In 1951, Otto Neugebauer published a short essay entitled "The Study of Wretched Subjects", spurred by the publication of a book review by George Sarton in *Isis*. Neugebauer was moved to explain "why a serious scholar might spend years on the study of wretched subjects like ancient astrology", to rebut Sarton's description of astrology as "the superstitious flotsam of the Near East". Since then, there has been a good deal of important work done on the wretched subject of astrology, much of it by Neugebauer himself, who contributed enormously to the reassessment and rehabilitation of astrology as an appropriate area of study for historians of science. Yet, students and scholars may still read authoritative works which denounce astrology as a perversion. P.M. Fraser, for example, in his magisterial *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, published in 1972, in the course of only one page of text alternately referred to astrology as a "false science", a "pseudo-science", a "corrupt science", "depraved", and a "bas-
tard" form of astronomy; a few pages later he added the label “debased”. Although he recognized the enormous impact of astrology in the Hellenistic world, it was inconceivable to him that astrology would share anything with “legitimate” science.

Today, few historians of science would question the claim that the history of astrology, as part of the scientific enterprise, is a worthwhile subject for study. Yet, until recently there were few books on ancient astrology, with notable exceptions including A. Bouché-Leclercq’s *L’astrologie grecque* (Paris 1899) and Franz Cumont’s *L’Égypte des astrologues* (Brussels 1937). While important work on ancient astrology has been published more recently by scholars including Otto Neugebauer, David Pingree, Francesca Rochberg-Halton, and Alexander Jones, their efforts have primarily attracted the attention of other specialists. Historians of astronomy working outside of the ancient period, or ancient historians not particularly interested in the history of astronomy, could easily overlook these contributions, and so this scholarship has not become integrated into more general accounts.

For some, the scholarly study of astrology continues to be plagued by worries about boundaries between “science” and “pseudo-science”; indeed the whole notion of ancient “science” still vexes many historians. But questions about boundaries are not modern; nor are the various issues associated with describing and distinguishing “disciplines”. That the location of astrology in antiquity was not always unproblematic is made clear in the two books recently published by Tamsyn Barton, *Ancient Astrology and Power and Knowledge*. Both books begin with lengthy and careful historiographical introductions, which will be useful even for readers without a particular interest in astrology. The two books, both published in 1994, are, to some extent, companion pieces, built on a shared foundation of research, but addressing somewhat different issues and directed to different audiences.

*Ancient Astrology* is a well-rounded introduction, not only to the main subject described by the title, but to various issues in the

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