



The Cazimi Press

March 31, 2012

Jonathan Powell
Chair, Urania Trust
BCM Urania
London
WC1N 3XX
United Kingdom

Dear Jonathan Powell,

I am the principal of, and chief translator for, The Cazimi Press, which specializes in English translations of traditional astrological texts, primarily from Latin. The goal of my Press is to make traditional thought and philosophy, techniques, and texts available to contemporary astrologers. Since 2007, I have a proven track record in publishing 11 volumes of translations and essays, which have contributed to the growing traditional revival.

Due to the scarcity of modern translations of the hundreds of Arabic astrological manuscripts still available, I ask you to consider this proposal for \$4590.00 (or £2866.00), to support my enrollment in intensive formal instruction in Arabic at the University of Minnesota (USA), during this summer 2012. In order for our community to benefit fully from this relatively untapped source material, we need translators with competence in Arabic in addition to having a detailed knowledge of medieval astrology, and experience in academics and publishing.

Currently, there is no recognized path to getting more astrologers and translators to be formally trained and competent in this language. The Urania Trust has a great opportunity to take the first steps in this direction, paving the way for new insights and discoveries about our astrological heritage, and serving the astrological community by recovering exciting new techniques. Supporting these efforts and this proposal will place the Urania Trust at the forefront of astrological research in this area, which is only seeing more attention and demand.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Benjamin Dykes
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Urania Trust Grant Proposal: Benjamin Dykes, April 2012

I. Executive Summary

Contemporary astrologers have gained much from English translations of ancient and medieval astrological texts (particularly from Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit), in terms of scholarly exploration, appreciation of our history, and learning many new and exciting techniques in all branches of astrology. The astrological community stands to gain much more when the huge mass of Arabic manuscripts begins to be translated, beyond the few already completed.

Translating and publishing Arabic texts in a timely fashion requires several things: in-depth knowledge and appreciation of medieval astrology, a proven track record in translation and publishing, academic training and familiarity, and language proficiency—preferably in Latin and/or Greek as well as Arabic.

Benjamin Dykes has established skills and backgrounds in all of these areas except for formal instruction in Arabic. Since earning his PhD in Philosophy in 2003, and his AMA qualification in medieval astrology from Robert Zoller in 2004, he has committed himself to translating Latin astrology tests, especially those made from earlier Arabic sources. However, bibliographical guides to Arabic manuscript collections describe hundreds of other extant manuscripts which have never been translated into any modern language, nor even printed in modern Arabic editions. This proposal requests \$4590.00 (or £2866.00) to pay for tuition in Arabic during the summer of 2012 at the University of Minnesota (USA), so that Arabic translations may be planned and produced within the next 3 years.

II. Statement of Need

Select Arabic astrological works were translated into Latin in the Middle Ages, and recently I and other scholars have worked to serve the astrological community by translating some of these influential Latin works into English (see attached list of publications). Other, non-astrologer scholars have worked to produce critical editions of some Arabic works, along with their English translations. Some of the latter include:

- Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhi, *The Abbreviation of the Introduction to Astrology*, ed. and trans. Charles Burnett, K. Yamamoto, and Michio Yano (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994)
- Al-Qabīsī, *The Introduction to Astrology*, eds. Charles Burnett, Keiji Yamamoto, Michio Yano (London and Turin: The Warburg Institute, 2004)
- Crofts, Carole Mary, "*Kitāb al-Ikhtiyārāt 'alā l-buyūt al-itnai 'asar*, by Sahl ibn Bišr al-Isra'ili, with its Latin Translation *De Electionibus* (Ph.D. diss., Glasgow University, 1985)

But the well-known bibliographical guide by Sezgin¹ shows that there are literally hundreds of medieval Arabic manuscripts on astrology available in world libraries, but hitherto untranslated and unpublished. These manuscripts represent approximately five centuries' worth of material by some of the greatest names in medieval astrology, such as Abu Ma'shar, 'Umar al-Tabari, Sahl bin Bishr, and many others. However, there are almost no astrologically trained Arabic speakers who also have experience in

¹ Sezgin, Fuat, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums* vol. 7 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979)

translation and publishing, who could make these manuscripts readily available in modern English editions.

The astrological community has benefited so far by the translation and publication of some of this Latin and Arabic material, and is better served by having this gap in purely Arabic material filled by contemporary translations. There are three ways in which the community benefits by having these translations:

1. Understanding our historical roots and uncovering unknown paths of influence and technique transmission.
2. Improving our practical techniques, by accessing the labor and insights of our predecessors.
3. Enriching our philosophical and spiritual resources, through appreciating the reflections and attitudes of older writers, for whom astrology was a living part of spirituality and an accepted worldview.

In recent years we have already seen such benefits, such as learning about hitherto unknown methods of casting consultation charts or “thought interpretation” in the practice of horary,² and numerous mundane techniques from the Persians.³

However, the process of producing academic critical editions requires the word-by-word comparison of (occasionally) dozens of manuscripts, demanding years of labor for even short works. Even then, the lack of purely astrological interest by certain scholars (such as David Pingree) means there is no guarantee that what is produced will be serviceable by, or the most necessary for, contemporary astrologers. The need for astrological translators trained in Arabic is presently great, because in order for works to appear within the next few years, advanced linguistic training must begin immediately.

III. Goal and Method

My immediate goal is to become proficient enough in Arabic in 2012, that I can begin to translate Arabic astrological works and help provide the enrichment and insight which would result from their availability. The ultimate objective is to produce a body of Arabic translations over the next 10 years, which will greatly advance our current state of knowledge and techniques, and make many centuries of astrology available to us for the first time. This body of translations would supplement my current Latin series which is approaching completion: *The Essential Medieval Astrology* series (see attached program of translations below).

In order to accomplish this goal and objective, I wish to enroll (with your support) in an intensive Arabic program at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis (USA), during the summer of 2012. This is a non-degree program for credit provided through the College of Continuing Education (CCE), and requires taking two concurrent courses (Arabic 1101-1102).⁴ These courses are five credits apiece (10 total), at a rate of \$448/credit, plus a college fee of \$110. The total enrollment cost is \$4590.00, or £2866.00.

² *The Search of the Heart* (see publication list below), pp. 1-29.

³ For example, *The Book of Astronomy* (see publication list below), Tr. 8.

⁴ The Summer 2012 term and Arabic courses may be searched for at:

http://onestop2.umn.edu/courseinfo/classschedule_selectsubject.jsp?institution=UMNTC

Although I am skilled in languages, a language such as Arabic really requires intense formal instruction through a course, rather than self-study. Evaluating my skills will come directly through the course grades, and how well they are applied will be exhibited in my initial translations over the next few years. Based on my past experience and skills, I believe I will earn high marks and develop the ability to begin work on Arabic texts within the next year.

IV. Personal and Organizational Information

My academic background and publishing record as principal of The Cazimi Press provide evidence of my ability to complete this project, and my commitment to it.

I graduated with a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Illinois (USA) in 2003. Both then and as an Adjunct Professor at Mankato State University (USA), I specialized in ancient philosophy and ethics, particularly the Aristotelian and Stoic philosophies which stand in the background of so much ancient and medieval astrological thought. Experience in Aristotle, Neoplatonism, and other streams of ancient thought are particularly useful in understanding Arabic-era astrology. After teaching University-level philosophy, I also earned my medieval astrology qualification from Robert Zoller in 2004.

Since 2007, I have published dozens of English translations of medieval astrological texts from Latin, which has greatly increased the material available to contemporary astrologers (see publications list below). A few of these have required rudimentary knowledge of Arabic, as well. By the end of 2013 I will have completed my *Essential Medieval Astrology* translation series (see below), a group of 11-13 volumes in all four primary areas of traditional astrology: nativities, questions, elections, mundane.

In 2012 my press (The Cazimi Press) will begin developing publishing projects with other astrological translators and writers, as part of an ongoing effort to make more ancient material available to contemporary astrologers.

Publications by Benjamin Dykes via The Cazimi Press (chronological):

Bonatti, Guido, Benjamin Dykes trans. and ed., *The Book of Astronomy* vols. 1-2 (Golden Valley: The Cazimi Press, 2007)

Dykes, Benjamin trans. and ed., *Works of Sahl & Māshā'allāh* (Golden Valley: The Cazimi Press, 2008)

Dykes, Benjamin trans. and ed., *Persian Nativities* vols. I-III (Minneapolis, MN: The Cazimi Press, 2009-10)

Dykes, Benjamin trans. and ed., *Introductions to Traditional Astrology: Abū Ma'shar & al-Qabisi* (Minneapolis, MN: The Cazimi Press, 2010)

Hermann of Carinthia, Benjamin Dykes trans. and ed., *The Search of the Heart* (Minneapolis, MN: The Cazimi Press, 2011)

Dykes, Benjamin trans. and ed., *The Forty Chapters of al-Kindī* (Minneapolis, MN: The Cazimi Press, 2011)

Dykes, Benjamin, trans. and ed., *The Book of the Nine Judges* (Minneapolis, MN: The Cazimi Press, 2011)

Dykes, Benjamin, *Traditional Astrology for Today: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: The Cazimi Press, 2011)

Dykes, Benjamin, *The Logos & Light Lecture Series*, 2 vols. (2009-12)

The Essential Medieval Astrology Cycle

The *Essential Medieval Astrology* cycle is a series of books which will redefine the contours of traditional astrology. Comprised mainly of translations of works by Persian and Arabic-speaking medieval astrologers, it will cover all major areas of astrology, including philosophical treatments and magic. The cycle will be accompanied by compilations of introductory works and readings on the one hand, and independent monographs and encyclopedic works on the other (including late medieval and Renaissance works of the Latin West).

I. Introductions

- *Traditional Astrology for Today: An Introduction* (2011)
- *Introductions to Astrology: Abū Ma'shar & al-Qabīsī* (2010)
- Abū Ma'shar, *Great Introduction to the Knowledge of the Judgments of the Stars* (2013)
- *Basic Readings in Traditional Astrology* (2013)

II. Nativities

- *Persian Nativities I: Māshā'allāh's The Book of Aristotle, Abū 'Ali al-Khayyāt's On the Judgments of Nativities* (2009)
- *Persian Nativities II: 'Umar al-Tabarī's Three Books on Nativities, Abū Bakr's On Nativities* (2010)
- *Persian Nativities III: On Solar Revolutions* (2010)

III. Questions (Horary)

- Hermann of Carinthia, *The Search of the Heart* (2011)
- Al-Kindī, *The Forty Chapters* (2011)
- Various, *The Book of the Nine Judges* (2011)

IV. Elections

- *Traditional Electional Astrology: al-'Imrānī, al-Rijāl, and others* (2012)

V. Mundane Astrology

- *Astrology of the World* (multiple volumes): Abū Ma'shar's *On the Revolutions of the Years of the World, Book of Religions and Dynasties*, and *Flowers*, Sahl bin Bishr's *Prophetic Sayings*; lesser works on prices and weather (2012-13)

VI. Other Works

- Bonatti, Guido, *The Book of Astronomy* (2007)
- *Works of Sahl & Māshā'allāh* (2008)
- Al-Rijāl, *The Book of the Skilled* (TBA)
- Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis* (TBA)
- *Astrological Magic* (TBA)
- *The Latin Hermes* (TBA)
- *A Course in Traditional Astrology* (TBA)