THE HOROSCOPES OF THE *ANONYMOUS COMMENTARY ON PTOLEMY'S 'TETRABIBLOS'*⋆

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Abstract

In this article, I demonstrate that, of the two horoscopes transmitted by the *Anonymous Commentary on Ptolemy's 'Tetrabiblos'*, edited by Hieronymous Wolf, Basel, 1559, pp. 98 and 112, the first (H^1) corresponds to an actual birth that took place in Lower Egypt on 25 June 448 AD, while the second (H^2) is the same horoscope, slightly modified to fit the specific example for which it provides the illustration. The new date proposed here for H^1 is important for establishing a more precise chronology of the *Anonymous Commentary*, since it not only provides a *terminus post quem* for its composition (from the middle of the fifth century onwards) but also a particular geographical environment in the proximity of Alexandria. Given the large amount of formal and structural similarities which can be readily observed between the *Anonymous Commentary* and commentaries on Plato and Aristotle composed by Ammonius and his disciples in Alexandria, it becomes impossible not to link the work of the anonymous commentator to the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria of the fifth and sixth centuries, led by the philosopher Ammonius and his brother Heliodorus.

The *Anonymous Commentary on Ptolemy's 'Tetrabiblos'* (= *Anonymous Commentary*) is the only surviving exegetical work on Ptolemy's astrological handbook. There is a humanist edition, by Hieronymus Wolf, Basel, 1559,[1] and two humanist Latin translations: one by Giorgio Valla in 1502 and the other by Wolf in his 1559 edition;[2] however, the Greek text established by Wolf is highly defective, since he relied on just one *recentior* manuscript, MS BSB, Gr. 59.[3] This is the main reason why the *Anonymous Commentary* needs to be systematically studied again, with the

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Library abbreviations: B. Angelica = Rome, Biblioteca Angelica; BAV = Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; BL = London, British Library; BM = Venice, Biblioteca Marciana; BML = Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana; BNF = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France; Bod. Lib. = Oxford, Bodleian Library; BSB = Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

1. *In Claudii Ptolemaei Quadripartitum Enarrator ignoti nominis, quem tamen Proclum fuisse quidam existimant*, ed. and tr. (Latin) Hieronymus Wolf, Basel, 1559. Passages in Wolf's edition are cited by page and line numbers separated by a full stop: e.g., W 1.32 = Wolf, p. 1, l. 32. Citations of the *Anonymous Commentary* refer to the book, chapter and paragraph of the *Tetrabiblos* commented on and, in brackets, to the page and line of Wolf's edition. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

2. On these two Latin translations, see R. Caballero-Sánchez, 'Historia del texto del *Comentario Anónimo al* Tetrabiblos *de Tolomeo*', *MHNH. Revista internacional de investigación sobre magia y astrología antiguas*, XIII, 2013, pp. 77–198 (83–85).

3. Ibid., pp. 173–75.

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aim of making a modern critical edition which can serve as an indispensable tool for the modern reader to understand more fully the transmission of astrology in late antiquity.[4]

We know that the *Anonymous Commentary* was written between the fifth and sixth centuries,[5] as it contains astronomical and historical evidence which allows us to date its composition to between 467 and c. 575.[6] This dating is consistent with the close stylistic and structural similarities that any reader of the *Anonymous Commentary* can easily observe between this work and commentaries on Plato and Aristotle composed by Ammonius and his disciples in the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria from c. 470 onwards.[7] Moreover, the *Anonymous Commentary* preserves two horoscopes which, as we shall see, belong to this very same time period and cultural milieu.

I. THE TWO HOROSCOPES PUBLISHED BY WOLF

When the German humanist Hieronymus Wolf (1516–1580) published his *editio princeps* of the *Anonymous Commentary on Ptolemy's 'Tetrabiblos'* in 1559, he inserted on p. 98 a horoscope cast 'ad medium tertii climatis, cuius latitudo est circa gradus 31' ('in the middle of third climate, whose latitude is c. 30 degrees'), which, in all probability, indicates the city of Alexandria (Fig. 1).

A little further on, at p. 112, we find another *figura cœli* (Fig. 2), cast in Alexandria as well, but apparently different from Horoscope 1 (H^1).

II. *STATUS QUAESTIONIS*

Otto Neugebauer and H. B. van Hoesen made no mention of these horoscopes in their excellent monograph *Greek Horoscopes*, the first edition of which was published in 1959.[8] A few years later (1964), however, in an appendix devoted to newly discovered horoscopes, they referred to the nativities of the *Anonymous Commentary* as follows: 'Two (scil. horoscopes) were discovered and dated by Dr. David Pingree in Hieronymus Wolf, In Claudii Ptolemaeii quadripartitum (Basel 1559, p. 98 and p. 112); the dates are 175 December 22 and 241 July 29 respectively.'[9]

4. My new critical edition of the text is now in progress; see R. Caballero-Sánchez, 'El *Comentario Anónimo al* Tetrabiblos *de Tolomeo*. Edición crítica y traducción castellana de los escolios metodológicos del libro I (in Ptol. *Tetr.* 1.1.1–1.3.1)', *MHNH. Revista internacional de investigación sobre magia y astrología antiguas*, XIII, 2013, pp. 221–58. See also below, n. 18.

5. Dates are AD unless otherwise stated.

6. See R. Caballero-Sánchez, 'On the Chronology of the Anonymous Commentary to Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*: Analysis of the Astronomical Evidence', *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, LII.4, 2021, pp. 442–61.

7. R. Caballero-Sánchez, 'En busca del autor perdido. Algunas reflexiones sobre el contexto histórico-filosófico del *Comentario Anónimo al* Tetrabiblos *de Tolomeo*', in *De falsa et vera historia*, II: *De ayer y hoy. Contribuciones multidisciplinares sobre pseudoepígrafos literarios y documentales*, ed. M. Labiano, Madrid, 2019, pp. 130–46.

8. O. Neugebauer and H. B. van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes*, Baltimore, 1959, repr. 1987.

9. O. Neugebauer and H. B. van Hoesen, 'Astrological Papyri and Ostraca: Bibliographical Notes', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CVIII, 1964, pp. 55–72 (66).

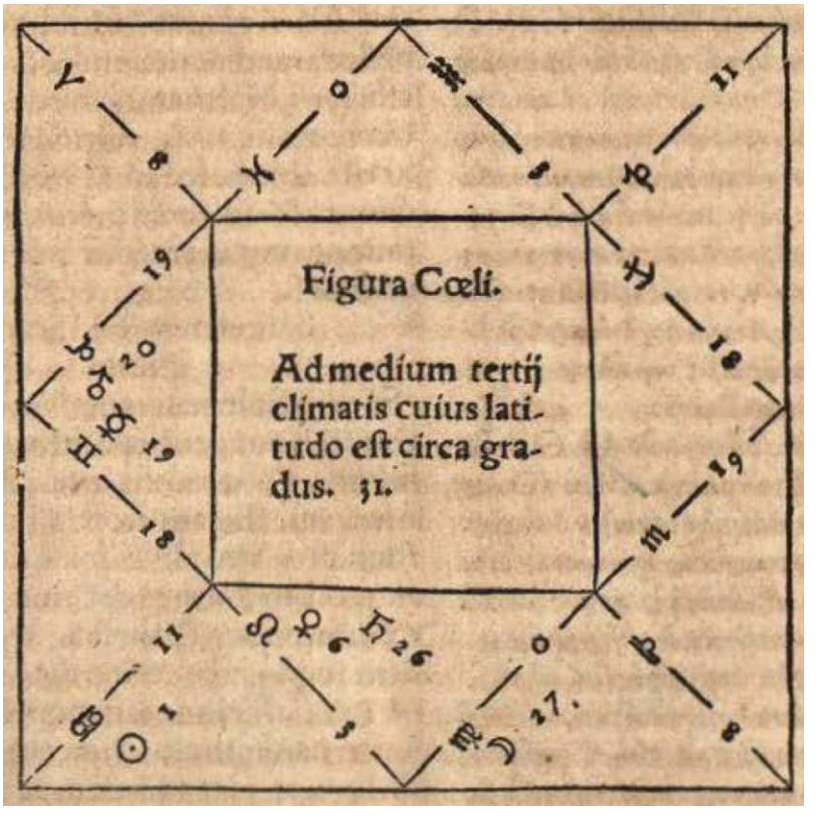

FIGURE 1. Horoscope 1, *In Claudii Ptolemaei Quadripartitum Enarrator ignoti nominis, quem tamen Proclum fuisse quidam existimant*, ed. and tr. (Latin) Hieronymus Wolf, Basel, 1559, p. 98.

Pingree's dates must have been privately communicated to Neugebauer and van Hoesen, because it was not until 1982 that he himself published the date of at least one of the horoscopes (H^2):[10]

The commentary contains a horoscope (112) that can in all probability be dated 22 December 175:

	Text	Computation
Saturn	Taurus 29°	Taurus 19°
Jupiter	Cancer 28°	Cancer 9°
Mars	Aries 22°	Aries 29°
Sun	Capricorn 1°	Capricorn 1°
Venus	Gemini (!) 6°	Sagittarius 1°
Mercury	Sagittarius 19°	Sagittarius 7°
Moon	Virgo 27°	Virgo 27°

10. D. Pingree, Review of H. Hübner, *Die Eigenschaften der Tierkreiszeichen in der Antike: Ihre Darstellung und Verwendung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Manilius*, Wiesbaden, 1982, *Gnomon*, LIV, 1982, pp. 620–23 (621–22).

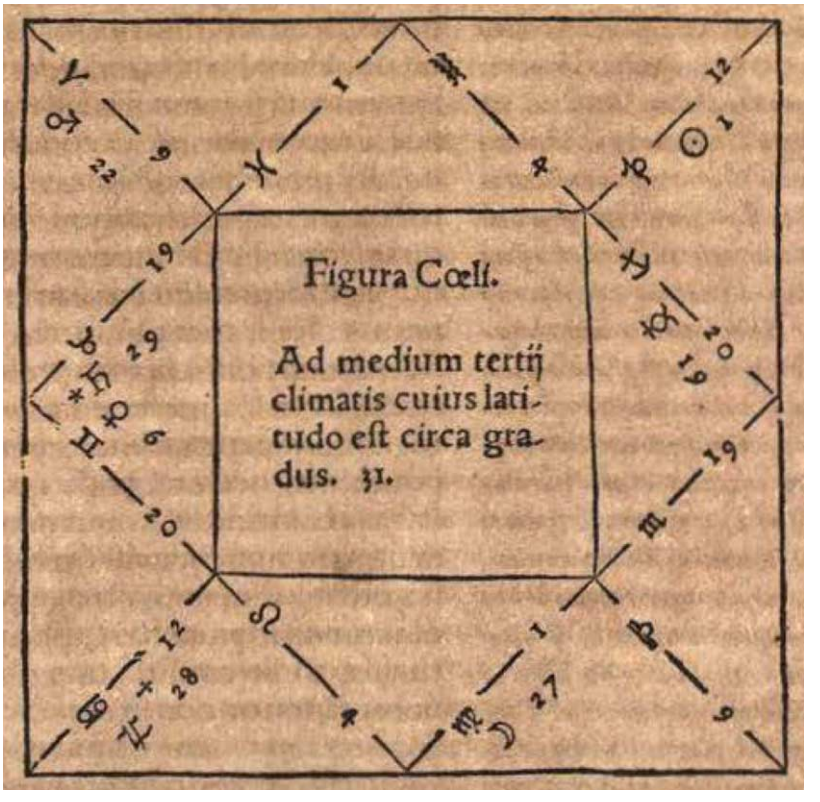

FIGURE 2. Horoscope 2, *In Claudii Ptolemaei Quadripartitum Enarrator ignoti nominis, quem tamen Proclum fuisse quidam existimant*, ed. and tr. (Latin) Hieronymus Wolf, Basel, 1559, p. 112.

As can be deduced from Pingree's example, the dates attributed to him by Neugebauer and van Hoesen were inversely correlated. Thus, the date proposed by Pingree for (H^1) (W 98) is 29 July 241 and for (H^2) (W 112) 22 December 175.[11]

Alexander Jones has recently considered the horoscopes in the *Anonymous Commentary* and has made the following remarks regarding them: 'Two undated horoscopes discovered by Pingree in an anonymous commentary on Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* published in Wolf (1559, 112–15 and 98 with 168–71) would, if genuine, best fit respectively AD 175 December 22 and 213 June 13 (not 241 July 29 as reported in Neugebauer and van Hoesen 1964, 66). I strongly suspect, however, that they are contrived illustrations. Aside from the 1559 edition, which is not free of textual inconsistencies, only a partial summary of the first horoscope has been published in Pingree (1982).'[12] Apparently on the basis of his own

11. Misled by Neugebauer and van Hoesen's mistake, Caballero-Sánchez ([as in n. 2], pp. 77–198 [79]) and S. Heilen (*Hadriani Genitura. Die astrologischen Fragmente des Antigonos von Nikaia*, I: *Edition und Übersetzung*; II: *Kommentar*, Berlin and Boston, 2015, pp. 273–74, 277–78) erroneously ascribed H^1 (dated by Pingree to 29 July 241) to W 112 and H^2 (dated by Pingree to 22 December 175) to W 98.

12. A. Jones, 'Ancient Rejection and Adoption of Ptolemy's Frame of Reference for Longitudes', in

calculations, Jones agrees with Pingree's dating for H^2, but amends H^1 by proposing an alternative date: 13 June 213. In any case, it is his view that neither is a true horoscope, and they do appear to be fictitious examples.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE DATES SO FAR PROPOSED

In fact, none of this data is convincing. There are two reasons for this: firstly, because of the significant deviations of some planets between their position in the horoscope and the location provided by modern scholars; and secondly, because neither of the two illustrations has been systematically tested against the underlying text, which is a task requiring not only a detailed comparison of the horoscopes with the relevant passages published by Wolf, but also a critical edition of them.

As has been shown by Stephan Heilen,[13] the computation of H^2 proposed by Pingree yields deviations which are too large in the positions of Saturn (a difference of 10 degrees) and Jupiter (up to 19 degrees). As for H^1, neither Pingree nor Jones offers his own calculation of planetary positions; so, it is necessary to provide their tropical longitudes according to Ptolemy's tables for the alternative dates proposed by each of them: 29 July 241 (Pingree = P) and 13 June 213 (Jones = J).[14] For this purpose, I have relied on Raymond Mercier's software Deviations11, which enables the user to identify the true positions of the Sun, the Moon and the planets according to Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*.[15] In the column labelled 'D', the deviations in planetary positions between H^1 and *Handy Tables* (= *HT*) are given in degrees of zodiacal longitudes:

Ptolemy in Perspective: Use and Criticism of His Work from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century, ed. idem, London and New York, 2010, pp. 11–44 (43 n. 58).

13. Heilen (as in n. 11), pp. 273–74.

14. To determine the exact time of birth properly, it is sufficient to get the time provided by modern computation in the horoscope cast for each of the dates by retaining the same degrees of the four angles provided by the *Anonymous Commentary*: AS Tau 19°; MC Aqu 3°; DS Sco 19°; IC Leo 3°. According to this procedure, the birth took place at 0h 00m on the date proposed by Pingree (29 July 241) and at 3h 00m on the date proposed by Jones (13 June 213).

15. The anonymous commentator relied either on the tables of the *Almagest* or on the *Handy Tables* by Ptolemy, probably in the two commented editions by Theon of Alexandria from the first half of the 4th century. Throughout his work, the anonymous commentator cited testimony from, and often recommended, the *Handy Tables*; to give a few examples from Book II, see *Anonymous Commentary*, II.4.5: ἐπὶ τοῦ διὰ τῶν πόλων αὐτοῦ γραφομένου κύκλου: ταῦτα δὲ ἐν τῷ κανόνι μαθησόμεθα (W 63.16–17); *Anonymous Commentary*, II.5.3: τοὺς καιροὺς τῶν ἐπισημασιῶν: τὸ γὰρ εἰδέναι πότε συμβαίνει ἡ ἔκλειψις οὐκ ἔστι τῆς προκειμένης πραγματείας, ἀλλὰ τοῦ προχείρου κανόνος (W 65.1–3); *Anonymous Commentary*, II.5.3: καὶ τῆς παρατάσεως τὴν ποσότητα: τὸ μὲν γὰρ εὑρεῖν ποσότητα τῆς ἐκλείψεως τοῖς προχείροις προσήκει κανόσι (W 65.6–7); *Anonymous Commentary*, II.7.1: ταῦτα δὲ τοῦ προχείρου κανόνος ἐστὶ τὰ θεωρήματα (W 64.9–10); *Anonymous Commentary*, II.7.2: παρατείνει τὸ ἐπισκίασμα: καὶ τοῦτο δὲ ὅπως χρὴ εὑρίσκειν ἐν τῷ κανόνι μαθησόμεθα (W 66.13–14). At any rate, the deviation of the planetary positions in the time lag between the tables of the *Almagest* and the *Handy Tables* is negligible: see Jones (as in n. 12), p. 41 n. 21. In order to check the accuracy of the planetary positions provided by the anonymous commentator in H^1 and H^2, however, it is more appropriate to rely on the *Handy Tables* than on the *Almagest*.

29 July 241 (P)	H^1	*HT*	D
Saturn	Leo 26°	Leo 19°	7°
Jupiter	[deest]	Cap 2°	-
Mars	Tau 20°	Tau 27°	7°
Sun	Cnc 1°	Leo 2°	32° (!!)
Venus	Leo 6°	Cnc 7°	29° (!!)
Mercury	Gem 19°	Leo 24°	65° (!!)
Moon	Vir 27°	Vir 13°	14° (!)

13 June 213 (J)	H^1	*HT*	D
Saturn	Leo 26°	Vir 1°	5°
Jupiter	[deest]	Leo 21°	-
Mars	Tau 20°	Tau 22°	2°
Sun	Cnc 1°	Gem 18°	13° (!)
Venus	Leo 6°	Cnc 21°	15° (!)
Mercury	Gem 19°	Gem 0°	19° (!)
Moon	Vir 27°	Vir 20°	7°

Here we have Pingree's (Fig. 3) and Jones's (Fig. 4) nativities in the *figura cœli* reconstructed by modern computation for the latitude of Alexandria,[16] the most important centre of the third climate, in which the anonymous commentator located the birth. As we can see, these planetary positions are slightly ahead of the ones based on Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*.[17]

As can be readily observed, the dates previously proposed for both horoscopes in the *Anonymous Commentary* are clearly unsatisfactory. To make some progress, therefore, it is necessary to examine the specific examples which the horoscopes are intended to illustrate, as well as to establish a critical text of the passages where these examples are explained.

IV. HOROSCOPE 1 (H^1)

The starting point, then, is H^1 (W 98). As Jones has already highlighted, the first horoscope is explained by the anonymous commentator near the end of the work (according to Jones, in W 168–71, but more precisely, in W 167.18–169.5). Since this passage is a commentary on Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, IV.10.13, it begins with an extensive προθεωρία, that is, a methodological and doctrinal introduction to the

16. In modern computation, the so-called 'Porphyry house system', which was commonly used by astrologers of late antiquity, has been selected; see C. Brennan, *Hellenistic Astrology: The Study of Fate and Fortune*, Denver, 2017, pp. 388–90.

17. For an explanation of these deviations, see Jones (as in n. 12), p. 41 n. 16: 'In fact Neugebauer underestimated both the error of Ptolemy's tropical frame of reference for his own time (mid second century) and the accumulated further error over the three subsequent centuries. Hence, longitudes from Ptolemy's tables should average about 2 1/4° less than modern theory values for the middle of the fifth century, which is consistent with Neugebauer's results for the late horoscopes.'

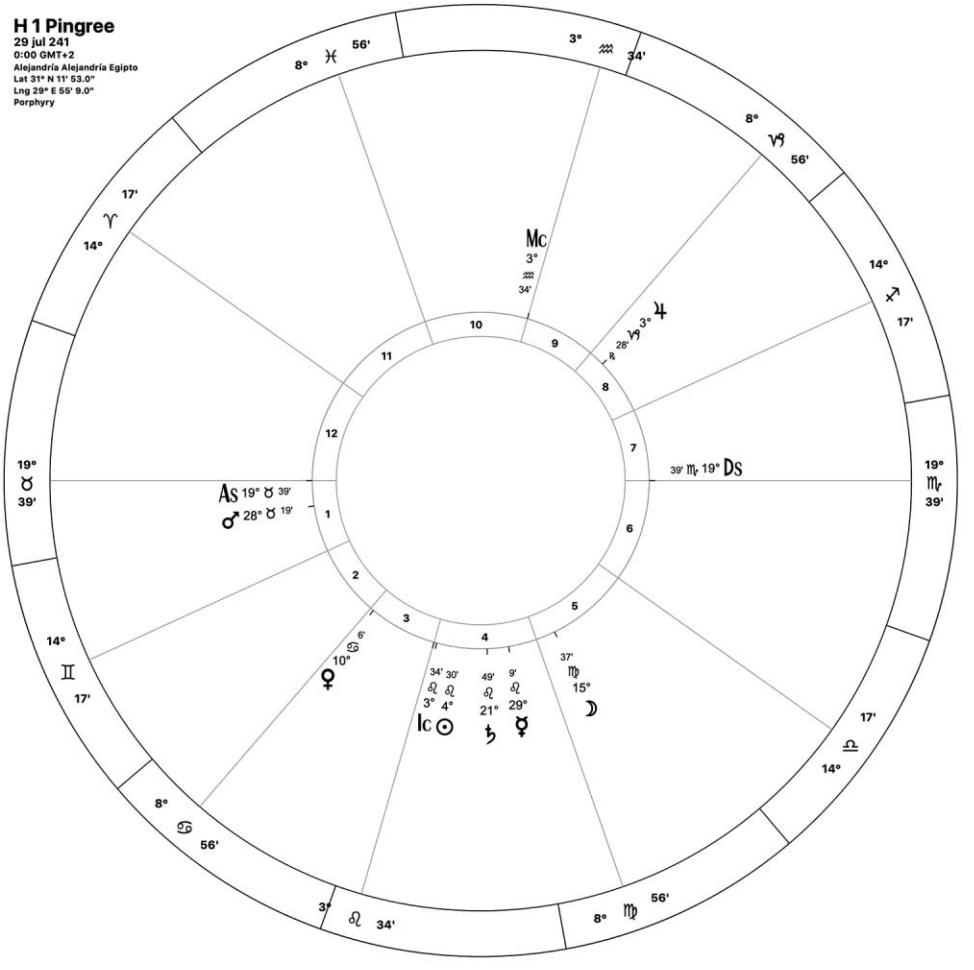

FIGURE 3. Horoscope 1 reconstructed by modern computation according to date proposed by Pingree, 29 July 241.

last chapter of the treatise. Having dealt with the planets governing the seven ages of life (infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood, maturity, old age), the anonymous commentator proceeds to explain how the ruling planets (*chronocratores*) of other life stages, which are proper to a specific birth, are to be determined. The method used by Ptolemy here is that of directions, as was the case in the chapter on the duration of life (3.11). On this occasion, however, it is necessary to establish not a single ἀφέτης (Latin: *prorogator*), the heavenly body which determines the vital quadrant, but several, as they follow one another, corporeally or in aspect, from the preceding degree closest to the aphetic place under consideration, in the direction of the zodiacal signs: the distances between the various aphetic planets, turned into equatorial times, provide the years of life during which this or that planet will rule the existence of the newborn.

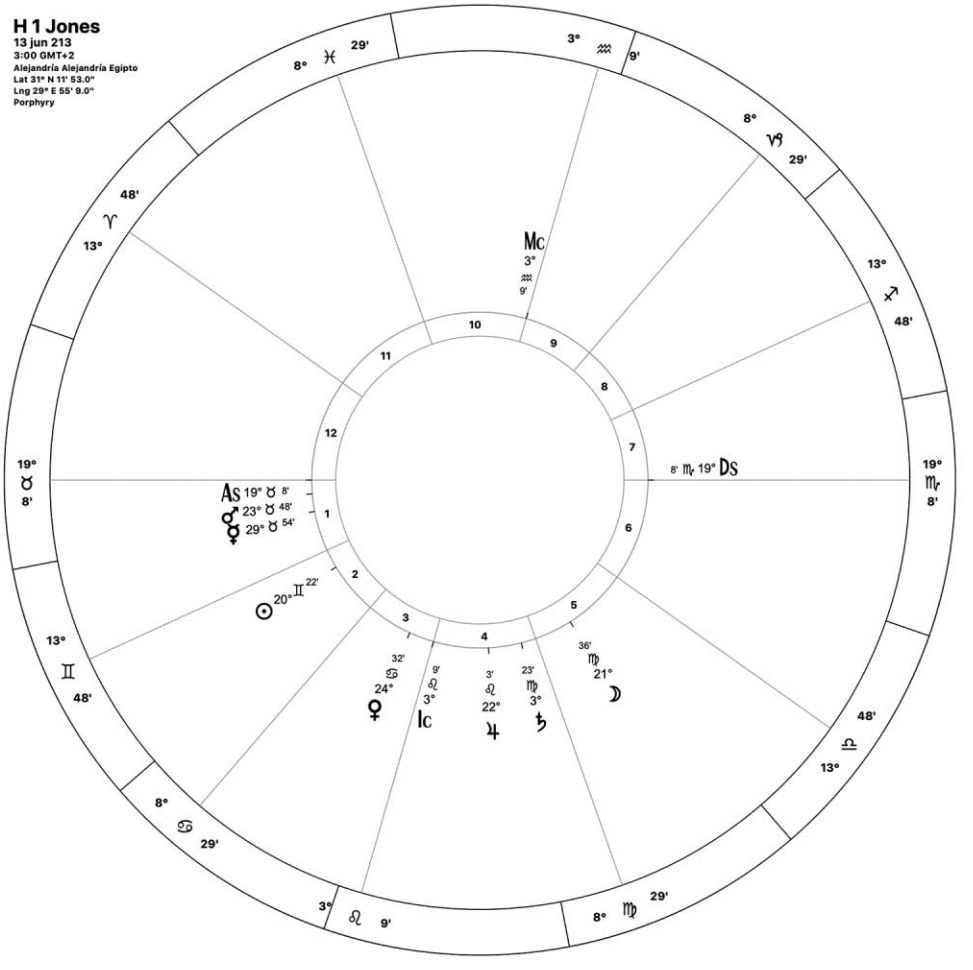

FIGURE 4. Horoscope 1 reconstructed by modern computation according to Jones's proposed date, 13 June 213.

IV.1. CRITICAL EDITION OF THE PASSAGE DEALING WITH H[1]

In order to illustrate this method, the anonymous commentator relies on a concrete example, a nativity performed in the third climate (Lower Egypt, latitude c. 31°, that is, Alexandria and its surrounding area; see ll. 32–33 in the critical edition of this passage):[18]

18. I am currently preparing the first critical edition of the Greek text for the *Bibliotheca Teubneriana*. The editorial criteria applied here are those established in Caballero-Sánchez (as in n. 4), pp. 221–24. For the manuscript tradition, see Caballero-Sánchez (as in n. 2), pp. 85–185. Because of a loss of fascicules, this passage has not been preserved in the oldest manuscript of the *Anonymous Commentary* (MS BML, plut. 28.34, s. XI^{3} = **L**), which contains only the whole of Book I, the beginning of Book II and the end of Book IV (W 175.51–179.39). The only manuscript testimony relying on the text of **L**—when it had not yet been damaged—is a paraphrase of the *Anonymous Commentary* by Isaac Argyrus at Constantinople from the 14th century (MS BNF, Gr. 2507, c. 1370 = **P**): as a fresh rewriting of the text, the significant variants in **P** have been taken into account in the critical apparatus whenever they agree with other manuscripts, as well as regarding the positions of the planets and the luminaries. In addition, the 14th-century manuscripts (**U K D M A**

CONSPECTUS SIGLORUM

U	Bod. Lib., Auctarium T.5.4	s. XIII[4], fols 126[v]–127[r] (see Appendix, Fig. A1.1)
K	Bod. Lib., Savile 12	s. XIV[1], fol. 266[r–v] (see Appendix, Fig. A1.2)
D	BML, plut. 28.20	s. XIV[1–2], fols 240[v]–241[r]
M	BM, Gr. 314	s. XIV[1–2], fols 175[v]–176[r]
A	B. Angelica, Gr. 74	s. XIV[2], fols 88[v]–89[r]
R	Bod. Lib., Rawlinson G 124	s. XIV[2–3], fol. 95[r–v]
V	BAV, Vat. Gr. 1048	s. XIV[3–4], fols 103[v]–104[r]
P	BNF, Gr. 2507	a. c. 1370, fol. 30[r]
B	BSB, Gr. 59	a. c. 1550, fol. 306[r]
W	*Editio princeps* (H. Wolf)	1559, fol. 168, ll. 9–36
Q	BAV, Barb. Gr. 274	s. XVI[3], fol. 176[r–v]
O	**D M A R V**	uel omnes uel praeter citatos
φ	**B W Q**	
ω	**U K O**	
Ω	**ω φ**	

Anonymous Commentary, IV.10.13 (W 168.9–36)

Φέρε οὖν ἐπὶ ὑποδείγματος πάντα τὰ εἰρημένα σαφηνίσωμεν. ὑποκείσθω τοίνυν τοιαύτη τις γένεσις. ἥλιος Καρκίνῳ μοίρᾳ α’ (ὁ μὲν ἥλιος τὴν ἀκτῖνα πέμπων τοῖς προηγουμένοις μέρεσι κυριεύει τῶν χρόνων, τὴν δὲ τῶν χρόνων ἄφεσιν οὐκ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ τοῦ κέντρου ληψόμεθα· ὡς νῦν ἡ μὲν Ἀφροδίτη ἀκτῖνα ἔπεμψε τῇ ς’ μοίρᾳ τοῦ Ταύρου, τὴν ἄφεσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ιθ’ μοίρας τοῦ ὡροσκόπου ἐποιησάμην), σελήνη Παρθένῳ μοίρᾳ κζ’, Κρόνος ἐν Λέοντι μοίρᾳ κς’, Ζεὺς Καρκίνῳ μοίρᾳ ο’ λεπτὰ λ΄, Ἄρης Ταύρῳ μοίρᾳ κ’, Ἀφροδίτη ἐν Λέοντι μοίρᾳ ς’, Ἑρμῆς Διδύμοις μοίρᾳ ιθ’, ὡροσκόπος Ταύρῳ μοίρᾳ ιθ’, μεσουράνημα Ὑδροχόῳ μοίρᾳ γ’.

Well, come, let us illustrate everything that has been said with an example. Let us assume a certain nativity, the following one: the Sun is in Cancer 1° (by sending its rays to the preceding regions, the Sun is regent of the times, but we will take the vital impulse of the times not from it, but from the angle; since Venus has now sent its rays over Taurus 6°, I have made the vital impulse from the 19th degree of the ascendant), the Moon is in Virgo 27°, Saturn in Leo 26°, Jupiter in Cancer 0°, 30 minutes,[19] Mars in Taurus 20°, Venus in Leo 6°, Mercury in Gemini 19°,[20] the ascendant in Taurus 19° and the meridian culmination in Aquarius 3°.

R V), on which all the others depend, have been collated, as well as those used in Wolf’s edition (**B W Q**). In the *Conspectus siglorum*, the dates of the manuscripts are indicated in quarters of a century: e.g., s. XIV[2–3] = between the second and third quarters of the 14th century, and so on. If a manuscript contains horoscope diagrams, this is indicated by referring to the Appendix of Illustrations in brackets, e.g., (Fig. A1.2).

19. Astronomical papyri and codices of the Roman and Byzantine periods (from the 2nd century onwards) commonly used a symbol similar to an omicron to represent the number zero in sexagesimal system; see A. Jones, *Astronomical Papyri from Oxyrhynchus (P. Oxy. 4133–4300a)*, Philadelphia, 1999, pp. 61–62.

20. The correct position of Mercury is Gem 19° and not Gem 9°, and there are several reasons why that is so: (a) a marginal note to Wolf’s Latin translation (W 168.29) indicates the true position of Mercury: Gem 19; (b) the anonymous commentator himself later reiterates the same position up to three times, referring to this particular example precisely (italics are mine): (1) *Anonymous Commentary* IV.10.19 (W 171.9–12): οἷον ἡ σελήνη **ἐν τῷ προκειμένῳ θέματι** Παρθένου κζ’ μοίρᾳ ὑπόκειται, **ὁ δὲ τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ ἐν Διδύμων μοίρᾳ ιθ’**. εἰλήφθω οὖν ἡ **ιθ’** μοῖρα τοῦ Ζυγοῦ. (2) *Anonymous Commentary* IV.10.20 (W 174.7–13): οἷον ὡς **ἐπὶ τῆς προεκτεθειμένης γενέσεως Διδύμοις** ὑπόκειται **Ἑρμῆς μοίρας ιθ’**, Ταῦρος δὲ ὡροσκόπος, κόλλησις οὖν ἔσται τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς ὡροσκόπον. ὅταν οὖν μέλλῃ γενέσθαι ὑπάντησις, ἐὰν ἐπέμβασις γένηται **ἐν τοῖς Διδύμοις περὶ τὴν ιθ’ μοῖραν**, τότε μάλιστα ἐπ ἴτασις ἔσται τοῦ ἀποτελέσματος. In the edited passage above, the *iota* of the number ιθ’ is preceded in all manuscripts by the abbreviation of μοίρᾳ (μ^{οι}), which makes it plausible that it might be omitted by haplography.

Ἐπεὶ οὖν οὔτε κατὰ σῶμα οὔτε κατὰ σχῆμά ἐστί τις ἐν τῷ ὡροσκόπῳ, λαμβάνω τὴν ἔγγιστα προήγησιν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης· αὕτη γὰρ ἀκτῖνα πέμπει κατὰ τετράγωνον τῇ ς᾽ μοίρᾳ τοῦ Ταύρου ἐν τοῖς τοῦ ὡροσκόπου προηγουμένοις μέρεσι καὶ δεσποτεύει τῶν χρόνων ἀπὸ τῆς ιθ᾽ μοίρας ἕως τῆς κ᾽· ἀπὸ γὰρ τῆς κ᾽ ὁ Ἄρης αὐτὴν διαδέχεται, μετ᾽ αὐτὸν ὁ Κρόνος καὶ μετ᾽ αὐτὸν ἡ σελήνη· εἶτα μετὰ λ᾽ μοίρας τοῦ Ταύρου καὶ τὴν ς᾽ Διδύμων καὶ ἡ Ἀφροδίτη καὶ μετ᾽ αὐτὴν πάλιν Ἑρμῆς, εἶτα [Ἄρης] καὶ Κρόνος καὶ σελήνη καὶ <τὰ ἄλλα> κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον.

Φέρε οὖν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κανόνος τοῦ χρόνου πῶς δεῖ ἐκβάλλειν παραθῶμεν. ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ κλίματι ἐγεννήθη, ἐκεῖσε τοὺς ἀναφορικοὺς χρόνους ληψόμεθα ὄντας τῆς μὲν ιθ᾽ μοίρας χρόνους λε᾽ λθ΄, τῆς δὲ τοῦ Ταύρου μοίρας κ᾽ χρόνους λς᾽ κη΄· ἐντὸς οὖν ἐνιαυτοῦ φήσομεν τὸν Ἄρη τοὺς χρόνους παραδέχεσθαι.

Since there is no planet in the ascendant either by body or by aspect, I take the precedence of Venus, the closest one to the ascendant: indeed, it sends its rays in a square aspect with Taurus 6° towards the regions preceding the ascendant and is ruler of the times from the 19th to the 20th degree; from the 20th degree, indeed, Mars receives the vital impulse, afterwards Saturn does so[21] and after that the Moon;[22] then, after 30 degrees of Taurus and the 6th degree of Gemini[23] Venus[24] too, after it in turn Mercury,[25] then [Mars][26] Saturn as well[27] and the Moon,[28] and so on <the others>[29] in the same way.

So come, let us explain in the table of times how to extract the data. As the birth took place in the third climate, the times of ascension will be taken from there, which are: of 19° in the ascendant, 35 39; of 20°, 36 28. So, Mars will be said to receive the times within a year.

1 ἐπὶ om. **K** // **2** σαφηνίσωμεν **P O φ** : σαφηνίσομεν **U K** / ὑποκείσθω **P O B W** : ὑπόδειγμα· ὑποκείσθω **U K Q** // **3** ἥλιος] ὁ μὲν ἥλιος **Q** / Καρκίνῳ] Αἰγοκέρωτος **Q** / μοίρᾳ] μοίρας **W** // **4** ὁ μὲν ἥλιος om. **Q** / πέμπων **W**^{mglat} **Q** : om. **ω B** // **7** ληψόμεθα om. **A** // **8** μοίρᾳ] μοίρας **W** // **9** ἀπὸ] ὑπὸ **K** // **11** μοίρᾳ] μοίρας **K W** / ἐν om. **Q** / μοίρᾳ] μοίρας

21. Saturn sends its rays onto Tau 26 in a square aspect. For all the planetary configurations dealt with by the *Anonymous Commentary* in this text, see below, Section V.2, Fig. 6.

22. The Moon sends its rays onto Tau 27 in a triangular aspect.

23. Venus sends its rays onto Gem 6 in a hexagonal aspect.

24. The transmitted reading (ἀναφοράν: 'ascension') does not make sense. Since Venus is found in Gem 6 and must be listed among the aphetic planets, the copyist of the archetype is likely to have unintentionally confused Ἀφροδίτην with ἀναφοράν.

25. Mercury does not send its rays, but, since it is located in Gem 19, meets bodily with the vital place (the ascendant).

26. It is impossible for Mars to send its rays towards the preceding regions, because it was in Tau 20°. A mistake must have been made here, either by the anonymous commentator or in the archetype of the manuscripts.

27. Saturn sends its rays onto Gem 26 in a hexagonal aspect.

28. The Moon sends its rays onto Gem 27 in a square aspect.

29. If we read just 'in the same way', the passage does not make sense. Indeed, Saturn and the Moon, which had just been mentioned, send their rays in different manners (Saturn in a sextile aspect, the Moon in a square aspect). More planets, however, are still to come: the next one to take over would be Jupiter by physical presence at 0° 30′ Cnc, very soon afterwards the Sun by physical presence at 1° Cnc, then the Moon at 27° Cnc by a sextile aspect, and eventually further planets would take over in Leo (depending on the length of the native's life). So, there must have been something lost in the original text, either <τὰ ἄλλα> or <ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων>: cf. *Anonymous Commentary*, II.8 (W 68.20–21): καὶ τὰ ἄλλα κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον; Anon. *in Ptol.* I.19 (W 37.49–50): καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ποιησόμεθα; *Anonymous Commentary*, II.8 (W 68.36–37): καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον. See also Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, IV.10.18: καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὁμοίως.

K W // **12** μοίρᾳ ο᾽ λεπτὰ λ΄ **Q** : ο᾽ λεπτὰ λ΄ **U** : ο᾽ λ΄ **P O** : 0.30 **W**$^{\mathbf{mglat}}$: ολ᾽ **K B W**$^{\mathbf{t}}$ // **13** μοίρᾳ^{1,2}] μοίρας **K W** / ς᾽] κς᾽ **Q** // **14** Ἑρμῆς] Ἀφροδίτης **W** / Διδύμοις **ω** : ἐν Ζυγῷ **φ** / μοίρᾳ] μοίρας **K W** / ιθ᾽ **B W**$^{\mathbf{mglat}}$: θ᾽ **P ω W**$^{\mathbf{t}}$ **Q** // **15** μοίρᾳ] μοίρας **K W** /Ὑδροχόῳ **P U K D Q** : Διδύμοις **O B** : om. **W** // **16** μοίρᾳ] μοίρας **K W** // **21** τῇ ς᾽ μοίρᾳ **Q** : τῆς ς᾽ μοίρας **Ω** / τοῦ Ταύρου **P K** : τοῦτο **U O B W** : τουτέστιν **Q** // **24** γὰρ **U K** : δὲ **O φ** // **26–27** τοῦ Ταύρου **U K Q** : τοῦτο **OB W** // **27** Διδύμων] Ὑδροχόου **W** / καὶ ἡ conieci : ἢ καὶ **Ω** // **28** Ἀφροδίτη conieci : ἀναφορὰν **Ω** // **29** [Ἄρης] seclusi (ἄρα fortasse legendum) / **29–30** καὶ <τὰ ἄλλα> κατὰ conieci : καὶ κατὰ **U K D M** : κατὰ **P A R V B W** : om. **Q** // **30** τρόπον **P U K Q** : χρόνον **O B W** // **32** ἐκβάλλειν] διεκβάλλειν **P** / παραθῶμεν] περιθῶμεν **K** // **34** ἀναφορικοὺς **U K Q** : om. **O B W** / τῆς **O φ** : τοῦ **U K** // **35** μοίρας **U K O B** : μοίρας τοῦ ὡροσκόπου **Q** : μοίρας μεσουραν **W** / χρόνους] χρόνου **K** / λθ΄] λς΄ **Q** / τῆς **O φ** : τοῦ **U** : τοὺς **K** / τοῦ **U K Q** : om. **O BW** // **36** χρόνους **ω B** : μεσουρανοῦ **W** : om. **Q** // **37** Ἄρη **O φ** : Ἄρην **U K**

IV.2. THE DATING OF H^1

Fortunately, the critical edition of the passage above, which is meant to contextualise and illustrate the first nativity of the *Anonymous Commentary* (H^1), gives us the exact position of Jupiter: Cnc 0° 30′. This fact has been crucial in finding a very plausible date for the horoscope: 25 June 448. According to modern computation for that day in Alexandria (Fig. 5), with the ascendant located in Taurus 19° and the meridian culmination in Aquarius 3°, as in the two previous examples (Figs 3 and 4), the time of birth was 2h 07m in the morning.

Below are the planetary positions in H^1 as compared to those provided by modern computation (= MC), on the one hand, and those based on Ptolemy's *Handy Tables* (= *HT*) and recorded in Mercier's software, on the other:

25 June 448	H^1	MC	D
Saturn	Leo 26°	Vir 0° 18′	4° 18′
Jupiter	Cnc 0° 30′	Cnc 1° 51′	1° 21′
Mars	Tau 20°	Tau 22° 22′	2° 22′
Sun	Cnc 1°	Cnc 3° 51′	2° 51′
Venus	Leo 6°	Leo 10° 12′	4° 12′
Mercury	Gem 19°	Gem 25° 38′	6° 38′
Moon	Vir 27°	Vir 29° 25′	2° 25′

25 June 448	H^1	*HT*	D
Saturn	Leo 26°	Leo 26° 50′	0° 50′
Jupiter	Cnc 0° 30′	Cnc 0° 24′	0° 6′
Mars	Tau 20°	Tau 20° 24′	0° 24′
Sun	Cnc 1°	Cnc 1° 01′	0° 01′
Venus	Leo 6°	Leo 6° 11′	0° 11′
Mercury	Gem 19°	Gem 19° 21′	0° 21′
Moon	Vir 27°	Vir 26° 51′	0° 9′

If we focus on the second table,[30] all the deviations (D) are within the narrow range of minutes of a degree. The position of Jupiter, in which degrees and

30. See above, n. 15. In the simulation of the *Handy Tables* provided by Mercier's software, the results above have been calculated for 2h 13m 20s, with the ascendant located in Taurus 19° and the meridian culmination in

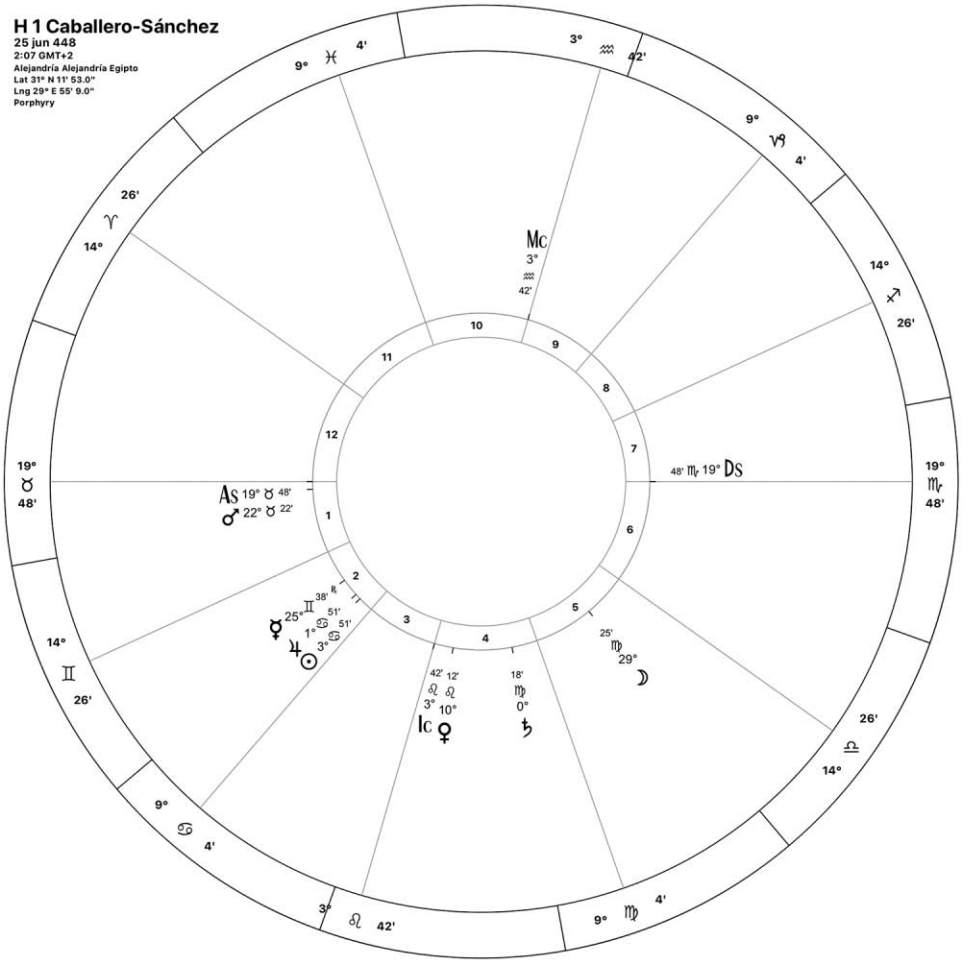

FIGURE 5. Horoscope 1, 25 June 448, reconstructed by modern computation.

minutes are given, is almost accurate. In all likelihood, therefore, the anonymous commentator's example corresponds to a real birth that took place in the latitude of Lower Egypt on 25 June 448, about two and a quarter hours after midnight.

Aquarius 3°, as in H[1]. Almost the same result is achieved by using the proper tables in Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*. So, according to the table of oblique ascensions for the 3rd *klima* (Lower Egypt, appropriate for Alexandria), the oblique ascension corresponding to the Sun's zodiacal longitude, Cancer 1°, is 76° 7′, and the number of ascensional degrees corresponding to 1 seasonal hour of day is 17° 30′, hence the number of ascensional degrees corresponding to 1 seasonal hour of night is 12° 30′. From the same table, the oblique ascension of the ascendant, Taurus 19°, is 35° 39′. Thus, the time difference between the time of nativity and sunrise would have been approximately 76° 7′ – 35° 39′ / 12° 30′ (seasonal hours of night), which comes to approximately three and one-quarter seasonal hours (καιρικαὶ ὧραι) of night. In other words, the horoscope was computed for two and three-quarters seasonal hours of night after midnight (within a margin of a few minutes), or three-quarters of the way through the ninth hour of night. The midheaven at Aquarius 3° also agrees with this time, as confirmed by the table of right ascensions of Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*. I am grateful to one of the *Journal*'s readers for providing me with the above calculation.

V. HOROSCOPE 2 (H^2)

Turning now to the second horoscope (H^2), we must refer back to chapter 11 of the third book of the *Tetrabiblos*, where Ptolemy applies the method of directions to the estimate of the years of life of the native, that is, the person for whom the horoscope was cast. In a long and complex προθεωρία to the commentary on *Tetrabiblos*, III.11.9 (W 113.43–117.24), the anonymous commentator focuses on the first modality of ἄφεσις, which Ptolemy himself had called ὡριμαία ('reckoning from the degree of the zodiac rising at the nativity'). According to this, the ἀφέτης, from its position in the western quadrant of the upper hemisphere, is moving towards the setting point, travelling up the course of the zodiac, that is, heading in the direction of the preceding signs (εἰς τὰ προηγούμενα), while following the course of the diurnal motion of the sky. The distance between the ἀφέτης or *prorogator* and the western angle, converted into equatorial times, provides the native's years of life. On its way to the western angle, the ἀφέτης meets, by body or by aspect, with beneficent and maleficent planets, which add and subtract years of life, respectively, according to their proportional hourly distance in relation to the ascendant.

V.1. CRITICAL EDITION OF THE PASSAGE DEALING WITH H^2

In order to clarify this doctrine, the anonymous commentator proposes the following example, which corresponds to the *figura cœli* in W 112 (H^2):

CONSPECTUS SIGLORUM[31]

U	Bod. Lib., Auctarium T.5.4	s. XIII^4, fols 78^{v}–79^{r} (see Appendix, Figs A2.1 and A2.2)
K	Bod. Lib., Savile 12	s. XIV^1, fol. 203$^{r–v}$ (see Appendix, Figs A2.3–5)
D	BML, plut. 28.20	s. XIV$^{1–2}$, fol. 202^{r}
M	BM, Gr. 314	s. XIV$^{1–2}$, fol. 147^{r}
A	B. Angelica, Gr. 74	s. XIV^2, fol. 63^{v} (see Appendix, Fig. A2.6)
R	Bod. Lib., Rawlinson G 124	s. XIV$^{2–3}$, fol. 66^{v}
V	BAV, Vatic. Gr. 1048	s. XIV$^{3–4}$, fols 72^{v}–73^{r}
P	BNF, Gr. 2507	a. c. 1370, fol. 192^{v}
B	BSB, Gr. 59	a. c. 1550, fol. 276$^{r–v}$
W	*Editio princeps* (H. Wolf)	1559, fol. 114, ll. 20–33, 44–52
Q	BAV, Barb. Gr. 274	s. XVI^3, fol. 117^{v} (see Appendix, Fig. A2.7)
O	**D M A R V**	uel omnes uel praeter citatos
φ	**B W Q**	
ω	**U K O**	
Ω	**ω φ**	

Anonymous Commentary, III.11.9 (W 114.20–33)

Φέρε οὖν ἐπὶ παραδείγματος παραστήσομεν τὸ προκείμενον. ἔστω οὖν	So, come, let us give a concrete example of what it has been proposed so far. Let us suppose, then,

31. For the editorial criteria, see above, n. 18.

ὁ ὡροσκόπος Ταύρῳ μοίρᾳ ιθ’, ἥλιος ἐν Αἰγοκέρωτι μοίρᾳ α’, σελήνη Παρθένῳ μοίρᾳ κζ’, Κρόνος ἐν Λέοντι <μοίρᾳ <κς’> καὶ Ζεὺς Καρκίνῳ μοίρᾳ <ο’> κη΄, Ἄρης Ταύρῳ μοίρᾳ κ’ καὶ Ἀφροδίτη Ὑδροχόῳ μοίρᾳ ς’, Ἑρμῆς ἐν Τοξότῃ μοίρᾳ ιθ’. ἐπεὶ οὖν ὁ ἥλιος ἡμερινῆς οὔσης τῆς γενέσεως ἀφετεύει καὶ ἔστιν ἐν τῷ ἐνάτῳ τόπῳ, λαμβάνω τὴν κατὰ διάμετρον, ἥτις ἐστὶ Καρκίνου μοῖρα α’, καὶ εἰσάγω ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ κλίματι (ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ ἐτέχθη) καὶ λαμβάνω τοὺς παρακειμένους ἀναφορικοὺς χρόνους· καὶ εὑρίσκω αὐτοὺς ὄντας ος’ καὶ τοῦ ὡροσκόπου εὑρίσκω λς’· καὶ ἀφαιρῶ τὸν ἐλάττονα ἀπὸ τοῦ μείζονος καὶ καταλείπονται μ’· καὶ τοσούτους λέγω εἶναι χρόνους τῆς καταδύσεως.

that the ascendant is in Taurus 19°, the Sun in Capricorn 1°, the Moon in Virgo 27°, Saturn in Leo <26°> and Jupiter in Cancer <0°> 28′,[32] Mars in Taurus 20° and Venus in Aquarius 6°,[33] Mercury in Sagittarius 19°. Now, being a diurnal birth, since the Sun holds the vital force and is in the ninth place, I take its diametrically opposite degree, which is Cancer 1°, then I bring it into the third climate (since the birth was just there) and I take the registered ascension times: so I find that there are 76, and I find 36 of the ascendant as well.[34] I subtract the lesser number from the greater number and there are 40 left: so many I will even say are the times of the setting angle.

Anonymous Commentary, III.11.9 (W 114.44–52)

Ἀφαιροῦσι δὲ ἢ προστιθέασιν οἱ συναντῶντες ἀστέρες. οἱ μὲν ἀγαθοποιοὶ συναντήσαντες προστιθέασιν, οἱ δὲ κακοποιοὶ ἀφαιροῦσι. τίνες δέ εἰσιν οἱ ἐν τῇ προτεθείσῃ γενέσει συναντήσαντες; Ζεὺς πρότερον κατὰ διάμετρον συναντᾷ, εἶτα Κρόνος κατὰ τρίγωνον καὶ Ἀφροδίτη. ὅταν δὲ ὁ ἀφέτης εὑρεθῇ ἐν τῷ ἐνάτῳ τόπῳ, τότε ὡριμαία λέγεται, ὅτι κατὰ τὴν τῶν ὡρῶν κατάστασιν πρὸς τὸν ὡροσκόπον λαμβάνεται.

The planets which meet (with the vital force) either subtract or add. By meeting this force, the beneficent planets add (years of life), the maleficent ones subtract. Which are the planets meeting the vital force in the above-mentioned nativity? First, Jupiter meets it in opposition, then Saturn in a triangle and Venus. When the vital force is in the ninth place, then it is called *horimaia*, because it is taken according to the system of hours relative to the ascendant.

2 παραστήσομεν **P O** φ : στήσομεν **U K** // **3** μοίρᾳ **ω B** : μοίρας **W Q** // **3–4** ἐν Αἰγοκέρωτι **P K O** : Αἰγοκέρωτι **U Q** : οὖν Αἰγοκέρωτι **B** : ἐν Σκορπίῳ **W** // **4** μοίρᾳ **ω B** : μοίρας **W Q** // **5** μοίρᾳ **U O B** : μοίρας **K W Q** / ἐν Λέοντι] Διδύμων μοίρᾳ ιε’ **P** / Λέοντι καὶ **U K Q** : om. **O B W** // **5–6** <μοίρᾳ κς’> supplevi : om. **Ω** // **6** Καρκίνῳ **U O B W** : ἐν Καρκίνῳ **K Q** / μοίρᾳ[1] **U O B** : μοίρας **K W Q** / <ο’> supplevi : om. **Ω** / κη΄ correxi : κη’ **P Ω** // **7** Ταύρῳ **U Q** : ἐν Ταύρῳ **K** : om. **P O B W** / μοίρᾳ[2] **U O B** : μοίρᾳ μοίρᾳ **D** : μοίρας **K W Q** / κ’ καὶ conieci : κβ’ **Ω** // **8** Ὑδροχόῳ conieci : Αἰγοκέρωτι **P** : Λέοντι **U Q** : ἐν Σκορπίῳ **K** : om. **O B W** / μοίρᾳ **U O B** : μοίρας **K W Q** // **9** μοίρᾳ **U O B** : μοίρας **K W Q** // **11** τόπῳ **P O** φ : om. **U K** / λαμβάνω **P U K Q** : προσλαμβάνω **O B W** // **12** μοῖρα] μοίρας **W** // **20** χρόνους om. **K** / τῆς καταδύσεως **P U** : τοὺς τῆς δύσεως **K O Q** : om. **B W** // **24** δέ **O** φ : om. **U K** / οἱ om. **Q** // **26** Ζεὺς] τῷ Διί **K** // **28** δὲ **O** φ : om. **U K** / ὁ om. **K** // **29** ὡριμαία **ω Q** : ὡριαία **B W** // **30** τῶν **ω** : om. **R** φ

32. That is, 28 minutes of 0 degree in Cancer. The reason why the *Anonymous Commentary* gives minutes of arc only in Jupiter's case will be explained below, in Section V.2.

33. For an overall explanation of the textual conjectures in this passage, see below, Section V.2.

34. That is, the times of oblique ascension of Tau 19° in the third climate (Lower Egypt), which are equivalent to the times of descent of its diametrically opposed degree, Sco 19°.

V.2. Commentary on H^2

Horoscope 2 poses more issues of interpretation and has proved impossible to date. Firstly, some planetary positions were wrongly represented in the image of H^2 published by Wolf (W 112), which has led to considerable confusion: according to the manuscript tradition, Mars is in Tau 22°, not in Aries 22°; Saturn is not in Tau 29°, as Wolf himself suspected by placing an asterisk above the symbol of this planet, but in Leo, with no indication of degree (see the critical apparatus). Furthermore, the position of Venus is aberrant, whether we take its position in the diagram (Gem 6°) or the reading supported by the oldest manuscript (**U**: Leo 6°): indeed, Venus is far exceeding its maximum elongation (between 45° and 47°) with respect to the Sun (placed in Cap 1°). Finally, Wolf put a *crux* next to the position of Jupiter (Cnc 28°) in the horoscope on p. 112—as will be shown further on, his doubts were fully justified.

There is a powerful reason to suspect that H^2, while allegedly referring to an actual birth,[35] is a contrived horoscope, in that it looks like a duplicate of H^1. In fact, both horoscopes match, exactly or with minimal variations (at least, in the manuscript tradition = **Ω**), the degrees of the four angles and the positions of all planets, except for the Sun and Mercury (and Venus 1) (see Fig. 6):[36]

	H^1	H^2 (**Ω**)	D
Saturn	Leo 26°	Leo ??	-
Jupiter	Cnc 0° 30′	Cnc 0° 28′	2′
Mars	Tau 20°	Tau 22°	2°
Sun	Cnc 1°	Cap 1°	180°
Venus	Leo 6°	Aqu 6° (1) / Leo 6° (2 = **Ω**)	180°/0°
Mercury	Gem 19°	Sag 19°	180°
Moon	Vir 27°	Vir 27	0°

If we pay attention to the most significant deviations (the Sun, Mercury and Venus 1), they all have an interval of 180° in common, which sets these planets apart from their original positions in H^1. Given the context in which H^2 is introduced, it makes complete sense to transfer the Sun from Cnc 1° to Cap 1°: the anonymous commentator is explaining the first type of ἄφεσις or *prorogation* in this passage, which is to be used when the ἀφέτης or *prorogator* (in that instance, the Sun), is found in the western quadrant of the local sphere's upper hemisphere. It appears that the anonymous commentator is simply fitting an actual horoscope (H^1), which has not yet been reported, to the specific scenario he needs to display here. Once the position of the Sun has been moved 180°, the anonymous commentator

35. See above, Section V.1, ll. 13–14: ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ ἐτέχθη. If, however, H^2 is, as I hope to show, a contrived horoscope based on H^1, that parenthesis must refer to the base horoscope (H^1), which the anonymous commentator is modifying here.

36. For an overall illustration of the planetary positions and configurations in H^2, see Fig. 6.

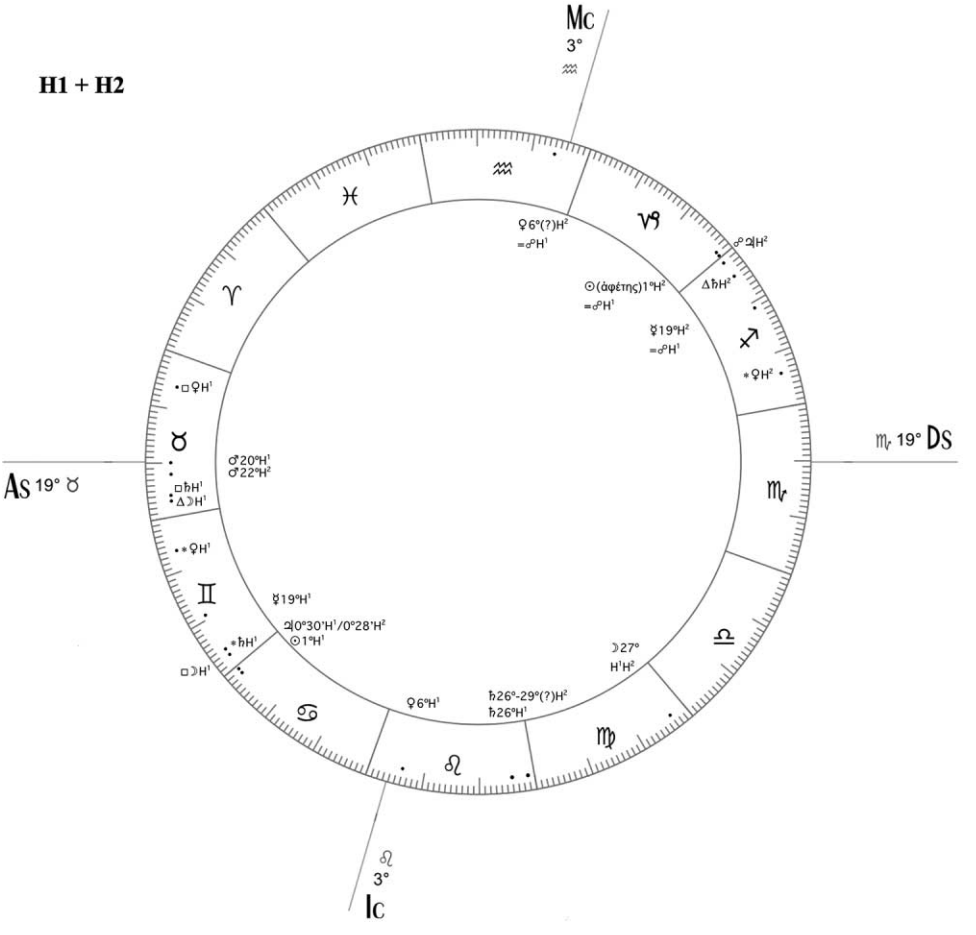

FIGURE 6. Overall illustration of the planetary positions and configurations in Horoscopes 1 and 2.

is immediately obliged to change the position of Mercury, and in doing so he employs the same procedure: he moves Mercury from Gem 19° (H^1) to Sag 19° (H^2), both points being separated by an angular distance of 180°.

As for Venus, it should logically have been moved from Leo 6° to Aqu 6° (+ 180° = Venus 1), but no manuscript supports this possibility: hence, the conjecture that I have proposed in the critical edition of the text. There is only one manuscript source (the paraphrase of the *Anonymous Commentary* by Isaac Argyrus = **P**) which keeps Venus within the range of its maximum elongation from the Sun, by putting it on Cap. 6°. The issue here, though, is that from there Venus cannot be in geometrical figure with any degree of Sagittarius so as to meet the Sun's path towards the setting point. Moreover, if Venus happens to be in Aqu 6°, it may observe Sag 6° in a hexagonal aspect and can be reached by the Sun after Jupiter and Saturn have already been met as well, as is expressly stated by the anonymous commentator (ll. 26–28). Another possibility in line with the sequence of the planets met by the Sun (Jupiter, Saturn and Venus) might be placing Venus itself

corporeally in Sag 6°. Finally, the probability that the reading of **U** (Venus in Leo 6° = Venus 2), as aberrant as it may be, is due to a mistake or oversight on the part of the anonymous commentator should not be discarded.

Another thorny problem is the exact location of the slow planets. In the case of Jupiter, the manuscripts give Cnc 28°. This reading must be wrong, however, as can be easily verified in the paragraph where the anonymous commentator explains the method of the ἄφεσις.[37] If Jupiter is first reached by the ἀφέτης (the Sun) in opposition, it cannot be found at Cnc 28°; indeed, the point diametrically opposed to Cnc 28° is Cap 28°. On this degree, though, Jupiter cannot be met by the Sun if the latter is approaching the western angle from Cap 1°. Therefore, if Jupiter is in Cancer, as reported by all the manuscripts, it must occupy the degree 0° 28′; only thus can the Sun, when moving with the celestial rotation from Cap 1°, first meet Jupiter's ray at Cap 0° 28′, in diametrical opposition to Cancer 0° 28′. That is the reason why the anonymous commentator gives minutes of arc only for Jupiter. If we compare the position of Jupiter in H^2 (Cnc 0° 28′, still closer to Cnc 0° 24′ in Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*) with that given by H^1 for the same planet (Cnc 0° 30′), the anonymous commentator seems to have rounded the true position of Jupiter in the latter horoscope (H^1).

As for Saturn, the oldest manuscripts (**U K**) agree in placing it at Leo, but with no indication of degree. It is possible, however, to deduce its zodiacal position more precisely. In the same passage analysed above, the anonymous commentator continues by stating that the next planet met by the Sun on its way to the setting angle is Saturn in a triangular configuration, and subsequently Venus with no specified aspect. Wherever Venus is to be located (Aqu 6° = Venus 1; or, by error attributable to the anonymous commentator, Leo 6° = Venus 2), either it is configured with Sag 6°—shaping a hexagon from Aqu 6° and a triangle from Leo 6°—or it is bodily in Sag 6° and is reached by the Sun in conjunction. Thus, given that Saturn meets the Sun in a triangular aspect before Venus does in Sag 6° (either by aspect or by body), then Saturn must occupy a point located between the 7th and 30th degrees of Leo, so that the encounter with the Sun occurs between the 7th and 30th degrees of Sagittarius.

In the *figura cœli* representing H^2 (Fig. 2), Wolf assigned Saturn 29° (of Taurus!), but this position makes it impossible for that planet to be in triangular aspect with Sagittarius. If the anonymous commentator had chosen, once again, to repeat the location of Saturn in H^1, as is the case with all the planets,[38] apart from the Sun, Mercury and Venus 1, Κρόνος would have been assigned 26° of Leo or similar; but no manuscript gives this reading. Hence, my conjecture of adding <μοίρᾳ κς'> to the text of the manuscript tradition. A third possibility is that the anonymous

37. See above, Section V.1, ll. 26–31.

38. In the case of Mars, I propose reading κ[β]′ instead of κβ′. There is no good reason why the anonymous commentator should have modified the length of Mars from 20° (H^1) to 22° (H^2). Perhaps the β originated from a misreading of καὶ? I am grateful to one of the *Journal*'s readers for this suggestion.

commentator had simultaneously ascribed the same figure to Saturn and Jupiter (28°); but then he would have made a further mistake, as the number 28 refers to degrees in the case of Saturn (28°), and to minutes of degree (28′) in the case of Jupiter, which is much more implausible. So, even entertaining any of these three possibilities, Saturn might hypothetically be found in Leo somewhere between the 26th and 29th degrees.

In light of this discussion of the second horoscope in the *Anonymous Commentary*, it appears that H^2 could well have been an adaptation of H^1 to the specific instance of the ἄφεσις ὡριμαία, for the sake of which the anonymous commentator would have changed the positions of the Sun and, consequently, of Mercury (and Venus 1). But, with respect to the remaining planets and to the angles of the local sphere, he would have retained either the same location as in H^1 (Venus 2, Moon, AS/DS) or an almost identical placement (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, MC/IC).

VI. CONCLUSION (AND FURTHER QUESTIONS)

Undoubtedly, the new date proposed here for H^1 (25 June 448, two and a quarter hours after midnight, latitude of Lower Egypt) is important for establishing a more precise chronology of the *Anonymous Commentary*, since it not only provides a *terminus post quem* for its composition (from the middle of the fifth century onwards),[39] but also a particular geographical environment in the proximity of Alexandria. Given such a spatial and temporal contextualisation, as well as the large amount of formal and structural similarities which can be readily observed between the *Anonymous Commentary* and commentaries on Plato and Aristotle composed by Ammonius and his disciples in Alexandria,[40] it becomes impossible not to link the work of the anonymous commentator to the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria of the fifth and sixth centuries, led by the philosopher Ammonius.

Indeed, the evidence is not lacking that in these pagan circles there was a remarkable interest in Ptolemy's cosmology, whose 'collection of astronomical books' was the subject of thorough commentaries in lectures by Ammonius, as Damascius expressly acknowledges when recalling his years as a student in Alexandria.[41] There were other Alexandrian teachers, however, who, apart from professing their passion for astronomy, also became interested in astrology. The Byzantine manuscript tradition links the name of Heliodorus, the youngest brother of Ammonius, to the composition of an *Ἀστρονομικὴ διδασκαλία* ('Astronomical

39. See Caballero-Sánchez (as in n. 6). In this article, I have tried to show that, on the basis of certain astronomical records provided by the anonymous commentator, his commentary on Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* must have been composed not before the year 467 and not after the year 575.

40. For the analysis of these similarities, see Caballero-Sánchez (as in n. 7), pp. 131–44.

41. Damascius, *The Philosophical History*, tr. and notes P. Athanassiadi, Athens, 1999, fr. T III, p. 340, ll. 89–91: τοῦτον καὶ τῶν Πλατωνικῶν ἐξηγητὴν αὐτῷ γεγενῆσθαι Δαμάσκιος ἀναγράφει, καὶ τῆς συντάξεως τῶν ἀστρονομικῶν Πτολεμαίου βιβλίων.

Lessons'), in which the student was not only introduced to the basics of astronomy but was also initiated into astrological doctrine.[42]

Although the attribution to Heliodorus of the commentary on Paul of Alexandria's astrological handbook has long been discarded, it is not unlikely that Ammonius's brother devoted some seminars to Paul's *Introduction*. For in the version of the commentary preserved in our manuscripts, which must be attributed to an astrologer close to the Neoplatonist Olympiodorus (sixth century),[43] if not to Olympiodorus himself, there are observations registered between June 492 and April 493, which concur with the activity of Heliodorus in the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria.[44]

Assuming that an active interest in astrology was sustained among some Alexandrian Neoplatonists on account of Heliodorus, and given that the *Anonymous Commentary*, written between the fifth and sixth centuries, displays numerous formal and structural similarities to the commentaries on Plato and Aristotle by Ammonius and his disciples, it is unavoidable to raise the following questions, which future research will need to address:

1. Could the *Anonymous Commentary* have preserved, to some extent, the written record of the lectures and seminars which Heliodorus devoted to Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, in the same way that, in Alexandria, several commentaries on Aristotle which were issued by some of the Ammonius's disciples stored the contents of their master's lectures?[45]
2. Could Heliodorus, then, have been the astrology professor of the anonymous commentator, that is, the revered 'master' (διδάσκαλος) to whom he pays tribute in a passage of the second book of his work, without naming him?[46]

42. See D. Bassi et al., *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum* [hereafter: *CCAG*], IV: *Codices Italici praeter Florentinos, Venetos, Mediolanenses et Romanos*, Brussels, 1903, p. 61; G. Kroll, *CCAG*, VI: *Codices Vindobonenses*, Brussels, 1903, pp. 30–31; F. Boll, *CCAG*, VII: *Codices Germanici*, Brussels, 1908, pp. 17, 18, 19, 20; P. Boudreaux, *CCAG*, VIII.4: *Codices Parisini*, Brussels, 1922, pp. 30, 34.

43. The link of this exegetical work to the commentaries of Olympiodorus and his school was independently established by J. Warnon, 'Le commentaire attribué à Héliodore sur les *Eisagogika* de Paul d'Alexandrie', *Travaux de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université Catholique*, II, 1967, pp. 197–217; and L. G. Westerink, 'Ein astrologisches Kolleg aus dem Jahre 564', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, LXIV, 1971, pp. 6–21 (10–13).

44. See D. Pingree in *Heliodori ut dicitur in Paulum Alexandrinum commentarium*, ed. A. Boer, comment. O. Neugebauer and D. Pingree, Leipzig, 1962, p. 149. See also J. Opsomer, 'Olympiodorus', in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. P. Gerson, 2 vols, Cambridge, 2010, II, pp. 696–710 (700); Heilen (as in n. 11), p. 502.

45. See the titles of some commentaries by John Philoponus on Aristotle, which the disciple of Ammonius composed from the lectures and seminars (συνουσίαι: 'meetings') of his master: Ἰωάννου γραμματικοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείας εἰς ... σχολικαὶ ἀποσημειώσεις ἐκ τῶν συνουσιῶν Ἀμμωνίου τοῦ Ἑρμείου. See Philoponus, *Tra neopitagorismo e neoplatonismo. Commentario alla Introduzione Aritmetica di Nicomaco di Gerasa*, tr. G. R. Giardina, Catania, 1999, pp. 54–55.

46. See Anon. *in Ptol.* II.10 (W 76.16–29). I have extensively defended the Heliodorus hypothesis as master of the anonymous commentator in another essay: R. Caballero-Sánchez, 'Heliodoro de Alejandría y el *Comentario Anónimo al* Tetrabiblos *de Tolomeo*', *Humanitas*, LXXVI, 2020, pp. 33–56.

3. Finally, since the first horoscope of the *Anonymous Commentary* (H^1), as we have seen, depicts a true birth that took place in Lower Egypt in the early morning of 25 June 448, and since it is well known that Heliodorus was born not long after his oldest brother Ammonius, in the fourth decade of the fifth century,[47] could H^1 be another tacit homage of the anonymous commentator to his master Heliodorus?[48] In other words, could H^1 be the nativity of the Neoplatonic philosopher, astronomer and astrologer Heliodorus of Alexandria?[49]

APPENDIX

Below are the references for the figures in this article, as well as images of H^1 and H^2 preserved in the main manuscripts of the *Anonymous Commentary*.[50]

Horoscope 1: H^1 (Figure A1)

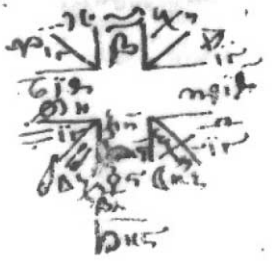

	Fig. A1.1	Text
Saturn	Leo 26º	Leo 26º
Jupiter	Cnc **2º** 30'	Cnc 0º 30'
Mars	Tau 20º	Tau 20º
Sun	Cnc 1º/**4º** (?)	Cnc 1º
Venus	Leo 6º	Leo 6º
Mercury (?)	Gem **8º** (?)	Gem 19º (9º **U**)
Moon	Vir 27º	Vir 27º

FIGURE A1.1. **U** = MS Bod. Lib., Auctarium T.5.4, s. XIII[4], fol. 126[v]. Cusps of the places in the local sphere: I (AS) Tau 19°; II Gem 13°; III Cnc [-]; IV (IC) Leo **6°** (!); V Vir 7°; VI Lib 13°; VII (DS) Sco 19°; VIII Sag 13°; IX Cap 8°; X (MC) Aqu **2°** (!); XI Psc 8°; XII Ari 13°. The scribe seems to have confused the symbol of Mercury with that of Jupiter.

47. On Ammonius's date of birth, see the introduction by L. G. Westerink to *Prolegomènes à la philosophie de Platon*, ed. idem et al., Paris, 1990, p. XI. As for the primogeniture of Ammonius over his brother Heliodorus, see Damascius (as in n. 41), fr. 57B, pp. 158, ll. 13–159, l. 5 (*Suda*, s.v. Αἰδεσίας = alpha iota.79.31–34).

48. It is important to point out that, long before the lifetime of the author of Anon. *in Ptol.*, it had become customary in astrological manuals to present sample nativities anonymously, even if the biographical data provided in this or that horoscope's discussion made the identification of the respective native by the reader easy: see, e.g., the case of the horoscope of Emperor Hadrian by Antigonus of Nicea and, more generally, Heilen (as in n. 11), pp. 528–31. So, if Heliodorus was honoured by the anonymous commentator through the preservation of his master's nativity, there must have been some contemporary readers in the Alexandrian Neoplatonic milieu (especially other students of Heliodorus) who would have understood the native's identity and appreciated the homage.

49. If this was the case, it is not to be excluded that Heliodorus used his own nativity in his lectures to illustrate astrological doctrines, following the example of predecessors such as Hephaestion of Thebes, *Apotelesmaticorum libri tres*, ed. D. Pingree, I, Leipzig, 1973, Heph.Theb. 2.2.23: ἐγὼ ἐτέχθην; see also Heilen (as in n. 11), p. 297, on Hor. gr. 380.XI.26. After all, if H^1 was Heliodorus's horoscope, the anonymous commentator must have learned about it from Heliodorus himself.

50. Any deviations in the illustrations from the positions given in the critical edition of the *Anonymous Commentary* or in the manuscript in question are indicated in bold. The names of the signs and planets in square brackets are absent from the illustration; [-] means that the illustration does not give the position of a planet.

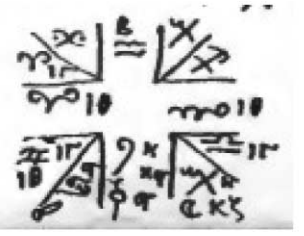

	Fig. A1.2	Text
[Saturn]	Leo 26º	Leo 26º
[Jupiter]	[-]	Cnc 0º 30’
[Mars]	[-]	Tau 20º
Sun	Cnc	Cnc 1º
Venus	Leo 6º	Leo 6º
[Mercury] (?)	Gem 19º	Gem 19º (9º **K**)
Moon	Vir 27º	Vir 27º

FIGURE A1.2. **K** = MS, Bod. Lib., Savile 12, s. s. XIV[1], fol. 267[r]. Cusps of the places in the local sphere: I (AS) Tau 19°; II Gem 13°; III Cnc 6°; IV (IC) Leo **8°**; V Vir 8°; VI Lib 13°; VII (DS) Sco 19°; VIII Sag [-]; IX Cap [-]; X (MC) Aqu **2°**; XI Psc [-]; XII Ari 13°.

Horoscope 2: H[2] (Figure A2)

	Fig. A2.1	Text
Saturn	Leo	Leo
Jupiter	Cnc 28º	Cnc 28’ (28º **Ω**)
[Mars]	[-]	Tau 22º
Sun	Cap 1º	Cap 1º
[Venus]	[-]	Leo 6º (**U**)
Mercury	Sag 19º	Sag 19º
Moon	Vir 27º	Vir 27º

FIGURE A2.1. **U** = MS Oxford, BL, Auctarium T.5.4, s. XIII[4], fol. 78[v]. Cusps of the places in the local sphere: I (AS) Tau 19°; II Gem [-]; III Cnc [-]; IV (IC) Leo [-]; V Vir [-]; VI [Lib] [-]; VII (DS) Sco 19°; VIII Sag [-]; IX Cap [-]; X (MC) Aqu [-]; XI [Psc] [-]; XII [Ari] [-].

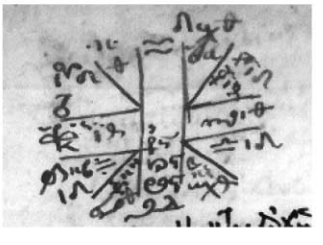

	Fig. A2.2	Text
Saturn	Leo **6º**	Leo
Jupiter	Cnc 28º	Cnc 28’ (28º **Ω**)
Mars	Tau 22º	Tau 22º
Sun	Cap 1º	Cap 1º
Venus	Leo 6º	Leo 6º (**U**)
Mercury	Sag 19º	Sag 19º
Moon	Vir 27º	Vir 27º
Asc. Node	Leo 6º	

FIGURE A2.2. **U** = MS Bod. Lib., Auctarium T.5.4, s. XIII[4], fol. 80[v]. Cusps of the places in the local sphere: I (AS) Tau 19°; II Gem 14°; III Cnc 9°; IV (IC) Leo 4°; V Vir 9°; VI Lib 14°; VII (DS) Sco 19°; VIII Sag 14°; IX Cap 9°; X (MC) Aqu 4°; XI Psc 9°; XII Ari 14°.

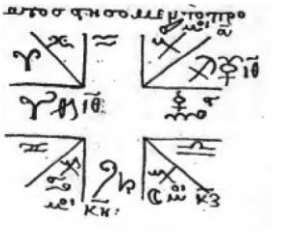

	Fig. A2.3	Text
Saturn	Leo	Leo
Jupiter	Cnc 28º	Cnc 28' (28º **Ω**)
Mars	Tau **19º**	Tau 22º
Sun	Cap 1º	Cap 1º
Venus	Sco 6º	Sco 6º (**K**)
Mercury	Sag 19º	Sag 19º
Moon	Vir 27º	Vir 27º

FIGURE A2.3. **K** = MS Bod. Lib., Savile 12, s. s. XIV[1], fol. 203[r]. Cusps of the places in the local sphere: I (AS) Tau [-]; II Gem [-]; III Cnc [-]; IV (IC) Leo [-]; V Vir [-]; VI Lib [-]; VII (DS) Sco [-]; VIII Sag [-]; IX Cap [-]; X (MC) Aqu [-]; XI Psc [-]; XII Ari [-].

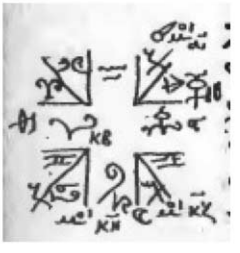

	Fig. A2.4	Text
Saturn	Leo	Leo
Jupiter	Cnc 28º	Cnc 28' (28º **Ω**)
Mars	Tau 22º	Tau 22º
Sun	Cap 1º	Cap 1º
Venus	Sco 6º	Sco 6º (**K**)
Mercury	Sag 19º	Sag 19º
Moon	Vir 27º	Vir 27º

FIGURE A2.4. **K** = MS Bod. Lib., Savile 12, s. s. XIV[1], fol. 203[v] (= Fig. A2.3). Cusps of the places in the local sphere: I (AS) Tau [-]; II Gem [-]; III Cnc [-]; IV (IC) Leo [-]; V Vir [-]; VI Lib [-]; VII (DS) Sco [-]; VIII Sag [-]; IX Cap [-]; X (MC) Aqu [-]; XI Psc [-]; XII Ari [-].

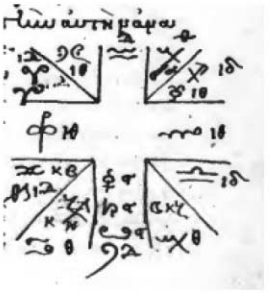

	Fig. A2.5	Text
Saturn	Leo **6º**	Leo
Jupiter	Cnc 28º	Cnc 28' (28º **Ω**)
Mars	Tau 22º	Tau 22º
Sun	Cap 1º	Cap 1º
Venus	Leo 6º	Sco 6º (**K**)
Mercury	Sag 19º	Sag 19º
Moon	Vir 27º	Vir 27º
Asc. Node	Leo 6º	

FIGURE A2.5. **K** = MS Bod. Lib., Savile 12, s. s. XIV[1], fol. 206[r] (= Fig. A2.2). Cusps of the places in the local sphere: I (AS) Tau 19°; II Gem 14°; III Cnc 9°; IV (IC) Leo 4°; V Vir 9°; VI Lib 14°; VII (DS) Sco 19°; VIII Sag 14°; IX Cap 9°; X (MC) Aqu 4°; XI Psc **19°** (!); XII Ari 14°.

	Fig. A2.6	Text
[Saturn]	[-]	Leo
[Jupiter]	Cnc 28º	Cnc 28' (28º **Ω**)
[Mars]	[-]	Tau 22º
Sun	Cap 1º	Cap 1º
[Venus]	[-]	Sco 6º (**K**)
Mercury	Sag 19º	Sag 19º
Moon	Vir 27º	Vir 27º

FIGURE A2.6. **A** = MS B. Angelica, Gr. 74, s. XIV^{2}, fol. 63^{v}. Cusps of the places in the local sphere: I (AS) [Tau] [-]; II [Gem] [-]; III Cnc [-]; IV (IC) Leo [-]; V Vir [-]; VI Lib [-]; VII (DS) Sco [-]; VIII Sag [-]; IX Cap [-]; X (MC) Aqu [-]; XI [Psc] [-]; XII [Ari] [-].

	Fig. A2.7	Text
Saturn	**Tau 29º**	Leo
Jupiter	Cnc 28º	Cnc 28' (28º **Ω**)
Mars	**Ari** 22º	Tau 22º
Sun	Cap 1º	Cap 1º
Venus	**Gem 6º**/Leo 6º	Leo 6º
Mercury	Sag 19º	Sag 19º
Moon	Vir 27º	Vir 27º

FIGURE A2.7. **Q** = MS BAV, Barb. Gr. 274, s. XVI^{3}, fol. 117^{v} (= Fig. 2). Cusps of the places in the local sphere: I (AS) Tau 19°; II Gem 20°; III Cnc 12°; IV (IC) Leo 4°; V Vir 1°; VI Lib 9°; VII (DS) Sco 19°; VIII Sag 20°; IX Cap 12°; X (MC) Aqu 4°; XI Psc 1° (!); XII Ari 9°.

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