

Astrology

Divination and Fate

- gifts from the gods
- uncertainty of fate vs. determinism
- shift toward determinism over time
- astrology and precision of fate
- escaping fate

Astrology and Cosmology

- Philosophic cosmology: cosmos governed by reason
- rise of technical astronomy/astrology in the Hellenistic era
- Stoic cosmology
- heavens as sign in unchanging divine text
- cosmic sympathy – stars as causes

Mechanics of Astrology

- Cosmic Sympathy and Celestial Influence
- Human Genesis and descent through the celestial spheres
- Horary vs. Genethliacal Astrology
- Geocentric cosmos
- Ecliptic and Zodiac; Solstices and Equinoxes
- Decans, Places, Domiciles, Exaltations, Aspects

History of Astrology

Babylonian astrology

- number system - base 60, place system
- observational data
- constellations

Egyptian astrology

- Sirius/Sothis and the rising of the Nile
- decans

Greek astrology

- Homer and Hesiod (c. 750 BCE)
- Pythagoreans
- Eudoxus of Knidos & Callipus of Cyzicus (4th century BCE) – Aratus *Phainomena*
- Hipparchus and the precession of the equinoxes

Roman astrology: Stoicism, Neopythagoreanism, and Neoplatonism

- Publius Nigidius Figulus (1st century BCE); Manilius (1st century CE)
- Dorotheus Sidonius (1st century CE); Vettius Valens (2nd century CE)
- Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century CE) – *Tetrabiblos*, *Al-Magest*
- Firmicus Maternus (4th century CE); Maximus of Ephesus (4th century CE)

Astrology and the Roman emperors

- Julius Caesar (100 - 44 BCE) and the Ides of March
- Augustus (63 BCE - 14 CE) - published horoscope and Capricorn coinage
- Tiberius (42 BCE - 37 CE) - tales of a fearful tyrant
- expelling the astrologers from Rome
- Astrology and the Christian Roman Empire

Mechanics of Astrology

Constellation	Symbol	Constellation	Symbol	Planet	Symbol
Aries	♈	Libra	♎	Saturn	♄
Taurus	♉	Scorpio	♏	Jupiter	♃
Gemini	♊	Sagittarius	♐	Mars	♂
Cancer	♋	Capricorn	♑	Sun	☉
Leo	♌	Aquarius	♒	Venus	♀
Virgo	♍	Pisces	♓	Mercury	☿
				Moon	☾

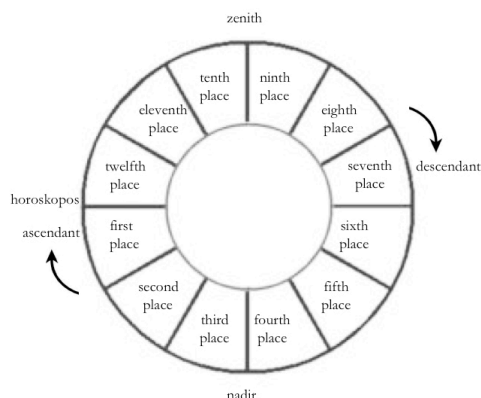
Planet	Beneficent	Maleficent	Male	Female	Hot	Cold	Dry	Wet
Saturn ♄		*	*			**	*	
Jupiter ♃	*		*		**			*
Mars ♂		*	*		*		**	
Sun ☉	*		*		**		*	
Venus ♀	*			*	*			**
Mercury ☿	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Moon ☾	*			*		*		**

Planets and their domiciles (*oikoi*) (houses)

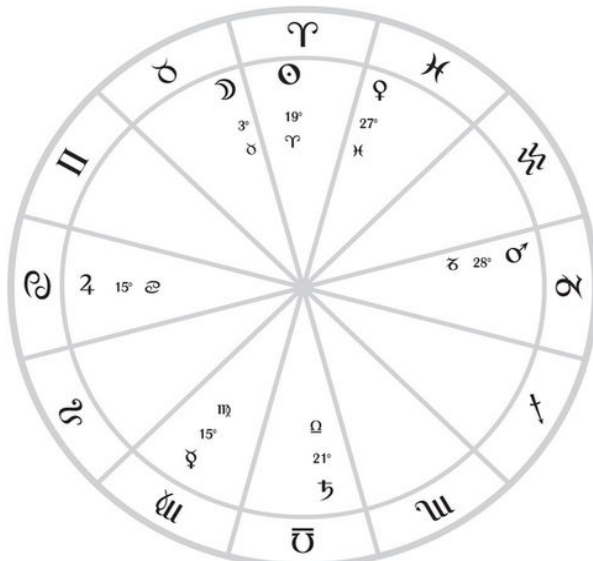
planet	nocturnal domicile	diurnal domicile	planet
Saturn ♄	Aquarius ♒	Capricorn ♑	Saturn ♄
Jupiter ♃	Pisces ♓	Sagittarius ♐	Jupiter ♃
Mars ♂	Aries ♈	Scorpio ♏	Mars ♂
Venus ♀	Taurus ♉	Libra ♎	Venus ♀
Mercury ☿	Gemini ♊	Virgo ♍	Mercury ☿
Moon ☾	Cancer ♋	Leo ♌	Sun ☉



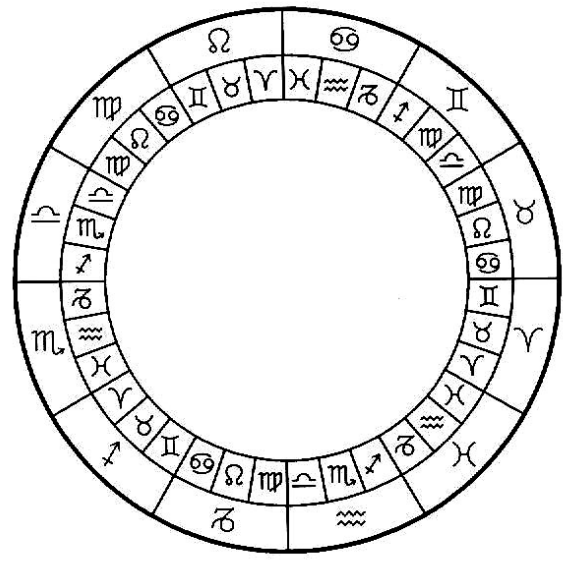
Places (*topoi*) on the Chart (houses)



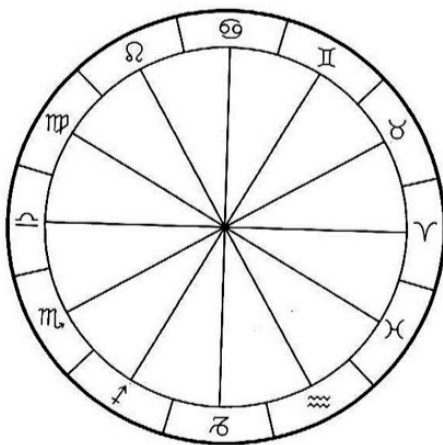
- I. The Ascendant-life, the spirit, the body.
- II. The Gate of Hades-possession, business.
- III. The Goddess-friends and relatives.
- IV. Nadir (Lower Midheaven)-parents, reputation.
- V. Good Fortune-children, friendship.
- VI. Evil Fortune-illness.
- VII. The Descendant-marriage.
- VIII. Death-death, inheritances, trials.
- IX. The God-religion, travel, prophecy.
- X. Zenith (Midheaven)-career, honors, reputation.
- XI. Good Daimon-benefits, accomplishments.
- XII. Evil Daimon-enemies, slaves, infirmity, death.



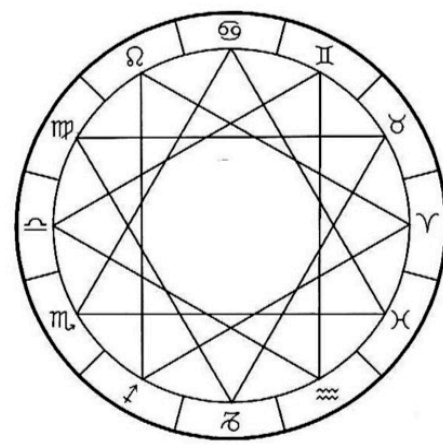
Exaltations



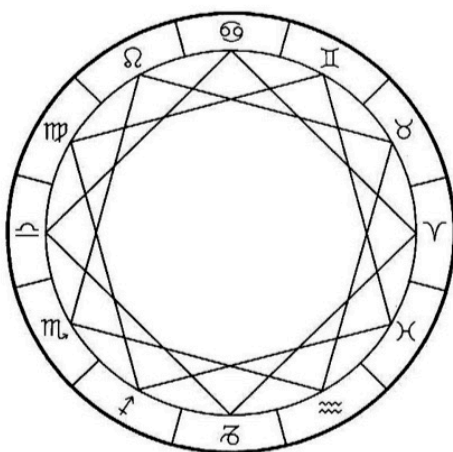
Decans



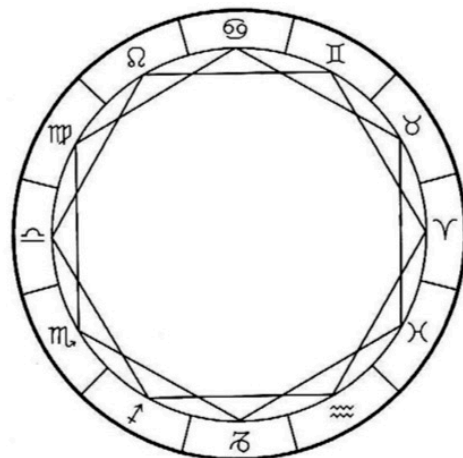
Opposition



Trine



Quartile (Square)



Sextile

***Iliad* 24.515ff.**

You must have iron courage: sit now upon this seat, and for all our grief we will hide our sorrows in our hearts, for weeping will not avail us. The immortals know no care, yet the lot they spin for man is full of sorrow; on the floor of Zeus' palace there stand two urns, the one filled with evil gifts, and the other with good ones. He for whom Zeus the lord of thunder mixes the gifts he sends, will meet now with good and now with evil fortune; but he to whom Zeus sends none but evil gifts will be pointed at by the finger of scorn, the hand of famine will pursue him to the ends of the world, and he will go up and down the face of the earth, respected neither by gods nor men. Even so did it befall Peleus; the gods endowed him with all good things from his birth upwards, for he reigned over the Myrmidons excelling all men in prosperity [olbos] and wealth, and mortal though he was they gave him a goddess for his bride. But even on him too did heaven send misfortune, for there is no race of royal children born to him in his house, save one son who is doomed to die all untimely; nor may I take care of him now that he is growing old, for I must stay here at Troy to be the bane of you and your children. And you too, O Priam, I have heard that you were aforetime happy [olbios]. They say that in wealth and plenitude of offspring you surpassed all that is in Lesbos, the realm of Makar to the northward, Phrygia that is more inland, and those that dwell upon the great Hellespont; but from the day when the dwellers in heaven sent this evil upon you, war and slaughter have been about your city continually.

Tacitus Annals 6.20

I must not pass over a prognostication of Tiberius respecting Servius Galba, then consul. Having sent for him and sounded him on various topics, he at last addressed him in Greek to this effect: "You too, Galba, will some day have a taste of empire." He thus hinted at a brief span of power late in life, on the strength of his acquaintance with the art of astrologers, leisure for acquiring which he had had at Rhodes, with Thrasyllus for instructor. This man's skill he tested in the following manner.

Whenever he sought counsel on such matters, he would make use of the top of the house and of the confidence of one freedman, quite illiterate and of great physical strength. The man always walked in front of the person whose science Tiberius had determined to test, through an unfrequented and precipitous path (for the house stood on rocks), and then, if any suspicion had arisen of imposture or of trickery, he hurled the astrologer, as he returned, into the sea beneath, that no one might live to betray the secret. Thrasyllus accordingly was led up the same cliffs, and when he had deeply impressed his questioner by cleverly revealing his imperial destiny and future career, he was asked whether he had also thoroughly ascertained his own horoscope, and the character of that particular year and day. After surveying the positions and relative distances of the stars, he first paused, then trembled, and the longer he gazed, the more was he agitated by amazement and terror, till at last he exclaimed that a perilous and well-nigh fatal crisis impended over him. Tiberius then embraced him and congratulated him on foreseeing his dangers and on being quite safe. Taking what he had said as an oracle, he retained him in the number of his intimate friends.

When I hear of these and like occurrences, I suspend my judgment on the question whether it is fate and unchangeable necessity or chance which governs the revolutions of human affairs. Indeed, among the wisest of the ancients and among their disciples you will find conflicting theories, many holding the conviction that heaven does not concern itself with the beginning or the end of our life, or, in short, with mankind at all; and that therefore sorrows are continually the lot of the good, happiness of the wicked; while others, on the contrary, believe that, though there is a harmony between fate and events, yet it is not dependent on wandering stars, but on primary elements, and on a combination of natural causes. Still, they leave us the capacity of choosing our life, maintaining that, the choice once made, there is a fixed sequence of events. Good and evil, again, are not what vulgar opinion accounts them; many who seem to be struggling with adversity are happy; many, amid great affluence, are utterly miserable, if only the first bear their hard lot with patience, and the latter make a foolish use of their prosperity.

Most men, however, cannot part with the belief that each person's future is fixed from his very birth, but that some things happen differently from what has been foretold through the impostures of those who describe what they do not know, and that this destroys the credit of a science, clear testimonies to which have been given both by past ages and by our own.

PGM XIII 709-715, 634-9

You, then, ask, "Master, what is fated for me?" And he will tell you even about your star, and what kind of daimon you have, and your horoscope and where you may live and where you will die. And if you hear something bad, do not cry out or weep, but ask that he may wash it off or circumvent it, for this god can do everything...

... "Protect me from all my own astrological destiny; destroy my foul fate; apportion good things for me in my horoscope; increase my life even in the midst of many goods, for I am your slave and petitioner and have hymned your valid and holy name, lord, glorious one, ruler of the cosmos."

Pliny NH 30.1.1-2

Last of all, to complete its universal sway, it has incorporated with itself the astrological art; there being no man who is not desirous to know his future destiny, or who is not ready to believe that this knowledge may with the greatest certainty be obtained, by observing the face of the heavens.

Ptolemy, *Anthologia Palatina* 9 .577

I know that I am mortal, the creature of one day. But when I explore the winding courses of the stars I no longer touch with my feet the earth: I am standing near Zeus himself, drinking my fill of Ambrosia, the food of the gods.

Vettius Valens, *Anthologiae* 6.1

I never got carried away by the various kinds of horse races or by the sharp crack of the whip, or by the rhythmic movements of dancers, nor did I enjoy the superficial charm of flutes and poetry and melodious songs or anything else that attracts an audience by a certain art or by jokes. I never took part in any harmful or useful occupations that were divided between pleasure and pain. I had nothing to do with disgraceful and troublesome But once I had experienced the divine and reverent contemplation of celestial phenomena, I wished to cleanse my character of every kind of vice and pollution and leave my soul immortal. I felt that I was communicating with divine beings, and I acquired a sober mind for research.

Firmicus Maternus 8.1.6

Look with wide open eyes at the heavens and let your soul contemplate the most beautiful fabric of the divine creation. This is the way to free our souls from the depraved snares of the body and to put off the dangers of mortality. They will then hasten to their maker with an accelerated pace, seeking nothing other than divine things through all the moments of all the hours.

Plotinus *Enneads* 2.3.1

The belief is that the planets in their courses actually produce not merely such conditions as poverty, wealth, health and sickness but even ugliness and beauty and, gravest of all, vices and virtue and the very acts that spring from these qualities, the definite doings of each moment of virtue or vice. We are to suppose the stars to be annoyed with men- and upon matters in which men, moulded to what they are by the stars themselves, can surely do them no wrong. They will be distributing what pass for their good gifts, not out of kindness towards the recipients but as they themselves are affected pleasantly or disagreeably at the various points of their course; so that they must be supposed to change their plans as they stand at their zeniths or are declining.

Manilius 2.80-149

Thus everything is organized throughout the whole world and follows a master. This god, and the reason that controls everything, brings down from the heavenly stars the creatures of the earth. Though the stars are very distant and remote, he makes us feel their influence, as they give to the peoples their ways of life and destinies and to every person a character of his own. We do not have to look far for proof: this is why the sky affects the farmland, why it gives and takes away various crops, why it moves the sea by ebb and tide. This constant motion of the sea is sometimes caused by the moon, sometimes provoked by her withdrawal to another part and sometimes depends on the yearly course of the sun through the year.

Ptolemy *Tetrabiblos* I.2

A very few considerations would make it apparent to all that a certain power emanating from the eternal ethereal substance is dispersed through and permeates the whole region about the earth, which throughout is subject to change, since, of the primary sublunar elements, fire and air are encompassed and changed by the motions in the ether, and in turn encompass and change all else, earth and water and the plants and animals therein. For the sun, together with the ambient, is always in some way affecting everything on the earth, not only by the changes that accompany the seasons of the year to bring about the generation of animals, the productiveness of plants, the flowing of waters, and the changes of bodies, but also by its daily revolutions furnishing heat, moisture, dryness, and cold in regular order and in correspondence with its positions relative to the zenith. The moon, too, as the heavenly body nearest the earth, bestows her effluence most abundantly upon mundane things, for most of them, animate or inanimate, are sympathetic to her and change in company with her; the rivers increase and diminish their streams with her light, the seas turn their own tides with her rising and setting, and plants and animals in whole or in some part wax and wane with her. Moreover, the passages of the fixed stars and the planets through the sky often signify hot, windy, and snowy conditions of the air, and mundane things are affected accordingly.

[Plato], *Epinomis* 983c-984d

We will begin then, as we say, by conceiving these two sorts of creature, both, to repeat ourselves, visible--the one composed, as might be imagined, wholly of fire and the other of earth, the earthy sort moving in disorderly fashion, that of fire with utter uniformity. Now the sort which moves in disorderly wise--as the kind of creature which includes ourselves mostly does--we must take to be unintelligent, but as for that which holds its course uniformly through the sky, we should count this abundant proof of its intelligence; in the unbroken regularity and uniformity of its path, and of all it does and has done to it, it provides convincing evidence of intelligent life. And of all necessitation, that which comes from a soul endowed with intelligence is far the mightiest, seeing she imposes her law as a sovereign who is subject to none, and when a soul has decided for the best with faultless wisdom, the utterly irreversible result falls out entirely to its mind. Adamant itself could be no stronger nor more inflexible, and 'tis no more than the truth to say that a triple Fate ensures and watches over the full accomplishment of all that each and every god has determined with perfect good counsel. For mankind it should have been proof that the stars and their whole procession have intelligence, that they act with unbroken uniformity, because their action carries out a plan resolved on from untold ages; they do not change their purpose confusedly, acting now thus, and again thus, and wandering from one orbit to another. Yet most of us have imagined the very opposite; because they act with uniformity and regularity, we fancy them to have no souls. Hence the mass has followed the leading of fools; it imagines that man is intelligent and alive because he is so mutable, but deity, because it keeps to the same orbits, is unintelligent. Yet man might have chosen the fairer, better, more welcome interpretation; he might have understood that that which eternally does the same acts, in uniform way and for the same reasons, is for that very reason to be deemed intelligent, and that this is the case with the stars. They are the fairest of all sights to the eye, and as they move through the figures of the fairest and most glorious of dances they accomplish their duty to all living creatures. And for further proof that we have the right to ascribe souls to them, let us, in the first place, but think of their magnitude. They are not really the tiny things they look to be; the bulk of any star is enormous; that we must believe, for the proofs are convincing. Why, we may rightly think of the sun as a whole as larger than the earth as a whole, and every one of the moving stars is, in fact, of amazing magnitude. So let us but consider how anything can be made to cause so vast a bulk to revolve perpetually in the same period, as the stars in fact revolve. Why, I say, God will be found to be the cause; the thing is impossible on other terms, for, as you and I have proved, soul can be imparted by God, and by God alone. And since God has this power, 'tis perfectly easy for him first to give life to any body or any bulk, and then to set it moving as he judges best. For the present we may affirm one truth about them all. It cannot be that earth and sky, with all the stars and masses formed of them, if no soul had been connected with, or perhaps lodged in, each of them should move so accurately, to the year, month, or day, to confer all the blessings they bestow on us all.

Plato, *Timaeus* 38e-39e

Now, when each of the stars which were necessary to the creation of time had come to its proper orbit, and they had become living creatures having bodies fastened by vital chains, and learned their appointed task--moving in the motion of the diverse, which is diagonal and passes through and is governed by the motion of the same--they revolved, some in a larger and some in a lesser orbit, those which had the lesser orbit revolving faster, and those which had the larger more slowly. Now by reason of the motion of the same, those which revolved fastest appeared to be overtaken by those which moved slower although they really overtook them, for the motion of the same made them all turn in a spiral, and, because some went one way and some another, that which receded most slowly from the sphere of the same, which was the swiftest, appeared to follow it most nearly. That there might be some visible measure of their relative swiftness and slowness as they proceeded in their eight courses, God lighted a fire, which we now call the sun, in the second from the earth of these orbits, that it might give light to the whole of heaven, and that the animals, as many as nature intended, might participate in number, learning arithmetic from the revolution of the same and the like. Thus, then, and for this reason the night and the day were created, being the period of the one most intelligent revolution. And the month is accomplished when the moon has completed her orbit and overtaken the sun, and the year when the sun has completed his own orbit. Mankind, with hardly an exception, have not remarked the periods of the other stars, and they have no name for them, and do not measure them against one another by the help of number, and hence they can scarcely be said to know that their wanderings, being of vast number and admirable for their variety, make up time. And yet there is no difficulty in seeing that the perfect number of time fulfills the perfect year when all the eight revolutions, having their relative degrees of swiftness, are accomplished together and attain their completion at the same time, measured by the rotation of the same and equally moving. After this manner, and for these reasons, came into being such of the stars as in their heavenly progress received reversals of motion, to the end that the created heaven might be as like as possible to the perfect and intelligible animal, by imitation of its eternal nature.

Thus far and until the birth of time the created universe was made in the likeness of the original, but inasmuch as all animals were not yet comprehended therein, it was still unlike. Therefore, the creator proceeded to fashion it after the nature of the pattern in this remaining point. Now as in the ideal animal the mind perceives ideas or species of a certain nature and number, he thought that this created animal ought to have species of a like nature and number. There are four such. One of them is the heavenly race of the gods; another, the race of birds whose way is in the air; the third, the watery species; and the fourth, the pedestrian and land creatures. Of the heavenly and divine, he created the greater part out of fire, that they might be the brightest of all things and fairest to behold, and he fashioned them after the likeness of the universe in the figure of a circle, and made them follow the intelligent motion of the supreme, distributing them over the whole circumference of heaven, which was to be a true cosmos or glorious world spangled with them all over. And he gave to each of them two movements--the first, a movement on the same spot after the same manner, whereby they ever continue to think consistently the same thoughts about the same things, in the same respect; the second, a forward movement, in which they are controlled by the revolution of the same and the like--but by the other five motions they were unaffected, in order that each of them might attain the highest perfection. And for this reason the fixed stars were created, to be divine and eternal animals, ever abiding and revolving after the same manner and on the same spot, and the other stars which reverse their motion and are subject to deviations of this kind were created in the manner already described. The earth, which is our nurse, clinging around the pole which is extended through the universe, he framed to be the guardian and artificer of night and day, first and eldest of gods that are in the interior of heaven. Vain would be the attempt to tell all the figures of them circling as in dance, and their juxtapositions, and the return of them in their revolutions upon themselves, and their approximations, and to say which of these deities in their conjunctions meet, and which of them are in opposition, and in what order they get behind and before one another, and when they are severally eclipsed to our sight and again reappear, sending terrors and intimations of the future to those who cannot calculate their movements--to attempt to tell of all this without a visible representation of the heavenly system would be labor in vain. Enough on this head, and now let what we have said about the nature of the created and visible gods have an end.

Macrobius, *Commentary on the Somnium Scipionis* 1.12

...The soul, having started on its downward movement from the intersection of the zodiac and the Milky Way to the successive spheres lying beneath, as it passes through these spheres, not only takes on the...wrapping in each sphere by approaching a luminous body, but also acquires each of the attributes which it will exercise later, as follows: in the sphere of Saturn it obtains reason and understanding, called *logistikon* and *theoretikon*; in Jupiter's sphere, the power to act, called *praktikon*; in Mars' sphere, a bold spirit or *thymikon*; in the Sun's sphere, sense perception and imagination, *aisthetikon* and *phantastikon*; in Venus' sphere, the impulse of passion, *epithymetikon*; in Mercury's sphere, the ability to speak and interpret, *hermeneutikon*; and in the sphere of the Moon, the power of sowing and growing bodies, *phytikon*.

Corpus Hermeticum I.24-26

Poimandres said: "First, in releasing the material body you give the body itself over to alteration, and the form that you used to have vanishes. To the demon you give over your temperament, now inactive. The body's senses rise up and flow back to their particular sources, becoming separate parts and mingling again with the energies. And feeling and longing go on toward irrational nature. Thence the human being rushes up through the cosmic framework, at the first zone surrendering the energy of increase and decrease; at the second evil machination, a device now inactive; at the third the illusion of longing; at the fourth the ruler's arrogance, now freed of excess; at the fifth unholy presumption and daring recklessness; at the sixth the evil impulses that come from wealth, now inactive; and at the seventh zone the deceit that lies in ambush. And then, stripped of the effects of the cosmic framework, the human enters the region of the ogdoad; he has his own proper power, and along with the blessed he hymns the father.

Testament of Solomon, 18: 5, 20, 40

"I am the first decan of the zodiac (and) I am called Ruax. I cause the heads of men to suffer pain and I cause their temples to throb. Should I hear only, 'Michael, imprison Ruax,' I retreat immediately." ... The sixteenth said, "I am called Katrax. I inflict incurable fevers on men. If anyone wants to regain health, let him pulverize coriander and rub it on his lips, saying, 'I adjure you by Zeus, retreat from the image of God,' and I retreat immediately." ... The thirty-sixth said, "And I am called Rhyx Mianeth. I hold a grudge against the body; I demolish houses; I cause the flesh to rot. If anyone writes on the front entrance of his house as follows, 'Melto Ardad Anaath,' I flee from that place."

Hermetica, Stobaeus 6.1.21.9

I told you, my son, that there is a body which encloses all things. You must conceive the shape of that body as circular, for such is the shape of the universe. ... And you must understand that below the circle of this body are placed the thirty-six Decans, between the circle of the universe and that of the zodiac, separating the one circle from the other; on the one hand they bear up, as it were, the circle of the universe, and on the other hand they circumscribe the zodiac, moving in a circle with the planets; they have the same force as the movement of the All, by turns with the Seven... And subject to the Decans is the constellation called the Bear, which is centrally situated with regard to the zodiac. The Bear is composed of seven stars, and has overhead another Bear to match it. The function of the Bear resembles that of the axle of a wheel; it never sets nor rises, but abides in one place, revolving about a fixed point, and making the zodiacal circle revolve. ... The force which works in all events that befall men collectively comes from the Decans; for instance, overthrows of kingdoms, revolts of cities, famines, pestilences, overflowings of the sea, earthquakes, -- none of these things, my son, take place without the working of the Decans. And those things also which befall men individually result from the workings of the Decans; for if the Decans rule over the seven planets, and we are subject to the planets, do you not see that the force set in action by the Decans reaches us also, whether it is worked by the Decans themselves or by means of the planets? And besides this, my son, you must know that there is yet another sort of work that the Decans do: they sow upon the earth the seeds of certain forces, some salutary and others most pernicious, which the many call daemons.