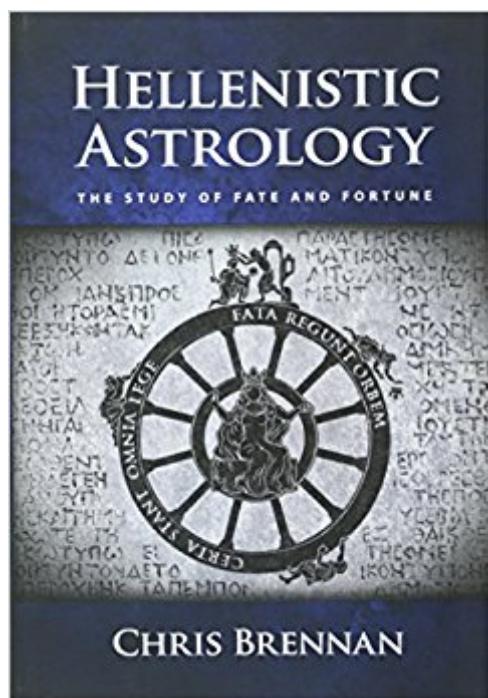


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# Hellenistic Astrology: The Study Of Fate And Fortune



## Synopsis

Hellenistic astrology is a tradition of horoscopic astrology that was practiced in the Mediterranean region from approximately the first century BCE until the seventh century CE. It is the source of many of the modern traditions of astrology that still flourish around the world today, although it is only recently that many of the surviving texts of this tradition have become available again for astrologers to study. *Hellenistic Astrology: The Study of Fate and Fortune* is the first comprehensive survey of this tradition in modern times. The book covers the history, philosophy, and techniques of ancient astrology, with a special focus on demonstrating how many of the fundamental concepts underlying the practice of western astrology originated during the Hellenistic period.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Chris Brennan is a professional astrologer from Denver, Colorado, USA. He was educated at Kepler College, where he focused on cross-cultural comparisons between the astrological traditions. He is the former President of the Association for Young Astrologers, and former Research Director of the National Council for Geocosmic Research. He is a regular contributor to *The Mountain Astrologer* magazine, and is the host of an award-winning weekly program called *The Astrology Podcast*. He has lectured widely on Hellenistic astrology since 2006, and teaches a certification course on the subject with students from around the world.

I was a professional astrologer for many years, and had already retired when I started hearing about

Chris Brennan's work. My interest in ancient astrological texts had begun with the brilliant opus of Project Hindsight in the 1990s, which I wholeheartedly supported; but it was Chris Brennan, over a decade later, who reawakened my passion for astrology. I eventually enrolled in Chris's online Hellenistic Astrology course, and what a wonderful decision that was; now, a distillation of that wealth of knowledge is available to a wide readership. With this comprehensive text, incorporating the history, theory, philosophy and practice of Hellenistic astrology, Chris Brennan has proffered a gift to students and scholars across many disciplines. Each chapter is informed by his focused attention to detail, erudition, respect for nuance, and enlightened approach to ancient traditions. Physically, the book is large but not unwieldy, even at nearly 700 pages. Its slightly oversized format and generous margins make it a pleasure to read, as one doesn't need to keep one's hand on a page or set a heavy object on the book in order to keep it open — this is quite helpful for referencing the book while looking at one's own chart files. Fonts are easily readable, even for my older eyes. Paper quality is excellent, and the lovely cover has a pleasing suedelike texture. The book includes numerous examples of modern charts viewed through a Hellenistic lens, enabling the reader to appreciate the timeless value of ancient techniques. Many clear diagrams and tables are included, and there is a generous index. As a student in Chris's online classroom, I have been exposed to much of the material here and can vouch for its alignment with the character and content of the course; at the same time, he has streamlined the text to make it easy to explore. The philosophy and history sections go into even greater detail than was possible in early iterations of the course. Chris's prose is at once precise and accessible. He is a skillful communicator, so the reader will have no difficulty in understanding the whys and wherefores behind the whats. I highly recommend this book to serious students of astrology (and related historical disciplines) who wish to broaden their horizons, and at the same time deepen their understanding of this ancient and ageless field.

Chris Brennan is to be congratulated on producing such an authoritative and comprehensive text on Hellenistic astrology. It is not a light read and with its 670 large format pages is weighty in all senses of the word. The significance of the Hellenistic period in astrology is that it is when the shape of the astrology we practice today - planets, signs, houses, aspects, etc. - can first be discerned. If you are new to Hellenistic astrology then this book is not what you should start with. Suitable introductions to this text would be Demetra George's *Astrology and the Authentic Self* (though this covers some quite modern ideas as well as the Hellenistic) or Charles Ober's *Introduction to Traditional Natal*

Astrology - A Complete Working Guide for Modern Astrologers. With one of these under your belt, you could then proceed with confidence to study Brennan's work. The text can be divided into the following sections: 1. The history of ancient astrology (Mesopotamia, Egypt), origins of Hellenistic astrology, the Hellenistic astrologers and astrology in the Roman Empire; decline and transmission of Hellenistic astrology - 140 pages. 2. Philosophical issues in Hellenistic astrology - fate, determinism, free will - 22 pages. 3. Hellenistic natal astrology: planets, zodiac, aspects, places (i.e. houses), and what are called today essential and accidental dignities; bonification and maltreatment and lots (the Arabic Parts) - 370 pages. 4. Hellenistic predictive astrology: annual profections, time lord techniques, transits (briefly) and zodiacal releasing - 53 pages. I am delighted to see such a professional set of end material: glossary, index, bibliography (24 pages), abbreviations, timeline and chart data. Would that all such astrology textbooks be so well documented. This text originated with the author's well-received Hellenistic astrology lecture course; if you prefer to digest this material via audio lectures (with slides) - over 90 hours of them - you should investigate it. As it stands, this book is an excellent text accompaniment to the course. Chris mentions in the Introduction the tension he felt in writing this work between providing a full and scholarly historical treatment of the development of Hellenistic astrology on the one hand and how a practicing astrologer might employ Hellenistic techniques today on the other. Ultimately each reader will have to decide whether he has struck the right balance - personally, I would like to have seen a little less of the former and more of the latter but this is a minor quibble. The writing is clear, straight forward and unpretentious. The author does his best to guide us through the confusing web of ideas and practices which were to become the basis for modern astrology. I believe this work will be the seminal work on this subject for some time to come.

I waited for the publication of this book for the past year or so. I was not disappointed. It is a great foundational textbook for those interested in Hellenistic Astrology. Nicely written, the language is clear and straightforward, with every argument supported by a large body of references or evidence. I expect this book to become a classic in the Hellenistic Astrology contemporary literature. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of astrology.

I have followed Chris Brennan's work on hellenistic astrology over the past several years and was eagerly awaiting the publication of this book, which he spent the last decade writing and revising. It was well worth the wait, and I've been reading through the text pretty much non-stop since it arrived. The writing is clear, and the presentation is logical and understandable. Chris has done a great

service to the field of astrology by gathering together and clearly explaining the original ideas and texts that form the foundation of the celestial craft. His approach is evidence-based. When there are controversies in the literature, he presents the various arguments and their supporting evidence and leaves it for the reader to decide. In addition to the theoretical and historical material, he offers a wealth of chart examples which illustrate the various hellenistic techniques. I have no doubt that this will become an essential text in the library of every serious astrologer. If I were permitted to buy just one book on astrology in 2017, it would be this one.

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