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Editor Nicholas Campion

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Editorial

This issue of *Culture and Cosmos* includes seven significant papers on the history of astrology, covering a range of periods and approaches. Roger Beck's 'The Ancient Mithraeum as a Model Universe. Part 2', touches on archaeoastronomy and classical religion.¹ Helena Avelar and Charles Burnett's analysis of a twelfth century horoscope cast by Abraham the Jew examines the technical practice of medieval astrology. Lindsay Starkey's paper on Mellin de Saint-Gelais and John Calvin, and Scott Hendrix's on Galileo, concern theoretical contexts for the European astrology of the middle ages and Renaissance. Richard Angelo Bergen's '*Paradise Lost* and the Descent of Urania: from Astrology to Allegory' deals with literature, Hakan Kirkoğlu's '*Ilm-i nudjum* and 18th century Ottoman Court Politics' examines the political uses of astrology, and Graham Douglas's 'Trystes Cosmologiques: When Lévi-Strauss Met the Astrologers' explores one of the twentieth century's most important anthropologist's attitudes to astrology.² Anything Lévi-Strauss said about astrology is of interest by definition, in view of his authorship of a remarkable series of seminal works (*The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949), *Tristes tropiques* (1955), *Structural Anthropology* (1961), *Mythologiques* (1964), *The Raw and the Cooked* (1964), and *The Savage Mind* (1966). Lévi-

¹ Part 1 was published as Roger Beck, 'The Ancient Mithraeum as a Model Universe. Part 1', in *Heavenly Discourses*, ed. Nicholas Campion (Lampeter: Sophia Centre Press, 2016), pp. 21–31.

² For comparison see Nicholas Campion, 'Surrealist Cosmology: André Breton and Astrology', *Culture and Cosmos* 6, no. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2002): pp. 45–56.

Strauss, coming last chronologically in this journal, also has the last word. In response to a question about the surrealist André Breton, Lévi-Strauss replied:

I knew André Bréton well – we were very close for a period of time; but I won't go as far as him. I wouldn't say that it holds [secrets] – but it is perhaps one of the signs that secrets exist which we don't understand, and I feel impelled to say, that we will doubtless never understand.

It is precisely this lack of understanding which motivates historians: with just a little more evidence, we hope, perhaps we will understand the world a little better. And perhaps, then, the papers in this issue will take us a little closer to understanding astrology's appeal, claims, role, nature, function, ideology, world-view and cultural significance.

Dr Nicholas Campion,
University of Wales Trinity Saint David