

ZODIAC

ANCIENT ASTRAL SCIENCE IN TRANSFORMATION

Astrology, Astronomy, Mathematics, Religion and Philosophy – all these different aspects and their theories and practices, texts and images, meet in the concept of the zodiac. 2500 years ago, in the 5th century BCE, the introduction of the zodiac in Babylonia marked a turning point in human culture and science. The zodiacal turn was accompanied by a mathematical turn in the astral sciences and a personal turn in astrology. From Babylonia, zodiacal astral science spread to Egypt, the Greco-Roman world, and beyond.

The ZODIAC project led by Principal Investigator Mathieu Ossendrijver is funded by a European Research Council Advanced Grant (2021–2026) and hosted at the Institute for the History of Knowledge in the Ancient World at Freie Universität Berlin. ZODIAC's interdisciplinary approach conceives astral science as interconnected astronomical, astrological, mathematical, religious, and social practices.

This research endeavour develops a new account of the emergence, spread and cross-cultural transformations of zodiacal astral science. ZODIAC is the first in-depth, comprehensive study addressing both textual and iconographic sources from different ancient cultures to reveal the strategies that fostered broad acceptance in numerous new contexts: How can we explain the global spread of the cross-cultural phenomenon of the zodiac?

The ZODIAC team and their academic partners have set out to find the answers.

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LOCATIONS

An opening reception and lecture by Susanne Hoffmann will take place Wednesday 21/9/22 at 17.30 in Planetarium am Insulaner
Munsterdamm 90
Steglitz
12169 Berlin

The workshop will take place in the Holzlaube on the Freie Universität campus
Room 1.2051
Fabekstraße 23–25
Dahlem
14195 Berlin



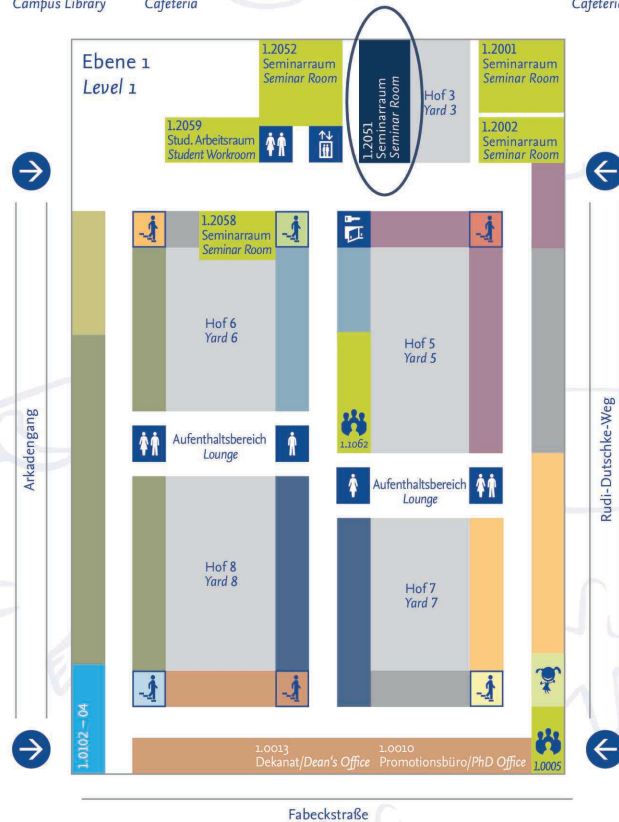
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IMAGINING THE SKY

THE ZODIAC AND RELATED ASTRAL IMAGERY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

SEPTEMBER 21–23 2022



IMAGINING THE SKY

THE ZODIAC AND RELATED ASTRAL IMAGERY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

In the wake of the introduction of the zodiac, images played an important role in representing astral knowledge and disseminating it across the ancient world. However, ancient astral science and its cross-cultural transmission are still studied primarily on the basis of texts, with relatively little attention paid to images. Secondly, the interactions between image and text, which have become a central topic in research on ancient mathematics, have not yet been adequately addressed in research on ancient astral science. The objectives of the workshop are to share examples of zodiac-related imagery from different regions, communities and periods, to discuss the evidence in an interdisciplinary setting, to begin a dialogue with new approaches and tools from art history, image theory and digital humanities, and to exchange ideas about the following questions:

- What theoretically informed methods and approaches can be proposed for studying ancient astral imagery?
- What are the relations between the images and the material aspects of their carriers?
- Who produced the images and how were they produced?
- What knowledge and which practices are reflected in the images and what are their meanings, functions, and contexts?
- How to analyse and characterize the interactions among image, text, tables, and other media?
- How to analyse the cross-cultural transmission of astral imagery, and what can be said about the available examples?

CONFERENCE DAY ONE (THURSDAY 22/9/2022)

- 9.00 Opening
- 9.10 Sonja Brentjes (Berlin)
Celestial imagery as chances and challenges for a history of supra-terrestrial knowledge
- 10.00 Susanne Hoffmann (Jena)
Visualising ancient skies: Transfer and transformation of astronomical knowledge
- 10.30 Break
- 11.00 Rune Nyord (Atlanta)
Celestial reflections: Strategies for imaging the sky and its processes in ancient Egypt
- 11.50 Benjamin Anderson (Ithaca)
Pictorialization in al-Sufi's Book of the Fixed Stars
- 12.20 John Steele (Providence)
A new look at the images on the Neo-Assyrian circular tablet K.8538
- 13.00 Lunch Break
- 14.30 John Baines (Oxford)
Ordering the day and the night in ancient Egyptian imagery
- 15.20 Nicola Barbagli (Naples)
The sky in the hands: The zodiacal imagery in the coinage of Alexandria
- 15.50 Break
- 16.20 Daniela Mendel-Leitz (Tübingen)
Zu einem Detail der astronomischen Decke im Pronaos des Hathortempel von Dendara
- 16.50 Ilaria Bultrighini (Berlin)
Visual representations of the seven planets in Graeco-Roman antiquity
- 17.20 Victoria Altmann-Wendling (Würzburg)
The moon as part of the zodiac in ancient Egypt
- 17.50 Break
- 18.00 Fabio Spadini (Berlin)
The orientation of the zodiacal image on monuments of the Roman imperial period

CONFERENCE DAY TWO (FRIDAY 23/9/2022)

- 9.30 Wolfgang Hübner (Münster)
Taxonomy and constraint of systematization in Hellenistic astrology
- 10.20 John Wee (Singapore)
The Kassite calendar of constellations
- 11.00 Break
- 11.20 Willis Monroe (Vancouver)
Cuneiform astral diagrams in theory and practice
- 11.50 Yossra Ibrahim (Mainz)
The making of the big picture: On the ancient Egyptian celestial diagrams and their long decorative tradition
- 12.20 Jeanette Fincke (Leiden)
"Conceived while Mercury stood in its DUR". Two diagrams of planetary positions on a late Babylonian astrological tablet with nativity omens (TCL VI 13)
- 13.00 Lunch Break
- 14.30 Christian Leitz (Tübingen)
Der Tierkreis in den Litaneien von Esna
- 15.30 Stamatina Mastorakou (Berlin)
The zodiac in poetry and material culture in Hellenistic times
- 16.00 Break
- 16.30 Marvin Schreiber (Berlin)
Drawings and diagrams in late Babylonian astral science
- 17.00 Fabio Guidetti (Pisa)
The zodiac and the beginnings of Greek celestial cartography
- 17.30 Wayne Horowitz (Jerusalem)
The uranology texts: A new fragment and some new thoughts
- 18.00 Conclusion