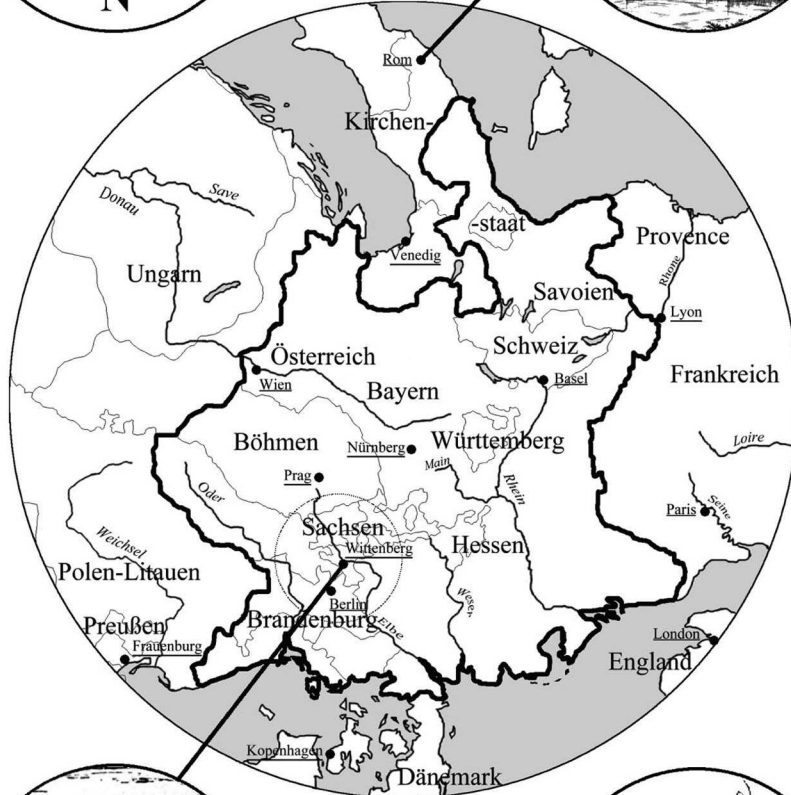


Das Heilige
Römische Reich
Deutscher Nation



Von dess Erdtrichs vmb
kreiss / Region / Gele-
genheit / Dicke und
Werte



die himel vnd die drey
obern element seind inn-
wendig hol / vnd steckt ein
himmel in dem andern / vnd
ein element wirdt verfasst
in das ander / ABER das erd-
trich ist innwendig nit hol /
vnd steckt kein ander ro-
tunder corpus darinn / son-
der ist ein gantze kugel / al-
lenthalben mit erdtrich
aussgefüllet / dann dass etli-
che speluncken vnd heimli-
che gäng darin hin vnd her
gefunden werden / die doch
nicht zuachten seind gegen
der gantzen erden. gleich
wie die grossen vnd hohen
berg vnd hülen / so das
meer ins erdtrich gefres-
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gantzen erdtrich / das in



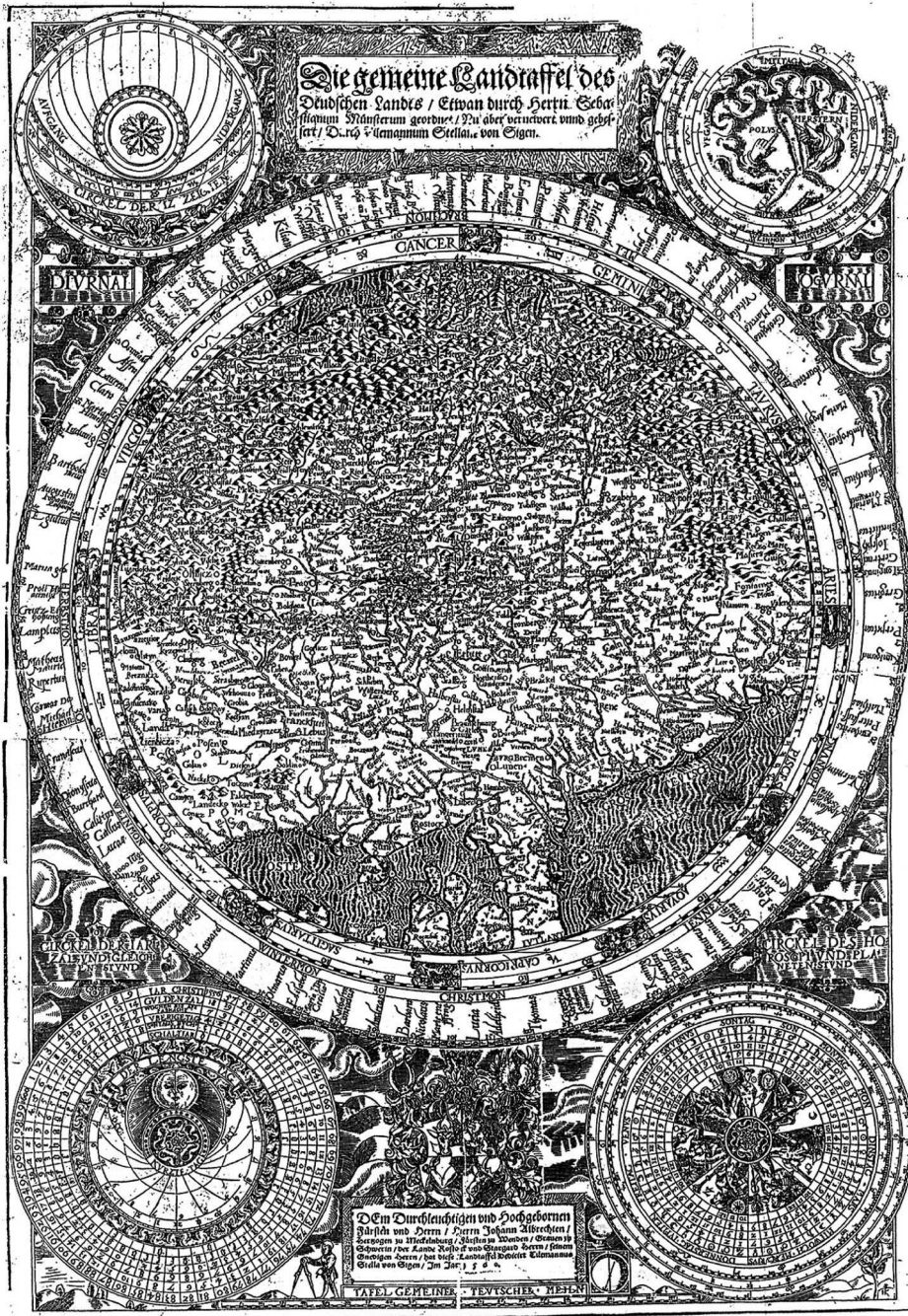
im Jahrhundert
der Reformation

Anno Domine MDXXIV



seinem CIRCK GERINGS VMB-
 HER BEGREIFFT 5400. teut-
 scher meilen. darauss man
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 die dicke dess erdrtrichs
 hat 17148. teutscher meilen
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wie viel zeit würde ei-
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 wüsten / vnd gieng alle tag
 4. teutscher meilen? so
 theile 5400. mit 4. vnd fin-
 dest 1350. tag / die machen
 drey jar vnd 260. tag.



Jürgen G. H. Hoppmann

Astrology of the Reformation

Faust, Luther, Melanchthon and the art of reading the stars

with a foreword by Günther Mahal

in English translation and horoscope interpretations of
Astronomia Teutsch from 1580 in original medieval German

ArsAstrologica



once dedicated to my children Heide-Leocardia, Fion-Jasper and Jarla-Finela

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ISBN 978-9403694-078

Publisher: Bookmundo Direct

Typesetting and cover design: ArsAstrologica

Translated with DeepL Pro from »Astrologie der Reformationszeit«

published 1998 Clemens Zerling Verlag, Berlin 1998 ISBN 3-88468-069-2

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Foreword

*sive astrologia sit ars sive scientia
cert una pulchra fantasia*

[Philip Melanchthon]

Whether astrology is art or science,
it is beautiful in any case,
a beautiful fantasy.

You don't have to be a proselyte of stargazing to find this book appealing and exciting: a historically grounded and differentiated account of how the man next to Luther - quite unlike the latter - read the messages in the sky, perceived liabilities and took heed of instructions for action. Philipp Schwarzerdt, called Melanchthon, interpreted horoscopes, admittedly not as professionally as a contemporary he did not admire very much, the legendary Doktor Faustus from Knittlingen.

In the middle of the watershed of the epoch, within which humanism, the Renaissance and the Reformation have long been recognised as interwoven guiding forces of only temporary dominance, in the middle of an era of ostentatious (though not always objective) farewell to the allegedly dark Middle Ages and their postulated homogeneities, the great little man from Bretten, which remained part of the Electoral Palatinate in 1504, the neighbouring town of Knittlingen, holds fast to a



large-scale coordinate thinking that can still be found today in a watered-down form in every colourful newspaper and that has survived the ever-repeated sorting away into the wastepaper basket of mere superstition. Melanchthon's astrology is not the individual path of a blinded man. He shared his faith (for that is what one must call astral reassurance that goes beyond the epistemic) with many famous contemporaries, just as little as with easily duped simple-minded people, often scientists, who

achieved something significant in their sober subjects.

That what was observed in the heavens and used for often far-reaching conclusions could not yet be neatly separated into astrology and astronomy in the early or middle 16th century, into the dull-believing and the bright-scientific (as the multiple enlightened attributions read today): this is now as well known as the intertwining of alchemy and chemistry in the same decades.

That gold is an element and therefore cannot be synthesised was only irrefutably proven in the 19th century. To portray all the alchemists who orientated themselves on the four-element doctrine and Aristotle's doctrine of permutability as fraudulent fools corresponds to a cramped prophetic attitude in the history of science. The same applies to the astrology of Luther's time, of Faust's time, of Melanchthon's time: anyone who is quick to use the censorships from today's grade books says goodbye to an intellectual history whose current certainties are not in the best of shape either.

Luther's oft-quoted dictum that astrology (including that of his friend Melanchthon) is »a hopelessly shameful art« should be taken less as the judgement of an intellectually established man, and more as the rather bellied aversion of one who was otherwise attached to many dark things throughout his life. The dividing line between astrology advocates and astrology opponents by no means marked a separation of the retarded here and the clever or progressive there. That the proponent Philipp Melanchthon made efforts to reconcile and maintain belief in the stars with his Protestant religiosity - that makes his position on star divination all the more exciting, even for readers of the expiring 20th century. The much-vaunted praecceptor Germaniae, respected even on the Catholic opposite side, the tolerant church diplomat with an eye for tolerance, the accomplished classical philologist and sought-after academic teacher - he can hardly be regarded as one easily seduced by any dubiousities. His living plea for a sidereal guidance system with conse-

quences on earth and in the human being provides a piece of transpersonal orientation history beyond the individual case.

Jürgen G. H. Hoppmann's book offers thoroughly researched documentation of the entire development of astrology from the Reformation to the Enlightenment in words and pictures (here astonishingly well sorted).

Dr. phil. habil. Günther Mahal
Faust-Museum Knittlingen

Von planeten vnd Zeichen dess himlischen Cirkeln vnd der 12. Zeychen Qualitäten.



Die alten weisen der himlischen ding / von stäten brauchs wegen der 12. Zeichen Zodiaci / das ist / himlischen vmberckels / haben sie ihnen eigen Charakter vnd Zeichen solcher erdacht / damit sie die ohn verdruss einbildeten. 7. planeten. 4. aspect. trachenkopff vnd schwantz. Dann so sie den Widder bezeichnen gewöllt / habens allein die Hörnerdesselben also widder fürgebildet. für den Ochsen / haben sie den kopff mit den hörnern fürgemakt. Die Zwillig

haben zween solche strich bedeut. Den krebs seind zwey hörner.

Den löwen zeigt an ein solcher löwenschwanz. für die Jungfraw haben sie solche kleyder gefalten gemacht m. Die Wag bezeit ein Wagbalcken. Scorpion ein knöpflechter Scorpion schwantz. den Schützen ein pfeil. den steinbock ein steinbock schwantz / also. für den Wasserman machen sie zwey solche Bächlin. Die fisch / zween fisch / also

dieweil im himlischen Bild die fisch als mit einem faden in der mitte zusammen gethan / habens etliche also fis. aussgetruckt. ferner trachenkopff vnd schwantz zu bezeichnen / haben sie zween halbe Cirkkel gemacht / beyder seit mit jren knöpflein geendet / damit diss das haupt / das den schwantz des trachen bedeute.

Darnach an statt Saturni / haben sie ein alten gemalet / an ein stecken gesteuert .

fürn Jupiter einen König mit
einem Scepter. fürn Mars ein
kriegischen pfeil.

Die Sonn ein runde figur der
Sonn / also Den Mon dess Mons
zwey hörner. Venus ein
frawenbildt. Mercurius / ein
Junger der ein breyten hut auff
einem runden Baret tregt.

Wider / Löw / Schütz /
seyn feurige Zeychen /
warm / trucken / männlich / tägig
/ Choleric / bitter / von Ausgang.

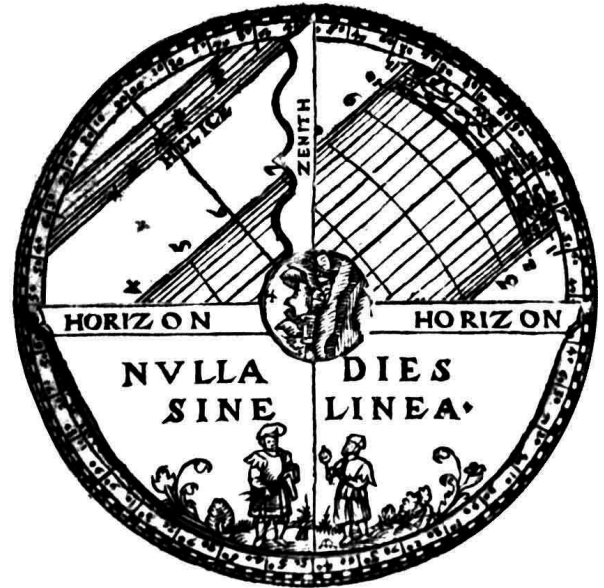
Zwilling / Wag / Wasserman /
seind lüfftig / warm / feucht /
männlich / tägig / Sanguinischer
Complex / süß / vnd von
Nidergang / etlich sagen von
Mittag. Krebs / Scorpion / fisch /
wässerig / kalt vnd feucht /
weibisch / nächtlich /
phlegmatisch / herb / von
Mitternacht / etlich sagen von
Nidergang.

Ochs / Junkfraw / Steinbock /
seind jrdisch / trucken / weibisch /
nächtlich / melancholisch / lüfftig
/ von Mittag / etlich sagen von
Mitternacht.

Time has two faces

But that the movement of the stars is a clock that can be used to changes on Earth can be measured, is not so easily dismissed. Things happen in complicated patterns of obvious coincidences which the artist's alert eye observes ...

*[Camille Paglia
- The Masks of Sexuality]*



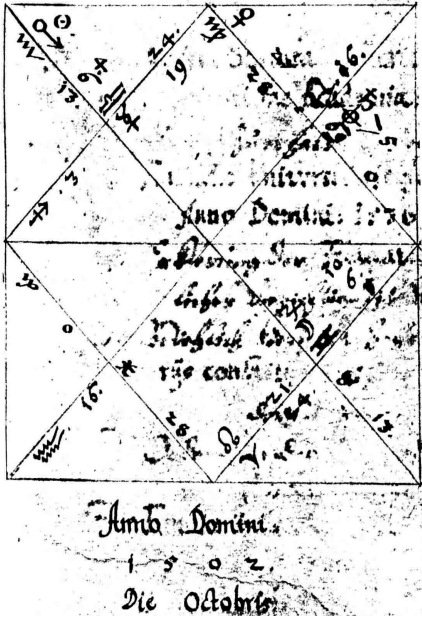
The planetary god Saturn is assigned to the signs Capricorn and Aquarius in the classical manner of the Middle Ages. The discovery of the planet Uranus at the time of the French Revolution by the oddball military musician Herschel from Hanover, who emigrated to England and erected a huge homemade telescope in his front garden, which beat the Royal Astronomical Society's telescope by far, much to the latter's displeasure [Zinner 1951, Filbey and Filbey 1986], did not lead to the

collapse of the astrological edifice of faith - even if today's astronomers repeatedly claim this. Rather, the art of interpretation was expanded and refined [Paris 1977, Arroyo 1980]. Uranus was assigned secondarily, and later solely, to the unconventional and experimental Aquarius, where it was elevated to the status of sign ruler. This is not to be understood objectively. Today's astrologers do not believe in any gods who sit up there on the stars and make the poor little people on

earth happy or maltreat them according to their whims. This was not the case in the Middle Ages, nor was it the case over 2,000 years ago with the Greeks and Romans. And what is stargazing actually about?

Well, the underlying idea is that time and space belong together. The quantity of time can be measured in days, hours, minutes, litres and metres: Astronomy. And what about the manner, the quality? A body can be large or small, light or heavy,

thick or thin. Does this also apply to time, and if so, can this be read from the daily and annual rhythms, i.e. from the sun, moon and planetary stars?



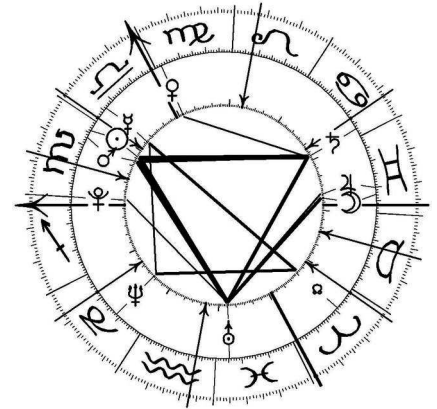
Astrology would then be the quality of time - a fascinating thought. And perhaps that is why people in all countries and in all cultures of the world have developed spiritual systems to put celestial movements and earthly events into a context.

Elective horoscope of the Leucorea

In the Middle Ages, astrology belonged to the Liber artes, the liberal arts, and was regularly taught at universities.

Martin Pollich von Mellerstadt was one of the professors at Leipzig University. He had made a name for himself as the author of numerous annual horoscopes. In an effort to work wisely and moderately, he wrote his annual predictions out of »pflicht des gehorsamß«. He called it an »inhuman thing« to be able to foresee from the hour of birth of a prince »all the bodily coincidences and misfortunes of future illnesses and the predetermined natural end«. In his astrological work he referred to Arab and Greek classics of astrology, such as Abumasar, Alfonso of Castile, Ptolemy and Alcabitus [Eis 1954:103, Koch 1982:69]. As personal physician he accompanied the Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise on a pilgrimage to Palestine.

The legend goes that Pollich was able to save the life of his seriously ill prince on this journey. That is why he was granted the wish to found a university in Wittenberg - only it was not allowed to cost any-



hing [according to the astrologer Ernst-Jürgen Thieme-Garmann, whose ancestors studied in Wittenberg]. He is also said to have been seriously ill himself, to have sensed the end and to have wanted to spread iatromathematics, i.e., all his astromedical knowledge as widely as possible.

As the first rector of the University of Leucorea (= White Mountain = Wittenberg), Pollich drew up a founding horoscope. In the *Librum Sta-*

tuorum Academiae Vitebergensis, the Schemata coeli are drawn on the very first page [Speler1987,1994]. A cultural-historical study by Hahne in the 1920s claims that Fredericus Saxonius did not pay attention to the astrological date proposal, that the famous man did not care so much about astrology.

This conclusion is wrong. The historian, rector at the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, had simply not recalculated the horoscope and probably could not imagine what significance it once had [6 Hahne 1919].

He himself probably didn't think much of astrology either, describing it as »a thing that, after millennia of experience, the poor, sweating human heads with and without hieroglyphic caps will never let go of«. Stargazing yes or no - A look at the university's statute book clearly shows that the historian confused the signs Cancer and Leo and all conclusions drawn from this are correspondingly mistaken. In the foundation chart, Cancer Saturn is indeed in trine to Sun and Mars in

Scorpio. This is a very positive constellation astrologically. It indicates courage, strength and a good relationship with the authorities. Indeed, the great reforms of the Leucorea were always covered by the authorities. It would be a good elective horoscope. Everything indicates that the time was deliberately chosen by Martin Pollich according to the positions of the stars. [Hoppmann 1997:91]

Martin Pollich initially set up the university very modestly. The focus of academic education was medical training with special emphasis on astrology. A few years later, a theological faculty was established in the Augustinian monastery. A young, at first rather serious and well-behaved monk named Martinus studied there from 1509. In 1512, he was awarded a doctorate in theology and became a professor of the Bible. He began to have doubts about the Pope and the Church in Rome, published inflammatory theses and so on.

The number of students grew, the small town of Wittenberg almost

suffocated from the influx of the sons of wealthy citizens and nobles. In 1517, 232 students had enrolled, by 1520 there were already more than twice as many [Diwald 1982:155]. Luther soon said: »Like busy ants they surround my cathedral«. From August 1518, one of Germany's most renowned humanists, Magister Philippus, known as a youthful genius, gave lectures in Greek and Latin. He then became even more popular and formed a powerful team with Dr Martinus in the fight for a renewal of the church. And what is more - and this is what this book is about - he taught the interpretation of the stars to hundreds of students in Wittenberg on the Elbe for decades.

But wait, dear readers! How did one come to choose the time of such a university foundation according to the stars, what motives drove people back then, and why, why, why tell these old stories again now?

Basic ideas of star interpretation

It is said that animals have no abstract idea of time, that this is an essential point in which we differ from them. Certainly - there is day and night, spring, summer, autumn and winter. But even quite independently of seasons and weather, we feel that we are better or worse off in certain phases, and our fellow human beings are subject to similar moods at the same time. It doesn't matter whether the causes are political, economic or personal: These moods can last for many months, and our world of feeling moves in equally large spaces.

In the most beautiful sunshine we can feel dark clouds within us, short winter days can last quite a long time for our subjective perception. Sometimes time races by, sometimes it just doesn't seem to pass. On some days everything just works out, on others you stand up with your left foot and know that you just won't succeed.

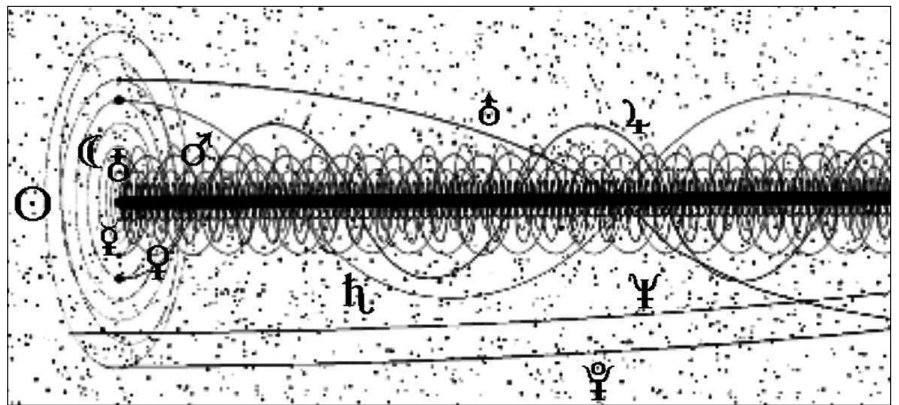
Much of this can be explained by psychology and biology, but not everything. We describe our own life biography in other categories. Sometimes we have the feeling of being just in time, sometimes time seems to pass us by.

Then again, there are those sudden moments when we see the crystallisation point of a long-standing, preceding development. Sometimes it seems as if the event itself has triggered a pull from the future, influencing the present and the past. It is said that great events cast their shadows ahead - is there then also a backward causality? [Elwell 1988]

This all sounds a bit crazy, but: Those who reject such mystical ideas for rational reasons are often not at

all aware of how much their own rational attitude of faith motives is determined by the belief in coincidence. That no phenomenon between heaven and earth may be explained on other than purely logical-rational grounds, according to provable processes of cause and effect, is one of the dogmas of scientific faith.

But this way of thinking offers no explanation for many important events in our own lives. Sudden illness, death, loss of money or job, but also the birth of a child, an unexpected lottery win, divorce, a flirtation - who believes in coincidences in such a situation! The understanding and mastering of one's own life



Time has two faces

often only begins beyond all belief in coincidence. Especially in crisis situations, people look for explanatory patterns that relate the different points in time of their own lives to each other. In this way, everyone hopes to recognise the meaning behind the smooth surface of events.

Our personal chronology is also completely independent of the always uniform, quantitative time measurement of natural science. At 17, one can feel very, very old, an old soul in a young body. And there are also people who, at an advanced age, say that their tired body does not fit in with their alert mind. Yes, who has not experienced on their birthday that they do not feel as young or as old as the number of years seems to indicate? Proverbs like »Every thing needs its time« show that for us humans life does not run in a straight line, divided into fixed quantities like minute, hour, month and year. The smell, the colour, the taste of time - these are much more appropriate descriptive criteria.

Scientific approach

The sensation of a quality of time that cannot be measured with clocks is a phenomenon that belongs to our humanity. What is it that can be measured in the outside world? There is the annually repeating



course of the sun in the sky and the resulting seasons. But many developments in our lives, in the family, the economy and politics seem to run according to other rhythms - if not according to the course of the sun, then perhaps according to that of the moon? And if all time pheno-

mena cannot be explained by its phases, then perhaps by the course of the planets that move so infinitely slowly in the night sky? Their orbits, apart from very slight fluctuations, have always remained the same since the formation of the earth. All life here grew into these rhythms. It is well known how strong small but always uniform forces act. Just think of the force of a drop of water in a dripstone cave or that of the wind in desert regions. As tiny as the mass forces of the distant planets are on us - their almost eternal continuity could have a great influence on us humans.

On the diagram shown here, the movement of the solar system appears three-dimensional. In the centre, the sun moves on its orbit through the universe, around it the planets circle, and also our home planet Earth with its moon. Since the sun itself moves through space, the orbiting planets spiral through infinite space. The course and experience of time can also be understood as a spiral, in its inward and outward

turning dynamics both a metaphor and a symbol. [Seifert 1996:33]

The horoscope as a momentary constellation, e.g. at the birth of a person, the laying of the foundation stone of a house or at an accident, can be imagined as a cross-section through this space-time spiral. From a purely technical point of view, this model corresponds to modern astronomy, and it is consistent with the ideas of modern astrology. To be a child of one's time, not something static, but a process, constantly evolving in time: this is how the image of man of modern astrology shows itself in its connection to astrophysics. [Robert Hand at the first all-German astrology congress in Berlin in 1993].

We can see that the idea of a quality of time is still oriented towards the respective valid scientific models. There is a quite plausible explanation for the fact that such an idea is not discussed at modern universities and research institutions: Of course, there are mostly intellectuals there who keep their hands off astrology out of fear for their scientific sinecu-

res - and often such technically oriented people simply do not understand the psychic component of the star myth.

The modern scientist is a specialist and rarely practised in holistic thinking. Astrophysicists, on the other hand, want to discover universally valid laws when observing the processes in the universe. They study organised matter such as interstellar gas and dust, distant suns, supernovae, galaxies. With their telescopes and radio wave receivers, they can look further and further out into infinity. At the same time, they always need fixed reference values to be able to measure, weigh and classify. They have to filter out exactly the object of their research from the enormous amount of information and data that accumulates in their computers.

Ceteris paribus, all other things being equal: Since the astrophysicist cannot intervene in the experiment of the cosmos, even this standard notation of scientific formulae does not help him. In order to be able to establish mathematically verifiable

formulas, he must therefore concentrate on very, very few factors.

Psychological tests have been developed in order to establish a connection with human beings and thus to verify the theses of astrology. But which human being can be described as a questionnaire result with all the complex shades of his psyche? Fairy tales, songs, poems and pictures remain more suitable tools. Nobody burns in a physical sense. But we immediately understand what is meant by a fiery character, a bilious one, i.e. choleric. The ancient teaching of the elements has many common roots with astrology, psychology and medicine. There, one does not think causally, but analogically, in correspondences.

Kairos, the right moment

Fairy tales are another ancient method of describing the soul in human beings and giving it nourishment in crisis situations. Modern astronomers often find the myths of the constellations ridiculous, naïve and simply outdated. Depth psychology,

on the other hand, has long since recognised the healing power for the soul inherent in these archetypes of humanity. Examples of this are Fritz Riemann and C. G. Jung. And many modern astrologers such as Hermann Meyer, Liz Greene and C. F. Frey created modern therapeutic approaches. Since this way of thinking is based on chains of analogies, no connection to established physics can be established. [Schäfer 1993]

When Ouranos is referred to in the following, this means at the same time the ancient Greek god of the sky, the quality of time, the planet Uranus discovered by astronomers and accidentally so named by them, as well as the properties assigned to this planet by astrologers [Greene 1985]. And Kronos (Greek) or Saturn (Roman) is at the same time the son of this god, the quantity of time, and until the beginning of modern times for the astronomer-astrologers (at that time not yet separate professions) the outermost planet. The earth goddess Gāa or Gaia, as the sister and lover of Ouranos, also represents the earth. The

following ancient story is found in Greek mythology:

At the beginning of all time there was only heaven and earth. Every evening, when the sun had sunk and the clouds lowered, the sky god Ouranos embraced his sister, the earth goddess Gāa. At night they conceived children together and in the morning, when the bright day began, heaven and earth tore apart again, distanced themselves, separated. Day after day, the same game was repeated. The universe came into being and many children were born. But from the perspective of the Heavenly Father, they all looked too clumsy, too crude and awkward. None met his standards and he stuffed them back into the womb of the Earth Mother.

Gāa became increasingly angry, unable to bear this rejection. Hadn't she always been fertile, hadn't she always done her bit to create the universe? Secretly she made a sickle and made a pact with the youngest and most well-bred of her sons. Kronos was to take over the rule of the whole world after his father's fall. »Only« two

things Gāa wanted to keep for herself: Power over birth and death.

Kronos waited in his mother's womb for the night. As Ouranos lay with his sister-lover as usual, he was emasculated by his son with a cut. Castrated and bleeding, he fled to heaven while his cut limb fell into the sea.

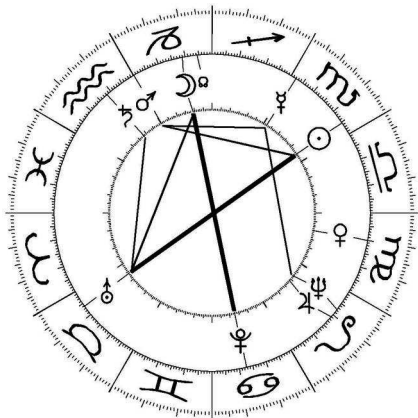
This then gave birth to Venus-Aphrodite, the foam-born. Saturn freed all his siblings. Kronos married one of his sisters. Fearing to be overthrown again by his own child, he devoured his offspring immediately after birth.



Kairos, the right moment

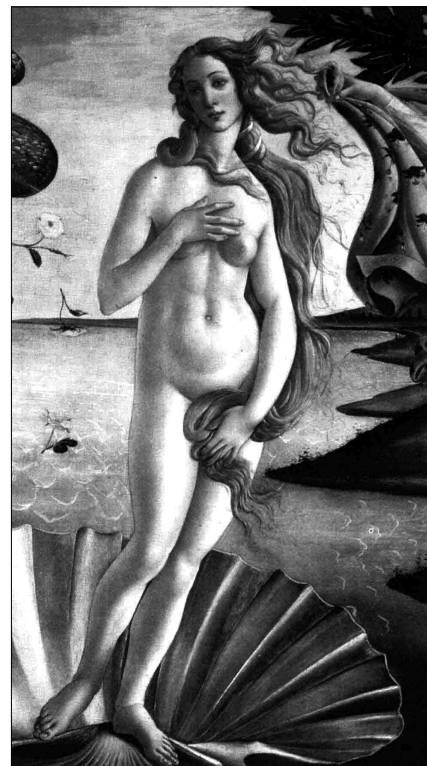
In the end, it was Zeus/ son Jupiter who, with the help of his siblings, overcame his father and took over. His mother Gaea, however, still retained power over two things: birth and death.

We are all born through time and pass away with it. In ancient prints, Kronos/Saturn holds the sickle of the castrator or the scythe of the great reaper who mows the ears of grain of life. In the horoscope it signified the point of greatest misfortune, of poverty, disease and imprisonment. It also refers to the quantitative aspect of time, the minutes, hours, days and years with which one's own lifetime inexorably melts away. Those who realise their trans-



ience, consciously divide their available energy and practise self-discipline can achieve great things. Among the dark sides of Kronos, the always uniform concept of time, are the mindless dogmas of convention, eternally identical courses of action and duties that always have to be completed anew, completely independent of the individual rhythm of life. Its old assignment to the sign Aquarius points to great mental power of concentration, but also to its conservative, stuffy sides. Uranus stands for the quality of time, its subjectively sensitive peculiarity, and is nowadays assigned to this sign. It is said that Aquarius-born people experience extreme differences between their inner rhythm and the external continuous time constraints. Times of deep lethargy alternate with moments of concentrated experience in which many threads of action come together in a flash. Such characters only feel free when they can live according to their inner clock - and this is really subject to strong fluctuations.

Saturn/Kronos as quantity and Uranus as quality of time - they are bundled in Kairos, the right moment. This old Greek term was mainly used in the Middle Ages for alchemy. It referred to the astrologically correct time at which a chemical experiment could succeed. If one worked with mercury (Mercurius), for example, then the planet Mercury, which is analogous to Mercury,



Time has two faces

had to be in a favourable position. Kairos is therefore the right moment, the focal point of Saturnine quantity and Uranian quality of time.

Freedom or compulsion of fate

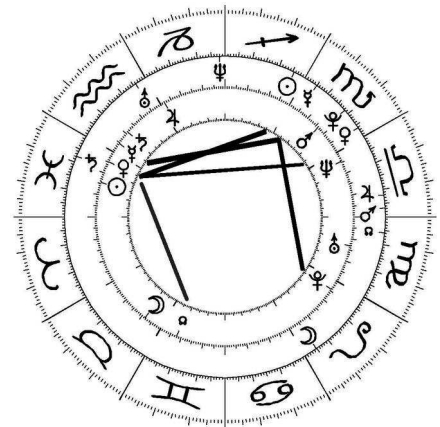
In 1478, the Florentine government, led by Lorenzo de Medici, assembled the most important astrologers. They were to find out which of the schools practising at that time was the most promising. The Neoplatonic group around Marsilio Ficino and his opponent Pico della Mirandola were also invited. The meeting of scholars must have been worthwhile for the Medici. For Giovanni de Medici, who was just three years old at the time, had been prophesied to become Pope one day.

And indeed, as Leo X, he then made church history - in constant consultation with his court astrologers. For another 100 years, this Florentine merchant family pursued politics with the help of the stars. As the wife of the French king Henry II,

Catherine de Medici listened to the advice of the astrologers Nostradamus and Gauricus. The latter came into contact with Melanchthon, interpreted (corrected, falsified?) Luther's horoscope and was even appointed a Catholic bishop thanks to his successes. The Italian Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino was born with Mars and Saturn in the intellectually disciplined sign Aquarius, in quadrature tension to the Sun in the passionate sign Scorpio. He is said to have blamed this constellation to friends for his constant dejection. Others say that Ficino suffered from a strong Saturnian fear throughout his life because Saturn was on his Ascendant. [Braunsperger 1928]

One could interpret this as an inner tension between body and spirit, between fate and freedom. Ficino is usually quoted in historiography as an outspoken opponent of astrology. In fact, however, he only fought resolutely against deterministic prophecies. He developed a modern and emancipatory view of astrological

prognosis, even from today's perspective. He was of the opinion that even so-called tension transits (unfavourable angles of the current stars, related to the constellation at the time of birth) were kairos, i.e. right moments for personal development. Ficino could neither raise the level of street astrologers with his clever thoughts, nor inspire his educated



princely friend Pico della Mirandola for star divination. Pico wrote: »How astrology knows how to incite hope! With what audacity it joins the circle of science! It is the corrupter of philosophy, defiles medicine and lays the axe to the trunk of religion.« [Sementowski-Kurilo 1970]

According to the legend, Pico died at the age of 31 on the exact day and at the hour prophesied to him by several astrologers [on the prophecy, see also Eugen Garin's preface to Pico's books against astrology]. The comparison of birth and death constellations shows an exact square between Saturn's square and the radix dragon head. However, at that time people also worked a lot with primary directions. Did this story really happen or is it just a legend of enterprising horoscope fortune-tellers who wanted to gain the respect of their princely clientele with this creepy story?

The great astronomical-astrological church clocks

In his Brief History of Time, Stephen Hawking, a renowned physicist and mathematician of the late 20th century, hopes:

»If, however, we discover a complete theory, after a certain time its basic features should be understandable to everyone, not just to a handful of specia-

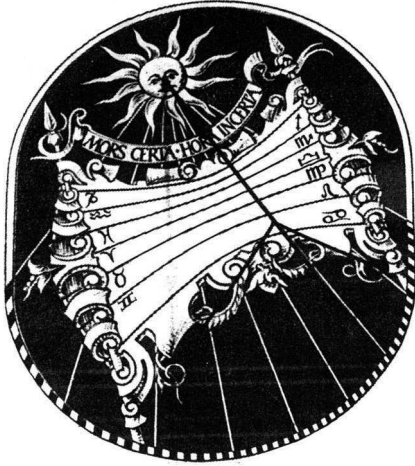
lists. Then we will all - philosophers, scientists and laymen - be able to grapple with the question of why we and the universe exist. If we found the answer to that question, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason - because then we would know God's plan.«

How similar these thoughts are to the medieval view that God is the creator of the universe and therefore also the master of time. Even in ancient times, people spoke of the Primum mobile, the unmoved mover, in whose hands lies the entire clockwork of time and space!

More than 600 years ago, huge astronomical-astrological clocks began to be erected in the churches of the rich Hanseatic cities, especially around the Baltic Sea. Success in the trade of salt, furs, fish and spices had brought great wealth to cities such as Strasbourg, Münster, Lübeck, Stralsund, Wismar, Prague, Gdansk and Lund. Such a clock cost a fortune and was undoubtedly an object of prestige. But this was probably only

one of the reasons for its construction.

When looking at history, we must always bear in mind that people were not so materialistically oriented in the past. The spiritual and philosophical moment enjoyed much greater importance. Such clocks demonstrated the position of man in the cosmos, established a contact with the nameless. What could better illustrate the unity of science and religion at that time than these huge, highly complicated machines in the immediate vicinity of the altar? The oldest well-preserved work can be found in the Marienkirche in Rostock [Schukowski 1992, 1997]. It is completely restored and shows many astrological-astronomical details such as ascendant, medium coeli, sun and moon in the signs of the zodiac, planetary regent of the current hour etc. In Lübeck in 1405, the construction even disregarded certain theological boundaries of Christianity. The clock there (destroyed in the Second World War, only recognisable in photographs)



was the only one that also showed the position of the planets, so that the complete horoscope could be calculated at a glance. A similar model, but in the meantime without mechanics, can be found in Stralsund's Nikolaikirche.

The Farnese clock in the Vatican has been completely preserved and overhauled down to the last gear. Its restorer Ludwig Oechslin, born in 1952 under the sign of Aquarius, calls the original builders priest mechanics, since it was almost all theologians who constructed these complicated planetary machines and the inscriptions world models [Meier 1995].

There were only a few *magistri orlogii* (master clockmakers) who had the necessary knowledge for this.

The builder of the Gdansk clock, which was recently restored and set in motion again, is said to have been blinded after completing the gear train so that he would not be able to produce a similar masterpiece anywhere else. However, such fables also surround the Strasbourg Cathedral Clock. It was built at a time when Protestant theologians made the city a stronghold of the Reformation. Even Copernicus, to whom we will return, and Tycho Brahe's planetary model were depicted there [Oestmann 1993 (1)]. The iconoclasm of the Reformation banned all ornaments and images of saints from the churches. Was this how Strasbourg's citizens wanted to demonstrate their new religious self-image?

The many astrological sundials with their magnificent grid lines should not be forgotten in this context. The Arachne on the old Görlitz Ratsapotheke at the house on Untermarkt at the corner of Peterstraße bears

the inscriptions *Solarium* and *Arachne*. The latter consists of a multitude of straight and curved lines with numerous symbols of the lights sun and moon as well as the planets, from which the position of the sun in the respective sign of the zodiac and even the current hourly regent can be read via the pole height of the sun.

It was created by the Görlitz mathematician and astronomer Zacharias Scultetus in 1550. A Baroque sundial with astrological date lines can also be found at the Dresden Zwinger, created at a time when the Saxon court held astrology in the highest esteem.

So all these clocks show not only the quantity of time, but also its quality. A sensitive person trained in the art of astrology can perhaps still recognise the current constellation on the basis of the representation of the dial and thus feel his way into the mood of the moment, i.e. sense Uranus, the quality of time, and perhaps even determine Kairos, that right moment.

It is an expression of our present zeitgeist to see these watches only as chronometers, as measuring tools for Kronos/Saturn, for the quantity of time. However, one need not personally subscribe to this attitude. God is (also) time - this medieval notion can be pursued very easily: Just stand in front of the Old Town Hall in Prague or close to the clock of St Mary's Church in Rostock, the cathedral in Münster, St Nicholas Church in Stralsund, the cathedral in Lund or the cathedral clock in Strasbourg, listen to the not so quiet ticking and rattling, look at the clock face and feel yourself in the mood of the moment.

Time has two faces, one that can be measured and one that can be felt. In the past, people still appreciated this - and even chose the founding date of a university according to it.

Von dem Wassermann



Der Wassermann ist zimlich gut
Zulassen /
wers Begeren thut.
Doch hüt der schinbeim / folg du
mir /
Die dāwend krafft sterck / rat ich
dir
artzney gemeyn /
das haar beschneid /
Solt sähwen /
pflantzen auch bey
zeit. Wassermann das eylfft
Zeychen / Warm vnd feucht /
Saturnus tegliches hauss. hat am
Menschen die schinbeim vnnð

waden. Wann die Sonn darinn ist,
gibts schnee vnnð regen. So der
Mon darinn / ist böß schinbeim
vnd waden artzneyen / weit
reysen / newe kleyder anlegen /
mit herren handeln / fundamant
legen / äcker bawen / sähwen
/ ehelich werden / vber wasser
faren / mit vögel beyssen / haar
abschneiden / schuld fordern /
vnd was ein schnellend begert.
Das zeychen ist warm vnd feucht
/ vnd macht guten wind / vnd das
alles / so das Zeychen von orient
auffgeht. Wer vnder disem

Zeychen geboren oder
empfangen / hat zugleich glück
vnd vnglück / leidet offft armut.

Ein Knab geborn zwischen dem
20. tag Jenners / biss auff den 18.
hornungs / ist der natur vnnð
eygenschaftt dess Zeychens
Wassermann / langen haupts vnd
angesichts / bald zornig / sanffter
reden / stiller geschafft /
hertzlich bey den leuten /
lichten muts / Er leidet armut /
vnd nimpt sich doch sein nicht an
/ wovon er trawret. Nach 30.

jaren kompt er zu guter ruhe.
Sein lust ist wanderung. Im
werden angezeygt zwey Eheliche
Weiber / wirt von Weibern lieb
gehalten / hat ehr von jhnen / ist
etwan karg / träg / fantasiert vnd
redt mit jm selbs. Durch seinen
bruder kompt er in
widerwertigkeyt / wirt bald graw
/ eins guten alters / hat lust zu
schwarzen farben. Sein
kranckheit dess leibs eräuet sich
an den knien vnd schenckeln /
vmb das haupt / brust / miltz / vnd
bauch.

Sein glück seind die land der
Sonnen nidergang / vnnnd gegen
Mitternacht / der auffgang ist
mittel / nicht vollkommen. ABER
die land dess mittags seind jhm
vnglücksam / böß / tödtlich / vnnnd
widerwertig. Sein glückhafte
farben sind / braun / grün / aber
schwartz / weiss / blau /
gemenget / Seyn vnglückhaftig /
die andern mittel.

Sein höchste nutzung / seind alle
lufftige wässerechte ding /
Weiher / Wisen / Mülen / vnd

dergleichen. Die übung dess feurs
seind mittel / nicht böß. ABER alle
übungen dess felds seind jhm
vnglücksam.

Ein Meydlin geboren zwischen
obbestimmter zeit / ist auch der
selbigen natur. Wirt weise / vnn
kompt zu grossen ehren / samlet
viel guts / Ist eins bösen gehörs /
Zeychen oder massen im
angesicht. Ihr glück vnd vnfall /
farben vnd anders / schicken sich
wie oben gemeldet.

Saturno



Ein alt / kalt / fauler / Wendt den
schimpff / Unflätig / hässig / han
keinn glimpff. Mein kind
feindselig / neidig / herb / Metall /
Bley / Eisen / mein gewerb.
Saturnus ist der erst vnd oberst
planet / Ein verderber vnnð feind
der natur / giftig von natur / katl
vnnð trucken / bezeyhner der
arbeyt / auss den farben schwartz
/ sawr an dem geschmack.

auss den tagen den sambstag /
vnnð nächten ðinstags nacht.
Er lauffet so hoch am himmel /
dass er in 30. Jaren / 5. tagen

vnnð 6. stunden durch die 12.
zeychen laufft / ist inn jedem
Zeychen dritthalb Jar.

Von wegen seiner höhe sihet man
jhn selten. Die Wag ist sein
erhöhung / darinn er grossen
gewalt hat / Der Steinbock vnd
Wassermann seine heuser. Im
Krebs vnnð Widder hat er kein
glück. Der Widder ist sein fall.

Saturnus ist einer verderbten
natur / wie die Sonn einer lebend
machenden.

Wann Saturnus so nahe bey der
Erden wer als der Mon / so were
es allezeit Winter. Die grösse
Saturni ist ein achttheyl der
Sonn.

In den stunden Saturni ist gut
schwere ding kauffen vnnð
verkauffen / als Eisen / Bley /
vnnð allerley Metall vnnð schwer
ertz / schwere stein /
schwartzgewandt / gut gärten
bawen / Weiher grab en / ertz
graben / vnd was in der Erden
zuhandlen ist / gut seine feind mit
list bekriegen / graw thier reiten