

ASTROLOGY IN THE EARLY BYZANTINE EMPIRE

The peoples of the Roman Empire in the 4th century AD were very superstitious. Sorcery and astrology were widespread in the early Byzantine period. Astrologers, guided by Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, were compiling horoscopes and dream-books, while a common literature were the *seismologia*, *selenodromia* and *vrontologia*, with which people tried to predict the future. It was natural that in this environment many astrologers were famous and they flourished especially in the court of the Emperor Julian (361-363). The Fathers of the Church, however, were clearly against astrology and they were condemning those who wanted to learn about the future events from astrology and other occult practices and pseudo-sciences. Here are presented astrologers Maximus of Ephesus, Paul of Alexandria, Hephaestion of Thebes, Ioannis Laurentius of Lydia and Rhetorius of Byzantium, as well as the Emperor Julian the Apostate, together with the condemnation of astrology by Emperor Honorius and Church Fathers Basil the Great of Cesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, the bishop of Jerusalem Cyril I, Epiphanius of Cyprus, Eusebius of Alexandria, Nemesius of Emesa, and Synesius of Cyrene.