

# Astrology

# Roots of Astrology

- **6000-4000 BCE:** Sumerians seek to bring order to their universe through observation
- **Astrology:** attempts to correlate celestial and terrestrial events
- Based on astronomical measurements
- Drove many astronomical observations
- Later applies to human temperament and morality
- But astrology is a **pseudoscience**, *unconcerned with testing its own validity.*
- Astrological theories rely on unknown forces.

# Astrology through the ages

- **~1000 BCE, Babylon:** Priests use positions of celestial objects and events to divine auspicious actions for the kings.
- **~150 BCE, Alexandria:** Ptolemy writes *Tetrabiblos* (published in 1519), about the observed influences of the Sun, Moon, and planets on human activities.
- **800 CE:** Astrology well established in East. Becoming observationally and mathematically rigorous.
- **~1200 CE:** Astrology arrives in West in Islamic thought/practice.
- **Late 14<sup>th</sup> cent:** Chaucer writes about astrology.

# Astrology through the ages

- 1473**: *Astronomicicon* by Marcus Manlius published in Nuremburg by Regiomontanus.  
Books I, V are astronomy;  
Books II - IV are astrology.
- 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> cent**: Kepler, Galileo, and others cast horoscopes (because it pays).
- ~1690**: Henry Coley lays out theory of “weather and natal astrology”
- ~1700**: Newton invents calculus and applies it to physics. Astrology becomes superstition

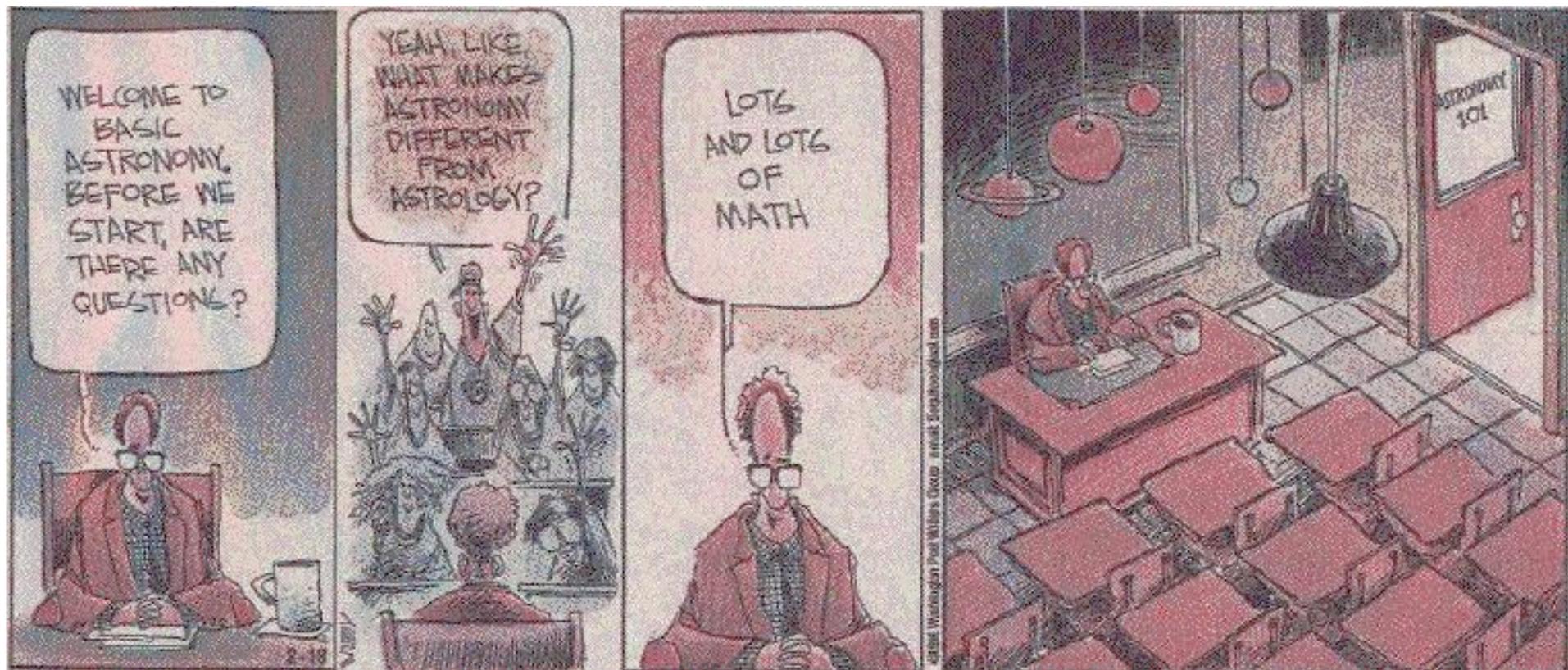


Anno 1586 Den 10 Tag September  
 5. als nachmittag 1/2. Saupst Hannibal Gittern  
 Von S. Michaelen. Der Welt gulten.



1/2. Saupst Hannibal Gittern  
 Von S. Michaelen. Der Welt gulten.  
 24 Cad 1/2  
 39 Cad 1/2  
 29 Kad 1/2  
 28 MCad D  
 33 MCad 1/2  
 22 MCad 1/2

Die Uebertriffung von zweier Hand, das  
 ist die von Kepler Hand. Aber die  
 Anweisung der Kepler'schen Anweisung  
 in S. Michaelen  
 M. A. 1804  
 Anweisung der 15. Mai 1804.



# Definitions

- Chart consists of 12 30° segments
- Each segment is a **house**
- Houses are static
- Zodiacal constellations move through houses
- Signs/planets are in the  
    **ascendant** (on horizon and rising), or  
    **descendant** (on horizon and setting) for 2 hrs/day
- Angular displacements of planets are the **aspects**

# To cast a horoscope...

You must:

- Know the time of birth
- Use longitude to get sidereal times
- Compute the position of the zodiac
- Plot the positions (azimuth) of the planets
- Note the characteristics of the signs and the planets
- Note the positions of the planets within the houses
- Note the aspects of planets

# The Variables

- One constellation is in the ascendant
- The Sun is in one sign
- The planets and the Moon are each in a sign
- There is an aspect between each pair of planets
- Moon may be ascending or descending
- Times of transits (when a planet crosses the ascendant/descendant)

# Aspects

There are 10 possible aspects (2-8° allowance)

- **Major aspects:**

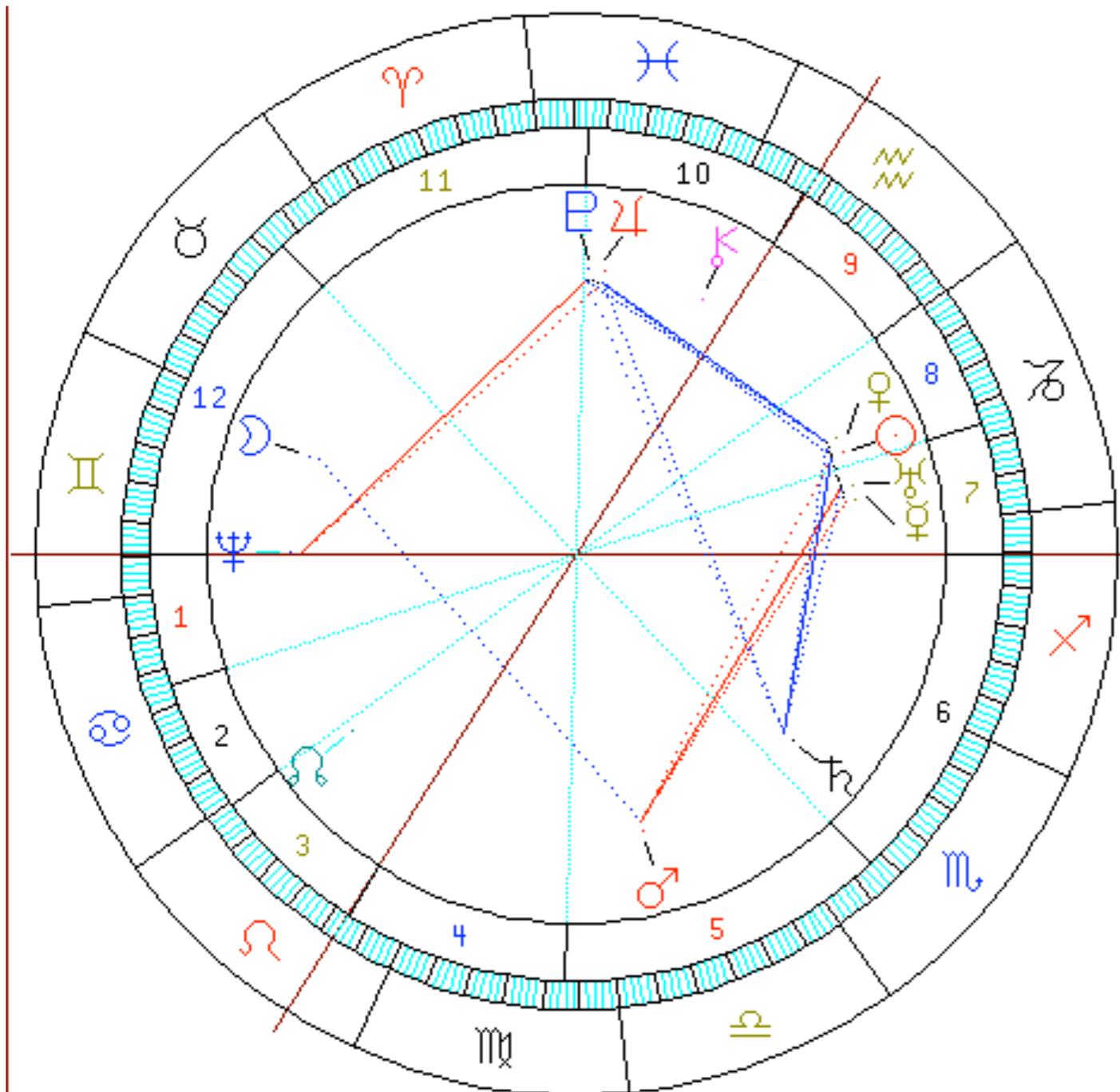
- Conjunction - 0°
- Square - 90°
- Triune - 120°
- Opposition - 180°
- Parallel of declination

- **Weak aspect:**

- Sextile - 60°

- **Weak aspects:**

- Semi-sextile - 30°
- Semi-square - 45°
- Sesquiquadrature - 135°
- Quincunx - 150°



ASTROLOG 5.710  
 Astrodienst free chart  
 Thu 27 December 1571  
 14:37 (T-merid m8e52)  
 Weil Der Stadt, GER  
 8°52E 48°45N  
 Placidus houses.  
 Tropical, Geocentric.  
 Julian Day = 2295226.0844

- 1st house: 24Gem25'18"
- 2nd house: 12Can30'07"
- 3rd house: 0Leo24'25"
- 4th house: 22Leo00'43"
- 5th house: 22Vir40'49"
- 6th house: 7Sco56'07"
- 7th house: 24Sag25'18"
- 8th house: 12Cap30'07"
- 9th house: 0Aqu24'25"
- 10th house: 22Aqu00'43"
- 11th house: 22Pis40'49"
- 12th house: 7Tau56'07"

- Sun: 15Cap27'48" - 0°00'
- Moo: 4Gem01'28" - 4°28'
- Mer: 5Cap34'21" - 1°12'
- Ven: 18Cap35'14" - 0°56'
- Mar: 8Lib16'31" + 2°25'
- Jup: 18Pis37'27" - 1°13'
- Sat: 13Sco48'28" + 2°16'
- Ura: 8Cap40'31" - 0°20'
- Nep: 23Gem50'36"R - 1°16'
- Plu: 21Pis57'59" -15°55'
- Chi: 28Aqu12'46" + 5°30'
- Nod: 2Leo45'13"R + 0°00'

Fire: 1, Earth: 4,  
 Air: 4, Water: 3  
 Car: 5, Fix: 3, Mut: 4  
 Above Hor: 9, Below: 3  
 East half: 6, West: 6  
 Ang: 5, Suc: 3, Cad: 4

# Sun Signs

Most serious astrologers discount Sun Signs as too simplistic, but others claim they are 80% accurate.

How many planets should you use?

6 (the classical planets + the Moon)

8 (6 + Uranus, Neptune)

9 (8 + Pluto)

Sun signs are tied to locations of constellations about 2000 years ago

# The Astronomical/Astrological Zodiacs

Constellation	Dates	Dates
	Astronomical	Astrological
Sagittarius	Dec 18 - Jan 18	Nov 22 - Dec 21
Capricorn	Jan 19 - Feb 15	Dec 22 - Jan 19
Aquarius	Feb 16 - Mar 11	Jan 20 - Feb 18
Pisces	Mar 12 - Apr 18	Feb 19 - Mar 20
Aries	Apr 19 - May 13	Mar 21 - Apr 20
Taurus	May 14 - Jun 19	Apr 21 - May 20
Gemini	Jun 20 - Jul 22	May 21 - Jun 21
Cancer	Jul 23 - Aug 9	Jun 22 - Jul 22
Leo	Aug 10 - Sep 15	Jul 23 - Aug 23
Virgo	Sep 16 - Oct 30	Aug 24 - Sep 22
Libra	Oct 31 - Nov 22	Sep 23 - Oct 22
Scorpius	Nov 23 - Nov 29	Oct 23 - Nov 21
Ophiuchus	Nov 30 - Dec 17	---

# Tests of Astrology

- Mars Effect (Gauquelin 1955). Are champion athletes preferentially born with Mars in the 1st or 4th houses?
  - Initial positive results ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) found biased.
- Select your own chart: in 7 studies with professional charts, 81/230 hits; 83 expected by chance
- Are you your own opposite? In half of 22 professionally-prepared charts, characteristics were reversed. Astrologers and their clients could not tell the difference.

# Tests of Astrology

- Sun sign compatibility? No correlation with 3000 couples marrying or 500 divorcing.
- Choice of profession: No correlation with Sun sign for 6000 politicians or 17,000 scientists
- Horoscope of mass murderer sent to 150 people. 94% said it described them well.
- 3000 specific predictions about celebrities:
  - 10% correct, 90% incorrect
- **References:**
  - <http://www.astrosociety.org/education/astro/ast3/astrology3.html>
  - Neihuys, J.W. The Mars Effect in Retrospect, Skeptical Inquirer, 21, 24, 1997

# Questions to ask your astrologer

- What is the likelihood that 1/2 of the world's population is having the same kind of day as you?
- Why is the moment of birth more important than the moment of conception?
- Are horoscopes done before the discovery of Uranus and Neptune incorrect?
- Should horoscopes include Pluto?
- Do extra-solar planets count?
- Are ascendants/descendants meaningful in Alaska?
- Is astrology a subtle form of bigotry?
- **Why aren't astrologers rich?**

# Does Astrology Work?

That depends on what you mean by **work**.

- Astrology has no demonstrated predictive power
- Astrology can make people feel good about themselves in a complex and confusing world
- Astrology is cheaper than psychotherapy