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Manuel I Komnenos and Michael Glykas: A Twelfth-Century Defence and Refutation of Astrology

Demetra George

Part 2: Manuel I Komnenos' Defence of Astrology

Abstract. Manuel Komnenos, emperor of the Byzantine Empire from 1143-1180, utilised astrology in his political and personal life, as well as supporting translations of occult literature in his court. When the Church Patriarch presented Manuel with a letter from a simple monk claiming that the astrological teaching was a sacrilege, Manuel could not allow a charge of heresy to be levelled against him. He composed a defence of astrology, asserting that it was compatible with Christian doctrine. This treatise is his only surviving document, and this is the first time that it has been translated from the Greek into any language since its composition in the twelfth century. The commentary takes up specific points for clarification.

A letter issued by the illustrious and pious king Porphyrogenetos,¹ lord Manuel Komnenos, filled with many lofty and compelling arguments, a defence against a letter from a certain monk of the imperial Pantokrator monastery² which disparaged the doctrines of the astrological art and called the teaching a sacrilege.

Most honoured father, your letter, which has been entrusted to my highness, was read through to me at once. Just as you supposed, it consisted of an attack against the science and art of astrology,³ composed from passages from authoritative writings.⁴ The letter, worthy of a simple monk, was not written in a well-planned and logical manner, but rather an altogether ignorant and inaccurate one. It is clear that the monk who wrote it does not have any erudition nor is he a sensible scholar in accordance with our holy teaching and its interpreters.⁵ At any rate it seemed to my highness at first best to not reply to the letter, but to

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restrain myself from taking offence in all matters. However, I also wished fully to assure you who are hesitant in regarding both the more serious doctrines and the matters with which a man who is receptive to thought and knowledge concerns himself. Also you inappropriately and in many ways overturn the creation which has been rightly and harmoniously made and set in order by God (and for this reason, it is in need of much study). You have not discerned correctly the place of astrology, but included together under a single name the ill-omened practices as well, which wrongly are supposed to be the subjects of astrology, since you considered the stars as ensouled and for this reason the making of charms and invocations,⁶ which very attempt is unholy and rejected by all wise men. Even if you had not laid this matter out, still my highness was moved to a defence and to the composition of the present letter. All the more, because you called heretics those persons who pursue the science of astrology, my highness defends the truth itself and these people. Because you have excluded them from the community of Christians, my highness writes to you that nothing which has been introduced by God is useless to the life of men and is to be rejected, but everything was introduced and came to be by his providence so as to be useful for the life of man⁷ (but rather by those who suppose these matters thus or otherwise, if these matters seem of little account or not). If at least in the case of the slightest objects, that is plants and roots and fish and rocks, indeed if there is a purpose even for a heap of soil, how much more in the case of that heavenly and very beautiful body and of the celestial bodies in it [.....lacuna] God put into this group what was useful for the constitution of the objects there.

Therefore if we see that the great light of heaven ascending towards the north and evaporating the water of the earth impregnates the plants, heating and warming them for a longer time, makes them greatly flourish and return to life as if they had previously died due to the cold, and arouses plant life for generation, and even more so, if it arouses and restores beasts to breeding, the sun also prepares the environment in the bottoms of the waters to procreate by warming in it the seeds of the fish, and disposes the souls of men to regard their work in a more stalwart manner. The moon, which is arrayed at the beginning of the night by God is a helper to the sun, and moistens the crops and warms them with a certain moderate heat and grants that they ripen through the glow of the sun and its eternal fire. We observe that the conditions here of both men and animals under the moonlight are in sympathy with the moon's waning and waxing. For instance, the weasel is denied the liver during the moon's

waning and, in turn, when the moon waxes the weasel recovers that which was given up. The oysters, clams, zoophytes, and all the cartilaginous fish are simultaneously affected with the light of the moon. The marrow and brains of animals have a greater amount of their matter when the moon is full, but in some way are more depleted when the moon is diminished.⁸ And as we specifically see that when the stars rise toward the north, at their conjunctions and, at the full moons, the weather changes in diverse ways. The winds blow more violently when the stars rise and, in turn, relax more and abate with their declinations. Seas fill up and then recede in accordance with the rhythm of the positions of the lights, and, in general, rivers also are affected with the light of moon. Bodies placed under the moon's light putrefy. In every way the environment is affected by these lights, and the animals here who by necessity are a part of the environment are likewise disposed in accordance with the quality of the environment.⁹ How can we not affirm that there are certain powers in the other stars as well, whose meetings and combinations reveal the manifold qualities of bodies and, in accordance with the emanations of these things from the heavens to the earth, clearly indicate the manifestations of the future? In all ways, unless someone desires clearly to refute this argument and to contend the clarity and truth of the matter at hand, will he agree to these propositions and accept that is not only the two lights which are active in the cosmos, and will he reject the notion that the rest of the sky is fixed and does not have any practical effect? For if the sun and moon have an effect, then by necessity so do the other stars. If someone were to destroy the power of the stars and their indications, by necessity he would also destroy the power of the sun and of the moon and the rest of the planets. But this cannot be so, save that the indications from the celestial bodies are known to few and to those who consider and apprehend rather subtly and scientifically.

For if an ignorant man should hear a wise man saying, 'Do not touch a certain part of the body with iron when the moon is next to the animal that is closely related to that part', he will hear what is said as meaningless and useless.¹⁰ But the wise man will hear these words as an adage which is governed by natural law, and will accept it as worthwhile. The moon also has the closest relationship with all things here on earth, including our bodies, and it indicates this whenever it passes through the Zodiac, which is physically analogous and related to each part of our bodies.¹¹ The moon is naturally moister than everything else because it is nearer to the earth than the other stars, and it partakes most of the earth's

exhalations.¹² Thus the moon places more moisture in the part of the body that is analogous to the zodiacal sign through which it is passing. Therefore one must be cautious when touching this part of the body with a scalpel, because if it is somehow cut, the flow of moisture to that place becomes greater; as moisture flows to it, inflammation consequently will follow.

Again if an ignorant person should hear, 'do not give anyone a purgative when the moon conjuncts Jupiter', the man who is unknowledgeable surely will not understand.¹³ But the man who is skilled in these teachings knows that Jupiter is temperate by nature, the reason for which will be given below, and correspondingly that it strengthens bodies. Thereupon he seeks to understand why the power of the purgative is blunted during the conjunction of this planet, and on account of this the drug becomes too impotent to draw out the toxic matter and to wrestle against his disposition. It is always the case that when the physical constitution is weak, the drug completely prevails and is able to extract matter from the depth, acting in accordance with its appropriate nature.

Therefore if a person should pay attention to these and similar sayings, and attempts the deed at the correct time, knowing the physical causes behind the sayings and taking precautions, and doing all things with God, in no way will he offend God. Thus when a person knows the substances which are in excess in his own body and properly uses a regimen appropriate to the temperament of the body, administering this as if the sickness came about from an excess of black bile or yellow bile or some other evil humour, he will diminish the illness through the use of a healthy regimen. Therefore in the same way that a person does not err by administering these procedures in accordance with his own temperament by utilising a healthy regimen, neither does the person who is attentive to this astrological theory. It is something natural and has been given from God for the opportune management of life and of this human body, and it does not transgress against the holy writings.¹⁴ For the use of those opportune and serviceable aids which arise from an uncontrived source for the management of one's own bodily concerns is not unholy, as you have said. It is the effects of these things alone that foretell the powers and the combinations and qualities that have been given by God to the stars. The misuse of the art clearly appears in the case when certain people discourse with stars through invocations, such as those who cast nativities.¹⁵ It is for this reason that astrologers are called magicians, because they turn away from the straight path and deviate toward the unholy. This is in every way a sacrilege that should be overturned

according to the teachings of holy men, as will be discussed below. Indeed to know in advance what will be, either bad or good, and not be willing to avert the bad nor to appropriate the good through prayer and beneficence, but to rest confident on the grounds that what is expected, whether bad or good, will turn out without opposition according to the goodwill of God or according to surrender to the changing power of the stars, when it is clear that this has come about in accordance with God's will, and for this reason to be carelessly disposed toward providence and the other benefits through which God is propitiated, this is an error.¹⁶ It is the unreasonable use of this art in an unsuitable and overly complex manner pursued for destructive purposes that is worthy of absolute silence and truly worthy of condemnation.¹⁷

Therefore according to the arguments that have been presented, the stars are only indications of the three times, the past, the present, and the future, and they act in accordance with natural laws and with their own specific natures. That which acts according to its nature is also useful for life. Therefore it is not worthless. The stars are not causative, because their bodies are lifeless, unintelligent and without perception. Thus when dealing with the stars through close observation, one does not make requests of them nor gain knowledge from their responses, as do those who make enchantments to the daimons. Rather, by knowing the nature of the stars and their combinations and the revealing configuration, one infers what is and what will be.¹⁸

However, the art seem liable to err for two reasons, and this will be the case in certain conditions, one from the shortcomings of men who practice it, 'for the calculations of men are faulty and their thinking is liable to be in error'.¹⁹ The other reason is due to men laying claim to the plans of God. Just as He wishes, there He desires to work miracles. For this reason the wonder truly is a wonder, whenever events occur contrary to expectation and already are in despair of human salvation, and then the power and strength of God shines forth just as we shall demonstrate from the examples as our argument continues.

If you introduce the argument from the books of Moses, 'Let these things [i.e., the sun, the moon and the stars] be for signs and for seasons and for days and years',²⁰ we will accept this verse as prophetic, but we will show you from the most authoritative writing itself, the Gospel of our Lord, that the gospel bears witness to astrology.²¹ Matthew said, 'For we have seen his star in the East and we have come to worship him'.²² Therefore if astrology was not indicative of the future, but was non-existent and false, the evangelist would not have mentioned the star's

name.²³ For the rest of the signs that followed closely at that time sufficed. But as it is, he inquires and gives additional evidence that through the beholding of this star, the Magi were led on the road toward the recognition of the truth. They were fully aware when our Lord fully accomplished the great mystery of divine incarnation upon the earth,²⁴ but he was known to them through an unfamiliar and newly shining star as God upon earth and as man, king, and mortal.²⁵ They indicated this recognition through their gifts, bringing him gold as to a king, frankincense as to a god, and myrrh as to a mortal. Because the Magi were experts in the prognostications of human destiny from the positions of the stars, they knew the place and the nation where Jesus would be born from the appearance of a particular star and of the zodiacal sign in which this star appeared, noting its inclination and its configuration.²⁶ For stars, by their different motions and manifestations, both in terms of their configuration and the zodiacal sign in which they appear, clearly indicate beforehand variations of great matters.²⁷

If someone asserts that the star was a new star that never had been seen before and that its motion was contrary to nature, as it seemed to move in a path from north to south,²⁸ then we may say that this is a wonder in the same way that the eclipse of the sun at the crucifixion was a wonder. And we accept the authority of Matthew who has said this. For it was likely that some extraordinary portent should be manifest in heaven at the time of such a mystery that would indicate the mystery that was brought to completion upon earth, from which it was possible for the strangest part of the mystery to be known to those men who are engaged in such activities. From this observation they gathered together and conjectured about the one who was begotten, that he was God and king and mortal. The star was called the newly appearing star because it was different from the stars that normally appear. In the same way that the eclipse that occurred at the time of the passion of Christ was unnatural, but nevertheless made clear to the expert his voluntary suffering, as will be demonstrated more fully, so also the new and unusual star which occurred at his birth made a prior indication beyond the other stars the extraordinary nature of the one who was born and that the astrological art is substantial. For even if we assert that the star was a comet and was a natural occurrence, or if we say that it was extraordinary and new, from either argument we can establish the substantiality of the art and the unwavering accuracy of those who made the observation.²⁹ We also establish from both arguments the capacity to discover personal salvation and its usefulness for those who truly consider such matters.

And consider the possibility that what you say is actually the opposite [of the truth]. Knowledgeable men who have employed this have been found using it for the discovery of a common eternal salvation and, for these men, this art has become the protection of the soul's salvation. Therefore it is clear that these arts are not forbidden by God. For if they were, neither in his birth nor in his crucifixion would such extraordinary celestial phenomena have attended as signs. At any rate God made these celestial phenomena for signs of the greatest events. So how can you say that they are the opposite and have no effect? You see how God was well pleased that stars that he introduced and created are known, and how he placed into them their own powers that indicate future events. For first of all, just as God separated the light from the darkness, afterwards he then introduced the sun and placed the disorderly scattered light in its disc, so that no one would think that the light existed from the beginning along with the sun, but rather that it be universally recognised that it was from the creative power of God that both exist, namely the creation of the light and the sun individually and their union over disparate parts. Thus both at the time of the crucifixion and at the birth, God showed the indicatory power of the stars. At the birth the star was unnatural and its movement was opposite to a star's usual path. It was due to these observations and from their art that the Magi knew about the wonder, but not only from their perception of the star, but also, as God was well pleased, he desired by means of a wonder to make a prior indication through the star about the mystery that was going to occur. Thus even the moon was attendant at the time of the unnatural eclipse, having conjoined the sun. It was from this realisation that even the Areopagite knew that God was suffering.

If someone explains that this star was an angel,³⁰ we concede the truth of the argument and we accept the explanation. In this manner we affirm and we conjecture, since the star itself was an indication of that beneficent world saviour such as the one who was born. For if it was a messenger, that which is second by nature after the first light, the intelligible and immaterial substance would not have revealed or communicated the mystery to the unbelieving Magi. For the entire miracle of the messenger would have been less, so to speak, and not filled with such unspeakable awe and amazement when it made clear to the Magi that the one who had been born was god-man, king, and both immortal and mortal, having been born in the area of Jerusalem.

Indeed comets that always appear from time to time are said by our ancestors to be messengers, prognosticators and guides of certain great changes in the world. In order that we might show from the events that

have occurred in our latter time that which we have asserted and in order that an the example might be drawn from the lesser occurrence, a star appeared that was a comet when the Germans came through the country of the Romanians whose transit the astrologers had predicted.³¹ Moreover they also knew that a similar comet had appeared, in the days of Lord Alexios, famous among kings, the grandfather of my highness, when the western peoples were about to pass through the land of the Romanians.³² So behold that the art was not faulty, but that events came to fruition just as the astrologers proclaimed.

After the passage of some time from the resurrection of Christ, was not the great theologian Dionysus the Areopagite guided toward his faith, but not from these things? When he heard the great Paul teaching in Athens about Christ who had died on the cross for us, he asked the time of the passion. Upon cross-examining him, he recognised that that person was Christ Himself, because based upon the time, he knew that the eclipse was unnatural. For Dionysus the Areopagite was a learned man and accurately knew that a solar eclipse can never take place when the moon is fourteen days past the conjunction with the sun. It occurs only when the moon conjoins the sun and is located at one of the nodes.³³ For this reason, you know, he even said to one of his friends who was travelling with him at that time, 'Either God suffers or the son of God also suffers together with he who suffers'. As we learn from the letter, he immediately became a disciple of the apostle, perceiving from the clearly unnatural eclipse of the sun that the herald was speaking the truth. In this way he was cleaved to Christ through Paul.³⁴ It is clear to you from this story that there exists a very great abundance of divine knowledge, and the hope of salvation belongs to those who make a wise use of it as well as to those who are capable in a knowledgeable way of directing every thought toward Christ. So understand from the fact that the eclipse occurred unnaturally that a person who is capable of knowledge recognized that God suffered and also that the wonder was shown to be a true wonder. Such a realisation would not have been apparent to those who do not know how eclipses naturally occur, since eclipses always take place in a specific manner, but only to one who knows about such things. In a similar manner at the birth of Christ, the wonder of the mystery was known to have been brought to completion by those who know these things through the unaccustomed manifestation of the newly shining star. Consequently it was through the stars that God was pleased to confirm to the messengers the recent mystery that was unknowable and difficult to understand. Therefore reflect upon the fact that when God innovates

nature, he cannot oppose anything that operates according to its own nature, and consider this, even in the case of the moon. For at the time of Christ's passion the moon, attendant of the eastern horizon, was quite a distance from the sun, and by God's will ascended and was united with the sun. Thus it is clear from these observations that the events judged from stars are unfailing to those men among the scientific astrologers who observe them carefully.

Also it is said that a certain archbishop of Thessalonika³⁵ ended a famine by being attentive to the risings of the stars when he cleaved the furrows in the earth and immediately cast in the seed, and through this careful observation he prepared the earth at the best time for the bearing of fruit. And a certain man who was digging in the long wall found a coffin and when he took off its lid he discovered a very large dead body and a letter which was attached to the chest stating these things: 'Christ will be born from the Virgin Mary and I believe in him. At the time of the sovereigns Constantine and Irene you will see me again, o sun!'

We hear also the bishop of Patara, famed for excellence, saying that many things which touch upon the truth come from such arts. For example, the judgment later showed that even John the Damascian, the wisest among the fathers, conducted many physical inquiries concerning these matters and also wrote treatises about them.³⁶ And that the great Anastasios alluded to these things in his chapters where he provides natural arguments concerning the elements, which in all ways enjoy in the effluences of the stars.³⁷ The person who knows and rightly conjectures that the stars do not have perception is not mistaken, rather he says that through the hope of God the properties of the stars act according to signs and not according to active causes.³⁸

Let us use an analogy. In sexual intercourse and union, the sanctioned manner in which a rational man comes to be born seems to be through lawful union, as God commanded, which is at all events blameless because it is accomplished naturally. Indeed the abuse of intercourse against the laws and the command of God is reproached as sinful, even if at that time man effects reproduction naturally and unconsciously. In the same way concerning the powers of stars, if a person utilises a sound calculation to the best of his ability and according to the command of God, as at the time of the crucifixion, the eclipse and, at the time of the birth, the star, he would not be mistaken. But if somehow he goes beyond what is necessary [in his thoughts] in regards to the intelligence of these ensouled, active, and causative stars, as rational and perceptive, he is condemned. For without perception and in accordance with natural

properties which the Demiurge placed in the stars [...lacuna] they affect the environment and the beings in it. If someone were to ask how the stars are not always active in accordance with these qualities, he would hear that just as every sperm that has been released from a man does not result in a human being, because the generative sperm is hindered due to the dryness, moisture, or heat of the womb or due to the greater or lesser amount of sperm, or any other cause, in the same manner because of certain unseen causes, but mainly due to the will and power of God, the stars are not activated according to their own power. As neither nature nor the womb nor the sperm are considered the cause or creator, even if they seem to be active as causes in accordance with the material and specific form, so also neither are the stars considered to be creative and perceptive, because they also have influence from the ordinance of God. At any rate the person who perceives in this way and conjectures piously about the law and aim of the Demiurge's divine providence does not offend God in any way.

Let us also consider that the following arguments are similar to the previous ones. They assert that Abraham apprehended the creator from his creations,³⁹ and also in regards to Seth, son of Adam, it was said that these matters were first taught by an angel.⁴⁰ For it was necessary that knowledge which existed so long ago be conveyed through an angel to this mundane human nature.

Well then, after these men, did not Constantine, the father and the apostle of kings, use this art when he wanted to lay the foundation for this New Rome of ours, being concerned that the city should forever remain invincible to its enemies and that it be filled with faith? As a sign of these things he carefully observed the northernmost position and movement of the stars. When he consulted Valens, the wisest practitioner of this sort of inquiry, Valens advised waiting for fourteen years for auspicious configurations to take place.⁴¹ But if perhaps from time to time difficulties should befall the city as a result of earthquakes or fire, and he should become denounced by the more learned of the inhabitants of the city, this example too serves as an illustration for the veracity of the horoscope at that time.⁴² And the astrologer predicted this, for he was unable to wholly bring into accord all the larger and smaller variables, and to accomplish everything that was wanted by Constantine. So if in fact the astrologer foretells these events and you see the events actually occur, do you not accept the astrologer and do you not glorify the teaching? And moreover he took note that the star of Saturn lying in the second sector of the zodiac made clear that the wealth of the citizens was

being spent on the monks, since Saturn itself is solitary, just as we see this occurring even until today.⁴³ Or will you reproach and cast off this art as something renounced? In no way. For if Constantine, that Christ-loving king, that apostle among apostles and zealot of piety and the most pious kings and bishops along with him knew the teaching was heretical, as you called it, and named those who use it heretics, in the words of the fathers who hold contrary opinions, if anyone of whom had presented an argument such as this against those Christians who follow this teaching, and for any other reasons and higher dispensations had condemned the teaching to silence, they would not have used it at critical times.⁴⁴ Since the holy men are revered as the voices concerning this teaching, we believe and we affirm these things, but we revere and we worship and we do not speak against them. But we are opposed to your crude and uneducated discourse which did not distinguish nor clearly state which part of astrology is rejected and reviled as I explained above and will further describe below. Rather you called those who pursue this art unholy and moreover that they transgress beyond the measure of every unholiness, among which, as we have said, many of the great kings and bishops are numbered.

For even the great theologian Gregory,⁴⁵ when praising Basil the Great in respect of his other doctrines, added the following, 'He partook of astrology to the extent that he was not driven into confusion by those who were clever in these matters; he disregarded the rest as useless'. And he did not say that it was heretical or daimonical or against God, but that it was useless, indicating that this aspect of astrology simply had no value to those beings who live a spiritual life. He said that the rest also is superfluous, namely philosophy or a regimen, the tools, the drugs, the therapies, the so-called pleasures, but not for those who are concerned with life and worldly matters. It is also clear that this is the case from the written statements of the *Hexameron* of Basil, whom you introduced, and that he called the art difficult to comprehend due to the most subtle division of hours, and the consequent failure of predictions.⁴⁶ And he said that astrology is likely to be faulty for this reason, but in truth he did not call it heretical or the people who use it heretics. For in one place Basil considers the difficulty in comprehending the art as virtually impossible, and he declares this. In another place he considers that more noteworthy persons make use of astrology through invocations and enchantments, on the basis of which the ignorant believe that the stars are ensouled, but he rejects this as unholy, and so it is. For reasonably, Basil stigmatises this

art as liable to fail in many ways, but not only because of its calculations, but also because God frequently wants to work wonders.

For know that the Jew who prophesied to that great bishop about his death, having determined this from abundantly clear signs, was not in error because of the art, but due to the fact that God desired to work a miracle through the prayers of this holy man, namely the salvation of the unbeliever and his entire household. The bishop awaited out his death in the flesh, according to the length of time the Hebrew had calculated, and when he had baptised the Hebrew along with the entire household, after three hours he gave over his life to the Lord. He said to the Hebrew, 'It is not because of the art that you have spoken wrongly. For it was bound to happen to me that I die at that hour, but God graced me with these three hours for your salvation, wishing to assure you that he is Lord of life and death'. And see how even the bishop truly bore witness to the significations from such an art.

It was not necessary when you attended to these matters to consider that which is non-existent as existent and to brand as heretic, delighting in your own opinion, even the very men who were not named as heretics by the saints, but rather to accurately observe what is written and its purpose. For the fact that holy men and the civil law itself impose silence in regard to these matters is in the nature of information control. The holy men were considerate of the rank of Christians, so they would not experience any obstacle toward the belief in Christ when they heard prophecies from the genethliologists and other astrologers about a person's destiny and predictions of earthquakes and eclipses and deaths of men due to heights, wars, shipwrecks, or other chance occurrences. They were also concerned that Christians should not think that the planets are gods, or that they are creative agents, causes and perceptible – for in the masses, the majority are easily deceived and more thick-witted about the subtle considerations of existence – and that they do not suppose that the entire power of the administrations here lie in them. Furthermore, that they do not presume that there is no providence here or that they do not believe in atheism or polytheism, and that the gospel of Christ and the zeal and proclamation of the apostles not be found empty. Due to all these reasons, they laid down as a law silence concerning these teachings.⁴⁷ Also the taunt that was hurled against Babylon, 'Where are your astrologers? Let them stand and save you'⁴⁸ was said sarcastically by the prophet Isaiah against those who think the planets are gods, namely those who have placed their hope in them and not in the creator of them, and those who do not, as we do suppose that there exists that the power of God which truly stands over

the stars, namely the power which is capable of preventing the events that have been signified and that are approaching. And Isaiah bore witness that there is some power in addition to that of the stars such as the power that exists through the use of weapons, the army, horses, machines, military counsel, practical advice. For God would not have confirmed what is insubstantial through the use of the term, but rather through the term he indicated its substantiality and that that power in which they too had confidence was greater and more evident than these things; and yet power in its own right is present in all the things that were mentioned previously [i.e., star], and yet apart from God, it is unsound, but it is great with the support of God. Therefore in the same way that the previous things that were enumerated are not entirely ineffectual by themselves, so neither are the stars or those who busy themselves with them considered useless. However, God reasonably brought retribution to the Babylonians and he reproached the infidelity of those people who had used the knowledge from these sources against God himself and his plan and his will. It is necessary as well for one to look down upon that which is viewed by the eyes of sense through the investigation of such things, for the eyes are short-sighted and empty, bowing to the earth and incapable of looking up. Similarly we know God as the Lord of heaven and all that is in it, who makes people poor and wealthy, causes death and engenders life, arbitrates for kings and dynasts and beggars, and changes everything whenever he wills and as he wills. In turn, between those who are clearly making creation into a god and those of us who think correctly, the Scripture arbitrates, 'They summon chariots and men on horses, we summon the name of our Lord'.⁴⁹ For according to what has been said, 'The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and the king is not saved by his great army, and the giant is not saved in the magnitude of his strength'.⁵⁰

And David, the son of Jesse who used a sling and killed Goliath is a witness to the power of God, a feat which no contemporary in any way would venture to do in that manner. For how would anyone with three stones take a stand against a person who has been fully armed with a set of armour, unless through the power of God? Or when would a dwarf too throw down a giant in wrestling? The person who uses material weapons and strength as instruments for his own safety, looking towards God and hoping for his mercy, possesses the weapons well and securely, because he understands correctly. But the person who believes in his own safety through these things alone, he is thwarted in every respect and will not be helped in the least by these weapons. For the fastest running horse is

tripped up by nothing and falls, or otherwise when he unexpectedly stumbles, he is found useless in battle. The weapons which were well fortified, when struck by a small javelin, reveal that the person who has placed his entire safety on them and considered himself safe through his own agency is oftentimes a corpse. Indeed, by this argument even the great apostle Paul called the elemental spirits beggars,⁵¹ since they are bereft of their own power and act in accordance with divine command and, again, are composed by his own activity, whenever their creator wants, just like the fire in the Chaldean oven.⁵² And once, the nature of water which had been activated red hot around the sacrificial wood was seen through the third pouring of water and through the hands of Thesbitos.⁵³ And so that we might believe the argument from the examples which we observe, often when a bad occurrence is expected by the astrologers and is averted through prayer and other good deeds, we attribute this as a miracle of God and we acknowledge the grace of God who has ordained this. And, in turn, when a favourable expectation is set forth that something good will come about, with the approval of God beyond expectation, often a complete reversal occurs. As Paul said, 'In order that God may be everything in all things', that all is of God and not of us.⁵⁴

In the case of those who have been given up by the doctors and who expect no aid from the medical art, but who clearly await death, whenever we see a remission through beneficence and repentance, we attribute it to the power of God. We do not reproach the medicine for being faulty, whenever God desires to work wonders, and we would never say that this medicine is ineffective. In the same way, we should not reproach such a discipline even as the astrological art, since both the medical and astrological arts are a skilled guess which aim at the diminution of the expected bad outcome.⁵⁵ For we attribute to the power of God the surfeit of good things and an increase which was anticipated, and not what was a demand in accordance with the prediction of the astrologer. If this were not the case, the occurrence would not be a wonder nor even considered a wonder, but simply as following nature and a matter of fact. We could not distinguish precisely that which is an intermediary between the power of God and the nature of heaven, nor would we wonder at God as someone awesome in his deeds.

But now in the assurance that the stars are senseless and inanimate, we say that heaven is a throne of God and has a certain influence, as it were, a declaration of the utmost power of God.⁵⁶ The extreme power of the person who is sitting above them is known analogously from this.

Moreover, it is necessary for those who are capable of understanding well and correctly to make a closer and more searching inquiry about the matters concerning heaven in order that the magnificence of God may be known from his creation as in the verse, "The heavens declare the glory of God"⁵⁷ not by using speech, nor by words, but by silently sounding in the ears of reason, shouting forth the divine power and providence through themselves and through the manifestations of the natural effects of celestial bodies. Thus the knowledgeable person might better understand the contemplations of God and be illuminated toward a knowledge of God from the power which has been concealed in those heavenly bodies, by seeing the comparisons and contrasts towards each other and apprehending the wisdom of God and the demiurgic intelligence.

If a throne of a man who is shining forth with excellence, or if his robe or sandals have a certain power and imperceptible effect, and we do not completely see them nor approach them directly but, reflect upon the power in them when we look with the eyes of the heart to the one who uses these things when we touch them with caution, we receive the grace from them. In the same manner when we see the throne of the king we approach it with reverence when we consider the person who sits on it. From his reputation we consider that the throne too must be honored, and as we gaze intently upon a throne in the realm of sense perception in the aforementioned way, and that the throne is truly so this way. For everyone is made to understand and is humbled, even if he is disorderly and stubborn by nature, when he sees the throne of the king before him, are we to think that the throne of God has no share of influence and hidden grace and power, and will we thus forget his reputation? And how will we escape the condemnation from the people of good will if we have such an attitude? Mind, we do not revere and worship this throne, but see it only as the throne of God and we interpret it as an indication of his activity.

Come now, let us suppose that someone is the best of artificers and has credentials among many people in respect of his knowledge concerning the building of houses, and that he has built a very beautiful house, and made this structure a wonder worthy of praise. Then, if from somewhere a person of low stature who was a rustic crawling on the ground should come upon this house and should approach it without praise, his mind not being temperate or capable of understanding suitably and wondering at the framework, and if he should praise some parts and criticise other parts, does he not insult the builder? Is the builder not vexed when his works and creations and designs are insulted and despised? On all

accounts. Or do you not think that God too is so insulted with respect to his very fine and wondrous creations and the grand workings of his craft, whenever we overlook these things carelessly as if they were incidental, just as if we were some barbarians in want of reason. And furthermore, when we call those who are capable of subtle thought impious.

Apart from all of these things, since the Scripture says, 'God saw everything, as many things as he created, and behold, it was very good', and nothing was contrary and disorderly to the foundations of God, why ever would we overlook the stars as being creations of God, considering them to be contrary to God because we do not accurately know the works of God. For if they are the creations of God, they are altogether good. See the variety and the harmony and the orderly arrangement and movement of the stars and how they orbit the heavenly circuit in sequence.⁵⁸ You think and you speak unsuitably about this, and you make broad declarations on matters about which you know nothing. You desire to go deeply into those areas which you did not search out correctly, and with a very narrow vessel, namely your own heart, you believe in the expansiveness of God's creation and you desire to encompass the whole by your narrow reckoning and to clearly expound the demiurgic creations of God, which very thing no one up to now has done. Without appropriate experience you have imagined these things, these things in a way opposite to the holy kings and to the truth. You have also insulted the honourable works and creations of God.

But you might say that the devil too is one of God's creations, so thus we ought pay attention to him? But the devil acquired his purpose self-willingly being opposite to the good because of his arrogance, and is said to be against God.⁵⁹ The stars are lifeless creatures, without perception and without premeditation. For this reason they are not opposite to God but remain in their own orbits in which they were arranged by the Demiurge, and also have imperceptible natural effects, and not according to any intention of their own. Sometimes the effects bring about a particular outcome, and at other times they do not. The stars are also active just in this way, just as they have been arranged by the Demiurge, unless there is some hindrance of their activities through the wondrous working of God, as has been said many times. And even if the stars had sense perception, the astrologer would not be able to comprehend what has been signified by them, since they lie concealed in plan and in mystery.

The Founding Chart of Constantinople

Source of data: Vat. gr. 191 on f.397 as cited by Pingree, *Prismata*, 306 (see n. 42 below). According to Manuel's statement that Saturn was in the second house of the horoscope and to the planetary positions cited by Pingree in *Prismata*, 306, unless the tables consulted by the astrologers were inaccurate, the only house system that would place Saturn in the second rather than third house is that of whole signs, which was used by ancient Hellenistic astrologers. This chart is therefore computed using whole sign houses using Janus software.

Appendix: Restricted Astrological Books in the Imperial Library.

The interest in astrology at the Byzantine court from the tenth to fourteenth centuries was reflected in the contents of the imperial library. This brief catalogue listing a number of restricted works dating from approximately 900 to 1388, has survived. We must ask whether these books were restricted because they were rare and in fragile condition or because of their subject matter. Because virtually all of the manuscripts listed in the *CCAG* were translated, recopied, and compiled in Byzantium from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, there is no reason why these manuscripts also could not have been recopied. Thus the fragile condition option seems less likely. One must then wonder whether these books contained either especially accurate methods of prognostication or what would have been considered magical or heretical auxiliary doctrines. The following text is edited from the Angelica MS.29, f.52 in *CCAG* 1: 83-84. These are the restricted books. The rest are astrological books available to the public

Concerning the astrological books once stored in the palace and not circulated. He himself said that the astrological books that are stored in the palace and not given to anyone to read but forbidden are these:

*The Apotelesmatica of Stephen of Alexandria.
Of Aristotle.
Of Theopolis, son of Thomas.
The Book of Chamasus.
The Book of Chalek.
The Book of Issak ben Salomon.
The Book of John, son of Chalek.
The Book of commerce.
The Book of John, son of Mousour concerning retrogrades and detriments.
The Book of the Arabian Fortunes.
The Book of Artasestros encompassing the uses of the stars in the astrological doctrine of some unknown Babylonian.
The Book of Artasestros encompassing the paranatallonta of each degree and the discovery through true attempt.
The Hermetic Mysteries.
The Book of Charaniotus which was discovered among the Hebrews.
The Book of the Babylonian Farek.
The Book concerning the mysteries of astrology.
The Book of Valens concerning the paranatallonta of each degree.
The Book of Masahalla concerning precise ideas.*

References

NB Full details of abbreviated references are given in part I.

1. Porphyrogenetos is an imperial epithet whose literal translation means 'of the purple-born'. This term which began to be used after the eighth century signified that a child had been born after its father had become emperor and addressed the growing concept of hereditary legitimacy for kingship. See *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3: 1701.

2. Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople was a large monastic complex founded by John II Komnenos. Of the many buildings, one church served as a funerary chapel for the Komnenii family, and other buildings housed nuns, monks, and a hospital. In front of his tomb Manuel installed a slab which he had brought from Ephesus in 1169/70 and on which it was believed that Jesus had lain after being taken down from the Cross. (Chon 2.7.222). See *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3: 1575.

3. The words *astronomia* and *astrologia* were used interchangeably until the Middle Ages to designate the astrological art, which was frequently considered to be applied astronomy (Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I.1). In another treatise Michael Glykas distinguishes the differences between the two terms. ('Whether it is necessary to regard the astrological doctrine as altogether evil', Parisines Codex (f 93), *CCAG* 5.1.140-41).

4. *CrÁsij, ewj* has a specialised meaning, 'a passage quoted as an authority from some special usage' *LSJ*.

5. During Manuel's reign there were some educated monks living at the Pantokrator Monastery. See Marin, *Les Moines de Constantinople*, 1897, 403 as cited by Cumont, 107.

6. The making of charms and invocations to compel the elemental spirits associated with the planets to effect a particular action is the basis of astral magic. This was a misuse or misunderstanding of the practices associated with theurgy, a larger body of doctrine advocated by later Neoplatonists such as Iamblichus in *On The Mysteries*. Theurgy attracted the interests of Michael Psellus, an eleventh century Byzantine Neoplatonist, and it may have been from this tradition that Manuel and his contemporaries were aware of the practice. See also E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951. However, magic and sorcery were not uncommon in the twelfth century. Choniates describes several men who were convicted of sorcery by Manuel (Chon. 2.4.144-50). See also

Henry Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Magic* (Washington, DC.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995).

7. The supposition that everything that God makes has a purpose and is not to be rejected was articulated by Basil, 'not a single thing has been created without a reason; not a single thing is useless' (*Hex.* 6.4).

8. The law of increase and decrease in accordance with the waxing and waning of the moon is discussed by Basil (*Hex.* 6.10), and Manuel paraphrases his examples. Abu Ma'shar also described these and other effects of the moon's phases in his *Greater Introduction* 3.13. Also see Cicero *Div.* 2. 19.

9. Manuel here follows rather closely the opening arguments in Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* 1.2 stating that the sun affects everything on earth including the generation of animals, the productiveness of plants, that the moon bestows her effluence on mundane things wherein rivers, seas, plants and animals wax and wane in sympathy with her, and that the passages of fixed stars affect various weather conditions. Boll, *Studien*, 133ff. enumerates parallels to this passage concerning the sun and moon in Cicero (*Div.* 2.42), Philo Judaeus, Cleomedes, and Manilius, and ascribes their likeness to the influence of Posidonius as cited by F.R. Robbins trans., *Tetrabiblos*, (Cambridge 1940), 7. St. Augustine in *Civ. Dei* 5.6 also reiterates the belief that 'It is not entirely absurd to say....that there are certain sidereal influences. We see that the seasons of the year change with the approach and receding of the sun. And with the waxing and waning of the moon we see certain kinds of things grow and shrink, such as sea urchins and oysters, and the moon and the tides of the ocean. But the choices of the will are not subject to the positions of the stars'. Here St. Augustine sets forth the essence of the compromise that was eventually formulated by later theologians which held that while the stars have an effect upon the mundane world and physical bodies, they do not influence the soul of man.

10. 'Pierce not with iron that part of the body which may be governed by the sign actually occupied by the Moon' is the twentieth aphorism from *The Centiloquium*. This work has been ascribed to Ptolemy as well as to Hermes Trismegistus, but Richard Lemay has shown that it actually belongs to Achmad Abu'Ja'far. See Helen Lemay, 'The Stars and Human Sexuality: Some Medieval Scientific Views', *Isis* 71 (1980), 127 ff. *The Centiloquium* was translated from Arabic to Latin by Plato of Tivoli and/or John of Seville in 1136 and became one of the basic textbooks of late medieval astrology. See Haskins, 68-68.

Today this aphorism remains as one of the basic astrological rules in electing dates for surgery. It is based upon the supposition that each zodiacal sign is analogous to a certain part of the body, such as Leo 'ruling' the heart, Pisces ruling the feet, Cancer ruling the stomach and breasts. It is advised not to have

surgery on a day when the moon, which transits through each sign every two and one half days, is in the sign that rules the corresponding body part. As Manuel implies, it is thought that the flow of blood to that area is greater on these days, and therefore increases the possibility of hemorrhage.

11. The notion that the zodiac and the planets are analogous to various parts of the body arises from pre-Socratic speculations concerning the correspondences between the macrocosm and the microcosm, such as Anaximenes' opinion that the human being is a microcosmic model of the macrocosmic Universe, 'Just as our soul which is air holds us together, so it is breath and air which encompass the whole world' (Aet. *Plac.* 1.3.4). This axiom of 'as above, so below', (from the so-called Emerald Tablet of Hermes, sixth-eighth c. CE, see Robb, Alexander, *Alchemy and Mysticism*, Koln: Taschen 1997, pp. 8-9), the correspondence between the whole and the part is central to astrological theory, and this idea was to culminate in the Stoic doctrine of cosmic sympathy which provided a justification for the possibility of divination, including astrology. The astrological term for the attribution of parts of the body to the planets and signs is *melothesia*. This concept is the foundation of medical astrology which continued to be widely practiced throughout the Middle Ages. There exists evidence from the fifth century in a pseudo-Hippocratic treatise entitled *De hebdomadibus* for the development of a medical astrology based upon Iranian doctrines. This work contains a theory on the correspondences between the parts of the body and parts of the whole world which has striking parallels to the 28th chapter of the Zoroastrian cosmological work, the *Greater Bundahishn*, (Zatspram 30. 5-11). See: M.L. West, 'The Cosmology of Hippocrates, *De Hebdomadibus*', *The Classical Quarterly*, 21 (1971), 365-388.

12. Ptolemy stated, 'Most of the moon's power consists of humidifying, clearly because it is close to the earth and because of the moist exhalations therefrom' (*Tetra.* 1.4.2). Robbins (p. 34) notes that it was a doctrine as old as Thales that moisture arising from the earth nourished the heavenly bodies; cf. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin, 1879), 276.

13. *Centiloquium*, XIX. 'The efficacy of purgation is impeded by the Moon's conjunction with Jupiter'. As this aphorism is directly above the preceding one (number XX) that Manuel used, it is likely that he had a text of the work in front of him. Manuel was known for his keen interest in and practice of medicine, and in terms of laying out a medical justification for the use of astrology in this section of his argument, he himself most likely took celestial configurations into consideration in matters of health decisions. This work was translated directly into Greek in eleventh century. See Pingree, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1:215.

14. Manuel is correct when he declares that the medical use of astrology is not condemned. Emperor Constantine circa 320 CE issued the following edict (later incorporated in the Theodosian code):

'The science of those men who are equipped with magic arts and who are revealed to have worked against the safety of men or to have turned virtuous minds to lust shall be punished and deservedly avenged by the most severe laws. *But remedies sought for human bodies shall not be involved in criminal accusation*, nor the assistance that is innocently employed in rural districts in order that the rains may not be feared for the ripe grape harvest or that the harvests may not be shattered by the stones of ruinous hail, since by such devices no person's safety or reputation is injured, but by their action they bring it about that divine gifts and the labours of men are not destroyed' (*Theodosian Code* 16.3). (Italics mine.)

15. Manuel is not altogether accurate here. Regarding the ancient astrologers who cast nativities, i.e., the genethliologists, while some might be guilty of a belief in astral fatalism, this did not imply that they used astrology in a magical or theurgical manner. As early as the first century, there arose a distinction between an astrology that had a spiritual purpose and was transmitted through divine revelation such as the hermetic astrology of Nechepso and Petosiris, and an astrology that was based upon astronomical and mathematical foundations in the tradition of Hipparchus and Ptolemy focusing more on mundane applications such as political, medical, or meteorological prognostications. However, Manuel did denounce genethliologists in this passage to make clear that he did not endorse the notion that astrologers could forecast a person's destiny from their horoscope, as part of his general argument concerning the supremacy of God over the stars.

16. Here Manuel is contrasting the Stoic attitude of resignation to one's fate that is determined either by God or the stars with the Christian point of view that God reserves the right to interfere in his own creations and to suspend natural laws at will. Therefore praying to God for intervention is an affirmation of the Christian belief in God's power and willingness to respond, while resignation or passivity implies less than devout practice. For the Stoic point of view on the benefits of knowing one's future, see Ptolemy *Tetra.* 1.3.11

17. See note 14 above concerning the *Theodosian Code* 16.3. Magical arts that are used for destructive purposes are to be condemned, but those used for beneficial purposes are tolerated.

18. The question of whether the stars are signs or causes, i.e., as the actual physical premeditated causes of events or as portents of coming events was

discussed by both the Neoplatonist Plotinus and his contemporary the Church father Origen. Plotinus maintained that the stars do not cause human events, and explained that they function as handwriting inscribed upon the heavens announcing the future to those who can read it (*Are the Stars Causes*, *Enn.* 2.3). Origen explicitly stated, 'The stars are not causes of men, they are signs. Men are not capable of having a precise knowledge of these things, but they are revealed for the sake of powers greater than human' (*In. genes. comm.*, in Eusebius *Prep. Ev.*, 6.11). Origen allowed for the prescience of God, which does not deny free will, and conceded that the stars, when purged of the doctrine of astral fatalism, could offer information and knowledge of the future. Manuel likewise took this position in his own argument that the stars are signs, not causes, whose information is of use to mankind.

19. Ptolemy pointed out that errors in astrological predictions were due to the inaccurate instruction of the practitioners of the art, rather than of the art itself, as well as to charlatans who for financial profit falsely claimed to be astrologers. Errors were also due to the long intervals of time that it took for astronomical configurations to repeat themselves exactly, and thus to the disparity of the examples on which predictions are based (*Tetra.* 1.2.6-8). To these considerations on the failure of predictions, Manuel added God's volition to intercede over the portents of coming events and to work miracles.

20. *Genesis.* 1.14.

21. The following verses describing signs from celestial phenomena have been used to argue the case for astrology as testified to by the Bible. The Star of Bethlehem that appeared at the birth of Jesus: *Matth.* 2.1-12; the eclipse and earthquake that occurred at the crucifixion: *Matthew.* 27.45; *Mark* 15.33; *Luke* 23.44; the signs that will indicate the end of times: *Matthew* 24.29; *Mark* 13.24-25; *Luke* 21.25.

22. *Matthew* 2.2.

23. Thorndike in *History*, 1: 471 points out that the story of the wise men from the east who had seen the star was formulated and inserted into this gospel in order to secure the support for the kingship of Jesus from astrology, which so many persons then held in high esteem.

24. *Oikonomia* ¹ has a specialised meaning of incarnation. See G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 942.6d.

25. The star of the Magi was an ongoing obstacle to the early Church Fathers' attempts to dismiss the influence of astrology, and in particular to counter the

implication that Christ Himself had been 'born under the decree of the stars'. In the fourth century several theologians put forth assertions that the star of the Magi was not a star at all. John Chrysostom argued that the star was not even a planet or comet, but a miracle from God that was outside the normal course of events (*Hom. on Matth.* 6, Migne, PG 57. 61-72). Diodorus of Tarsus said that it was a divine power with the form of a star (Migne, PG 103.829-77). St. Augustine suggested that Christ caused the star to make a marvelous appearance (*Conta Faustum* 2.15, PL 42,212). Basil of Caesarea (*Hom. on gener.*, PG 31.1469A-1475B) also reiterates these ideas, but this homily is now considered to be spurious.

26. The Magi were a sect of the Persian priesthood who, after the Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 BCE, were exposed to Chaldean astrotheology and celestial divination. It was during the Persian rule of Mesopotamia that the art of horoscopy was invented, and subsequently the Seleucid and Parthian periods saw the development of a sophisticated Hellenistic astrology. Over time the Magi acquired among the ancient Greeks the reputation for being well-versed in magic and astrology.

27. A number of natural theories have been set forth for the identity of the star of Bethlehem including that it was a comet, a supernova, and a conjunction of several planets. Astronomer Michael R. Molnar proposes the date of 17 April 6 BCE as containing the astrological configurations that would, according to the rules of ancient astrology, portend a regal birth in Judea. He makes a case that 'the star in the East' was the helical rising (at the eastern horizon at dawn) of the planet Jupiter. See the *Star of Bethlehem: the Legacy of the Magi*, Rutgers (NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

28. John Chrysostom (*Hom. on Matth.* 6.3) proposed that the proof that the star of the Magi was not an ordinary star was shown by the fact that it had a 'peculiar motion, shining by day, a rare intelligence in hiding itself at the right time, and a miraculous ability in standing over the head of the child'. See Thorndike, *History*, 1: 473. Molnar, note 27 above, explains that the unusual behaviour of the Magi's star was due to its helical rising (i.e., shining by day), Jupiter's occultation (eclipse) by the moon (i.e., hiding itself), and its retrograde, stationary (i.e., standing over the head), and direct motions over the year of 6 BCE (85-96).

29. Manuel, following the doctrines of the Church Fathers that the star was not an ordinary star, also allows for the possibility that it might have been a natural occurrence such as a comet. To Manuel's way of thinking, either case establishes the validity of astrology and its usefulness for personal salvation.

30. Stars are sometimes considered to be angels, which are understood by Christians as God's messengers to humans. The Greek word *ἄγγελος* means both 'angel' and 'messenger'. Biblical references in which stars are seen as messengers include, 'When the morning stars sang together, and all of the sons of God shouted for joy?' (Job: 38.7). For planets as messengers of God, see Lester J. Ness, 'Astrology and Judaism in Late Antiquity', *The Ancient World* 26, no. 2 (1995), 126-33 as cited by Molnar, 146.

31. In the twelfth century 'R(h)omania' was in official Byzantine use to designate the empire. See Robert Lee Wolff, 'Romania: The Latin Empire of Constantinople', *Speculum*, 23 (1948), 5-8 as cited by Brand, trans., 240.

32. The comet that Manuel mentioned refers to the expedition of Conrad III of Germany en route to the Second Crusade, whose soldiers pillaged and plundered the Byzantine land through which they were passing. Niketas Choniates describes them as 'a cloud of enemies, a dreadful and death-dealing pestilence, fell upon the Roman borders, I speak of the campaign of the Germans' (2.1.60). The second example of a comet that Manuel used concerning the reign of his grandfather Alexios spoke to the approach of the First Crusade circa 1095. Anna Komnena described this terrifying comet which blazed in the sky for forty nights (*The Alexiad*, 12.4). The comet of 1182 was thought to have foretold the vicious death of Andronikos I by his subjects.

33. Manuel's argument that the solar eclipse that occurred at Christ's crucifixion as recorded in the Bible (*Matth.* 27.45; *Mark* 15.33; *Luke* 23.44) was an unnatural occurrence was based upon the fact that the moon was at the fourteenth day in its twenty-eight day orbit around the Earth, i.e., the full moon, when it would have been impossible for a solar eclipse to take place. Thus such a phenomenon, contrary to natural law, could only be explained as a wonderworking of God.

34. Dionysios the Aeropagite, converted to Christianity by St. Paul at Athens, was credited in the sixth century with the authorship of several works and letters which combine Neoplatonic philosophy and Biblical symbolism, such as *The Celestial Hierarchy* which describes a choir of angels corresponding to the cosmic spheres. This attribution is now considered spurious. The story that Manuel tells about Dionysios has a number of variations, based upon Latin legends which confused him with a missionary in Gaul, and which later served as the source for the vita written around 833. See Halloix, *Vita Dionysii*, apud Migne, PG 4: 669-84 and *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1:629) The discussion of the unnatural eclipse as a miracle, as related by Manuel, is contained in Pseudo-Dionysios' *Letter to Polycarp*, no. 7 (Migne, PG 3,

col.1081). See also note 27 below in Commentary to Glykas for the text of this passage.

35. In the ninth century Leo the Mathematician, also known as Leo the Philosopher, was a scholar and teacher in Constantinople and served for a period of time as archbishop of Thessalonika. His library contained astrological manuscripts of Ptolemy, Paulus of Alexandria and John Lydus. Legends preserved by George Hamartolos, Symeon Logothete and others present him as an astrologer able to predict the future who knew how to utilise astrology for the raising of crops. He wrote a number of astrological works. See Pingree, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 2:1217; 3: 1854 and *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 3: 190-91.

36. John of Damascus (ca 675-749) was the greatest Eastern systematiser of Christian dogma. In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2.7, he included a treatise entitled 'Concerning the light, fire, luminaries, sun, moon, and stars' (Migne, PG 94: col. 885-99) in which he displayed a comprehensive understanding of astrological principles. However he concluded this section with a statement that while the stars are signs of meteorological change, they have nothing whatsoever to do with human actions, as 'we have been created with free wills by our Creator'.

37. Anastasios of Sinai lived in the seventh century, and his major work, the *Guidebook (Hodegos)* is a polemic against heresies. Cumont wrote that he did not find the passage of Anastasios of Sinai that Manuel mentioned, but he referred the reader to PG 89. col. 735A, *Question 95* where Anastasios concluded a response with the comment that '...prudence and temperance are natural qualities, which are not called virtues by the holy Father, but rather natural advantages and gifts which the most foolish astrologers prattle on that they come to men in accordance with the motion of the stars'.

38. See note 18 above concerning Origen.

39. Abram, or Abraham, was considered by ancient writers such as Vettius Valens to be one of the founders of astrology (*CCAG*, 5.2,71) and Firmicus Maternus (*Math.* 4. Proe. 5). *The Recognitions*, also known as the *Pseudo-Clementines*, which contain an account of the events that occurred not long after the crucifixion concerning the apostle Peter, Simon Magus and Clement of Rome states that Abraham, 'being an astrologer, was able from the rational system of the stars to recognise the Creator, while all other men were in error, and understood that all things are regulated by His Providence' (1.32); cf. *Gen.* 15.5-6. See Thorndike, *History*, 1:401; 411. Tester (141) noted that 'Abraham' in later authors of the Middle Ages, when the Arabic sources have been used, often refers to Hipparchus, by a misunderstanding of the Arabic form of his name.

40. Seth, son of Adam, was regarded in the Middle Ages as the recipient of divine revelation and as the author of sacred books. The historian Josephus stated in his *Jewish Antiquities* that Seth's children discovered the art of astronomy, and that one of the two pillars on which they recorded their findings was still extant in his time, the first century (1.2.3) Josephus, 'The Antiquities of the Jews' I.2.3 in *Works*, trans. William Whiston, 1736, no place: Hendrickson Publishers 1987. See also Thorndike, *History*, 1:366.

41. Both Cedrenus (ed., I. Bekker, Bonn 1838, 1:497) and Zonaras (ed., L. Dindorf, Leipzig 1870, 3:180 as cited by Cumont, p. 118) report during the twelfth century that the horoscope for the founding of Constantinople on 11 May 330 was cast by the renowned Vettius Valens at the command of Emperor Constantine. However, this was impossible as Valens flourished in the late second century CE. Pingree demonstrates that this horoscope was calculated by the astrologer Demophilus ca. 990 and interpreted 'according to the method of Vettius Valens', which accounts for how the authorship of this nativity later became attributed to Valens by the twelfth century historians. See Pingree, 'The Horoscope of Constantinople', *Prismata*, Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977. Cumont agreed with this however, he added, 'But yet, we know that Constantine had consulted certain astrologers for the nativity of new Rome because at that time it was the custom for this to be done for the construction of monuments, and it was of special concern regarding to royal cities'. See *CCAG* 9. 2, p. 4-16 for the horoscopes of Antioch, Alexandria, Gaza, Caesaria and Neopolis. Also see Cicero *Div.* 2.47 for a discussion of an attempt by Lucius Tarutius of Firmum to reconstruct the horoscope of the founding of Rome retrospectively.

42. In Demophilus' discussion of the horoscope of Constantinople, he presents an astrological explanation of an earthquake that destroyed almost a third of the city on October 25, 989. See Pingree, *Prismata*, 306.

43. In astrological interpretation, the second house is the domain of movable resources, i.e., money, wealth, possessions. One of the attributes of the planet Saturn (star of Kronos) is that of monastics, because of the solitary and disciplined nature of their lives (Valens, *CCAG* 2.89.18). Therefore the statement, 'the star of Kronos lies in the second place of the zodiac' could be interpreted as indicating that the monks would receive the wealth of the city. See Appendix B below for the horoscope of the founding of Constantinople.

44. See Part I of this paper in *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 5 no 1, pp. 10-11, for legislation against astrology, and n. 48 below.

45. The citation regarding Gregory, *Gregory in laud. Basil* PG 26 col. 528, as given by both Cumont and Eustratiades, is incorrect.

46. Basil of Caesarea (330-379), referred to by Manuel as Basil the Great, in discussing the creation of the lights of heaven (*Hexaemeron* 6) acknowledged that the observation of the signs given by the luminaries, as they indicate weather changes, is useful for human livelihood. However, he rejected the notion that the stars forecast human fate, and argued the impossibility of accurate interpretations due to difficulties in accessing the exact moment of birth. He ended this brief digression with a comment that if the stars and not human will are the determiners of fate, the entire system of rewarding virtue and punishing crime is useless. 'Where necessity and destiny prevail, merit, which is the special condition for just [Christian] judgment, has no place'. He did grant that 'variations of the moon do not take place without exerting a great influence upon the organisation of animals and of all living things, and the moon makes all nature participate in her changes (*Hom.* VI, 10), Migne, PG 29. 1285.

47. During the fourth century a series of secular and church laws was instituted that included injunctions against magicians and astrologers as a part of an anti-pagan legislation. There exist twelve pronouncements from 319 to 409 concerning divination that were issued by the emperors Constantine, Constantius, Valentinian, Valens, Honorius, and Theodosius that have survived in a codification of early imperial legislation known as the Theodosian Code, published in 438 under Theodosius II. Among these laws was an edict outlawing the teaching or learning of astrology (16.8). While an edict of 357 prohibited any attempt at divination under penalty of capital punishment (16.4), it was modified in 371 with the declaration that divination was not condemned, but was forbidden to be practised harmfully (16.9). See David Potter, *Prophets and Emperors*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 177-82.

48. *Isaiah* 47.13.

49. *Ps.* 20.7.

50. *Ps.* 33.16-17.

51. *Ep. Galat.* 4.9 The Galatians prior to Christianity worshipped pagan deities, which Paul calls 'the weak and beggarly elemental spirits of the universe' to whom they were slaves.

52. *Daniel* 3. 20-26 The Jews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when thrown into a fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar were not burned due to God's intervention.

53. *Kings* 1.18.31ff. Elijah built a stone altar upon which he placed a heap of wood and a sacrificial bull. He poured water three times over the offerings and into the deep trench that had been built around them. The fire of the Lord fell down and consumed the offering as well as all the water that was in the trench.

54. *Corinth*. 1.15.28.

55. Ptolemy also drew a comparison between the prognostications of astrologers and physicians (*Tetra*. I. 13-17). Cicero (*Div.* 2.6) compares divination and medicine, and stated that both are sciences capable of error.

56. *Matthew*. 5.34. Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King'.

57. *Psalms* 19.1-4

58. Plato considered the planets to be divine because of the mathematical beauty of their perfect circular motion (*Timaeus* 37-40, *Epinomis* 982b).

59. While Manuel argues that all of God's creations, including the stars, are good, the Christian polemic in general maintained that astrology was the invention of the devil (Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum* 2.17) and could be accomplished only through the help of demons. Tatian wrote that the demons, impersonating pagan gods, were embodied in the planets and constellations (*Oration to the Greeks*, 9).