

Appendix I.A: Basic Techniques of Hellenistic Astrology

1 The Backbone of Astrology

The *technē* of astrology consists of three major elements: zodiac signs, planets—and what are called ‘places’ (τόποι) in Hellenistic astrology.¹ These are supplemented by three other important doctrines: ‘sect’, based on the division of day and night; ‘dignities’, the various rulerships of planets in signs; and ‘aspects’, the geometrical relationships planets make with one another.

1.1 Planets

Hellenistic astrology uses the five visible planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn), the Sun and the Moon. The latter are called the ‘luminaries’. Often the term ‘planets’ refers to all seven visible bodies.

1.2 Zodiac Signs

The twelve zodiac signs, from Aries to Pisces,² are the backdrop on which the planets are placed and through which they move more or less in order.³ In the astrological chart which shows both planets and signs arranged in relation both to zodiacal order and to diurnal motion,⁴ the planets (including the Sun and the Moon) are each

1 But ‘houses’ in modern astrology.

2 The beginning of the (tropical) zodiac at Aries had been long established among the Greeks. The tropical zodiac is tied to the seasons; i.e., every year on the vernal equinox the sun is at 0° Aries. In the 2nd century BCE, Hipparchus placed the vernal point at the beginning of Aries. Antiochus of Athens (2nd century CE) explains the beginning of the zodiac with Aries because 1) Aries rules the head, the dominant human part, 2) Aries begins the spring and 3) spring (Aries) is associated with the first of the ages of man. See Antiochus, *Thesaurus*, Prooemium, in *CCAG* I, 142.4–143.10. For Ptolemy the zodiac starts with Aries because the wet excess of spring is its initial cause (*Tetrabiblos* I, 10, Hübner, 41–43).

3 Though this order was not always linear and in one direction, as the planets from Mercury to Saturn could be seen to stop, move backwards, and then move forward again; the Moon could also be seen to move north and south in declination (latitude from the celestial equator). The planets also appear to move west to east as they move through the zodiac (called ‘zodiacal’ or ‘secondary’ motion). These planetary motions were contrasted with the Sun, which regularly rose in the east and set in the west every day, a motion termed ‘diurnal’ or ‘primary’.

4 See n. 3.

placed, depending on where in the zodiac they fall, in one of twelve compartments called places.⁵

1.3 The Places

Each place consists of one zodiac sign⁶ and each is concerned with a particular area of life. The starting point for the chart is at the degree (μοῖρα)⁷ rising on the eastern horizon at the time of birth (called the *Hōroskopos*, ‘Hour-marker’, later called Ascendant), and the entire 30-degree segment of both circle and zodiac sign in which this degree falls becomes the first place, called ‘Life’ (ζωή).⁸ The second place is ‘Livelihood’ (βίος), the third ‘Moon Goddess’ (θεὰ Σελήνης), fourth ‘The Underground’⁹ (ὑπόγειον), fifth ‘Good Fortune’ (ἀγαθὴ τύχη), sixth ‘Bad Fortune’ (κακὴ τύχη), seventh ‘Setting Place’

5 Several authors mention an eight-compartment system (the ‘Octatropos’ or ‘eight-turning’) including Julius Firmicus Maternus (*Mathesis*, 11, 14), Antiochus (*Introduction*, 25, *CCAG* VIII/3, 117), and the anonymous author of P. Mich.inv. 1, 149 (col. ix.20–27). See Goold’s introduction, following Housman, in Manilius, *Astronomica*, lxi–lxii). Valens mentions an ‘*oktatropos*’ once, without elaboration, in 1X, 3.5 (Pingree, 321.9).

6 By far the most prevalent among Hellenistic astrologers is this ‘one place/one sign’ system (called ‘Whole Sign’ by modern traditional astrologers). This is not to say that astrologers were unaware of the earth’s inclination which put the ecliptic at about a 23.5° tilt and, consequently, often made for a less than 90° angle between the rising and culminating degrees in an astrological chart (depending on the rising time of the sign on the eastern horizon); what is now known as the Porphyry place-system is described in Valens, 111, 2 (Pingree, 127.17–128.26). But the whole sign/place system showed *areas of life*, while the rising or culminating angles (and those that set and anti-culminated) described the relative *strength* or *power* of signs or planets within that system. Yet all of Valens’ chart delineations use a one place/one sign system (thanks to Robert Hand for bringing this to my attention). Paulus Alexandrinus (378 CE) showed he was aware of this in his *Introduction*, ch. 30, ‘On the Midheaven’: ‘But it is necessary to know that the Midheaven degree does not always fall in the tenth from the Hour-marker, on account of the inequality of the zodiac sign’s temporal ascension, but sometimes on the ninth, sometimes on the eleventh.’ (Boer, 82.7–10): εἰδέναι δὲ χρῆ, ὅτι ἡ μεσουρανοῦσα μοῖρα οὐ πάντοτε ἐν τῷ δεκάτῳ πίπτει ἀπὸ τοῦ ὥροσκόπου διὰ τὸ ἀνίσον τῆς τῶν ζῳδίων χρονικῆς ἀναφορᾶς, ἀλλ’ ὅτε μὲν ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐνάτου, ὅτε δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐνδεκάτου. Olympiodorus, Paulus’s 6th-century commentator, appears to be the first of the Hellenistic astrologers to suggest that the quadrant system (in this case, the one later ascribed to Porphyry) be used for the places as signifiers of areas of life: cf. *Commentary on Paulus*, Boer 75–76; also Greenbaum, *Late Classical Astrology*, 118–20. For more on this topic, see R. Hand, *Whole Sign Houses: The Oldest House System* (Reston, VA: ARHAT, 2000), esp. 9–17; idem, ‘Signs as Houses (Places) in Ancient Astrology’, *Culture and Cosmos* 11.1 and 2 (2007): 135–62.

7 The same word as that used for the goddess of fate (see below, 3.3., ‘*Moirai*’).

8 See, e.g., Valens 11, 16.1 (Pingree, 67.7); 1V, 12.1, (Pingree, 170.2); Paulus, ch. 24 (Boer, 54.1). Perhaps more descriptive would be ‘Incarnation’ or ‘Physical Existence’.

9 Here I borrow Roger Beck’s translation for this place: R. Beck, *A Brief History of Ancient Astrology* (Oxford/Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 44.

(δύσις), eighth 'Death' (θάνατος), ninth 'Sun God' (θεὸς Ἡλίου), tenth 'Midheaven' (μεσουράνημα), eleventh 'Good Daimon' (ἀγαθὸς δαίμων), twelfth 'Evil Daimon' (κακὸς δαίμων). Each place is responsible for a certain area of life: for example, the fourth place represents parents, among other things, and the seventh place marriage (again, among other things).¹⁰

The places vary in effectiveness; the first, fourth, seventh and tenth are called 'centrepins' (κέντρα in Greek, *cardines* in Latin, modern 'angles') and are considered to be 'operative' or 'productive' (χρηματιστικός). The second, fifth, eighth and eleventh are 'post-ascensions' (ἐπαναφοραί) of the centrepins (called 'succeedent') and are moderately effective. The fifth and eleventh, because they are in aspect to the Hour-marker (Ascendant) (see below, 1.6, Aspects), are considered to be better than the second and eighth (which make no aspect to the Ascendant). The remaining places, the third, sixth, ninth and twelfth are called ἀπόκλιματα, declining (from the angles) and are the least effective—though the third and ninth, which make aspects to the Ascendant, are considered to be better than the sixth and the twelfth.

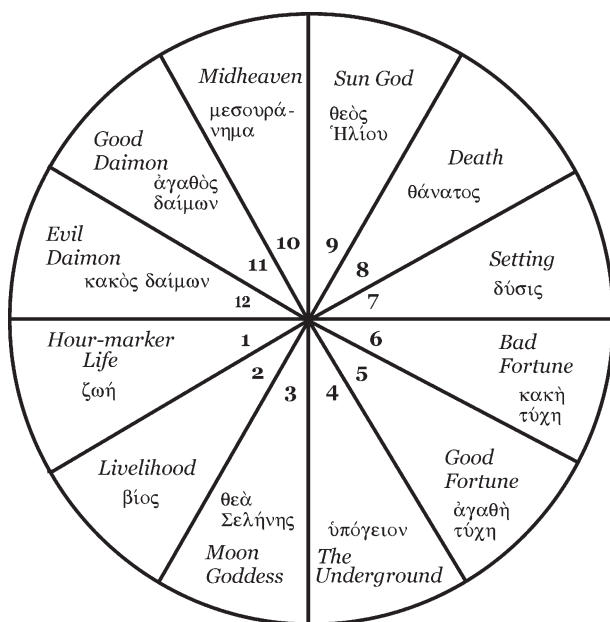


FIGURE I.1 Places of the chart.

10 Extensive descriptions of the places may be found in Valens, 11, 5–16; Paulus, chapter 24; Olympiodorus, chapter 23; Firmicus, 11, 19, (Ksz, vol. 1, 61–65 = Monat, vol. 1, 114–18; also Firmicus, *Ancient Astrology: Theory and Practice, Matheseos Libri VIII by Firmicus Maternus*, trans. J. R. Bram (Park Ridge, New Jersey: Noyes Press, 1975; reprint, Mansfield, Notts: Ascella, 1995), 40–42).

The assignment of these places in the astrological chart follows the symmetries so essential in Hellenistic astrology. Geometry and proportion were very important in the systematization of astrology by the Greeks. So the places are even, 30-degree segments of the circle,¹¹ and the signs of the zodiac are 30-degree, even segments of the ecliptic. The signs of the zodiac are arranged in symmetrical ways: as groups of tropical, solid and bicorporeal signs;¹² as groups of fiery, earthy, airy or watery signs (Valens is the first to assign elements to these groups of signs).¹³ These last are called ‘triplicities’ and are involved in one of the dignity systems we shall discuss below.

TABLE 1.1 *Signs of the quadruplicities*

<i>Tropical signs:</i> Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn (<i>Solsticial and Equinoctial</i>) <i>Solid Signs:</i> Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius (<i>Also called Fixed</i>) <i>Bicorporeal Signs:</i> Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces (<i>Also called Mutable</i>)

- 11 Such a division derives from the Babylonian practice in which the unequal size of the zodiacal constellations developed into a zodiac of equal 30-degree segments; evidence of this dates to the fifth-century BCE (see F. Rochberg, *The Heavenly Writing: Divination, Horoscopy, and Astronomy in Mesopotamian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 130). We have evidence that the earliest extant charts (1st century CE), charts were round in shape, as were the astrological boards used to lay out charts for clients. See Neugebauer and Van Hoesen, *GH*, 18 (No. 15/22, P. Oxy. 235, dated during the reign of Tiberius). See also J. Evans, ‘The Astrologer’s Apparatus: A Picture of Professional Practice in Greco-Roman Egypt’, *JHA* 35 (2004): 1–44. In the Medieval tradition the chart became a square segmented into triangles and rectangles representing the places (however, the concept of even division still applies): for its origins, see J. Thomann, ‘Square Horoscope Diagrams in Middle Eastern Astrology and Chinese Cosmological Diagrams: Were These Designs Transmitted through the Silk Road?’ in *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road*, ed. Philippe Forêt and Andreas Kaplony (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008).
- 12 See the descriptions in Paulus, ch. 1.
- 13 Valens, 1, 2; 11, 1. See W. Hübner, *Die Eigenschaften der Tierkreiszeichen in der Antike: ihre Darstellung und Verwendung unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung des Manilius* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1982), 238. (This text is also useful for the many other ways in which zodiac signs are characterised in different arrangements.)

TABLE I.2 *Signs of the elemental triplicities*

<i>Fire Signs:</i> Aries, Leo, Sagittarius
<i>Earth Signs:</i> Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn
<i>Air Signs:</i> Gemini, Libra, Aquarius
<i>Water Signs:</i> Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

1.4 *Sect and other Ordering Schemes*

Planets can be sorted in different ways in astrology: by their goodness or badness (benefics and malefics); by their light-giving qualities (luminaries and planets); by their distance as they appear from Earth (Chaldean or Egyptian [Platonic] order). They can also be sorted based on their allegiance to the day or night—and to the rulers of the day and night, the Sun and the Moon: this is called sect. These add to the ways in which the Greeks created a beautiful, symmetrical, organised whole out of their system of astrology. Sect is an important doctrine in Hellenistic astrology and is often crucial in chart interpretation.

Sect (*hairesis* in Greek, which means choice, but also faction), divides the planets into two factions. The nocturnal faction is led by the Moon; the diurnal faction by the Sun. Diurnal planets are happier, more consistent and better and more balanced in their effects when they are placed in a diurnal chart (where the Sun is above the horizon); nocturnal planets, conversely, behave better when in a nocturnal chart. In this way, they align with the natural order of sect.¹⁴

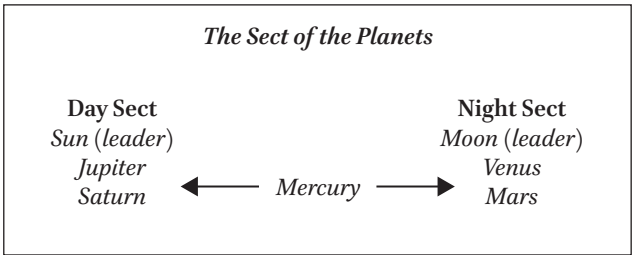


FIGURE I.2 *Sect.*

14 See the comprehensive article of G. Bezza, ‘The Development of an Astrological Term—from Greek *hairesis* to Arabic *ḥayyiz*’, *Culture and Cosmos* 11, no. 1 and 2 (2007): 229–60.

Thus Jupiter and Saturn prefer day charts, with the Sun above the horizon; and the Moon, Venus and Mars prefer night charts, with the Sun below the horizon. Mercury is ambivalent; in some schemes, if it is ahead of the Sun (in earlier zodiacal longitude), it is considered to be diurnal; when behind the Sun it is nocturnal.

Benefic planets are Venus (the lesser benefic) and Jupiter (the greater benefic). Malefic planets are Mars (the lesser malefic) and Saturn (the greater malefic).

The Chaldean order of the planets (based on their distance from earth and/or on their orbital cycles) is (from farthest/longest to nearest/shortest) Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon. This was the standard order for astrologers. Egyptian (Platonic) order (which Plato uses in *Republic*, x.616e; *Timaeus* 38d) is Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Moon.¹⁵ The Chaldean order is used in naming the days of the week in which, e.g., starting with Saturday, Saturn's day, the first hour of the day belongs to Saturn, the second to Jupiter, the third to Mars, the fourth to the Sun, the fifth to Venus, the sixth to Mercury and the seventh to the Moon. The assignments repeat with the eighth hour belonging to Saturn, etc. The scheme is ordered so that the last hour of the day belongs to the planet before the ruler of the next day, so Saturday's hours end with Mars, and then the first hour of the next day, Sunday, belongs to the Sun.

1.5 *Familiarity*

Congruence, equal-ascension and equipollence provide conditions of familiarity between planets. Congruent signs are those ruled (by domicile) by the same planets: e.g. Aries and Scorpio are congruent, because both are ruled by Mars. Equally-ascending signs are those that ascend in the same amount of time (called 'contra-antiscia' in modern astrology). Equipollent signs are those that have the same amount of (seasonal) daylight (called 'antiscia' in modern astrology). Certain signs 'see' each other; and others 'hear' (some 'command' and some 'obey'). See the diagrams overleaf.

1.6 *Aspects*

Geometrical relationships between planets provide ways for them to be in contact with one another. Accepted aspects were the conjunction (0° angular separation), the sextile (60°), the square (90°), the trine (120°) and the opposition (180°); these are called 'Ptolemaic' aspects. They can be either beneficial or difficult: trines and sextiles are considered to be good, but squares and oppositions bad. In observing the places which are called 'daimon' and 'fortune', the 'good' places, the fifth (Good Fortune) and the eleventh (Good Daimon) form, respectively, a trine and a sextile to the Hour-marker, thus reinforcing their goodness and ability to give benefits to the native, whose life as

¹⁵ For Chaldean order, see R. Gleadow, *The Origin of the Zodiac* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), 183. Macrobius identifies the orders as Egyptian-Platonic and Chaldean in the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 1, 19.2.

Familiarities/Affiliations

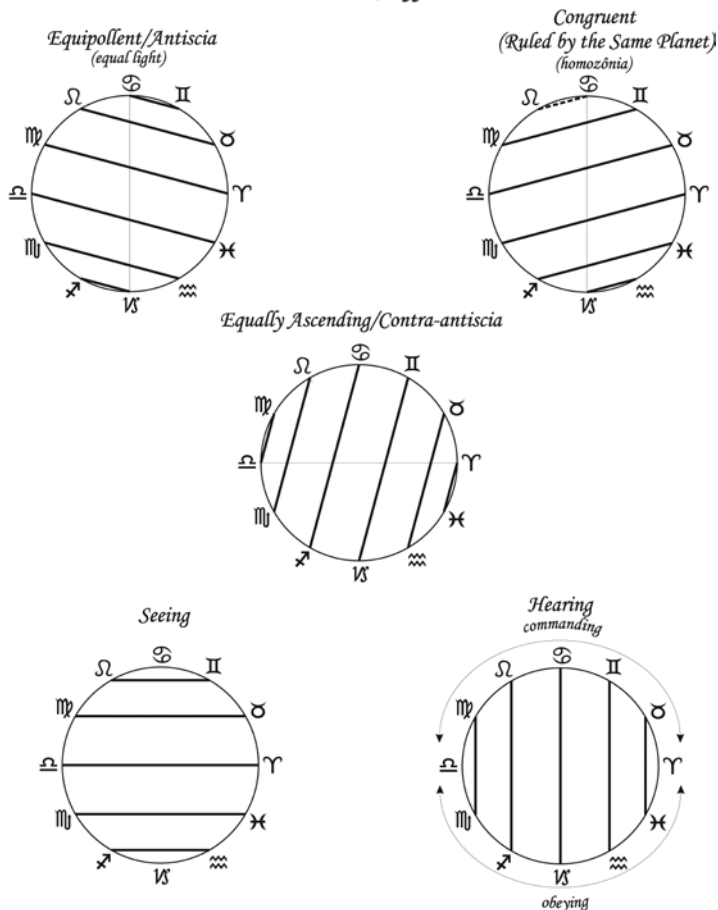


FIGURE 1.3 Familiarities between signs.¹⁶

a generalised whole is represented by the Hour-marker. By contrast, the ‘bad’ places, the sixth (Bad Fortune) and the twelfth (Bad Daimon), form no accepted aspect to the Hour-marker and are therefore ‘turned away’ from it.¹⁷ This contributes to these places being unable to produce anything good for the native, even when benefics are in them.

¹⁶ All these affiliations may be found in Paulus, chapters 8, 9, 12 and 13.

¹⁷ Any angular separation other than the accepted Ptolemaic one was considered ‘averse’ (ἀπόστροφος) and ‘unconnected’ (ἀσύνδετος). Only planets/signs/places ‘in aspect’ could see each other and thus have a relationship, whether harmonious or inharmonious. Aspects could be effective both by degree (i.e., separated exactly at the angle which makes the aspect), or by sign (called μοιρικῶς and ζφδιακῶς respectively).

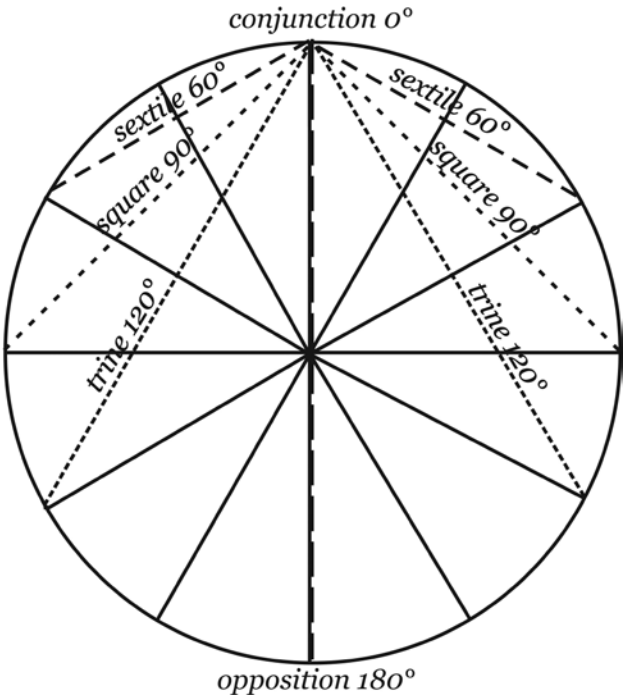


FIGURE I.4 Aspects.

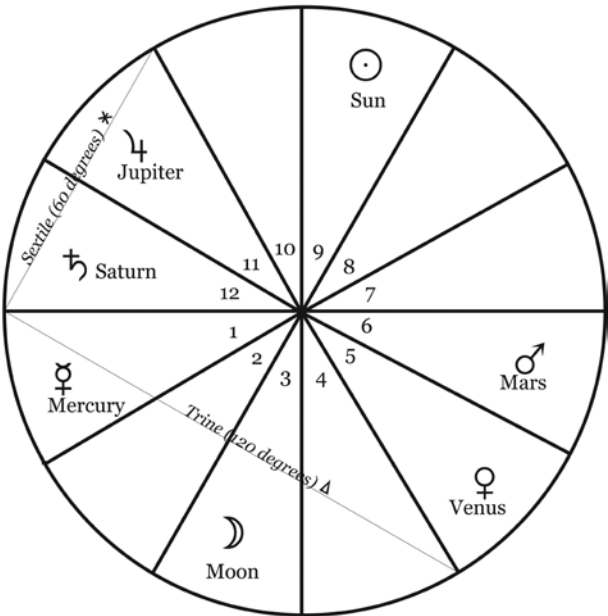


FIGURE I.5 Planetary joys and aspects to the hour-marker.

In addition, the concept of planetary 'joys' plays a part in how the Daimon and Fortune places operate. Venus and Jupiter are in their 'joy' in the fifth and eleventh places respectively. The concept of planets having 'joy' in a certain place of the astrological chart is delineated in the fourth-century *Introduction* of Paulus Alexandrinus (Chapter 24), but the doctrine is older.¹⁸

Whether the reason the benefics were said to 'rejoice' in the fifth or eleventh place relates to the previous concept that these places were in harmonious aspect to the Hour-marker,¹⁹ joys still embrace the symmetry of Hellenistic astrology: the benefics each take a 'good' place, Venus being associated with Fortune and Jupiter being associated with Daimon. And of course, in contrast but still symmetrical, the malefics, Mars and Saturn, are then said to rejoice respectively in the sixth and the twelfth. In complementarity to the doctrine of planetary joys, diurnal planets (Sun, Jupiter and Saturn) rejoice in places above the horizon, and nocturnal planets (Moon, Venus and Mars) in places below it.²⁰

1.7 *Dignities*

Using the word 'dignity' to describe the various rulerships of planets in zodiac signs is an anachronism in Hellenistic astrology;²¹ I use it for convenience here to refer to houses, exaltations, triplicities, bounds (terms) and faces. The most well-known rulership is that which the ancients called 'house', e.g., Aries and Scorpio are the houses of Mars, Taurus and Libra are the houses of Venus, etc.

18 See W. Hübner, 'Les divinités planétaires de la *Dodécatropos*', in *Les astres: actes du colloque international de Montpellier, 23–25 mars 1995*, 2 vols., vol. 1: *Les astres et les mythes, la description du ciel*, ed. Béatrice Bakhouché, Alain Maurice Moreau, and Jean-Claude Turpin (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1996), 307–17. Manilius has his own variant system of planetary joys which is different from the standard one discussed here. See also D. Houlding, *The Houses: Temples of the Sky* (Mansfield, Notts: Ascella, 1998), esp. 35–38. Valens makes a few references to a planet being in a place where it 'rejoices' (11, 32) but does not describe the system. In 111, 5 he speaks of planets rejoicing when placed in the chart according to their sect, and that Venus rejoices in the Hour-marker and Midheaven (this may refer back to Manilius's system of planetary joys). Other planets rejoice in the Hour-marker or Setting Place (Descendant). Antiochus of Athens also mentions a system of planetary joys that is more generalised than the standard one outlined by Paulus; see Antiochus, *Thesaurus*, ch. 44, CCAG I, 159.20–29.

19 Houlding, *Houses*, notes this possibility, 42.

20 This is part of the doctrine of sect (*hairesis*); see above, 1.4 and Fig. 1.2, 403.

21 Bezza, '*Hairesis* to *hayyiz*', 239–40.

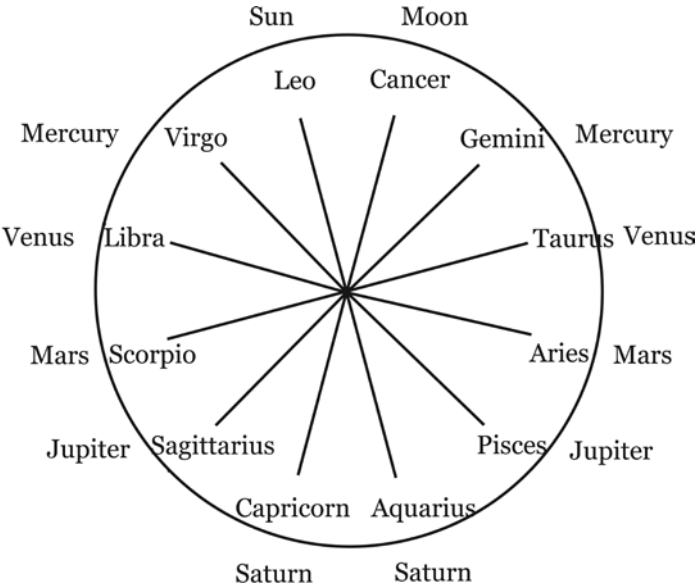


FIGURE 1.6 Planetary house rulers.

The luminaries rule one sign apiece, and the other five planets each rule two signs, in order from Leo and Cancer as in Figure 1.6. Again, the symmetry so prized by the Greeks is evident. Exaltation is another system of rulership: the Sun is exalted in Aries, Moon in Taurus, Jupiter in Cancer, Mercury in Virgo (where it is also house ruler), Saturn in Libra, Mars in Capricorn and Venus in Pisces.²²

The doctrine of triplicity rulers assigns certain planets the rule of certain signs based on their elements (fire, earth, air and water) and on their sect. Triplicity lords become important in estimating the conditions at different times in the life of the native. The first triplicity lord is the lord of the sect, e.g. in a day chart, if the Sun is in a fire sign, then he is the first triplicity lord; in a night chart, if the Moon is in an air sign, then Mercury is the first triplicity lord. The position and sign of the triplicity lords predict the condition of that time.

TABLE 1.3 Triplicity lords

Fire	Earth	Air	Water
(Day) Sun	(Day) Venus	(Day) Saturn	(Day) Venus
(Night) Jupiter	(Night) Moon	(Night) Mercury	(Night) Mars

22 See the descriptions in Antiochus, *Thesaurus*, 7, CCAG I, 147–48.

Bounds (ῥοια, *termini* or *fines* in Latin, also called ‘terms’ in English) are specific degrees of signs assigned to particular planets. A number of different bound systems were used in Hellenistic astrology, but the most common is the system of Egyptian bounds. Bounds are utilised in some length of life determinations. Faces divide each sign into three segments of ten degrees, each ruled by a planet beginning with Mars ruling the first face of Aries, and continuing the rulerships in the Chaldean order of the planets (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon). Overleaf is a table of dignities, including the Egyptian bounds and the faces.

2 Astrological Techniques

2.1 Lots

Lot calculation was briefly described in the Introduction. The calculation of a lot is usually dependent on whether the chart is diurnal or nocturnal; in other words, on its sect. When we take the arc distance between two planets or points and project it, the direction of the projection functionally depends on the chart’s sect.

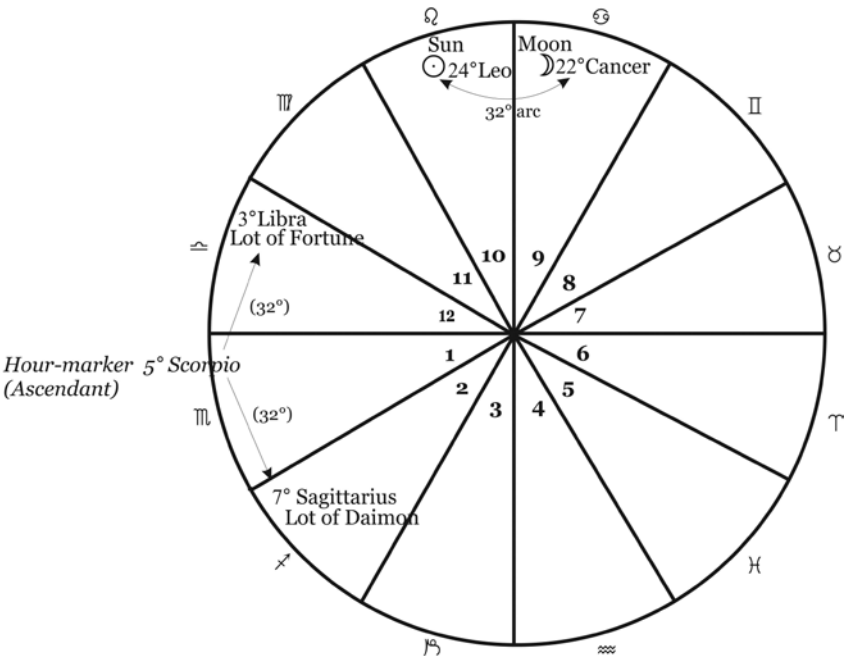


FIGURE 1.7 The Lots of Fortune and Daimon in a diurnal chart.

TABLE 1.4 *Dignities with houses, exaltations, Dorothean triplicities, Egyptian bounds and decanic faces*²³

Sg.	Houses of the Planets	Exaltation of the Planets	Triplicity Rulers Day Night	The Terms of the Planets According to the Egyptians							The Faces of the Planets			Detr.	Fall
♈	♂ D.	♂ 19	♂ 24	♂ 6	♀ 12	♂ 20	♂ 25	♂ 30	♂ 10	♂ 20	♀ 30	♀		♂	
♉	♀ N.	♂ 3	♀ 20	♀ 8	♂ 14	♂ 22	♂ 27	♂ 30	♂ 10	♂ 20	♂ 30	♂			
♊	♂ D.	♂ 3	♂ 6	♂ 12	♂ 12	♀ 17	♂ 24	♂ 30	♂ 10	♂ 20	♂ 30	♂	L		
♋	♂ N.D.	♂ 15	♀ 6	♂ 7	♀ 13	♂ 19	♂ 26	♂ 30	♀ 10	♂ 20	♂ 30	♂		♂	
♌	♂ D.N.		♂ 24	♂ 6	♀ 11	♂ 18	♂ 24	♂ 30	♂ 10	♂ 20	♂ 30	♂			
♍	♂ N.	♂ 15	♀ 20	♂ 7	♀ 17	♂ 21	♂ 28	♂ 30	♂ 10	♀ 20	♂ 30	♂		♀	
♎	♀ D.	♂ 21	♂ 6	♂ 6	♂ 14	♂ 21	♀ 28	♂ 30	♂ 10	♂ 20	♂ 30	♂		♂	
♏	♂ N.		♀ 6	♂ 7	♀ 11	♂ 19	♂ 24	♂ 30	♂ 10	♂ 20	♀ 30	♀		♂	
♐	♂ D.	L 3	♂ 24	♂ 12	♀ 17	♂ 21	♂ 26	♂ 30	♂ 10	♂ 20	♂ 30	♂		L	
♑	♂ N.	♂ 28	♀ 20	♂ 7	♂ 14	♀ 22	♂ 26	♂ 30	♂ 10	♂ 20	♂ 30	♂		♂	
♒	♂ D.		♂ 6	♂ 7	♀ 13	♂ 20	♂ 25	♂ 30	♀ 10	♂ 20	♂ 30	♂			
♓	♂ N.	♀ 27	♀ 6	♀ 12	♀ 16	♂ 19	♂ 28	♂ 30	♂ 10	♂ 20	♂ 30	♂		♂	

23 Table design by Robert Hand. The degrees given in this table must be read as the ending longitude and should be interpreted as being an exact longitude X°00'00.00".

In Figure 1.7, the arc to form the Lot of Fortune is taken from Sun to Moon by day. Using the shorter arc between the two planets (in this case, 32°), one projects it from the Ascendant in the same direction it was obtained, i.e. from Sun to Moon, clockwise. The 32° segment thus goes clockwise (in diurnal order) from the Ascendant to create the Lot of Fortune. The Lot of Daimon, which by day takes the arc from Moon to Sun, then goes in the opposite direction, in zodiacal, anti-clockwise motion. In the calculation of these ‘mirrored’ lots, they will always be projected from opposite sides of the Ascendant.

Most lots use the Ascendant as a projection point, but there are a few exceptions. The lots discussed in this book, though, are not in the latter category.

2.2 Planetary Periods

Planets are associated with different periods of years in prediction techniques. Commonly used periods are least (minor), middle and maximum. The minor periods are mostly based on recurrence cycles with the Sun.²⁴ These are discussed in Vettius Valens, IV, 6 (see Chapter Nine, 322 and n. 61). In the Egyptian bounds system, the amount of bounds for each planet adds up to the maximum (final) years for that planet (see Paulus, ch. 3). Mean years are mentioned in Valens, III, 13.

2.3 Katarchic Astrology

Much of Hellenistic astrological writing centres on natal astrology (genethlialogy). But there is also a branch of astrology called ‘katarchic’, in which charts are chosen at astrologically propitious times for events or rituals (these are also called ‘elections’); charts

TABLE 1.5 Years of the planets

Planet	Minor (Least)	Middle (Mean)	Maximum (Final)
☉	19	69.5	120
☿	25	66.5	108
♂	20	48	76
♀	8	45	82
♂	15	40.5	66
♂	12	45.5	79
♂	30	43.5	57

24 See Neugebauer and Van Hoesen, *GH*, 10–11.

of events after they have occurred are analyzed for outcomes; and charts are created for the moment of a question about an event, then analysed for outcomes based on the moment of the question (also called ‘interrogations’). The propitious time, or opportunity moment, is *kairikos* (see Chapter One, 3.5, 40–41; Chapter Seven, 1.2, 247–48).

3 Terminology

3.1 *Aphetēs*

The *aphetēs* has been traditionally understood as a kind of starting point.²⁵ LSJ, s.v., defines it as ‘prorogator’—a term which, though technically correct, hardly conveys a meaning to the modern ear. None of these capture the real sense of ἀφότης. It is, in truth, a ‘releaser’ (coming as it does from the verb ἀφίημι, literally, ‘send away from’).²⁶ In the chart, planets and points which are aphetic are, in a way, like bows releasing an arrow aimed at a certain spot; which kind of bow depends on the questions asked of the chart. There are numerous systems in which aphetic points are employed.

3.2 *Melothesia*

Astrological melothesia assigns body parts to planets, signs or even lots.²⁷ It is a fairly common practice in Hellenistic astrology, and continued in popularity in the Middle Ages. In this book, melothesia is discussed in Chapter Four (P. Michigan inv.1, 149) and Chapter Nine (Valens, 11, 37)

3.3 *Moirā*

The Greek word translated as ‘fate’ in this book is εἰμαρμένη, literally meaning ‘that which has been allotted’ (from the verb μείρομαι).²⁸ Μοῖρα, another noun often translated as ‘fate’, also comes from *meiromai*. *Moirā*’s first definition in LSJ is a ‘portion’, as of land;²⁹ in other words, a physical and material expression of allotment. In Greek astrology, of course, *moira* is simply the word for a degree of the zodiac—but, perhaps not so simply, it may point out a relationship between fate and the degrees

25 E.g. Bouché-Leclercq, *AG*, 415: ‘points de départ’; Neugebauer and Van Hoesen, *GH*, 12: ‘starter’.

26 For more on the concept of ἀφότης as releaser, see R. Schmidt in *Vettius Valens. The Anthology Book IV*, trans. R. Schmidt (Berkeley Springs, WV: Golden Hind Press, 1996), Translator’s Preface, xiii–xvi.

27 For more on the different kinds of melothesia, see Bezza, *AM*, vol. 2, 677, 680, 722–32, 741–44.

28 LSJ, s.v.

29 *Ibid.*, s.v. μοῖρα, 1.2.

of the zodiac—the individual ‘portions’ of fate where planets, the Hour-marker and the Midheaven just happen to fall. It may be just a coincidence that this is the word the Greek astrologers decided to use for ‘degree of the zodiac’ but, if it has nothing to do with any kind of fate, why not use a word like *μερίς* (a part, portion, division)³⁰ or *βαθμός* (step, threshold, degree)³¹ which have no connection to fate in their definitions?³² Jane Harrison has remarked that the Moirai and the Horai (the Hours), all of whom are the daughters of Zeus and Themis, represent both spatial and temporal allotments or apportionments.³³ *Moirā* appears to have been first used as a technical term, dividing portions of the sky into even segments, by Aratus, who calls a twelfth part of the zodiacal circle a *moira*.³⁴ Hipparchus is the first to use *moira* as one ‘portion’ (i.e. degree) of a zodiac sign,³⁵ and Geminus defines it as a thirtieth part of a sign.³⁶ But there is even earlier evidence of *moira* as a portion of the night sky which shows the passage of time, in Homer: ‘As the stars have gone forward, and more than two portions of the night have passed, only a third portion is left.’³⁷ To Homer, of course, *moira* is also fate.

This connection between a degree of the zodiac and fate is explicitly seen in at least one example in Late Antiquity. Censorinus, writing in 238 CE, in *De die natali*, makes

30 Ibid., s.v.

31 Used by Valens, I, 16.4 (Pingree, 30.7–9), as meaning 15 degrees of the zodiac, but the question is still relevant: why was *moira* chosen in the first place?

32 See also the argument of R. Schmidt, ‘Translator’s Preface’, in Vettius Valens, *The Anthology, Books I–VII*, trans. Robert Schmidt, 6 vols. (Berkeley Springs, WV/Cumberland, MD: Golden Hind Press, 1993–2001), here *The Anthology Book I*, xix; and idem, ‘Facets of Fate’, *The Mountain Astrologer* (Dec.–Jan. 1999–2000): 83–94, 106, 126.

33 J. E. Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cleveland/New York: World Publishing Company, 1927, repr. 1962), 477. But the Moirai are the daughters of Necessity in the Myth of Er (*Republic* x.617c).

34 *Phaenomena*, ll. 560, 581, 716, 721, 740: cf. Aratus, *Phaenomena*, ed., trans. and comm. Douglas Kidd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), and Kidd’s commentary on line 560, 377–78.

35 See Hipparchus, *Hipparchi in Arati et Eudoxi phaenomena commentariorum libri tres*, ed. and trans. Karl Manitius, (Leipzig: Teubner, 1894); the *Index verborum*, 339, has, for μοῖρα, ‘gradus i.e. tricesima pars signi, passim...’.

36 *Introduction to the Phaenomena*, I, 6: ‘Again, each of the twelfth-parts is divided into 30 parts, and the one section is called a degree (*moira*), so that the whole circle of the zodiac signs (*zōidia*) encompasses 12 zodiac signs, and 360 degrees (*moirai*).’ Geminus, *Introduction aux phénomènes*, ed. and trans. Germaine Aujac, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1975), 2: Πάλιν δὲ ἑκαστον τῶν δωδεκατημορίων διαιρεῖται εἰς μέρη λ, καὶ καλεῖται τὸ ἐν τμήμα μοῖρα, ὥστε τὸν ὅλον κύκλον τῶν ζωδίων περιέχειν ζῳδία μὲν ιβ, μοίρας δὲ τξ. Of course, by the time of Geminus, the Hellenised system of astrology was well underway.

37 *Iliad*, x.252–3 (Allen): ἄστρα δὲ δὴ προβέβηκε, παρόιχωκεν δὲ πλέων νύξ / τῶν δύο μοιράων, τριτάτη δ’ ἔτι μοῖρα λέλειπται.

a specific correlation between the Moirai who are the Fates and the *moirai*/degrees of the zodiac: ‘There are thirty of these “little parts” in one zodiac sign, so a total of 360 in the whole zodiac. The Greeks call these μοῖραι, “lots”, clearly because they call the goddesses of fate “the Moirai”. In fact, the “little parts” are like fates to us, for the one rising when we are born has the greatest power over us.’³⁸

3.4 *Thema mundi*

The astrological birthchart of the world. It was not considered to be a ‘real’ chart, but a symbolic representation of planets in their houses. A common version appears in Firmicus, III, 1 (KSZ, I, 91). The *thema mundi* is discussed more fully in Chapter Five, 3.2.

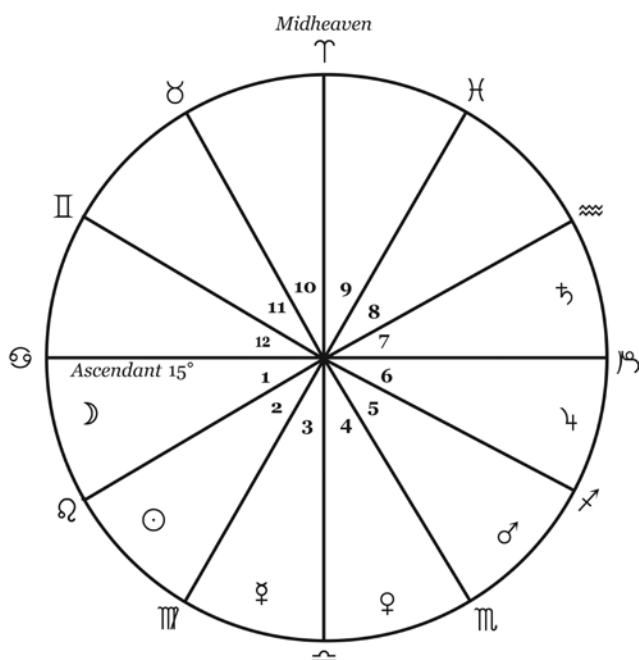


FIGURE 1.8 *Traditional thema mundi, as in Firmicus.*

38 Censorinus, *De die natali*, 8.5 (Sallmann): ‘sunt autem hae particulae in unoquoque signo tricenae, totius vero zodiaci numero CCCLX. has Graeci μοῖρας cognominarunt eo videlicet, quod deas fatales nuncupant Moeras, et eae particulae nobis velut fata sunt; nam qua potissimum oriente nascamur plurimum refert.’ See also Censorinus, *Censorinus: The Birthday Book*, trans. Holt. N. Parker (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 13.