muhūrta (katarchic astrology) and samhitā (mundane astrology), as well as other subsets of astrology that are unique to the Indian tradition.

However, the full development and widespread use of the system of interrogations does not become apparent in India until the 6th century with the works of the well-known Indian astrologer Varāhamihra and especially his son Prithuyasas (c. 600 CE) in his *Shatpanchasika*. This is during the same time period that interrogational astrology begins to appear in the Persian tradition,⁴⁰ and the fact that trading was occurring between the Indians and the Persians at this time raises questions about which culture actually developed interrogational astrology as a complex and clearly defined branch of horoscopic astrology. At the present time the lack of extant texts from the Persian tradition and the lack of translations of the relevant Sanskrit authors from this period leaves this issue unresolved, and makes Pingree's argument of an Indian development as the only tenable argument, although it may be subject to future revisions.

Persian and Arabic Developments

According to Pingree, the concept of interrogations was eventually transmitted from India to Persia at some point during the Sasanian period along with other materials that were gathered up from Indian and Hellenistic sources. Although astrological texts in Pahlavī are scarce because so many were destroyed by the invading armies of the rapidly expanding Islamic empire in the 7th century, Pingree was able to determine that

³⁸ A varga is a divisional or harmonic chart in Indian astrology.

³⁹ *Yavanajātaka*, Ch. 63: 6, trans. Pingree, vol. 2, pg. 163.

⁴⁰ "...those examples I have been able to examine indicate that among the types of astrology then in use was that of interrogations, an Indian invention based on Greek katarchic astrology..." Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 40.

...references to astrology in Pahlavi literature assure us that that science was widely practiced in Sasanian Iran; and those examples I have been able to examine indicate that among the types of astrology then in use was that of interrogations...⁴¹

It is possible that it was at this point during the Sasanian period in Persia that the theory and practice of interrogations, as apparently initially developed in India, was merged with the Hellenistic concepts that were derived from the Pahlavī translations of Greek sources such as Dorotheus and Valens, and the more recognizable formulation of interrogational astrology was likely formed. As Pingree points out, it is notable that almost all of the major astrologers of the early Arabic period such as Abū Sahl ibn Nawbakht, Māshā'allāh, 'Umar ibn al-Farrukhān al-Tabari, and Abū Ma'shar were Iranians⁴² because they were able to draw on Persian sources and traditions in their works either directly or indirectly. Of course, by the time that the Pahlavī translations of Dorotheus and Valens reached the early Arabic era astrologers they had already been revised, likely in the 6th century under Khusrō Anūshirwān, to include material on interrogations. The result of these revisions was a synthesis of Hellenistic and Persian techniques that becomes evident in the early Arabic era works such as Māshā'allāh's text on interrogations known as *On Reception*. This work shows a distinctly Hellenistic framework, for example with its use of whole sign houses, its focus on 'reception' and the use of whole sign aspects, but it is one which has been elaborated with the inclusion of what may be a Persian refinement of the aspect doctrine. It is possible that the Sasanian astrologers were responsible for this innovation of the interrogational aspect doctrine, with its particular focus on applications and separations between the planets, due to the invention of historical astrology with its focus on the periodic conjunctions of the superior planets.⁴³

This new synthesis of Persian and Hellenistic techniques into what was a budding medieval horary doctrine is so markedly different from the genethliology that is presented by Māshā'allāh in his *Book of Nativities* that it led Robert Hand to state in the introduction to his translation of *On Reception* that

...anyone who looks at the two texts would have a hard time believing that these two books were written by the same person. I for one do not believe that they were! The methods used in the two texts are so different that it is hard to believe that they even came from the same school of astrology, let alone the same author.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 40.

⁴² Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 41.

⁴³ Pingree argues that historical astrology proper was a Sasanian invention: "...historical horoscopy, with its political variant, was the most influential innovation attributable to Pahlavī astrologers, though they contributed much else, especially interrogations to Arabic astrology and its neighbors and dependents in Western Europe and Byzantium." Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 49.

⁴⁴ Masha'allah, *On Reception*, trans. Robert Hand, ARHAT Publications, 1999, pg. ii.

Hand may actually be inadvertently correct in arguing that these two works are not derived from the same tradition. The discrepancy between the newly formed synthesis of Persian and Hellenistic techniques in the interrogational branch of astrology that is presented in *On Reception*, and the natal doctrine in the *Book of Nativities* is easily accounted for once it is recognized that this was in fact a new addition to the western tradition of horoscopic astrology which simply hadn't become fully matured and integrated into the tradition yet. While in questioning the authenticity of the authorship of the text Hand is correct in pointing out that

...in other texts from the medieval period, there is no such major gap between the methods of natal astrology and those of horary (except of course for whatever difference which would naturally arise because of the differences in the two applications of astrology)...⁴⁵

This objection is only correct inasmuch as this branch had not been fully integrated into the medieval tradition at this early period of Arabic era astrology, as it would become in later authors such as Abū Ma'shar and eventually Ibn Ezra and Bonatti, and not likely, at least in this respect, because it was written by a different author.⁴⁶

Pingree has demonstrated that Māshā'allāh was able to draw directly on later Hellenistic sources such as Hephaistio of Thebes and Rhetorius of Egypt, in addition to the indirect sources that were available in Pahlavī translations such as Dorotheus and Valens, through manuscripts that were provided to him by an older contemporary of his in the Baghdad court named Theophilus of Edessa (c. 695-785).⁴⁷ Theophilus was an astrological advisor to the Abbāsīd caliphate in the second half of the 8th century who knew Greek and Pahlavī as well as his native Syriac and was able to quote several Hellenistic astrologers such as Dorotheus, Valens,

⁴⁵ Ibid., pg. iii.

⁴⁶ The other part of Hand's argument in pointing out the discrepancies between *On Reception* and *The Book of Nativities* is that Masha'allah drew heavily on Dorotheus and this is demonstrated clearly with his extensive use of triplicity rulers in the *Book of Nativities*, but then in *On Reception* triplicity lords are never used. The problem with this argument, aside from the fact that Dorotheus didn't practice horary as Hand assumes, is that in the fifth book of the *Pentateuch* on katarchic astrology the emphasis of the technique is focused on examining the domicile lords of the signs and there is little, if any, mention of triplicity rulers in relation to elections. So even if Dorotheus was hypothetically practicing interrogational astrology, or at least if Masha'allah was under the impression that he did, there is no precedent set in the fifth book of the *Pentateuch* which would indicate that triplicity lords should be a primary technique used within the context of interrogations or elections. While triplicity lords are used in relation to the houses in the later Medieval horary tradition, there is no reason to believe that Masha'allah would have thought that they were applicable to, or at least a central part of interrogational astrology based on the sources that he was drawing on, and it is not surprising that they are absent in this particular work. However, this does not necessarily mean that Hand's hypothesis is untenable *per se*, because the two works may very well have been written by different authors, but at this point other evidence would have to be brought forward in order to substantiate the argument.

⁴⁷ For most of this discussion on Theophilus see David Pingree, "From Alexandria to Baghdad to Byzantium. The Transmission of Astrology," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Summer 2001, pgs. 3-37.

Ptolemy, Hephaistio and Rhetorius from their original Greek works. He also appears to have been familiar with the work of the Indian astrologer Varāhamihra, likely through a Pahlavi translation, particularly his work on military astrology the *Bṛhadyaśtrā*.⁴⁸ Theophilus wrote works in Greek on genethliology, katarchic astrology, and military astrology as well as works on interrogations. It is with him that we see some of the first applications of the concept of interrogations in the Greek language and he appears to have played a major role in synthesizing the Hellenistic and Persian traditions, although he does not appear to have been concerned with creating a new technical vocabulary in Greek in order to express this synthesis as would later Byzantine astrologers.⁴⁹ Part of this synthesis involved the re-conceptualization of certain katarchic doctrines into interrogations and Pingree points out that a chapter of one of his works

...on whether an interrogation will concern a man or an animal, is a re-interpretation of a statement by Hephaestio about which astrological factors lead to the birth of a monster.⁵⁰

Thus Theophilus' work was to some extent a continuation of his Persian predecessors who revised Dorotheus in that it is partially characterized by "continuing and expanding the Indian and Sasanian habit of transforming katarchic into interrogational astrology."⁵¹ Ultimately Theophilus' synthesis exercised a considerable influence on early Arabic era astrologers such as Māshā'allāh, Abū 'Alī al-Kayyāṭ, Sahl ibn Bishr, 'Umar ibn al-Farrukhān al-Tabari, and al-Qaṣṣrānī. Within the next few decades the integration and maturation of the fourth branch of horoscopy had been accomplished, thus establishing the fourfold division of horoscopic astrology in the Arabic tradition; mawālīd (genethliology), ikhtiyārāt (katarchic astrology), taḥāwīl sinī al-'ālam (mundane astrology), and masā'il (interrogational astrology).

The Byzantine Transmission

Pingree argues that when Theophilus' student Stephanus the Philosopher moved from Baghdād to Constantinople in 775 he brought with him several manuscripts written in Greek by his teacher, along with others manuscripts from various Greek and Arabic sources, which brought an influx of Hellenistic, Persian and Arabic astrology into the Byzantine Empire. This was likely the first introduction of the interrogational branch of astrology to the Byzantine Empire,⁵² where it became known as *erōtēsis* (ἐρώτησις) or "interrogations."

⁴⁸ Pingree, *From Alexandria to Baghdad to Byzantium*, pg. 15.

⁴⁹ "What he was not involved in was the invention of new astrological concepts and technical vocabulary with which to express them" Pingree, *From Alexandria to Baghdad to Byzantium*, pg. 20.

⁵⁰ Pingree, *From Alexandria to Baghdad to Byzantium*, pg. 20.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² According to Pingree this unique event of Stephanus moving from Baghdad to Constantinople was also the first introduction of military and political astrology to the Byzantine Empire as well. See Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology*, pg. 64.

Aside from the alleged existence of interrogational astrology in Dorotheus, several astrologers and historians have pointed to a selection of horoscopes from a mysterious source known as “Palchus” as evidence to affirm the idea that interrogational astrology existed at least by the late Hellenistic tradition, as well as that the term *katarchē* was used in the Hellenistic tradition to refer to interrogations.⁵³ However, the nature of the “Palchus” delineations in Neugebauer and Van Hoesen’s *Greek Horoscopes* are mainly inceptional, and follow closely along the same lines as the *katarchic* delineations given in Dorotheus and other Hellenistic authors, even to the point of covering the same topics such as “About a small lion, whether he will be tamed.”⁵⁴ The problem with this usage of the “Palchus” passages in order to argue for interrogational astrology in the late Hellenistic tradition is not so much whether or not those charts are genuinely interrogational in nature, but rather that, as Pingree points out, “Palchus” is merely the pseudonym of the 14th century Byzantine astrologer-scribe named Eleutherius Zebelenus of Elis (b. 1343) who was associated with the astrological school of John Abramius (fl. c. 1370-1390). This school was important because its members copied and preserved many rare and important astrological and astronomical treatises such as Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos*, the pseudo-Ptolemaic *Centiloquy*, Hephaestio’s *Apotelesmatica*, and the *Mysteria* of Abū Ma’shar, as well as “a number of fragments of Hellenistic astrological texts mixed in with material derived from Arabic.”⁵⁵ However, Pingree has shown that many of the manuscripts handled by Abramius and Eleutherius

“...represent peculiar recensions in which both the grammar and the logic of the order of the presentation of technical material has been subjected to alteration, and in which some interpolations appear.”⁵⁶ In the case of the *Tetrabiblos* and the *Centiloquy* “...the editor of these recensions appears to be John Abramius himself...”⁵⁷ and “...a comparison of the excerpts from Hephaestio with the original text of that author demonstrates that Abramius has felt free to make extensive changes, omitting long passages, adding many others, and altering both the expression and sometimes the content of a large number of passages.”⁵⁸

Eleutherius has also been shown to have been directly involved in altering texts, for example in the case of one manuscript of Rhetorius where he “...copied his own compendium which he

⁵³ For example, see Geoffrey Cornelius, *The Moment of Astrology, Origins in Divination*, The Wessex Astrologer Ltd., Bournemouth, England, 2003, pg. 125. Also Jim Tester, *A History of Western Astrology*, Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK, 1987, pg. 91. Also see Lee Lehman’s entry on “horary astrology” in James R. Lewis, *The Astrology Book*, Visible Ink, Detroit, 2003.

⁵⁴ Neugebauer & Van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes*, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, PA, 1959, pg. 146. Compare with book 5, chapter 12 of Dorotheus on “The buying of animals.”

⁵⁵ David Pingree, *The Astrological School of John Abramius*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 25, 1971, pg. 203-204.

⁵⁶ Pingree, *The Astrological School of John Abramius*, pg. 202.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

falsely ascribed to Palchus...” and “...changed much in the chapters he copied.”⁵⁹ As Pingree emphasized as early as 1971

The Psuedo-Palchus has been regarded as one of our most important sources for the history of Greek astrology under the Roman Empire; it is now apparent that its information must be treated with extreme skepticism until Eleutherius’ sources and methods of editing can be fully studied.⁶⁰

Pingree has also specifically called some of his predecessors to task for taking some of the “Palchus” fragments at face value, and not acknowledging or realizing the issues surrounding them. For example, in discussing one manuscript from “Palchus” which previous historians had used in historical reconstructions Pingree states that

The main problem with the historical reconstruction offered by Bidez and Cumont is that they mistook the fourteenth-century form of the text for one of the early sixth century reflecting one of the Hellenistic period.⁶¹

Thus, not only should we be weary of the supposed references to interrogations attributed to “Palchus” that appear in a few 5th century charts contained in the often cited 1959 work *Greek Horoscopes*, but we shouldn’t attempt to deduct information about the use of Greek technical terminology in Hellenistic astrology from them, and we certainly should not construct entire theoretical and philosophical arguments which are largely dependent upon those literary horoscopes.

With the questionable “Palchus” horoscopes set aside, it was likely with the reintroduction of astrology to the Byzantine Empire by Stephanus that the spread of interrogational astrology, from its probable origins in India through Sasanian Iran to Baghdad and then to Constantinople, was accomplished.

Concluding Remarks

Aside from the misleading Arabic title and a few scattered references to interrogations in only 6 of the 43 chapters of the 5th book of the *Pentateuch*, the explicit prefatory statements and actual content of the vast majority of Dorotheus’ 5th book is clearly electional and inceptional in nature. The one researcher who was qualified and able to read all of the necessary languages and who dedicated a large portion of his life to studying the history and transmission of astrology argued that Dorotheus’ work was not interrogational in nature, and that this branch of astrology was developed in the Indian tradition of horoscopic astrology. Although there are still a number of unanswered questions surrounding the interplay between the Indian and

⁵⁹ Pingree, *From Alexandria to Baghdad to Byzantium*, pg. 11.

⁶⁰ Pingree, *The Astrological School of John Abramius*, pg. 204.

⁶¹ Pingree, *Classical and Byzantine Astrology in Sassanian Persia*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 43, 1989, pp. 227-239, pg. 236.

Persian traditions around the 6th century and which culture fully developed the techniques and concepts of interrogational astrology, the complete lack of evidence that this branch of astrology existed in the Hellenistic tradition inevitably leads to the likely conclusion that it did not. While an absence of extant evidence is not necessarily conclusive proof that interrogational astrology didn't exist in the Hellenistic tradition, it is enough to seriously bring into question the current historical narrative which has almost universally and unquestioningly accepted that the origins of interrogational astrology date back to at least the 1st century CE in the work of Dorotheus of Sidon. At best this is an unsupported speculation at this point, and at worst it is simply a myth that resulted from an overly careless reading of the Arabic version of Dorotheus' text. In either case, the path forward at this point is through the careful investigation and critical examination of the texts themselves. By doing this we should be able to gain a clearer understanding of the origins of horary astrology, as well as the historical development of horoscopic astrology itself.