

GODDESS ASTROLOGY



ELISABETH BROOKE

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Dedication for EFB

ὁ δ' ὄλβιος, ὃν τινα Μοῦσαι φίλωνται: γλυκερή οἱ ἀπὸ στόματος ῥέει αὐδή.

“Women who are pirates in a phallocratic society are involved in a complex operation. First, it is necessary to plunder—that is, righteously rip off gems of knowledge that the patriarchs have stolen from us. Second, we must smuggle back to other women our plundered treasure.”

Mary Daly

“When the whole world is silent even one voice becomes powerful.”

Malala Yousefzai

CONTENTS

<i>NOTES ON SOURCES</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</i>	<i>xiii</i>
Aries the Amazon	1
Taurus: Aphrodite Kore	15
Gemini: Iris	31
Cancer: Hestia	45
Leo: Hera	61
Virgo: Demeter	79
Libra: Aphrodite Urania	95
Scorpio: Persephone	111
Sagittarius: Artemis	125
Capricorn: Hecate	141
Aquarius: Athena	155
Pisces: the Pythia	169
The Planets: the Sun	185
The Moon: Selene	201
Mercury: the Melissae	213
Venus: Aphrodite	227
Mars: the Furies	239
Jupiter: Themis	255
Saturn: Rhea	269

Areas of expression—the houses	287
Aspects	295
Transits and cycles	301
<i>END NOTE</i>	309
<i>APPENDIX 1: A–Z LIST OF THE HOROSCOPES (BY SURNAME)</i>	311
<i>APPENDIX 2: KEY WORDS</i>	331
<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	333
<i>INDEX</i>	337

NOTES ON SOURCES

Homer: (c800–700 BCE) believed to be either a poet from Ionia or a name for a collection of oral poems sung accompanied on the lyre, by wandering minstrels. The poems (written in dactylic hexameters) were written down in the time of Peisistratus (561–527 BCE). The books, the *Iliad and the Odyssey* are partly set in Mycenaean times and centred around the Trojan War and its aftermath. Emily Wilson's (2018) translation of the *Odyssey* shows a woman's perspective rather than some of the gung-ho Victorian translations.

The Homeric Hymns are a collection of invocations to the gods, written in the 6th and 7th centuries BCE, by unknown authors. They were written to be performed accompanied by the lyre. These are among the earliest sources for the Greek Myths and in many cases show the move from pre-Hellenic to Hellenic theogony. The history of this takeover is discussed in the introduction.

Hesiod: (c700 BCE) was a Boeotian (Central Greece) poet and farmer who wrote *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. *Theogony* provided another framework for Greek mythology. His work is notoriously misogynist but is a good source material for mythology.

Sappho: (b.612 BCE) of Mytilene, Lesbos. A female poet and perhaps a priestess of Aphrodite, and composer of lyric poetry. Little of her work survives, fragments are still being discovered in the rubbish tips at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, and as mummy wrappings. It is believed early Christian fathers ordered her books to be destroyed. Much of her work was quoted by later authors commenting on her poetic style, e.g. Horace the Roman poet. Plato called her the Tenth Muse. She wrote love poetry, choral hymns which were probably performed by young women in rituals for Aphrodite and wedding songs.

Aeschylus: (525–456 BCE) Athenian tragic dramatist, author of over ninety plays, seven of which survive. He wrote the *Oresteia* which was a trilogy of plays performed at the Dionysia dramatic festival in Athens. The last play of the trilogy, *The Eumenides*, explores the hounding of Orestes by the Furies, the Pythia at Delphi and the supplanting of mother-right by father-right (see: Mars the Furies and Pisces the Pythia).

Herodotus: (484–425 BCE) Ethnographer, historian (said to be the first) and geographer from Halicarnassus (Bodrum, Turkey) who wrote *The Histories*, the first major work in prose. He travelled extensively around Greece, Egypt and Asia Minor and recorded the customs and stories from the places he visited in a non-judgemental, accessible style. He was later attacked for making things up, like snowy mountains in Africa, but has subsequently been proven right (Mount Kilimanjaro) on several counts.

Sophocles: (496–406 BCE) Tragic playwright and friend of Herodotus. Most famous for his three Theban plays, one of which, *Electra* shows her revenge on their father's murder by their mother Klytemnestra (Clytemnestra).

Euripides: (480–406 BCE) Athenian dramatist who wrote tragedies including, *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *the Suppliants*, *Hecuba*, *The Trojan Women*, *Iphigenia in Taurus*, *Phaedra*, *Phoenician Women*. *The Bacchae*. His portrayal of women, for example in *Medea*, and *Hecuba* is sympathetic.

Aristophanes: (450–385 BCE) Greek comic playwright whose works were performed in Athens, his play *Lysistrata* details the religious life of Athenian women and girls. His best known works are hilarious satire on Athenian life and notables, including Socrates, in *The Clouds*. Other well-known plays include, *Frogs*, *The Birds* and *The Wasps*.

All the translations from the Greek are mine, unless otherwise stated. It felt important to go back to the source, particularly as many of the texts were translated by 'Victorian Gentlemen scholars' who had a particular mindset, which is reflected in their choice of words, although new translators are also guilty of this. (see Amazons fn xxxviii for an example).

I also wanted to look especially at pre-Homeric texts, The Homeric Hymns, Sappho and Hesiod, as they sometimes relate a time before the Hellenic invasion of Greece which overthrew the native goddesses by 'marrying' them and absorbing their powers and spheres of influence.

I have chosen to reframe Greek myth as this is where my interest lies. This process can be repeated for any tradition looking at written sources, pottery, art, stories, legends and conversations with elders.

INTRODUCTION

This book came about through serendipity. I was asked to run a workshop and it could be about anything. Having run workshops all over the world the past forty-five years, I decided to do something new and wondered how the Greek goddesses would work with all the Astrological signs.

Of course, there was Venus and the Moon, but to my mind these are, or rather were, hackneyed archetypes of women's experience. We are not all breeders, and love, as portrayed by ordinary astrology, was a kind of dumb, saccharine experience. All of this bore little relation to women's lives in the twenty-first century. Also, some planets were problematic, Mars for example; there are women who fight, but this is not what most women can identify with.

This led me into the pre-patriarchal world of Crete and the Minoans and older writing, like the *Homeric Hymns* to see what they had to suggest. It was important for me to do the translations myself, as a lot of these texts were translated by Victorian and Edwardian 'Gentlemen Scholars' who generally had a patriarchal mindset. Most of what is known as Greek myth comes from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. Ovid was a Roman writer of the first century CE, so a late source and a Romanised one.

Of course there was a time before, if not a matriarchy, at least not a patriarchy. A time before war, male domination, violence and rape were institutionalised, a time before the Aryans from Mongolia with their horses, sky gods and brutalist culture conquered the matriarchal culture of Old Europe.

This book then, is my research, offering another perspective of different female archetypes, illustrated by the lives of extraordinary women both alive and dead.

The book begins with a look at the context of history to see how Goddess worship developed and later, how it declined. It is chilling reading.

Then follow the chapters on each of the twelve astrological signs, each with a meditation, some background to the myths and examples of two women.

This is followed by a look at the seven traditional planets, again with examples of notable women.

Then I look at the Houses, and Aspects to see how the signs and planets express themselves in the horoscopes I introduced in the twelve Astrological Signs and the Seven Traditional planets.

Transits and cycles discusses how the movements of the planets affect our actions, again looking at the twenty-eight women I have previously discussed.

The Appendix shows all the horoscopes arranged alphabetically for ease of use, and also some key words for each sign.

I chose to use Greek Mythology, because those are the myths which speak to me, not because they are in any way better. I hope my work will be continued by other women from other Goddess Traditions who can widen the field. I felt it was better to study one system in depth rather than write about traditions I do not resonate with.

The book can be read straight through as an exploration of the Goddess and Astrology, and also as a reference book for both astrological studies and goddess lore. It was incredibly difficult to choose the example lives, there were so many women's stories I wanted to tell, but again, it felt better to study fewer women in more detail, than many superficially.

I would like to thank Oliver Rathbone and Melinda McDougal of Aeon Books for their forbearance in waiting for this book, written as it was during the plague years of 2020–21. Doing the research was challenging, the libraries I usually used were closed, with the exception of the Classical Association Library in the University of London where the super helpful librarians stoically remained open for book borrowing and study, hats off to them! I would also like to thank everyone in London who kept the show on the road, delivering food, and parcels and keeping this city alive. Especial thanks to EFB who was my lockdown companion and whose music and humour was a delightful diversion during this trying time.

Fitzrovia, Lamas 2021

AN EXPLORATION OF THE GODDESSES OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY IN RELATION TO THE ASTROLOGICAL SIGNS.

Offering a new and insightful discussion into the subjects of both Greek mythology and astrology, Elisabeth Brooke skilfully intertwines the two to create an original and captivating exploration of the female experience. It expresses a deep appreciation that women's lives are not all the same and should not be put into the same overused stereotypes; instead, it offers a refreshing perspective of female archetypes, illustrated by the lives of extraordinary women both alive and dead, which women everywhere will relate to.

Each chapter of this book follows one of the twelve Astrological Signs, seven traditional planets, as well as the Houses and Aspects. The connection to a Goddess of Greek mythology is detailed for each of these, providing an illuminating and engrossing background to the Greek myths and Goddess lore. The chapters bridge the gap between ancient and modern, exploring more recent examples of brave, strong, and empowering women for each of the Astrological Signs.

The book can be read straight through as an exploration of the Goddesses and Astrology, and as a reference book for both astrological studies and historical Goddess lore. Goddess Astrology also contains excerpts from classical texts, newly translated by the author Elisabeth Brooke.

Elisabeth Brooke qualified as a Medical Herbalist with the National Institute of Medical Herbalists in 1980 and studied with Maggie Hyde and Geoffrey Cornelius at the Company of Astrologers London 1984 to 1989. She has a private practice and teaches and lectures worldwide on Astrology and Herbal Medicine. She is the author of seven books including the bestselling *A Woman's Book of Shadows* (Aeon, 2019). She publishes an astrology blog on her website www.elisabethbrooke.com. Elisabeth has a BA (Hons) in Classical Studies and is studying for an MA, researching Greek creation myths.

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