

## **Astrology and Ancient Cultures**

By Holly H. Miller - [www.venusrayastrology.com](http://www.venusrayastrology.com) - 2013

Astrology is the study of the movement of the sun, moon, planets, asteroids, and the synchronicity they share in the lives of people, nations, and earthly events. In modern society, astrology is often thought to be a “new age” concept. But astrology is actually a very ancient art that pre-dates even the science of astronomy.

### **The Beginnings of Astrology**

Mankind has always been fascinated with the existence and movement of heavenly bodies. Astronomical observations began in Mesopotamia with the earliest known civilization – the Babylonians. They successfully identified celestial patterns, constellations, and planets, as well as introducing the concept of the zodiac. Unlike modern society, these ancient cultures made no distinction between astrology and astronomy. In fact, astrologers of the time were associated with both scientific, scholarly affairs and the more ethereal religious practices. By the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the Babylonians had passed the concepts of astrology on to the Greeks.

## **The Greek Influence on Astrology**

The Greeks were known not only for their analytical approach to studying new ideas, but also about how those ideas might apply to the individual. Originally, astrologers applied their knowledge in general terms, but the Greeks brought the concepts of astrology into the everyday affairs of people. It was during the Greek period that astrology was developed into a science by the likes of Aristotle and Plato. Later, the Romans accepted the tenets of astrology and named the signs of the zodiac which are still in use today. Eventually, the principles of astrology would become known worldwide.

## **The Decline and Ascension of Astrology**

After the fall of Rome, the practice of astrology declined after being deemed demonic by Christian church authorities. However, as the Christian church grew in power, astrology once again gained favor by Christian leaders. St. Thomas of Aquinas, for example, believed that everything was controlled by heavenly bodies and used astrology extensively in his ministry. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the world would enter the Age of Enlightenment and the emphasis on scientific advancement would split astrology and astronomy into two separate disciplines for the first time in the history of the world.

## The Zodiac

The ancients divided the journey that the sun takes over the course of a year into twelve equal zones. This division is known as the zodiac. The word *zodiac* comes from a Greek word that means “circle of animals”, like a modern day zoo. The signs of the zodiac are categorized as follows:

- Earth signs: Capricorn, Taurus, and Virgo
- Air signs: Aquarius, Libra, and Gemini
- Water signs: Pisces, Cancer, and Scorpio
- Fire signs: Leo, Aries, and Sagittarius

Each sign is closely associated with seasonal cycles.

Astrology is not a “new age” concept as many believe. In fact, the art of astrology can be traced back to the oldest known Babylonian cultures in Mesopotamia. Through the centuries, astrology has fallen in and out of favor and practice for various reasons. Today, the art and science of astrology is popular around the world.

The famous Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist Carl Jung utilized astrology to gain deeper understanding of the psyches’ of his patients. Today we are seeing a growing number of colleges and universities that are allowing

astrology as part of one's coursework in their Master and Doctoral programs as well as an increasing number of practicing psychologists and therapists who integrate natal astrology in their professional practice. This trend speaks to the validity of astrology as a pragmatic tool for human insight, personal growth, and transformation. Just like medicine and religion, astrology has its share of quacks and charlatans, so it is important to do your homework before choosing a qualified, well trained, and ethical astrologer.