

Oracle, Omens, Prophecies

Helena Lukášová pro Plenér 2021

Looking to the future
Searching for the principles of
events Making the right decision
Understanding the hidden forces

**All this is the result of thinking
about time, understanding the
relationship between cause and
effect.**

Reflection



Reflective surfaces, see-through objects, mirrors served as portals to realm that could be seen but not interacted with

Reflection

pre-Columbian mirror, Chimu culture 1100 -1470 CE, Peru South America, that portrays a ruler, priest, or deity, holding mushrooms in both hands (the mirror is old but not original)

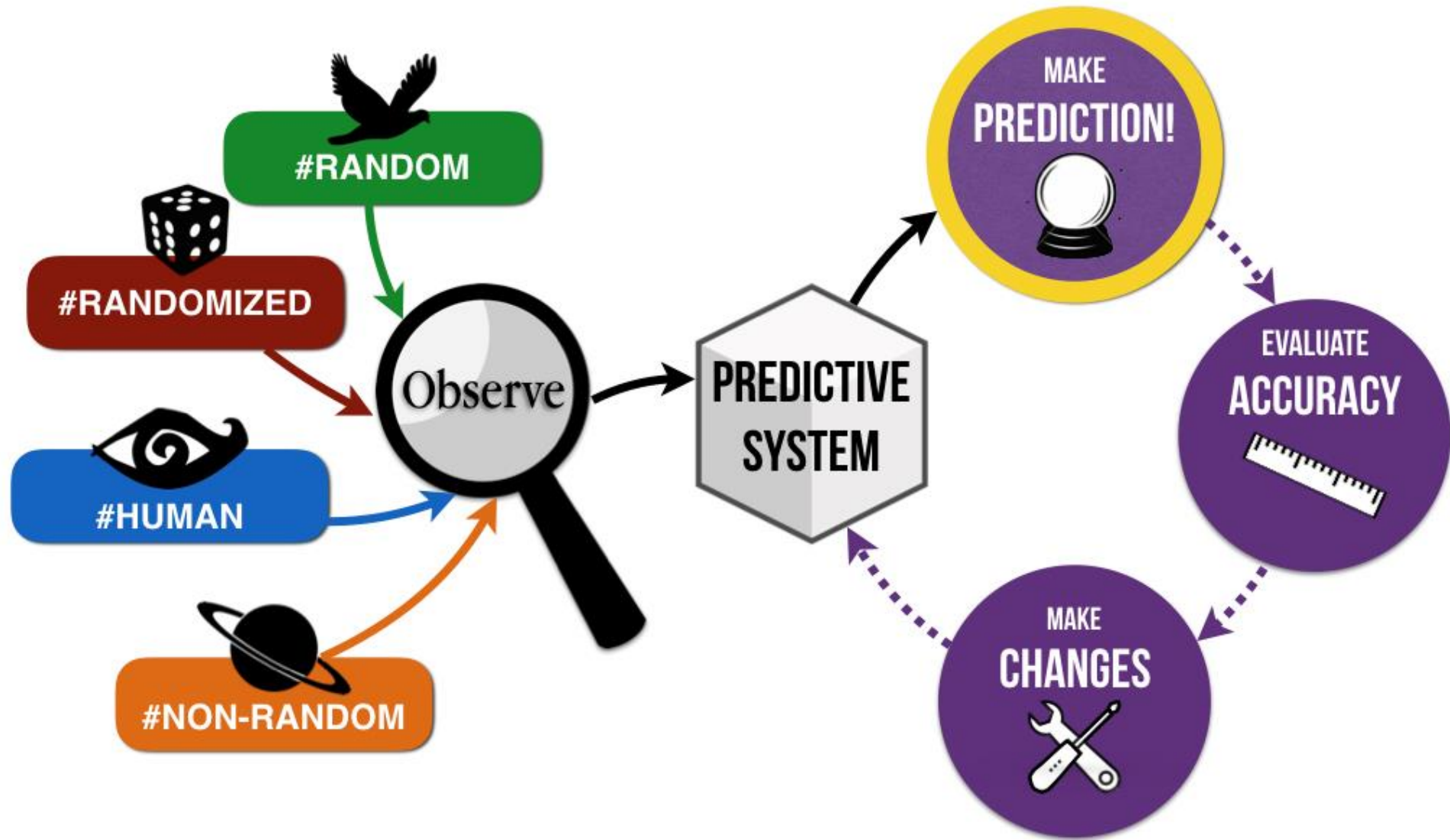


Reflection



Magic mirror and other peculiar objects in
John Dee's possession
(British Museum)

John Dee (1527–1609),
mathematician, astrologer,
magician, and antiquary, claimed
that he had been given a magic
crystal by an angel called Uriel



Random

Naturally-occurring **random processes**, without any systematic predictability and without any intervention from human beings; sometimes also called “**spontaneous.**”

Roman Augury

interpreting behavior of birds

cca 600 b. c. – 100 a. d.

The interpretation of flight (possibly sound) of birds was done by specially schooled high priest - **augur** appointed to this duty.

The ancients that practiced augury felt that nature, and therefore the divine will, could be deciphered by a patient method of watching, waiting, listening.

Cicero, the famous orator and senator, was also appointed an augur later on in his political career.



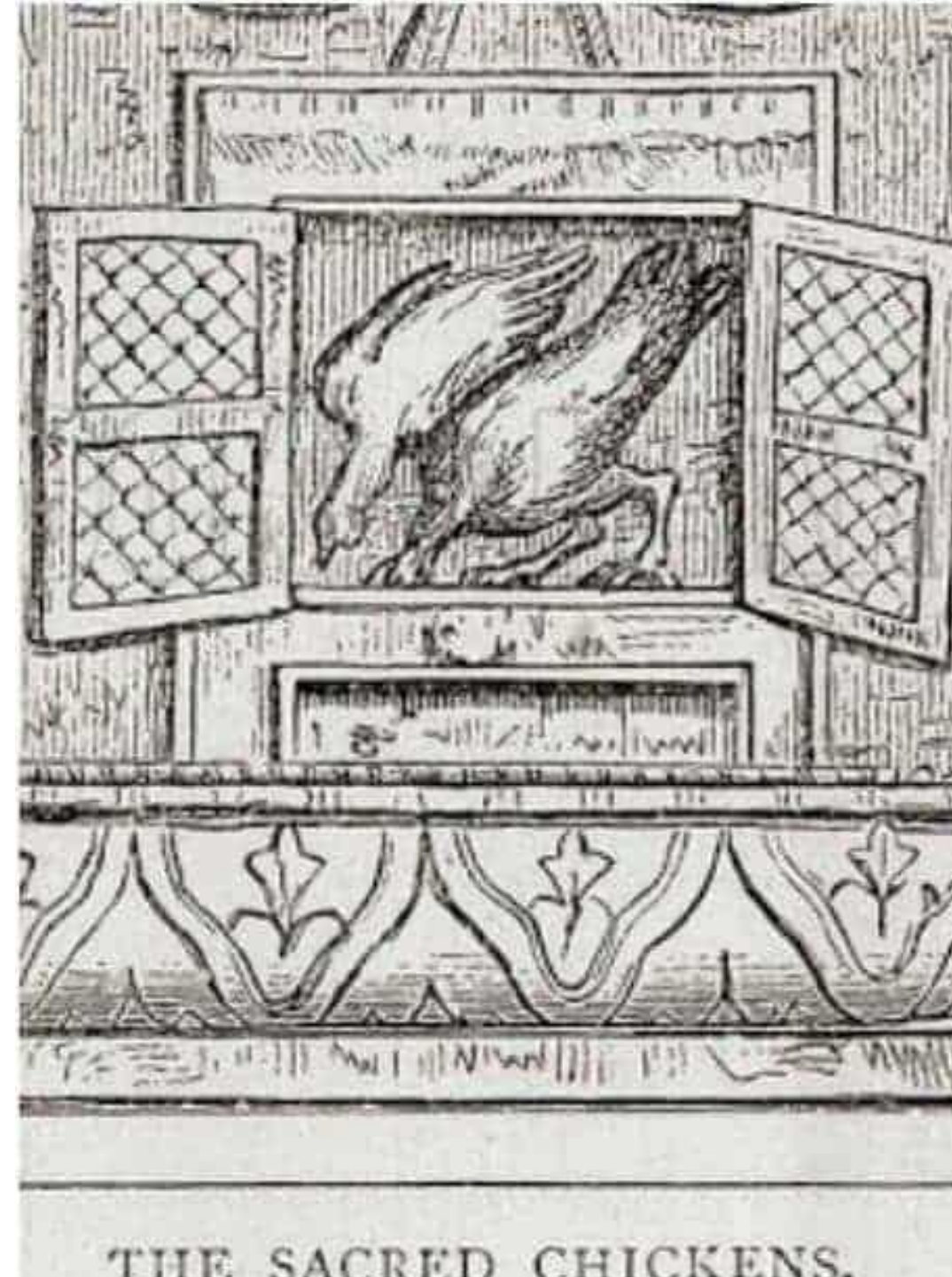
Roman Augury

sacred chickens

Special chicken bread from
Negreponte Greek island

Pullarius -“priest of the sacred
chickens”

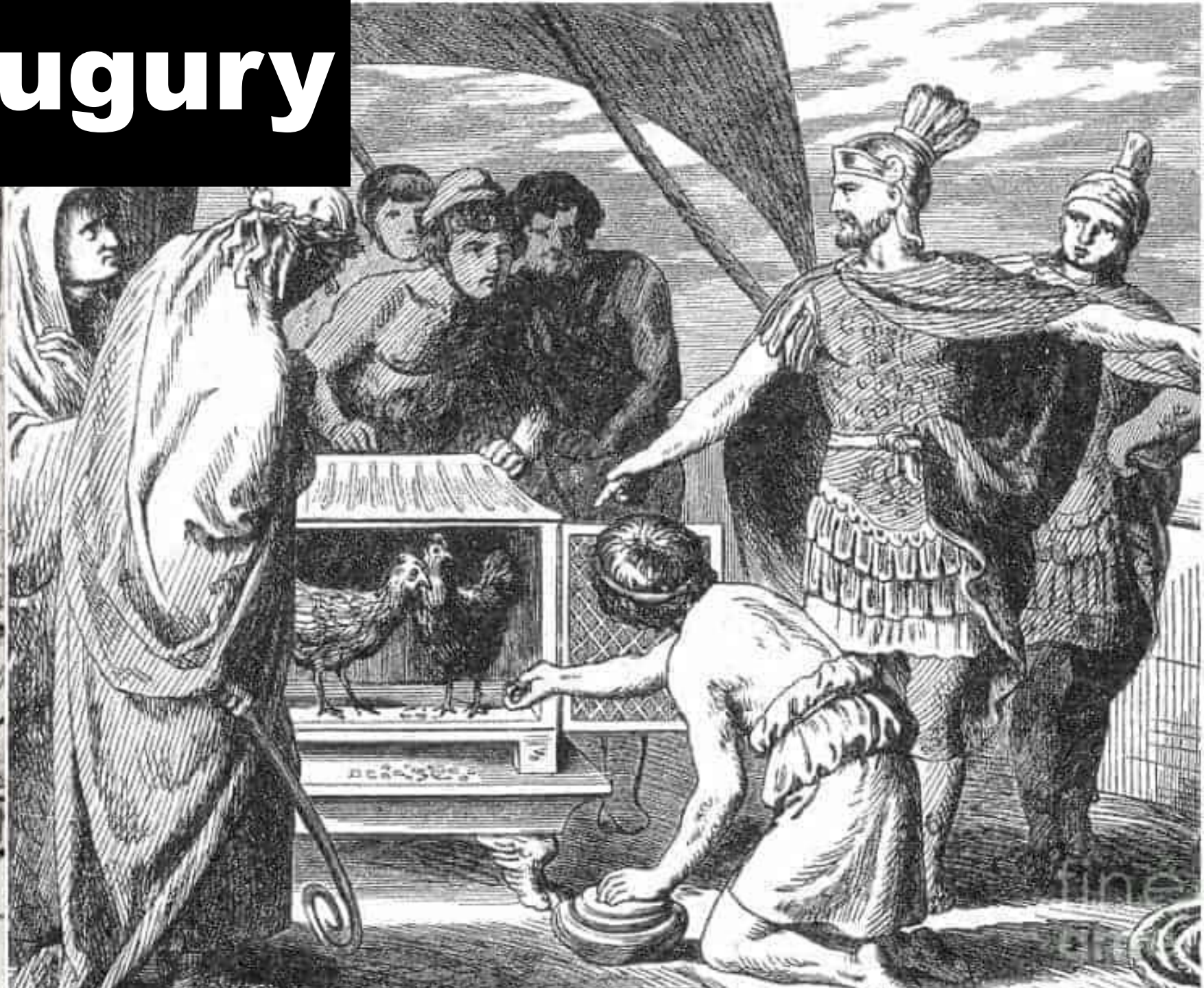
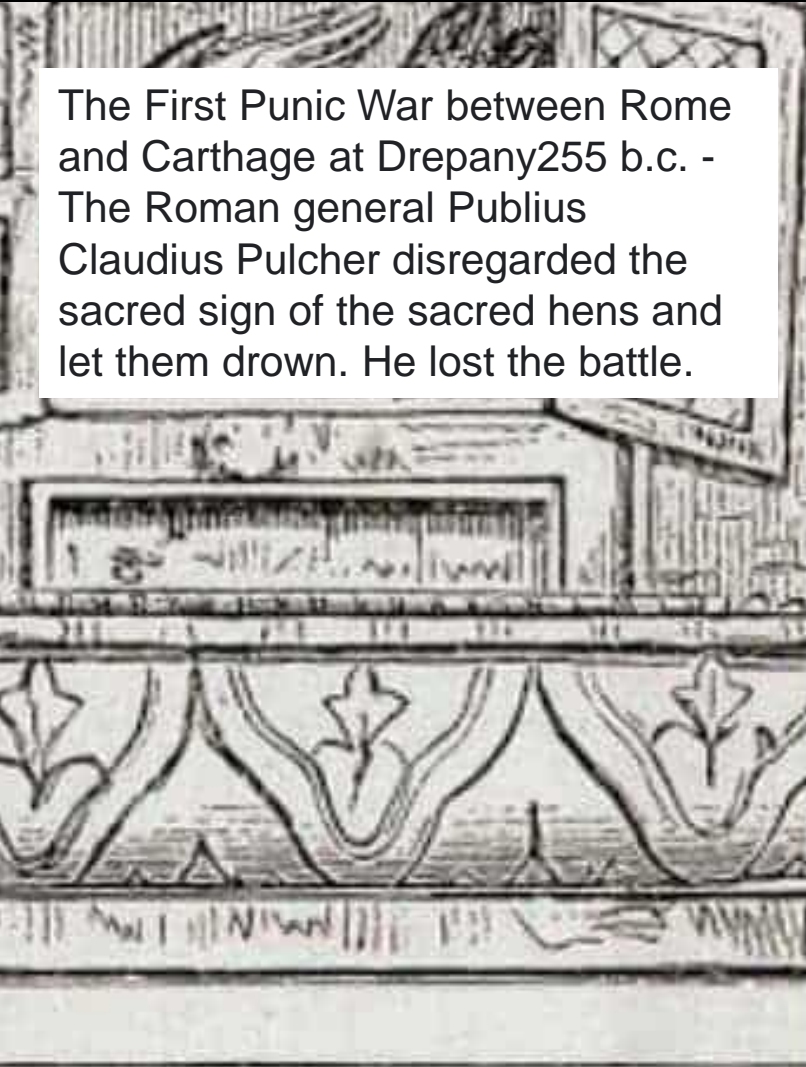
Chickens were kept unfed in their cages for a predetermined amount of time before being released and presented with some grain. If they ate the grain, the venture upon which the Romans were consulting them was deemed favorable. If they didn't touch it, however, the venture lacked the god's backing and was therefore to be abandoned.



Roman Augury

sacred chickens

The First Punic War between Rome and Carthage at Drepany 255 b.c. - The Roman general Publius Claudius Pulcher disregarded the sacred sign of the sacred hens and let them drown. He lost the battle.



SACRED CHICKENS.

Kryštof Kintera I see I see I see

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2F_NVEicb0k



Haruspicy

Divination from animal entrails

Common in Ancient Mesopotamia, also used through Greek and Roman period.

bārû or **haruspex** – trained diviner could see yes / no answers of the Sun God.

simpler instructions, often inscribed on clay models of organs (typically sheep's livers)

[Bārûtu](#), or “Art of the Diviner” manual for extispicy was “published” (copies known date from about 600 BC and earlier), it took up 135 clay tablets written as 60 lines of cuneiform each.



The top-of-the-line future-predicting gizmo was a sheep's liver, an organ so bloody and distinctive folks assumed it was the house of the soul—and because of that spiritual connection, an ideal canvas upon which the gods could write their wills.

Bārûtu manual mentioned above actually contains some purely "theoretical" predictions, in that they refer to anatomical oddities that had never been observed. This might be the first known example of a deterministic system.

Haruspicy

Divination from animal entrails

Bārûtu or “Art of the Diviner” manual for extispicy was “published” (copies known date from about 600 BC and earlier), it took up 135 clay tablets written as 60 lines of cuneiform each.

Bārûtu manual contains some purely "theoretical" predictions, in that they refer to anatomical oddities that had never been observed. This might be the first known example of a deterministic system.



Haruspicy

Divination from animal entrails

In this sense, the bārû acted like a modern scientist, seeking to replicate the results of an earlier experiment to assure veracity.

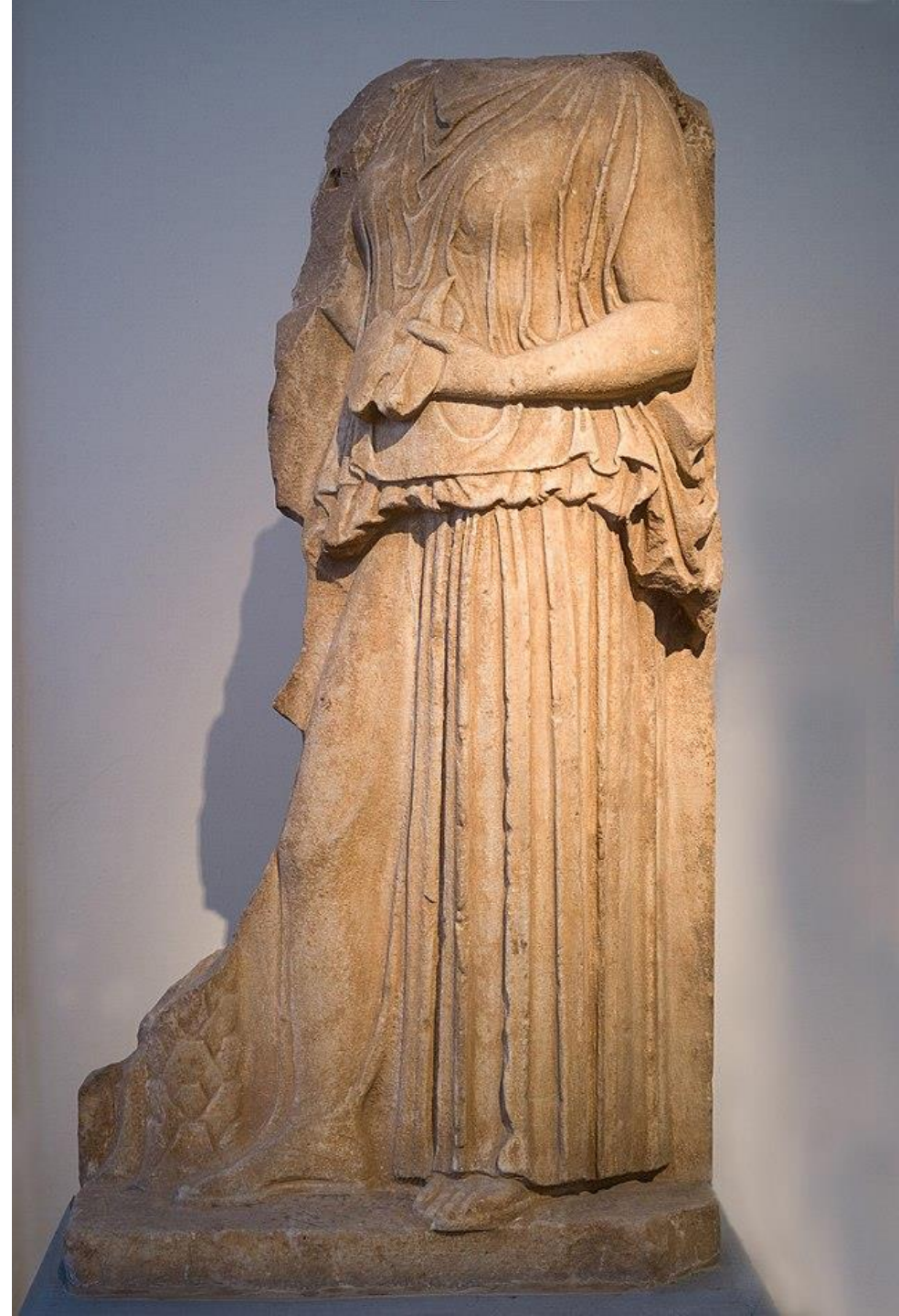


Haruspicy

Divination from animal entrails

In this sense, the *bārû* acted like a modern scientist, seeking to replicate the results of an earlier experiment to assure veracity.

The Stele of Diotima,
female seer holding a liver,
c. 420 – 410 b. c.



Haruspicy

Divination from animal entrails

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/cuizine/2018-v9-n1-cuizine04015/1052116ar/>



Extispicy in the everyday with artist Amanda Couch 19/10/20

The Liver Models 2016.
Monoprint on Chinese paper.



Amanda Couch
Extispicy in the everyday
with artist

direct impressions of of lamb's liver using
the Gytaku or Japanese technique for

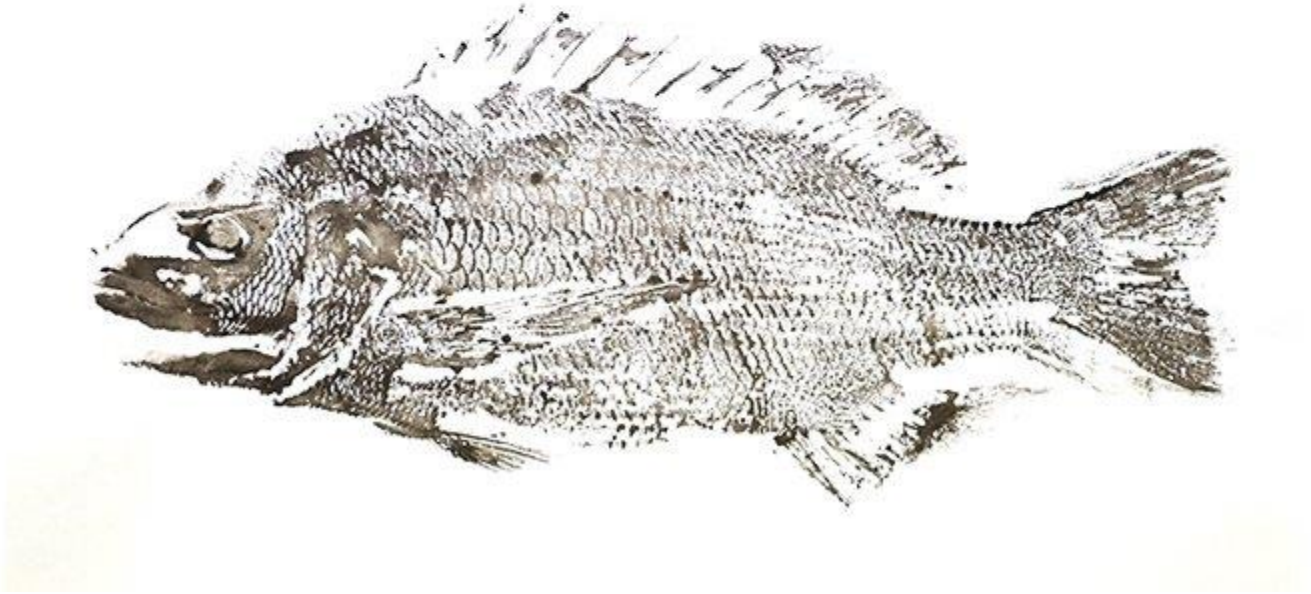
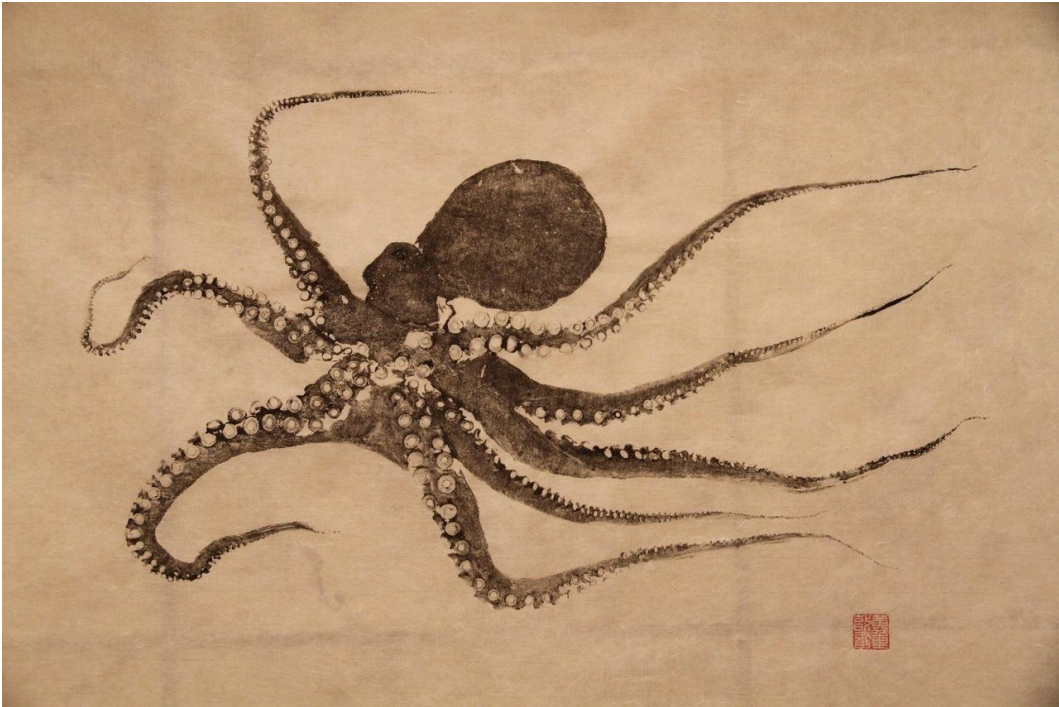
DALŠÍ VIDEA
Přehrát (k)

5:18 / 16:06



YouTube

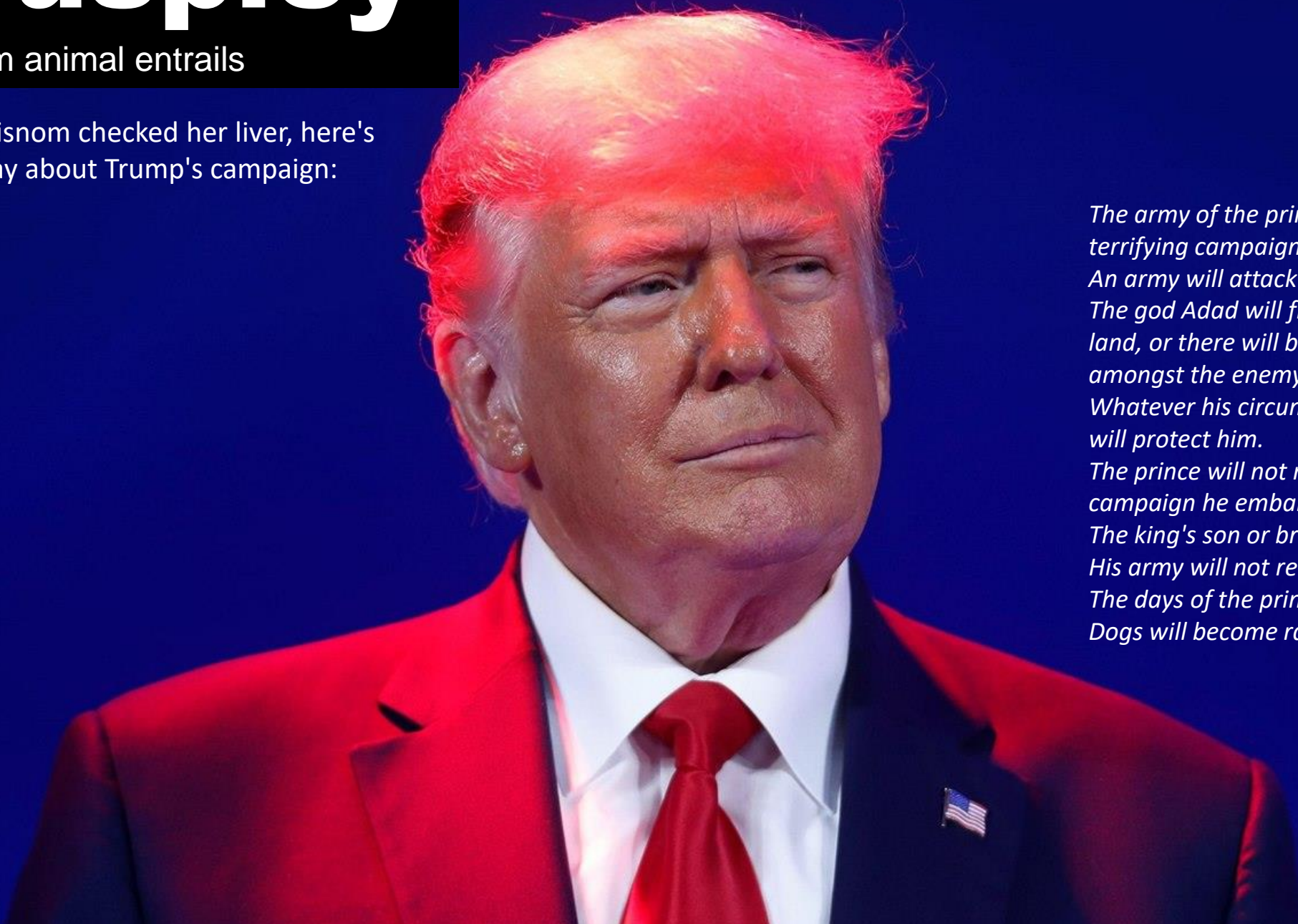
Gyotaku Japanese technique of fish imprint



Haruspicy

Divination from animal entrails

When Selena Wisnom checked her liver, here's what it had to say about Trump's campaign:



*The army of the prince will go on a terrifying campaign.
An army will attack the prince in battle.
The god Adad will flood the enemy's land, or there will be confusion amongst the enemy.
Whatever his circumstances, the gods will protect him.
The prince will not return from the campaign he embarked upon.
The king's son or brother will flee.
His army will not reach its goal.
The days of the prince will be long.
Dogs will become rabid.*

Astrology

Divination from the sky observation

An attempt to explain and understand the mysterious and complex relationship between the Universe as a whole and human beings. First documented evidence of Western and Near East Astrology coming from Ancient Mesopotamia (around 2000 b. c.), systems being developed independently in Ancient China, Mesoamerica, and India.

Astrologers were famous astronomers – Johannes Kepler, Tycho Brahe, Galileo Galilei.

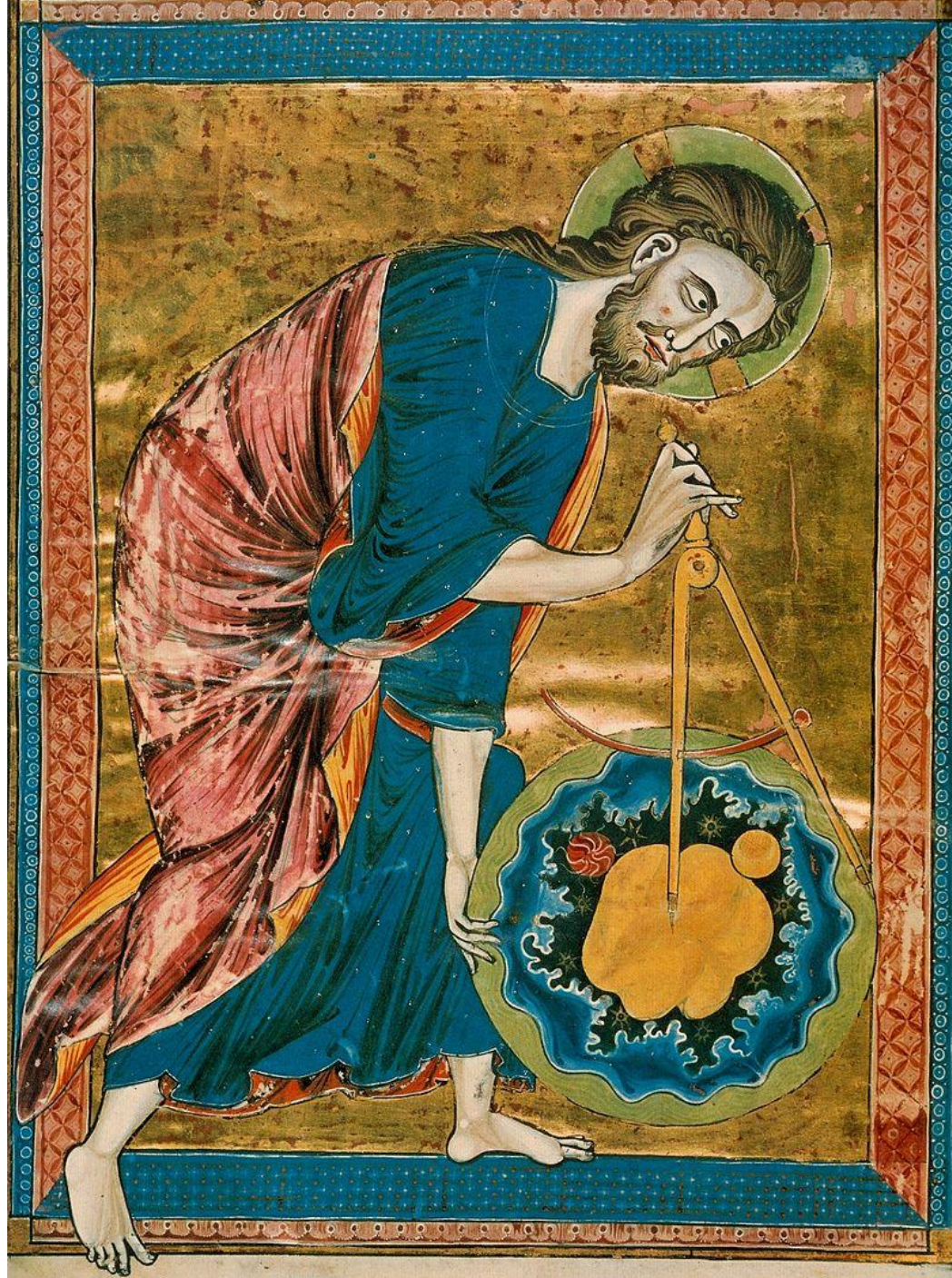
Astrology and Astronomy since the 18th century they have come to be regarded as completely separate disciplines.



Astrology

Divination from the sky observation

Geometry and astronomy/astrology (*astronomia*), was connected to the divine for most medieval scholars. The compass in this 13th-century manuscript is a symbol of God's act of creation, as many believed that there was something intrinsically divine or perfect that could be found in circles.



Astrology

Divination from the sky observation

Sorry, astrology fans: you've been reading the wrong star sign all this time!

In fact, a massive 86% of us were actually born under a different constellation to our star sign, based on how the sky exists today... and it's all to do with the Earth's wobble.

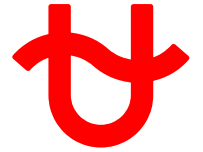
The wobble causes the Earth's axis, which is the centre line around which it rotates, to swing in a slow circle over the course of 25,800 years.

"The line from Earth through the sun points to Virgo for 45 days, but it points to Scorpius for only 7 days. To make a tidy match with their 12-month calendar, the Babylonians ignored the fact that the sun actually moves through 13 constellations, not 12.



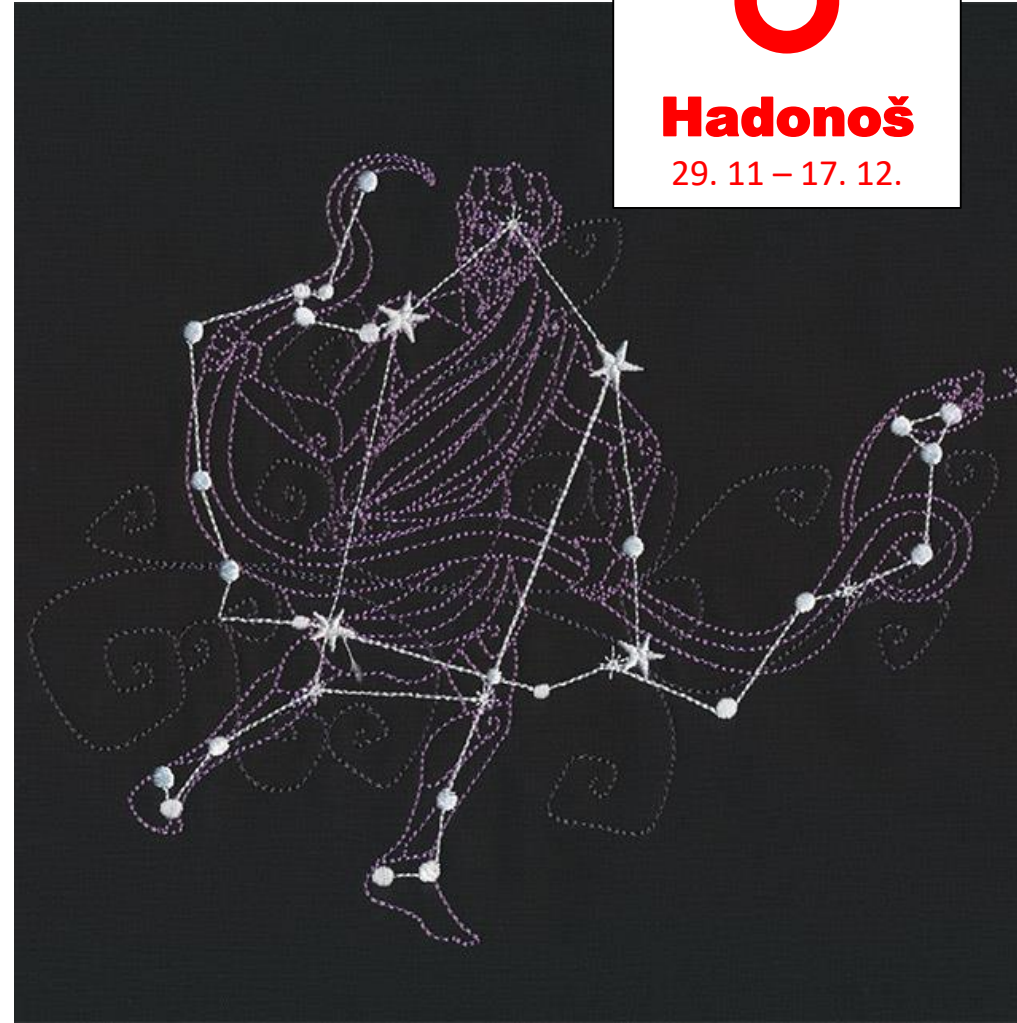
We didn't change any zodiac signs...we just did the math!

Ophiuchus



Hadonoš

29. 11 – 17. 12.



Margaret Haines
Combines Astrology
and Fake News in a
“Post-Traumatic Age”

Trailer:

<https://vimeo.com/147478649>

Full movie (24 min):

<https://vimeo.com/147478649>

“I was interested in considering astrology as an older news system which could be taken as infallible to the manipulation of corporate media”



Comets

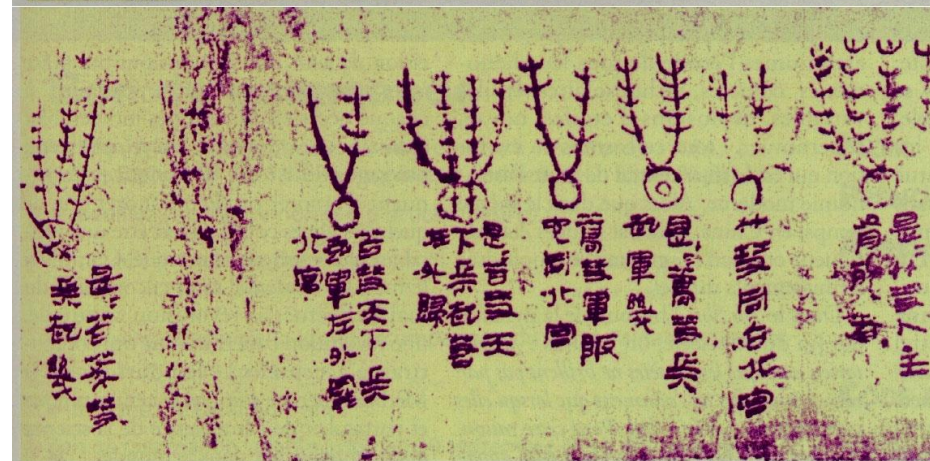
Divination from the sky observation

How to seek a

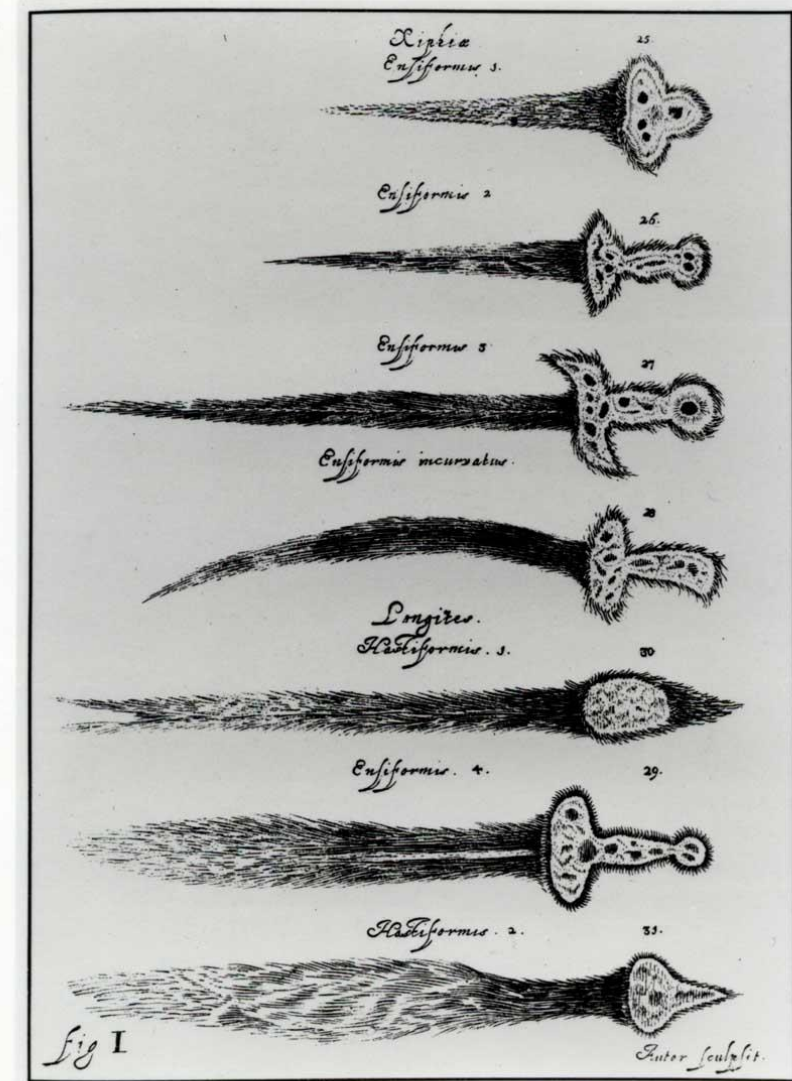
prediction: Wait for a comet to appear

Equipment: naked eye

Personnel: Any human who attributes meaning to the appearance of a comet.



The Mawangdui silk, a 'textbook' of cometary forms and the various disasters associated with them, was compiled sometime around 300 B.C., but the knowledge it encompasses is believed to date as far back as 1500 B.C.



Cometographia - types of cometary forms, illustrations from Johannes Hevelius' (Danzig, 1668)

Comets

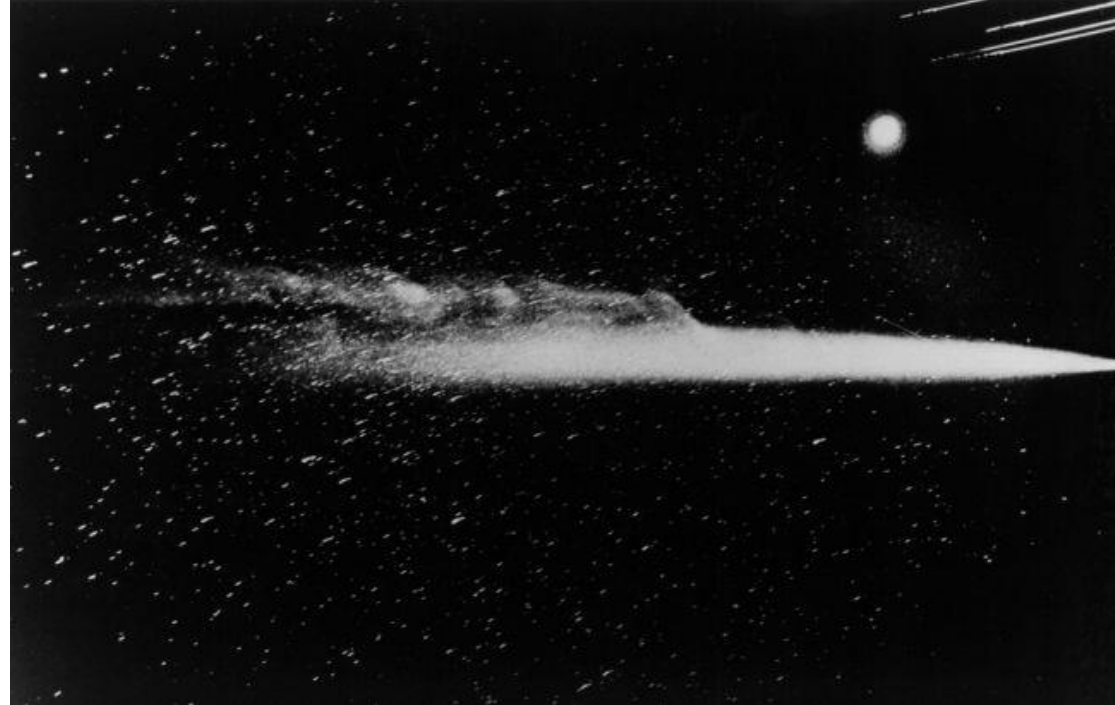
Divination from the sky observation

44 b.c.: An appearance of a comet soon after Julius Caesar's death was taken as a sign that Caesar had been become a god.

12 b.c.: The appearance of the "Star of Bethlehem" during the birth of Jesus is often interpreted as a comet (perhaps Halley's Comet).

1066 b. c.: An appearance of Halley's Comet was supposedly a good omen for William the Conqueror and the Norman's conquest of England at the Battle of Hastings (or, alternatively, a bad sign for the defeated King Harold and his Anglo-Saxons).

Edmund Halley made the bold claim, using calculations based on Newton's theory, that the "Great" Comet of 1682 would return 75 years later, and that claim was posthumously verified.



May 13, 1910, by a wide-angle camera at Lowell Observatory, Flagstaff, Arizona

May 13, 1986,
ESA's Giotto
Probe and
Halley's Comet



Meteorites

Message from te Heaven

Egyptian word for heaven (*Bja*) is the same word they used to describe what we now know as iron.



The Willamette Meteorite, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (Clackamas tribe) continue to honor Tomanowos' gift with songs and rituals, including a ceremonial visit to the exhibit every year.

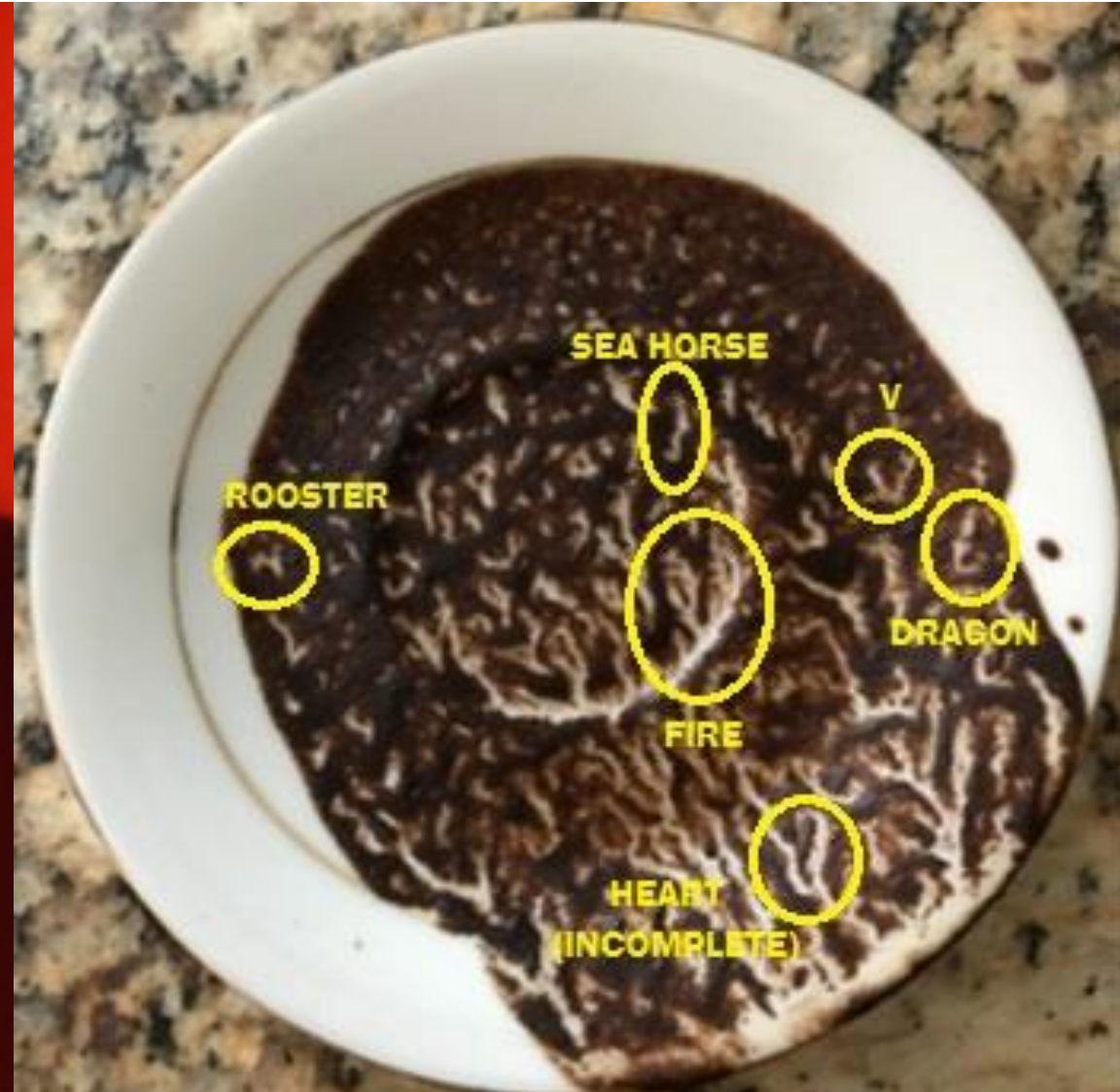


Stone was placed in the Ka'aba by Prophet Abraham, after it was presented to him by the angel Gabriel. The stone is recognised as to have come from heaven.

Randomized

Input is the result of a process that a **human initiates** for the express purpose of **producing a random outcome**.

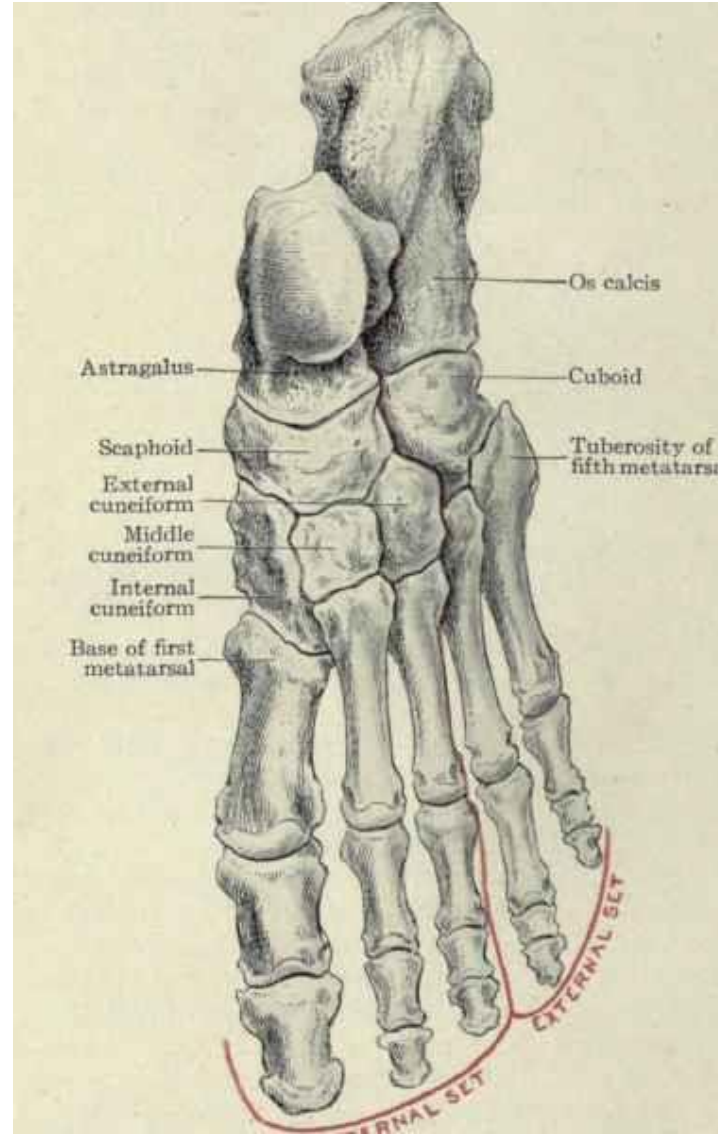
Turkish Coffee Reading



Astragaloï

Divination from random process

Dice-like systems have been used for millennia, e.g. “astragaloï” made from the astragalus bones of various animals, favored by the Greeks.



Astragaloï

Divination from random process

Dice-like systems have been used for millennia, e.g. “astragaloï” made from the astragalus bones of various animals, favored by the Greeks.



Astragaloi

Divination from random process

21 of these stelas with oracles have been found around, especially on four sides a list of the potential falls of five different astragals.



Lot Divination Kremna Stela

Bibliomancy

Divination from random pages

Council of Vannes in 465 - the use of oracular books, including the use of Biblical texts in an oracular manner, was forbidden.

Someone seeking guidance about the future would consult the owner of the book, who would then have the guidance-seeker pick a number at random – this would be the “lot” in the title – and then turn to the oracle that matched the selected number.

Gospel of the Lots of Mary, 5 – 6th century
75x69 mm, 160 pages



Pyromancy

Oracle Bones

Cracking bones with heat + interpreting the cracks' meanings.

Earliest about 3 500 b. c., popular during Shang Dynasty 1200 – 1000 b. c.



Oracle Bones

Divination from random process

As finds they were considered to be dragon bones and used as a remedy. Plastrons for malalie and bones for wounds.



In 1898 Wang Yirong the chancellor of the Imperial Academy in Beijing discovered on the bone, before it was ground into powder, that it bore strange glyphs, which they, have studied on ancient bronzes.



Oracle Bones

Divination from random process



Transmitter
from the project Trans_Forma
2017 , chrom plated 3d print

Systems

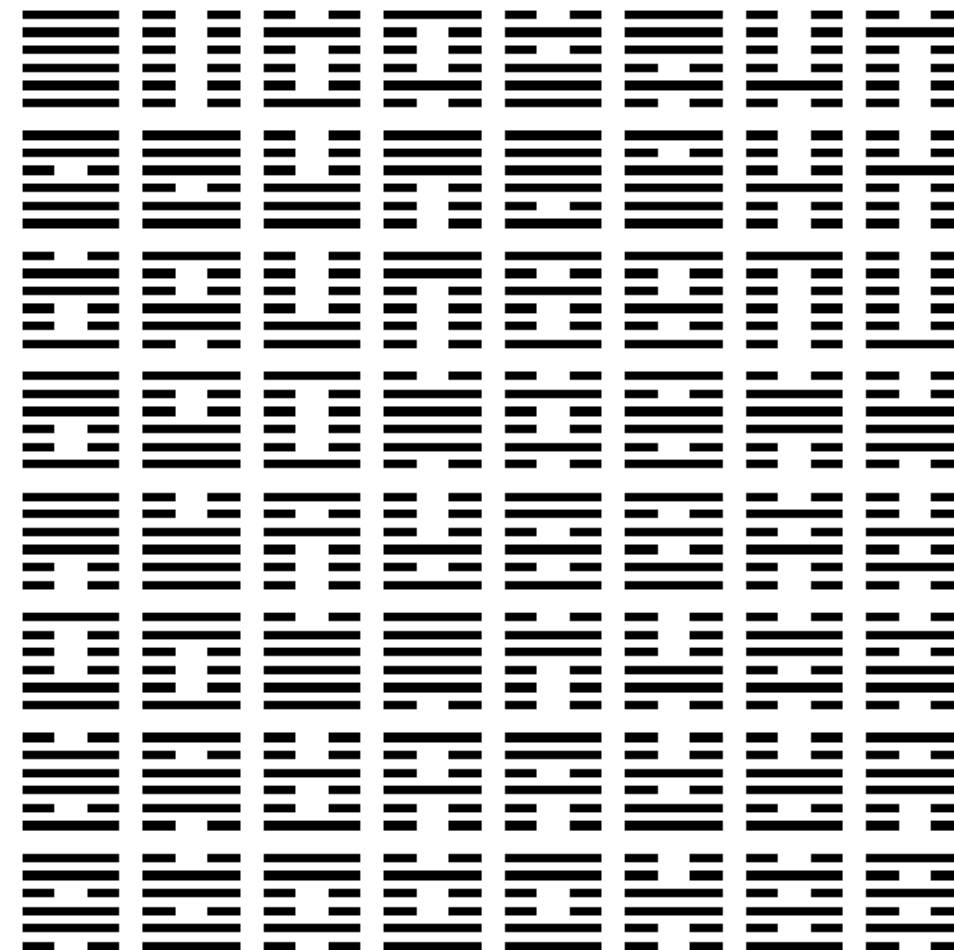
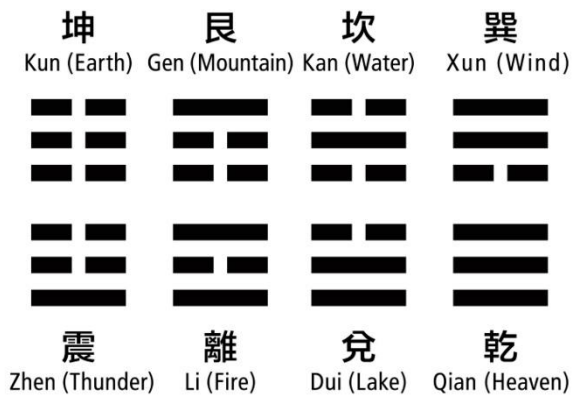
Complex systems to understand the Universe

I-Ching 易經 / Book of Changes

Fu Xi, a dragon or a snake with a human face, studied the patterns of nature in the sky and on the earth: the markings on birds, rocks, and animals, the movement of clouds, the arrangement of the stars. everything could be reduced to eight trigrams, each composed of three stacked solid or broken lines, reflecting the *yin* and *yang*, the duality that drives the universe.

The origin of the book is connected with the beginnings of the Chinese Sia dynasty in the 18th century BC. It began to be used for divination during the 12th century BC during the Chou dynasty.

In its main part, it is a series of 64 hexagrams, shapes composed of six lines (which can take yang or yin forms), which represent 64 different archetypal situations. The Book of Changes has been (and still is) used not only as an oracle, but also as a philosophical and cosmological system that plays an important role in Taoism, from which Chinese culture was largely derived.

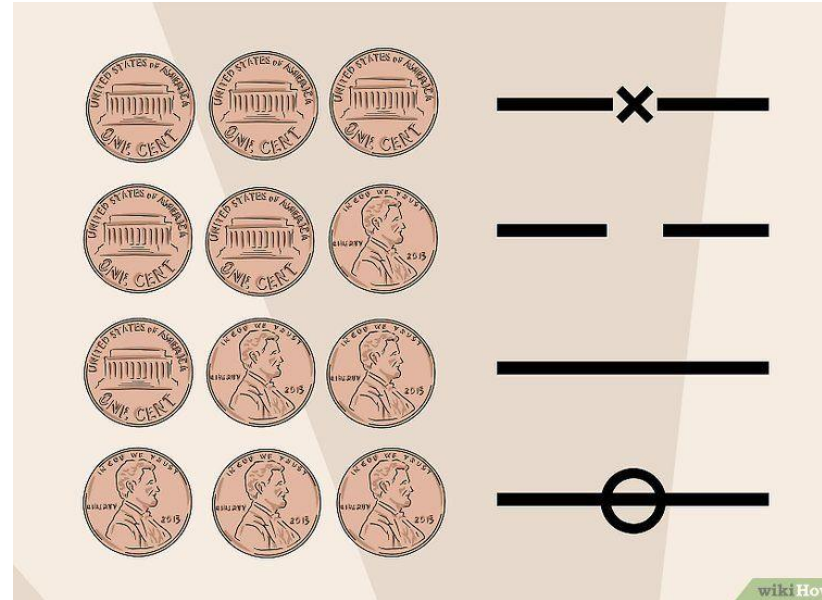


1. Qian
Creation
2. Kchun
Acceptance
3. Chun
Birth
4. Meng
Maturation
5. Sü
Expectations
6. Sung
Quarrel
7. Sh '
Army
8. Pi
Connection
9. Xiaochu -
Submission of the Little One
10. Lü
Stepping

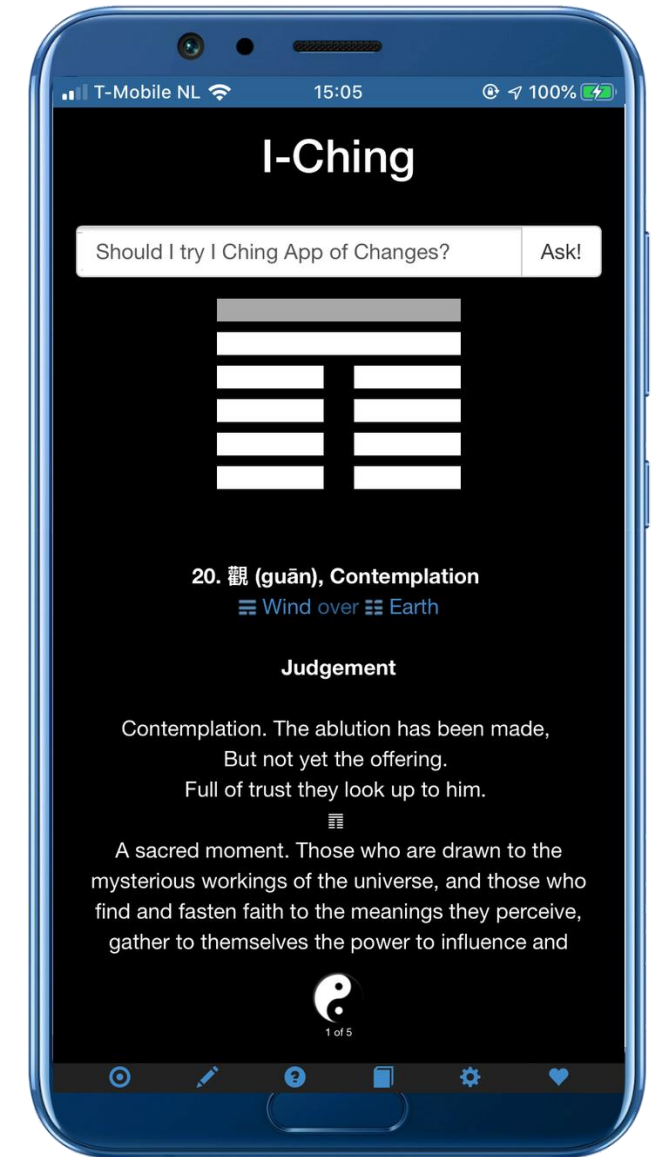
Systems

Complex systems to understand the Universe

I-Ching 易經



The main point is that consulting with the Book of Changes makes it easier to decipher the often complex situations in which an individual finds himself into a clearer formula, which then facilitates decision-making.



John Cage: Music of Changes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_8-B2rNw7s

Systems

Complex systems to understand the Universe

IFA divination – Yoruba tribe tradition.

Babalowo - interpreter of systems of signs. **Odu** - Ifa corpus 256 parts subdivided into **Ese** – verses (about 800 ese per odu). Babalowo uses sacred palm nuts and divination chain

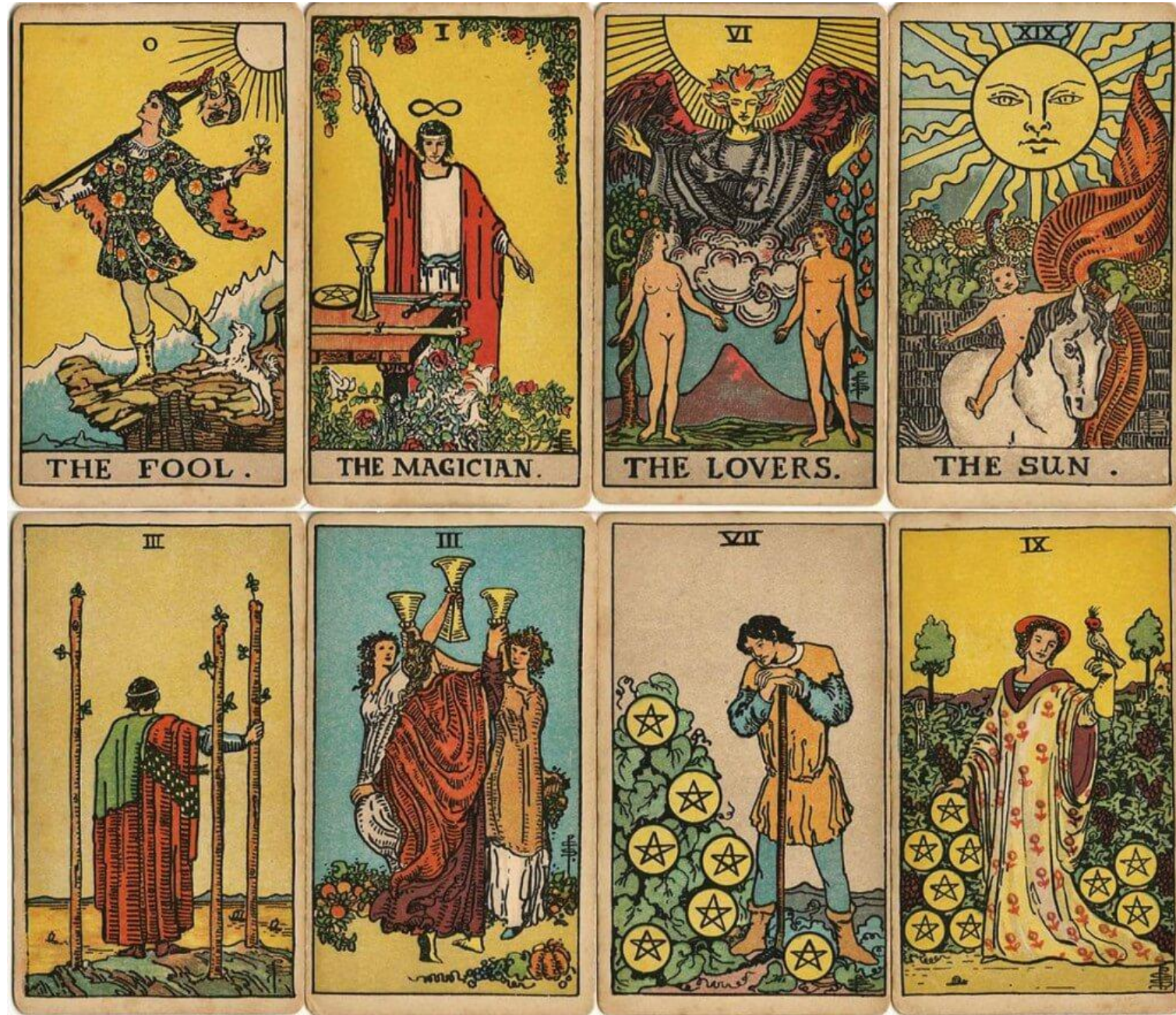


Systems

Cartomancy

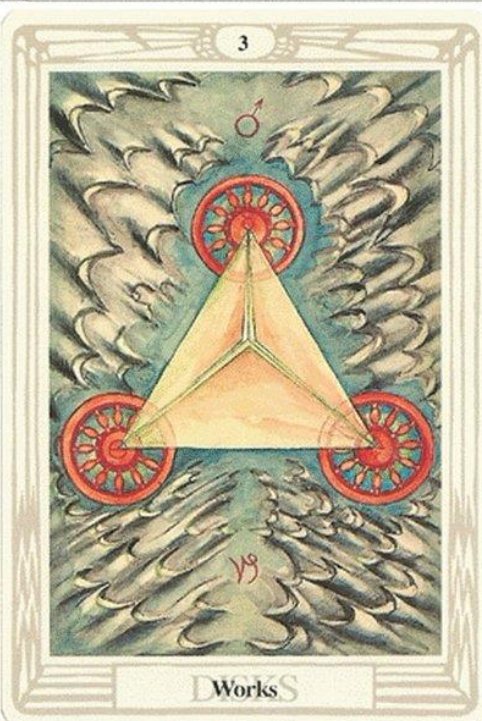
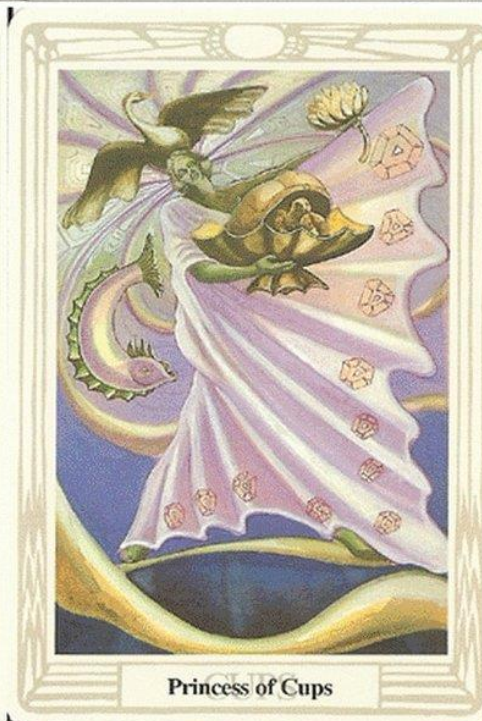
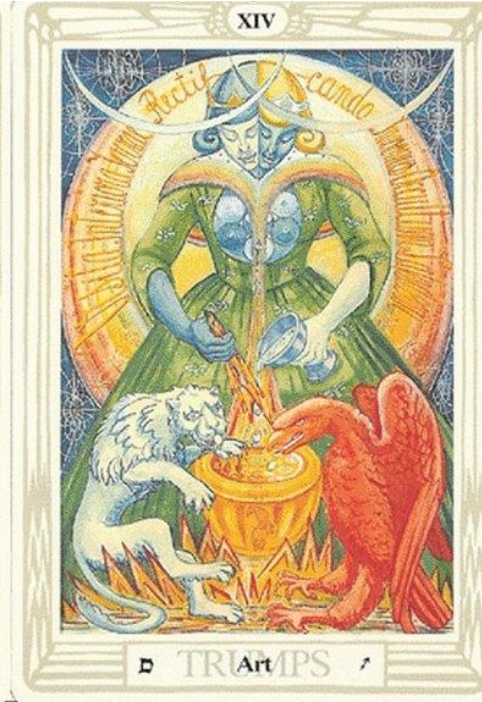
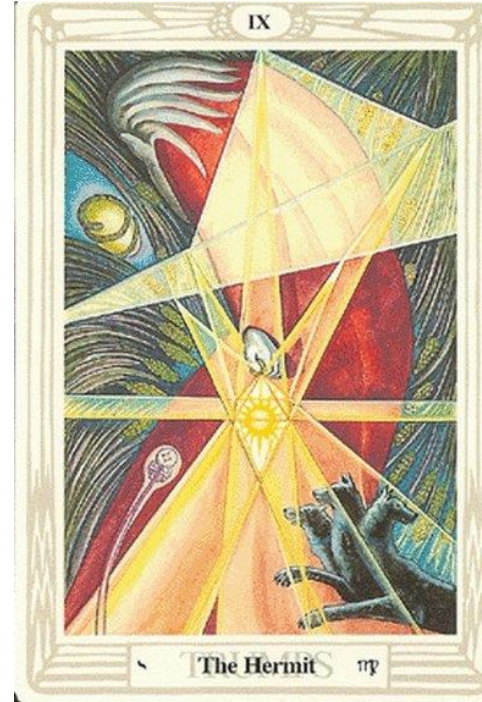
Tarot Cards – reading form 18th century.
A tarot deck specifically designed for occult purposes around 1789.

Aleister Crowley, stated of the Tarot: "The origin of this pack of cards is very obscure. Some authorities seek to put it back as far as the ancient Egyptian Mysteries; others try to bring it forward as late as the fifteenth or even the sixteenth century ... [but] The only theory of ultimate interest about the Tarot is that it is an admirable symbolic picture of the Universe, based on the data of the Holy Qabalah."



Systems

Cartomancy

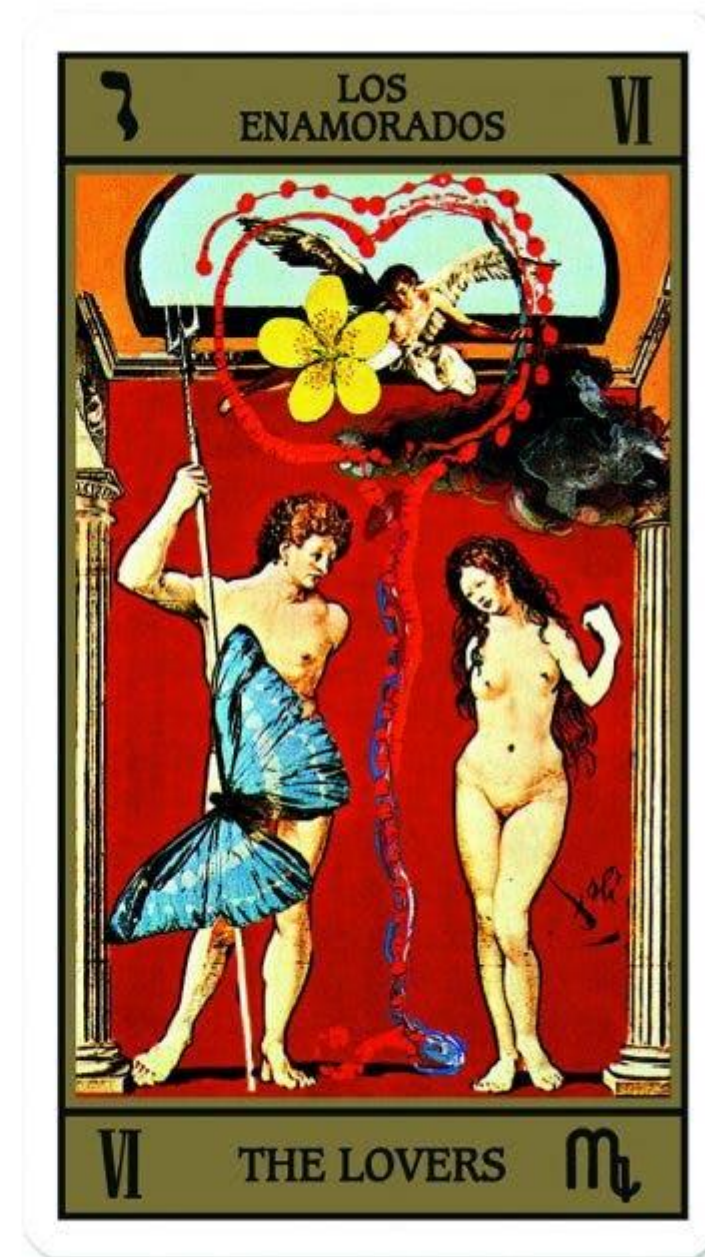
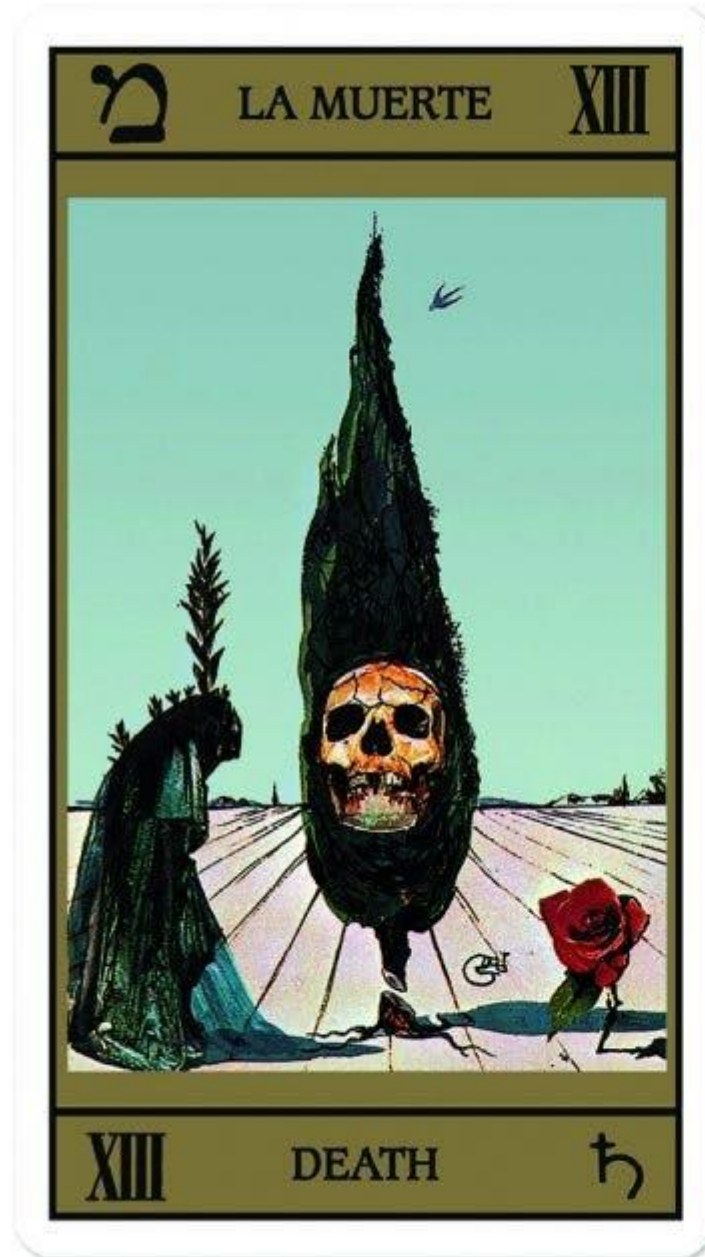


Aleister Crowley Tarot cards

Systems

Cartomancy

Salvator Dali Tarot cards



Systems

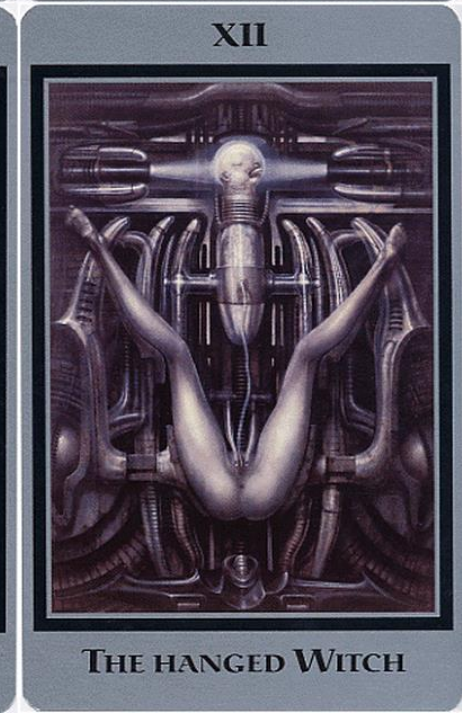
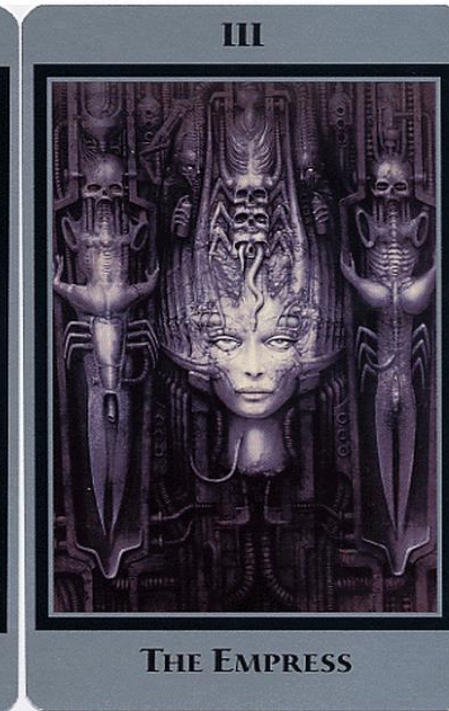
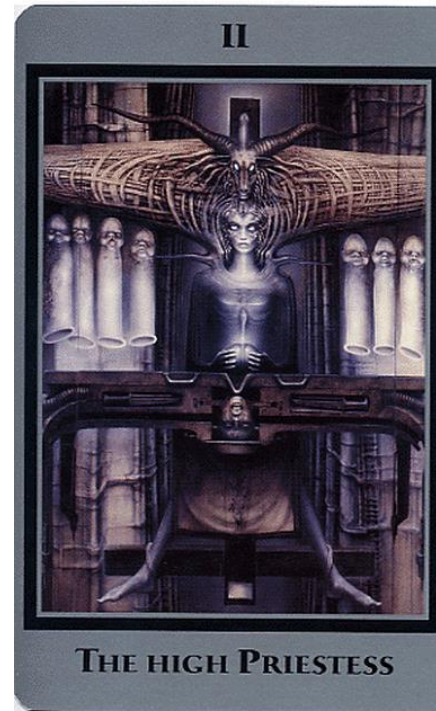
Cartomancy

Carl Gustav Jung: "The cards, combine in certain ways, and the different combinations correspond to the playful development of mankind." This, too, is how Tarot works—with the added dimension of "symbols, or pictures of symbolical situations." The images—the hanged man, the tower, the sun—"are sort of archetypal ideas, of a differentiated nature."

There are modern-day mystic-occult decks to suit every spiritual bent imaginable (Buddhist, Wiccan, Toltec, Cat People). There are decks with a less devotional approach: Stick Figure Tarot? Hello Kitty? Star Trek? Why no Contemporary Art deck, with Maurizio Cattelan as the Fool and Urs Fischer as Death? Why no Fashion tarot, with Anna Wintour as the Empress and Martin Margiela as the Hermit?

Hans Rudolf Giger Tarot cards

Scroll or Resize Window to View More Cards.



Systems

Cartomancy

Alejandro Jodorowsky - To him, the tarot is such a constant companion that it has become all-purpose: a point of reference, of reflection, of divination. He has put it into his films, he uses it to communicate in a nonliteral way, and it is a simple pastime to boot.



Holy Mountain, 1973 trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmR0vi0ifzE>

El Topo movie 1970

Art

“In the modern world, the artist took over the role of the shaman.”



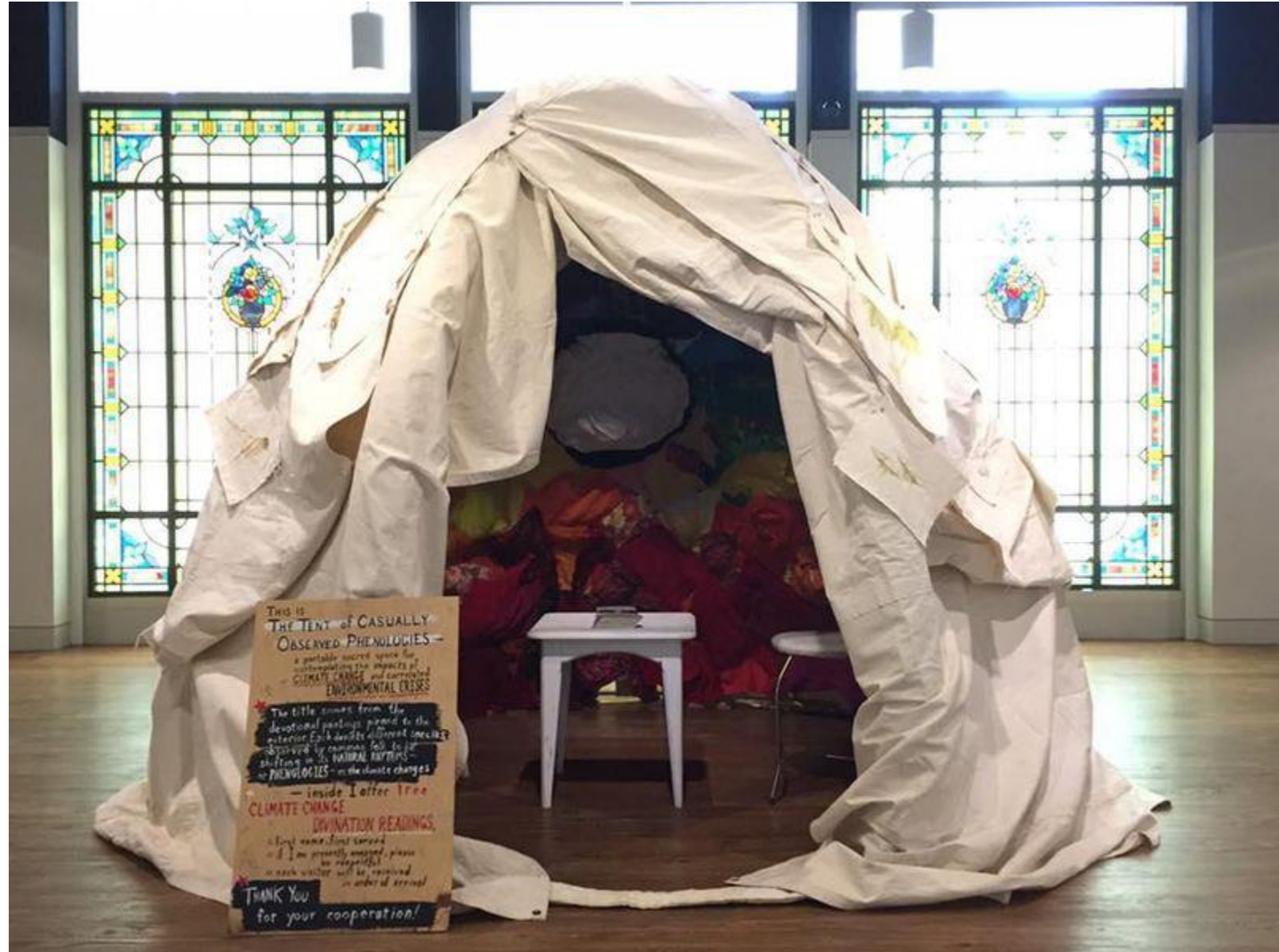
Mathew Barney, Cremaster Series
<https://vimeo.com/331881653>

Art

James Leonard -The Tent of Casually Observed Phenologies, 2016

“I thought to myself, if we’re not going to listen to climate scientists, we might as well be listening to fortune-tellers,”

Participants choose among three tarot decks—the classic - then pose a question related to climate change. “Perhaps they want to know what their neighborhood will look like in 50 years, if a favorite lake will still be there, or if avocados will still be available on store shelves,”



Alex Head und Miodrag Kuč - Totalisator 2050 – spekulative Prognosen für das Ruhrgebiet

Artists develop a betting office in an abandoned market trailer at the former horse racing track in Recklinghausen. Everyone is invited to place real bets on the sporting, demographic, economic, cultural and political life of the Ruhr in 2050. Gambling becomes a medium for the exploration of democratic and artistic participation. The *Totalisator 2050*, an anachronistic mega calculator from the world of horse racing, will decide the potential winner in 2050 when all bets will be settled at the site of the Recklinghausen racetrack.



Art

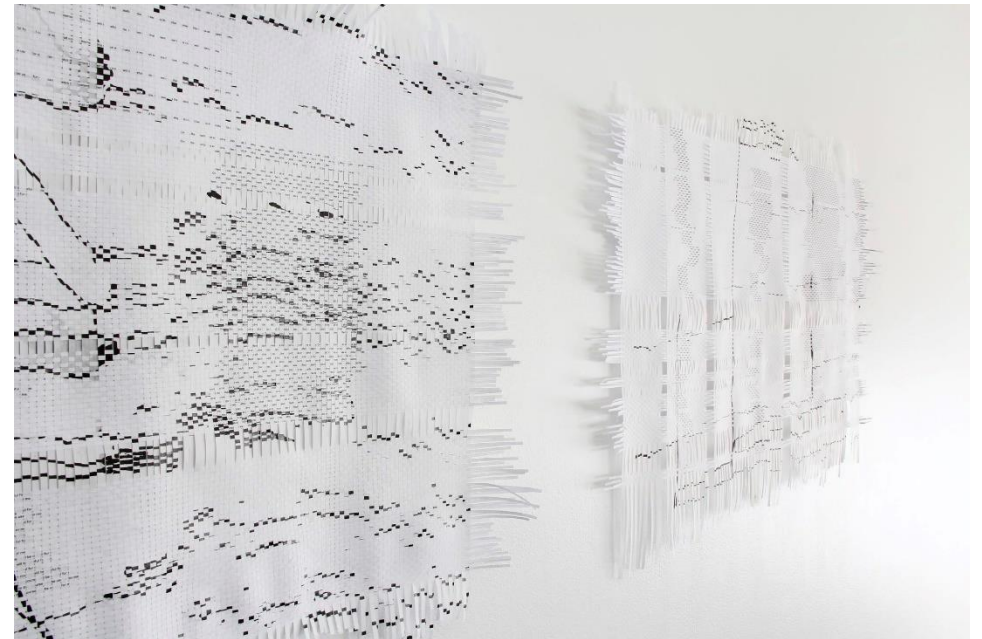
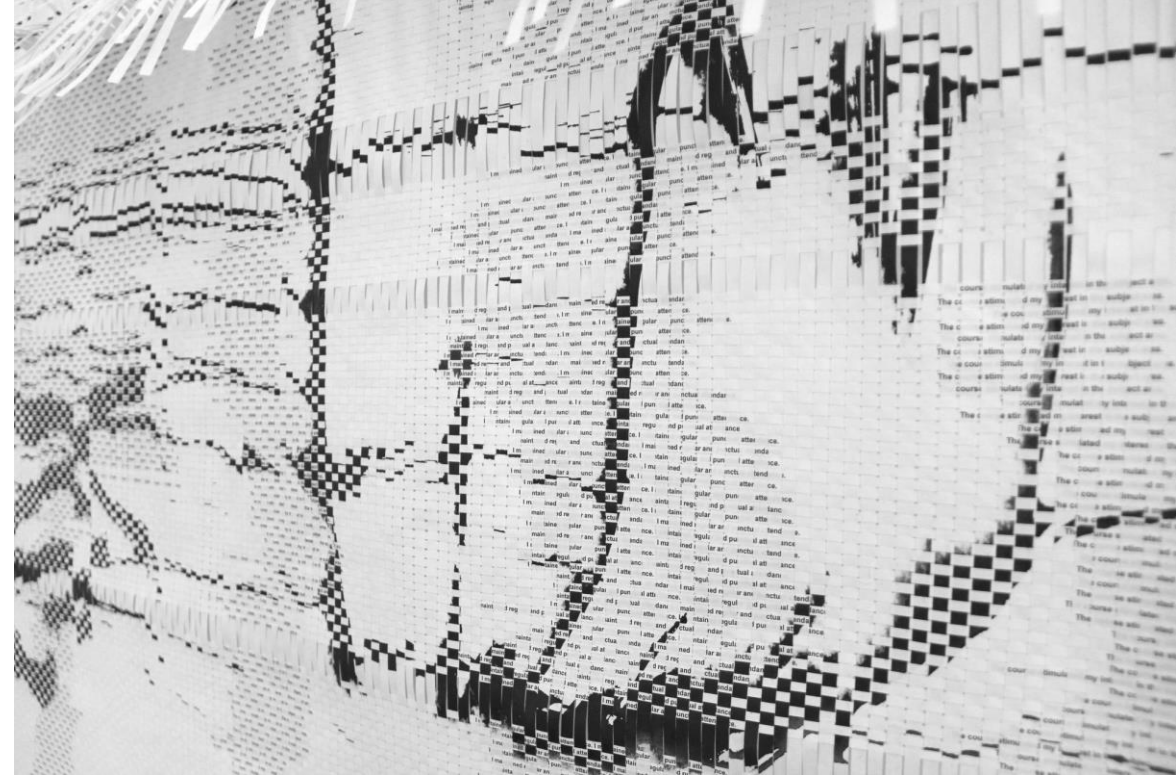
Damla Tamer -Divination Objects

Ink on paper, woven

Dimensions variable, approx. 50 x 32 inches

2019-2020

Two distinct source materials: 1) Ink stain drawings, made by dripping ink on paper or submerging paper sheets into ink vats, making up the vertical warp material 2) Text compositions containing prompts from academic teaching evaluation surveys filled out by students at the end of university courses, making up the horizontal warp material. The process of producing these materials was influenced by the **ikat textile technique** in which the horizontal and vertical threads of a rug are dyed before being woven, in anticipation of a final pattern that will emerge from the alignment and overlap of dyed areas.



Humanity and nature
were inseparable. It has
been only in the last few
hundred years we have
seen this accelerating
separation between
people and nature.