SIDEREAL AND TROPICAL SYSTEMS IN VEDIC ASTROLOGY

VIC DICARA
AT THE ROOT OF ALL ASTROLOGY

✧ Astrology is interpretation of the heavens.
✧ Two most obvious objects up there? ☀ & ☽
✧ The Sun & Moon :: the fundamental background for interpreting the heavens.
✧ The Sun & Moon are the seeds of the tropical and sidereal systems, respectively.

Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa describes an almost exclusively sun-moon astrology.
SEEDS OF SIDEREAL & TROPICAL SYSTEMS

✧ Ṣ’s movement measured against the stars (sidereal).
✧ ᪖’s movement measured by length of day & night, as it wanders north and south (tropical)
✧ Both systems have always coexisted.

Not as two contradictory versions of the same thing, but as two different, complimentary ways of looking at the same thing.
✦ To Calculate the Tropical Fields

❖ Intersect ☉’s equinotical movement by ☽ cycles.
❖ 12 segments - “rāśī”

✦ To Calculate the Sidereal Fields

❖ Intersect ☽’s stellar movement by ☉ cycles
❖ 27(+) segments - “nakṣatra”

At least, this is the Asian method.
HISTORICAL USE OF THE TWO SYSTEMS

- Sidereal systems initially far more prevalent, because astrology initially relied on observation.
- Advances in astronomy eventually enabled astrology to be based on calculation.
- This first allows use of sidereal fields, and eventually use of the 12-fold tropical.
SIDEREAL MARKERS FOR TROPICAL SIGNS

✦ The early calculations were works in progress, needing observational correction.

✦ For this, astronomers correlated the tropical signs to stellar markers.

✦ Hipparchus realizes that the stellar markers are not reliable.

✦ Some continued using the stellar markers for some time, but soon almost everyone embraced the tropical definition.

Except...
WHY DID INDIA EMBRACE THE SIDEREAL ZODIAC?

✦ Who knows? Even Varāhamihīra seems confused about it. PaS 3.31-32 & BrS 3.1-3

✦ Unlike other cultures, India kept using their 27 lunar-sidereal nakṣatra, and married them to their 12 sign system.

✦ This marriage was so tight, they come to understand the nakṣatra as combinations of their signs and padas (and visa versa).

✦ I believe they were simply unwilling to divorce and annul the marriage.
A NEW MOVEMENT IN VEDIC ASTROLOGY

✦ Unfortunately, definitions of the nakṣatra and rāśi from core Sanskrit source texts nullify the validity of that marriage.

✦ “Nakṣatra” = unchanging heavenly objects. “Rāśi” = portions of sunlight.

✦ Vedic astrologers (in and out of India) starting to question the marriage.

✦ Use tropical signs with sidereal “fixed-star-field” nakṣatras.

(References: SūS 14.7, BhP 5.21.3 (ViP, PaP), VeJ 5-9.)

Opens more common ground for Western and Vedic astrologers, and may give Westerners easier access to the symbolically beautiful and rich 27 nakṣatras of Vedic India.
THANKS!

VIC DICARA.COM