

Ancient Magic - Assignment 2

Charite, daughter of the wealthy and prominent Androtion, comes to consult you about her upcoming marriage. Even though you are something of an outsider in the town, you know that this girl has been enthusiastically courted by all the eligible young men in the nearby towns, for not only is she beautiful but, since she has no brothers, she is the heiress to her father's considerable fortune.

Indeed, a number of these young men have come to consult you about their chances or to ask you for a *charitesion* spell to improve their relations with her father. One youth, Thrasyllus, even asked for a love charm for Charite. Knowing her family and situation, you had warned him that Charite was protected by powerful countercharms and would not respond as easily as the other maidens whom he had asked you to cast *agōgē* spells upon. He was still willing to give it a try, however, and, since he was willing to pay, you agreed to perform the ritual. When she did not come to him, you suggested that he might do better trying to influence her father, but he went off, muttering about getting help from other friends. Thrasyllus' wealth made him a serious contender for Charite's hand, but his unsavory reputation made her father nervous.

Chryseros, an older man from a neighboring town, was an even wealthier suitor, but Androtion decided to marry Charite to Tlepolemus, his brother's son. Androtion's brother had been a renowned soldier, but, as everyone in town was well aware, he was not very good at managing his money and was largely dependent on his wealthy brother. The marriage of Charite and Tlepolemus would thus keep Androtion's money in the family instead of going off to swell the coffers of Chryseros. Moreover, Tlepolemus seems genuinely attached to his cousin Charite, although he has only been in to consult you about his future glory and adventures - marriage doesn't seem to be his top priority in life. Charite also has consulted you before about her dreams, asking for an exciting marriage and future life.

When you cast the horoscope for the day and hour of the wedding, you come up with the following chart:



What response will you give to Charite? You should explain your response as though you were telling your apprentice, who is learning your profession. How did you move from the horoscope to the response? What sources did you consult to determine the meaning? You should cite Ptolemy, Dorotheus Sidonius, and (probably the most useful) Firmicus Maternus to explain your reasoning. Make sure to take into account the positions of the planets within the zodiac, their daytime houses, and the places (referred to as Houses in Firmicus), as well as their relations to one another. Explain to your apprentice which parts of the horoscope are the most significant and why you weigh some factors in the interpretation more heavily than others. Notice that your horoscope does not contain certain kinds of information, such as the exact position in degrees of the planets, which will prevent you from making all of the calculations that some of the more complex handbooks describe. A selection of frequently asked questions about the assignment can be found on the Moodle site.

The purpose of the assignment is for you to demonstrate your familiarity with and understanding of the primary texts and secondary interpretations we have studied, particularly the relation of the magical practices to the social contexts in which they take place. While you should discuss the specific features and context of your interpretation in terms of the broader context of magical practices in the ancient Mediterranean world, please avoid vague and sweeping generalizations. Please assume that your apprentice has a good general background in the subject of ancient magic but needs to have the procedures carefully explained, especially how to interact with a client. Specific evidence and careful argumentation are the best ways to convince your audience.

Your response, due to me via email by **noon on Monday, April 7**, should be around four to six pages of printed text, given a double-spaced document with reasonable font and margins (e.g., this document is Garamond 12 pt. with 1" margins). Please proofread your papers carefully to ensure that they are free from annoying typographical, spelling, and grammatical errors. For the benefit of your modern readers, please cite ancient primary texts by the book and chapter number, not the modern page number. However, if you cite any modern secondary sources (perhaps as an explanatory footnote to your modern reader rather than to your apprentice), you should cite by page number.