

# “The Research Group Speaks”

## Episode 12



Martin, Slovakia, Slovak National Library, Fragment of the Picatrix, circa 1400 CE.  
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## The Sources of the Engraved Magic and Astrological Images in the *Book of Sigils* (*Liber Sigillorum*) and the *Ghāyat al-Hakīm* (*The Goal of the Wise*)<sup>1</sup>

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<https://manuscriptevidence.org/wpme/episode-12-vajra-regan-on-engraved-magic-and-astrological-images/>

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all material has been adapted from Lauri Ockenström and Vajra Regan, “The Hermetic Origins of the *Liber sigillorum* of Techel,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 33 (2023): 173–266.

## Astral Magic<sup>2</sup>

1. an examination of the specific configuration of stars and constellations that could yield the desired result
2. the preparation of the image (engraving or effigy) that symbolizes the emanating configuration
3. procuring the image at a time when the stars and constellations are arranged in the appropriate configuration

*Additionally*

- (4) using various auxiliary (ritual) techniques, such as incense, prayers to the stars, invocations, magic names, and so forth

### Comparison of the *Liber planetarum* and the *Liber sigillorum* of Techel

Table 1

| Lp | S(atur) | <i>Liber planetarum</i>  |  | Ls | <i>Liber sigillorum</i> of Techel  |   |
|----|---------|--|--|----|--|---|
| 0  |         | sigil of Saturn, a human figure.   |  |    |  |   |
| 1  | S1      | a man seated on a plow between two oxen; he holds a vulture with the head of a man and the head of a fox                     |  | 1  | a man seated on a plow between two oxen; he holds a vulture with the head of a man and the head of a fox | 1 |
| 2  | S2      | man with the face of a raven and the legs of a lamb, perched on a seat with a staff in his right hand and skulls in his left |  |    |  |   |
| 3  | S3      | man with sickle, a crocodile beneath his feet  |  | 2  | man with sickle, a crocodile beneath his feet  | 2 |
| 4  | S4      | man with a sieve above a dragon  |  | 3  | man with a sword above a dragon  | 3 |
| 5  | S5      | standing eagle   |  | 4  | standing eagle   | 4 |
| 6  | S6      | a fish   |  | 5  | a fish   | 5 |
| 7  | S7      | man with a sword   |  | 6  | man with a sword   | 6 |
| 8  | S8      | turtledove   |  | 7  | turtledove   | 7 |
| 9  | S9      | Aquarius   |  | 8  | Aquarius   | 8 |
| 10 | S10     | Cancer   |  |    |  |   |
| 11 | S11     | bird with a leaf in its mouth, a human face in its sight   |  | 9  | bird with a leaf in its mouth, a human face in its sight   | 9 |

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Dov Schwartz, *Studies on Astral Magic*, p. x

**Comparison of the *Liber planetarum* and the *Liber sigillorum* of Techel**

**Table 2**

| Lp | J(upiter) | <i>Liber planetarum</i>  |  | Ls | <i>Liber sigillorum</i> of Techel   |    |
|----|-----------|--|--|----|---|----|
| 12 | J1        | Jupiter with nimbus ( <i>circulus</i> ), standing on four men, his hands raised in the manner of the saints          |  | 10 | Jupiter with nimbus ( <i>circulus</i> ), seated upon a throne carried by four men, his hands raised in the manner of the saints | 10 |
| 13 | J2        | man with a lion's face and the feet of an eagle above a two headed dragon, he strikes the dragon's head with a spear |  | 11 | man with a lion's face and the feet of an eagle above a two-headed dragon, he strikes the dragon's head with a staff            | 11 |
| 14 | J3        | man ascending on an eagle, he holds a staff in his hand  |  | 12 | man ascending on an eagle, he holds a staff in his hand   | 12 |
| 15 | J4        | <i>characteres</i>   |  |    |   |    |
| 16 | J5        | soldier on horseback, he holds the reins and a bow   |  | 13 | a man on horseback, he holds the reins and a bow  | 13 |
|    |           |  |  | 15 | a woman, her hair hangs down over her breasts   | 14 |
| 17 | J6        | a man seated on a fish, a peacock above his head   |  | 16 | a man seated on a fish, a peacock above his head  | 15 |

**Table 3**

| Lp | M(ars) | <i>Liber planetarum</i>   |  |    | <i>Liber sigillorum</i> of Techel   |    |
|----|--------|---|--|----|---|----|
| 18 | M1     | man ascending on a lion with a drawn sword                      |  |    |   |    |
| 19 | M2     | a naked man, his hand on the neck of a naked girl               |  | 17 | a naked man, his hand on the neck of a naked girl                                     | 16 |
| 20 | M3     | man dressed in a lorica and a galea, he has a sword in his belt |  | 14 | <b>man dressed in a lorica and a galea, he has a sword in his hand or in his belt</b> | 17 |

## *Ghāyat al-Hakīm 2:*

### فصل (١٠) في الأحجار

## Chapter 10, “On the Stones”

### Structure of Chapter 10

#### I. *The Stones and Metals Proper to Each Planet*

- **Saturn, Jupiter, Mars**, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon

#### II. *The Images of the Planets*

- Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, **Saturn, Jupiter, Mars**

#### III. “The Images (*Engravings*) in the Stones” (الصور في الأحجار)

- Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, **Saturn, Jupiter, Mars**

### Comparison of the *Liber planetarum* and the *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*

Table 1

| <i>Liber planetarum</i><br>Florence, BNC, MS II. III. 214, ff. 33r–38r   |   |  | <i>Ghāyat al-Hakīm 2.10</i><br>(ed. Hellmut Ritter)   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Saturn</b>  |   |  | <b>Saturn</b>   |   |
| a man with a long face, seated upon a plow between two oxen; he holds a vulture with the head of a man and the head of a fox                                     | 1 |  | a man with a long face, seated upon a plow between two oxen; he wears a collar on which there is the head of a man and the head of a fox                                | 3 |
| a man with the face of a raven and the feet of a lamb, seated on a <i>bundle</i> ; he has a staff ( <i>virga</i> ) in his right hand and skulls in his left hand | 2 |  | a man with the face of a raven and the feet of a camel, seated on a stool; he has a staff (عصا, 'aşan) in his right hand and a lance / spear (حربة, harba) in his left. | 2 |
| a man standing with a <u>sickle</u> above his head and a <u>crocodile</u> beneath his feet   | 3 |  | a man standing with a <u>fish</u> above his head and a <u>lizard</u> beneath his feet   | 2 |
| a man standing on a dragon, with a sieve ( <i>cribrum</i> ) in his right hand  | 4 |  | a man standing on a viper, with a sickle in his right hand and a staff in his left  | 2 |



# Comparison of the *Liber planetarum* and the *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*

Table 2

| <i>Liber planetarum</i><br>Florence, BNC, MS II. III. 214, ff. 33r–38r   |   |   | <i>Ghāyat al-Hakīm</i> 2.10<br>(ed. Hellmut Ritter)  |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Saturn   |   |   | Jupiter  |   |
| a standing eagle   | 5 | 4 | a vulture  | 3 |
| Jupiter  |   |   |  |   |
| Jupiter with nimbus ( <i>circulus</i> ),<br>standing on four men, his hands<br>raised in the manner of the saints  | 1 | 1 | man with a crown on his head,<br>seated on a throne with four feet,<br>each foot on the neck of a standing<br>man; the men have wings, and the<br>man <on the throne> has his hands<br>raised in prayer                  | 3 |
| a man with a lion's face and the feet<br>of an eagle; beneath his feet, a two<br>headed dragon; he strikes the<br>dragon's heads with a spear ( <i>hasta</i> ) | 2 | 2 | a man with a lion's face and the feet<br>of bird, beneath his feet a dragon<br>with <i>one head</i> (cf. 2.6.2); he has a<br>spear (مزرق, mizrāq) in his right<br>hand, with which he strikes the head<br>of the dragon. | 3 |
| man ascending on an eagle, he holds<br>a staff in his hand   | 3 | 3 | a handsome man in a round cap<br>riding an eagle (cf. 2.6.3)   | 3 |

# Comparison of the *Liber planetarum* and the *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*

Table 3

| <i>Liber planetarum</i><br>Florence, BNC, MS II. III. 214, ff. 33r–38r   |          |  |          | <i>Ghāyat al-Hakīm</i> 2.10<br>(ed. Hellmut Ritter)   |   |
|--|----------|--|----------|---|---|
| <b>Mars</b>  |          |  |          | <b>Mars</b>   |   |
| a man ascending on a lion, with a drawn sword  | <b>1</b> |  | <b>1</b> | a man riding on a lion, with a drawn sword in his right hand, and a human head in his left  | 3 |
| a man standing naked; on his right, a young woman resembling Venus, likewise standing naked, with her hair tied around her head; and the man, who is like Mars, places his right hand on the girl's neck and his left on her breast, and his fingers come over the shoulder of the girl all the way to her neck, and he looks the woman in the face, and she looks at the ground | <b>2</b> |  | <b>3</b> | a man standing naked; on his right, the image of young woman, that is Venus, who is standing and has her hair tied back; and Mars places his hand on her neck and his left hand upon her breast, and he looks her in the face | 2 |
| man dressed in a lorica and a galea, he has a sword in his belt  | <b>3</b> |  | <b>3</b> | a man in armor, standing upright and girded with two swords, one drawn in his right hand, and holding a human head in his left hand (cf. 2.7.1)   | 3 |

## The First Image of Saturn

| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Liber planetarum</i><br/>(Florence, BNC, MS II.III. 214, fol. 34r)</p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ghāyat al-Hakim</i> 2.10<br/>(ed. Ritter, p. 120, lines 2-7)</p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Liber sigillorum</i> of Techel<br/>(Berlin, MS lat. fol. 307, fol. 22ra)</p>   |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>(stone)</b><br/>Take the stone that is called Persian bezoar and make from it the ring's gem ...</p> <p><b>(astrological instructions)</b><br/>After the fashion of the picture, let there be engraved and painted, when Saturn will be in the ascendant in the twenty-first degree of Libra,</p> <p><b>(image)</b><br/>the figure of a man with a long-bearded face and arched, drooping eyebrows, seated on a plow between two oxen, bearing in his hand a vulture, and <i>on its</i> neck the head of a man and the head of a fox</p> | <p><b>(stone)</b><br/>When one engraves on a bezoar stone,</p> <p><b>(astrological instructions)</b><br/>in the hour of Saturn, when Saturn is in the ascendant in the twenty-first degree of Libra,</p> <p><b>(image)</b><br/>the image of a man with a broad forehead, a long face, and wrinkled eyebrows, who is riding on a plow with two oxen in front of him, and he is begging for mercy, and around his neck is a necklace on which there is a human head and a fox's head</p> | <p><b>(stone)</b><br/>Therefore, if you find a sigil engraved thus in stone, and having this figure, namely:</p> <p><b>(image)</b><br/>a bearded man with a long face and arched eyebrows, seated on a plow between two oxen, bearing a vulture in his hand, and on its neck the head of a man and the head of a fox</p> |

### *Liber planetarum*

(Florence, BNC, MS II. III. 214, fol. 34r):

“[vir] ... Baiulans in manu sua vulturem et in collo eius hanc (*habens?*) caput hominis et caput vulpis.”

*Emended*

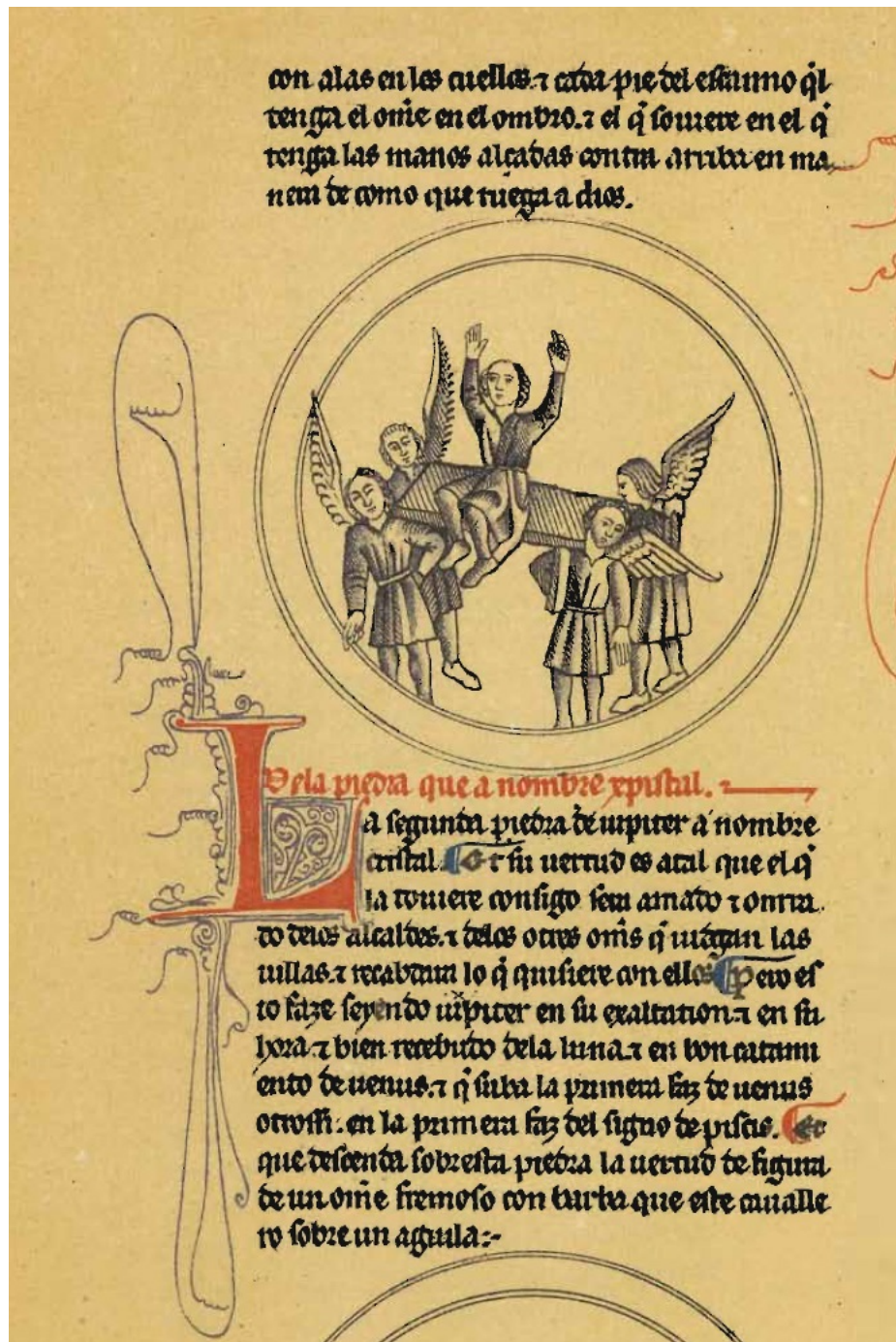
“[a man] ... bearing in his hand a vulture, and *having* round *his* neck the head of a man and the head of a fox”

### The First Image of Jupiter:

#### Jupiter Enthroned (Olympian Zeus)

| <i>Liber planetarum</i><br>(Florence, BNC, MS II. III. 214,<br>fol. 35v–36r)  | <i>Ghāyat al-Hakim</i> 2.10<br>(ed. Ritter, p. 121, lines 13–15)  | <i>Liber sigillorum</i> of Techel<br>(Wellcome Library, MS 116,<br>pp. 25b–26a)   |
|---|---|---|
| The first ring of Jupiter ...<br>Take white <i>mancotus</i> , that is,<br>sapphire ( <i>jacintus</i> ), and paint<br>on it Jupiter ... that is, a man<br>having four feet, every foot<br>upon the neck of a man, and<br>the four men should be<br>standing upright, and above<br>the head of Jupiter a circle <u>in</u><br><u>the manner of the saints</u> , and<br>his hands should be raised up<br>to the sky ... | For Jupiter, a ring stone of<br>white sapphire (يَلْقُوت <i>yāqūt</i> )<br>is engraved with the image of<br>a man with a crown on his<br>head, on a throne with four<br>feet, and each foot stands on<br>the neck of a standing man,<br>and the men have wings, and<br>he ( <i>Jupiter</i> ) has his hands<br>raised in prayer. | In white sapphire ( <i>jacintus</i> ). If<br>you find a sigil engraved in it,<br>namely: a man, Jupiter,<br>having a crown on his head,<br>and sitting upon a four-footed<br>throne, each foot upon four<br>men who hold <the feet> on<br>their necks, and the four men<br>are standing upright, and<br>above the head of Jupiter is a<br>circle <u>in the manner of the</u><br><u>saints</u> , and his hands are<br>raised up to the sky |

Image of 'Jupiter Enthroned' ('Olympian Zeus')  
 from the *Lapidario* of King Alfonso X ('El Sabio')  
 El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, MS H. I. 15, fol. 102ra.

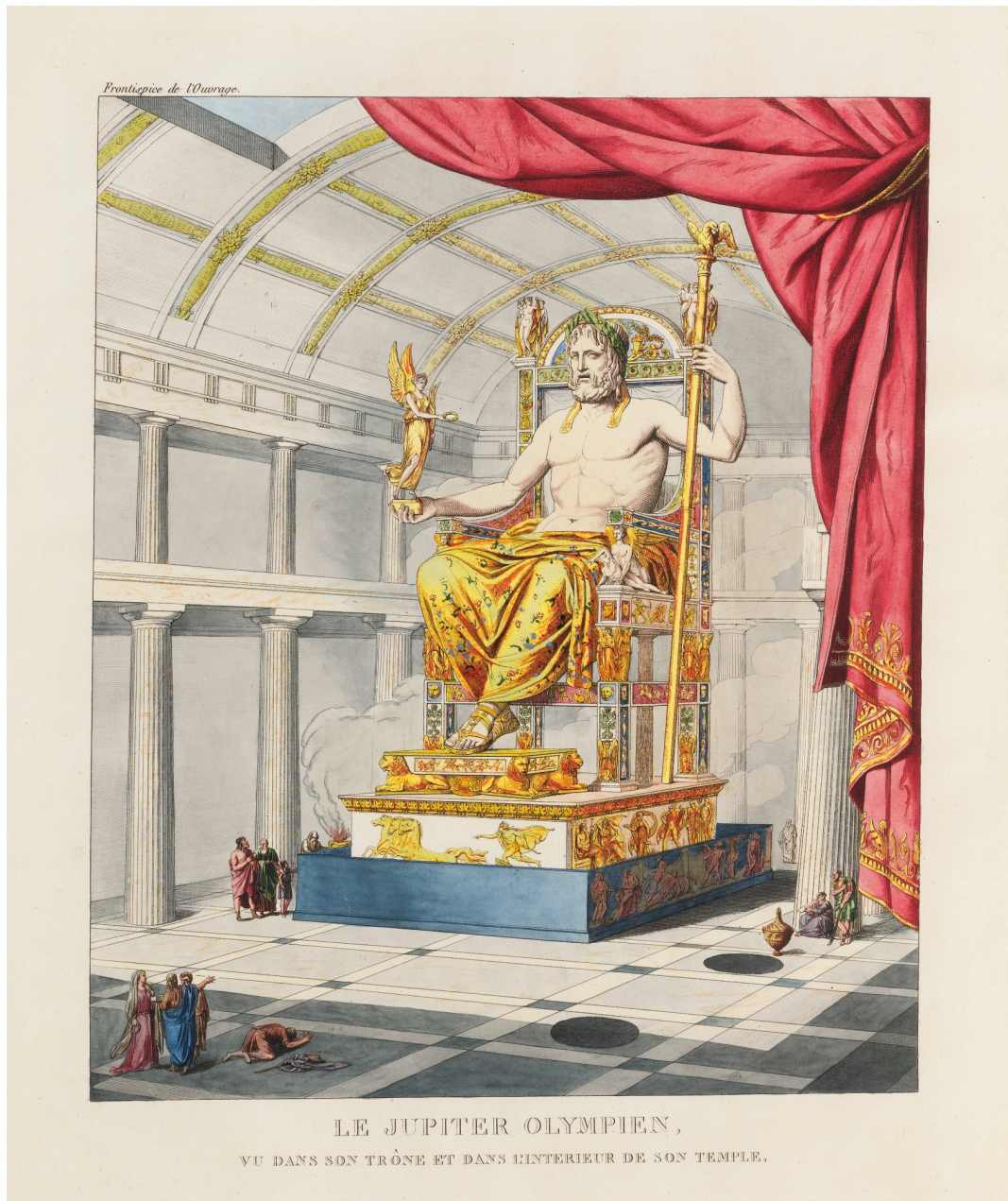




**The statue of ‘Olympian Zeus’ by Phidias (c. 435 BC)  
as described by Pausanias (c. 110 – c. 180)**

“The god sits on a throne, and he is made of gold and ivory. On his head lies a garland (στέφανος / *circulus*) ... In his right hand he carries a Victory ... In the left hand of the god is a scepter ... and the bird sitting on the scepter is the eagle ... The throne is adorned with gold and jewels ... There are four Victories, represented as dancing women, one at each foot of the throne.”

Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 5.11.1–3, ed. and trans. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod



A.-C. Quatremère de Quincy, *Le Jupiter Olympien, ou l'art de la sculpture antique* (Paris, 1814), frontispiece

## Detail

The winged Victories who carry the throne of Zeus

