The Two Zodiac Problem
Toward an Empathic Understanding

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And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years...” And it was so.

~ Genesis 1:14-15
The Two-Zodiac Problem

Two zodiacs that postulate 12 signs of 30° each, with such signs having the same names and meanings – yet, attribute these meanings to different dates and different meanings to the same dates, are inherently contradictory.
Consequences of the Two-Zodiac Problem

- Causes confusion and distress
- Undermines astrology’s credibility
- Divides the community
- Compromises efficacy of practice
- Weaponized by astrology’s critics
Reasoned discussion has been constrained by an attitude of political correctness. Most astrologers avoid the topic, proudly claim tolerance of divergent views, or assert the nonsensical position of co-validity of the two zodiacs.
Unhelpful Approaches

- The claim that both zodiacs are equally valid
Contradictory statements cannot both be true in the same sense at the same time. A thing cannot be itself and not-itself.
Mutual tolerance for both zodiacs may be a politically correct position, but it is also an intellectually lazy one.
Unhelpful Approaches

- The claim that both zodiacs are equally valid
- Personal, subjective experience
Colleague’s Sidereal Chart

Colleague’s Tropical Chart
Unhelpful Approaches

- The claim that both zodiacs are equally valid
- Personal, subjective experience
- Anecdotal examples involving specific cases
Unhelpful Approaches

- The claim that both zodiacs are equally valid
- Personal, subjective experience
- Anecdotal examples involving specific cases
- Empirical research with statistical analysis
The birth chart is synergistic whole
2. Meaning of any part is a function of context
3. Chart symbols are multidimensional & multivalent
4. Astrological phenomena are synchronistic
5. Birth charts are open, evolving systems
Unhelpful Approaches

- The claim that both zodiacs are equally valid
- Personal, subjective experience
- Anecdotal examples involving specific cases
- Empirical research with statistical analysis
By examining evidence from anthropology, archaeoastronomy, Babylonian mythology and early astrological writings, it may be possible to discern whether a mistake occurred that resulted in the splitting of an original zodiac into two contradictory versions.
The zodiac is a 16° band encircling the Sun.
The sidereal zodiac is defined by the stars and is currently disconnected from the seasons as a frame of reference.
Tropical Aries begins where the earth’s celestial equator intersects the plane of the ecliptic.

The Tropical Zodiac
Tropical Aries begins where the earth’s celestial equator intersects the plane of the ecliptic.
The earth’s axial tilt relative to its orbital plane gives us the changing quality of seasons and signs.
The original zodiac was actually a hybrid defined by fixed stars and cardinal points.
The Big Question

Could the constellations have come into being without being anchored to the equinoctial and solstitial points?
Gemini facts lead the way, followed by Virgonian analysis. Sagittarian abstract reasoning looks at the evidence to see if it supports or refutes the hypothesis. Then, there’s Pisces…
Pisces is direct perception, or knowing by empathic connection with the thing known.
To achieve depth, we must utilize the gifts of Pisces: imagination, and empathy.
Observation of the night sky focused on one all-important question: as the stars move, what happens here, in my world? What happens to me?
Stars that rose just ahead of the Sun at dawn became associated with earthly phenomena that occurred during that 30-day period.
The figures that populated the heavens were superhuman sky gods with a direct, causative effect upon the world below.
Every constellation, every month, had its own meaning and signaled to the tribe the requisite activity to be performed.
Knowing the proper times for sowing, cultivating, and harvesting crops were universal human concerns and the basis for organization of communal life.
The Summer Solstice
The Winter Solstice
Northern Hemisphere

Spring Equinox
Days longer than nights
Days get longer
Nights longer than days
Nights get shorter

Summer
Days longer than nights
Days get shorter

Autumnal Equinox

Winter
Nights longer than days
Nights get longer
The image of a crossing or “double-axe” symbolized the equinox and solsticial points during the Bronze Age (2000-1470 BC) when Babylonian Omen astrology was underway.

The Double-Axe Symbol
The standard Mesopotamian symbol for the Sun (Shamash) is a four pointed disk with undulating lines radiating intercardinally.
Inca’s Torreon, Machu Picchu
Mayan Pyramid, Chichen Itza
Big Horn Medicine Wheel & Sundance Lodge
Newgrange Passage Tomb, Ireland
Newgrange Passage Tomb, Ireland
The Great Pyramid
Archaeoastronomer, E.C. Krupp says...

The precise timing of solstice and equinox dates and the construction of monuments to predict them was, “an old, old religious response that is not a byproduct of culture but something that makes culture the way it is.”
Because each month had its own quality, zodiacal constellations were metaphors of seasonal processes occurring in nature.
Myths with their attendant rituals and festivals were celebrated in synchrony with the appearance of the representative constellation.
During the 12-day Babylonian festival Akitu starting on the vernal equinox, the King took on the role of Dumuzi (Aries) and participated in a marriage ceremony with the priestess of Inanna (Pisces), culminating in ritual intercourse.
“My vulva, the horn, the Boat of Heaven, is full of eagerness like the young moon. My untilled land lies fallow. As for me, Inanna, who will plow my vulva? Who will plow my high field? Who will plow my wet ground?”

Aries & Pisces Together Again
Signs and constellations were conflated; constellation was sign, and sign was constellation.
The Babylonians placed the midpoints of the cardinal signs precisely at the equinoctial and solstitial points, as if anchored to them.
The first new moon closest to the vernal equinox started the Babylonian calendar.
The Babylonians determined the location of the equinoctial and solsticial points in the night sky, then built the zodiac around them.
Early astronomers measured solar, lunar, and planetary position from fixed stars because it was the best means available at the time. It does not follow that zodiacaal constellations have intrinsic meaning and special powers to determine earthly phenomena.
Precession results from the Earth’s wobble on its axis. The vernal equinox drifts backward through the constellations, and currently resides at 5° Pisces.
As the Sun moved into a new constellation every month, so the seasons were pulled along like an ox pulls a cart—or, so it seemed.
Rainy Season in Babylonia
Creation of 12-Sign Hybrid Zodiac

The reduction from 17 irregular to 12 equal 30-degree constellations resulted from establishment of the Babylonian Calendar. By 860 BC, the equinoxes and solstices were placed in the middle of months 1, 4, 7, and 10. A twelve month solar calendar fixed to the seasons was the prototype for a twelve sign zodiac measured from the stars. By 420 BC, 12 months of 30 days became 12 signs of 30 degrees.
By the time Hipparchus discovered precession in 134 BC, the vernal equinox had shifted from 15° Aries (860 BC) to 5° Aries.
The implication was staggering...

Calendar-keeping is the foundation upon which astrology rests.
Northern Hemisphere

Spring Equinox
- Days longer than nights
- Days get longer
- Nights longer than days
- Nights get shorter

Summer
- Days longer than nights
- Days get shorter

Autumnal Equinox

Winter
- Nights longer than days
- Nights get longer
Given precession, the eventual mistiming of seasonal based activities, especially agriculture, was inevitable.
By separating the vernal point from the constellations, Hipparchus' tropical zodiac did a better job of measuring time.
Hipparchus’ decision to start the zodiac with the vernal equinox did not constitute creation of a new zodiac so much as an evolution toward a more precise, accurate understanding of what the zodiac had always been.
Ptolemy was emphatic: “The powers of the signs take their cause from the solstitial and equinoctial starting-places, and from no other source.”

Ptolemy (100-170 AD)
The notion that constellations had power and meaning in themselves was an illusion rooted in a misperception of the cause of seasonal processes.
For millennia, constellations had been chopped, expanded, added, or eliminated, which only underscores that they never had any inherent meaning in themselves.
The Southern Hemisphere Question

Earth appears to be a northern-hemisphere dominant planet. 90% of its population and nearly 70% of its land mass are in the northern hemisphere. Perhaps sign meanings are the same all the way down for reasons we do not yet understand. Perhaps there’s something about the earth’s poles – positive and negative – that play into it.
Signs in the tropical system are angles made from the earth’s orbit about the Sun. Every 30° from the vernal equinox constitutes a new sign.
A Geometry of Meaning

Houses are Multiples of 30°

Aspects are Multiples of 30°
A Geometry of Meaning

Houses are Multiples of 30°

0 x 30 = 0°
1 x 30 = 30°
2 x 30 = 60°
3 x 30 = 90°
4 x 30 = 120°
5 x 30 = 150°
6 x 30 = 180°

Aspects are Multiples of 30°
# All Meaning is an Angle

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The fact that houses and aspects have absolutely no relationship to constellations, and yet share a kinship of meaning with the sign of the same angle, underscores that all meaning in astrology is an angle, a phase within a more encompassing 360° cycle. Constellations have nothing to do with it.
Alleged meanings of sidereal constellations are unrelated to geometric angles. Yet, these meanings are essentially the same as their tropical counterparts. If such meanings were not derived from geometric angles formed by the Earth-Sun relationship, then why are they the same as the tropical meanings that clearly do relate to the Earth-Sun relationship?
All academic scholars who have specialized in the origins of astrology agree on this point: India inherited most of its astrology from the Greeks.
Once imported, the sidereal zodiac of India began with the constellation Aries, just as it did with the Hellenistic Greeks.

28 (or 27) Lunar Nakshatras
The Puranas and other Vedic texts from 200 to 600 AD all state “the solstices are at the beginning of Capricorn and Cancer and the equinoxes at the beginning of Aries and Libra.”
In approximately 2500 BC when the Nakshatras began, the first Nakshatra was Krittika, which at the time coincided with the vernal equinox.
There was no consensus on the velocity or significance of precession in Hindu astrological and astronomical works prior to the 10th century.
Difference Between Right and Rite

Indian astronomers have tried to fix zero of the Hindu zodiac to the vernal equinox, but the sidereal system had become deeply entrenched with social and religious rites timed by the Moon in relation to specific stars. Accordingly, proposed changes were never sanctioned by Hindu religious authorities. This controversy is ongoing in India today.
Is there a persuasive argument for claiming that constellational meanings originated independent of seasonal processes? That the sidereal zodiac and Babylonian calendar developed separately through parallel lines of evolution?
The zodiac was a giant calendar-clock in the sky.
For millennia, constellations had been the shiny object that distracted from the true importance of the equinoctial and solstitial points.
All sign meanings are derivative of their foundational meaning rooted in nature. Remove that, and the system collapses like a house of cards.
So, the umbilical cord was severed; the cardinal points were finally liberated from their entrapment in arbitrary, superfluous, made-up constellations.
Although the door to debate and discussion must always remain open, it behooves us to ask whether a historical error occurred that resulted in a splitting of the original zodiac into two. In line with Occam’s razor, the simpler explanation is usually correct – to wit, the two zodiacs were originally one, but split apart due to different perceptions of the meaning and significance of precession.
That which does not kill us makes us stronger.

(Friedrich Nietzsche)