

A
PICATRIX
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ON THE PICATRIX



I. Introduction to the *Picatrix* (The Aim of the Sage) of al-Majriti,
Maslamati ibn Ahmad
Joseph H. Peterson

The *Ghâyat al-Hakîm fî'l-sîhr*, or *Picatrix*, as it is known in the West, is an important Arabic magical text. It is perhaps the largest and most comprehensive of the grimoires, or handbooks of magic. The attribution to the Andalusian mathematician al-Majriti (or al-Madjriti) (d. ca. 1004-7) is considered pseudo-epigraphic. The Latin translation dates to 1256 and the court of Alphonso the Wise, king of Castille, and exerted a considerable influence on Western magic thereafter. It is said that much of Ficino's astrological magic derives from the *Picatrix* (see I.P.Couliano, *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*, University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 118). *The Picatrix* is mentioned by Johannes Trithemius in Book 2 of his notorious *Steganographia* (1500) and in his *Antipalus Maleficiorum* (c. 1500). One copy (British Library, Sloane manuscript 3679) passed down from Simon Forman (d. 1611) to Richard Napier (d. 1634) to Elias Ashmole (d. 1692) to William Lilly (d. 1681).

E.M. Butler wrongly associates it with Gio. Peccatrix, (no doubt a pseudonym) who edited an Italian version of the *Key of Solomon* (British Library, Sloane manuscript 1307). Misled by some comments by Mathers and others, Dr. Butler incorrectly concluded that the *Picatrix* was "an Italian edition of the *Clavicula*, strongly impregnated with black elements" (*Ritual Magic*, 1949, p. 135.)

Recent editions include:

Arabic

Pseudo-Magriti, *Das Ziel des Weisen*, Herausgegeben von Hellmut Ritter, B.G. Teubner / Leipzig / Berlin 1933. Studien der Bibliothek Warburg Herausgegeben von Fritz Saxl. XII. *Picatrix* ("Das Ziel des Weisen" von Pseudo-Majriti) 1. Arabischer Text.

German

"*Picatrix*" *Das Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo-Magriti*, Translated into German from the Arabic by Hellmut Ritter and Martin Plessner, London, The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1962

French

B. Bakhouché, F. Fauquier, B. Pérez-Jean: *Picatrix Un traité de magie médiéval*. 388 p., 130 x 210 mm, 2003, Paperback ISBN 2-503-51068-X, EUR 37.91. Newest critical edition.

French

S. Matton, *La magie arabe traditionnelle*, Paris, 1977 (incomplete)

Latin

Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghâyat Al-Hakîm, ed. David Pingree (London, Warburg Institute, 1986).

Spanish

Abul-Casim Maslama ben Ahmad: *Picatrix (El fin del sabio y el mejor de los dos medios para avanzar)*. Edición de Marcelino Villegas Editora Nacional. Colección «Biblioteca de visionarios, heterodoxos y marginados». (Madrid, 1982).

English

An English translation of the first two books of *Picatrix* was released in August of 2002 by Ouroboros Press, translated from the Arabic by Hashem Atallah.

I hope that by giving this account of its contents, other editions and studies of this important text may be encouraged.



II. Summary of the Contents of the Picatrix

From Martin Plessner's introduction to the German Edition

The following pages are intended as a guide to and an epitome of this often disorderly book. A glance at the table of contents is enough to show that the sequence of chapters is erratic and closer inspection reveals that the scope of individual chapters is far wider than appears at first sight. Philosophic doctrines (which, according to the author, are the basis of the talismanic art), theory of magic, astronomical, astrological and physical lore, extensive directions for the practice of the art, and accounts of the peoples by whom it is employed are jumbled together throughout the book, with no discernible guiding principle. If a systematic arrangement is anywhere perceptible, it is in the astrological and astronomical material, though even this is far from self-contained or methodically ordered. Subjects which belong together are separated (e.g., the geographical sections on pp.171 ff. and 394 ff.), long, discursive definitions, appearing in unexpected places, further break the sequence (e.g., pp.78 and 343)-. and there is a great deal more to make the reader's task more difficult.

This manner of writing may well be intentional, whether to make the magical sections appear less suspect by interlarding them with theoretical passages, or to make certain doctrines seem less strange by administering them in small doses, or to demonstrate the equal validity of the magical and philosophical material, or for a combination of all three reasons. At all events, a similar method of presentation is apparent in one of the principal sources of *The Aim of the Sage*, the encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity (*Ihwân al-Safâ*).

What follows is a survey of the whole, with a sketch of the sources, as far as they can at present be identified. No attempt has been made to impose a logical order on the illogicality of the book.

Book I

In the preface, after some autobiographical material, the author gives his reason for writing the work, which is to shed light on the nature of magic, a secret closely guarded by the ancient philosophers. He adds a summary of the contents of his four books (pp.1-3). This is replaced, in some manuscripts, by a detailed list of contents, arranged by chapter, of which a translation will be found on pp. lxxvi-lxxviii of the present volume.

Chapter 1 (pp.4-7) demonstrates the importance of philosophy, on the one hand for the understanding of matters divine, natural and moral, and on the other as the premise for magic, which is its *conclusio*. In the first section there are verbal echoes

of al-Fârâbî's *Classification of the Sciences (Ihsâ al-'Ulûm)* and the Neo-Platonic doctrines of the pseudo-Empedocles. The chapter ends with an excursus on the definition of some logical concepts, suggested by the word *conclusio*.

Chapter 2 gives a definition of magic according to the Ihwân al-Safâ', and of talismans according to Jabir ibn Hajjân. The talisman is compared to the elixir of the alchemists (pp.7-9). Magic is to be divided into two parts, theoretical and practical, the first being confined to the knowledge of the heavens (with the parenthesis that speech is a kind of magic) and the second consisting in making use of the natural kingdoms, animal, vegetable and mineral (pp.9-10). This principle of discrimination holds good, by and large, for the arrangement of the whole work. The chapter concludes with certain astronomical and astrological matters.

Chapter 3 deals with the reasons for the heavens' being spherical in form, with the degrees and the images ascending in them, and compares the power of the degrees with that of the planets (pp.12-14). Some passages are related to the *Kitâb al-Baht* of Jâbir, which is laid under such heavy contribution later in *The Aim of the Sage*.

Chapter 4. Since the successful use of talismans depends upon their being used in conjunction with the correct constellations, this chapter is devoted to the latter. The author gives a descriptive list of the twenty-eight mansions of the moon, according to the "Indian" system, and assigns to each its correct talisman. Analysis of the passage shows that it is a compound of "Indian" doctrines, the tenets of Dorotheus of Sidon (both attested by Ibn abi 'l-Rijâl) and elements from a list ascribed to Hermes (attested by the Ihwân al-Safâ') (pp.14-21). At the beginning of the chapter, the author advised the magician of the necessity to prepare himself inwardly for his task: this is now, in an excursus, brought into harmony with the disposition inherent in various natural substances to absorb magical influences, and this again is followed by suggestions as to the positions of the moon favorable for certain enterprises (pp.22-24). The author opens the final section with his usual formula to the effect that he is returning to the true subject of his book.

Chapter 5 enlarges the discussion of the lunar mansions, by giving thirty-one examples of constellations of a different kind, favorable to the manufacture of talismans. Some of the talismans are described, but no indication is given of how to make them effective, a subject which later occupies a large part of the book (pp.24-34). Inserted in the middle of the discussion is an account of the different effects of the various aspects (p.29). There follow remarks on the dependence of the talismans on the heavenly bodies and the importance of the magician's concentration of his energy towards his purpose, again with verbal echoes from the Ihwân al-Safâ'. Along with these go aphorisms from "Plato" and Tâbit ibn Qurra, as well as two extracts

from a treatise ascribed to Aristotle, which is later quoted entire in Book IV, chapter 4. (pp.34-36). Examples are given of the “incantation” of talismans to make them effective. These formulae are also to be found in the *Ihwân al-Safâ’*, where they are attributed to Hermes. This completes the practical instruction given in Book I. Then comes a postscript and the chapter concludes with an evaluation of magic and alchemy (pp.38-39).

The two final chapters of Book I are entirely devoted to philosophy. **Chapter 6** deals with the nature of man. Starting from the premise that man is a microcosm, the author opens with an enumeration of the characteristics which make man superior to all other creatures (pp 40-41). He then gives the familiar correspondences between the parts of the human body and those of the macrocosm. Though at first there are only reminiscences of the *Ihwân al-Safâ’*, we soon find whole pages together which are identical with that work, and, in part, with the work edited by Goldziher as *The Book of the Essence of the Soul (Kitâb ma`ânî al-nafs)* (pp.42-46). The human being as he is actually found on earth is shown to depend from his idea, the universal man, and this dependence is illustrated by a succession of hypostases (pp.47-50). Numerous single echoes of Neo-Platonic and pseudo-Empedoclean propositions may be identified here, but the passage as a whole has not so far been satisfactorily clarified. The author expressly states that this sixth chapter is not a digression, but deals rather with the essence of magic, by which he clearly means that the chain of hypostases proves a connection between the upper and the lower world, the prime tenet in the art of magic. A mention of the obscurity with which the ancients clothed this scheme is made the occasion for a consideration of both the superficial and the essential nature of knowledge and of the mode of study (pp. 50-51).

Chapter 7 takes up again for its theme the great chain of being, the author’s ideas on which cannot yet be given their correct place in the history of Neo-Platonic thought. He then reverts in greater detail to the concept of Hyle, and its place in the chain, the discussion of such theoretical topics being justified by the fact that they “correct the understanding and sharpen the apprehension” (pp. 51-54).

Book II

Chapter 1. The correspondences between earthly creatures and their celestial archetypes, which were mentioned at the end of Book I, form the opening topic of this chapter. This is the subject of the ninth aphorism of the pseudo-Ptolemaic *Centiloquium*. Next comes the story of a magical cure, taken from the Commentary of Ibn al-Dâja on this aphorism, which recounts how, in his youth, the author came to occupy himself with magic while testing Ibn al-Dâja’s prescription for the cure (pp.55-57). Then follows an excursus on sensory perception, including a quotation

from the *Ihwân al-Safâ'*, and other modes of cognition (pp.57-58). The chapter ends with an account of the contributions made by individual branches of knowledge to the, understanding of the correspondences between the two worlds (pp.58-59).

Chapter 2 treats the subject of the celestial images and their significance, i.e., the forty-eight constellations known to the Greeks and the *paranatellonta* of the thirty-six decans. The three decans of Aries in the “Indian” system are selected from Abû Ma`shar by way of example and a full explanation of their *paranatellonta* given (pp. 59-62). Ibn Wahshîja follows the same method of interpretation: he uses the triplicities, while the “Indian sage” Tumtum and others use the degrees (p.62). Examples of the images ascending in the degrees are given and their significance explained, with reference to a book by Jâbir which has not survived (pp.62-68). Finally, the author computes the possible number of planetary conjunctions in a single degree, on the basis of a work by “Herrnes”, extending, as he does so, a section of Jâbir’s *Kitâb al-Baht* (pp. 63-65).

Chapter 3 is very long and is mainly concerned with the effects of the moon, beginning with the significance of its phases. The ultimate dependence of the moon’s operation on that of the sun is emphasized (pp. 65-67). This is followed by a demonstration of the analogy between the phases of the moon, the ages of man and the seasons of the year etc. Then there is a short interpolation maintaining that composite bodies are subject to perpetual change from the motions of the stars, without changing their specific shapes. After this comes the nature of eclipses (pp. 67-69). Almost all the foregoing is derived from the *Nabataean Agriculture* of Ibn Wahshîja. The author now reverts to the moon and follows, for many pages, the theory of the *Ihwân al-Safâ'*, which differs from that of Ibn Wahshîja in that it links the periods of the moon’s greatest influence to its conjunction with other planets and the houses in which they stand (pp.69-74). The rest of the chapter is devoted to the theory of the elections, in which the moon plays an important part, and is introduced by a discussion of the *impedimenta lunae*, the unfavorable positions of the moon, which go back to Dorotheus of Sidon. A section is devoted to the art of converting the ascendant into a fortunate one. The whole passage is almost completely pervaded by correspondences and parallels with Ibn Abi ‘l-Rijâl, and in certain parts with Sahl b. Bishr (pp.74-81). An interpolated note gives a mathematical definition of the aspects (p.78). The chapter concludes by contrasting Aristotle’s exhortation to Alexander to practice astrology and the Islamic prohibition of the art.

Chapter 4, a short one, discusses the doctrine of the trepidation of the sphere of the fixed stars, which must be taken into account in the drawing-up of astronomical tables. This is taken verbatim from Theo Alexandrinus, with the addition of a postscript, which is apparently the work of the compiler (pp. 81-83).

Chapter 5 is a particularly good example of the characteristically curious arrangement of the subject matter in *The Aim of the Sage*. It begins with the statement that a “master of ancient times” divided the whole art of magic under three heads: talismans, the worship of the planets and incantations. Each of these became the special province of certain peoples: the “Indians”, for example, excelled in incantations. From this we pass to an enumeration of the various arts and doctrines of these “Indians”, with emphasis on, among other topics, the combination of stars to compose certain magical figures (pp. 83-86). Mention of the “Indian” theory of the nature of dreams is the occasion for an account of the author’s own ideas on the subject, which are based on those of al-Fârâbî, and certain quotations from the latter’s *Ideal State*. There follows the theory of divination and prophecy, the second of which has also close affinities with the work of al-Fârâbî, though his name is not mentioned until the conclusion of the section, where there is an irrelevant quotation from his treatise on alchemy (pp.87-90). The author now reverts to his “Indians” and adopts their doctrine of the superiority of talisman over election, since the talisman, as well as being rendered effective by the power of the constellation which dominates it, receives extra power from the specific qualities (virtutes) of the substances of which it is composed (pp. 90-91).

Chapter 6 begins with the importance of the *virtutes* in reinforcing the effects of the stars even in those natural processes which are independent of human agency. Man makes talismans unawares as soon as he begins to manipulate nature in such processes as dyeing cloth, breeding animals or compounding drugs, as well as in the manufacture of objects of everyday use from the products of nature, as in cooking, spinning and the like. Now in the manufacture of a talisman, as in medicine, the maker is consciously seeking to use a simple or compound substance, which is itself predisposed towards the desired effect (pp. 91-94). Just as the product may be influenced in different ways by the treatment it receives, so also the influence of a star depends upon its position. This analogy is soon abandoned and the author turns to the theory of the stars’ effects in a way which is unrelated to what has gone before. The first part of this chapter is taken over entire from Jâbir’s *Kitâb al-Baht*, while the second part apparently consists of quotations from that half of the work which has not come down to us. Some of the theories presented are extremely difficult to understand and interpret, as the author himself admits. The main source of the difficulty lies in the fact that the discussion concerns the aether and the sphere of the fixed stars and their bearing on motions and effects (pp. 94-99). There follows a passage on the relative effects of different planets in conjunction with one another, which, though based on the same theories, is less obscure (pp. 99-100). The chapter concludes with a further summary of the theory, again in conformity with the surviving portion of Jâbir’s book (pp.100-101).

Chapter 7. The importance of similarity and dissimilarity for the explanation of certain sidereal effects was repeatedly mentioned in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, the author takes the opportunity of defining similarity as an aspect of the logical category of relation applied to the talismanic art. He then enters on a detailed discussion of the category of quantity, considering lines, surfaces, time, place, speech and number as far as they are significant for talismans, with a shorter account, at the end, of position and quality (pp. 101-107). The whole is summarized from Jâbir's *Kitâb al-Baht*.

Chapter 8 is also taken from Jâbir. It contains a table showing the simple qualities heat, cold, moisture and dryness and what results from the various steps in forming combinations of them. The table is preceded by a discussion of details, of antique origin (Antiochus of Athens). After this comes the rationale of the sequence of the combinations of the qualities, likewise from Jâbir (pp. 107-110). The author closes this very difficult section, whose importance for the whole is not easily discernible, with these words:

“I set forth such miraculous and confusing matters from all the sciences for this reason only, that you may be purified for the earnest study of these marvelous arts and may achieve what the ancient sages achieved and attain the heights that they attained”.

Chapter 9 takes up again the notion of the combination of the stars in magical figures (see Chapter 5) and gives instructions for making six talismans engraved with such figures (pp. 111-113).

Chapter 10 deals with talismans made by engraving certain figures on the stones and metals which belong to the planets. It falls into three parts, of which the first is an enumeration of the minerals belonging to the various planets. The Arabic manuscripts of *The Aim of the Sage*, unlike those of the translations, show striking deviations from the usual classification. It is therefore possible that the correspondences of the translations with the norm may be due to a reworking of the text. At all events, it is remarkable that some of the deviations (e.g. iron instead of lead for Saturn, copper instead of iron for Mars) are also found in Book III, chapter 7, the chapter on Sabian prayers to the planets. The first part ends with illustrations of the figures, some of which still survive as signets of the planets (pp. 113-114). The second part describes the images of the planetary gods. The author gives three sources, though there are in fact more, as will be seen from the commentary to the present translation. The three sources specified are a lapidary by `Utârid, a book without a title by Apollonius and a work by a certain Kriton on pneumatic talismans translated by Bu(i)qrâtîs (Picatrix) (pp.114-119). In the third part are instructions for engraving these and other images, some of them with magical signs, on different stones, with information on their

various effects. The number of the sources is then increased by the mention of a book dedicated to Alexander by Aristotle (obviously *Secretum secretorum*) and a work by Hermes (al-Hâdîtûs). There is, however, no indication of the relevant source for most of the instructions, so that it cannot be determined whether the sources of all are the same as those just mentioned. The differing degree of explicitness of the instructions makes it probable that the author collected his material from wherever he could find it (pp.119-130). The chapter concludes with a short list of talismans which are to be manufactured when the planets are in certain decans. The effects are given, but no other details (p.141). This list is clearly connected with the last two chapters of Book II, which discuss the decans in detail.

Chapter 11 opens with an admonition to keep the doctrine concealed from the unlettered, who, from their lack of wisdom, will only disparage the dignity of the astrologer. It continues with the definition of understanding and sagacity, using formulations which are to be found in a collection of aphorisms ascribed to al-Fârâbî, though also attributable, in part, to Miskawaih and even to Aristotle (pp.131-133). Then follows the detailed enumeration of the thirty-six decans (here called *wujûh*, *facies*), the images ascending in them, and the names of the planets with which they are connected, beginning from Aries, with Mars, the Sun and Venus and ending in Pisces with Saturn, Jupiter and Mars. There are a few words of introduction to the list, stating that the effects of the decans are founded in their concord with the *physeis* of their “lords”. A postscript discusses the relative power of the various planets and astrological positions and of the *physeis* (pp.133-140). An identical description is to be found in Ibn Abi ‘l-Rijâl, except that the latter omits all the images and, from Virgo on, the planets, which he has no call to give at all. In a short closing passage the author tells us that, to make their operation effective, the images must be engraved on substances which correspond to the respective planets.

Chapter 12 gives a second list of decans, based on the system of the “Indians”, in which the decans are called *darîjân*, the Indian name for them. They are now allotted to the planets in such a way that each first decan contains the lord of the zodiacal sign (Mars, e.g., is in the first decan of Aries), while to the other two decans are allotted the lords of the signs situated trigonally (120°) distant from them, as, in Aries, the Sun (Leo) and Jupiter (Sagittarius). The effects only are given, not the images (pp. 141-43). We continue with information on Brahmin ascetic practices, which are performed at astrologically significant times and, by enabling the practitioners to reach a state of dematerialization, allow them to dominate the celestial powers. They are guided by a “Book of the Buddha”, from which extracts are quoted (pp.144-46). Then comes the description, frequently found in other texts, of the severance of a head from a living body so that it may be questioned for prophetic purposes. Our author gives no indication that he is here deserting the “Indians” for the Sabians (pp.146-47). There

follows a detailed list of the colors belonging to the decans of the planets (again called *wujûh*, *facies*), without any indication of what the significance of this is. If we are to believe this list, each planet has three decans, as though it were a sign of the zodiac, and one color and two talismans are attributed to every decan (pp. 147-151). The conclusion of the chapter and of Book II consists of an extract from a work on talismans by the physician alRazi, describing the constellations favorable to the manufacture of talismans for specific purposes (pp.151-52). The author gives the names of several books, among them the much-quoted *Kitâb al-Baht*, by Jâbir, whose pupil he professes to be. Finally, he gives the contents of both the magical books of the Laws, ascribed to Plato, and compares their method with that of Jâbir (pp.152-57).

Book III

Having expounded, in Book II, the doctrine of the planets and the signs of the zodiac for the most part as elements of constellations for the purpose of making talismans, the author, in Book III, treats them more individually, with their specific qualities. The planets are personified to such a degree that they are virtually conjured and worshipped.

Chapter 1. After a short, not easily intelligible introduction, the object of which is to establish the astrological hour which makes a talisman efficacious, (pp. 156-57), there is a detailed description of the dominions of the seven planets, which embraces all divisions of nature and certain aspects of civilization, such as languages, religions and the sciences. In conclusion, there is a brief note on the effects of both nodes of the lunar orbit (pp.157-64).

Chapter 2. There is a similar, but much shorter detailed list of the dominions of the twelve signs of the zodiac (pp.164-66).

Chapter 3 is an omnium gatherum, beginning with a list of the substances from which the inks of the planets may be made. No source is yet known for anything from the beginning of Book III to this point. We now find a quotation from an otherwise unknown pseudo-Aristotelian work entitled *The Book of Lamps and Banners*. The author first gives a list, as it appears in this work, of the images of the personified planets, which is in effect a supplement to that in Book II, chapter 10. Then, again from the *Book of Lamps and Banners*, he gives the colors and stuffs of the robes to be worn when worshipping the planets, as well as the fumigations proper to them (pp. 167-68). He adds to these, from another, unnamed, source, the formulae for the inks of the thirty-six decans and explains, in a postscript, the importance of dealing consistently with only those things which belong to the planets. As a text for this he uses an aphorism by 'Utârid, which is repeated, along with other aphorisms by the

same author, in Book IV, chapter 4 (pp.168-71). The effects of the planets on the geographic regions of the earth are now illustrated, certain products and other features peculiar to foreign countries being specified, in a mixture of the true and the fantastic. In the middle of this section is a list of the products of Spain, the author's homeland, and the whole concludes, in spite of the author's leaning towards astrology, with a quotation from the Hippocratic work *De Aeribus aquis locis*. The chapter ends with a list of the general effects of the sun and moon and of the other five planets on mankind (pp. 171-76).

Chapter 4 is completely isolated, since it is the only one in the entire book which mentions Islam in connection with astrology. It goes so far as to use the Koran as a basis for a method of reckoning the duration of the Arab kingdom by using the numerical values of some single letters and groups of letters at the beginning of a number of the *suras*. All the verses of the Koran are first allotted, in order, to the seven planets. Then those letters, or groups of letters, are selected which stand at the beginning of those *suras* of which the first or last verse was allotted to Venus, the planetary patroness of the Arabs.

The author begins with a short description of his source, a book by the so far unknown Ja'far of Basra (pp.176-77). The expression *symbol* used here prompts him to make a digression on overt and covert meaning and the relation of this distinction to the psychology of cognition. The various ways of knowing God are given as an example. Parts of the argument are to be found in a minor work by al-Gazzâlî. The comparison, frequent in Islamic literature, between the incomprehensibility of God and the intolerable brilliance of light, is used by way of illustration (pp.177-79). This is followed by speculation as to the reason why, of the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet which together form a whole, compounded of spirit and matter, that half only which represents the spirit appears at the beginning of the *suras*, why more than five of these letters never occur together, and, finally, why the first letter of this kind to appear in the Koran is *alif* and the last *nûn*.

Certain admonitions, from the Gospel and from Hadîth, enjoining that secrets should be imparted only to those worthy to receive them, but to such persons freely, are then quoted (pp. 179-181). Then follows the enumeration of all the *suras*, including the number of their verses and the statement of the planet to which each first and last verse belongs (pp. 181-84). The author is seeking to prove that the term of the Arab kingdom is six hundred and ninety-three years, the same number at which al-Kindî had arrived by two other methods in a work which the author cites explicitly and which has survived (pp. 184-85). The conclusion is concerned with an explanation of the nature of the spirit, since the spirit is represented, as mentioned above, by the letters at the beginning of some of the *suras*. The explanation begins with the Stoic

definition of the vital spirit, a definition often used in Arabic literature. Other definitions follow, of which only some can be ascribed to definite sources (pp.185-87).

It is worth mentioning that this “Islamic” chapter comes directly before that part of the book in which the author turns to black magic. The introduction to this part is even more remarkable.

Chapter 5 opens with the statement that the author is “returning to the subject”. It refers to the division of the creatures of the three natural kingdoms among the planets, which was dealt with at the beginning of Book III. The author soon breaks off and reverts to the superiority of man over living creatures, which he has already noted in Book I, chapter 6. He details the characteristics of a number of different animals and establishes man’s superiority by the fact that all the elements have a share in him. The reiteration of this in the digression is intentional, since it gives the author the chance to discuss jinns, devils and angels (pp.187-89).

He then announces once more that he is about to take up his main subject again and gives an account of the peoples who have been famous for the arts of magic and of how they attained the position of being able to control the *pneumata* (pp.189-90). As an example, he narrates a story from a book known only from the present work. It tells, with detailed descriptions of the magical processes, how a rich and handsome young man was spirited to the place where his lover was and then, later, freed from the enchantment (pp. 190-92). After carefully pointing out the importance of the subject and the extent of the pains he himself has taken, the author speaks for the third time of returning to his theme and gives exhaustive directions for the attraction of the planetary spirit by using a knowledge of the lordships of the planets. The fumes of the incense burnt in the incantation of the planet are to be passed through the middle of a hollow cross, explicit reasons being given for this. The chapter concludes with some general quotations from an unidentified source on the relations between planets and terrestrial souls (pp.192-97).

Chapter 6 is devoted to the manifestation of the spiritual essence of the wise man, which is called his “perfect nature”. The incantation for this “perfect nature” is described according to two pseudo-Aristotelian hermetic treatises, *al-Istamâtîs* and *al-Istamâhîs* (pp. 198-210), the latter of which survives complete, the former in fragments only. Following this are prophecies, quoted from *al-Istamâhîs*, of Alexander’s victory over the Persians, and Alexander is advised to invoke the *pneumata* of his “perfect nature”. The author, citing a text which he claims to be Persian, tells how the King of the Persians learned from his description that Alexander was invincible (pp. 201-203). Then come “historical” notes on the most ancient philosophers, who were aware of this *pneuma*, and information concerning

the spiritual forces at work in talisman and soul alike. Both these sections are taken from *al-Istamâhîs* (pp.203-205), and the chapter ends with sayings by Socrates and Hermes on the essence of the perfect nature, from the same source (pp. 205-206).

Chapter 7. The reader is apparently now considered sufficiently prepared in the theory of magic to be initiated into its practice. Our author quotes from a book by al-Tabarî, an astronomer not yet identified, copious instructions, for the adoration of the planets according to the usage of the Sabians. These are not given in the form of a connected narrative, but as directives, and they go so far as to enjoin prostration.

At the beginning of the chapter is a list of the planets, with particulars of which planet is to be invoked for which groups of people and which desired gifts (pp.206-209). Following this there is a second list, giving the characteristics of each planet and explaining their significance, in a way frequently reminiscent of the list in chapter 1 of this book (pp.209-213). Then come the ceremonies and the texts of the prayers for each planet, with details of their correct hours and astrological conditions. For each planet a number, varying from one to four, of prayers and incenses, is given. The prayers to Mars are followed, curiously enough, by a prayer to Ursa Major. For many parts of the prayers parallels can be found in the fragmentary manuscripts of *al-Istamâtîs*. The metals from which the incense vessels must be made do not in all cases correspond with the traditional planetary metals, as stated above in Book II, chapter 10 (pp.213-37). Next there is an account of other Sabian rites, child sacrifice, the worship of Mars by ritual slaughter, the initiation of young men, offerings to Saturn and a variant of the story, given in Book II, chapter 12, of the severance of a living head from its body (pp. 237-41).

Chapter 8 contains prayers of the Nabataeans to Saturn and the Sun, taken from the *Nabataean Agriculture*. In a postscript the author explains that all this is, according to Islamic notions, idolatry, and that he introduces it simply on grounds of scholarship and as a proof of the pre-eminence of Islam (pp.241-45).

Chapter 9 contains, again according to *al-Istamâtîs*, the names of the *pneumata* of the seven planets and their six “directions”, i.e. the two channels of movement of each of the three dimensions of space, hence the six directions in which the *pneuma* can move. There follows a detailed description of the ceremonies for each planet, this time concerned with the proper regulation of sacrificial repasts (pp.245-253).

Chapter 10 continues with excerpts from our two pseudo-Aristotelian works. First, from *al-Istamâhîs*, there are four amulets, composed by Aristotle for Alexander (pp.253-58). Then comes a talisman for protection against the poisons in magic philtres and a medicine for the evil effects of the *pneuma* on the magician (pp.258-

59). After this follow *nirenjs* [*nirangs*], charms for various objects, such as success in love, royal favor etc., invented by Kînâs, the “pneumatician”, of whom we know from other sources. Each purpose is allotted various media, such as talismans, foods, fumigations and aromatic substances or perfumes. Many of these media have magical names and magic words are also prescribed for their incantation (pp.259-272). The source of all these prescriptions is so far unidentified, though at some points *al-Istamâtîs* and related texts are expressly cited.

Chapter 11 is given over to similar formulae, which, it is explicitly stated at the outset, do not come from Kînâs. Modes of procedure are only sometimes specified and frequently the ingredients alone of the charms, in prescription form, are given. Not all the prescriptions are of a purely magical nature: they sometimes extend to exact directions for preparing poisons. Some parallels from *al-Istamâtîs* manuscripts may be recognized. The section of prescriptions ends with a prophylactic against the poisons employed, the invention of Kanka, the “Indian”, who is known from other sources (pp.272-85). Immediately on this passage follow examples of the magic arts of the ancient Egyptians, which come from the widely-diffused legendary pre-history of Egypt, to be found in al-Maqrîzî and other authors. These examples are interrupted by a discussion of the “friendly” numbers 220 and 284. The whole is attributed to “him”, so that it appears that Kanka has all along been under contribution, whereas the fact is that the section is a miscellany from different sources.

None of the legendary kings of Egypt is named until a further instalment of Egyptian history is presented. What we are told of Egypt concerns talismans, devices to give warning of the approach of enemies and for the storage of drinking water, as well as talismanic sculptures against disease and for the unmasking of libertines (pp.285-88). The discussion of “Indian” practices now continues, including examples of the artificial generation of living beings (pp.288-90).

We now return to philosophy, which occupies the last chapter of Book III and the first of Book IV. The definite division of the two chapters is not easily accounted for. One has the impression that the author may have wished, at obvious points like the end of one book and the beginning of another, to display something less offensive than the wild heterodoxy of, in particular, the second part of Book III.

Chapter 12 begins with an emphatic statement of the importance of practical application in attaining mastery of the arts. It is illuminating that it adduces an example in which a magical performance is discovered to be a fraud, viz., the story, well known from elsewhere, of Anoshawan and Mazdak. There follow exhortations to the love of God, which is so markedly different from all other kinds of love. Then comes a passage from the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, which makes a rather forced

transition to a discussion of the various meanings of the word “nature”. For this there are many parallels, one of the definitions being derived from Isaac Israeli. Book III ends rather abruptly with an account, attributed to Empedocles, of the first causes of the substances (pp.290-296).

Book IV

Chapter 1. It is a little difficult, since the opening of the chapter is a continuation of the statement of Empedoclean doctrine begun in Book III, Chapter 12, to realize that a new book has commenced. We begin with the theory of the five substances, treated as a history of creation and of nature (pp.297-299). This is followed by a detailed analysis of the concepts of Substance (pp.299-300), Intellect (pp.300-304), and Soul (pp.304-308). No source is given for the section on Intellect, though many parallels could be pointed out. In the passage on Soul, on the other hand, there are quotations, some of them genuine, from a number of ancient philosophers. Reasons for having expounded the doctrine of Soul and Intellect conclude the chapter and the statement that a shadow forms a material partition between the intellect of the reader and that of the universe is the starting-point for an interesting excursus on the nature of shadows.

Chapter 2. The author, having once again given philosophy its due, “returns to the subject of the book”, and chapter 2 deals with prayers to the moon in each of the twelve signs of the zodiac. These are the work of “a school of learned men of the Kurds and Abyssinians” and often tell what may be accomplished under each sign. Narratives illustrating the possible effects are sometimes given (pp. 309-319). The most remarkable of these is the story of two men who meet while walking on the waters of the Red Sea. Following the prayers to the moon are “Indian” ceremonies for the seven planets. Each ceremony is to be preceded by a seven days’ fast and magic signs, called characters, are used in the ceremonies (pp 319-322). Certain parts of this may be found in Hermetic manuscripts.

Chapter 3 takes up again, on a much larger scale, the legendary prehistory of Egypt, which had already been begun in Book III, chapter 11. The story of the Eagle Town, built by the rebellious governor ‘Aun in an attempt to escape the vengeance of King al-Walîd on the latter’s return from an expedition to the so-called Mountain of the Moon and the source of the Nile, is then told in detail (pp.322-329). (Parallels to the whole, from pseudo-Mas’ûdî’s *Ahbâr al-zamân*, *al-Maqrîzî* and *al-Nuwairî* are cited in the footnotes to the translation.) There is now an abrupt transition to directions for making oneself invisible, and the story of a sorcerer’s Kurdish apprentice, whose lack of understanding led to his dismissal (pp.329-31). The chapter concludes with some

aphorisms, one of them from pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*, which are not entirely comprehensible (pp. 331-32).

Chapter 4 is again a miscellany. It opens with forty-five aphorisms of an astrological and magical nature from a book extant in manuscript, by the Babylonian 'Utârid (Hermes). 'Utarid may perhaps be the person mentioned in Book II, chapter 10 as one of the sources for the engraving of planetary figures on stones (pp.332-36). There follow ten aphorisms from the *Centiloquium* (pp. 336-38) and sayings attributed to Plato, Hippocrates and Aristotle, also of an astrological nature (pp.338-39), as well as the complete text of the "Aristotelian" treatise on talismans, extracts from which were quoted in Book I, chapter 5. Added to this there is a discussion of the notion of degree, which is to be found in the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise (pp.339-43). Then there are further observations of a general kind on talismans, which the author says he has from Jâbir. It has not been possible to identify precisely what work is meant (pp. 343-46). The conclusion of the chapter is taken up with two quotations from "Plato", of which one is an exhortation to prefer bodily death to spiritual extinction and the other concerns the basis for the effects of music on the soul. The latter quotation, which is largely incomprehensible and clearly very corrupt, includes excerpts from the fragments of Empedocles, which are extant in Greek. The chapter ends with the admonition to discipline the soul, sleeping and waking (pp.346-48).

Chapter 5 begins by enumerating the ten sciences preliminary to the mastery of alchemy and magic. The list is, in many respects, influenced by the familiar encyclopedic pattern, but takes, in others, quite a singular turn. The pertinent Aristotelian texts are specified for some of the sciences (pp.349-51). We are now told that through philosophy man strives after the divine likeness. Then the author reverts to the theory of love, with which he had begun to deal in Book III, chapter 12 (pp.351-53). He considers that the power of the evil eye ought by rights to be discussed here. The fact that the evil eye may be hereditary gives him the occasion for a detailed account of the doctrines of heredity and procreation, taken verbatim from al-Fârâbî, who is, however, not named (pp.353-57). The chapter concludes with speculations, from an unknown source, on the meaning of bi-sexuality (pp.357-58).

Chapter 6 opens with formulae and ceremonies for incense, allegedly by Buddha, in honor of the seven planets -- a subject that had, to all appearances, been exhausted. It closes with the verses from *Exodus*, telling of the perfumes prescribed by God to Moses, (pp. 358-362), and an exhaustive description of "Indian" enchantments (pp. 362-66).

Chapter 7 is very long and consists for the most part of avowed and verbatim extracts from the *Nabataean Agriculture*, e.g., how the bay tree spoke to the gardener in a

dream, the debate over precedence between the marshmallow and the mandrake, the self-commendation of the olive tree and how a sleeping king was apprised by a tree that his servant, disregarding the royal command in anticipation of the royal remorse, had spared the life of the queen. The other extracts are, in the main, explanations of the magic properties of certain plants and of the customs of the peoples mentioned in the *Nabataean Agriculture* (pp. 362-401). Not all can be traced to the manuscripts of the *Agriculture* and some of the matter seems to be taken from other works by Ibn Wahshîja. A different version of the discussion of poison for arrows used by the Armenians (pp. 383 f.) is to be found in the *Book of Poisons*. Other subjects seem to have been added by our author, for example, a quotation from a work attributed to al-Hallâj (pp. 389 f.). The section on the specific products of certain countries (pp. 391-96), a subject resumed from Book III, chapter 3, goes far beyond what Ibn Wahshîja can have had to say. Summing up, the author speaks of the three natural kingdoms -- animal, vegetable and mineral -- and of mankind as well as the links by which they may be led back to the Creator (pp.401-402).

The two last chapters, the compiler says, are taken from a temple book, which was found in the time of Cleopatra.

Chapter 8 gives, in a confused order, a large number of the *virtutes* of natural objects (pp.403-412). Parallels to most of these, very often in the works of Jâbir, are identifiable, and many are attributable to classical authors, such as Pliny.

Chapter 9 deals, in its entirety, with descriptions of talismans, which expressly depend on the *virtutes*. Astrological material is not mentioned. The objects of the talismans are of different kinds: for drugs, for attracting or repelling animals, producing color effects etc. (pp.412-20).

As a conclusion, the author gives a testament of Socrates and seven admonitions by Pythagoras, both identifiable in other sources, some of them classical (pp.421-423).



III. Excerpt from a Lecture on Alchemy

Terence McKenna, Wetlands Preserve, 1998

“...Let me read you a passage from Giordano Bruno. This is a wonderful passage from the Picatrix. This was the book of 12th century magical texts that began to introduce these hermetic ideas and this passage is the core passage that inspired the Rosacrucians and numerous other utopian movements. Here is Frances Yeats, “Hermes Trismegistus is often mentioned as the source for some talismanic images and in other connections but there is in particular one very striking passage in the fourth book of Picatrix in which Hermes is stated to have been the first to use magical images and is credited with having founded a marvelous city in Egypt.” And here is the passage from the Picatrix, “There are among the Caldeans very perfect masters in this art and they affirm that Hermes was the first to construct images by means of which he knew how to regulate the Nile against the motion of the moon. This man also built a temple to the sun and he knew how to hide himself from all so that no one could see him although he was within it.”

Those of you who are scholars in Rosicrucianism know that one of the things that was always said of Rosicrucians was that they were invisible. This was how Robert Fludd proved to people he wasn't a Rosicrucian, he'd say “you're looking at me so how could I be one?” So, he's in the temple but he could not be seen within it. “It was he, Hermes Trismegistus, too, who, in the East of Egypt constructed a city, 12 miles long, within which he constructed a castle which had four gates within each of its four parts. On the Eastern gate he placed the form of an eagle. On the Western gate, the form of a bull, on the Southern gate, the form of a lion, and on the Northern gate he constructed the form of a dog. Into these images he introduced spirits which spoke with voices. Nor could anyone enter the gates of the city except by their permission. There he planted trees in the midst of which was a great tree which bore the fruits of all generations. On the summit of the castle he caused to be raised a tower 30 cubits high on the top of which he ordered to be put a lighthouse the color of which changed every day until the seventh day, after which it returned to the first color. And so the city was illuminated with these colors. Near the city there was abundance of waters in which dwelt many kinds of fish. Around the circumference of the city he placed engraved images and ordered them in such a manner that by their virtue, the inhabitants were made virtuous and withdrawn from all wickedness and harm. The name of the city was Adocetine.”

ON THE MOON AND THE LUNAR MANSIONS



IV. Extracts on the Moon

And draw your attention to the Moon in all works as if it were the Chief of all the other Planets because it brings about evident Manifestations and Judgments in all things in the world and it pertains to the power of generation and corruption...

Introduction

The *Picatrix* or *Ghayat al Hikam*, the Aim of the Wise, was composed in Arabic in Andalusia around 1000 A.D. It is a key work of for medieval and Renaissance astrological magic.

The following extracts deal with the Moon, particularly with her phases. Too often it is rather simplistically asserted that astrological magic should only be done under a waxing Moon. As these extracts make clear the waning Moon, like any astrological factor, has its uses as well.

Book I, Chapter 5, paragraph 34

Translation by Christopher Warnock, Esq.

It is necessary to observe when casting images which are made for love and friendship that the Moon is fortunate and full of light and do not make something, as we have previously said, when the Moon is unfortunate and diminished in light.

Example of the same. Make images for love and delight and to visit kings and high lords in the day of the Moon [when the Moon is] increasing in light in Sagittarius, Taurus, Cancer or Pisces (and with the Head of the Dragon she is strong in works [of magic]) and always [when the Moon] is in a fortunate mansion and one appropriate for the work when the Moon is aspecting Venus in the hour of Jupiter when Jupiter is in Pisces, Sagittarius or Cancer and the Moon is [also] in those places.

And conversely make images for evil [when] the Moon is in a unfortunate mansion and with unfortunate planets or aspecting the same with a square or opposition. And when these [images] are made in such a way your work will be carried out in everything according to your wishes.

Book II, Chapter 3, paragraph 7

And draw your attention to the Moon in all works [of magic] as if it were the chief of all the other planets because it brings about evident manifestations and judgments [?] in all things in the world and it pertains to the power of generation and corruption and she is the mediatrix [female intermediary] in the advance of your work, receiving

the influences and impressions of the stars and planets and pouring them out to the inferiors of this world.

Wherefore draw your attention to that which we have said before concerning her [being] fortunate and infortunate, increasing [waxing] and diminishing [waning] in light, because after separating from the Sun she secures his strength then she moves to be in a sextile, square, trine and opposition aspect. And she receives strength from the stars and planets when she is connected by the aspects we have mentioned before.

And if you find the Moon increasing in light then her strength and power is good and useful in all works to bring about increase and if you find the light [of the Moon] diminishing it is suitable and harmonious for all works in which you wish diminution.

And after the Moon separates from the conjunction of the Sun [New Moon] all the way up to a sinister [against the direction of the signs] square until it arrives at an opposition [Full Moon] it is always good and harmonious for buying and selling, trials and asking for the repayment of debts, debates and councils for everything you require.

And after separating from the opposition of the Sun and crossing to the dexter square [Last Quarter] all the way to the conjunction of the Sun [next New Moon] it is good and appropriate to [pay] for debts that you owe and for those who keep possessions to return them to others and for wisdom and for asking and inquiring into truth.

V. The Mansions of the Moon: “On the Creation, Proportion and Composition of the Heavens for the Fashioning of Images”

Translation by Robert Thomas

I intend at present to state the effects and works of the Moon through each of her 28 Mansions, as they are agreed upon by all the wise men of India.

The first Mansion of the Moon is called Alvach. It is begun from the starting point of Aries, through the 12th degree, 51st minute and 26th second of that sign. And the wise men of India will begin journeys and give medicines when the Moon is in this Mansion. You also ought to place [the Moon] in this Mansion for all images you intend to fashion that you might travel on the road and be returned home safely. They also account this sign [Mansion] good for the creation of discord and enmity between a man and wife, and for the creation of enmity between two friends. The foundation of all acts for good purposes is an observation, namely to see whether or not the Moon is in a good condition, and is safe from [aspect with] Saturn, Mars and from combustion with the Sun. And do the opposite in all works of evil, namely [set the] Moon in combustion with the Sun, and Saturn and Mars aspecting the Moon (or at least one of them).

The second Mansion is called Alkatayn. It is begun in the 12th degree, 51st minute, 26th second of Aries, and is completed in the 21st degree, 42nd minute and 12th second of the same sign. In this mansion you should fashion images when you wish to pollute rivers and waters, or find hidden treasure, and for the production of much wheat, and by which may be accomplished the destruction of houses before they are complete. And likewise you make images in this [Mansion] for creating anger between one man and another, and also for making strong the prison in which are held captives.

The third Mansion is called Acoraxa. It begins in the degree aforesaid, and is completed in the 8th degree, 3rd minute and 2nd second of Taurus. In this Mansion should be fashioned images for the salvation of sailors and their safe return, and for strengthening the imprisonment of captives, and for works of alchemy, and for all operations which are done through fire, and for hunts in the country, and for the creation of love between man and wife.

The fourth Mansion is called Aldebaran. It is begun in the 8th degree, 3rd minute and 2nd second of Taurus, and is finished in the 21st degree, 25th minute and 20th second of the same sign. In this mansion you should fashion images for the destruction of a city, villa or any other building which you desire not to endure, and they shall proceed to their destruction; and [images so] that a lord shall disagree with his advisor, and for the creation of discord between man and wife, and for the

destruction of fountains and waters. And you may discover treasures hidden below the earth [in this Mansion], and destroy and bind all reptiles and venomous animals.

The fifth Mansion is called Almites. It is begun in the 21st degree, 25th minute and 20th second of Taurus, and is finished in the 4th degree, 17th minute and 20th second of Gemini. In this Mansion, make images for the teaching (?) of the arts and mysteries to young men, and for the safety of travelers through other countries, so that they swiftly return and so that sailors may travel safely. Also, [make images] for the strengthening of buildings, and for the destruction of alliances and friendships, and to create good will between man and wife. And do this when the Moon travels through a humane sign and is rising; and save [the Moon] from Saturn and Mars and combustion with the Sun as we have said before in the first Mansion. And these are the [humane] signs: Gemini, Virgo, Libra, Sagittarius and Aquarius.

The sixth Mansion is called Athaya. It is from the 4th degree, 17th minute and 20th second of Gemini to the 17th degree, 8th minute and 36th second of the same [sign]. In this Mansion fashion images to destroy cities and castles, and for exercises placed around them [i.e., besiegement of them], and for enemies of kings to be revenged on them [the kings], and for the destruction of crops and trees, and to bring friendship between two allies, and for excellent hunting in the countryside, and for the destruction of medicines, so that the wise did not give it [at this time].

The seventh Mansion is called Aldirah. It is [begun] from the 17th degree 8th minute 2nd second of Gemini, and is ended at the end of this sign. In this Mansion, fashion images for the increase of trade and of its money and for good travel, and to cause friendship between enemies and allies, and for when you wish to drive away flies and prevent them from coming in, and for the destruction of high offices. And it will be good for approaching the presence of the king, or for any other you like, and for fashioning [images] for inclining to benevolence the king or whatever other lord you may desire.

The eighth Mansion is called Nathra. It is begun at 0 degrees 51 minutes 26 seconds of Cancer. In this Mansion fashion images for love and friendship, and that one may travel and go upon the roads safely, and for the creation of friendship between two allies, and that the imprisonment of captives may be strengthened and fortified, and for the destruction and prostration of captives, and to drive out mice from whatever place you may desire.

The ninth Mansion is called Atraf. It is begun in the 12th degree 50th minute and 26th second of his sign, obviously Cancer. In this excellent mansion you may fashion images for the destruction of a harvest, and for the making unfortunate of all those

who travel, and to do evil to all men, and to cause disputes and enmity between allies, and to defend yourself from other men.

The tenth Mansion is called Algebhal. It begins from the 25th degree 42nd minute and 51st second of Cancer, and is finished in the 8th degree 34th minute and 18th second of Leo. In this mansion you may fashion images to create love between a man and woman, and for the destruction of enemies, and for the goodwill of allies, and alternately for the assistance of them.

The eleventh Mansion is called Azobra. It is begun in the 8th degree 36th minute and 18thth second of Leo, and is finished in the 25th degree 2nd minute and 44th second of that sign. In this mansion you may make images for the release of captives, and for the setting of armies to cities and castles [i.e., besiegement], and for the strengthening of buildings, and to enlarge the wealth of allies.

The twelfth Mansion is called Acarfa. It is begun in the 25th degree 2nd minute and 44th second of Leo, and is completed in the 4th degree 17th minute and 6th second of Virgo. In this Mansion, you may fashion images for the increase [of the harvest and of plants, and for the increase of destruction, and for the destruction of ships, and for the betterment of allies and learned men, [and for] captives and servants to be made fast and to give good service.]

The thirteenth Mansion is called [Alahue]. It is begun from the 4th degree 17th minute and 6th second of Virgo, and is ended in the 17th degree 8th minute and 36th second of this sign. In this mansion you may make images for the increasing of trade and your money, the increase of harvests, that buildings may be completed, and for the liberation of captives.

The fourteenth Mansion is called Alcimech. It is begun in the 17th degree [8th minute and] 36th second of Virgo, and is complete at the end of this sign. In this mansion may be made images for the love of men and women, and for curing the infirm, and for the destruction of harvests and plants, for the destruction of desire, and that sailors may have good [conditions], and for the love of allies.

The fifteenth Mansion is called Algafra. It is begun in the first degree of Libra, and is finished in the 12th degree, 51st minute and 26th second of that sign. In this Mansion may be fashioned images for locating treasure, and for the impeding of travellers that they may not be able to go to their journeys, and for the separation of a married man from his wife, that they may never be joined one to the other, and for the creation of discord between friends and allies, and for the destruction of the houses of enemies.

The sixteenth Mansion is called Acubene. It begins in the 12th degree 51st minute and 26th second of Libra and is ended at the 25th degree, 42nd minute and 52nd second of that sign. In this mansion you may make images for the destruction of wages, crops and plants, and for creating discord between a man and woman, and for the liberation of captives from prison.

The seventeenth Mansion is called Alichil. It begins in the 25th degree, 42nd minute and 52nd second of Libra, and is ended in the 8th degree, 36th minute and 2nd second of Scorpio. In this mansion you may fashion images for the placement of armies, and for making buildings strong and stable, and for the safety of sailors. And in this Mansion make [images] for loves which are of ordinary durability.

The eighteenth Mansion is called Alcakl. It begins in the 8th degree, 36th minute and 2nd second of Scorpio and endures to the 21st degree 25th minute and 44th second of that sign. In this Mansion you may make images for victory [over] your enemies, and to strengthen buildings, and to destroy friendship.

The nineteenth Mansion is called Exaula. And it begins in the 21st degree, 25th minute and 44th second of Scorpio and is ended in the 4th degree, 27th minute and 10th second of Sagittarius. In this Mansion you may make images for the placement of armies outside of cities and advancement upon them, and for the increase of crops, and for the capturing of fugitives, and for the destruction of ships.

The twentieth Mansion is called Nahaym. It is begun in the 4th degree, [27th minute and] 10th second of Sagittarius, and is ended in the 17th degree, 8th minute and 26th second of this sign. And in this Mansion you may fashion images for the animals wild and domesticated, and for the destruction of disagreements between friends.

The twenty-first Mansion is called Elbelda. It begins in the 17th degree, 8th minute and 48th second of Sagittarius and is ended at the end of the sign. In this mansion you may make images to strengthen buildings, and to separate women from their proper husbands.

The twenty-second Mansion is called Acadaldeba. It begins in the first degree of Capricorn, and endures to the 12th degree, 51st minute and 26th second of this sign. In this Mansion, you may fashion images for the safety of those who are ill, and to create discord between two [people].

The twenty-third Mansion is called Caciddebolah. It begins in the 12th minute, 51st minute and 26th second of Capricorn and endures to the 25th degree, 42nd minute and 52nd second of this sign. In this Mansion you may make images for the curing of the sick, and for the joining of men with wives.

The twenty-fourth Mansion is called Caadachahot. It is begun in the 25th degree, 42nd minute and 52nd second of Capricorn and endures to the 8th degree, 34th minute and 28th second of Aquarius. In this Mansion you may make images for good will between men and women, and for the increase of trade.

The twenty-fifth Mansion is called Caadaladbia. It is begun in the 8th degree, 34th minute and 28th second of Aquarius, and ends in the 21st degree, 25th minute and 17th second of the same sign. In this Mansion may be made images for the separation of women from their men, and for the repair of buildings.

The twenty-sixth Mansion is called Almisdam. It is begun in the 21st degree, 25th minute and 17th second of Aquarius, and ends in the 4th degree, 17th minute and 10th second of Pisces. In this Mansion may be made images for the goodwill of men.

The twenty-seventh Mansion is called Algaafalmuehar. It begins in the 4th degree, 17th second and 10th second of Pisces and ends at 17 degrees, 8 minutes and 36 seconds of that sign. In this Mansion may be made images for increasing trade, and to obstruct [the construction of] buildings, and for the endangerment of sailors.

The twenty-eighth Mansion is called Arcexe. It begins in the 17th degree, 8th minute and 36th second of Pisces, and lasts to the end of that sign. In this Mansion may be made [images] for the increase of trade and the creation of peace and agreement between man and wife, and for strengthening the imprisonment of captives.

When you desire to perform your work in the day, arrange that the Moon be in the Ascendant, and that a diurnal sign be rising; if it is done at night, let a nocturnal sign be rising. And let there be rising a sign of direct ascension, for works of magic which are light [i.e., trivial] and certain; and let there be rising a sign of tortuous ascension for more serious works. And for that reason let the helpful [planets] be in a fortunate aspect [to the working]; for if there ascends a sign of direct ascension and an infortune is present therein, the work is destroyed and spoiled.

VI. The Picatrix: Lunar Mansions in Western Astrology

Ian Freer MA (Cantab) Hons

One of the oldest and most practical applications of astrology is the election of a suitable moment for an event. It is therefore regrettable that there is a dearth of printed material on the subject at the present time. In order to rekindle interest in this valuable subject I would like to present some new material gleaned largely from my original researches into medieval Latin source material, specifically the mysterious manuscript known as Picatrix, which gives very detailed information on the use of lunar mansions in elections.

Due to the complexity of the subject I should first spend some time on setting the context. Picatrix was a medieval manuscript drawing on earlier sources, all pre-1000 AD. Its major importance was in the 15th century when it was studied by Cornelius Agrippa, Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino; later it was circulated among English astrologers including Simon Forman, William Lilly and Elias Ashmole. Some 17 ms copies of Latin versions survive today in various European libraries including the British Library. From the 18th century its importance diminished until German astrologers (Karl Brandler-Pracht and Elsbeth Ebertin) looked afresh at the lunar mansions; also 20th century historians, particularly a group including Dame Frances Yates attached to the Warburg Institute, re-evaluated it and saw it as a crucial late Hermetic text of the Renaissance, reviving interest in the classical planetary gods, with obvious results in European arts and general culture which we can still appreciate today.

What sort of astrology is in the Picatrix? Proactive astrology looks to the future with a view to improving it. In the Hellenistic period (from the death of Alexander to the suicide of Cleopatra) this was called Katarchic astrology, and referred to elections. All divination has proactive possibilities, foreseeing the likely outcome perhaps in order to improve it or avoid it. The astrology of the Picatrix is electional, choosing the optimum moment, firmly proactive and empowering. The belief was that the Cosmos was full of invisible, i.e. occult forces, not the protons, quarks and neutrinos of modern, materialistic science, but planetary and divine forces which could be channelled and attracted by the use of sympathetic magic and astrological know-how. The doctrine of correspondences, evident in the herbalism of Culpeper, was a key factor and long lists of such correspondences were compiled by the author of Picatrix. It was thought that man was in charge of his Universe and would be a great scientist if he could learn use these forces to shape his destiny; this is the belief behind Pico's famous Oration on the Dignity of Man, which sums up the optimistic Renaissance outlook. He was influenced greatly by the Corpus Hermeticum, once a larger compilation than we now possess, surviving in the Near East despite the coming of

both Christianity, which it had predicted in very mournful terms, and Islam. The books we have come west shortly before the fall of Constantinople to the Turks. It was only at the end of World War 2 that a large body of linked Gnostic writings (including a text from the Hermetica) were rediscovered at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt.

The Coptic Church of Alexandria, which dominated the early centuries of Christianity, was extremely uncomfortable with the Hellenistic style of religion which involved planetary deities, some of whom are female, e.g. the Moon and Venus - the closest the Church comes is in its veneration of the Virgin Mary. It turned them into Saints, e.g. Hathor/Venus becomes St. Catherine with her shrine in Sinai, named after the Mesopotamian Moon God, Sin, husband of Hathor. The Moon is of course exalted in Taurus (part of which constellation was known to the Egyptians as the Seven Hathors) and that sign is ruled by Venus.

Just as we study solar cults like Mithraism and Zoroastrianism when we plot the spread of the solar zodiac system, so we have to be aware of these Moon cults when delving into the lunar mansions system. The Moon God Sin had a major Temple at Harran, whose present site is in south-east Turkey (but then culturally in Syria or Mesopotamia), which was a centre of Hermeticism and Picatrix-type beliefs well into the Islamic period, at least until the Crusades. (This may explain a great deal about the Knights Templar). Thoth, or Hermes Trismegistus as he was known later, was a major Moon deity of the Egyptians. He was also the God of Wisdom and Writing. He was worshipped particularly at Hermopolis, in Arabic called El Ashmunein. His priest Petosiris was legendary as a great astrologer, whose works are now known only in quotations from Roman sources. His tomb is decorated like an Egyptian mini-Temple. The Picatrix has a curious passage about the city of Hermopolis which is cited in the relevant chapter of Eugenio Garin's "Astrology in the Renaissance", and it is surprising that the text should refer explicitly to the Egyptian city and not to Harran, if one accepts the majority view among scholars that the contribution of Egypt to astrology was much smaller than that of Mesopotamia. (Perhaps this fact is linked to the use of Egyptian decans in the text).

Picatrix became greatly influential in the Neoplatonist phase at the end of the 15th century. It is sometimes called Hermetic but it was written a long time after the original Hermetic writings, midway between them and the Renaissance Hermetists. It is the most thorough compilation of astral magic known from the Arab world, drawn from 8th and 9th century sources known in the Near East. The original Arabic text was known as the Ghayat Al Hakim, the Aim of the Wise. It was the Latin version, probably made by Aegidius de Thebaldis¹, translator of Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos, which was widely influential and which I have been researching and partly translating. It

came via an intermediate Spanish translation of which only fragments survive. It was translated into Spanish possibly by Yehuda ben Moshe in 1256 and Latin soon after. The Latin is a very close translation of the Spanish but not highly accurate - there are expansions, omissions and mistakes.

How did the translation come about? The prologue tells us that, “the learned man Picatrix compiled the text from 200 books and more of philosophy, which he has called after his own name.” Alfonso X (the Wise), King of Castile 1252-1284, ordered the translation. He was of course also responsible for the compilation of the Alphonsine tables, the standard European astronomical tables until the 16th century. It is symptomatic of the Arab influence on the European astrological revival that this Arabic text should enter Europe through Spain, once occupied by the Moors, rather than through the Byzantine Empire, geographically far closer to Harran and Hermopolis.

The book was never printed in any language until the present century. An Arabic text was published by Ritter in Berlin in 1933. A German text was published by Ritter and Plessner in London in 1962. A definitive Latin text, which I have worked from, was published by Professor Pingree through the Warburg in 1986. It has never been fully translated into English.

Professor Pingree’s articles promote an emphasis on literary sources typical of most western scholars. However I believe he may have overlooked important oral components in the development of the material. Studies of Homer in the context of other oral traditions have helped us enormously in understanding oral sources and how accurate they can be. They can survive millenia and cross cultures easily as wandering bards or minstrels travel the world. Stock phrases and other memory aids, such as lengthy lists, occur with frequency in material which was originally committed to memory by trained bards. There are numerous lists and stock phrases in the Picatrix, which suggest to me that it developed in a secret Mystery school somewhere in the Near East. The text is a compilation from many different sources in that region but it often states, “The wise men of India say”... not the wise Men of India write, but say.

The fact that it is a compilation in four books is itself suggestive of a student taking notes from an oral lecture course or courses by various teachers, before whom he stands full of awe. The Arabic names in Picatrix are very garbled (see appended table) as if written during dictation without understanding: much more accurate ones with English translations are given by Vivian Robson in “The Fixed Stars and Constellations”, which is essential reading for anyone who wishes to explore the topic of lunar mansions further.

The writings refer often with awe to Hermes Trismegistus, i.e. Thoth. The predecessor of Thoth was Seshat, Mistress of the Library, she who remembers. Her symbol was a seven pointed star, nowadays (is there a deliberate connection?) the symbol of the Faculty of Astrological Studies. Seshat was the wife of Thoth but no myths about her have survived. The Pharaoh's wife took part in the King's Jubilee (the Heb Sed) as Seshat, measuring out the field which was Egypt in miniature. All the cults brought their cult statues and stood on the part of the field corresponding with their Temple of origin. In her heyday, which was in prehistory and the very earliest dynasties, it seems likely that the wisdom teachings were committed to memory as happened with the Bards and Druids in the Celtic world. Later her function was absorbed entirely into that of Thoth. The Picatrix does refer also to Hermopolis with awe as I have indicated, so the cult of Thoth and Seshat is strongly implicated. This is another clue to an oral tradition behind it. The entire epics of Homer were composed orally and committed to someone's memory. Both epics are longer than the Picatrix, so it was possible for a trained person to learn it off by heart.

Twelve Solar vs. Twenty-Eight Divisions

The Picatrix material produced many surprises for me. For example in the Middle Ages it was thought that the unlucky Via Combusta was shorter, extending from only 18 deg. Libra to 3 deg. Scorpio. The main surprise was that elections in this system were based not on solar astrology (i.e. with the Sun placed in an appropriate zodiacal sign for the activity) but on lunar astrology in which the Moon should be placed in an appropriate asterism of 12 deg. 51 min. 26 secs., a lunar mansion or 1/28 th division of the zodiac circle, roughly a day and a night's journey for the Moon. Clearly it is important to indicate the nature and location of each mansion in the system, which I will deal with shortly. First, however, some background to that.

There are three major systems of astrology in which lunar mansions are used: Chinese, Hindu and Arab. The Hindu system uses only 27 mansions (having dropped one except for use in horary work) and the Chinese is virtually another system altogether. The other systems are set out in detail in Robson's book and also in Volguine's "Lunar Astrology", long since out of print. Arab astrology is the closest obvious source for the Picatrix, but the Arabs came to prominence only in the late 7th century, which begs the question of where it came from before. The short answer is that the basis of this system was compiled in writing in Iran during the period of the 3rd to 7th centuries AD, but may well derive from earlier, more obscure oral or lost written sources. I am sure that at least one Near Eastern religious cult was implicated and we cannot rule out contact with Greco-Egyptian Hermetists as the key. Is there a clue in the author's name?

The author calls himself Picatrix and some scholars have said this is a corruption of Buqratis or indeed the Doctor Hippocrates of Cos, to whom many later works were wrongly attributed. The Italian ms. I have seen in the BM refers to a Giovanni de Picatrix, which only serves to confuse matters further. E J Holmyard², the alchemy expert, suggests the writer was a mysterious Norbar the Arab or an alchemist called Al Majriti (the man from Madrid), but the dates make this latter identification impossible; the Warburg settle for calling him "Pseudo-Majriti", which takes us no further. At any rate the original author/compiler was an Arab Hermetist or neo-Platonist living no later than the 13th century and possibly up to several centuries earlier. He drew heavily on the Arab astrologer Abu Ma'ashar. He wrote in a period when the Arabs dominated astrology as so much else. It is notable that the text itself makes many references to the Wise Men of India, who used quite a different system of lunar mansions, but the Indian priests are known to have used their form of lunar mansions in timing their religious rites in the first millenium BC. The text refers to planetary gods by their (often garbled) names in Latin, Greek, Arabic and Indian. This is completely typical of the muddled nature of the mss.

The lunar mansions are claimed to be suitable for specific purposes. The reader is directed to make an image when the Moon is in the relevant Mansion. Astrologers like John Dee separated the astrology from the magic and used this astrological system brilliantly in electing the Coronation Chart for Elizabeth I. Now this use of images may be a clue as it was part of the Egyptian magical tradition. Archaeologists have found so-called execration texts or curses written in hieroglyphs on clay figures of people from neighbouring countries considered likely enemies of Egypt. These figures were sent to the boundary forts and when Egypt was attacked the appropriate image was shattered in an act of sympathetic magic.

The Hebrews were greatly influenced by Egypt and a similar idea lies behind the fictional tale of the Rabbi of Prague who created the Golem, a clay figure brought to life by Qabalistic spells and magic letters.

We cannot be sure that the image making in the Picatrix was derived from Egypt as the execration texts are entirely different in method from the often beneficial effects promised by Picatrix, which does not use the breakage for effect, but I make the point that the method was in the air.

This leads me on to a new theory about the name Picatrix. The word could be connected with a Latin root meaning painted and if so the feminine ending -ix would give the meaning of painted lady. Who could she have been? Firstly, we know that Egyptian women loved to decorate themselves with make-up and/or tattoos. (Seshat has a dual meaning of make-up artist as well as goddess.) We have found tattoos on

Egyptian women in the form of Bes (the lion-faced dwarf god, patron of childbirth) on the upper thigh and rows of dots across the stomach. Some of their wise women were amulet-makers; others were involved in midwifery and determined the fate of the new born, warning which deities must be appeased or would favour the child. The wise woman was called a Rekeet. This is the likely origin of the good fairies, wicked fairies or stepmothers etc. in our fairy tales (Cinderella is derived from an Egyptian tale). The “good fairies” are sometimes known as the Seven Hathors, also the name of the Pleiades in Taurus. They warn of a seven-fold vision or “Bow” of a deity or its totem animal, which would be a powerful omen in the child’s life; this is what Joseph dreamt when he saw the seven fat cattle and seven lean. Let us suppose that the painted lady was a Seshat or Rekeet, then she would have passed on her learning which was concerned with fate and timing by oral means, perhaps for millenia, and in Roman times this would have become a dim memory of a painted lady, probably transmitted through the Thoth cult into the Hermetist movement. Interestingly, this lends support to the theory that early, oral forms of astrology were in the domain of women³.

Prominent Aspects of The Picatrix

Let us now turn to some prominent aspects of the Picatrix; correspondences, decanates and the lunar mansions.

Correspondences

The doctrine of correspondences is kept alive in coffee table books on astrology, herbals and Qabalistic reference works. In antiquity, certain stones, plants and animals were said to have a special relationship with the seven planets and twelve zodiacal signs. The earliest list known is on a cuneiform tablet from Seleucid (i.e. Hellenistic) Uruk on which are recorded for each zodiacal sign a temple or city, one or two trees (is this another Celtic-style tree calendar?⁴), one or two plants and one or two stones. These ideas originated in Mesopotamia. A list for the planets is preserved in the Anthologies of Vettius Valens. There is much more in Picatrix, such as planetary stones, psychological faculty, activities, language, exterior and interior parts of the human body, law or religion, colour, profession, taste, places, stones, metals, trees, herbs, spices, animals, birds and insects for each planet. Also parts of the body, colour, taste, places, metals and animals for each zodiacal sign. Such lists are very useful to horary astrologers.

These lists first appear in India, in the Yavanajataka of Sphudivaja, a 3rd century versified form of a 2nd century translation from the Greek. The Sanskrit author mixes Greek and Indian lists. The Sanskrit was translated into Syriac and Arabic. This Indian tradition first appears in the West in astrological works composed in Syria by

Theophilus of Edessa in 8th century and in Iraq by Abu Ma'ashar (Abumasar) of Balkh in the 9th.

Decanates

This is definitely an Egyptian contribution to astrology. The 36 Egyptian gods of time ruled 10 degrees of the ecliptic, originally extending their influence from Tropic to Tropic. They are cited as powerful in the Christian era "Corpus Hermeticum"⁵. The decans were the living Ba or immortal soul of the god.

One medieval manuscript of Picatrix in Poland has illustrations of images for the decans and the planets⁶. The earliest known illustration of the decans was in the Middle Kingdom, when Egyptian coffin lids were inscribed with the decanal constellations in 36 columns divided by twelve lines. They included Orion and Sothis (Sirius), possibly Procyon and Hydra too. Pictures of decanic spirits appear in a Greek manuscript on astrology translated into Sanskrit about 150 AD, which formed the basis of the Yavanajataka. The images were then put into Indian style, which may explain peculiarities in the Polish illustrations. In Egypt these images were engraved on amulets, made of a specified stone, associated with a plant, and worn as a prophylactic to ward off various diseases. They were the subject of a treatise by the revered Egyptian authorities Nechepso and Petosiris, who were the most oft quoted sources in Roman astrological literature. (These were apparently the Pharaoh Nekht-neb-ef and the priest of Thoth, Petosiris, whose monument can be seen at Hermopolis). The decans come into the Picatrix through the work of Abu Ma'ashar. The author has added to each description the purposes for making the amulet. Electional astrology is used in timing the manufacture.

The decans in later astrology were simply a one-third division of zodiac signs, like Lilly's use of Faces in his system of planetary dignities, from the Greek "Prosopa" or masks. They were seen in India as Masters of Time, Chronokratores. The Liber Hermetis (5th century AD) lists the illnesses associated with each decan - the scheme is zodiacal, starting with Aries at the head of the body.

We can differentiate between the Egyptian decanates and Babylonian ways of Anu, Enlil and Ea, which divided the night sky into parallel bands, because the Egyptian system was sequential, not parallel. The Babylonians with their advanced mathematics were using a co-ordinate system based on their mythology, whereas the Egyptian system was based on their ten day week. Both influenced the development of astrology.

Lunar Mansions

There is no mention of lunar mansions known from European antiquity⁷. However,

these mansions or Nakshatrani have played an important part in Indian divination since at least the mid-5th century BC. The Arabs named them “Manazil al-Qamar”. Even today the Arabs use the Crescent Moon symbol for their religion and a Lunar calendar. The Babylonian Moon God Sin was the supreme deity in the Near East prior to the Christian and Islamic periods. (We should not assume because of our cultural conditioning that lunar automatically means feminine.)

By the 6th century AD the Mansions had become the main determinant factor in Indian electional astrology. The Moon’s presence in each Mansion boded good or ill for each kind of activity undertaken at the time, modified by good or bad planetary aspects. We know that Iranian scholars from the Sassanian period (3rd to 7th centuries AD) were familiar with these Mansions and they put together a manual of activities timed by the Moon based on Indian, Persian and Greek sources. There was borrowing from Dorotheus of Sidon’s poem on astrology. Such timing by the stars featured in a rudimentary way in Hesiod’s poem, “Works and Days”, and the Egyptians had an established system of lucky and unlucky days. The Sassanian text was used by the author of Picatrix. The objectives listed for each Mansion are therefore taken directly from an Indian tradition.

Planetary Aspects in Picatrix

Chapter Four of Book One sets out what may be accomplished when the Moon is in each Mansion and then gives advice to the practitioner. My translation reads, “If you want to do your work in the day, arrange for the Moon to be in the ascendant and rising from the diurnal signs; if at night, it should be rising from a nocturnal sign. Your aim will be accomplished more easily if the Moon is in a sign of short ascension, less so in a sign of long ascension. There should be good aspects from the benefic planets. A malefic in the rising sign will harm the work. A conjunction or other good aspect from a benefic to the rising sign will help. Similarly, when the diurnal signs rise in the night and the nocturnal ones in the day and benefics aspect it (the contrary for malefics).”

“The practitioner should know the virtues of the planets and signs, which are fixed, mobile or common, which are benefic or malefic.” The text warns against using an eclipsed Moon or one under the Sunbeams (less than 12 degrees orb either side in solar conjunction), in other words a New Moon is not to be used. “Do not use a Moon weakening in its course, travelling less than 12 degrees daily and avoid the Via Combusta. Do not use the ends of signs which are ruled by malefic planets, i.e. Aries, Scorpio, Capricorn and Aquarius. Do not use a Moon falling from the Midheaven, into the 9th House. You should set Jupiter or Venus on the ascendant or on the Midheaven because they will put right an unfortunate Moon.”

Modern Derivatives

Volguine quotes⁸ praise of the 28 Mansions from Cornelius Agrippa⁹. He also notes that the Lunar Zodiac still exists then in Iran and among the Parsees, for the second chapter of the Bundahish in the Zend-Avesta gives the name of the 28 divisions. He goes on to note that the so-called Critical Degrees of Karl Brandler-Pracht are none other than the cusps of the Lunar Mansions. (It was claimed that planets within 3 degrees of those points exert a stronger influence than if they had no contact with those degrees. Born in 1864, Brandler-Pracht was one of the first modern German supporters of astrology.) Volguine notes that the Hindus group these Mansions into masculine and feminine, but the practical use seems to have been abandoned except for determination of the sex of an unborn infant. In 1929 Elsbeth Ebertin published a list of the mansions, offering some interpretations not existing in preceding publications¹⁰.

Example Charts

I have not tested these interpretations extensively and I must offer these portions of translation to provide work for other astrologers to do, which may require adaptation to modern conditions, as Frau Ebertin must have realised. However, two example charts from history, elected by practitioners with knowledge of the mansions, do give results consistent with the alleged reliability of the method. (This is not nearly enough to satisfy the statisticians but I hope it will whet some appetites.)

Elizabeth I did not ascend to the throne immediately on Mary's death. She waited until 15 January 1559 and it is thought that John Dee elected for noon on that day, the traditional time for a coronation ceremony. His notebooks suggest that he attached great importance to the Mansions¹¹. Many of the good features of this chart are outlined elsewhere by Olivia Barclay¹² but there are others given in Picatrix, e.g. the Moon is not afflicted by malefics. It has contacts to the benefics. It is not in the Via Combusta. It is in Albotain, which is reckoned good for finding lost treasure, having plenty of corn and strengthening prisons.

The elected chart for Burma's constitution is given by Gregory Szanto and Nick Champion¹³. At present Burma is the poorest country in Asia, ruled by a military dictatorship. It has put up many barriers against the outside world. The Moon is in Abuzene, which is given only to certain harmful purposes. Its position is just 5 minutes from the start of the Picatrixian Via Combusta, and within the area so described by Lilly. It is noteworthy that Mars is on the MC, followed by Saturn and Pluto, and that Neptune contacts six planets. As this is a night time chart the Sun is obviously below the horizon; conventional wisdom among electional astrologers

working in the western system is that noon is the best possible time, placing the Sun on the MC.

Lunar Mansions in The Picatrix (1256 AD Translation)

The planetary rulers are those for the days of the week. The whole list repeats every four weeks, as each mansion covers the average daily motion of the Moon.

No.	Name	Position (to nearest minute)	Planetary Ruler
1	Alnath	0 Aries	Sun
2	Albotain	12.51 Aries	Moon
3	Azoraya	25.43 Aries	Mars
4	Aldebaran	8.34 Taurus	Mercury
5	Almices	21.26 Taurus	Jupiter
6	Athaya	4.17 Gemini	Venus
7	Aldirah	17.9 Gemini	Saturn
8	Annathra	0 Cancer	Sun
9	Atarf	12.51 Cancer	Moon
10	Algebha	25.43 Cancer	Mars
11	Azobra	8.34 Leo	Mercury
12	Acarfa	21.26 Leo	Venus
14	Azimech	17.9 Virgo	Saturn
15	Argafra	0 Libra	Sun
16	Azubene	12.51 Libra	Moon
17	Alichil	25.43 Libra	Mars
18	Alcalb	8.34 Scorpio	Mercury
19	Exaula	21.26 Scorpio	Jupiter
20	Nahaym	4.17 Sagittarius	Venus
21	Elbelda	17.9 Sagittarius	Saturn
22	Caadaldeba	0 Capricorn	Sun
23	Caadebolach	12.51 Capricorn	Moon
24	Caadacohot	25.43 Capricorn	Mars
25	Caadalhacbia	8.34 Aquarius	Mercury
26	Almiquedam	21.26 Aquarius	Jupiter
27	Algarf Almuehar	4.17 Pisces	Venus
28	Arrexhe	17.9 Pisces	Saturn

Further details of the system are included in Vivian E Robson's "The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology"¹⁴. The list given in chapter 3 of that book must be renumbered from the beginning of the zodiac in order to correlate it with the Mansions in this article.

Lunar Mansions in The Picatrix (1256 AD Translation)

No.	Picatrix Name	Arabic Name	Meaning
1	Alnath	Al Sharatain	The Two Signs
2	Albotain	Al Butain	The Belly
3	Azoraya	Al Thurayya	The Many Little Ones
4	Aldebaran	Al Dabaran	The Follower
5	Almices	Al Hak'ah	A White Spot
6	Athaya	Al Hanah	A Brand or Mark
7	Aldirah	Al Dhira	The Forearm
8	Annathra	Al Nathrah	The Gap or Crib
9	Atarf	Al Tarf	The Glance of the Lion's Eye
10	Algebha	Al Jabhah	The Forehead
11	Azobra	Al Zubrah	The Mane of the Lion
12	Acarfa	Al Sarfah	The Changer of the Weather
13	Alahue	Al Awwa	The Barker
14	Azimech	Al Simak	The Unarmed
15	Argafra	Al Ghafr	The Covering
16	Azubene	Al Jubana	The Claws
17	Alichil	Iklil Al Jabhah	The Crown of the Forehead
18	Alcalb	Al Kalb	The Heart
19	Exaula	Al Shaula	The Sting
20	Nahaym	Al Na'am	The Ostriches
21	Elbelda	Al Baldah	The City or District
22	Caadaldeba	Al Sad Al Dhabih	The Lucky One of The Slaughterers
23	Caadebolach	Al Sad Al Bulah	The Good Fortune of The Swallower
24	Caadacohot	Al Sad Al Su'ud	The Luckiest of the Lucky
25	Caadalhachbia	Al Sad Al Ahbiya	The Lucky Star of Hidden Things
26	Almiquedam	Al Farch Al Mukdim	The Forespout of the Waterbucket
27	Algarf Almuehar	Al Fargh Al Thani	The Lower Spout of the Waterbucket

28	Arrexhe	Al Batn al Hut	The Belly of the Fish
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Each mansion is 12 degrees 51 minutes and 26 seconds. There are four groups of seven mansions, starting at 0 degrees of each Cardinal sign. They equate roughly with the Hindu nakshatras and Chinese manazils. The positions start at the Vernal Equinox (the Aries point) using the tropical (Western) zodiac, not sidereal, but were originally derived from the sidereal positions. The Arabic names are sometimes derived from zodiacal constellations found in the mansions, e.g. the Lion's Glance, Forehead and Mane are found in Leo, the Claws in Libra relate to Scorpio, the Sting is found at the end of Scorpio and the Belly of the Fish at the end of Pisces.

Table of Intentions

Purpose	Mansion Numbers in Picatrix Book 1, Ch 4
To go safely on a Journey	1,8
To take medicine	1
To make a servant flee	1
To dig streams, wells	2,15
To find lost treasure	2,15
To have plenty of corn	2
To strengthen prisons	2,3,8,10,20,26,28
To save and protect sailors at sea	3,7,14,17
To accomplish works of alchemy	3
All works done with fire	3
To put love between spouses	3,5,17,24,28
To make master shrink back from servant	4
To set boys to learn skills	5
To safeguard travellers	5,19,20,21,26,28
To improve buildings	5,10,11,17,18,21,25,26
To bring friendship	6,7,8,10,14,17,23,26
To increase trade and profit	7,11,13,21,24,27,28
To increase crops	7,12,13,19,21,28
To expel flies	7
To gain favour of Kings, authorities	7,13
To expel mice and bugs	8
To protect from another man's claims	9
To promote love between man and woman	10,14,17

To release captives	11,13,18
To travel safely in hot places	11,13
To increase the wealth of allies	11
To help allies, authorities, captives and servants	12
To heal the sick by drugs, medicines	14,22,23,27
To destroy lust	14
To improve the luck of kings	14
To scatter your enemies	15
To help the deceived	17
To tame wild and vicious beasts	20
For people you want to come to you	20
For allying good men with each other	20,22,23,27
For soldiers to report victory	24

References

1. See Between Ghaya and Picatrix - The Spanish Version, D Pingree, Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 44 (1981), 27-56.
2. See Alchemy, published by Pelican Books.
3. See e.g. River, "The Knot of Time".
4. See R. Graves, "The White Goddess" and C and L Murray, "The Celtic Tree Oracle".
5. See the recent concise edition by Gilbert, co-author with Bauval of "The Orion Mystery", or the four volume edition by W Scott.
6. Studies of the Warburg Institute Vol.39 Picatrix the Latin Version of the Ghayat Al-Hakim, 1986, edited in two parts by D Pingree.
7. See passim D Pingree, Some Sources of the Ghayat Al-Hakim, Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 43 (1980) 1-15.
8. Lunar Astrology, English translation, published by ASI in 1974 p.61.
9. La Philosophie Occulte, p.354.
10. Volguine at p.124 gives some fascinating practical examples, e.g. German astrologers suffered disastrous persecution on June 9, 1941, when the Moon was in Mansion XX. However, other factors must have played a part as this event was unique.
11. Information supplied by Annabella Kitson.
12. See "Horary Astrology Rediscovered". Note that Elizabeth inherited the throne in 1558 but was not crowned until the following year.

13. See “Perfect Timing” and “The Book of World Horoscopes” respectively, published by Aquarian Press.
14. Weiser, 1979.

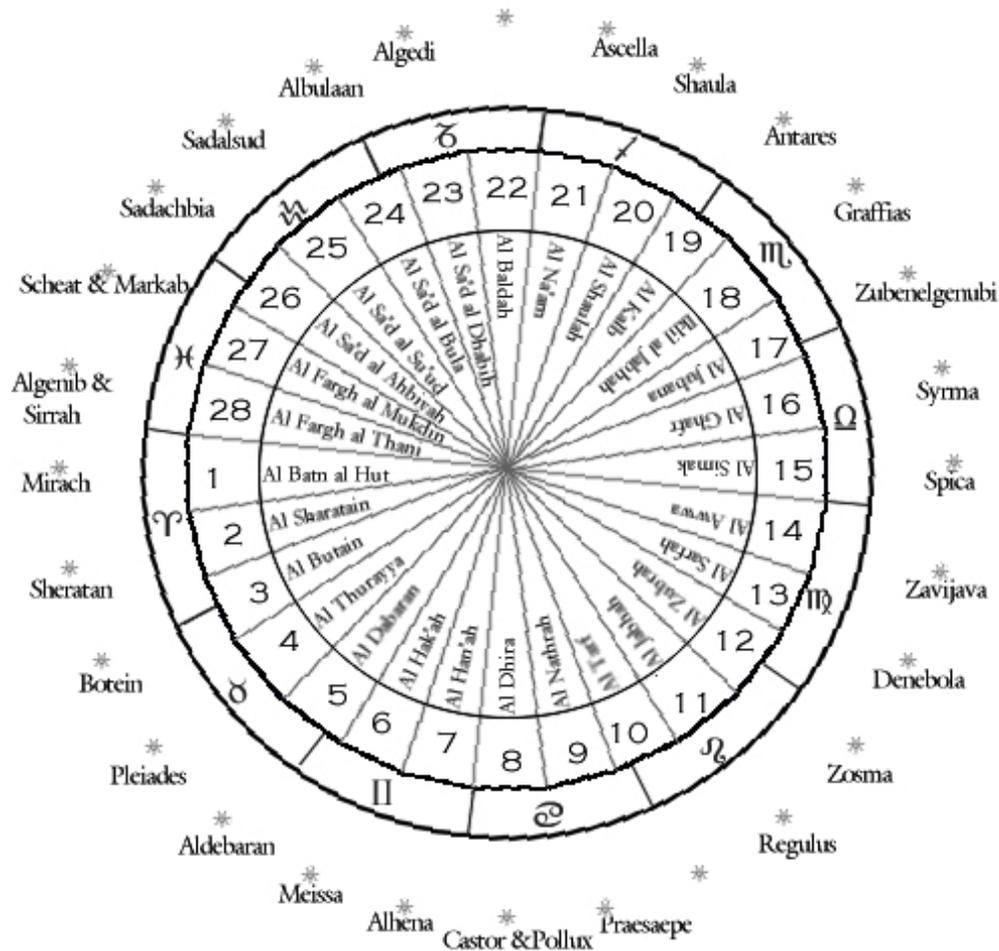
VII. W. B. Yeats and "A Vision:" The Arab Mansions of the Moon

Neil Mann

The treatment of the Yeatses and the Mansions does not come at the beginning of this section, since some background is useful before looking at their possible interest in this area of astrology. The page is arranged as follows:

- 1. an overview of the rationale for the Mansions of the Moon, in the Introduction;
- 2. an outline of the Arabian system of the Mansions, both
 - as a practical astrological system, drawing on the Indian and Hellenistic traditions of astrology, and giving Abenragel's List of the Mansions
 - and as a mystical system for arranging spiritual knowledge, using Ibn 'Arabi's List of the Mansions.
- 3. What we know about the Yeatses' approach to the matter of the Mansions and what might have been available to them, including George Yeats's List of the Mansions, and further general observations on the confusing situation they faced.
- 4. A look at the symbolic and talismanic images associated with the Mansions, along with H. C. Agrippa's List of the Mansions.

I do not speak or read Arabic and the materials here are drawn from a variety of sources with different conventions of transliteration...



Introduction

The Arabic Mansions of the Moon, and one version of their alignment with the Zodiac. The fixed stars outside the circles are the traditional marker stars associated with each Mansion, and they often share a name, although the star names have been altered through European adoption (two Mansions do not contain any prominent stars). Because of the linkage with the fixed stars, which change their positions with respect to the Sun's equinoxes with precession, there has been a greater tendency to treat the Mansions as sidereal than tropical, or to shift the Mansion which is regarded as the first one in accordance with the shift of the Vernal Equinox (see below). The alignment given here is based on a list made by George Yeats, but using the Arabic names from Vivian Robson, *The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology* (YL 1772). This takes the first Mansion as *Al Batn al Hut* (the Belly of the Fish), but in mediaeval times *Al Sharatain* (the Two Signs) was usually taken as the first, and anciently the first was *Al Thurayya* (the Many Little Ones, the Pleiades); see the Shifting Mansions below.

Like the Sun, the Moon appears to go around the circle of the Zodiac, though its circuit lasts a month (of 27.32 days) rather than a year (see astronomy). The twenty-eight Mansions of the Moon divide the Zodiac in the same way as the twelve Signs of the Zodiac, marking out sectors of the circle of the sky, though, since the number of degrees in a circle, 360°, is not neatly divisible by 28, their span is an awkward 12°51'25.7" (a 364 degree circle would be neater). It is thought that the lunar system of division may predate the solar Zodiac at least as rough sectors, since the stars remain largely visible, and the Moon's apparent motion against the background is clearly noticeable from night to night. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* which Yeats had (1911 edition, YL 629) notes that the lunation cycle (the Moon's synodic cycle, from the Greek *synodos*, meeting, conjunction) is the reason for dividing the Sun's annual cycle into twelve, while the lunar Mansions derive from the Moon's own motion:

The *synodical* revolution of the moon laid down the lines of the solar, its *sidereal* revolution those of the lunar zodiac. The first was a circlet of "full moons"; the second marked the diurnal stages of the lunar progress round the sky, from and back again to any star. The moon was the earliest "measurer" both of time and space; but its services can scarcely have been rendered available until stellar "milestones" were established at suitable points along its path. Such were the Hindu *nakshatras*, a word originally signifying stars in general, but appropriated to designate certain small stellar groups marking the divisions of the lunar track.

— "Zodiac", *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 28, 995.

Since the Moon's sidereal revolution is 27.32 days, the number of Mansions has been approximated as both 27 and 28: in the most commonly used Indian system, there are 27 *nakshatras*, while 28 divisions are used in the Arabic and Chinese systems, as well as an older Indian system. (For a comparative table of the stars involved in lunar Mansion systems from Babylon, Arabia, India and China, drawn up by David B. Kelley, [click here](#), and for a consideration of the origins of the Mansions, in India and China, see Philip Yampolsky, "The Origin of the Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions", *Osiris* IX [Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger B.V., 1950; 1984] 62-83.)

The Arabic Mansions of the Moon

The term 'Mansion of the Moon' or 'Station of the Moon' is the usual translation into English, via the Latin (*mansio*, dwelling, and *statio*, position or abode), of the Arabic term *manzil al-qamar* (plural *manâzil*; station, resting-place of the Moon, more after

the manner of a camel train than an actual dwelling, certainly not a grand one). The Arabs are thought to have taken a local pre-Islamic weather-predicting system of *anwa*, based on the star groups which rose just ahead of the Sun at a given time of the year, and to have combined it with the Mansion system of the *nakshatras* from Indian astrology. On the origins of the Arab system, see Giuseppe Bezza, “Du Calendrier naturel à l’Astrologie. Quelques observations sur la prévision du temps dans la littérature arabe du Moyen Age”, *Actes du V Séminaire Maroco-Italien* (Cosenza: Unesco, 1999).

In *A Vision A*, Yeats notes that the number of his Phases ‘is that of the Arabic Mansions of the Moon but they are used merely as a method of classification and for simplicity of classification their symbols are composed in an entirely arbitrary way’ (*AVA* 12). Despite this dismissal, and despite the fact that Yeats is dealing with phases rather than the path of the Moon, there are lingering elements that seem to go beyond just classification. In another piece of ‘classification not symbolism’ (*AVB* 196), Yeats fits his Phases of the Moon to the months of the year and therefore to the solar Zodiac, on the basis that all cycles are linked in some way to each other (see *Making Twenty-Eight Twelve*). Although the phases of the Moon, which follow the synodic cycle of 29.53 days and cover more than 360°, are separate from and independent of the Moon’s sidereal position (for more, see the Lunar Cycle), the two are inevitably linked in the mind of the observer, so that there is a strong impulse to bring the cycle of the phases together with the Mansions of the Moon, particularly on the part of artists and those who do not need to be too accurate or practical in their reckoning. Indeed, within artistic and symbolic representations, as opposed to astronomical and astrological, the various cycles are almost always superimposed on each other.

The twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet and the symbolic significance of the Moon in Islam, particularly the crescent Moon, give the Mansions a particular significance in Arabic astrology. It is through the Arabs that Hellenistic astrology, including that of the Hermetic Corpus, and Indian astrology, along with the positional number system, were transmitted to the Europeans during the Middle Ages. During the great efflorescence of Islamic translation and science, roughly from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries CE, there were many writers in Arabic on astrology, and almost all include some treatment of the lunar Mansions, usually derived ultimately from the Hellenistic system of Dorotheos of Sidon (Dorotheus Sidonius; first century CE) influenced by the Indian *nakshatras*. Much of the material, but by no means all, was translated into Latin during the European Middle Ages, usually in Spain, where Islam and Christendom met, along with Judaism. The most frequently cited authors include: Mâshâ’allâh ibn Atari (Messahalla; fl. 800 CE), Abû ‘Ali al-Khayyat (Albohali; 770-835 CE), Abû Ma’shar (Albumasar; ca. 786-885 CE),

Al-Qalandar (Archandam, Alchandreus; identity uncertain), Al-Kindî (Alkindus; 795–865 CE), Al-Farghânî (Alfraganus; fl. 840 CE), Al-Qabisi (Alcabitius; d. 967 CE), ‘Alî ibn abi ‘r-Rijâl (Haly Abenragel, fl. 1020 CE), Al-Birûnî (Alberuni; 973–1048 CE).

Also probably from Spain, and certainly in its present form, is an Arabic text called *Ghâyat al-Hakîm*, ‘The Goal of the Wise’, known in Europe by the name of its declared author as *Picatrix*, a grimoire with a powerful reputation and disordered structure.

The table below summarises the lists of the Mansions of the Moon given in a Latin translation of ‘Alî ibn abi ‘r-Rijâl, *Albohazen Haly Fīlii Abenragel libri de iudiciis astrorum, summa cura ... latinitati donati, per Antonium Stupam*, published in printed form by Henricus Petrus in Basel in 1551 (pp. 342–46; an earlier version was published in Venice in 1503). The topics are rearranged slightly and kept in semi-note form for brevity. The focus is almost entirely on ‘catarchic’ astrology, that is the selection of propitious times to begin things and, with respect to what is favoured by the Moon’s position in the various Mansions, Abenragel’s list is a summary of Indian and Hellenistic traditions rather than an exposition of Arabian astrology or any ideas of his own. The enterprises involved vary from the important to the trivial, from marriage to when to put on new clothes, and Dorotheos also comments on the outcome of processes started involuntarily under a particular Mansion, such as captivity. Certain enterprises are favoured and others particularly cautioned against depending on the Moon’s position, though, for good fortune in the ventures favoured by a Mansion, the Moon must also be free from bad aspects from other planets. Some elements seem to be influenced by the Zodiac sign (interestingly Virgo seems to favour marriage with non-virgins), and characteristics often repeat for two or more consecutive Mansions. It is interesting that in European adoption the practice seems to have moved away somewhat from the deciding when to start a venture to focus more on magical operations and the making of talismans, although the matters favoured may be similar. This seems more superstitious in some respects, but it also takes the burden off waiting for the appropriate time to do something, as long as the talisman has been made at the right time. The lists here are incidentally a fascinating side-light on the possible pre-occupations of their period, though probably more the time of the original sources, than of ‘Alî ibn abi ‘r-Rijal himself, or of the Latin translators. Certain things like when to have a haircut and put on new clothes seem strangely unimportant, while Dorotheos’ terms of reference, in particular, are very much those of a male, slave-owning soldier, in danger of capture.

The Mansions of the Moon according to Abenragel (ca. 1000 CE)				
<i>Elections according to the Moon in the Mansions</i>				
	Name given & Arabic name	starting degree	Indian opinion	Dorotheos
1	Ilmath <i>Al Sharatain</i>	0° 0' 0" Aries	Good for taking medicines, pasturing livestock, making journey, except second hour	Good for buying tame animals, for journeys, especially voyages, for making arms, planting trees, cutting hair or nails, putting on new clothes. Bad for contracting marriage (holds for Moon in Aries), making partnerships, or buying slaves, who will be bad, disobedient or run away. If captured, prison will be bad and strong.
2	Albethain <i>Al Butain</i>	12° 11' 26" Aries	Good for sowing and making journeys.	Bad for marriage, buying slaves, and for boats and prisoners similar to Almath
3	Athoraie <i>Al Thurayya</i>	25° 22' 52" Aries	Good for trading and revenge on enemies; indifferent for travel.	Good for buying tame animals and hunting, for all matters involving fire, and for doing good. Bad for marriage, and making partnerships, especially with those more powerful. Bad for buying cattle or flocks, for planting trees, sowing or putting on new clothes. If captured, prison will be strong and long. Water journeys will bring fear and danger.
4	Addaunnam <i>Al Dabaran</i>	8° 34' 18" Taurus	Good for sowing, for putting on new clothes, for receiving women and feminine things, for demolishing a building or starting a new one, for making a journey, except for third part of day.	Good to build a house, which will be solid, and building in general, to dig a ditch, to buy slaves, who will be loyal and honest, and to buy livestock. Also good to be with kings and lords, for receiving power or honours. Bad to contract marriage, since woman will prefer another, or to enter partnerships, especially with those more powerful. Voyages will involve big waves. If captured, the captivity will be long but, if captured for skills, will be released through goodwill.
5	Alhathaya <i>Al Hak'ah</i>	21° 45' 44" Taurus	Good for contracting marriage, for putting boys to study laws, scriptures or writing, for making medicines, for making a journey.	Good for buying slaves, who will be good and loyal, for building, for travel by water, for washing head, indeed general washing, and cutting hair. Bad for partnerships. If captured, imprisonment will be long, unless captured for skills, when he will escape.
6	Alhana/Atabuen <i>Al Han'ah</i>	4° 17' 10" Gemini	Good for kings to declare war, enrollment of armies and cavalry, for knights seeking better pay, for the successful siege of a city, for smiting enemies and evildoers. Bad for sowing, seeking a loan, or burial.	Good for partnerships and ventures, associates will agree and be honest and loyal, for hunting, for journeys by water, though delays. Bad for taking medicine and for treating wounds. New clothes put on will soon tear. If captured, release within three days or very long imprisonment.
7	Addirach <i>Al Dhira</i>	17° 36' 36" Gemini	Good for ploughing and sowing, for putting on new clothes, for women's jewellery, for cavalry. Bad for journeys, except in last third of night.	Good for partnerships, which will be good and useful, with loyal and agreeable associates, for washing head, cutting hair and new clothes, for buying slaves and livestock, for smiting or making peace with enemies,

				for voyages towards destination, but delays on return. Bad for buying land, and for giving up medicine. If captured, unless he escapes in three days, he will die in prison. Likewise, if he has escaped something he fears, he will encounter it again.
8	Aluayra <i>Al Nathra</i>	0° 0' 0" Cancer	Good for taking medicine, for cutting new clothes, for women's jewellery and putting it on. Rain will bring benefit not damage. Bad for travel, except for last third of night.	Good for voyages, swift on outward and return journeys. Marriages contracted will be harmonious for a while, then discordant. A slave bought will deceitful, accuse his master, and run away. A partnership started will involve fraud on either side. If captured, long imprisonment.
9	Attraaif <i>Al Tarf</i>	12° 11' 26" Cancer	Bad for sowing, journeys, entrusting anything to anyone, or seeking to harm anyone.	Good for voyages, outward and return, for reinforcing doors and making locks, for making beds and putting up bed-curtains, for transplanting wheat. Bad for partnerships, which will involve fraud on either side. Bad for cutting hair, or new clothes. Putting on new clothes may lead to drowning in them. If captured, long imprisonment.
10	Algebhe <i>Al Jabhah</i>	25° 22' 52" Cancer	Good for contracting marriage, for sugar and what is made with it. Bad for journeys and entrusting anything, for putting on new clothes or for women's jewellery.	Good for buildings, which will last, and for partnerships, benefiting all parties. If captured, at the command of a leader or because of great deed, and long, hard imprisonment.
11	Azobrach <i>Al Zubrah</i>	8° 34' 18" Leo	Good for sowing and planting, for besieging. Indifferent for trade and journeys. Bad for freeing captives.	Good for buildings and foundations, which will last, and for partnerships, from which associates will gain. Good for cutting hair. Bad for new clothes. If captured, at the command of a leader, and long imprisonment
12	Azarfa <i>Al Sarfah</i>	21° 45' 44" Leo	Good for starting all building, for arranging lands, sowing and planting, for marriage, for putting on new clothes, for women's jewellery, for making a journey in the first third of day.	Good for buying slaves and livestock, once the Moon is out of Leo, since the Lion is a great devourer. (If he eats a lot it leads to stomach pains, power, boldness and obstinacy.) What is lent will not be returned, or only with great effort and delay. Voyages will be long, hard and dangerous, but not fatal.
13	Aloce <i>Al Awwa</i>	4° 17' 10" Virgo	Good to plough, sow, make a journey, marry, free captives.	Good to buy a slave, who will be good, loyal and honest, to start building, to give oneself to pleasures and jokes, to come before a king or famous man, to take medicines, to cut new clothes, to wash or cut hair. Not bad to marry a corrupted woman, and, if marrying a virgin, the marriage will last a while. A voyage undertaken will involve delay in return. If captured, he will be injured in prison, but captivity will end well.
14	Azimech <i>Al Simak</i>	17° 36' 36" Virgo	Good for marrying a woman who is not a virgin, for medicines, sowing and planting. Bad for journeys or entrusting something to someone.	Good to start a voyage and a partnership, which will be profitable and harmonious, to buy a slave, who will be good, honest and respectful. Marriage with a virgin will not last long, and

				it is not bad to marry a corrupted woman. If captured, he will soon escape or be released.
15	Algarf <i>Al Ghafr</i>	0° 0' 0" Libra	Good to dig wells and ditches, to cure illnesses to do with wind, but not others. Bad for journeys.	Good for moving house, for adapting or preparing a house, its owner and site. Good to seek to do a good deed, to buy and sell, but selling slaves not livestock, because Libra is a human sign. Bad for both land and sea journeys. Marriage will not last in harmony, or only for a while. Partnerships entered will lead to fraud and discord. Money lent will not be returned. Bad for cutting hair.
16	Azebone <i>Al Jubana</i>	12° 11' 26" Libra	Bad for journeys, trade, medicines, sowing, women's jewellery, for cutting or putting on new clothes.	A slave bought will be good, loyal and honest. Bad for marriage, which will only last in harmony for a while, for partnerships, which will lead to dishonesty and mutual suspicion. If captured, he will soon be out of prison, if God wills.
17	Alidil <i>Ikilil al Jabhah</i>	25° 22' 52" Libra	Good to buy flocks and livestock, to change their pasture, to put on new jewellery and besiege towns.	Good for starting building, which will be solid and durable, for settling a dispute between two people, to foster love, and love begun will be absolutely solid and last for ever. Good for all medicine. Voyages started will bring anxiety and sorrows, but he will survive. Partnerships started will bring discord, and he who marries, will find his wife impure. Bad for selling slaves or cutting hair.
18	Alcalb <i>Al Kalb</i>	8° 34' 18" Scorpio	Good for building, for arranging lands and buying them, for receiving honours and power. If it begins to rain, it will be wholesome, useful and good. Eastwards journeys are favoured.	Building undertaken will be solid. Good for planting and taking medicines. If a man gets married and the Mars is with the Moon here, he will find her not to be a virgin. If he enters a ship he will come out again. Bad for selling slaves, new clothes, cutting hair. Partnerships will result in discord.
19	Yenla <i>Al Shaula</i>	21° 45' 44" Scorpio	Good for besieging towns and encampments, for disputing against enemies, for making a journey, for sowing and for planting trees. Bad for entrusting something to somebody.	If a man gets married, he will find her not to be a virgin. Bad for voyages, which will end in shipwreck, for partnerships, which will be discordant, for selling slaves, and very bad for a captive.
20	Alimain <i>Al Na'am</i>	4° 17' 10" Sagittarius	Good for buying animals. Rain will be good and do no harm. Indifferent for journeys.	Good for buying small animals. Bad for partnerships and captivity.
21	Albeda <i>Al Baldah</i>	17° 36' 36" Sagittarius	Good for starting any building, for sowing, for buying lands or livestock, for buying and making women's jewellery and clothes. Indifferent for journeys.	A woman who is divorced or widowed will not marry again. Indifferent for slaves bought, since they will think much of themselves and will not humble themselves to their masters.
22	Sahaddadebe <i>Al Sa'd al Dhabih</i>	0° 0' 0" Capricorn	Good for medicine and journeys, except for last third of day. Good for putting on new clothes.	Good for entering a partnership, which will bring profit and usefulness, and for entering a ship, though there will be great anxieties from a strong desire to return and the like. A man who becomes engaged will break the engagement before the wedding and die

				within six months, or the couple will be in conflict and live badly, with the wife mistreating the husband. Bad for buying slaves, who will do ill to their master, or run away, or be irksome or bad. If captured, he will soon gain freedom.
23	Zadebolal <i>Al Sa'd al Bula</i>	12° 11' 26" Capricorn	Good for medicine, for putting on new jewellery and clothes, for a journey in the middle third of day. Bad to entrust something to someone.	Good for partnerships. Bad for marriage, since wife will mistreat husband and they will not be together much, for entering a ship, if a short voyage is wanted, for buying slaves. If captured, he will soon regain liberty.
24	Zaadescod <i>Al Sa'd al Su'ud</i>	25° 22' 52" Capricorn	Good for medicine, sending out armies and soldiers. Indifferent for journeys. Bad for merchandise, jewellery, putting on new clothes, marrying.	A slave bought will be strong, loyal and good. Bad for partnerships, which will end in great harm and conflict, and for entering a ship. Marriage will only last a while. If captured, he will soon be free.
25	Sadalabbia <i>Al Sa'd al Ahbiyah</i>	8° 34' 18" Aquarius	Good for besieging towns and encampments, for going into a quarrel, for pursuing enemies and doing them harm, for sending messengers. Favours journeys southwards. Bad for marriage, for sowing, for merchandise, for buying livestock.	Good for buying slaves, who will be strong, loyal and good, for building, which will be solid and durable, and for voyages, though there will be delays. Marriage will only last for a while. Bad for partnerships, which will end badly and harmfully, and a slave will escape.
26	Fargalmocaden <i>Al Fargh al Mukdim</i>	21° 45' 44" Aquarius	Good for making a journey in the first third of the day, but the rest is good for neither journeys nor any other beginning.	Good for building, which will be solid and durable, for buying a slave, who will be loyal and good, for entering a ship, though there will be delays. Bad for partnerships. Marriage will not last. If captured, he will be in prison for a long time.
27	Alfargamahar <i>Al Fargh al Thani</i>	4° 17' 10" Pisces	Good for sowing, and useful for trading. Good for marriage. Indifferent for journeys, except for middle third of night when very bad. Bad for entrusting something to someone, or lending anything.	If starting a partnership, it will begin well but end in harm and conflict. Entering a ship will bring damage, dangers and travails. A slave bought will be bad. If captured, he will not leave prison.
28	Bathnealoth <i>Al Batn al Hut</i>	17° 36' 36" Pisces	Good for trade, sowing and medicines. Good for marriage. Indifferent for journeys, except for middle third of night when bad. Bad for entrusting something to someone, or lending anything.	A partnership started will begin well but end badly. A slave bought will be bad, irascible and very proud. If captured, he will not leave prison.

Johannes Hispalensis translated a good number of Arabian sources on astrology, and gives his own summary of all these works in *Epitome Totius Astrologiae* (written ca. 1142); he also gives the Indians and Dorotheos as his authorities for the Mansions, and the meanings are largely in accordance with Abenragel's reports. We know that the Yeateses were referred to this book (see *The Yeateses and the Mansions* for this and further consideration of mediaeval Latin sources).

Mystical Astrology

A very different approach is seen in an influential system of correspondences constructed by the Sufi Master, Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, who was born in Murcia, in the Arab Spain of Al-Andalus, in 1165 and died in Damascus in 1240 CE (a life-span that pre-dates Yeats's [1865-1939] by 700 years almost exactly). Ibn 'Arabi's exposition is one of mystical symbolism rather than practical astrology, using the Mansions to organise a chain of being from the uncreated first cause through levels of celestial manifestation and the elemental world to man and the process of hierarchy itself. The cosmos expounded gives a theoretical explanation of the tropical system of the Zodiac, placing the Towers of the Zodiac in the Sphere of the Starless Sky, above that of the Sphere of the Fixed Stars, and below the Sphere of the Divine Pedestal and the Sphere of the Divine Throne. Effectively he, therefore, gives the equinoxes precedence over the precession of the stars, and ties the First Point of Aries to the Vernal Equinox, which is seen as closer to the first movers than the 'fixed' stars.

According to Titus Burckhardt's summary of Ibn 'Arabi's ideas, drawn from a variety of his works in *Mystical Astrology According to Ibn 'Arabi*, the true start of the Mansions appears to correspond with the Moon's Ascending Node (see the Draconic Cycle), but for symbolic purposes it is aligned with the Vernal Equinox. Ibn 'Arabi gives a series of correspondences with Divine Names or Attributes, as well as the hierarchy of creation and the alphabet and, with respect to the alphabet, asserts that 'It is not like people think, that the Mansions of the Moon represent the models of the letters; it is the 28 sounds which determine the lunar mansions' (Burckhardt, 35). (See the Ibn 'Arabi Society's site for more detail, and Burckhardt.) The sequence given here appears in *The Revelation of Mecca*, but the names of the Mansions are not given, so I have taken them from Vivian Robson, *The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology*, which follows a looser convention of transcription.

The Mansions of the Moon according to Ibn 'Arabi (ca. 1200)						
	[name]	meaning	from	attribution	letter	Divine Attribute
1	Al Sharatain	The Two Signs	0° Aries	The First Intellect, the Pen	Hamza & Alef	Divine Essence
2	Al Butain	The Belly of Aries	12°51'22" Aries	The Universal Soul, the Preserved Tablet	Hâ' (unstressed h)	The One Who Calls Forth
3	Al Thurayya	The Many Little Ones	25°42'51" Aries	Universal Nature	'Ayn	The Interior
4	Al Dabaran	The Follower	8°34'17" Taurus	Universal Substance, <i>prima materia</i>	Hâ (stressed h)	The Last
5	Al Hak'ah	The White Spot	21°25'40" Taurus	Universal Body	Ghayn (gh)	The Manifest

6	Al Han'ah	The Mark	4°17'09" Gemini	Form	Khâ (kh)	The Wise
7	Al Dhira	The forearm	17°08'34" Gemini	The Throne	Qâf (q)	The All- Encompassing
8	Al Nathra	The Gap or Crib	0° Cancer	The Footstool	Kâf (k)	The Grateful
9	Al Tarf	The Glance	12°51'22" Cancer	The Self-Existing Ultimate Sphere, the Starless Sky, the Zodiacal Towers	Jîm (j)	The Independent, the Rich
10	Al Jabhah	The Forehead	25°42'51" Cancer	The Sky of the Fixed Stars, the Sphere of the Stations, the Sun of Paradise, the Roof of Hell	Shîn (sh)	The Powerful
11	Al Zubrah	The Mane	8°34'17" Leo	The First Heaven, the Sphere of Saturn, the Sky of the Visited House and Lotus of the Extreme Limit, the Abode of Ibrahim (Abraham)	Yâ (y/i)	The Lord
12	Al Sarfah	The Changer	21°25'40" Leo	The Second Heaven, the Sphere of Jupiter, the Abode of Musa (Moses)	Dâd (stressed d)	The Knowing
13	Al Awwa	The Barker	4°17'09" Virgo	The Third Heaven, the Sphere of Mars, the Abode of Harun (Aaron)	Lâm (l)	The Victorious
14	Al Simak	The Unarmed	17°08'34" Virgo	The Fourth Heaven, the Sphere of the Sun, the Abode of Idris (Enoch, Hermes)	Nûn (n)	The Light
15	Al Ghafr	The Cover	0° Libra	The Fifth Heaven, the Sphere of Venus, the Abode of Yusuf (Joseph)	Râ (r)	The Form-Giver
16	Al Jubana	The Claws	12°51'22" Libra	The Sixth Heaven, the Sphere of Mercury, the Abode of 'Isa (Jesus)	Tâ (stressed t)	The Numberer
17	Iklil al Jabhah	The Crown of the Forehead	25°42'51" Libra	The Seventh Heaven, the Sphere of the Moon, the Abode of Adam	Dâl (d)	The Evident
18	Al Kalb	The Heart	8°34'17" Scorpio	The Sphere of Ether, Meteors and Fire	Tâ (unstressed t)	The Seizer
19	Al Shaula	The Sting	21°25'40" Scorpio	Air	Zây (z)	The Living One
20	Al Na'am	The Ostriches	4°17'09" Sagittarius	Water	Sîn (s)	The Life-Giver
21	Al Baldah	The City	17°08'34" Sagittarius	Earth	Sâd (stressed s)	The Death-Giver
22	Al Sa'd al Dhabih	The Fortune of the Slayers	0° Capricorn	Minerals and Metals	Zâ (stressed z)	The Precious
23	Al Sa'd al Bula	The Fortune of the Swallower	12°51'22" Capricorn	Plants	Thâ (th)	The Nourisher
24	Al Sa'd al Su'ud	The Fortune of the Fortunate	25°42'51" Capricorn	Animals	Dhâl (dh)	The Humbler
25	Al Sa'd al Ahbiyah	The Fortune of the Hidden	8°34'17" Aquarius	The Angels	Fâ (f)	The Strong
26	Al Fargh al Mukdim	The First Spout	21°25'40" Aquarius	The Jinn	Bâ (b)	The Subtle

27	Al Fargh al Thani	The Second Spout	4°17'09" Pisces	Humanity	Mîm (m)	The Uniter
28	Al Batn al Hut	The Belly of the Fish	17°08'34" Pisces	The Hierarchy of the Degrees of Existence, not their manifestation	Wâw (w/û)	The One Who Elevates by Degrees

The movement away from Divine Essence in the First stage passes through stages of universal Archetypes and reaches the highest levels of celestial manifestation at stages Seven and Eight around the Summer Solstice, the spheres beyond the manifest cosmos. The planetary sequence starts with Saturn and the Sun is at the central point of this sequence, corresponding with the equinoctial point of Libra. Earth represents the most solid simple element, and is placed at the Winter Solstice, after which come the mixed forms, with a form of ascent.

Although it is unlikely that Yeats would have known about Ibn 'Arabi's schema, there are some interesting parallels in the hierarchy or cycle outlined, in particular with the placement of the Divine Essence with the First Mansion, and the Light with the opposite point.

All the same, Yeats was certainly interested enough in Arabian wisdom to concoct an elaborate story involving Michael Robartes and the Judwalis in the first version of *A Vision*, locating the adventures at various places in Arabia and Ottoman Palestine, as well as giving one of the supposed origins of the System to a Syriac Christian at the Caliph's court in Baghdad, Kusta ben Luka, a translator from the ninth century CE.

The Yeatses and the Mansions

As the schema of the twenty-eight **phases** of the Moon first began to emerge in the Automatic Script at the end of November 1917 the Yeatses must have been intrigued by the possibility that they bore some relation to the twenty-eight **Mansions** of the Moon from Arabic astrology. Only three days after the first appearance of the '28 days of [Moon]', the Automatic Script features the term 'The 28 mansions' (*YVP* 119) in one of George's answers on 25 November 1917 and in a subsequent question on that day Yeats was wrestling with the problem that one solar day 'which equals one mansion of moon would represent one incarnation & time after', in other words the period between lives (*YVP* 120). On the 30 November George's reply to the first numbered question contains another name for these divisions of the Zodiac, 'the stations 28 of moon', and Yeats's next question was whether these days 'correspond to the lunar mansions' to which the answer was apparently 'Yes' (*YVP* 126).

We know that the Yeatses did investigate the Mansions to a limited extent at least: George Yeats copied out both a passage from Chaucer's 'Franklin's Tale' and an edited

version of W. W. Skeat's notes to the Oxford edition. Chaucer's Franklin tells of an astrologer friend who helps the love-lorn Aurelius:

<p>He [Aurelius] hym remembered that, upon a day, At Orliens in studie a book he say Of magyk natureel, which his felawe, That was that tyme a bachelor of lawe, Al were he ther to lerne another craft, Hadde prively upon his desk ylaft; Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns Touchynge the eight and twenty mansiouns That longen to the moon—and swich folye As in oure dayes is nat worth a flye,— For hooly chirches feith in oure bileve Ne suffreth noon illusioun us to greve.</p>	<p><i>He remembered that, one day, While studying in Orléans, he had seen a book About natural magic,* which his companion, Who was then a bachelor of law, Even though he was learning another skill, Had privately left on his desk. This book spoke much about the operations Concerning the twenty-eight mansions That belong to the moon—and such folly As nowadays is considered worthless— Since the holy church's faith does not Allow any illusion to harm our belief.</i></p>
<p>‘The Franklin’s Tale’, <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>, Fragment V (Group F) 1123-1133</p>	<p><i>*magic which harnesses the forces of nature, and does not involve invocation of spirits or demons.</i></p>

George Yeats also highlighted a passage from Skeat’s notes with double lines: after directing his reader to Ludwig Ideler’s *Untersuchungen über den Ursprung und die Bedeutung der Sternnamen* (1809) for the positions of the Mansions, Skeat comments that, since Ideler does not give their significance, ‘For the influence of the moon in these mansions, we must look elsewhere, viz. in lib.i. cap. 11, and lib. iv. Cap. 18 of the *Epitome Astrologiae* of Johannes Hispalensis’ (from *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1894], Vol. 5, 392; see *CVA* notes 10). As has been mentioned, the Arabic Mansions had passed into mediaeval European usage through the work of the Spanish translators, especially those of Toledo, and, in his *Epitome Totius Astrologiae* (“The Summary of All Astrology”), Johannes or Joannes Hispalensis (John of Seville) brings together astrological teaching from a variety of sources, including Arab writers, many of whom he had also translated. At some stage the Yeatses must have followed up these references.

Published in printed form in 1548 but dated internally to 1142, the *Epitome* does not give the Arabic names of the Mansions, but it does give the Latin names, and quite a full treatment of their significance according to Dorotheus of Sidon. In the context of mundane astrology, Joannes Hispalensis also quantifies the ‘virtues’ (*virtutes*) of the Moon, by which he means its strength within the figure of a horoscope, according to its **phase**, giving the twelve somewhat unequal ‘portals’ or ‘doors’ (*ianuae*), but he does not assign any further characteristics to them. One other point that could have been of interest to the Yeatses is his method of predicting the year to come, through taking the horoscope of the Moon’s last conjunction or opposition prior to the Sun’s entry into Aries, the New Moon or Full Moon in March.

Another resource which the Yeatses could well have consulted would have been the works of Cornelius Agrippa, in particular his *De Occulta Philosophia*, of which they perhaps already owned a copy (YL 5) and which Yeats certainly knew in J. F.'s English version (1651). Agrippa asserts the importance of the Mansions in his second Book on Celestial Magic stating in Chapter 33, entitled 'Concerning the 28 mansions of the Moon, and the powers of the same', that:

Since the Moon measures the whole Zodiac in the space of twenty-eight days, hence the wise men of the Indians and the most ancient Astrologers granted twenty-eight mansions to the Moon, which are situated in the eighth sphere and which, as Alpharus says, are allotted diverse properties and names from the diverse constellations and stars of the same which are contained in them; while the Moon travels through these it derives differing powers and differing virtues. . . . And in these twenty-eight mansions lie many secrets of the wisdom of the ancients, and through them are worked wonders in all things which are under the circle of the moon. . . .

This chapter gives a list of the Mansions, in the normal, garbled mediaeval form of the Arabic names, the meaning in Latin, their positions and a brief summary of their significance, while a later chapter gives images for each of the Mansions to be used in the manufacture of talismans according to the magical intentions of the maker (see Agrippa's list below). These images are of a similar nature to those which Yeats tried to develop for each of the Phases (see Phase Images), although they are usually very different in detail; however, both combine disparate and strange images, which are sometimes quite violent. For instance, a talisman for revenge and enmity should be made out of red wax when the Moon is in the fourth Mansion (Aldebram or Aldelamen, the eye of the bull), with the image of a soldier on horseback, holding a snake in his right hand, which should then fumigated in incense of red myrrh and storax, while one to aid childbirth and to cure the sick, should be made out of gold with a lion's head on it when the Moon is in the tenth Mansion (Algeliache or Aglebh, the lion's forehead), fumigated with ambergris. The only image which coincides in Yeats's and Agrippa's lists is that of a Janus figure which represents both Yeats's Phase 18 and Agrippa's Mansion 21, Abeda (see the list below).

Giordano Bruno's lists of astrological images, including those of the Mansions, are very similar to Agrippa's. These figures are given not in the context of talismans or magic, since, ostensibly they are part of his mnemonic system; however, in the words

of Frances Yates, the “two books on the art of memory” which he published while resident in Paris “reveal him as a magician”. Much of his more explicit magical writing was in fact not published until long after his death, with *De Magia* only appearing in 1891. The images which appear in *De umbris idearum* (1582) are not exactly the same, but, although there are other sources which he could have used, Agrippa is the most likely, particularly given other echoes elsewhere in his works. Bruno, however, develops and embellishes to a greater or lesser extent from what any sources could offer him. With reference to the examples given above, Bruno gives for the fourth Mansion a soldier on horseback with a snake in his right hand and dragging a black dog with his left, for the tenth a woman in childbirth, in front of whom there is a golden lion and a man in the attitude of a convalescent, and for the twenty-first, two men back to back, each picking up shaved hairs.

Agrippa’s lists of the Mansions of the Moon and their images appear to be derived in turn from the *Picatrix*, possibly the best-known magical text dealing with the Mansions. Although it was only available in manuscript form at the time when Yeats was working, there are copies in Oxford, London and Paris; MacGregor Mathers who ‘had copied many manuscripts on ceremonial magic and doctrine in the British Museum, and was to copy many more in Continental libraries’ (*Au* 183) would almost certainly have known it. The *Picatrix* not only uses the positional Mansions of the Moon (see *Frank Pearce Sturm*, 83-87), considering the role of Yeats’s Kusta ben Luka, he mentioned Arabian philosophers and astrologers, referring to Alkindi, Albumazar, Thebit ben Corat and Rhazes, as well as a manuscript in the Bodleian “entitled The Book of the 28 Images of the Moon and the 28 Mansions and the 54 Angels Who Serve the Images”. He noted that in “the Middle Ages, when Arabian learning was lost, the Images of the Moon became the 28 Judges of Geomantic Divination”. Sturm also claimed very particular knowledge:

I know a deal about this that is in no book, for it comes from the memory of one long dead. For twenty-five years some mind that is not my own has tried to force me to write a certain system of philosophy, but I am not yet convinced that it is worth writing. I used to think that the spirit of a monk, burnt for heresy early in the 12th century was my informant, but I would rather believe him to have been myself in a past life, as I once saw him in a crystal vision, with a tonsured head sticking out of a cowl, in a big gloomy lecture hall. He died with his book in his mind, & now troubles me with his uncompleted task. When I am in that mood I take up a pen and make up sentences out of his book. I have a

whole collection of them, and if I don't call the automatic writing it is not because I don't believe they are.

(*Frank Pearce Sturm*, 85)

Although Sturm was indicating a willingness to delve into Arabian and Mediaeval lunar astrology, as well as his own unquiet spirit's ideas, Yeats seems to have taken little interest.

There are other possible places in which the Yeatses could have found lists of the Mansions, though without any tangible evidence that they did: either Western compilations of Arabic source material, similar to the *Epitome*, such as Guido Bonatti's *Liber introductorius ad iudicia stellarum*, or actual translations of original Arabic works, some, such as that of Abenragel cited above, available in printed form, and others, such as the pseudo-Hermes, only in manuscript. All these writers, though, give very similar lists, most in fact derived ultimately from Dorotheos of Sidon and Indian sources.

There is, however, one final source that they did use, which is significantly different from the others. It is a list of Mansions of the Moon in George Yeats's hand, and was filed with the Automatic Script from 27 June 1918; it is published in George Mills Harper's *The Making of Yeats's "A Vision"* (Appendix C; Vol. 2, 419). As the heading '560. Athanasius Kircher' indicates, the list was derived from a work of the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher, in fact *Lingua Aegyptiaca Restituta* (Rome, 1643). Kircher was among the first Europeans to study the Coptic language, surmising that Coptic was the descendent of the language of Ancient Egypt, although Coptic had already almost died out as a spoken language by his day and become restricted to the liturgy of the Coptic Church. Kircher had access to a bilingual Arabic-Coptic word list, which had been prepared in the fourteenth century by Barakat ibn Kabar (d. 1324), the priest of the Hanging Church in Cairo. This work was called The Great Ladder (*Scala Magna* in Kircher's Latin or *al-Sullam al-Kabêr* in Arabic) and Kircher added a Latin translation, making it a trilingual lexicon. He published it under the title *Lingua Aegyptiaca Restituta*, 'The Egyptian Language Restored', since he was among the first to surmise that Coptic descended from the language of Pharaonic Egypt.

As a supplement to the word lists, he examined areas by topic, among them 'The Egyptian names for the stars' where he sought to piece together the astronomy/astrology of Ancient Egypt. A good part of this chapter is centred on the Mansions of the Moon and was repeated, with a few embellishments, in his *magnum opus* on Egypt, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (Rome, 1652-54). The two lists both have

inaccuracies in the starting and finishing degrees of the Mansions, but they are distinct, and the anomalies in George Yeats's list indicate that her source was *Lingua Aegyptiaca Restituta*, where the list starts on page 560.

THE COPTIC MANSIONS OF THE MOON ACCORDING TO KIRCHER

George Yeats's Notes see <i>The Making of Yeats's Vision</i> II, 419	<i>De Aegyptiacis Stellarum appellationibus, from Lingua Aegyptiaca Restituta, 560-67</i>	<i>Concerning the Egyptian names of the stars</i>	
28 Mansions of ☽ 560. Athanasius Kircher	from to	Coptic name Latin translation and comments	transcription and translation
1 Ⲭ	0 Aries - 12° 24' Aries	ΚΥΤΩΝ : piscis Venter Cæti, sive piscis	[kutōn] fish the belly of the whale, or the fish
2 Ⲯ (see Abenragel)	12° 24' Aries - 25 Aries	ΠΙΚΥΤΩΡΙΟΝ : Piscis Hori caput Arietis authority: Abenragel	["pi-kutōrion] fish of Horus the head of Aries/the ram
3 from 5th degree of Ⲯ to 9th Ⲕ The mansions of this joining together	25 Aries - 9 Taurus	ΚΟΛΩΝΗ : statio connectens triangulum prope ventrem cæti	[kolōn] connecting/joining station a triangle near the whale's belly
4 Ⲕ The Mansion of Hours. (also the Hen of the skies with her sons) joining Ⲕ to 21	9 Taurus - 21 Taurus	ΦΡΙΑΣ : statio Hori Gallina cæli, cum filiabus suis (the Pleiades)	[órias] station of Horus the hen of the skies with her daughters (also chicks)
5 from 21 Ⲕ to 4 Ⲓ. The eye of Ⲕ	21 Taurus - 4 Gemini	ΠΦΩΡΙΟΝ : Statio Hori maior oculus Ⲕ	["pi-óron] greater station of Horus the eye of Taurus / the bull
6 The Head of Ⲓ. 4 Ⲓ to 17 Ⲓ (The Gate)	4 Gemini - 17 Gemini	ΚΛΥΣΟΣ : Claustrum caput Ⲓ	[klusos] barrier/gate the head of Gemini
7 17 of Ⲓ to 30 Ⲓ (The shoulder blade of the Twin)	17 Gemini - 30 Gemini	ΚΛΑΡΙΑ : (no Latin; Arabic, <i>Albanaad</i>) scapulas Geminorum	[klaría] Gemini's/the Twins' shoulder blades
8 (The bed of the Lion) 1 of ⲗ to 13	0 Cancer - 13 Cancer	ΠΗΛΑΞΙ : cubitus (Nili) cubitus Leonis ('lion' is incorrect)	["pi-mah] cubit of the Nile (Nilemeter) forepaw of Leo/the lion
9 (The descent) 13 of ⲗ to 21 ⲗ	13 Cancer - †21 Cancer	ΤΕΡΗΘΙΑ : statio descensus seu influentiae	[termetha] station of descent or influence [influc]
10 (The parturition of self) from 21 ⲗ 9 ♀	†21 Cancer -9 Leo	ΠΙΑΥΤΟΣ : Seipsam parturiens	["pi-autos] giving birth to itself
11 (The Tree in leaf) 9 ♀ 21 ♀	9 Leo - 21 Leo	†ΤΕΧΝΗ : Fronis frons Leonis	["ti-tehni] forehead/brow of Leo /the lion
12 21 ♀ 4 ♀	21 Leo - 4 Virgo	ΠΙΧΩΡΙΟΝ : (no Latin; Greek: <i>πυραργη</i>)	["pi-chóron]
13 (Mansion of love 4 ♀ to 18 ♀)	†9 Virgo - 18 Virgo	ΑΣΦΥΛΙΑ : statio Amoris	[asphulia] station of Love
14 (Mansion of acclamation) 18 ♀ 30 ♀ Latrantius?	18 Virgo - 30 Virgo	ΑΒΥΚΙΑ : statio latrantis forsan à Canicula	[abukia] station of the barker / dog perhaps from the Dog Star (Sirius)
15 (Mansion of Highth & depth) 0 ♀ to 13 ♀	0 Libra - 13 Libra	ΧΩΡΙΤΟΣ : statio altitudinis	[choritos] station of height and/or depth
16 (Mansion of propitiation) 13 ♀ 26 ♀	13 Libra - 26 Libra	ΧΑΜΒΑΛΙΑ : statio propitiationis	[chambalia] station of propitiation
17 26 ♀ 1 ♀	26 Libra - †1 Scorpio	ΠΡΙΘΗΙ : (no Latin, even Arabic not transliterated)	[priithi] (elsewhere the name of Aquarius)
18 (The crown) 1 ♀ 21 ♀	9 Scorpio - 21 Scorpio	ΣΤΕΦΑΝΗ : Corona	[stephani] the crown
19 (The Heart of Scorpio) 21 ♀ 4 ♀	21 Scorpio - 4 Sagittarius	ΚΑΡΘΙΑΝ : Cor cor Scorpii	[karthian] the heart the heart of Scorpio
20 (Mansion of chastity) 4 ♀ 17 ♀	4 Sagittarius - 17 Sagittarius	ΑΓΓΙΑ : Sancta	[aggia/angia] sacred, inviolable, chaste
21 (Mansion of delight & favour (influence)) 17 ♀ 30 ♀	17 Sagittarius - 30 Sagittarius	ΝΗΜΑΡΕΞ : statio gratiae, & iucunditatis	["ni-mamrēx] station of favour and delight
22 The State. 6 ♀ to 12 ♀	9 Capricorn - 13 Capricorn	ΠΟΛΙΣ : Civitas	[polis] the city-state
23 (The sacrifice of arm) 12 ♀ 25 ♀	13 Capricorn - 25 Capricorn	ΥΠΕΥΤΩΣ : Brachium sacrificii	[upeutós] the arm of sacrifice
24 (The absorption of arm-Beatitude) 25 ♀ to 9 ♀	†29 Capricorn 9 Aquarius	ΥΠΕΥΡΙΤΩΣ : Beatitudo, sive brachium absorptum	[upeuritós] beatitude/felicitity, or the arm swallowed
25 (The beatitude of beatitudes) 9 ♀ to 21 ♀	9 Aquarius - 21 Aquarius	ΥΠΕΥΝΕΥΤΗΣ : Beatitudo beatitudinum, sive Brachium brachiorum	[upeuneutēs] felicity of felicities, or the arm of arms
26 (The concealed arm) 21 ♀ 4 ♀	21 Aquarius - 4 Pisces	ΥΠΕΥΘΕΡΙΑΝ : Brachium absconditum	[upeutherian] the concealed arm
27 (Mansion of the first budding) 4 ♀ to 17 ♀	4 Pisces - 17 Pisces	ΑΡΤΥΛΟΣ : Statio prioris germinationis	[artulos] station of the first budding/germination
28 (The final generation) 17 ♀ to 30 -	17 Pisces - 30 Pisces	ΑΡΤΥΛΟΣΙΑ : Posterior germinatio	[artulosia] later budding / germination

* In Coptic Egyptian, the definite article is ⲛ 'pi' for the masculine, † 'ti' for the feminine and ⲛⲓ 'ni' for the common plural.

† Anomalous degree values — the misprints were corrected in *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, although that also has its own mistakes.

I have amended the list slightly from Harper's reading in the case of Mansion 4, 'also the Hour of the [indecipherable word] with her sons', since it is clearly a translation of 'gallina caeli'. The use of a capital 'H' indicates that George Yeats probably read 'Hori' correctly as 'of Horus', although the capitalisation is generally not reliable. There is a full article about George Yeats's list and the links with Athanasius Kircher in the *Yeats Annual* 16, 2005. Unfortunately in the transmission to printing, the special characters lost their formatting and the version above is more correct.

George understood Latin, but appears to have been slightly cavalier with the dictionary, taking *cubitus* as bed rather than the cubit measure or forearm and reading *frons* as *frons*, *frondis*, a frond, bough or leafy branch, rather than *frons*, *frontis*, forehead, front or brow. In both places the context makes the alternatives clear, so it indicates that she may have been rushing to some degree. She would have been able to read the Coptic as well, since the Golden Dawn required its members to know the names of Egyptian deities in their Coptic forms (Kircher's assumption about Coptic had been proved right, and Coptic Egyptian is more or less the ancient Egyptian language in the Greek alphabet, giving it vowels and making it more readily accessible). George would probably have recognised most of the Hebrew as well, since the language and alphabet were fundamental from studies in Cabbala in the Golden Dawn. That was still not enough, though, and the gaps in George Yeats's list are understandable when one sees the pages are also scattered with Greek, Arabic, Estranghelo and Amharic scripts.

ones is also clear and the names seem to be often Greek translations of the Arabic names, especially in the second half of the list, and so it seems probable that the list is largely a version of the Arabic lunar system, especially since the essential Egyptian system is strongly solar and decimal, using the 36 decanates of the Zodiac (ten days of the Sun's movement) rather than the 28 Mansions (one day of the Moon's movement).

The fact that the list was, at least in part, different from either the Arabic one or the European one derived from it (see Agrippa's list below) may have been a reason for this version's attractiveness, but the names still indicate that the Mansions are often linked to the larger constellations and are often little more than subdivisions of the Zodiac signs. Another point is worth noting: *Al Batn al Hut* appears here as the first Mansion, displacing *Alnath/Al Sharatain*, and this problem of locating the Mansions reliably may have frustrated the Yeatses: where should the Mansions start? are they tropical or sidereal? which is the first Mansion? These are all variations on the same question really.

The Shifting Mansions

The Mansions' names often tie them to a constellation or sign of the Zodiac, for example, the ram's belly, the lion's mane, the scorpion's sting. It is also clear that with the dislocation of the constellations from their associated signs of the Zodiac, owing to the natural phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes, if the Mansions remain tied to the stars rather than the signs, then some of the anomalies that are gradually established between the two series start to make the system look slightly absurd, thus *Al Batn al Hut*, "the belly of the fish", from the constellation of Pisces will now be found in the tropical sign of Aries. This is because the system of the Mansions is strongly linked to the stellar patterns in the night sky rather than to the Sun's equinoxes and solstices (its *tropoi*, turning points), which form the basis for Arabian and European astrology, and the Mansions therefore creep 'forwards' as the precession of the equinoxes shifts the tropical Zodiac backwards against the background of the stars.

The exact amount of the drift varies with the date. The texts usually derive from Arabic writers of the tenth and eleventh centuries, whose works were transmitted into Europe through mediaeval translations circulated in manuscript, which, in turn, were then sometimes printed some centuries after that, with no updating. There is, therefore, room for a great deal of uncertainty, since each year adds a further slippage of 50.4", and therefore 1° every 71½ years. Such shifts can be confusing and are only further obscured by poor transliteration of Arabic, gaps, or corruption during the copying of manuscripts. Indeed, it often seems that observation stopped with the

Arabs and that, once astrology fell into desuetude among in Islamic culture, the system became stuck.

Traditionally in both the Indian and Arabic systems the first Mansion was *Al Thurayya* (the 'Many Little Ones'; Indian, *Krittika*, the 'General of the Celestial Armies'; Greek, the **Pleiades**) located in the shoulder of the constellation of Taurus. With the systematisation of Greek astronomy and the establishment of the the Sun's position at the Vernal Equinox as the First Point of Aries and the start of the Zodiac, the Mansion associated with the star *Sheratan*, *Al Sharatain*, became the first Mansion — *Botein* seems to have missed out. *Sheratan* (Beta Arietis) is one of the horns of Aries and the name, meaning the "Two Signs", refers to it as a marker for the Zodiac's beginning along with *Mesarthim* (Gamma Arietis); the Mansion is also called *Alnath*, meaning "the one that butts" and, though this name was more common in European usage, it is liable to confusion with another butter, the bright star in upper horn of Taurus, also called *Al Nath* or *El Nath* (Beta Tauri, traditionally shared with Auriga). This Mansion, associated with the horns of Aries, is listed as the first by Abenragel (fl. 1000 CE) and Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240 CE), and this is the order that passed into European astrology, so that *Alnath* is mentioned as the first Mansion by Chaucer (1340-1400) and Agrippa (1486-1535). Johannes Hispalensis, writing in the 1140s, does not tie the Mansions to the tropical Zodiac, starting the first Mansion, Horns of Aries, at 16° 01' Aries, and places the previous Mansion, the Fish (*Al Batn al Hut*), at the end of the list but starting at 3° 09' Aries. However, if the boundaries of the Mansions are tied to a starting point in the tropical Zodiac, which is usually 0° Aries, when adaptations come they tend to be discrete shifts, displacing the sequence through the whole span of a Mansion, 12° 51' 26", or even two, as in the change from *Al Thurayya* to *Al Sharatain*. The list which George Yeats copied out from Athanasius Kircher places his equivalent of *Al Batn al Hut* (the Fish) aligned with 0° Aries, close to Johannes Hispalensis' arrangement, but at the head list. If the system is taken as purely sidereal, then it cannot be fixed to any particular point and will shift gradually every year; if the marker stars are used, precessional slippage means that the star that is currently closest to 0° Aries is *Scheat* (Beta Pegasi; which will reach the exact longitude of the Spring Equinox in 2045), one of the markers of *Al Fargh al Mukdin*, the First Water Spout.

An example of the confusing situation, based on one of the clearer and better known stars, Alpha Tauri (*Aldebaran*), which gives its name to one of the Mansions, may give some indication. *Aldebaran* ('the follower' of the Pleiades) is usually identified with the eye of the constellation of Taurus, the Bull, and the name is one of the most distinctive and least liable to corruption since it comes from this star, which was one of the four Royal Stars of ancient Persian astronomy.

- In purely sidereal terms, and therefore in both Zodiacs at the date of coincidence (circa 200 CE), it is located at 14° 35' of Taurus, at about the mid-point of the Zodiac-sign's 30° range; by 1900 its position in the tropical system had shifted almost 24 degrees to 8° 27' of Gemini.
- Abenragel and *Picatrix* place the start of the Mansion at 8° 34' 18" Taurus, which is a value based on the position of 0° Aries around the year 1000 CE.
- Agrippa, writing in 1509 (and published in 1531), locates the Mansion, called *Aldebram* or *Aldelamen*, and glossed as the eye of the Bull or the head of the Bull, as the fourth Mansion spanning the space between 8° 34' 17" and 21° 25' 43" Taurus. This is justifiable as he is writing about what people **used** to do, and it appears that he is drawing to a large degree on the *Picatrix*.
- Abenragel's works when published in translation in the sixteenth century carry the values which were valid when he wrote, and with the name somehow garbled into *Addauennam*.
- Francis Barrett used Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia* almost three centuries later as the basis for *The Magus* (1801).

We therefore find positions determined for a date around 1000 being given as if they still applied after 1800.

Those who do not just follow sources create different problems:

- Joannes Hispalensis, giving a list for 1142 (but published in 1548), does not fix the Mansions to the tropical Zodiac, so he has 'Caput Tauri', the head of the Bull, starting at 11° 43' Taurus and separately 'Oculus Tauri', the eye of the Bull (*Al Dabaran*), starting at 24° 35'.
- Robert Fludd, writing in 1617, gives no names and only attributes, but places the first Mansion at 27° 53' Aries, while the 27th starts at 2° 25' Aries. It is difficult to tell which of the Mansions corresponds to *Al Dabaran*, but the third starts at 23° 37' Taurus.
- Athanasius Kircher's lists, written in the 1650s but with an historical approach, have the eye of the Bull as the fifth Mansion starting at 21° Taurus.
- Coming to the twentieth century, Vivian Robson's book, *The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology*, was published in 1923; it was in the Yeatses' Library (YL 1772) but did not appear until after the bulk of the Automatic Script and the Yeatses' research. He takes a comparative and historical approach, giving Indian, Arabian and Chinese systems. The list of the Arabian Mansions starts with *Al Thurayyah*, making *Al Dabaran* the second Mansion, and takes the stars as markers (so that 0° Aries is not the start), has the Mansion starting at 8° 40' Taurus.

Other writers complicate matters differently, Guido Bonatti for instance adding a separate subcycle of Mansions, but discounting the Mansion in which the New Moon takes place, since the Moon's effect is obliterated by the Sun. Arcandam (Al-Qalandar, also Alchandreus), apparently a tenth century writer whose astrological works were among the first to enter Europe, adopts a completely different methodology and dispenses with such fractional divisions, locating the Mansions squarely within the signs either in pairs or threes, putting *Cocebran* in the centre of Taurus (10^o-20^o), a solution similar to that eventually adopted by the Yeatses.

. . . back to the Yeatses

The Instructors had discouraged Yeats from wider reading in the early stages of the System's development and had also denied that "Any use [was] made of apparent use of symbolic motion of ☉ opposite to ☾" (*sic*), asserting that the phasic divisions were "symbolic & arbitrary only" (22 January 1918; *YVP* 1 275). It was also clear that the Phases assigned to various people bore no relation to the phase of the moon at the time of a person's birth, as would be the case in an astrological system. The Instructors assigned Phases to people whom the Yeatses knew early on, and in many cases Yeats knew these people's charts well: his own Moon would be placed astrologically at Phase 18 or 19 (depending on the divisions) rather than 17, George's at 25 or 26 not 18, while Maud Gonne, instead of being placed in Phase 16, would be born in the non-human Phase 15. In this sense at least, it was evident that the System was not astrological.

If it was not the Phase of the Sun and Moon, however, it was always possible that there was something to do with the Moon's absolute position. Again, from their knowledge of the birthcharts of some of the people involved, it was fairly clear that it would not be any simple alignment, but they may have considered it worth investigating a little. At the very least Yeats would have been interested in another set of symbolism.

From notes and references in the Automatic Script, it is clear that the Yeatses devised an alignment of the Instructors' Phases with the Zodiac fairly early on for their own use. In many comments, they treat the Phases as having stellar counterparts, such that fixed stars are identified as positioned at certain Phases and planets as transiting or passing through them, exactly as in conventional astrology. None of the background apparatus to this schema appears in the Script itself and evidently the Yeatses were developing the ideas elsewhere before bringing them to the evening sessions. This fixed alignment is linked to the Universal Man, and they had a different method of

marrying up the individual's horoscope and Phase (placing the Ascendant at the centre of the Phase, see Astrology).

Even if there were correspondences between the Phases of the Universal Man and the traditional Mansions, trying to connect the Mansions to their Instructors' Phases would never have been straightforward, not least because of the difficulty of determining which Mansion started the series and where. In the published versions of the System, Yeats used the precession of the equinoxes for a rather different purpose. In the published versions, they eventually decided on symbolic rather than mathematical allocations with respect to the Great Year (which is linked to the Universal Man), and these allocations are arbitrary, fitting the divisions to whole Zodiac signs, rather than natural, dividing the circle by twenty-eight. A normative pattern of assigning mansions to signs of the Zodiac in twos and threes is seen in some Arab writers, such as Arcandam, and mediaeval manuscripts, but the Yeatses took the arbitrariness to a more extreme degree, allotting a whole sign to the crucial Phases 1, 8, 15 and 22, while allocating the others in triads (see the Cardinal Phases and Triads).

All the same, it would be very strange if the Yeatses had not consulted Joannes Hispalensis, Cornelius Agrippa, or one of the several other resources at some stage. Understandably, however, they did not pursue such researches to any significant extent, since the one thing that all the systems have in common is that they are positional divisions of the Zodiac and as such have very little to do with the Moon's phasic changes.

Images and Talismans

The Yeatses did develop a set of images, one for each of the Phases, Symbols of the Phases, and to some extent their interest in the Mansions of the Moon may have been as much to do with the symbolism involved rather than direct correspondence. The signs of the Zodiac are very simple images, usually just an animal, whereas the Mansions tend to be associated with slightly more complex images, often of situations or specific individuals, though examples such as the fish and the head of a lion show the influence of the Zodiac.

The nature of these images seems in part to derive from the association of the Mansions with talismanic magic in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance (and still today, according to a website on Renaissance Astrology and Magic). The following Mansions and Images are given by Agrippa (for a comparison of the Images with Bruno's for the Mansions of the Moon, see Phase Images). See *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, Book II, Chapter 46 (link to another web-site for the full text of J. F.'s English translation of 1651). Agrippa tells how the talismans used to be made when

the Moon was in a particular Mansion, with appropriate materials and perfumes, apparently distancing himself by claiming simply to record what was done rather than to instruct. The names are often recognisable corruptions of the Arabic ones (similar to but different from those in the translation of Abenragel above), while the Latin names coincide almost entirely with those given by Joannes Hispalensis.

The Mansions of the Moon according to H. C. Agrippa's <i>Occult Philosophy</i> , 1533						
	name	(name – Latin)	from	significance	Talisman for	with image of
1	Alnath	horns of Aries	0° Aries	journeys and discord	the destruction of someone	A black man in a garment made of hair, and girdled round, casting a small lance with his right hand
2	Albothaim Albocham	belly of Aries	12°51'22" Aries	finding treasure and retaining captives	reconciliation with a prince	A king crowned
3	Achaomazone Athoraye	rainy ones or Pleiades	25°42'51" Aries	profits sailors, huntsmen, alchemists	happy fortune and every good thing	A woman well clothed, sitting in a chair, her right hand being lifted up on her head
4	Aldebram Aldelamen	eye or head of Taurus	8°34'17" Taurus	destruction and hinderances of buildings, fountains, wells and gold mines, the flight of reptiles and creates discord	revenge, separation, enmity & ill will	A soldier on a horse, holding a serpent in his right hand
5	Alchataya Albachaya	()	21°25'40" Taurus	helps safe return from journey, instruction of pupils, confirms buildings, gives health and good will	the favour of kings and officers	The head of a man
6	Alhanna Alchaya	little star of great light	4°17'09" Gemini	favours hunting, besieging towns, revenge of princes, destroys harvests and fruits, hinders medicine	to procure love betwixt two	two images embracing one another
7	Aldimiach Alarzach	arm of Gemini	17°08'34" Gemini	brings money and friendship, profits lovers, disperses flies, destroys teaching authorities	to obtain every good thing	A man well clothed, holding his hands up to heaven as it were praying and supplicating
8	Alnaza Anatrachya	misty or cloudy	0° Cancer	creates, love, friendship, travellers' fellowship, drives away mice, confirms captivity	victory in war	an eagle having the face of a man
9	Achaam Alcharph	eye of Leo	12°51'22" Cancer	hinders harvests and travellers, creates discord between men	to cause infirmities	The image of a man wanting his privy parts, shutting his eyes with his hands
10	Algeliache Aglebh	neck or forehead of Leo	25°42'51" Cancer	strengthens buildings, extends love, good will and help against enemies	to facilitate child-bearing	The head of a lion

11	Azobra Ardaf	Leo's mane	8°34'17" Leo	helps journeys and money from commerce, and redeeming captives	fear, reverence and worship	A man riding a lion, holding the ear thereof in his left hand, and in his right, holding forth a bracelet of gold
12	Alzarpha	tail of Leo	21°25'40" Leo	prosperes harvests and plantations, betters servants, captives and allies, but hinders sailors	the separation of lovers	A dragon fighting with a man
13	Alhayre	dogs or winged ones of Virgo	4°17'09" Virgo	favours benevolence, money, voyages, harvests, freedom of captives	the agreement of married couples and for dissolving charms against copulation	images of man in red wax and woman in white wax embracing
14	Achureth, Arimes, Azimeth, Albumech, Alcheymech	Virgo's ear of corn	17°08'34" Virgo	favours marital love, healing of sick, good for journeys by sea but bad for land	divorce and separation of the man from the woman	A dog biting his tail
15	Agrapha Algarpha	covered or flying covered	0° Libra	good for extracting treasures, digging pits, helps divorce, discord, destruction of houses and enemies, hinders travel	friendship and goodwill	A man sitting and inditing letters
16	Azubene Ahubene	horns of Scorpio	12°51'22" Libra	hinders journeys and marriage, harvests and commerce, but helps redemption of captives	much merchandising	A man sitting on a chair, holding a balance in his hands
17	Alchil	crown of Scorpio	25°42'51" Libra	improves bad fortune, helps love to last, strengthens buildings, helps sailors	against thieves and robbers	An ape
18	Alchas Altoh	heart of Scorpio	8°34'17" Scorpio	causes discord, sedition, conspiracy against powerful, revenge from enemies, but frees captives and helps buildings	against fevers and pains of the belly	A snake holding his tail above his head
19	Allatha, Achala, Hycula, Axala	tail of Scorpio	21°25'40" Scorpio	helps besieging and taking of cities, driving people from positions, destroys sailors and captives	facilitating birth and provoking the menstrues	A woman holding her hands upon her face
20	Abnahaya	the beam, transom	4°17'09" Sagittarius	helps taming beasts, strengthens prisons, destroys allies' wealth, compels a man to come to a certain place	hunting	Sagittary, half a man and half an horse
21	Abeda Albeldach	the desert	17°08'34" Sagittarius	favours harvests, money, buildings, travellers, causes divorce	the destruction of somebody	A man with a double countenance, before and behind
22	Sadabacha, Zodeboluch, Zandeldena	the shepherd	0° Capricorn	incites the flight of slaves and captives, helping escape, and curing of diseases	the security of [i.e. to catch] runaways	A man with wings on his feet, bearing an helmet on his head
23	Sabadola	swallowing	12°51'22"	causes divorce, freedom of	destruction and	A cat having a dog's

	Zobrach		Capricorn	captives, healing of sick	wasting	head
24	Sadabath Chadezoath	star of fortune	25°42'51" Capricorn	helps marital understanding, victory of soldiers, causes disobedience, hindering execution of authority	the multiplying of herds of cattle	A woman giving suck to her son
25	Sadalabra Sadalachia	the butterfly, unfolding	8°34'17" Aquarius	helps siege and revenge, divorce, prisons and buildings, speeds messengers, destroys enemies, helps spells against sex or to cause impotence	the preservation of trees and harvests	A man planting
26	Alpharg Phtagal Mocaden	the first drawing, draining	21°25'40" Aquarius	helps union, love of men, health of captives, destroys prisons and buildings	love and favour	A woman washing and combing her hairs
27	Alcharya Ahhalgalmoad	the second drawing, draining	4°17'09" Pisces	increases harvests, revenues, money, heals illnesses, weakens buildings, prolongs imprisonment, endangers sailors, and helps bringing evils against anyone	to destroy fountains, pits, medicinal waters and baths	A man winged, holding in his hand an empty vessel, and perforated
28	Albotham Alchalh	the fishes, Pisces	17°08'34" Pisces	increases harvests and commerce, helps the safety of travellers in dangerous places, causes marital harmony, but strengthens prisons and causes loss of treasures	to gather fishes together	A fish

ON RITUAL AND TALISMANS



VIII. Picatrix Astrological Magic Aphorisms

The cautious Soul collaborates with the Astral action just as the skilled peasant collaborates with Nature when plowing and digging.

Introduction

The *Picatrix* or *Ghayat al Hikam*, the Aim of the Wise, was composed in Arabic in Andalusia around 1000 A.D. Its author sought to digest and synopsise a great number of previous works on astrological magic. Among these works were the *Secretum Secretorum*, the Secret of Secrets, attributed to Aristotle and the *Liber Fructus*, the Book of Fruit, also known as the *Centiloquium* attributed to Ptolemy. The aphorisms, translated below by Jose Manuel Redondo Ornelas, provide useful insight into the natures and uses of the planets and fixed stars in astrological magic.

The Picatrix

Book IV, Chapter 4

Translation by Jose Manuel Redondo Ornelas

We have drawn out for you, disciple, from the same sources of the books of the People related to this matter so many things that if you think about it, you'll realize how difficult it was to gather them from all the books that stop on this subject and that are the basis of the thing.

Aphorisms from the *Secretum Secretorum*

Among them what Mercury the Babylonian says in his Aphorisms entitled Secret of Secrets, from which we have picked out 45, where we can find a lot of the knowledge in whose path we are in.

- (1) The content of the first one is that anyone who pretends to gather the powers of the stars is forced to assume their character.
- (2) The Sun should be asked for the raise of prestige, praising of fraternity, amplitude of designs, authority over the powerful, humiliation of the sovereigns, splendor of lights and vanishing of darkness.
- (3) The Moon should be asked for fluidity of movements, disclosure of secrets, abundance of waters, extinguishing of fires, invalidation of completed facts and dissolution of harmonic atmospheres.
- (4) Saturn should be asked for limitation of movements, hiding of secrets, impoverishment of countries, decrease of intentions, temptation of souls and water stagnation.

(5) Jupiter should be asked for the accumulation of goods, conciliation of opinions, rejection of temptations, mitigation of grief and security of earthly and maritime paths.

(6) Mars should be asked for promotion of animosity, boldness of spirit, taming of beasts, subordination of passions, splendor of lights, generation of insurrection and submission of enemies.

(7) Venus should be asked for harmonization of the souls, expansion of enjoyment, rejection of preoccupation, influx of desires, nobility of lineage, extinguishing of fire and domestication of animals.

(8) The Scribe should be asked for manifestation of the hidden, study of mysteries, unfastening of the tongue, circulation of wealth, defamation and transmission of slanders.

(9) Abundance of smoke, untarnished animosity, observance of feast, intensity in invocations, procure as possible; election of the correspondences and minutia in the petition: those are the milestones of talismans.

(10) If the objective is in the nature of the ruler the acquisition will be easier, and vice versa.

(11) Signs can degenerate the actions of the celestial bodies and neutralize their positions, but they can also improve them.

(12) If the ascendant sign is not from the same nature of the request or the requester, the invocation would be meaningless and; the requester beware!

(13) The talismans of fixed stars last longer than those of the planets.

(14) If possible, the planets must be reinforced with a fixed star from the same nature, because it concentrates the power of the influx and the duration of the work.

(15) When the request is from the same nature than the ascendant and the dominant star, and is reinforced with a fixed star, one can be sure that it will be obtained easily and the influx will be strengthened.

(16) For dynamic the Eagle Star must be used, for the static the Lira Star.

(17) Conjunction of celestial bodies is a great support that we have to take advantage of.

(18) Positions are as fundamental as conjunctions for talismans.

(19) The dominant star being in the Midheaven, exalted or in its domicile and taking part of the ascendant.

(20) Entrust the Sun when you are depressed because it means renovation, growth, and quick response.

(21) Entrust the Moon when you're blocked because it's influent and of quick response, besides it means renovation and growth.

(22) Entrust Saturn when you are excluded because it means renovation and growth.

(23) To become wealthy use Jupiter because it has influx and quick response there; besides it means renovation and increase of goods.

(24) For domination use Mars, because it has influx and quick response in this and other aspects, and it means renovation and growth.

(25) When you are loathed use Venus who has very strong influx and quick response in this and other aspects, and means renovation and growth.

(26) If you ignore something use Mercury because in relation with this it means renovation and growth, resolute influx and quick response.

(27) Sluggishness in response is due to range, or insecurity, or bad organization.

(28) The work done to obtain perfumes and to recite invocations is better than the work done with precipitable gases and other spirits.

(29) The rising of the Sun and the indiscrete glances interrupt the spirituality of the nocturnal celestial bodies.

(30) The darkness of night and immobility interrupt the spirituality of diurnal celestial bodies; each star must be used in its own form.

(31) Immobility of a slow celestial body is more efficient than the dynamism of a quick one, even though they have the same strength.

(32) Don't demand harmony from Mars nor fracture from Venus; be rigorous on this and never divert a celestial body from its path.

(33) The comets should be used when they appear and in what they rule; just as fixed stars, they have to be used according to each one's nature.

(34) You can address Mercury on the empty signs while the Moon can be addressed on both positions indistinctively.

(35) Mercury can be used for one thing and its contrary because it is of a variable nature.

(36) To unfasten the tongues Mercury must be in its house and it is efficient with those who Mercury rules.

(37) The Sun answers those who are ruled by Mars, and Mars answers those ruled by the Sun.

(38) The Moon answers those who are ruled by Venus, and Venus answers those ruled by the Moon.

(39) The Sun is in conflict with those who are ruled by Saturn, and Saturn is in conflict with those ruled by the Sun.

(40) The Moon is in conflict with those who are ruled by Mars, and Mars is in conflict with those ruled by the Moon.

(41) Venus answers those who are ruled by Jupiter, and Jupiter answers those ruled by Venus.

(42) Jupiter conflicts with those who are ruled by Mars, and Mars conflicts with those ruled by Jupiter.

(43) Mars conflicts with those who are ruled by Venus, and Venus conflicts with those ruled by Mars.

(44) Mercury conflicts with those who are ruled by Jupiter, and Jupiter conflicts with those ruled by Mercury.

(45) You must take in consideration that two opposite stars reinforce each other in the rulership of human beings, unlike the stars of fate. And this is what we take in consideration of all that was said by that man.

Aphorisms from the *Liber Fructus*

From what the master on Judiciary Art, Ptolomeus, says in his book entitled The Fruit, this ten points were drawn out:

(1) The astrologer is able to control the actions of the stars if he knows the influx of their nature; is quite likely that he can modify the action before it happens.

(2) The cautious soul collaborates with the astral action just as the skilled peasant collaborates with nature when plowing and digging.

(3) The forms of the complex world obey the astral forms and that's why theurgists determined them according to the stars, in relation to whatever they wanted to influx.

(4) Use the malefics in your selections, just as the skillful doctor uses poisons in the correct measure.

(5) That two persons agree on something must be taken as a signal that something is in their natal horoscopes, and since they agree, it must be in a similar way: the one with the stronger position plays the role of leader and regent; and that of the weaker one plays the role of patient and ruled.

(6) Love and hate emanate from the crossed position of the two Lights in the natal horoscope of the two persons; from the coincidence of the ascendant (in the case of love), or from their opposition (in the case of hate). The dominated sign is the more loving.

(7) The stars should be used in the construction of cities; in the construction of houses we must use the planets.

Every city built with Mars in the Midheaven, or any other fixed star from the same nature, will see the majority of its governors die by the sword.

(8) We shall not ignore the 120 conjunctions that occur between the planets, because in them is almost the whole knowledge of what happens in the world of being and corruption.

(9) In each theme, a space must be left to the inability of the receiver to comprehend all the form of the action.

(10) The Sun is the spring of the animal force; the Moon is the spring of the natural force; Saturn, the spring of the adhesive force; Jupiter, the spring of the progressive force; Mercury, the spring of intellectual force; Mars, the spring of the choleric force and Venus is the spring of the passionate force. That's why, Mercury, Mars and Venus points out in the natal horoscope the character and profession of the person.

IX. Extracts on Planetary Ritual Clothing

In this regard, Aristotle says in his Treatise that the most important thing to keep in mind when making a talisman, is the effect of the seven moving planets.

Introduction

The following extracts deal with the appropriate clothing and ritual dress for invocations of the various planets. We notice that they are a mixture of items actually ruled by the particular planet, e.g. a gold ring as gold is ruled by the Sun, and items appropriate to the persons and professions ruled by the planets. To invoke a planet, we must, in a sense become one of the Children of the Planet.

Book III, Chapter 3

Here follow the colors of the clothing and vestments of the planets. The color of the vestments of Saturn are black and the best [fabric] is wool. The color of Jupiter is green and the best [fabric] is silk. The color of Mars is the flame of fire and the best [fabric] is silk. The color of the Sun is yellow gold and the best [fabric] is silk and yellow gold. The color of Venus is rose colored and the best [fabric] is silk. The color of Mercury is is many mixed colors and the best [fabric] is silk. The color of the Moon is shining white and the best [fabric] is silk or linne .

Book III, Chapter 7

Saturn: Put on black clothes, namely the cloth used to wrap a corpse and a black cape in the mode of a doctor and black shoes.

Jupiter: Put on yellow and white clothing. Go to a place for your work that is separate, humble and appropriate to hermits or Christians. Put a crystal ring on your finder and wear a white cloak.

Mars: Put on red clothes and wear on your head red linen and silk or put a red hat on your head. Carry a sword on your neck [shoulders?] and protect yourself with all the [arms and armor] you are able and wear a ring in the form of a man about to go to law or a soldier on your finger.

Sun: Put on royal clothing. Silk, mixed with gold and put a gold crown on your head and a gold ring on your finger.

Venus: Put on the first or second styles and the best one is the robe and trappings of a noble Arab man. Wear white clothes and white cotton on your head because this is his [signature or seal]. Another style is that of woman. Wear long clothes of silk and

gold mixed, precious and beautiful and on your head place a crown richly adorned with precious stones and pearls and on your hand a gold ring with pearls and on your arms wear bracelets of gold; in your right hand hold a mirror and in your left hand a comb. Put before you a jug of wine and in your clothing place crushed aromatics and odoriferous [incense or scent] in the way that women do.

Mercury: Dress yourself as a notary or scribe and act just as if you were a scribe...Sit in a seat, like the seat of a judge and turn your face towards it [?], with a [book or paper] in your hand looking like your wish to write.

Moon: Prepare yourself in the fashion of a young man and with something that smells good and in your hand have a ring of silver and your movement and work is smooth and elegant and your speech is distinguished, in a good style and to the point.

X. Twenty Two Benefic Astrological Talismans

The making of talismans concerns [the action] of spirit on bodies...

— *Picatrix, Bk I, ch. 2.*

Introduction

The *Picatrix* or *Ghayat al Hikam*, the Aim of the Wise, was composed in Arabic in Andalusia around 1000 A.D. It is a key work of medieval and Renaissance astrological magic.

The following talismans all come from Book II, chapter 5 of *Picatrix* and were translated by Robert Thomas, a noted ceremonial magician and traditional astrologer. These talismans are, for the most part, based on astrological elections using the 12 mundane houses, rather than a particular planet. This is an excellent example of the sophistication of astrological technique typical of *Picatrix*.

Book I, Chapter 5

If you desire to fashion images **to place love between two people**, and that of them love and affection should be made strong and strengthened, fashion images of the two [people] in their likenesses. And let this be done in the hour of Jupiter or Venus, and let the North Node [be] placed in the Ascendant, and let the Moon [be] with Venus or aspecting her with a good aspect, and let the lord of the 7th house aspect the lord of the Ascendant with a trine or sextile aspect. And after this, I say join the images together face to face, and bury them in a different place - that is to say, [the place] of that other who is beloved by the magician. And it shall be as you desire.

An image **to generate peace and love between two [people]**. Fashion two images under the Ascendant of the questioner, and make fortunate the Ascendant and 10th house, and remove infortunes from the first house, and place the lord of the 10th house fortunately and aspecting itself to the lord of the Ascendant by a trine or sextile aspect.

And there is a second image that may be fashioned: if it is done **for two friends**, place the eleventh house in the Ascendant of it as aforesaid in the first image ; and if you wish to generate love between **a man and woman**, place the Ascendant of the second image as the seventh house from the first. And form it so that the Lord of the Ascendant of he who seeks love shall aspect the lord of the Ascendant of the other [person] with a good aspect and that they are well received of one another. After this join the images and bury them in the place of the one who is sought; and they will be friends that were apart before.

An image **to place love between two people**. Fashion two images with the 1st face of Cancer rising, and Venus therein, and the Moon in the 1st face of Taurus in the eleventh house. And when you have made these images, join each to the other face to face and bury them in the house of the other. And they will care for each other and have an enduring love between them. And these are called figures of alteration, and Ptolemy speaks of them in the 33rd verse of his Centiloquy. And we shall speak further of this in the fourth book of our work; therefore we shall explain then, if God so wills it.

An image **for an enduring love**. Fashion two images, and place a fortune in the Ascendant, and the Moon in Taurus conjoined to Venus. And write on one image cifram - obviously the figure algorismi is of such a kind - 0-220 changes of positions, and write the figure itself in the other image in 284 positions and join the pair of images face to face, and there will be complete and enduring love between them.

An image **that kings and nobles or whomever is desired shall love you**. Fashion an image in the form and name of the one for whom the image is made. Make the Ascendant fortunate with a fortune that is not cadent, retrograde or combust, and with the Lord of the Ascendant placed strongly, in good condition and direct of motion, in his exaltation, and let the Lord of the Tenth aspect the Lord of the Ascendant by a trine or sextile aspect with strong reception; and let the Lord of the Ascendant be placed in a compelling sign and the Lord of the Tenth be in an obeying sign. And as long as he shall have the aforesaid image with him, he shall be loved and honored and whatever he requests of the king shall be given to him.

An image **that a lord may be loved and always obeyed** [by his subjects]. Fashion two images, of which one should be made in the hour of Jupiter, and the Moon well-aspected to the Sun and separated from the infortunes; and place the North Node of the Moon in the Ascendant. After this, fashion the other image placing the cusp of the fifth house of the first image as the Ascendant [of the second], and do this in the hour of Venus. And the North Node of the Moon should be placed in the Ascendant or aspect the Ascendant with a good aspect, and that in the hour of the Moon, with the Moon placed so that it is free from infortunes. And bury the images with some fixed star on the Ascendant in the hour of Saturn. And when you have done this, the lord shall be loved by all his subjects, and they will obey him.

An image **that slaves might love their master**. Let there be two images, of which one should be made in the hour of any of the superior planets and with the Moon increasing in light, with the North Node in the First, Fourth, Seventh or Tenth House. And fashion the second image in the hour of any of the inferior planets, and let the Ascendant [of the second image] be within the Tenth house of the first image,

and let the South Node be placed in the First, Fourth, Seventh or Tenth houses. And when these two images have been made in this fashion, join them together face to face and bury them in the place of those whose love is desired.

An image **to gain dignity from a lord or king**. Fashion images, and make fortunate the Ascendant and Tenth and the Lord of the Ascendant. And likewise, remove the infortunes from the Ascendant and its lord, and place a fortune in the Eleventh house aspecting the Ascendant and its lord with a good and praiseworthy aspect; and with the lord of the Tenth aspecting the Lord of the Ascendant by a favorable aspect with reception. And when these images have thus been perfected, bear them with you in secret, allowing no-one to see them; and by them you will be aided and have the heart of the king and you shall receive whatever dignities or offices you may request of him, his officers or dignitaries.

An image **to increase sales and profits**. Fashion images, and make fortunate the Ascendant and the Tenth house and their lords, and the lord of the house of the lord of the Ascendant, and the lord of the house of the lord of the Tenth, the Moon and the lord of its house, as well as the Second house and its lord, and place the lord of the Second house in reception with the lord of the Ascendant by trine or sextile aspect, and place a fortune in the Second house, and place the Part of Fortune in the Ascendant or the Tenth house, and have the Lord of the Part of Fortune aspecting it with a good aspect. And when this image has thus been made, carry it with you, and hide it secretly so that none might see it, and you shall gain money in great quantities and have good fortune in all your undertakings.

An image **for the augmentation of cities** and that they may continue well. Fashion an image, and make fortunate the Ascendant and the Tenth and their lords, and let them be aspected by the fortunes, and make fortunate the lord of the Second house and the lord of the Eighth house, and place the Lord of the Ascendant well, and with the fortunes aspecting it, and make fortunate also the lord of the house of the lord of the Ascendant and the Moon and the lord of the house of the Moon. And in truth when this image is completed as has been said, bury it in the center of the city, and it shall be as you have desired.

An image **to acquire the love of another**. Fashion two images, of which one should be made in the hour of Jupiter with Virgo rising and the Moon waxing in light, and place it in the First, Fourth, Seventh or Tenth houses. Make the second image in the hour of Venus when Venus makes a good aspect to Jupiter. And the infortunes should be placed in cadent houses to the Ascendant, and let the Ascendant of the second image be the Seventh house cusp of the first image, and the lord of the Ascendant [of the second image] should aspect the lord of the Ascendant of the first image with a trine

or sextile aspect. And when these images have been made as we have said, join them to one another face to face, and bury them in the place of the one from whom you seek love and preferment.

An image **to aid the escape of those detained in prison**. Fashion an image in the form of the one who is imprisoned that you wish to release in the hour of the Moon, with the Moon waxing in light, fast in motion and safe from the infortunes. Bury the image near the prison when the Ascendant is placed as the Tenth house of the city where the prisoners are detained.

An image **to catch many fish**. Fashion an image in the form of a fish which exists in your river, and make it with Pisces rising, and with Jupiter in it [the Ascendant], and the lord of the hour should be Venus. And make it in this fashion, fashion the head and body first, and after this the tail, and join them together in the aforesaid hour. And make a spike of pure silver, and place the image on the head of the spike; and fashion a pitcher or other vessel having a constricted mouth out of lead, and in the midst of this place the spike upright with the image of the fish at the top of it. Next fill the vessel with water and seal the mouth with wax that the water may not escape. After this, place the vessel in the bottom of the river. All the fish which live there shall be gathered together from every part [of the river]. An image **to gather fish together**. Alhanemi, who was wise and skilled and discovered the truth, said this in his book on these arts: make an image in the shape of a fish, and do this with the second face of Pisces rising, and let the Moon be with Mercury in the Ascendant. And do this in the hour of the Moon. And when this image has been properly made, place it in the river when you wish the fish to gather together, and you shall behold wonders as many fish gather together in that place.

An image **for the driving away of scorpions**. Fashion the image of a scorpion from the purest gold in the hour of the Sun, and place the Moon in the Ascendant, 4th, 7th or 10th houses in either Taurus, Aquarius or Leo (Leo is best, for the magic of its nature is contrary to scorpions). Let the Sun be also in Leo, and let Saturn be retrograde. Fashion the tail [of the scorpion] first, after this the legs, after this the claws, and finally the head. There are many diverse aspects in this [working], and you should know them well, for they may aid you in all such operations and workings. When the members [of the image] have been made in this manner, place the left claw in the place of the right, and the right foot in the place of the left foot, and place the head upright in the proper position and the tail likewise. After this has been done, fashion a spine and when this has been made in this manner, bury [the image] in a hole which has been bored into a stone. After this, bury the stone in a place high above the city(?), and [scorpions] shall flee from that place and not approach within 45 miles of it.

An image **to heal the sting of scorpions**. Fashion the image of a scorpion in bezoar stone, and do this in the hour of the Moon while the Moon is in the second face of Scorpio, and with Leo, Taurus or Aquarius rising. Afterwards let this stone be set in a ring of gold, and when it has been made thus, use it to mark incense under the aforesaid constellation. Give the one stung a drink made with incense marked by this seal and he will be healed immediately and all infirmity will be put aside.

An image **that a man may be loved by women**. Fashion the image of a maiden in a metal both cold and dry, and make this with Virgo rising and with Mercury being within the circle of his auge and being the almuten of the chart; this work should also be started in the hour of Mercury. In this manner the image should be completed. After this has been done, fashion another image in the likeness of a youth when Mercury is in Virgo and has returned to the place of the [Ascendant of the] first image, or is thus placed in Gemini, and beware of differing Ascendants- that is to say, if Mercury is in Gemini do not place Virgo on the Ascendant, and likewise if Mercury be in Virgo do not place Gemini on the Ascendant, but whichever sign is on the Ascendant let Mercury be in that sign likewise. When these two images have been made, bind them face to face and place them by hand into a high wall. And all of these things should be done in the hour of Mercury with Virgo or Gemini rising. Bind the image with a wire made of the same metal as the images, and bury it in the center of a city of great population. And when you have done this, men will be joined to women and there shall be excellent love between them. Likewise, when someone seeks to be loved by another bury it (i.e., the joined images) in the place where you wish them to be joined together.

An image **to make that physicians may profit**. Fashion in a plate of tin the image of a man seated upon a throne, having the work of science, and make another image of a man standing on his feet and held before him a chamberpot as if seeking counsel on it. And fashion both images under an ascendant of Taurus or Libra, with Mars in the Ascendant and the North Node on the Midheaven. And when you have made it thus, set the plate bearing these images in the place where you wish people to come [to consult], and you shall behold the people miraculously carried to that place.

An image **for the multiplication of crops and plants**. Fashion in a plate of silver the image of a seated man with crops, trees and plants about him; and this should be made beneath an Ascendant of Taurus, and the Moon passing from the Sun against Saturn. And bury this [image] in the place you wish it to be, and all seeds and plants and the like will greatly increase and [it] will preserve [them] from destruction by animals, birds, tempests or any manner of thing which destroys crops.

An image **for the healing of flaws in stones**. Fashion the image of a lion in the purest gold, holding a stone in its hand as though dancing with it, and fashion it in the hour of the Sun with the first degree of the second face of Leo rising. And if you carry this tablet with you, you shall be instantly freed from weariness. And this has been proven by the most wise.

An image **for the casting out of illness, melancholy and [the breaking of] enchantments**. If you wish to remove mechanical infirmities of whatever kind you may wish, to strengthen health until it is quite strong, and to return evil spells upon their senders whenever you may wish to do so. Fashion an image of the purest silver in the hour of Venus, with the Moon being placed in the Ascendant, fourth, seventh or tenth house and aspecting Venus with a good aspect; and the lord of the sixth house should aspect a fortune with a trine or opposite aspect, and the lord of the 8th house should be in square aspect to Mercury. And beware that Mercury not be retrograde nor combust, nor receiving any aspect from an infortune. And this image should be fashioned in the final hour of the lord of the day, and the lord of the hour should be placed in the tenth house from the Ascendant. And when this image has been fashioned in this manner, the aforesaid infirmities will be driven away.

XI. Astrology, Magical Talismans and the Mansions of the Moon

Translated by Robert Thomas

Through such a process as this is strengthened the Spirit of Reason, and it is joined to all the great virtues of the world, from which proceeds the spirit which has its agency in [such an] image...

There are 28 Mansions of the Moon, according to the second Pliny. The first of these is for destruction and depopulation [of places], and is called Alnath. When the Moon has passed into this Mansion, fashion an image of a black man with his hair wrapped and bound in black cloth, standing upright on his feet and holding in his right hand a lance in the fashion of a fighter. You should make this image in a ring of iron, and cense it with liquid storax. And [make] with this a seal in black wax, and say: "Thou, O Geriz, put to death NN, son of NN, swiftly and soon; and destroy him." And if you observe this [method], then it shall be as you wish. And know also that Geriz is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The second mansion is Albotayn, and it is for the removal of anger [from between two people]. When the Moon has passed around to this Mansion, take white wax and mastic and melt them together over a fire. After [they are well mixed], remove them from the fire and form from it the image of a crowned king. Cense this [image] with lignum aloes, and say: "Thou, O Enedil, drive away this anger with NN from me, and let me be reconciled with him, and let my petition be agreeable to him." And you should carry this image close by you, and it shall be done as you wish. And know that Enedil is the name of the lord of this Mansion. And this is his figure.

The third Mansion is Azoraye (which is to say, the Pleiades). It is for the acquisition of all good [things]. When the Moon has passed into this Mansion, fashion the figure of a seated woman with her right hand raised over her head, and wrap [the image] in cloth, and cense it with musk, camphor, mastic and aromatic oils. And say: You, Annuncia, make such and such [to happen]; and speak your petition here to her for whatever good thing you wish. Fashion this image in a silver ring with a square table, and then place it upon your finger. When you have performed this as aforesaid, it will be as you wish and your request will be carried out with speed. And know that Annuncia is the name of the lord of this Mansion. And this is its figure.

The fourth Mansion is Aldabaran, and it is for the creation of enmity. When the Moon has passed around to this Mansion, take red wax and from it fashion the image of an armed man riding a cavalry horse holding a serpent in his right hand. Cense this image with red myrrh and storax, and say: You, Assarez, do such and such a thing and fulfill my request; and make your request from things appertaining to enmity,

separation and the creation of evil desires. And it shall be completely as you have asked. And know that Assarez is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The fifth Mansion is Almizen, and it is for receiving good from kings and high officials. When the Moon has passed into this Mansion, fashion a sign from silver in which should be sculpted the head of a man without a body, and above the head should be written the name of the lord of this Mansion; and when writing this seal, make your request for whatever you desire. Fumigate it with white sandalwood, and say: You, Cabil, fulfill my desire and grant my petition, namely, that I shall receive good things and the best from the king and his councillors. When this [image] has been made, carry this seal with you and your petition will be granted. [Also] when you wish to see anything in your dreams, place this image in your bed beneath your head at night, and think always of what you wish [to see] and what you asked of shall be made clear to you. And know that Cabil is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The sixth Mansion is Achaya, and it is for the creation of love between two people. When the Moon has come about to this Mansion, fashion two images from white wax, place them face to face, and wrap them in white silk. Cense them with amber and lignum aloes, and say: You, Nedeyrahe, bring together this one and this one, and place between them love and friendship. And from this it shall be done as you desire. And know that Nedeyrahe is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The seventh Mansion is Aldira, and it for the acquisition of all good [things]. When the Moon has come around to this Mansion, fashion a seal of silver, and sculpt the image of a man clothed in robes and with his hands extended to heaven after manner of a man who is praying and supplicating [the gods]; in the breast [of this image] write the name of the lord of this Mansion. Cense it with all things which have sweet odors, and say: You, Siely, cause such and such to happen, and fulfill my petition. Ask [of it] whatever you wish from among all the good things. Carry this seal with you, and you will receive all you ask for. And know that Selehe is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The eighth Mansion is Annathra, and it is for the acquisition of victory. When the Moon has traveled into this Mansion, fashion from tin the image of an eagle with the head of a man, and in its breast scribe the name of the lord of this Mansion. Cense it with sulfur, and say: You, Annediex, do such and such for me, and bring what I have asked to me. When this image has been perfected in this fashion, take it with you into battle and you shall be victorious and shall prevail [over everyone]. And know that Annediex is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The ninth Mansion is Atarfa, and it is for [creating] weakness and infirmity. When the Moon has traveled into this Mansion, fashion the image of a man with no

genitalia out of lead, and with his hands covering his eyes; and upon his neck write the name of the lord of this Mansion. Cense this image with pine resin, and say: You, Raubel, make such and such a child fall ill or cause the blood to flow from the child of such and such. And ask whichever of these two [things] you desire, and it shall be done as you wish if you perform properly what is written above. And know that Raubel is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The tenth Mansion is Algebha and it is for the healing of illness and ease of childbirth in women. When the Moon has passed around to this Mansion, fashion [an image] from gold or latone (?) [of] the head of a lion, and above it write the name of the lord of this Mansion. Cense the image with amber, and say: You, Aredafir, lift up sadness, slowness and infirmity from my body and from the body of whomsoever consumes food or drink in which this seal has been placed. And whatever day you may have censed it, and it shall be carried to the sick [person] or the infirm [person] shall wash it with another substance to be consumed against illness or for women who have had a difficult birth. And know that the name of the lord of this Mansion is Aredafir.

The eleventh Mansion is Azobra, and it is for retaining respect and good [things]. When the Moon has passed into this Mansion, make in a table of gold the image of a man riding a lion, holding a lance in his right hand and holding the ear of the lion with his left [hand], and in front of this figure write the name of the lord of this Mansion. And say: You, Necol, bring glory to me that I shall be feared by men, and so that their fear shall cause them to tremble when they behold me; and quiet the heart of the king and of [his] lords and of [other] men of high estate that they may grant me honors and dignities. Carry this tablet with you, and it shall be as you have requested. And know that Necol is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The twelfth Mansion is Azarfa, and it is for the separation of two lovers as you may wish. When the Moon has passed around to this Mansion, fashion in black lead the image of a dragon fighting with a man, and in front of this figure write the name of the lord of this Mansion. Cense the image with the hair of a lion mixed with asafoetida, and say: You, Abdizu, break apart and separate them, NN from NN. Bury this image in the place that you wish, and it shall be as you desire. And know that Abdizu is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The thirteenth Mansion is Alahue, and it is for the liberation of men who are not able to come to women and for the creation of love between men and women. When the Moon has come around to this Mansion, fashion from red wax the image of an erect man (that is, with an erect penis); and let it be in all ways the image of a man desiring to be in coitus with a woman. From white wax fashion the image of a woman. Bind the two images together face to face, and cense them with amber and lignum aloes,

and wrap them in a piece of white silk which has been washed in rosewater; and in whichever image write the name of the one you desire. If a woman shall carry these images with her, she will be most strongly desired by the man whose name is upon the image - which is to say, when he sees her. And if another is tied or bound, who is not able to perform with women, if he shall carry the images with him [the binding] shall be dissolved and he will be able to perform with women. And know that the name of the lord of this Mansion is Azerut.

The fourteenth Mansion is Azimech, and it is for the separating of men from women. When the Moon has come around to this Mansion, fashion from red wax the image of a dog with his own tail held in his mouth. Cense it with the hair of a dog and the hair of a cat, and say: You, Erdegel, break apart and divide NN from NN, that they shall desire only enmity and evil [between them]. And name whatever person that you wish, and bury [the image] in the place where they are. And know that the name of the lord of this Mansion is Erdegel.

The fifteenth Mansion is Algafra, and it is for the acquisition of friendship and all good things that may be desired. When the Moon has passed into this Mansion, fashion from ink [and parchment] the figure of a seated man, holding scrolls in his hand as if they had been collected together. Cense it with frankincense and nutmeg and say: You, Achalich, do such and such for me, and make things comply with my wishes. You may ask him for the joining together of friends and lovers, and any thing which pertains to them, and this image should then be carried with you. And know that Achalich is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The sixteenth Mansion is Azebene, and it is for the making of money (which is to say, in selling and earning). When the Moon has passed around to this Mansion, fashion in a plate of silver the figure of a man seated in a throne and carrying a scale in his hands. Cense [the image] with fine odors, and set it out under the stars for seven nights, saying each night: You, Azeruch, make such and such happen for me, and complete for me my request. Ask of it pertaining to selling and earning. And know that Azeruch is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The seventeenth Mansion is Alichil, and it is [for workings] that thieves may not enter into the house and to drive away similar types of people. When the Moon has entered this Mansion, fashion the figure of a monkey in an iron seal, holding his hands above his shoulders. Cense it with the hair of a monkey and the hair of a female mouse, and wrap it in a monkey skin. It should then be buried in your house, while saying: You, Adrieb, guard all my things and everything that exists within this house, nor let it be entered by thieves. When the aforesaid [procedure] has been

done, thieves will flee from your house. And know that Adrieb is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The eighteenth Mansion is Alcab, and it is for the healing of fevers and infirmities of the belly. When the Moon has traveled into this Mansion, fashion from wax the image of an adder holding its tail above its head. Cense it with the horn of a stag and say: You, Egribel, guard this house of mine that no serpent may enter nor any other hurtful beast. Place the image in a vessel which should be buried beneath your house; when it has been done as I have said then no serpent will be able to enter nor any other hurtful creature. If [the image] is to relieve a fever or illness of the belly, carry this image with you and it will free you [from them]. And know that Egribel is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The nineteenth Mansion is Axaula, and it is for hurrying the menses of women. When the Moon has passed around to this Mansion, fashion from brass (which is drawn forth in a certain manner) a seal, in which sculpt the image of a woman holding her hands before her face. Cense it with liquid storax and say: You, Annucel, cause the blood to flow from such and such a woman - name her here. And it shall be as you asked. If a woman keeps this image tied about her waist, it will keep her happily and without danger [of pregnancy]. And know that Annucel is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The twentieth Mansion is Alnaym, and it is for hunting in the fields. When the Moon has come around to this Mansion, fashion in a plate of tin a figure having the head and arms of a man, the body of a horse with four feet and having a tail, holding a bow in its hands. Cense it with the hair of a wolf, and say: You, Queyhuc, make me to take all I hunt in the world, and let them come to me swiftly. Carry the image with you happily and you shall take anything in the world that you hunt. And know that Queyhuc is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The twenty-first Mansion is Albelda, and it is for destruction. When the Moon has passed around to this Mansion, fashion the image of a man having two faces, with one facing forward and one facing behind. Cense it with sulfur and carabe, and say: You, Bectue, leave the place where you are and destroy them. Then place the image in a small bag and place sulfur and carabe with it along with some hair, and bury it in the place that you wish, and it shall be as you have requested. And know that Bectue is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The twenty-second Mansion is... [lacuna]

The twenty-third Mansion is Zaadebola, and it is for destruction and devastation. When the Moon has passed into this Mansion, fashion a seal of iron in which you

should sculpt the image of a cat having a dog's head. Cense it with the hair of a dog, and say: You, Zequebin, drive out everyone from such and such a place, and destroy and devastate it. When this Mansion has come to the Ascendant, set this seal out under the stars, and the following night bury the aforesaid seal in the place which you wish to destroy. And it shall be as you desire. And know that the name of the lord of this Mansion is Zequebin.

The twenty-fourth Mansion is Caadezod, and it is for the increase of herds. When the Moon has passed into this Mansion, take the horn of a castrated ram which is best and most apt, and in it fashion the figure of a woman with her son in her arms, in the likeness of one who is breastfeeding. Cense it with mundatura(?) which can be made from the aforesaid horn, and say: You, Abrine, improve and guard this herd. After this, hang the image about the neck of one of the rams of this herd; if you wish to work for [the increase of] herds of cows, fashion this image in the horn of a bull, and hang it around the neck of a bull, and the herd will be augmented as has been said and death shall not overtake it. Know that Abrine is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The twenty-fifth Mansion is Zaadalahbia, and it is for the protection of orchards and crops from evil happenings. When the Moon has come to it, fashion a seal in fig wood, and sculpt in it the figure of a man in the likeness of one who is planting trees. Cense it with the flowers of these trees, and say: You, Aziel, guard my crops and my orchards that any destruction or ill fortune may not befall them. Place the aforesaid image in one of the trees in the place which you wish to guard. While the image which was made continues there, destruction shall not befall the crops. And know that Aziel is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The twenty-sixth Mansion is Alfarg Primus, and it is for the creation of love. When the Moon has passed into it, take white wax and mastic and melt them together; from these fashion the image of a woman with her hair unbound and before her a vessel placed as if to receive her hair. Cense it with sweet-smelling odors, and say: You, Tagriel, bring me to the love and friendship of such and such a woman. Place the image in a small bag, and place with it also some of the most sweet-smelling of substances; carry it with you, and it shall be completed as you have requested. And know that Tagriel is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The twenty-seventh Mansion is Alfarg Posterior, and it is for the destruction of springs and wells. When the Moon has come into it, take red earth, and in it fashion the image of a winged man, holding in his hands a dish with a hole in it, and raising a bone to it (?). Afterward put all of it into the kiln in which it is to be fired. After this place in the vessel asafoetida and liquid storax, and say: You, Abliemel, destroy such

and such a spring of such and such a man, and name him here as you wish. Throw the image into his spring, and it shall be destroyed and the spring shall no more come forth. And know that Abliemel is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

The twenty-eighth Mansion is Arrexe, and it is for bringing fish together in one place. When the Moon has come to this Mansion, fashion of brass (which is in one manner) a seal, in which fashion the image of a fish having a colored spine on which you should write the name of the lord of this Mansion. Cense it with the skin of a sea fish; after this, tie a string around it and throw it in the water in the place where you wish the fish to come together. All of the fish in the area around it will immediately gather together about it, and allow you to harvest them. And know that Anuxi is the name of the lord of this Mansion.

Know that in all of these images you ought to write the name of the lord of the Mansion and your petition with it. But in all of them which are designed to do good, gather things together, join [others] together, or cause favor and love, you ought to write [the name] in the breast of the image. Works which cause arguments, separation and which cause enmity and malice, [write the name] behind the shoulders (which is to say, in the spine of the image). All works which are for glory, honor and the gaining of high office ought to have the name written on the top of the head of the image. And thus it is done.

XII. Ritual of Jupiter

Introduction

The *Picatrix* or *Ghayat al Hikam*, the Aim of the Wise, was composed in Arabic in Andalusia around A.D. 1000 and is a compilation of many earlier books on astrology and magic. The *Picatrix* was translated into Latin in A.D. 1256 at the court of Alphonso the Wise in Castile. It was the most important text on astrological magic in medieval and Renaissance Europe, but because of its reputation for evil magic, it was never published until modern times and circulated only in manuscript form. Despite its unsavory reputation it gives a complete philosophical underpinning for astrological magic relying on Hermetic and Neoplatonic philosophy.

Book III, Chapter 9

The Operation of Jupiter

When you wish to work through Jupiter, work in the day of Jupiter [Thursday], with the Sun in Sagittarius or Pisces and the Moon in the head of Aries (because this is the exaltation of the Sun). And prepare a clean and bright house, a cauldron and a good and rich cloth and the house should be suitable to the work.

Hold in your hand a dish with a mixture of honey, butter, nut oil, sugar [and make the mixture] smooth and liquid and make a pastry of flour, butter, milk, sugar and the most delicate saffron and make more than you are able to eat.

And in your house at the head of a large table place above [the table] a strong tripod and put before it a censor composed of the metal of Jupiter [traditionally tin].

And on the table place musk, camphor, lignum aloes and other good smelling things and civet and similar things. And mix one [measure?] of mastic with the pie and bring about a mixture of the wet and dry.

And in the middle of the table place a large lit candle and behind the candle place a pomegranate and cook and broil the flesh of a ram, a chicken and a pigeon and fill the dish full and at the head [of the table] pour a jug full of wine and place a clear vessel.

And above the table place a branch of myrtle and as we have said before, suffumigate mastic and lignum aloes at the head of the table and suffumigate mastic in the other parts of the house and no one should be in the house besides yourself.

And say, “Demuez, Armez, Ceylez, Mahaz, Erdaz, Tamyz, Feruz, Dyndez, Afrayuz, Tayhaciedez.” These are the all of the names of the spirits of Jupiter in six parts of Heaven. The interpretation of the name Afriduz and the others following is, “Come

and enter all of you spirits of Jupiter and smell the perfumes and eat from this dish and do as you wish” and say the preceding 7 times.

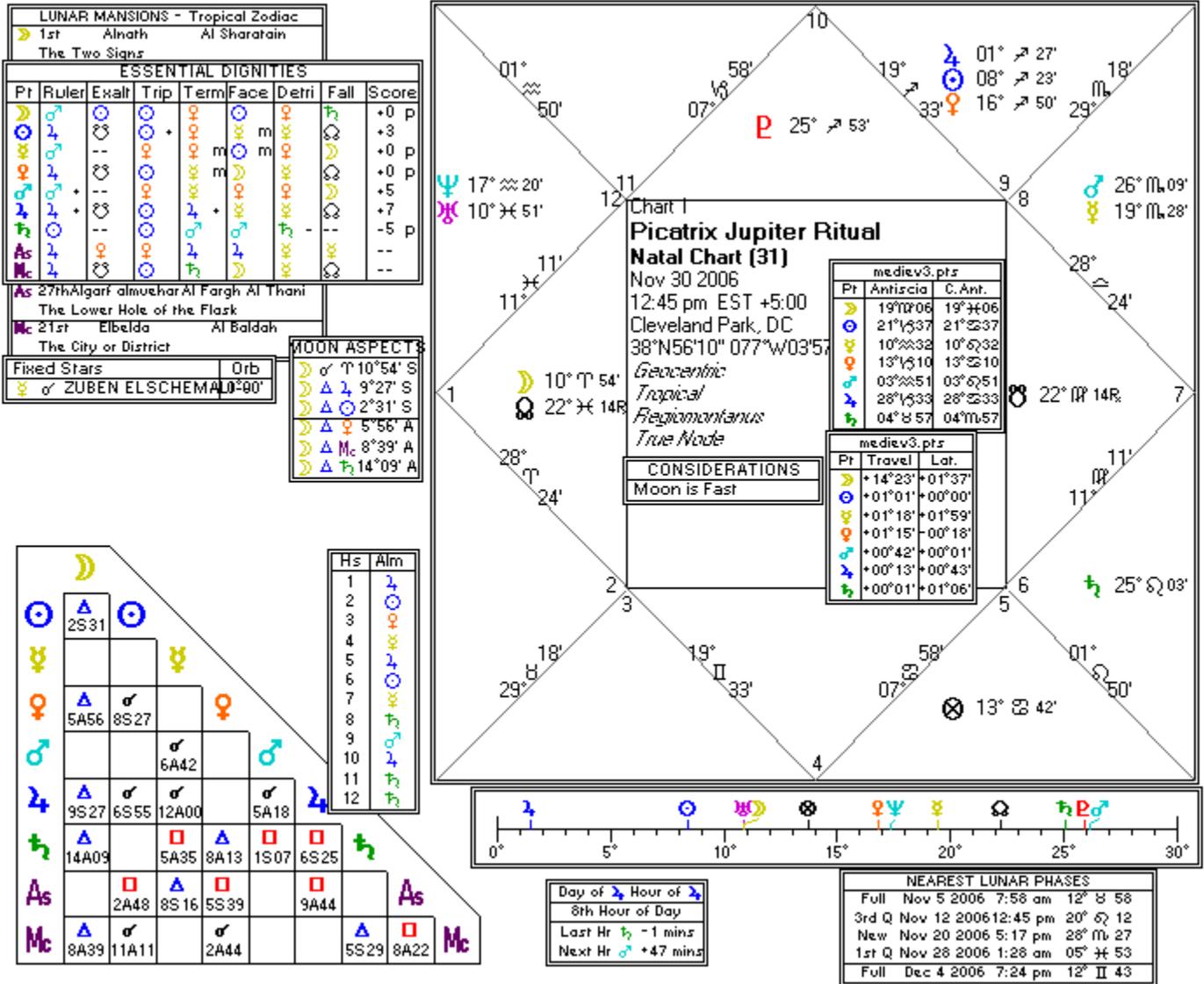
Afterwards go out of your house and stand quiet for [a time, an hour is a possible translation, which may not be practical]. Then enter your house and make the previous prayer again and after doing the work 5 times on the 6th time after you have made the aforementioned prayer then spirits will come in beautiful forms wearing ornate garments and they will receive your petition and the desire that you have waited for will be recorded and your knowledge and understanding will be assisted and the power of the spirits will defend and protect you.

When this order is complete, call together friends and associates and prepare food and eat and drink together and perfume with perfumes and suffumigate with suffumigations.

This is the true prayer of the planets that the Roman wise men were accustomed to make during the year, specifically for Jupiter.

Example Election

The *Picatrix* states that the above ritual should be done, “in the day of Jupiter [Thursday], with the Sun in Sagittarius or Pisces and the Moon in the head of Aries (because this is the exaltation of the Sun).” *Picatrix* Bk III, ch. 9. An example election



appears below.

We have the Sun in Sagittarius, the Moon in Aries and it is Jupiter day. As a bonus it is the planetary hour of Jupiter as well.

XIII. An Astrological Election of Mercury in the First Face of Virgo for Wealth and Growth

*A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven kissing hill,
A combination and a form indeed,
Hamlet Act III, Scene IV*

— *William Shakespeare*

The Italian astrologer and philosopher Marsilio Ficino says,

“...if anyone looks for a special benefit from Mercury, he ought to locate him in Virgo...and then make an image out of tin or silver; he should put on it the whole sign of Virgo and its character and the character of Mercury. And if you are going to use the first face of Virgo, add also the figure which has been observed in the first face...”

Three Books on Life Bk. III, Chapter 18 (Kaske & Clarke ed.) page 334-5.

The faces or decans are ten degree divisions of the signs of Zodiac. The origins of the 36 decans are very ancient. In Egypt they appear in the decan calendars of the the Middle Kingdom, over 2,000 years before Christ. Typically an image was associated with each decan. We find listings of these images in the 1st century B.C. *Liber Hermetis* attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. *Liber Hermetis* trans. Robert Zoller (Spica ed.) pages 1-10.

A listing of decans is also found in *Picatrix* an encyclopedic work of medieval Arabic astrology and magic at Book Two, Chapter 11. For more information on *Picatrix*, see *Picatrix* at Twilight Grotto. Two more selections from *Picatrix*, untranslated elsewhere can be found at *Astrology, Magical Talismans & Mansions of the Moon* in *Picatrix* and *Listing of the Mansions of the Moon* in *Picatrix*.

This week’s talisman comes from David Pingree’s Latin version of *Picatrix* published by the Warburg Institute,

Et ascendit in prima facie Virginis puella virgo linteo laneo veteri
cooperta, et eius manu malum granatum tenens. Et hec facies est
seminandi, arandi, germinandi, arbores, colligendi uvas et bone vite. Et
hec est eius forma.

And there ascends in the first face of Virgo a maiden girl covered in linen and wool, holding in her hand a pomegranate. And this is a face of planting, cultivation, germination of trees, collecting grapes and good vines. And this is its form.

Picatrix Book II, Chapter 11 page 77 (translation by Christopher Warnock, Esq.)

The famous astrologer and mage Cornelius Agrippa says that the first face of Virgo, “...signifieth getting of wealth, ordering of diet, plowing, sowing and peopling.” *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* Bk, II, Chapter 37 (Tyson ed.) page 378.

In any election we would like to see the Moon strong, as she conveys all influences from the superior spheres to us in the sub-lunary realm. Here she is in her sign, Cancer, and in the angular tenth house. The Moon is applying to a sextile of Mercury and the aspect is almost perfect; the Moon is in the same degree as Mercury.

There are, however, two potential problems with this chart. The first is that Mercury, while going from combustion, is still within 10 degrees of the Sun. The famous English astrologer William Lilly says that to be combust a planet needs to be in the same sign as the Sun, but this proximity is worrisome nonetheless.

The second problem is that Mercury is applying to Jupiter and Mercury is in Jupiter's detriment, Virgo. The Italian astrologer Guido Bonatti says that, "Whether a planet is joined by a planet which is in its descension [detriment or fall] or that planet which is in the descension of another is joined by that planet whose descension it is, it always brings the matter forth to destruction and annuls it." *Liber Astronomiae* Bk. IV (Arhat ed.) page 15.

In this case, however, Mercury and Jupiter are both highly essentially dignified, Jupiter is exalted and Mercury is in its sign, and accidentally dignified, Mercury is in the ascendant and Jupiter in the benefic 11th house, so this so should mitigate some of the ill effects, if any.

XIV. Invocation of Mercury

Mercury is changeable, exchanging one nature for another, embracing that of the other planets, that is to say good with the good and bad with the bad.

Introduction

The invocations of Mercury translated below are from *Picatrix*, Book III, chapter 7, which as the late David Pingree notes, “describe the private rituals of the Harranian Sabians...” “Some Source of the Ghayat al-Hakim” *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institute*, vol 43 (1980) at 12. We are privileged to have the translation of these invocations by Nigel Jackson, a leading contemporary mage, artist and esoteric researcher.

Invocation of Mercury

Picatrix, Book III, Chapter 7

Translation by Nigel Jackson

Mercury, noble lord, you who are truthful, sensible, intelligent, you who, like the scribes, know and spread arithmetic, calculation, the science of the heavens and the earth! You are a noble lord, a master who supports and understands subtly the measured joy, riches, trade, profits, the profound significations.

To whom is due all prophecies of prophets and their meanings, reasoning, theory, the apprehension of diverse sciences, of subtlety, intellect, philosophy, geometry, of the sciences of heaven and earth, divination, geomancy, poesy, of writing, eloquence, intellectual agility, of the depth in all the teachings and in all the actions, of aptitude, of the changing of one affair to another, of deception, to render oneself pure and sincere, of perseverance, of aiding men, and of comporting oneself well toward them, of forgiveness, of intelligence, of tranquillity, of averting wickedness, of good religion in the regard of God and of the law in regard to men, it is you who organize all these and of them are the significator.

You who are masked, by your subtlety, so that your nature is not able to be known nor your effects determined for certain. You are favourable with the favourable planets and unfavourable with the unfavourable planets, masculine with males and feminine with females, with the diurnal stars diurnal and nocturnal with the nocturnal, in accord with them in all their natures. You model yourself on them in all their forms, and you transform yourself into all their qualities.

I pray and invoke you by all your names: **Hotarit** in Arabian, **Mercury** in Latin, **Haruz** in Roman, **Tyr** in Phoenician, **Meda** in Indian. I conjure you in the first place, by the

Lord, the God of Greatness, who is the master of the firmament and of the great and high realm.

I conjure you by Him to favourably receive my request, to realise for me that which I ask of you, to pour on me the powers of your spirit, so that I am made strong, that I be made effective to realise my wish, so that I am capable and prepared to apprehend the sciences and the wisdoms.

Cause me to be liked and to be well received by kings and men of exalted office, make it so that I am highly placed and honoured of all men, in the secret confidence of the kings so that they value me, agreeing fully with my words, having need of me and asking of my knowledge and wisdom as regards revenues, arithmetic, astrology and divination. Act in my regard and dispose me so that I am able to benefit from these who precede, so that I can receive wealth, honours, and excellence before kings, those in high places and all men.

It is why I conjure you by **Arquyl**, the Angel that God has placed with you to carry out your actions and operations, to carry out my request, to grant my prayer, to pay attention to my supplications and to carry them out. I ask you to help me of your spirit, to strengthen me, to bind me in amity with kings by the grace of your spirit and your power and that I attain, by your virtue, to science and wisdom; so that you assist me by your aid to grasp that which I do not know, to comprehend that which I do not comprehend and to see that which I do not see.

Keep away from me of necessity, that which diminishes intelligence and gives rise to forgetfulness, keep from me feebleness, so that I can attain the standard of the superior sages of yore, who naturally by their spirit and their heart, acquired knowledge and intellect. Send to my spirit your power and your spirit, so that it exalts me, makes me attain the aforesaid state and directs me in knowledge, wisdoms and in all my actions, so that I have the grace and the capacity to serve kings and men of high station, and that I acquire in this manner riches and treasures; accomplish this request swiftly for me.

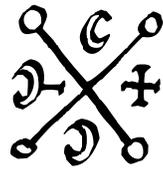
For my part, I conjure you by the Lord God, master of the high firmament and puissant kingdom, to gather my demand and to carry out effectively all the requests I address to you.

Directional Spirits of Mercury
Picatrix, Book III, Chapter 9

Barhuyex, Emirex, Hamerix, Sehix, Deryx, Meyer, Deherix, Baix, Faurix; scribe, Mercury! Come swiftly with your spirits!

The name which includes the spirits of Mercury is Merhuyez, that of its spirit in the height is Amirez, that in the depth Hytyz, that to the right hand side Cehuz, that to the left Deriz, that of the front Maylez, Dehedyz behind: that of his movement in the heavens and its progression in the signs is Mehendiz. The name which includes all these preceding (it is so to speak the radix and the type of all those preceding) is Merhuyez, named above.

ON THE DECANS AND TAROT



XV. A Brief History of Tarot

Paul Hughes-Barlow

There are three unanswered questions on the tarot:

- What was the origin of the suit card symbols, and what did they stand for?
- What was the source of the trumps, and what was their original import?
- When and why did people begin using the cards for divination?

In the tarot community there is an implicit understanding that in some way the tarot has always been about divination. We want it to be so. I have my doubts. I believe there was a simple political agenda at work – to use the tarot as a vehicle to create a mystical quasi-Christian system based upon Judaic and Islamic sources, but without disclosing those sources. Europe has a long and ignoble history of ethnically cleansing the continent from influences from the Middle East. Our Christian faith has been cleansed as far as possible from its roots. Jesus is depicted with blonde hair and blue eyes; his birth is symbolized by a Christmas Tree and giving gifts, while Easter is a commercial enterprise to sell chocolate eggs. The influence of Islam and Judaism has been tolerated, barely, at the extremities of Continental Europe. In the West, Spain had a very successful Islamic civilization that also tolerated Judaism, but this was forcibly removed and Spain became ultra Catholic. In the East, Prague became a centre of kabbalistic thought. Today, Moslems are seen at best with suspicion, and at worse as the end of civilization.

At the heart of the Judaic and Islamic religions is the belief that no graven images are permissible of the Prophets. Tarot, on the other hand, is image rich. Tarot thrives on art, pictures and images. Tarot is unthinkable without its beautiful pictures. The western culture has no problem with plagiarism when it comes to appropriating eastern knowledge. Scientists such as Isaac Newton stole many Islamic ideas and used them as their own without ever feeling the need to acknowledge the sources.

While there is evidence of propaganda in using texts such as the Sepher Yetsirah and the Bahir to convert Jews to Christianity by suggesting that these texts predict the Coming of the Messiah, Islamic influences were simply deleted. For example, we only have references to tarot being banned in the 1370s, while the first examples of decks appear around 1450 to 1480. Michael Dummett proposed the Islamic origins of tarot in 1980, forty years after the discovery of the Mamluk cards in Istanbul.

In the 14th century the prototype tarot deck had 52 cards, and it originated in the Mamluk playing cards. These cards had four suits, and the court cards were the King and a Minister, which evolved into the Kings, Knights, Knaves and Queens.

By the 15th century, the symbols for the suits had become Coins, Cups, Swords and Batons. The 22 Trump cards were added. The cynic in me believes that 22 is significant as the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet for anti-Semitic purposes, particularly as the Jewish religions forbids the use of imagery. The number of the Major Arcana has always been 22, although the introduction of zero meant that there have sometimes been 21 with an un-numbered card. The history of the Major Arcana should be seen as portraying a continuous snapshot of the ebb and flow of religious and political trends in society.

The best way for a fad to take root is for the opinion formers to take up new ideas, so tarot decks were painted to portray the nobility who had money and influence. This flattery worked particularly well in Italy with the Viscontis of Milan and the D'Estes of Ferrara.

The next century saw printing technology spread the tarot decks for playing around Europe. The Trumps cards were numbered and had titles added.

Religious war broke out on the iconography of some of the cards in the 17th century, particularly in Catholic countries over the Pope and female Pope cards.

The 18th century saw the rise of the Tarot of Marseilles which used Egyptian symbolism to explain its origin. The cards began to be commonly used for divination. Note that kabbalism was not the first choice.

The 19th and 20th centuries saw kabbalism and astrology incorporated into the tarot, and the cards were increasingly used for divination rather than playing games.

The origins of the tarot clearly go back to the Mamluk Tarot, and the Near East, with influences from Sufism, Persia and Zoroastrianism. There are also intriguing links to polo. These influences are particularly strong for the creation of the suits.

The muddled creation and development of the Triumphs shows the search for an identity for these cards, which seems to have originated in Petrarch's *I Trionfi*, began in 1356 and continued until his death fourteen years later. There may well be a connection to the Mystery Plays and Morality Plays that were very popular in medieval Europe. However much the depiction and order of the Triumphs has changed down the centuries, the constant has been the number 22, so could we be witnessing an attempt to Christianize the Hebrew alphabet? The next stage shows that the problem was embraced as a virtue when the esoteric tarot developed. The Tarot of Marseilles included Egyptian iconography, but the problem was of course that hieroglyphics had so far eluded translation. This did not stop the notion of the Egyptian God Thoth take root as the God of the Tarot. With Egyptian hieroglyphics

such an impenetrable barrier, an alternative route had to be found, and where better than kabbalism? After all, the Sepher Yetsirah, Bahir and Zohar were readily available in Latin. Now of course, Jewish mysticism could not be taken on as it was – it had to be Christianized, and used as propaganda to convert Jews to Christianity. Incidentally, the 12th century books from Southern France and Spain, the Sepher Yetsirah, Bahir and Zohar were originally propaganda tools against Judaism.

Our modern interpretations of the Tarot can be identified precisely to the 1750s when Etteilla began to explore the tarot as a divination system. Etteilla declared that the tarot contained all the secret wisdom of the ancients. This notion was taken up by Court de Gebelin who saw not the kabbalism of Judaism, but ancient Egyptian symbols, and the Book of Thoth. Etteilla developed his system of divination with a mish-mash of sources that had no internal logic, so it was up to later occultists to provide a coherent structure.

Eliphas Levi

Eliphas Levi connected the Egyptian symbolism with the Hebrew Alphabet inspired by *Le Mond Primitif* by Court de Gebelin and the *Oedipus Aegypticus* by Athanasius Kircher. These two books provided a structure of attributions to the Hebrew alphabet incorporating astrology and angelology. Add in the heady mix of the renaissance magic of Henry Cornelius Agrippa, and we have the esoteric tarot.

The Golden Dawn System

The next development of the esoteric tarot was inspired by Eliphas Levi, when various members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in England revised some of Levi's ideas. Historians disagree on who was responsible, but it is clear that Wyn Westcott, Macgregor Mathers, and AE Waite all had some input. I would suggest that that the Irish playwright WB Yeats, who was head of the Order for a time; unfortunately, of all the prominent members of the Golden Dawn, Yeats was the only one to keep his vows and not leak the secrets of the Order.

Tarot Interpretations – Major Arcana

The basis of all the interpretations of the Major Arcana can be found in a handful of authorities concentrated in a period of barely 200 years. These are:

- Pratesi's *Cartomancer* 1750
- De Mellet 1781
- Court de Gebelin 1773-82
- Eliphas Levi 1855
- Christian 1870

- Macgregor Mathers 1880
- Golden Dawn 1888-96
- Waite 1889-1909 and 1910
- Aleister Crowley Thoth Tarot 1944.

Tarot Interpretations – Minor Arcana

Almost all the interpretations for the Minor Arcana come from a single source, the **Picatrix**, (1256) which is a Latin translation of an earlier Arabic manuscript on the magical attributions of the 36 decanates. The decanate system is truly ancient, going back around 5,000 years to Ancient Egypt.

The Golden Dawn was the primary force for using the **Picatrix**, although it naturally did not acknowledge this. The interpreting authorities can be slimmed down to:

- Etteilla
- Golden Dawn
- Mathers
- AE Waite
- Crowley

What happened to the Sephiroth? Everything written about the Minor Arcana concerning the Sephiroth is clearly an extrapolation based upon an interpretation of what the Sephiroth mean. The Sephiroth on the Tree of Life can be seen only as a secondary system, and one that is not particularly coherent. This does not of course stop books on Tarot continuing to print diagrams of the Minor Arcana on the Tree of Life.

Since there are 36 decans, four Minor cards do not fit into the system, which is why the Aces are referred to the 'Roots of the Powers of the Elements', interestingly not to Kether, which would be an obvious choice if one wanted to reinforce the kabbalistic notion of the Tarot. The reason why Kether is not the first choice is that the Minor Arcana are divided into four elements, and Kether is not supposed to be subdivided in any way.

The Court Cards

If there have been many reinterpretations and arguments over the order, naming and attributions of the Major Arcana, it is as nothing to the Court Cards. Originally there seemed to be only two court cards; a King and a Minister. This was later expanded to include a Knight, Knave and Queen. The order and nomenclature was changed by the Golden Dawn to fit in with Kabbalistic ideas found in the Sepher Yetsirah and Bahir, and to confuse the issue further, Aleister Crowley made further adjustments.

The primary attribution of the Court cards is of course to the four elements. Later, these elements were sub-divided using the elements, so that we have fire of water, earth of air, etc. The Golden Dawn added an extra level of complexity by associating the King, Queen and Prince with astrology using the decanate system, but by overlapping the signs so that for example the Queen of Wands rules from 20 degrees Pisces to 20 degrees Aries. Since the Princesses or Knaves were the earthy part of each element, they could not rule a decanate, so they each ruled a “Quadrant of the Heavens about Kether” (Book of Thoth, Crowley).

However, the main authorities of interpretation can be slimmed down to:

- Pratesi
- Etteilla
- Mathers
- Waite
- Crowley

The latter three names can be considered part of the same school, the Golden Dawn.

Summary

What is interesting about the development of the Tarot is the way that its Arabic antecedents have been consistently ignored or covered up. The Kabbalistic association appears when occultists were unable to convincingly incorporate their preferred source, from Ancient Egypt. Where Kabbalism does appear, the agenda and propaganda of converting Jews to Christianity is never far below the surface. The use of astrology, particularly with **Picatrix**, shows the only coherent and consistent interpretations for the Minor Arcana. Interpretations of the cards only appeared around 1750, and if we aggregate members of the Golden Dawn, the number of modern authorities on the tarot comes to:

- Pratesi's Cartomancer 1750
- De Mellet 1781
- Court de Gebelin 1773-82
- Eliphas Levi 1855
- Christian 1870
- Golden Dawn authorities

What has happened to all the other authorities? Well, while they have not contributed greatly to the divinatory meanings of the Tarot, they have extended the influence and attribution of the Tarot into other esoteric, occult and philosophical realms and schools.

Despite the machinations and convoluted history, Tarot is still a brilliant system of divination and magic. The inclusion of 22 cards to the 56 suit cards is very significant, as it showed an agenda for including Christian religious imagery. Trying to understand the order of those cards as they evolved is a red herring. There seems to be little understanding down the centuries for why there are 22 cards, until Christian kabbalists saw the significance. However, even then they preferred to use Ancient Egypt over the Bible. My preferred tarot deck is the Thoth Tarot by Aleister Crowley. On the back of the Thoth Tarot book is a drawing of the God Thoth.

Recommended Books

- The Mystical Origins of the Tarot, Paul Huson, Destiny Books
- A Wicked Pack of Cards, Ronald Decker, Thierry Depaulis, Michael Dummett
- A History of the Occult Tarot, Ronald Decker and Michael Dummett

XVI. The Decans in Astrology

Benjamin Dykes, Ph.D., DMA

Introduction

In this brief essay I will explain the history and some of the meanings and uses of the astrological decans. It is not a complete survey, and there are other sources I have not checked. It is mainly designed to give a student of the Western Mystery Tradition a general introduction.

The decans originally started out as calendar devices: they were ways of keeping track of how much of the heavens had turned, day to day. And since they were measured by the rising and setting of certain stars or groups of stars, and since stars were often thought to be alive or have intelligent power, the decans were associated with deities. Later, when horoscopic astrology was invented, they were thought of as astrologically very important for a few centuries. Then their importance clearly waned. [1] Their earlier status as important divisions of the heavens and as associated with star beings remained alive in talismanic magic (e.g., the Picatrix), but in astrology they became only minor dignities and played special roles only in astrological medicine and physiognomy. [2]

Section I: Astronomy and Horoscopic Astrology

Astronomical Background

Before the Greek invention of horoscopic astrology in the first few centuries B.C., the Babylonian and Egyptian traditions of star-gazing and omens did not focus so exclusively on the zodiac. As the heavens turned from east to west (called “primary motion” in astrology), different constellations rose, culminated, and fell, depending on one’s latitude and the season of the year. Originally, the Egyptians associated 36 constellations with the calendar (non-zodiacal). [3]

They were also used for calendrical purposes: each day, for ten days, the Egyptians would note what stars were rising with the sun. After ten days, they’d consider it the start of the next decan. But it is clear that the Egyptians hadn’t regularized the decans into degrees. [4] For it makes sense geometrically to have 36 decans of ten degrees each. But since the year is 365 days long (actually $365 \frac{1}{4}$), the actual length of the year in days (by which they measured the decans) does not match the number of degrees in a circle. Very quickly the calendar would break down. [5]

When Greek scientists and astrologers began to synthesize prior traditions and added systematic innovations of their own, dividing the sky according to the zodiac became more common, and the decanal system was shifted onto it. They immediately became

part of astrology, with three decans of 10 degrees each being assigned to each zodiacal sign. [6]

The decans also seem to have been associated with star deities during this period. The ancients not only attributed divine power to planets, but also to stars (or at least, significant stars). The decans were, or represented the power of, star deities, and pictures of the deities associated with them can be found. [7] Bruce Malina (see bibliography) shows in great detail that virtually every being and image in the Revelation of St. John in the New Testament is a celestial object, from constellations, to comets, to planets, to individual stars, including the decans (whom he associates with the 24 Seniors), [8] all of which reaches back to Babylonian star-gazing and star-worship. On the ancient view, it made sense to read stories of intelligent drama into the stars, based on the relationship of the stars to each other, and if Malina (and others) are right, John is reinterpreting stars' and comets' natures and relationships to reveal God's plan.

Hellenistic Astrology

It was in Hellenistic astrology (from the first few centuries B.C. until approximately the 1st century A.D.) that the decans played a prominent role in astrology. The Roman astrologer Firmicus Maternus (3rd - 4th century A.D.) says the decans have "infinite power and freedom in indicating the fates of men." [9] But the Greeks didn't get very far with the matter (Firmicus p. 36). Following are a few ways astrologers used them:

Unlucky/Lucky Births and the Ascendant

As a holdover from the Egyptian era, some of the decans were considered lucky or unlucky. [10] Consequently, the decan that was rising on the horizon at birth was taken to indicate whether a native would have a good or bad life. This was the basis for the later importance of the horoscope (the zodiacal degree on the horizon at birth) and the Ascendant (the zodiacal sign rising at birth) and the houses. [11]

Medical Astrology

The notion of the decans as indicating lucky or unlucky lives, along with the Stoic notion of the heavens as being a sort of cosmic body (corresponding to our human bodies), led to the idea that each decan was associated with a certain part of the human body. Consequently, the decans in which the malefic planets (Mars and Saturn) or the horoscope were at birth, indicated the parts of the body one could expect ailments to strike. The first decan of Aries was associated with parts of the head, and so on through the zodiac, whose last decan in Pisces related to the feet.

Astrologers also used these medical notions to predict whether children would have birth defects (“monstrous births”). [12]

Ultimately, the decans were used to predict the health, success, body structure, and personality of the native. Holden’s translation of Hephaestio of Thebes’s view of the 2nd decan of Cancer reads that a native with this decan rising will be reared “richly and of better parents, and he will see the deaths of his brothers; and he will be a public man and he will be held in honor... [and] small in stature, swarthy, his beard thin,” et cetera. [13]

Leitourgoi: Rulership by Spirits?

Early on in the development of Greek astrology, each decan was further divided into three parts (making nine per zodiacal sign), which were called leitourgoi (ministers) or munifices (duty-officers). [14] It is unknown where this division came from, but they clearly derive from the earlier Babylonian star-worship and attribution of deities to the decans. Firmicus says they are attributed to the decans by “some who wish to elaborate [the decans] in more detail.” [15] Holden says they may have been the origin of the Hindu division of signs into ninthths, called navamsas. [16]

Now, munifices or leitourgoi in politics were officials who carried out official duties assigned them by a superior. And so Firmicus says that the munifices have an infinite number of powers of divinities, decreeing accidents, pains, sicknesses, unexpected events, and monstrous births. [17] Holden reports the Hermetica as saying there are stars which travel in heaven and obey the decans (viz., the leitourgoi); the leitourgoi are servants and private soldiers under the command of the decans. [18]

It is unclear what exactly the ancient astrologers thought leitourgoi or munifices were. Were they just further subdivisions of the signs, so that the notion that they were “divinities” or “officials” was meant to be metaphorical, like planets “ruling” signs or “receiving” one another? Or did they believe that celestial spirits, possibly accessible through magical means, were influential through certain parts of the sky?

Weather Prediction

Some ancient and medieval sources also say that weather can be predicted by the decans, though they incorporate fixed stars outside the zodiac, along with complicated rules for weather prediction. [19] In this case, we are probably seeing a combination of old Babylonian-Egyptian omen and weather prediction, and new zodiacal Greek astrology.

Mundane Astrology

The decans were also used, along with fixed stars and other constellations, to predict world events.

Al-Biruni says the Greeks also associated some of the 48 constellations to the decans, depending on what was rising at the time. But they did it for the purposes of mundane astrology peculiar to a given country, and they left no instruction as to how to do it. [20]

Systems of Rulership

There were two versions of rulership given to the decans in the ancient world: I will call these Chaldean rulership, [21] and rulership by triplicity. [22]

The Chaldean rulership orders the planets by planetary speed, and associates them in order with the decans, starting with Mars as the ruler of the first decan of Aries, and then working around the zodiac:

Aries	Decan 1	Mars
	Decan 2	Sun
	Decan 3	Venus
Taurus	Decan 1	Mercury
	Decan 2	Moon
	Decan 3	Saturn
Gemini	Decan 1	Jupiter
	Decan 2	Mars

In this scheme, Mars winds up ruling both the first decan of Aries and the last decan of Pisces, thereby ruling two decans in a row.

The scheme of rulership by triplicity assigns the domicile ruler (the sign ruler) to the first decan of any given sign, and then the domicile/sign rulers of the other two signs of that element to the remaining ones, in order. For instance: Aries is a fire sign, ruled by Mars. So Mars rules the first decan of Aries. [23] The next fire sign, in order, is Leo, ruled by the Sun. So the Sun rules the second decan of Aries. The next fire sign is Sagittarius, ruled by Jupiter; so Jupiter rules the third decan. Taurus is an earth sign, ruled by Venus. So Venus also rules the first decan, Mercury the second, and Saturn the third.

What may be unfamiliar to modern students of astrology in these schemata is a layered notion of rulership. Traditionally, any given degree of the zodiac has multiple rulers, depending on whether it is considered as a member of the sign, or a member of a decan – or a member of a triplicity, term, or exaltation (three other traditional types of rulership). Similarly, in real life we all have many masters, some more powerful and some less.

Decline of the Decans in Horoscopic Astrology

As time went on, the decans declined in their significance for astrologers. So Firmicus Maternus does report that if a planet is traveling through a decan it rules, it acts as though, and accomplishes the same things as when, it is in its own sign. [24] But astrologers were rarely if ever considering the decans as being so influential. [25] They often considered the term rulers as important, but more often than not the decans were the least and last of the rulerships considered in astrological judgment – aside from special techniques such as in medical astrology. [26]

Section II: The Images of the Decans (“Faces”)

The decans were also called (or had associated with them, it is unclear) “faces” or “figures,” because the Greeks, Hindus, and Babylonians attributed a human or divine figure to each one. [27] These figures clearly have a religious background, as some sources attribute gods to them [28] (and my guess is that they could be related to the leitourgoi or munifices, see above). Later, the images were used for magical purposes (i.e., the Picatrix, and Agrippa).

Following are three versions of the images associated with the decans:

- a. Ibn Ezra’s description of “the Hindus” images. These are more motley images, often featuring animals and humans with animal parts.
- b. The Picatrix’s images. These often include the animals or unusual features of “the Hindus” images, but come with more explicit meanings similar to Agrippa’s.
- c. Agrippa’s versions of the images, along with what they signify. These lose their animal symbolism, are more streamlined, and come with specific meanings relating to human emotions and pursuits.

I have compared the descriptions to the constellations that rise with the decans, as well as the two systems of decan rulership (by Chaldean order or speed, and by the rulers of the triplicity), but have so far been unable to find consistent reasons why the images and meanings are what they are, both between different decans and in terms

of how the three sources differ. The answer may lie in the divinities associated with the decans, sources for which I have so far not consulted.

First Decan of Aries

a. Ibn Ezra: A head in the form of a dog with a candle in its left hand and a key in its right hand. Banbakha [29] says it is a Moor; his eyes are black, and his eyebrows are stright, and he is of the giants' race. He is self-laudatory and is wrapped in a large white cloak with a rope girdle on it; he is irascible and stands on his feet.

b. Picatrix: The form of a black man, restless and great in body having red eyes and holding a cutting axe in his hand, girded about with white garment; and there is great worth in this face. And this is a face of strength, high rank, and wealth without difference.

c. Agrippa: A black man, standing and clothed in a white garment, girdled about, of a great body, with reddish eyes, and great strength, and like one that is angry; and this image signifieth and causeth boldness, fortitude, loftiness, and shamelessness.

Second Decan of Aries

a. Ibn Ezra: The figure of a women draped in clothes and a mantle, and she has one leg, and she has the form of a horse.

b. Picatrix: A woman dressed in green clothes and lacking in one leg. And this is a face of high rank, nobility, worth, and kingship.

c. Agrippa: A woman, outwardly clothed with a red garment, and under it a white, spreading abroad over her feet, and this image causeth nobleness, height of a kingdom, and greatness of dominion.

Third Decan of Aries

a. Ibn Ezra: A yellow man whose hair is reddish, and he is irascible and contentious, and in his hand are bracelets of wood and a wand, and his clothes are red, and he is a blacksmith, and he desires to do good but he cannot.

b. Picatrix: An inquiet man holding in his hands a gold bracelet, and dressed in red clothes, who desires to do good and is not able. And this face is one of subtlety, and of subtle professions, and of new things and instruments, and the like.

c. Agrippa: A white man, pale, with reddish hair, and clothed with a red garment, who carrying on the one hand a golden bracelet, and holding forth a wooden staff, is restless, and like one in wrath, because he cannot perform the good he would. This image bestoweth wit, meekness, joy and beauty.

First Decan of Taurus

a. Ibn Ezra: A woman with hair, who has a son, and who wears clothes partly burnt.

b. Picatrix: A woman of curly hair, having a single child who is dressed in clothes like unto fire, and she herself dressed in similar clothes. And this is a face of plowing and working the earth, of sciences, geometry, of sowing seed, and making things.

c. Agrippa: A naked man, an archer, harvester, or husbandman, and goeth forth to sow, plough, build, people and divide the earth, according to the rules of geometry.

Second Decan of Taurus

a. Ibn Ezra: A man that resembles a ram in his face and in his body, who has a wife that resembles an ox. His fingers are like goat's hoofs, and that man is very hot and gluttonous, and does not give his soul any rest. He builds land and drives the oxen to plow and sow.

b. Picatrix: A man like the figure of a camel and having on his fingers are hooves like those of cows, and he is covered completely with a torn linen sheet. He desires to work the land, to sow, and to make things. And this is a face of nobility, power, and of rewarding the people.

c. Agrippa: A naked man, holding in his hand a key; it giveth power, nobility, and dominion over people.

Third Decan of Taurus

a. Ibn Ezra: A man whose feet are white and so are his teeth, which are so long that they can be seen outside his lips. His complexion is reddish and so is his hair, and his body resembles that of an elephant and a lion, and he is not reasonable, and all his thoughts are toward evil, and he is sitting propped up. There also ascends a horse, and a dog, and a small calf.

b. Picatrix: A man of ruddy coloring with large, which teeth appearing outside of his mouth, and a body like an elephant whose legs are long; and there ascends with him one horse, one dog, and one calf. And this is a face of laziness, poverty, misery, and fear.

c. Agrippa: A man in whose hand is a serpent, and a dart, and is the image of necessity and profit, and also of misery and slavery.

First Decan of Gemini

a. Ibn Ezra: A beautiful woman standing in the air, and she can sew.

b. Picatrix: A beautiful woman, a mistress of sewing; and with her ascends two calves and two horses. And this is a face of the art of the scribe, of reckoning, of number, of giving and receiving [i.e., trade], and of the sciences.

c. Agrippa: A man in whose hand is a rod, and he is, as it were, serving another; it granteth wisdom, and the knowledge of numbers and arts in which there is no profit. [30]

Second Decan of Gemini

a. Ibn Ezra: A black man with his head bound in lead, and a weapon in his hand, and an iron helmet of his head, and on the helmet there is a silk crown, and in his hand a bow and arrows. He likes ridicule and mockery, and he walks around in a garden that has trees and flowers, and in his hand scales stones. He strikes them with his hand, and plays music, and picks flowers from the garden.

b. Picatrix: A man whose face is like an eagle and his head is covered with a linen cloth; he is garbed and protected in a leaden cuirass, and on his head an iron helmet upon which is a silken wreath; and he is holding in his hand a bow and arrows. And this is a face of burden and also of evils and of subtlety.

c. Agrippa: A man in whose hand is a pipe, and another being bowed down, digging the earth; and they signify infamous and dishonest agility, as that of jesters and jugglers; it also signifies labours and painful searchings.

Third Decan of Gemini

a. Ibn Ezra: A man seeking arms who has a bow and a quiver, and in his hand an arrow and clothing and golden ornaments, and he desires to play music and laugh and mock in all sorts of ways.

b. Picatrix: A man garbed with a cuirass holding a bow and arrows, and a quiver. And this is a face of boldness, honesty, and the division and alleviations of labor.

c. Agrippa: A man seeking for arms, and a fool holding in the right hand a bird, and in his left a pipe; and they are the significations of forgetfulness, wrath, boldness, jests, scurrilities, and unprofitable words.

First Decan of Cancer

a. Ibn Ezra: A handsome young man, wearing clothes, and he has some sickness, and in his face and fingers there is some crookedness, and his body resembles that of a horse and an elephant, and his feet are white, and on his body are hanging ornaments in the shape of trees, and he sits in an orchard that grows fragrant stalk.

b. Picatrix: A man having twisted and crooked fingers and head; and his body is like the body of a horse, and having white feet and upon his body fig leaves. And this is a face of teaching, knowledge, of love, subtlety and of skills.

c. Agrippa: A young virgin, adorned with fine clothes, and having a crown on her head; it giveth acuteness of senses, subtlety of wit; and the love of men.

Second Decan of Cancer

a. Ibn Ezra: A beautiful maiden with pleasant speech, on her head a myrtle crown, in her hand a wooden stick, and she desires wind and music.

b. Picatrix: A woman of beautiful visage, and having on her head a green wreath of myrtle, and in her hand is the stem of the planet which is called the water lily, she is singing songs of love and joy. And this is a face of playing, and of wealth, joy and abundance.

c. Agrippa: A man clothed in comely apparel, or a man and woman sitting at the table and playing; it bestoweth riches, mirth, gladness, and the love of women.

Third Decan of Cancer

a. Ibn Ezra: A man whose foot resembles that of an animal, and on his body there is an animal, and he intends to enter a ship to go to sea and bring gold and silver to make rings for his wives.

b. Picatrix: A Celhafa [31] and he holds a serpent in his hand holding before him golden chains. And this is a face of running, riding, and acquiring in war in strife and contrariety.

c. Agrippa: A man, a hunter with his lance and horn, bringing out dogs for to hunt; the signification of this is the contention of men, the pursuing of those who fly, the hunting and possessing of things by arms and brawlings.

First Decan of Leo

a. Ibn Ezra: A large tree on whose branches there is a dog and a vulture, and a man wearing pretty clothes, though dirty, and he is about to hit his father.

b. Picatrix: A man dressed in filthy garments; and there ascends with him the figure of a lord of the horse looking toward the north; and his figure is like the figure of a bear and the figure of a dog. And this is a face of strength, liberality, and victory.

c. Agrippa: A man riding on a lion; it signifieth boldness, violence, cruelty, wickedness, lust and labours to be sustained.

Second Decan of Leo

a. Ibn Ezra: A man whose nostrils are fine, on his head there is a shape of a crown of white myrtle, and a bow in his hand. He is fierce like a lion in his anger, and he is wrapped in a cloak that looks like a lion.

b. Picatrix: A man having a crown of white myrtle on his head and in his hand a bow. And this is a face of beauty, of riding, and of the rising up of a man who is ignorant and vile; and it is a face of war, and of naked swords.

c. Agrippa: An image with hands lifted up, and a man on whose head is a crown; he hath the appearance of an angry man, and one that threateneth, having in his right hand a sword drawn out of the scabbard, and in his left a buckler; it hath signification upon hidden contentions, and unknown victories, and upon base men, and upon the occasions of quarrels and battles.

Third Decan of Leo

a. Ibn Ezra: An ugly black man, laborious, intelligent, with delicacies in his mouth and meat in his hand.

b. Picatrix: An old man black and foul, holding fruit and meat in his mouth and a jug covered with copper in his hand. And this is a face of love and delight, and trays [of food?] [32] and of good fortune.

c. Agrippa: A young man in whose hand is a whip, and a man very sad, and of an ill aspect; they signify love and society, and the loss of one's right for avoiding strife.

First Decan of Virgo

a. Ibn Ezra: A maiden wrapped in a cloak, and wearing worn out clothes, with a jug in her hand, and she stands in myrtle, and she wants to go to her father's house.

b. Picatrix: A beautiful girl covered over with a woolen sheet and holding in her hand a pomegranate. And this is a face of sowing, of plowing, of the making of trees to sprout, of gathering bunches of grapes and of the good life.

c. Agrippa: The figure of a good maid, and a man casting seeds; it signifieth getting of wealth, ordering of diet, plowing, sowing, and peopling.

Second Decan of Virgo

a. Ibn Ezra: A black man, all covered with hair. On him are three garments, one of leather, the second of silk, and the third is a red mantle, and in his hand an inkwell in order to reckon.

b. Picatrix: A man of beautiful color, dressed in leather and upon the vestment of leather another vestment of iron. And this is a face of petition, of desires, and of wealth, of tribute and the denying of things that are just.

c. Agrippa: A black man clothed with a skin, and a man having a bush of hair, holding a bag; they signify gain, scraping together of wealth and covetousness.

Third Decan of Virgo

a. Ibn Ezra: A white woman who is self-laudatory; she is wearing a dyed mantle, her hands are leprous and she is praying to God.

b. Picatrix: A pale man of large body wrapped in a white linen cloth, and with him a woman holding in her hand black olive oil. And this is a face of weakness, old age, illness, sloth, the injury of limbs, and the destruction of the people.

c. Agrippa: A white woman and deaf, or an old man leaning on a staff; the signification of this is to show weakness, infirmity, loss of members, destruction of trees, and depopulation of lands.

First Decan of Libra

a. Ibn Ezra: A man in a shop in the market with scales in his hand, and he wishes to buy and sell.

b. Picatrix: A man holding a lance in his right hand but in the left a bird hanging by its feet. And this is a face of justice, truth, good judgments, the completeness of justice of the people and weak person, of doing good for the indigent.

c. Agrippa: An angry man, in whose hand is a pipe, and the form of a man reading in a book; the operation of this is in justifying and helping the miserable and weak against the powerful and wicked.

Second Decan of Libra

a. Ibn Ezra: A man in the form of an eagle, and he is naked and thirsty, and he is about to fly in the air.

b. Picatrix: A black man having a journey of marriage and joy. And this is a face of quiet, joy, abundance, of the good life.

c. Agrippa: Two men furious and wrathful, and a man in a comely garment, sitting in a chair; and the signification of these is to show indignation against the evil, and quietness and security of life with plenty of good things.

Third Decan of Libra

a. Ibn Ezra: A man whose face resembles that of a horse, with a bow and arrows in hand.

b. Picatrix: A man upon a donkey, and before him a wolf. And this is a face of evil works, sodomites, adultery, of songs, joy, and of taste.

c. Agrippa: A violent man holding a how, and before him a naked man, and also another man holding bread in one hand, and a cup of wine in the other; the signification of these is to show wicked lusts, singings, sports and gluttony.

First Decan of Scorpio

a. Ibn Ezra: A beautiful woman, her body is red and she is eating.

b. Picatrix: A man holding a lance in his right hand, but a human head in his left. And this is a face of disposition, sadness, evil will, and hostility.

c. Agrippa: A woman of good face and habit, and two men striking her; the operations of these are for comeliness, beauty, and for strifes, treacheries, deceits, detractions, and perditions.

Second Decan of Scorpio

a. Ibn Ezra: A woman who has left her house; she is naked and has nothing on and she is entering the sea.

b. Picatrix: A man riding upon a camel holding a scorpion in his hand. And this is a face of knowledge, modesty, disposition, of one who speaks evilly one to another.

c. Agrippa: A man naked, and a woman naked, and a man sitting on the earth, and before him two dogs biting one another; and their operation is for impudence, deceit, and false dealing, and for to send mischief and strife amongst men.

Third Decan of Scorpio

a. Ibn Ezra: A dog, and two pigs, and a big leopard with white hair, and various prey animals.

b. Picatrix: A horse and a rabbit with it. And this is a face of evil works and taste, and joining oneself with women by force and with them being unwilling.

c. Agrippa: A man bowed downward upon his knees, and a woman striking him with a staff; and it is the signification of drunkenness, fornication, wrath, violence, and strife.

First Decan of Sagittarius

a. Ibn Ezra: A naked man, from his head down to his navel it is the figure of a man, and from the navel down, it is in the shape of a horse, in his hand a bow and arrows, and he is shouting. [33]

b. Picatrix: Three bodies of men of which one is yellow, another white, but the third red. And this is a face of heat, weight, of fructifying in fields and on lands, of sustaining and dividing.

c. Agrippa: A man armed with a coat of mail, and holding a naked sword in his hand; the operation of this is for boldness, malice, and liberty.

Second Decan of Sagittarius

a. Ibn Ezra: A beautiful woman with a lot of hair, wearing clothes and earrings in her ear, and in front of her there is an open chest containing golden ornaments.

b. Picatrix: A man who leads cows, and holding/having a monkey and a bear before him. And this is a face of fear, lamentation, mourning, misery, and inquietude.

c. Agrippa: A woman weeping, and covered with clothes; the operation of this is for sadness and fear of his own body.

Third Decan of Sagittarius

a. Ibn Ezra: A man whose color of complexion is golden, and in his hand [something that looks] like a wooden earring, and he is covered with a door made of tree bark.

b. Picatrix: A man holding a cap on his head and killing another man. And this is a face of evil inclinations, of adverse and evil effects and of swiftness in these same things and in evil inclinations, of hostility, dispersion, and of doing evilly.

c. Agrippa: A man like in color to gold, or an idle man playing with a staff; and the signification of this is in following our own wills, and obstinacy in them, and in activeness for evil things, contentions, and horrible matters.

First Decan of Capricorn

a. Ibn Ezra: An irascible black man, his body is like that of a wild boar, with much hair, and his teeth are sharp and long as beams, and he has a cattle goad, and he catches fish.

b. Picatrix: A man holding a pipe in his right hand but a hoe in his left hand. And this is a face of happiness, joy, and the scattering of tasks and laziness with weakness and unceasing evils.

c. Agrippa: A woman, and a man carrying full bags; and the signification of these is for to go forth and to rejoice, to gain and to lose with weakness and baseness.

Second Decan of Capricorn

a. Ibn Ezra: A black woman covered with a mantle and she has a horse.

b. Picatrix: A man having before him half of a monkey. And this is a face of seeking matters which can in no way be, nor does anything prevail to touch upon these matters.

c. Agrippa: Two women and a man looking towards a bird flying in the air; and the signification of these is for the requiring of those things which cannot be done, and for the searching after those things which cannot be known.

Third Decan of Capricorn

a. Ibn Ezra: A beautiful woman, though black, and her hands are skilled in all kinds of work and spinning of silk.

b. Picatrix: A man holding a book and opening and closing it, and having before the book the tail of a fish. And this is a face of riches, the accumulation of money and the ascent of business affairs tending toward a good end.

c. Agrippa: A woman chaste in body, and wise in her work, and a banker gathering his money together on the table; the signification of this is to govern in prudence, in covetousness of money, and in avarice. [34]

First Decan of Aquarius

a. Ibn Ezra: A black man who is skilled in copper.

b. Picatrix: A man who has his head cut short [off?] [35] and who holds in his hand a peacock. And this is a face of misery, poverty, and of a slave who deals with crumbs.

c. Agrippa: A prudent man, and of a woman spinning; and the signification of these is in the thought and labor for gain, in poverty and baseness.

Second Decan of Aquarius

a. Ibn Ezra: A very black man whose beard is long and in his hand a bow and arrows, and purses that contain precious stones and gold.

b. Picatrix: A man like unto a king who values himself much and who shuns those whom he sees. And this is a face of beauty and of position, of having that which one seeks, of completeness, of harm and of weakness.

c. Agrippa: A man with a long beard; and the signification of this belongeth to the understanding, meekness, modesty, liberty and good manners.

Third Decan of Aquarius

a. Ibn Ezra: And angry and deceitful black man who has hair in his ear, and on him a crown from the leaves of a tree, and he turns from place to place.

b. Picatrix: A man with his head shortened [cut off?] [36] and who has an old woman with him. And this is a face of abundance, of the perfection of the will, and of insulting behavior.

c. Agrippa: A black and angry man; and the signification of this is in expressing insolence, and imprudence.

First Decan of Pisces

a. Ibn Ezra: A man wearing beautiful clothes, in his hand an iron instrument, and he is going home.

b. Picatrix: A man who has two bodies and is like he is going to salute with both hands. And this is a face of peace and humility, of weakness, of many journeys, of misery, of seeking wealth, and the lamenting of one's manner of living.

c. Agrippa: A man carrying burdens on his shoulder, and well clothed; it hath his signification in journeys, change of place, and in carefulness of getting wealth and clothes.

Second Decan of Pisces

a. Ibn Ezra: A beautiful white woman, sitting in a ship at sea, and she wishes to go out on land.

b. Picatrix: A man turned around backwards holding his head downwards, and his feet upwards lifted up on high, and in his hand a tray of something to be eaten. And this is a face of reward and of strong will in matters which are high, burdensome and valued, and of thinking.

c. Agrippa: A woman of a good countenance, and well adorned; and the signification is to desire and put one's self on our about high and great matters.

Third Decan of Pisces

a. Ibn Ezra: A naked man putting his foot on his belly, in his hand a lance, and he is shouting out of fear of robbers and fire.

b. Picatrix: A sad man and of evil thoughts thinking on deceptions and treachery; and before him a woman and an ass ascending over her, and in her hand a bird. And this is a face of ambition and of lying with women with a great appetite, and of seeking quiet and peace.

c. Agrippa: A man naked, or a youth, and nigh him a beautiful maid, whose head is adorned with flowers; and it hath his signification for rest, idleness, delight, fornication, and for embracing of women.

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Appendix: Two Systems of Decan Rulership

Decan	Chaldean Scheme	Triplicity Scheme
Aries 1	Mars	Mars
Aries 2	Sun	Sun
Aries 3	Venus	Jupiter
Taurus 1	Mercury	Venus
Taurus 2	Moon	Mercury
Taurus 3	Saturn	Saturn
Gemini 1	Jupiter	Mercury
Gemini 2	Mars	Venus
Gemini 3	Sun	Saturn
Cancer 1	Venus	Moon
Cancer 2	Mercury	Mars
Cancer 3	Moon	Jupiter
Leo 1	Saturn	Sun
Leo 2	Jupiter	Jupiter
Leo 3	Mars	Mars
Virgo 1	Sun	Mercury
Virgo 2	Venus	Saturn
Virgo 3	Mercury	Venus
Libra 1	Moon	Venus
Libra 2	Saturn	Saturn
Libra 3	Jupiter	Mercury
Scorpio 1	Mars	Mars
Scorpio 2	Sun	Jupiter
Scorpio 3	Venus	Moon
Sagittarius 1	Mercury	Jupiter
Sagittarius 2	Moon	Mars
Sagittarius 3	Saturn	Sun
Capricorn 1	Jupiter	Saturn
Capricorn 2	Mars	Venus
Capricorn 3	Sun	Mercury
Aquarius 1	Venus	Saturn
Aquarius 2	Mercury	Mercury
Aquarius 3	Moon	Venus
Pisces 1	Saturn	Jupiter
Pisces 2	Jupiter	Moon
Pisces 3	Mars	Mars

Notes

[1] Holden confirms this, p. 93.

[2] The art of judging someone's face, body structure, and some personality features by the natal figure.

[3] Tester says (p. 22) the quinances come from the Babylonians, who associated pictures with each one.

[4] Holden, p. 12.

[5] Bruce Malina says that there were originally 24 decans, hence the 24-hour day. See bibliography.

[6] Tester, p. 20; Holden, p. 12-13.

[7] Malina cites the Encyclopedia of World Art, which I have not yet seen.

[8] It would be interesting to know if the 24 Seniors of Enochian magic could be correlated with these earlier versions of the decans.

[9] Firmicus Maternus, p. 34. But he adds that the Greeks didn't get very far with the matter, even though other Greek sources do describe the nature of the decans in detail. Perhaps he meant that the methods were not clearly worked out, or perhaps he was referring to the lack of information on the leitourgoi/munifices (see below).

[10] Holden, p. 8.

[11] Holden, p. 8.

[12] Holden, p. 71. But Ptolemy omits discussion of the decans when discussing "monstrous births."

[13] Holden, p. 80.

[14] Holden, p. 12-13, 70-71 and n. 168; Firmicus, pp. 34-36.

[15] Firmicus, p. 36.

[16] Holden, p. 12-13.

[17] Firmicus, p. 36.

[18] Holden, p. 70-71 and n. 168. Does this mean that planets obey the leitourgoi, who obey the decans in turn? Or is it speaking of fixed stars that fall under the leitourgoi, so that the author of the *Hermetica* is mixing the old constellational notion of the decans with the new, zodiacal one?

[19] E.g., Ptolemy associates different weather with each decan, and notes weather indications of each sign depending on whether one is looking at indications in the northern or southern ecliptical latitudes. He incorporates fixed stars along with other rules (Ptolemy, pp. 207ff.). Ibn Ezra follows Ptolemy (Ibn Ezra, Chapter 2).

[20] Al-Biruni, §450.

[21] Abu Ma'shar and Firmicus Maternus follow this scheme, as do most Greek, Arab, and Latin astrologers. It is also the version taught in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

[22] Al-Biruni says this scheme comes from Hindu astrology (Al-Biruni, §451). It is also the basis of a system used for astrological physiognomy.

[23] Just like the Chaldean scheme.

[24] Firmicus, p. 34.

[25] Indeed, I have only seen Firmicus comparing decans and signs in this way.

[26] E.g., Abu Ma'shar (Holden p. 115, 120), Alubater (Holden, p. 122) and later medieval astrologers tend to list decans last and attribute to it the weakest sway in astrological considerations.

[27] Al-Biruni, §449-50. He seems to say a decan is not the same as a face, although they do coincide. It could be that "face" refers to the mythical-magical aspect of the decan.

[28] Wright cites "Hermes's" list of Egyptian divinities attributed to the decans: v. Ruelle, *Rev. de Philol.*, 1908, p. 247. I have not seen this source.

[29] Ibn Ezra says, this is a "learned" Hindu.

[30] In other words, knowledgeable pursuits that aren't subordinated to other purposes, but are noble in themselves. Aristotle held that some philosophical knowledge was more noble because it didn't depend on external needs and demands like profit-making – a reflection of a society in which people either were free or served someone else.

[31] Robert Hand indicates that he does not know what this means.

[32] Robert Hand adds this suggestion in brackets.

[33] In other words, a centaur.

[34] Note that Ibn Ezra and the Arabic author of the Picatrix, do not share Agrippa's Christian negativity toward the merchant and money trades.

[35] Robert Hand adds this suggestion in brackets.

[36] Robert Hand adds this suggestion in brackets.

XVII. Overview of Recent Tarot Works That Reference the Picatrix

Liber T: Tarot of Stars Eternal
Roberto Negrini, art by Andrea Serio
Llewellyn Worldwide

This deck is a close reworking of the Crowley/Harris Thoth Tarot, which may strike some as verging on blasphemy. I actually quite like it. The major arcana are a slightly simpler rendition of Crowley's descriptions and Harris's imagery, but with an effective style and sense of color all their own. The real innovations lie in the minor arcana, which have been enriched by many exotic figures from 'the hermetic tradition of the Egyptian Decans' and 'the astrology of the Golden Dawn', from the Arabic **Picatrix** and the constellations of India. These surreal images of men, women, spirits and beasts are bizarre, goetic, sexual, alchemical, mythical, daemonic, sidereal, and strangely effective. Sadly, the usual miniscule instruction booklet fails to provide many explanations or details, leaving me hoping for much more information in the future. The original artwork by Lady Frieda Harris still remains one of the glorious achievements in the art of Tarot, but this intelligent tribute to the roots of Crowley's vision stands quite well on its own.

- *Shade Oroboros*

Mystical Origins of the Tarot: From Ancient Roots to Modern Usage
Paul Huson
Destiny Books

Where Paul Huson's 1972 work *The Devil's Picture Book* presented a rich melange of broad speculations regarding the emblems of Tarot, his new book *Mystical Origins of the Tarot* approaches the subject along entirely different and decidedly radical lines, challenging preconceptions and removing layers of fanciful superimposition which have hitherto obscured Tarot's roots. He subjects the images of traditional Tarot to a penetrating and rigorous process of historical analysis and thematic elucidation employing an approach which can best be described as 'symbolic archaeology' - the results are quite remarkable. The research brought to bear on the origins of the enigmatic cards is impressive, thorough and original: for instance the four suits signs of the Minor Arcana are painstakingly traced via the surviving decks of Mamluk Egypt to the heraldic symbols denoting the Four Virtues and the four Mazdean castes of ancient Persia. An important paradigm-shift in understanding is achieved via the author firmly locating each of the figures of the Major Arcana in the beguiling world of popular religious dramas, mysteries and miracle-plays in the High Middle Ages - he

even provides examples of their speeches from the original dramas. The chapter on the Major Arcana in this context is as illuminating as it is convincing.

Furthermore Paul Huson goes deeply into the traditions underpinning the cartomantic significance of each card, giving the divinatory rundown from Pratesi's *Cartomancer* of 1750 to A.E. Waite in 1910 along with his own suggested keywords for readings. One surprising turn-up for the books transpires when the author locates the direct source of the Golden Dawn Decanic system of the Minor Cards in the section on the 36 Decan images in Book II of the Arab grimoire called the **Picatrix**. The 16 legendary personages identified with the court cards likewise opens up fascinating points of symbolic comprehension.

The sections on practical cartomancy will be found invaluable by both beginners and seasoned users of the cards: a great deal of utile information and insight is imparted which will facilitate practise. I especially like the techniques for 'linking' the cards. The above gives but an indication of some of the absorbing contents of this inspiring book. In its own way the research it unfolds is as compelling to follow as a detective story as the author indefatigably tracks down the emblematic minutiae of Tarot symbolism to their archaic and mediaeval originals.

Ranging with great erudition from Shia, Sufi and Magian symbologies, to Neoplatonic doctrines, mediaeval mystery-plays, 18th century cartomancers and scholarly art history this packed study delivers such a veritable feast of fresh information and insight on the subject of Tarot that beginners and veteran tarotists alike will find it a real treat to read and an indispensable resource for reference. It is illustrated throughout with a wealth of examples of card-images, allegorical emblems and images skilfully executed by the author. This is very likely the definitive study on the subject. Highly recommended.



The title of this book is misleading, as there is nothing mystical in it. I was expecting to read about initiation rites under the Great Pyramid, or a secret transmission by medieval heretics. Instead, I found much solid historical research delving into Tarot's origins.

The most interesting and original part of the book is Huson's description of the trumps' origin in medieval popular culture, especially miracle and morality plays, and depictions of the Dance of the Dead. For instance, he speculates that the Tower came from the stage set for the play the Harrowing of Hell, where the action takes place in

a fortified tower with flames blazing from the top, souls peering out through barred openings, and the Devil looming over it all. By the mid-16th century, these plays were no longer performed. Tarot had lost its moorings in traditional medieval culture, and was being influenced by popular printed material like calendars, almanacs and horoscopes.

The heart of the book is his discussion of individual cards, showing possible origins for the images and their divinatory meanings. He lists meanings attributed to each card by cartomancers and occultists from the mid 18th to the early 20th centuries: an anonymous 1750 Bologna manuscript, deGebelin, deMellet, Etteilla, Eliphas Levi, Paul Christian, Mathers (co-founder of the Golden Dawn), A. E. Waite writing as Grand Orient in 1889, and Waite in the *Pictorial Key to Tarot* of 1909. Huson also provides descriptions of the astrological decans from the medieval work **Picatrix**, which the Golden Dawn rather awkwardly grafted onto Etteilla's card meanings to formulate what has become the basis for modern divinatory meanings. The discussion of each card is accompanied by Huson's line drawings of the *Rider-Waite-Smith* and *Conver Tarot de Marseilles* decks, as well as related medieval art, making it a very nice reference.

The book summarizes how 18th and 19th century occultists influenced Tarot. I was happy to see it give the vastly underrated Etteilla his due. Etteilla invented modern cartomancy using spreads; and his card meanings are the underpinning of the Rider-Waite-Smith system, which has so heavily influenced contemporary Anglo-American tarot. Several spreads invented by Etteilla and 19th century cartomancers make this book especially useful to people interested in traditional card reading methods.

Huson's discussion of the origins of the four suits and their symbols is the least convincing part of the book. He summarizes the evolution of playing cards from the abstract, medieval Egyptian Mamluk cards into Italian, German and French suit symbols. Then he speculates, with weak evidence, that these symbols may have roots in pre-Islamic Persian culture and Sufism, or possibly traditional allegories of the Virtues. He also gives some speculative theories about the origin of court cards in medieval literature.

Scattered throughout are intriguing nuggets of historical speculation on the origin of card images. For instance, Huson traces the 7 of Swords image in the RWS deck to the 15th century Sola Busca deck, and then back to an incident in a medieval romance where devious means were used to steal some swords from Charlemagne and his knights.

I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in tarot's roots. It isn't comprehensive, but it includes topics that get little or no coverage in general discussions of tarot history. If you ever wondered where our card meanings come from, his comparison of divinatory meanings from various sources is a gold mine. For people interested in traditional cartomancy, this book is the best source we have in English for pre-Golden Dawn card meanings and spreads.

- *Sherryl Smith*

The Nigel Jackson Tarot *aka* Medieval Enchantment Tarot
Nigel Jackson
Llewellyn Publications

Nigel Jackson, born in 1963, lives in Manchester, England and is a well-known artist and illustrator specializing in the symbolism of Western Esoteric Tradition: he is deeply immersed in the traditional Tarot of 15th century Italy, the magical teachings of medieval-renaissance astrological magicians such as Ficino, Agrippa and Bruno and in bringing to life the talismanic images inherited from ancient sources of arcane lore such as the Arabian grimoire the **Picatrix**. He has worked intensively in researching the magical system of the 28 Mansions of the Moon. Nigel has been involved for the last quarter of a century in pursuing the inner wisdom of the hermetic mysteries and in expressing the symbolic 'language of the gods' through his visual art which he views as a living 'alchemy of the imagination'.

Published as a book and deck set, the Nigel Jackson Tarot (presently re-issued as the 'Medieval Enchantment' tarot) consists of intricate ink drawings tinted in subtle muted watercolors by Hermetic artist-illustrator Nigel Jackson. The Trumps are structured and titled following the older paradigm of the French-Milanese Marseilles order, with traditional titling and placement. A set of astrological correspondences for the Majors is generated from Traditional Astrology of the High Middle Ages, 'Children of the Planets' woodcuts and the Essential Dignities of the planets. The Minor Arcana meanings and themes are based solidly upon the 18th century French-Piedmontese tradition relayed via Etteilla as also reflected in Rider-Waite and other later decks: following the conventions of alchemical symbology Staves (depicted as Arrows in the style of the Visconti-Sforza decks) represent Air, Swords equate with Fire - his scenes and meanings for the Minors are clearly derived from continental cartomancy. According to Jackson, the deck was inspired by researches into the patterns of medieval Neo-Pythagorean arithmancy, Neoplatonic and Hermetic

imagery and his insight into possible correlations between Tarot and classical number-symbolism preserved into the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. Based on his ongoing work in pre-modern esoteric traditions in the West, his 2006 book 'Fortuna's Wheel' is a succinct summary of his speculative theories to date about Tarot symbolism in the context of medieval Catholic, Neo-Platonic and Pythagorean ideas.

"This deck was created over a 2 year period in the late 90s: it is actually a sort of 'reincarnation' of the first hand-drawn and coloured deck on 78 pieces of card which I created as a youngster in 1974 which was based on the old Piedmontese tarocchi as shown in a Kathleen McCormack paperback and I've always been grateful that the first tarot images my imagination was 'seeded' with were those very authentic designs: Paul Huson's seminal 'The Devil's Picture Book' was another early inspiration back in the 1970's. The Neo-Pythagorean numerological speculations which underly this deck along with the swords-fire and staves-air correspondances and the set of planetary dignities which I correlate with the Trumps are all derived from my research and practice within traditional Hermeticism, Neoplatonic Magic and Traditional Astrology - as regards divinatory significance I cleave closely throughout to the customary cartomantic meanings derived from Etteilla (and his 2 Piedmontese oral sources) in the 18th century (and subsequently adopted by most tarot writers including A.E Waite). The astrological ascription for the trumps are a frankly speculative outcropping of my work with medieval-renaissance Hermeticism and planetary image-magic from Cornelius Agrippa, Giordano Bruno and the Kitab Ghayat al-Hakim (**Picatrix**) - whilst chronologically they are of course contemporary I might suggest that these planetary-astrological correspondences are qualitatively more 'traditional' (because they are founded upon genuine Traditional Astrological rulerships) than the Victorian trump ascriptions which became regarded unquestioningly by most occultists as 'set in stone' during the 20th century. The imagery of these cards also conveys an affectionate homage to the conceptions of both Pamela Colman-Smith and A.E Waite and also to the Thomson-Leng Tarot of the 1930s. So this deck fulfils a double ambit in that it aimed to indicate the salient features of a more traditional conceptual horizon underlying Tarot imagery whilst presenting a Tarot design faithful to the traditional iconography of late medieval Tarocchi complete with Pope and Popess and so forth."

- Nigel Jackson, 8/25/2006

XVIII. Magical Uses of the Tarot

Paul Hughes-Barlow

Paranoid, "magical attack" sections removed...

Tarot does not have a great record of use in magic. Most books on magic suggest doing a tarot reading to check the outcome before performing magical rituals. The problem is that the Kabbalistic structure of the Tree of Life kills the magical powers of the Tarot. When the Tarot is divorced from the Tree it has tremendous potency, but few tarot practitioners and magicians have developed the Tarot in this way.

On supertarot.co.uk the Tree of Life rarely appears, for good reason, and some of the arguments were developed in my book *Tarot and the Magus*, which records the spontaneous appearance of the Goetic Spirits (who are actually the Jinn) as a result of working on the Opening of the Key Spread.

The Magic Tarot System

Once you realize that Magic Tarot does not use the Kabbalistic System, you have to find another way...using old meanings of the cards that are probably not familiar to modern tarot readers. For the Minor cards in particular, this means using the decanate system going back to Picatrix.

Below I list suggested magical uses of the Tarot. Some will be fairly obvious, particularly with the Major Arcana, but otherwise they are derived from traditional sources, not Liber 777. Paul Huson's *Mystical Origins of the Tarot* was useful in compiling this list.

Major Arcana

Fool	Hesitation, instability, madness, nullity.
Magus	Deception, swindles.
High Priestess	False knowledge or revelations, deception.
Empress	Abuse of feminine energies
Emperor	Abuse of political power. Authoritarian or totalitarian abuse.
Hierophant	Destructive relationships, divorce. Inability to be decisive.
Chariot	Defeat, failure. Inability to travel.
Lovers	Indecision, problems in relationships.
Justice	Terror, destruction, bad laws, injustice corruption.
Hermit	Delays, obstacles, concealment. Hidden enemies.
Wheel of Fortune	Bad luck. Devious 'friends'. Blocks, obstacles. False dawns.
Strength	Violence, abuse of power. Weakness, discord.
Hanged Man	Traitor, treachery, restraint. Seclusion.
Death	Death. Cancellation of a project.
Temperance	Poor timing. Missing an important event by being early or late. Inability to cope with situations.
Devil	Anger. Evil.
The Tower	Prison. Destruction. Destructive rivalries.
Star	Theft. Abandonment. Failure of hope.
Moon	Delusion. Hidden enemies. Deception and fear.
Sun	Happiness, contentment, joy.
Judgment	Delay, postponement. Damaging legal ruling.
World	A bad situation that does not change. Depression.

Minor Arcana

The magical definitions below are based on the Picatrix definitions of the decanates, except for the Aces which are not astrological.

Disks

Ace	Obsession with security. Paranoia. Fear of change
Two	Wandering work. Itinerancy. Alternate gain and loss. Weakness and necessity.
Three	Forever seeking what cannot be known or attained. Failure, mediocrity.
Four	Covetousness, suspicion. Obsession with minor details. Discontent.
Five	Plowing, sowing, building and earthly wisdom. (Note that this is at odds with the evil associated with Geburah).
Six	Power, nobility, rule over people. A great card for influence over others.
Seven	Misery, slavery, necessity, madness, baseness.
Eight	Sowing, planting, herbs, colonisation. Storing money and food.
Nine	Gain, covetousness, taking goods. Stockpiling.
Ten	Old age, slothfulness, loss. Depopulation.
Page	Contradiction. Prodigality, carelessness.
Knight	Unemployment.
Queen	Faithless woman. Venality.
King	Spoils of war. Financial loss. Greed, corruption.

Cups or Chalice

Ace	Sorrow, depression, emotional loss and disappointment. Inconstancy.
Two	Rule, science, love, joy. Heart ruling the head. Obsession with bad omens.
Three	Pleasure, joy, abundance, plenty.
Four	Hunting, pursuing. Collecting war booty, fighting.
Five	Strife, sadness, treachery, deceit, destruction, ill-will.
Six	Affronts, detection, strife, mischiefmaking, looking for trouble.
Seven	War, drunkenness, fornication, wealth, pride. Violence against women.
Eight	Many thoughts leading to anxiety and worry. Misery, wandering around in search of money and food.
Nine	Self-praise. High mind, seeking after noble aims and knowledge.
Ten	Pleasure, sex. Quietness, peacemaking.
Page	Seduction either by ideas or through sexuality. A Mata Hari
Knight	Collecting debts. Deception, fraud.
Queen	Untrustworthy woman, fickleness, sensuality.
King	A friendly, cultured, confidence trickster.

Swords

Ace	Violence, excessive force. Triumph, authority.
Two	Justice, truth, aid, helping the poor.
Three	Quietness, ease, plenty, good life, dancing.
Four	Evil actions. Alternate singing and joy with sexual excess, evil and depravity.
Five	Poverty, anxiety, grief. Inability to come to terms past loss and failure. Mourning
Six	Beauty, dominance, conceit. Pleasant manners, modesty.
Seven	Abundance and compliments. Detection, affronts.
Eight	Writing, calculations, giving and receiving. Learning from financial errors.
Nine	Burdens, pressure, hard work, subtlety, dishonesty.
Ten	Disdain, mirth, jollity, unprofitable words.
Page	Espionage - finding hidden knowledge and information. Eternal vigilance.
Knight	Soldier, military man. Hastiness in action.
Queen	A difficult woman. Malice, bad luck, sorrow.
King	Legal problems.

Wands

Ace	Annoyances, violence, intimidation.
Two	Boldness, fierceness, resolution. Shamelessness.
Three	Pride, nobility, wealth, rulership.
Four	Subtlety, beauty, new things and ideas.
Five	Boldness, liberality, victory, cruelty, violence.
Six	Quarrels, ignorance. False knowledge. Victory over all.
Seven	Love, pleasure, society, avoiding quarrels and problems. Care with money.
Eight	Boldness, freedom, welfare, liberality. Care of the land.
Nine	Fear, lamentation, grief, anxiety, worry.
Ten	Ill-will, envy, obstinacy. Swiftmess in evil. Treachery, disloyalty.
Page	Bad, but important news.
Knight	Exit, departure, resulting in separation.
Queen	Prostitution.
King	A gentleman. A bachelor. Single man.

Part of the success of this system is deception - even if you spot the use of a particular tarot card, you may still be fooled because you are not necessarily seeing the same meaning as the magician...It will be interesting to see if this system develops into something more useful.

More Uses

The magical system can be used to develop desirable characteristics within yourself. The Opening of the Key Spread is invaluable in understanding how magic works, and how you can use the system for yourself. Have fun.

COLOPHON

A PICATRIX MISCELLANY

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