

Whole Sign Houses  
The Oldest House System

An Ancient Method in Modern  
Application

by

Robert Hand

ARHAT

Publications

ARHAT Ltd.

410 S. Rampart Blvd. Suite 390

Las Vegas, NV 89145

Copyright © 2000  
Robert Hand

## Table of Contents

Preface. . . . .	ii
The Oldest House System:	
Whole Sign Houses. . . . .	1
The Notion of Place or <i>Topos</i> . . . . .	2
The Horoscope. . . . .	2
“Places” Aspecting the Horoscopic Sign. . . . .	3
Angular Houses Versus “Malefic” Aspects. . . . .	7
The Origin of “Benefic” and “Malefic” Aspects. . . . .	7
Historical Development. . . . .	9
The Problem of Julius Firmicus Maternus. . . . .	14
The Advent of the Modern Type of House System. . . . .	16
A Modern Solution to the Midheaven Problem. . . . .	17
The Modern Practice with Whole-Sign Houses. . . . .	21
Whole-Sign Houses or Places Computed from Lots. . . . .	23
The Whole-Sign House “Cusps”. . . . .	24
Examples. . . . .	26
Conclusions. . . . .	34
Chart Data and Sources. . . . .	34
Appendix 1 – Horary Astrology and Whole-Sign Houses. . . . .	36
Appendix 2 – Glossary of Terms. . . . .	41
Appendix 3 – Are Only the Major ( <i>Ptolemaic</i> ) Aspects Valid? . . . . .	45
Index. . . . .	47

## Preface

The material contained in this book originally appeared in *The Mountain Astrologer* in the summer and fall of 1999. For the purposes of this publication there have been considerable revision and enlargement. First of all there have been some discoveries.

In the original articles I stated that there was only one unambiguous reference to anything other than the system of houses presented here, and that was in the writings of Julius Firmicus Maternus (see page 14). According to the existing translation he appears to have used the Equal House system. Since then I have consulted the original Latin in which it appears that his use of equal houses is not as clearly established as I had previously thought.

Also we now have the writings of Olympiodorus in English translation for the first time (soon to be published by ARHAT). And these, it seems, have things to tell us about the early history of house division and the uses of the Lots of Fortune and Spirit.

In addition to these I have made a number of additions that will make the text more useful to those who might want to probe more deeply into the material. Words and texts and Greek and Latin are given in the text and in notes. These might not have been entirely suitable in articles written for general consumption, but they are useful in a book.

I have also added an entirely new section on horary astrology (see Appendix 1). At the time of my writing of the articles I was not certain as to the usefulness of Whole-Sign houses in horary, but since then I have come to use them routinely for all astrological functions including Horary and Electional Astrology (the Astrology of picking times taking action) and I have found these houses to be extremely effective. In Appendix 1 I present one of several cases that I have encountered where the use of Whole-Sign houses (along with other ancient and medieval techniques) greatly enhanced the clarity of the answer that the chart gave to a question.

And in any case, articles that appear in magazines eventually become difficult to obtain, so ARHAT's presentation of these articles in book form will make them accessible to those who can no longer find the magazines.

Robert Hand – Sept. 2000

## The Oldest House System: Whole Sign Houses

**A**fter<sup>1</sup> several years of research into the oldest texts of our astrological tradition we now know what the earliest house system was. And in a way it was not a house system at all as we understand house systems. Rather, it was the signs of the zodiac, themselves, used as a house system. In this system the rising degree of the zodiac marks the sign it is located in as the 1<sup>st</sup> house. The rising sign itself thus becomes the 1<sup>st</sup> house, as we would refer to it, from its very beginning to its end, regardless of where in the sign the rising degree may fall. The next sign to rise after the rising sign becomes the 2<sup>nd</sup> house, the next sign the 3<sup>rd</sup> house, and so forth. Actually, to understand this properly, one has to know that it is not that the signs were used as houses so much as *there were no houses at all*, merely the signs of the zodiac used as we would use houses, with no second, separate, twelve-fold division of the chart at all. This has several important consequences:

- As stated above, wherever the rising degree falls in its sign, that entire, or whole, sign is the 1<sup>st</sup> house.
- Therefore, the beginning of a house is always 0° of a sign and the end of a house is always 30° of a sign.
- The culminating degree, or Midheaven, may or may not fall in the 10<sup>th</sup> sign from the rising sign.
- There are no intercepted signs because every complete sign is a house.
- And last, but most subtle, the entire house system is based on the **ecliptic** and not on some other circle such as the equator, horizon, or prime vertical, to say nothing of the even more exotic methods of the Placidus house system.

While some have called this system the Sign-as-House system,<sup>2</sup> I and

---

<sup>1</sup> Words in **bold print** are listed in the glossary on page 41.

<sup>2</sup> Especially in the writings of James Holden whose excellent work on traditional Astrology needs to be more widely known.

others have taken to calling this the Whole-Sign House System.

### The Notion of Place or *Topos*

In the preceding I used the word ‘house’ in the modern sense of the word, but the reader should know that this was not the word used in Greek astrology, *not ever, not at any time*. The Greek word used was *topos* (τόπος), meaning ‘place’ or possibly ‘position’. It is the root of our words ‘topology’ and ‘topography’. In Latin astrology the word *locus* was used to translate *topos*. The Greek word for ‘house’ was *oikos* (οἶκος), from which comes to us by way of Latin our words ‘economic’ and ‘ecology’. This word was used exclusively for signs of the zodiac as signs, and not for signs as they were regarded in relation to the rising sign. *Oikos* can also be translated as ‘dwelling’ and, specifically, *oikos* was used primarily to describe the signs as the dwelling places of the planets. For example, Aries is the *oikos* of Mars, Sagittarius of Jupiter, and so forth. *Oikos* was never used in the context of a 1<sup>st</sup> *oikos*, a 2<sup>nd</sup> *oikos*, a 3<sup>rd</sup> *oikos*, etc.

In Latin the word *domus* was used to translate *oikos*, and it too was used primarily to describe a sign as a dwelling place. Only later in the Middle Ages did *oikos-domus*-house become confused in its use as to whether it referred to house or sign in the modern senses of the words. But even as late as the mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Lilly refers to Aries as “the diurnall house of ♂ . . .”<sup>1</sup> and so for all of the signs. In modern German astrology to this day, the word *Ort*, meaning ‘place’, is used alongside of *Haus*, meaning ‘house’.

### The Horoscope

Another word that we must truly understand in order to comprehend the import of Whole-Sign Houses is the word that we know as ‘horoscope’. In very recent astrology, since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it has come to mean the entire astrological chart taken as a whole, but this is not what it originally meant. It comes from two Greek words *hōra* (ῥάρα), meaning an hour, a particular span of time, and *skopeō* (σκοπέω), which is a bit more complicated. The fundamental root meaning of the verb *skopeō* is to ‘look at’, ‘pay attention to’, or ‘observe’. It also meant ‘to mark’ as in the English expression “mark my words,” as opposed to “do not mark up the furniture.” The noun form of *skopeō* is *skopos* (σκοπός). From these two put

---

<sup>1</sup> William Lilly, *Christian Astrology*, London: 1647 facsimile edition, Regulus Pub. Co., Ltd., 1985.

together we get *hōroskopos* (ὥροσκοπός), which becomes the Latin *horoscopus*. Thus the entire meaning of the word is “that which marks or designates the hour, time, or season.” It is important that the reader understand this completely because if we think of *hōra* as simply being ‘hour’, we will lose one of the essential features of **horoscopic points**. A **horoscopic point** does not “observe” the hour; it designates something as being characteristic or significant of a special time. In particular, a **horoscopic point** designates the sign that it is in as being the 1<sup>st</sup> place, or *topos*, of a particular *topos* system. Please note the careful avoidance of the word ‘house’.

The key point is this: while the rising degree was the most important **horoscopic point**, other points in the chart were also considered to be horoscopic. These included the Sun, the Moon, the *Part of Fortune* (referred to hereafter as the **Lot of Fortune**), and several other lots (as the Greeks called the points we call “parts”) as well. In particular, modern astrologers may be startled to learn that in Greek astrology the **Lot of Fortune** was used as a **horoscopic point** to mark a *topos* system starting from its own sign. Also, any planet that was *in the sign* of the **Lot of Fortune** was considered to be *in* the **Lot of Fortune**. The Lot became both a particular degree and the sign that degree was located in.

### “Places” Aspecting the Horoscopic Sign

There is something in modern astrology that often baffles students. We often say things like, “the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> houses aspect the 1<sup>st</sup> house by trine.” We say this despite the fact that, in all modern systems of house division, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> houses (measured using the zodiac) may be anywhere from a sextile to a sesqui-quadrate from the 1<sup>st</sup> house, and in higher latitudes they may even vary from the semi-sextile to the quincunx from the 1<sup>st</sup> house. The notable exception to this is the **Equal House system**, in which this cannot occur. This is because modern houses (again, except for the **Equal House system**) are not based on the **ecliptic** or zodiac. They are based on other planes or circles or measurements. Yet, as we shall see, the logic of these house systems is derived from aspects within the zodiac.

In both Greek and medieval astrology the astrological aspects were limited to the **Ptolemaic aspects**, i.e., conjunction, opposition, trine, square, and sextile. And, strictly speaking, the conjunction was not considered an aspect; more precisely, aspects were considered to be a way of conjoining or joining together two planets. There were two types of conjunctions, those by body where the two planets are actually close together, and conjunction by aspect in which one planet was said to be

conjunct the aspectual position of another planet. So, while moderns may have it backwards, both Greeks and the Medievals treated the conjunction and the aspect as being in the same category; it is just that the aspect was a type of conjunction, rather than the conjunction a type of aspect. While I will continue to speak in the modern manner of aspects as including the conjunction, it is important to understand the actual and original relationship between conjunctions and aspects. This is because the Latin word *aspecto* and its Greek originals, *epimartureō* (ἐπιμαρτυρέω), *martureō* (μαρτυρέω), *theōreō* (θεωρέω), and *epitheōreō* (ἐπιθεωρέω), are all words meaning ‘to look at’ or ‘to see’. Two bodies standing in the same place cannot actually “see” each other. Therefore, the conjunction cannot properly be thought of as a “looking at.”

This logic also extends to things that stand directly next to each other. If I stand right next to you, and we look in the same direction, it is difficult for you to see me. For this reason, signs on either side of a given sign were held not to “look at” each other. The signs that were six and eight signs away were also not regarded as “looking at” the 1<sup>st</sup> sign. The logic of this is not so clear, but, in general in ancient astrology, signs and their opposing signs were regarded as having similar characteristics. So if the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> signs did not “look at” the 1<sup>st</sup> sign, the 8<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> were not regarded as “looking at” the 1<sup>st</sup> sign either. In any case, the logic of the relationship between a given 1<sup>st</sup> sign and the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> places from it is more clearly shown in the next paragraph. And while we are at this point in the discussion, it is also necessary to point out that in the more ancient forms of astrology, Eastern as well as Western, aspects were measured from sign to sign much more than they were from degree to degree. Between this fact, and the nature of the relationship between a sign and the signs in a 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> sign relationship to it, we eliminate at a stroke all minor aspects. Either they violate the provision concerning signs 2, 6, 8, and 12, or they measure angles that are not multiples of 30 degrees. The first criterion eliminates the semi-sextile and the quincunx; the second eliminates semi-squares, sesqui-quadrates, quintiles, septiles, etc. (See Appendix 3 for a further discussion of these issues.)



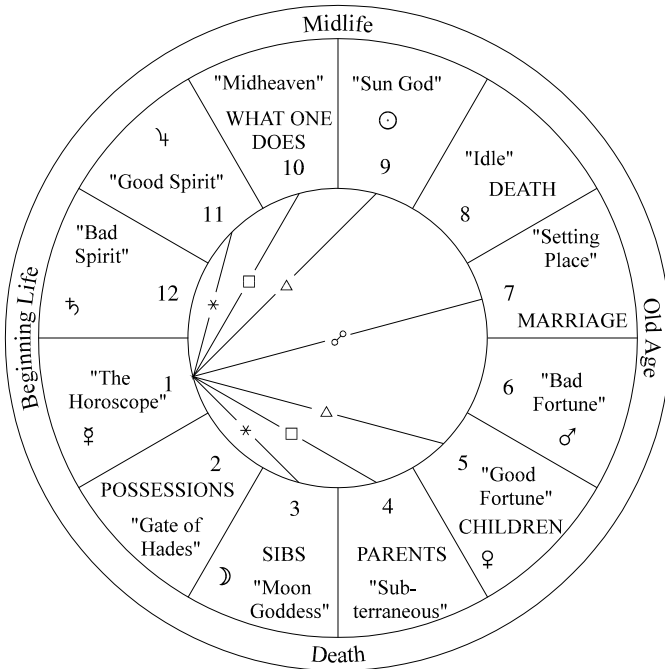


Diagram 1 –The Twelve Places in Greek Astrology

Now if we look at Diagram 1, which shows the aspect relationships and the meanings of the “houses”, i.e., places, in Greek astrology, we will notice something. All of the houses that do not “look at” the 1<sup>st</sup> sign, “The Horoscope”, i.e., rising sign in this instance, have meanings that can be described as “malefic.” The only exception is the 2<sup>nd</sup> sign, which became associated with possessions and lost its malefic signification. But notice that originally it was called “the Gate of Hades.” And in Hindu astrology it is still considered malefic even while it is connected with possessions. Perhaps this has to do with the attachment to material things being the cause of suffering.

The key point here is that aspects between signs, or the lack of aspects between signs, is an important factor in giving rise to the significations of the “houses.” In early astrology there seems to have been little distinction made between “good” aspects (sextile and trine) and “bad” aspects (square and opposition). The truly “bad” relationship was no relationship at all. And even later on, when the distinction came to be made between these

two categories of aspects, no connection between two signs was still considered to be the worst relationship two signs could have. In Greek and early Arabic astrology the 6<sup>th</sup> sign from any sign referred to elements that were hostile or inimical to the matters signified by the 1<sup>st</sup> sign, elements that were hostile to the survival of whatever the 1<sup>st</sup> sign signified, hence illness in the case of the physical body, or servitude. The 8<sup>th</sup> sign signified the actual death or destruction of whatever the 1<sup>st</sup> sign signified. The 12<sup>th</sup> sign signified whatever could imprison or secretly work against whatever the 1<sup>st</sup> sign signified. This leads to some very interesting observations. Bonatti, in Tractatus II, says of the 9<sup>th</sup> house that it signifies “the hidden enemies of kings because it is the 12<sup>th</sup> from the 10<sup>th</sup>. And this is the reason why prelates and other religious persons are always secretly hostile to kings.”<sup>1</sup> (See Diagram 2)

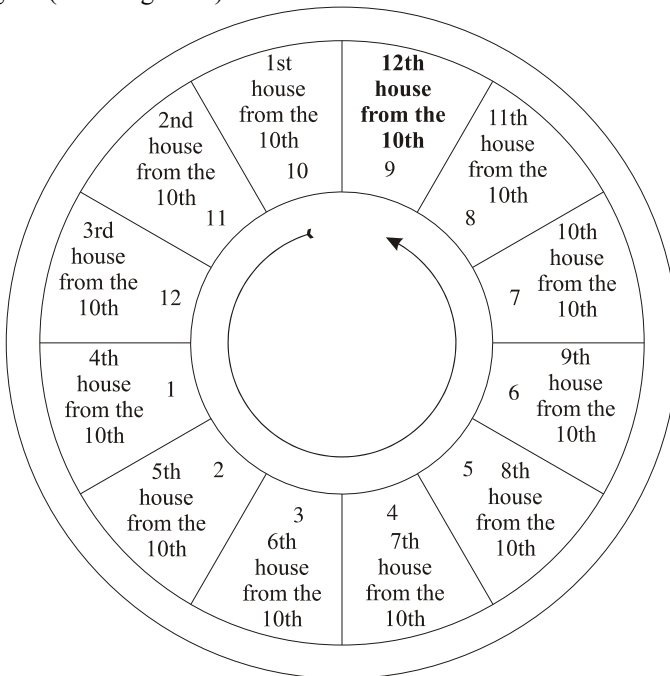


Diagram 2 – Counting Houses

(in this Example, how the 12<sup>th</sup> from the 10<sup>th</sup> is the 9<sup>th</sup>)

The designation for signs having no aspect relationship to each other

---

<sup>1</sup> Tractatus II, *On the Ninth House*, Translation by author.

is that they are “not joined,” which in Latin is *inconiunctus*, or in English, inconjunct. For this reason, those who believe that the quincunx of 150° is a valid aspect should not refer to this aspect as an inconjunct. An inconjunct *aspect* is an oxymoron.

The term *disiunctus* is also used, meaning ‘disjunct’. I use this word instead of inconjunct so as to avoid confusion.

### **Angular Houses Versus “Malefic” Aspects**

The signs that are in 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> house relation to any sign are an interesting problem. We would regard the aspects involved as being squares and oppositions. Therefore, in the logic of modern astrology, these signs should be hostile to the 1<sup>st</sup> sign. However, there seems to be a division in the logic here. Very early it was recognized that these signs, along with the 1<sup>st</sup> sign, were somehow more important than the other signs. They were called “pivots” as if they were turning points in the chart. The Greek word ‘pivot’ is *kentron* (κέντρον) from which comes the Sanskrit term *kendra*. In Latin the equivalent word is *cardo*, the adjective form of which is *cardinalis*. Originally the cardinal signs were not the signs that begin with solstices or equinoxes, but were the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> signs of the chart, counting from the sign that contained the **horoscopic point**. Although the evidence is not completely conclusive, it appears that if a sign contained a **horoscopic point** such as the Ascendant degree, the **Lot of Fortune**, or the Moon (the Sun being used this way less frequently), the signs and planets that squared or opposed it were treated as being in “angles” from the 1<sup>st</sup> sign. If the sign did not contain a **horoscopic point**, the planets and signs that made squares or oppositions to it were considered to be hostile to the planets in the 1<sup>st</sup> sign, at least by some authors. However, this combination of the logic of “houses” and aspects does not seem to have been consistently applied.

### **The Origin of “Benefic” and “Malefic” Aspects**

The following is documented most clearly in the medieval writers, but seems to have roots in Greek or earlier astrology. First of all, the zodiac was generally regarded as being divided into two halves, one half being allocated to the Moon (Aquarius through Cancer), and the other half being allocated to the Sun (Leo through Capricorn). If we consider each of the luminaries as aspecting only in its half of the zodiac up to the opposition plus the opposition, itself, an interesting pattern emerges. In Diagram 3, the halves of the zodiac include the opposite signs from Cancer and Leo, Capricorn and Aquarius, which are of course not, strictly speaking, in the

halves belonging to the Moon and Sun. Other than the opposition aspect,

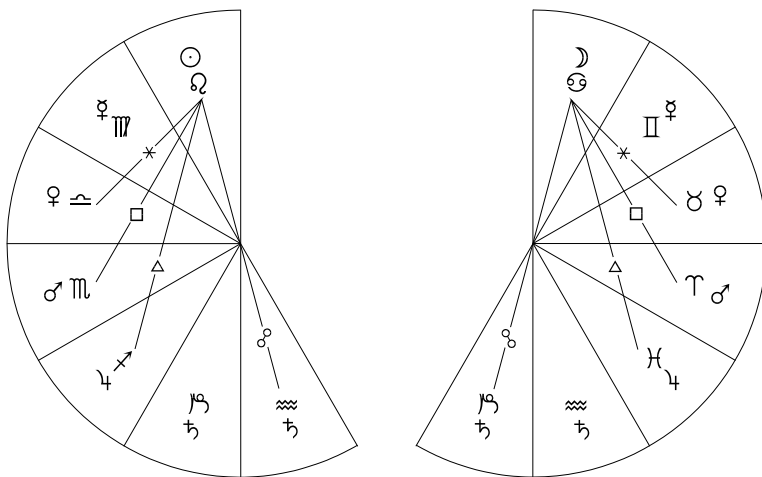


Diagram 3 – The Relationship of Rulerships to Aspects

however, the Sun is treated as aspecting forward in the zodiac from Leo (also called sinister aspects), and the Moon as backward in the zodiac (also called dexter aspects). (Dexter and Sinister have no meaning regarding the opposition.)

Here is the passage from Bonatti which presents this logic of the aspects.

“It is said that the sextile aspect is a good aspect and it is an aspect of moderate friendship and concord, but not complete. And it is called an aspect of moderate friendship because it is itself gotten from Venus and from the Luminaries because the domiciles of Venus aspect the domiciles of the Luminaries by the sextile aspect as has been described previously. And because of this, it is said that that aspect is one of moderate friendship because Venus is the fortune of half and not complete strength.

“And the square aspect is said to be moderately evil and that it is an aspect of moderate enmity and discord, but not complete. And it is called an aspect of moderate enmity because it is itself gotten from Mars and the Luminaries because the domiciles of Mars regard the domiciles of the Luminaries by the square aspect as has been described previously. And because of this that aspect is said to be one of moderate enmity because Mars is an infortune less than Saturn just as Venus is a lesser fortune than Jupiter.

“The trine aspect is called a good aspect and an aspect of complete friendship and complete concord and complete goodness. And it is called an aspect of perfect friendship and concord because it is itself gotten from Jupiter and the Luminaries because the domiciles of Jupiter aspect the domiciles of the Luminaries by the trine aspect. And because of this that aspect is said to be one of complete friendship because

Jupiter is the fortune strong and perfect beyond all other fortunes from which nothing of goodness is lacking.

“But the opposition aspect is called an evil aspect and is the aspect of ultimate enmity and ultimate malice and ultimate discord. And it is said to be such an aspect of ultimate enmity because it is gotten from Saturn and from the Luminaries because the domiciles of Saturn aspect the domiciles of the Luminaries by opposition. And because of this that aspect is said to be of ultimate discord because Saturn is an infortune greater and stronger than all other infortunes.” [Translation by author.]

As Bonatti points out, the sextile forward from the Sun in Leo, and the one backward from the Moon in Cancer, both aspect signs of Venus. Venus is the **lesser benefic**; therefore, the logic goes, the sextile is the aspect of moderate friendship. The square forward from Leo and the one backward from Cancer aspect signs of Mars. As Mars is the **lesser malefic**, the square is the aspect of moderate enmity. The trines from Leo and Cancer aspect signs of Jupiter. As Jupiter is the **greater benefic**, so the trine is the aspect of complete friendship. Then the signs of the luminaries aspect the signs of Saturn, Capricorn, and Aquarius, by either opposition or quincunx. The latter is not recognized as an aspect. Therefore, at best, the relationship between the signs of the luminaries and the signs of Saturn is one of not being joined, i.e., disjunction. At worst, it is one of opposition. Therefore, (and in contrast to many moderns who view the square as being worse than the opposition), as Saturn is the **greater malefic**, so the opposition is the aspect of complete enmity. Notice that the signs of Mercury are disjunct Leo and Cancer. Mercury is not considered a malefic but is neutral in this respect.

At this point we see that the interplay between signs and their rulers, the aspects, and the meanings of what later became the houses, are all related in a complex and intricate manner. While I am not going to take the position that we should not be using minor aspects, I think the reader can see that minor aspects require some explaining in terms of the framework that has been presented here. Clearly, when Kepler proposed many of the modern minor aspects, such as the quintile, he did not have this whole system in mind. It is possible that he was unaware of it, or perhaps he did not take it seriously.

### Historical Development

There is no evidence that anyone prior to Ptolemy used anything but Whole-Sign houses for deriving the areas or domains of life that each planet affected. However, there is evidence that modern types of house-division (in which the Ascendant marks the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> house, and the Midheaven the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup>) may have been used for another

purpose. More on that later. The question is, what system did Ptolemy use? The usual answer is **Equal Houses**. Some, including Placidus, have tried to assert that Ptolemy used the **semi-arc system** that we know as the Placidian. This is not defensible! Ptolemy used the logic of Placidian division for computing **primary directions**, but no one before the late Middle Ages connected his manner of doing **primary directions** and his method of house division.

Here is the manner of translation that gives rise to the idea that Ptolemy used anything like modern houses. The following is from the Ashmand translation of Book III of Ptolemy in the chapter on the parents.<sup>1</sup>

“The shortness of his [the father’s] life is particularly intimated by the position of the Sun and Saturn in the first two angles, viz. the ascendant and the midheaven, or in their *succedent houses*; and his affliction by diseases and injuries, when they may be posited in the two other angles, the western and the lower heaven, or in the *houses succedent* thereto.” [italics mine]<sup>2</sup>

The original Greek says nothing about “houses.” The Greek word is the word for ‘succeedent’ without a noun, *epanaphora* (ἐπαναφορά). Robbins translates the word as “succeedent signs.” But even this is supplying an implied noun. “Succeedents” is actually what the Greek says. We need to know what that implied noun is. Then, a bit later on, we have another passage that identifies the area of the chart to which one should look for brothers and sisters. Again we have the Ashmand translation.

“The place, whence inferences are drawn respecting brothers and sisters, is to be considered as being applicable only to children of the same mother, *and it is consequently, agreeably to nature, presumed to be the same as the maternal place; viz. the sign occupying the mid-heaven; or, by day, that which contains Venus, and, by night, the Moon.* This sign and its succedent are considered as indicative of the mother and her children, and the same place is therefore properly allotted to brothers and sisters.”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> This and many of the other points regarding Ptolemy and house division referred to below are made by myself and Robert Schmidt in the Introduction and body of Schmidt’s translation of Ptolemy. See Claudius Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos, Book III*, trans. Robert Schmidt, Berkeley Springs, WV: Golden Hind Press, 1996. I especially refer the interested reader to my introduction, p. ii, and Schmidt’s Translator’s Preface, pp. viii-xiv. At the time of that writing I was not in a position to check Schmidt’s work but I was at the time convinced of its correctness. Now that I have been able to check it, I still am.

<sup>2</sup> *Ptolemy, Tetrabiblos*, trans. J. M. Ashmand, Chicago: Aries Press, 1936, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81. (All italics in citations are this author’s.)

Here we have a series of misunderstandings in the translation, and that of Robbins is no better. He has the following text corresponding to what has been italicized above:

“. . . it is more naturally to be taken . . . from the culminating sign, the place of the mother, that is, that which contains by day [diurnal chart] Venus and by night [nocturnal chart] the Moon.” [Bracketed material supplied by author.]<sup>1</sup>

The Robbins translation would be correct if changed to the following:

“. . . it is more naturally to be taken . . . according to the sign which culminates with respect to the place of the mother, that is, that [place] which contains by day Venus and by night the Moon.”<sup>2</sup>

However, all translations agree that the next sentence refers to the place or *topos* of siblings to be a sign, *zōidion* (ζῳδῖον). This tells us two things: First, that Ptolemy made planets **horoscopic points** for certain purposes, and, second, that in doing so he used Whole-Sign houses.

So where did the notion of **Equal Houses** in Ptolemy come from? It comes from Book III in the section in which Ptolemy describes the computation of the **aphetic point**, a point used to determine how many years a person may live. Here is the passage in Ashmand:

“These several places [in which the **aphetic point** may be found] are the sign on the angle of the ascendant, from the fifth degree above the horizon, to the twenty-fifth degree below it; the thirty degrees in dexter sextile thereto, constituting the eleventh house, called the Good Daemon; also the thirty degrees in dexter quartile, forming the mid-heaven above the earth; those in dexter trine making the ninth house, called God; and lastly, those in opposition, belonging to the angle of the west.”<sup>3</sup>

This has been interpreted as referring to **equal houses** from the Ascendant, with the slight alteration that the 1<sup>st</sup> house extends from 5° above the Ascendant to 25° below it, and so for the other “houses” as well. But there is a problem. Except at the very beginning of the passage, neither the word ‘house’ nor *topos* appears in the original Greek. The original Greek referring to the 11<sup>th</sup> “house” is as follows:

---

<sup>1</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. F.E. Robbins, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954, p.251.

<sup>2</sup> λαμβάνοιτο ἄν φυσικώτερον ὃ τε περὶ ὁμοητρίων μόνον καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ μεσουρανοῦντος δωδεκατημορίου τοῦ μητρικοῦ τόπου, τουτέστι τοῦ περιέχοντος ἡμέρας μὲν τὸν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης, νυκτὸς δὲ τὴν σελήνην . . .

<sup>3</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, trans. J. M. Ashmand, p. 88.

καὶ τὰς ταύταις ταῖς 30 μοίραις δεξιᾶς ἑξαγώνου (τε) (τὰς) (ταῖς) (τοὺς) (τε καὶ) τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος.

*kai tas tautais tais 30 moirais dexias hexagonous (te) (tas) (tais) (tous) (te kai) tou agathou daimonos . . .*

The words that are in parentheses in the Greek are the critical ones. Each one is an alternative to the others according to Boer who edited the Teubner edition of the *Tetrabiblos*. Robbins favored the *te*, and Boer the *tas*. But the upshot of all of these is that it is up to the choice of the editor of the Greek to interpret exactly what Ptolemy was saying here. Here are the two basic choices: 1) One set of interpretations states that the 30 degrees which are in a right hexagon (sextile) to the ones around the Ascendant are also known as the “Good Daimon” or 11<sup>th</sup> *topos* or place. 2) The other possible set of interpretations says that the degrees in question must be from among those 30 degrees which are in the right hexagon *and which are also* in the 11<sup>th</sup> place (i.e., 11<sup>th</sup> sign from the ascending sign). Thanks to the textual confusion we do not know from the Greek whether these degrees constitute the 11<sup>th</sup> place (which favors the equal house interpretation), or whether the degrees in question have to be both in the 11<sup>th</sup> *topos and in sextile as well* to the degrees around the Ascendant (which favors the Whole-Sign interpretation).<sup>1</sup>

And finally what we have here in Ptolemy *is not a description of a house system*, but a description of places (in the non-technical sense of the word ‘place’) in the chart in which an **aphetic point** may be found. In the passages where we do see Ptolemy referring to houses in the modern sense, we either have adjectives with no explicit noun, or we have clear references to signs of the zodiac.

So what happened? Two things happened. First of all, we have the problem that the Greeks noted, namely, that the Midheaven degree does not always fall in the 10<sup>th</sup> place from the rising sign. Second, we do have clear references in Vettius Valens<sup>2</sup> and in other places that something like modern houses might be used for another purpose, namely, *to evaluate the strength or intensity of a planet*.<sup>3</sup>

We do this in modern astrology whenever we refer to a planet as

---

<sup>1</sup> Again see Schmidt’s Translator’s Preface to Book III of the *Tetrabiblos* and to the translation of chapter 11, pp. 29-33.

<sup>2</sup> Vettius Valens, *Anthology, Book III*, trans. Robert Schmidt, Berkeley Springs, WV: Golden Hind Press, 1994, chapter 2, p. 33 ff.

<sup>3</sup> See Schmidt’s Translator’s Preface to Book III of the *Tetrabiblos*, p. viii, where he discusses this issue.



being angular (the strongest, so it is said), succedent (next strongest), or cadent (weakest). When we do this, we're doing something we don't usually notice, namely, that we are using modern houses for two purposes: 1) As I have already said, we derive the area or domain of life that a planet primarily affects from the house placement. 2) We evaluate how strong a planet is from the houses. The Gauquelin's research into the planets' placement in charts came up with results that pertain only to #2. Their results say nothing about #1.<sup>1</sup>

It appears from the earliest Greek sources that the original idea was that these were separate functions of houses or places that could easily be allocated to different ways of deriving "places." In chapter 2, Book III of the *Anthology*, Valens describes a method of computing places which is the same as that later attributed to Porphyry. In this system, the distance in degrees between the Ascendant and Midheaven in longitude is divided into three equal parts, which become the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> places. Then the same is done between the Ascendant and IC to get the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> places. But in his description Valens mentions only the power of the degrees in each place; he says nothing about the signification, i.e., what part of life each place rules.

This system was also described in the *Thesaurus* of Antiochus of Athens in chapter 46.<sup>2</sup> But again the use is in connection with computing the years associated with each place and not with the signification. Porphyry, in his commentary on Ptolemy, quotes Antiochus, and that is how the system became associated with him as the "Porphyry" house system.

Then, a bit later on, someone proposed doing the division into thirds on the equator rather than the **ecliptic**. This system is described in writings of Rhetorius<sup>3</sup> from about 500 C.E. and it is the system that we know as the Alchabitius house system, although it long precedes Alchabitius. Still, at this point, these "places" are used only for determining strength or something else, but not for the signification of

---

<sup>1</sup> These results have been presented in numerous books and articles by the Gauquelins.

<sup>2</sup> Antiochus of Athens, *The Thesaurus*, trans. Robert Schmidt, Berkeley Springs, WV: Golden Hind Press, 1993, p. 32. We do not have the exact reference to the Porphyry commentary, but this passage from Antiochus was, in fact, quoted by Porphyry with the result that the house system became associated with Porphyry.

<sup>3</sup> This is cited in Otto Neugebauer and H.G. van Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes*, Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Library, 1959, pp. 152-157.

rulership over domains of life.

### The Problem of Julius Firmicus Maternus

When I wrote the original version of this text for *The Mountain Astrologer* magazine, I believed that there was only one author before 500 C.E. who used anything other than Whole-Sign houses for signification of domains of life. That was Julius Firmicus Maternus in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century C.E. who seemed to use **Equal Houses**. In preparation for the revised version of the articles for publication in this work, I reviewed the text in question and did a thorough examination of the Latin. Here is a translation of the result.

“The first place is that division in which the horoscope is located. In this place are contained the life and breath of human beings. From this place one learns the foundation of the entire geniture. This place extends its powers from that degree in which the horoscope is [located] through the remaining 30 degrees [*per residuas partes XXX*]. It is moreover the first cardine and is the connecting principle and substance of the entire geniture.

“The second place from the horoscope is located in the second sign and takes a beginning [*initium*] from the 30<sup>th</sup> degree of the horoscope and extends its powers through the remaining 30 degrees. . .” [Translation by the author]<sup>1</sup>

This text is much more ambiguous than I originally thought. The ambiguity comes from the phrase *per residuas partes XXX*., “through the remaining 30 degrees.” Jean Rhys-Bram translates it as “through the following thirty degrees.”<sup>2</sup> If her translation were correct it would establish this as an unambiguous **equal house system** reference. However, the Latin adjective *residuus*, translated here as “remaining,” does not mean “following.” It means only “the remaining” or “the rest

---

<sup>1</sup> Julius Firmicus Maternus, *Matheseos Libra VIII*, Book II, chapter 19. The Latin is as follows:

*Primus est locus [idest] illa pars, in qua horoscopus est constitutus. In hoc loco vita hominum et spiritus continetur, ex hoc loco totius geniturae fundamenta noscuntur, hic locus ab ea parte, in qua fuerit horoscopus, vires suas per residuas partes XXX extendit. Est autem cardo primus et totius geniturae compago atque substantia.*

*Secundus ab horoscopo locus in secundo signo constituitur et accipit initium a XXX. horoscopi parte et vires suas per XXX residuas partes extendit . . .*

<sup>2</sup> Julius Firmicus Maternus, translated as *Ancient Astrology - Theory and Practice* by Jean Rhys Bram, Park Ridge, NJ: Noyes Press, 1975, pp. 48-51.

of.” Could it mean all of the other *remaining*, or *the rest of the thirty* degrees of a sign rather than the thirty degrees which follow into the next sign? The Latin word *initium* in connection with the 2<sup>nd</sup> house does mean “beginning.” This suggests that the 2<sup>nd</sup> house begins at the 30<sup>th</sup> degree of the horoscope. However, what is the “30<sup>th</sup> degree of the horoscope?” Is it 30 degrees from the horoscope, i.e., Ascendant, or is the last degree of the horoscope the last degree of the rising sign? Horoscope can mean the rising sign as well as the rising degree.

Unfortunately I have to say that the text here really is ambiguous. But other sections in the text on the houses occupied by lots do not seem to indicate **equal houses** but rather Whole-Sign houses. In Book VI, chapter 32, there is the following passage:

If you should desire to acquire the Place of the Father by a method exact to the degree, and it is a diurnal geniture, you will compute the number of all of the degrees from the degree of the Sun as far as to the degree of Saturn, to wit, of all of the signs which there are from the Sun to Saturn. And when you have established the entire sum of that number, beginning from the degree of the horoscope, you will divide this number, which has been filled, among all of the signs giving thirty degrees to the individual signs. And in whichever sign the last degree falls, that very sign reveals the place of the father.<sup>1</sup>

Here the text unambiguously defines a “place” as being a sign, not any thirty-degree patch. Let me assure you that there is no “interpretation” of the Latin here.

So why should Firmicus Maternus use **equal houses** for the Ascendant houses and then use Whole-Sign houses for the places of the lots? If Firmicus Maternus did use Whole-Sign houses, then one thing is clear; he intended that the degrees at 30 degree intervals from the Ascendant be used as some kind of defining point for the house such as, for example, for computing house rulerships and lots.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Si locum patris partili volueris ratione colligere, et sit diurna genitura, computes a parte Solis usque ad partem Saturni omnem partium numerum, omnium scilicet signorum quae a Sole usque ad Saturnum sunt, et cum integram numeri feceris summam, ab horoscopi parte incipiens hunc numerum qui completus fuerit signis omnibus divides, reddens triginta partes singulis signis; et in quo signo novissima pars ceciderit, ipsum tibi signum locum patris monstrat.*

## The Advent of the Modern Type of House System

Finally, in the late 6<sup>th</sup> Century C.E., in the last days of the old Greek astrological tradition, we have a commentary by one Olympiodorus on the text of Paulus Alexandrinus from the 4<sup>th</sup> Century C.E.<sup>1</sup> In this text, for the

---

<sup>1</sup> As of this writing the Olympiodorus translation is in the final stages of editing and as a result the pagination of the this new translation is not complete. Therefore, I cite here in full the relevant passage from Olympiodorus as translated by Dorian Greenbaum in a new translation very shortly to be released by ARHAT.

(Greek Text p. 75, ll. 23-31, p. 76, ll. 1-8)

### Concerning the Separation of the Twelve Places

There has come to be a certain amount of difference and ambiguity for the astrologers concerning the division and separation of such twelve places. For they define the whole place as the *zōidion* itself, whose degree is found marking the hour or culminating. But in this reckoning other faults also result, especially because from the hour-marking degree up to the culminating one there is not always a distance of 90 degrees, but either more or less; in more remaining over, an unused *zōidion* results, but in less, an [unused] place. But others, taking 15 on each side of the hour-marking degree and the culminating one, likewise circumscribe the places. These also thus result in ill-placement/strangeness.

But one of the ancients, whose name time has handed down in the depths of forgetfulness, taking as a starting point what has been said about lengths of life by the most divine Ptolemy, that one must take the hour-marking place from 5 degrees of those pre-ascending the hour-marking degree, sets out a method which seems even better than all the others, in respect of how much none of the ill-placements in those result in this one.

(Greek Text p. 76, ll. 8-33)

This is the method. One must, he says, take the 5 <degrees> pre-ascending the Midheaven and make this a beginning of the culminating place, noting of what *zōidion* and in what degree it is. And since the interval between both the hour-marking degree and the culminating one is not always of 90 degrees, but at one time more and another less, one must take them, and however many there are, and write out the third part of them. And so, beginning from the degree before the culminating one, which we have made the beginning of the Midheaven place, give over to the whole distance of it the written out <degrees> of the third part of the interval, noting what the last is and the degree of what *zōidion*. For this will be the end of the Midheaven, but the beginning of the eleventh place, that is to say, the Good Spirit.

Again, counting from this, as into the ones that follow, an equal

first time, we clearly see places computed by the Valens-Antiochus-Porphry system used for the *signification* of planets as well as for their strength. Clearly, by this time, the two uses of the places were becoming merged, and places were now finally beginning to diverge from signs and become a second twelve-fold system of dividing the chart.

But when we see the earliest Arab era authors, we see only the Whole-Sign house system. It is curious that the earliest texts on **horary astrology** give us the rules that modern **horary** astrologers still use concerning houses. But where modern astrologers use Placidus, Koch, or Regiomontanus, the original authors use Whole-Sign houses. (We look at Whole-Sign houses in **horary astrology** further on. See Appendix 1 at the end of the book.) In the second generation of Arabic astrologers, beginning in the late 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Centuries C.E., the modern-type house system completely displaces Whole-Sign house division. The system usually used is that of Rhetorius-Alchabitius. The change began with the commentators on Ptolemy and continued as astrologers began to come to grips with the problem of the Midheaven.

### A Modern Solution to the Midheaven Problem

The problem is (to state it again) that the Midheaven does not always fall in the 10<sup>th</sup> sign from the Ascendant. For example, in my own chart I have Cancer rising. My Midheaven is in Pisces which is the 9<sup>th</sup> sign from Cancer. The main difficulty with the Midheaven problem is that almost everyone from the very beginning assumed that the Ascendant and the Midheaven were somehow connected. Obviously they are connected in terms of the geometry of the chart, but it was assumed that if the Ascendant determined the location of places in some manner, the Midheaven should also do so in a manner that was compatible with that of the Ascendant. Except for proponents of **Equal House** division, the usual

---

[number] to those of the third part of the interval, noting the last just as with those above. For this again will be the end of the Good Spirit, but the beginning of the Evil Spirit. And still, likewise, casting out first the third part of the interval as according to those following from the zodiacal degree of what has been found at the beginning of the Evil-Spirit place, that is the twelfth, we will have the end of it, or the beginning of the *hōroskopos*. And it is obvious that the beginning of the *Horoskopie* place will be 5 degrees before, pre-ascending the hour-marking degree, since we have made the beginning of the counting of degrees of the circumscription of these three places from the 5 degrees pre-ascending the Midheaven degree.

solution was the same as the modern one, that the Ascendant should determine the location of the 1<sup>st</sup> place, while the Midheaven should determine that of the 10<sup>th</sup>, and they both should have some role in determining that of the intermediate places. It is this last that has given rise to the entire, vast confusion that has reigned ever since concerning the location of intermediate place or house cusps. This problem has never been solved!

Let's suppose that the problem is really a false problem, that it was never the intention of the earliest astrologers to create a second twelve-fold system of division to add to that of the signs. Suppose, instead, that the interpretative functions of the twelve places were to be taken on by the signs according to their relationship to the rising sign or any other sign containing a **horoscopic point**. The problem of relating the Ascendant and Midheaven to the places might never have arisen if astrologers in the Middle East and subsequent West had continued the most ancient practice of simply counting signs from a variety of **horoscopic points**. Then it might never have seemed necessary to coordinate the Ascendant and Midheaven into a single system. We do know, for example, that places were computed from the Ascendant, the **Lot of Fortune**, the Lot of the Father<sup>1</sup> for information about the father, the Lot of the Mother<sup>2</sup> for information about the mother, and from other lots as well from which it would be plausible to compute places by sign. And even with those lots where it would not be plausible to compute places, the lot was supposed to designate an entire sign as the source of something in particular. For example, there was a Lot of Inseparable Illness, i.e., chronic illness. Its formula was Lot = Ascendant + ♂ - ♃ by day, and Lot = Ascendant + ♃ - ♂ by night. The sign it fell into was supposed to signify the source of the worst kinds of illness. In Valens this was called the Lot of Accusation because it was supposed to signify that of which one was accused, whether falsely or truthfully.

Encountering this material I had a thought. Suppose instead of tying the Midheaven to the Ascendant and having both of them determine houses or places together, we let them determine houses or places separately, as if the Midheaven were a lot such as the **Lot of Fortune**.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Lot of the Father is as follows:

By day (in a diurnal chart): Lot = Asc. + ♃ - ☉

By night (in a nocturnal chart): Lot = Asc. + ☉ - ♃

<sup>2</sup> The Lot of the Mother is as follows:

By day (in a diurnal chart): Lot = Asc. + ♀ - ☽

By night (in a nocturnal chart): Lot = Asc. + ♀ - ☽

This is not exactly without precedent. The Hamburg School of Alfred Witte (known in this country as the Uranian System) did just such a thing. In fact, they used several house systems concurrently, just as the Greeks seem to have done. But there is one difference in the Hamburg School: the points that determine houses may be on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup> house cusps of their houses depending upon the type of point. Then **equal houses** are taken from there. The lone exception to this practice that is of interest to us are the Midheaven or Meridian Houses, which are usually **equal houses** measured on the celestial equator using the meridian as the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> house. Thus, the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> house usually differs from the Ascendant. Using Meridian Houses, the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> house is the **Equatorial Ascendant** (often incorrectly referred to as the **East Point**).

The Greeks were more consistent. Since, for them, the relationship among the houses was one of aspect by sign, all **horoscopic points** determined a 1<sup>st</sup> house or place. If one were to use the Midheaven as a **horoscopic point**, as one would do with a lot, then the Midheaven would determine the 1<sup>st</sup> place of the places as related to issues of the Midheaven. The Greek word for the primary matter concerned with the 10<sup>th</sup> house is “action,” or, in Greek *praxis* (πράξις). That is, the 10<sup>th</sup> house is the house of what one does, not merely as a profession, but also in terms of one's total life activity. Thus, places counted from the Midheaven would be places relating to one's actions as a whole.

This originally occurred to me based on my research into the use of lots and was reinforced at least somewhat by the Hamburg practice. Imagine my surprise and gratification when we encountered Book V, chapter 6 of the Valens' *Anthology*. There Valens mentions what happens when Gemini rises and the Midheaven happens to fall into Aquarius. He states that Aquarius has to do double duty. It becomes a place of action because the Midheaven falls into it, but it remains the place of foreign lands and the God (the Greek name for the 9<sup>th</sup> place). Similarly, Leo at the other end does service both as the sign of the IC and as the 3<sup>rd</sup> place from the Ascendant.<sup>1</sup>

Now this is not exactly the same thing as making the Midheaven the **horoscopic point** of its own system of places, but doing so would accomplish the same thing. In any case, it is clear that Valens at least was willing to let the Midheaven float and be somewhat independent of the Ascendant as a determiner of places.

---

<sup>1</sup> Vettius Valens, *Anthology, Books V & VI*, trans. Robert Schmidt, Berkeley Springs, WV: Golden Hind Press, 1994, p. 30.

One of the consequences of this idea is that the Midheaven can have a relationship to the Ascendant such that it is in a place as measured from the Ascendant. In the middle latitudes, where most of the U.S. is located, the Midheaven can be in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, or 11<sup>th</sup> sign from the Ascendant. In some cases it can even be in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> sign from the Ascendant. In higher latitudes, such as Great Britain, Scandinavia, or Russia, this is much more common. Can it be that the sign relationship of the Midheaven to the Ascendant tells us something about the chart?

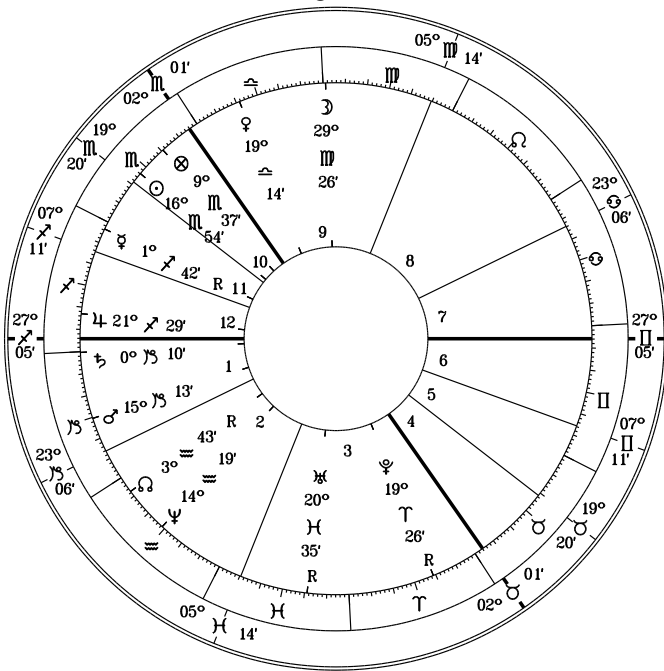


Diagram 4 — Edward VII

As an example, here is the chart of Edward VII of Great Britain, one of the favorite charts of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century astrologers (see Diagram 4). The inner part of the wheel contains Koch house cusps computed in the usual manner. The middle part of the wheel contains the signs of the zodiac so that they can be counted as places from the rising sign. Such a form allows one to compare modern houses to Whole-Sign houses.

Notice the location of the Midheaven. Since Edward VII was born with late degrees of a sign rising, most of his 1<sup>st</sup> place is in what moderns would call the 12<sup>th</sup> house. But his rising sign is Sagittarius. Therefore, the



1<sup>st</sup> place is the sign Sagittarius and the 12<sup>th</sup> place is the sign Scorpio. This puts his Midheaven into the 12<sup>th</sup> place as reckoned from the Ascendant. Thus Scorpio, following Valens, does double duty as the place of action (because the Midheaven is in it) and the 12<sup>th</sup> place (as counted from the Ascendant). This also means that the sign Taurus is the 6<sup>th</sup> place from the Ascendant as well as the place of family and ancestors. Now, in ancient astrology, both Eastern and Western, the 6<sup>th</sup> place is the place of enemies as well as servitude and illness. I have reason to believe that this signification is correct, although the “enemy” signified by the 6<sup>th</sup> house is different from that of the 7<sup>th</sup>. The 7<sup>th</sup> house “enemy” is an opponent, someone who defines himself or herself through conflict with you. The hostility may range from mere competitiveness to serious anger, but competition is the central feature. With the 6<sup>th</sup> house, the enemy is more likely to be destructive for the sake of destruction. The 6<sup>th</sup> place does not aspect the 1<sup>st</sup>; therefore, the affairs of the 6<sup>th</sup> house do not support Life, the key signification of the 1<sup>st</sup> place. This is the probable basis of the 6<sup>th</sup> place being a place of illness. Illness threatens survival.

When we look at the chart of Edward VII from this point of view, we are justified in suggesting that his parents (the place of the IC) are also his enemies (6<sup>th</sup> place from the Ascendant). Anyone who knows about his relations with his parents, particularly in later years with his mother, will know that this is not much of an exaggeration. Of course, the very close, even though out-of-sign, square between the Moon and Saturn also tells us that his relationship with his mother may not have been very healthy. Taking the Midheaven for a moment, his parents did their best to keep him from assuming any aspect of his proper professional role. Thus, his proper role (Midheaven) was kept hidden (12<sup>th</sup> place) for years until his mother died at a very ripe old age. I do not want it left unsaid that there could have been many other ways for this to work out.

### **The Modern Practice with Whole-Sign Houses**

For a modern astrologer the Whole Sign system may seem difficult to accept. The idea that the whole rising sign might constitute the 1<sup>st</sup> house or place does not seem too difficult to accept when the Ascendant falls into the early degrees of a sign and there are no planets in the rising sign that are above the Ascendant. But when we have a situation like Edward's where Mercury is in the 11<sup>th</sup> place by Koch but the 1<sup>st</sup> by Whole Signs, to say nothing of Jupiter, it gets to be a bit harder to accept. Let me assure the reader that I, too, have had my problems with this. And it also seems as though the ancients made a distinction between planets in the 1<sup>st</sup> place above the horizon versus below. Here is a passage from chapter 26 of the

*Liber Hermetis.*

“The Sun in the Ascendant in a diurnal nativity, not rendered unfortunate, especially [if it is] in its own domicile or exaltation or triplicity, shows one who has been born of a noble father and who is glorified in his own country with riches and possessions. Most of these, moreover, have become kings who are cosmocrators, i.e., those who possess or rule the world, but others become dukes or those who preside [in some other way] . . .”

“But in the night the Sun in the Ascendant shows one born of a father who is poor, ignoble, or who has been driven out, and it causes the life of the native to be laborious and without glory.” [Translation by author.]<sup>1</sup>

The odd part of the passage given above is that, while there is a difference between the Sun above and below the horizon in the rising sign, it is the Sun above the horizon, in what we would call the 12<sup>th</sup> house, that gets the good description. The Sun below the horizon in the rising sign comes off rather badly. This is undoubtedly because the Sun above the horizon, being the diurnal planet par excellence, is more powerful when seen than when hidden. But modern astrologers do not pay much attention to this. They are more concerned with a planet being in the “12<sup>th</sup> house.”

Still, despite what may seem implausible given the general practice since the early Middle Ages, my experience with clients is supporting the Whole-Sign method. And this has also been the experience of others who adopted the Whole-Sign system before I did. When a modern house system, such as Koch, and the Whole-Sign house system give different results, the Whole-Sign house interpretation works better most of the time.

However, there are some basic rules one has to follow:

1) As Valens says, the sign of the Midheaven has to do with “10<sup>th</sup> house” matters even if it is not the 10<sup>th</sup> sign from the Ascendant. One should synthesize the import of the two houses, the 10<sup>th</sup> with whatever sign the Midheaven falls into with respect to the Ascendant. The same is also true of the IC and 4<sup>th</sup> house matters along with whatever sign it falls into with respect to the Ascendant.

2) Lot houses, especially those computed from the **Lot of Fortune** and the **Lot of Spirit**, should also be used. And these are also Whole-Sign houses. I will have more to say about houses from these lots in below.

3) Planets above the horizon in the 1<sup>st</sup> house do not seem to be the

---

<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Gundel, *Neue Astrologische Texte des Hermes Tresmigistes*, Munich: 1936, p. 73.

same as planets below the horizon in the 1<sup>st</sup> house. This does not seem to be as much of a factor, however, with the Descendant and the 7<sup>th</sup> sign.

### Whole-Sign Houses or Places Computed from Lots

One of the most startling implications concerning Whole-Sign houses is the use of what I will call Lot Charts. These are charts in which a Lot, or Part, serves as the **horoscopic point**, that is, the point that establishes one of the signs as being the sign that occupies the 1<sup>st</sup> place, or “house” as we would call it. This teaching is quite thoroughly worked out in connection with the chart based on the **Lot of Fortune**. This appears at its most developed in the Manilius where it is called the “Circle of Athla.”<sup>1</sup> However, the meanings of the places as established by the **Lot of Fortune** in this system are quite different from those in conventional places or houses. In Vettius Valens, however, the meanings of the places from the **Lot of Fortune** are pretty much what one would expect, aside from the fact that these places are derived from the **Lot of Fortune** rather than from the Ascendant.<sup>2</sup> The only problem is that there is no systematic listing of the significations of these places. Only some of them are described in detail. The 11<sup>th</sup> place from the **Lot of Fortune** is described as a “place of Acquisition,” that is, it shows something about how one acquires wealth and possessions. This is consistent with the fact that the 11<sup>th</sup> place in Greek astrology in general, as well as Hindu astrology, is a place in which one gains wealth. The 10<sup>th</sup> place from the **Lot of Fortune** is a secondary Midheaven, describing more about what one does for a living or calling.

It is not stated very clearly, but the implication is very strong that one could do something similar with the **Lot of Spirit** as well as the other Lots. Unfortunately, again, there are no worked-out examples. Much in ancient astrological texts seems to have been left as “an exercise to be worked out by the student.” And I strongly believe that this is literally the case.

According to Paulus Alexandrinus,<sup>3</sup> Olympiodorus, and others, the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Manilius, Astronomicon*, trans. G. P. Goold, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977, pp. 171-179.

<sup>2</sup> Vettius Valens, *Anthology, Book II*, trans. Robert Schmidt, Berkeley Springs, WV: Golden Hind Press, 1994, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> In the new translation of Paulus, chapter 23, we have the following: “And *Fortune* signifies all things about the body and actions throughout life. It becomes indicative of acquisition, reputation and privilege.” As of this writing the new translation has not been finally paginated. This is true also of other references to

**Lot of Fortune** has to do with acquiring money and other possessions, with reputation, career, and social status (especially as these are determined by one's family status), and with one's body type (along with the Ascendant). As one can see, the **Lot of Fortune** is very lunar in its indications.

The **Lot of Spirit**,<sup>1</sup> according to the same sources, has to do with intentional actions, especially one's career insofar as it is determined by conscious choice. The **Lot of Spirit** is solar. In fact, the **Lots of Fortune** and **Spirit** are among the Lots related specifically to the planets, **Fortune** being related to the Moon, and **Spirit** to the Sun.<sup>2</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this article to go into this in great depth, but it is clear from a careful reading of the Greek literature that the **Lot of Fortune** and its associated chart describe one's tendencies early in life, while the **Lot of Spirit** and its presumed associated chart have to do with later life and one's maturity. The basic chart from the Ascendant seems to be the native's life as a whole. I could and will say much more about these charts in other writings, but that has to be left to another time. Therefore, I will refer to Lot charts sparingly in the examples below.

### The Whole-Sign House “Cusps”

One last issue before we turn to some examples: What are the “cusps” of Whole-Sign houses? Are they the beginnings of the signs, or something else? Unfortunately, we do not have definite evidence as to what the practice actually was. And there are Lots where this becomes an issue. For example, the Lot of Death has the formula  $\text{Lot} = \text{♄} + 8^{\text{th}} \text{Cusp} - \text{♃}$ , both

---

this Paulus and Olympiodorus.

<sup>1</sup> From Paulus, chapter 23, “Spirit happens to be lord of soul, temper, sense and every power, and there are times when it cooperates in the reckoning about what one does.”

<sup>2</sup> From the new translation of Olympiodorus we have this particularly clear comparison of the *lots of Fortune and Spirit*. “Then after this the [Lot] of the Good Spirit, since we can get to know the characteristics of the soul, sense and purpose from this, just as [we learn] the body and things concerning the body from *Fortune*. Especially concerning these things, the greatest power of divination abides with knowing the characteristics of the soul and instruction about the body; that is to say, how a soul, having come from above, is here a citizen according to the cosmos, and how the body [is situated] and things concerning the body. And to say, simply, all the things it will encounter not depending on us.” Chapter 22 of Olympiodorus.

by day and by night. What is the 8<sup>th</sup> house cusp? We have no examples of this or similar Lots being computed in a sample chart with Whole-Sign houses. However, this and other similar Lots were used in the days of Whole-Sign houses.

Previously I felt that reading between the lines, one might get the impression that the what I am about to describe may have been the practice. And, the passages from Maternus cited previously have very much reinforced my view that the “cusps” of Whole-Sign houses were as follows: In each sign, the degree that the Ascendant occupies in the 1<sup>st</sup> sign is the degree of the cusp. This means that the Whole-Sign “cusps” are the same as the **Equal House system** cusps. The difference is that in the Whole-Sign system the “cusps” are not the beginnings of the houses. But wait! Aren’t cusps supposed to be beginnings by definition? No. In fact, the word ‘cusp’ means ‘point’. Remember that ‘bicuspid’ teeth are teeth with two points, not two beginnings. The cusp is the point where the symbolism of the house is expressed most intensely. Even in classic **Equal Houses**, and in medieval sources all other systems as well, the cusp is supposed to be five or approximately five degrees into the house, not at the beginning. The Hindus place the cusp in the middle of the house. In Whole Signs, the cusp is free to float about the house and be anywhere at all, even while the place or *topos* coincides with the full extent of the sign.

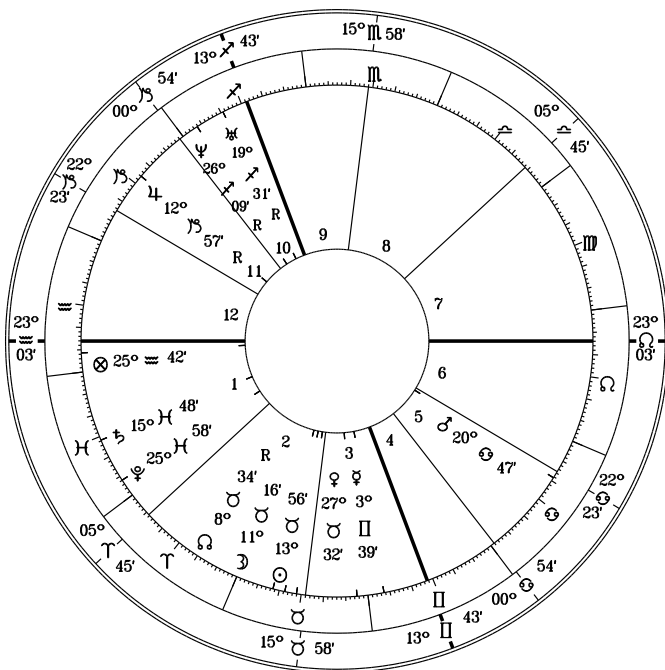


Diagram 5 – Karl Marx

### Examples

For our first example, I would like to refer to the chart of Karl Marx, the founder of Communism, whose influence on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has been huge. The inner cusp lines are from the Koch system of houses. The Whole Signs are designated by the zodiacal ring around the chart.

This chart is typical of one in which there is a large difference between the Whole-Sign houses and the more standard ones. First of all, we have the latter degrees of a sign rising and, because we have a high northern latitude, the Midheaven is not in the 10<sup>th</sup> sign from the Ascendant. Using some other modern house system such as Placidus would not make much of a difference here.

Marx was born on the day of a New Moon. In fact, it was a total eclipse of the Sun. The path of the eclipse rose in Western Africa and headed north over Egypt and the Middle East and spent most of its time over what later became the Soviet Union. This is one of the more dramatic

instances of a prenatal eclipse path showing where some event near the eclipse was going to have its most dramatic effect, the event being Marx's birth. This is a fact that should be noted by all students of mundane astrology. An event associated with an eclipse may not become obvious until many years after the eclipse, if that event is the birth of someone very important.

Because of the New Moon, the **Lots of Fortune** and **Spirit** are both very close to his Ascendant. This makes the Whole-Sign charts of all three points the same as far as the places or houses go; for example, Aquarius is the 1<sup>st</sup> place or house according to all three points. According to the ancient writers, this is supposed to be good. I cannot say that my experience has borne that out, but it does seem to give a remarkable degree of coherence to the chart when the indications of all three charts are the same,

But what do we have here that makes the Whole-Sign system stand out over the later, quadrant type of system that is now, for the most part, in use? We have Uranus and Neptune in the 10<sup>th</sup> house, using modern houses. That is not a bad indication given that Marx was a revolutionary and a social idealist. In Whole-Sign houses, we retain this indication because these planets were in the sign of the Midheaven and thus did affect his mission in life. In addition, the Midheaven itself was in the 11<sup>th</sup> place from the Ascendant. This means that his Uranian quality affected the social or collective world and that he was not merely someone whose personal habits were Uranian.

In modern astrology, the ruler of the Midheaven is Jupiter, which was in his 11<sup>th</sup> house. This could also make the statement that his purpose in life was related to a larger social framework and was not merely personal. But in Whole-Sign houses, Jupiter is located in the 12<sup>th</sup> place in Capricorn and therefore the effects or outcome of his philosophy would be generally subversive of the established order. 'Subversive' is a good 12<sup>th</sup> place word. Also notice that, for both systems, Jupiter is in its fall, which makes the Sagittarius Midheaven less than its usual "jolly" self.

But with Whole-Signs we get some additional information. The 10<sup>th</sup> place from the Ascendant is Scorpio. This speaks even more about a secretive and subversive quality in his career. The ruler, Mars, is also, like Jupiter, in its fall. It is also in the 6<sup>th</sup> place from the Ascendant. Some modern house systems would also put it in the 6<sup>th</sup> house. This place is classically considered a malefic position in that it rules illness and persons who are particularly out to get one. In modern astrology, open enemies are usually assigned to the 7<sup>th</sup> house, but in Greek and Hindu astrology, this function is assigned to the 6<sup>th</sup> house. It is a house of those whose interests are very distinct and in conflict with one's own. I believe that the

7<sup>th</sup> house is more accurately described as a house of opponents (as well as partners, etc.) with whom one is engaged in some sort of contest or struggle. Sixth house place enemies seem more personally hostile to oneself. We should also notice that Mars is the ruler of the 3<sup>rd</sup> place of writing and communications, whereas, in modern houses, it is the ruler of the 2<sup>nd</sup> house. Even more interesting is that the 3<sup>rd</sup> place was known to the Greeks as the house of the Moon Goddess, and it later became the house of religions not in power, or sects. Marxism has not always been out of power, but it has been most definitely a sect, and a warlike one at that. Also, this Mars is trine Saturn and Pluto in the 2<sup>nd</sup> place of property (moveable property or possessions as opposed to real estate). Marx's theory of the production of value by the working class is a central feature of Marxist reasoning. In fact, his entire emphasis on the working classes can be considered to be another manifestation of the ruler of the 10<sup>th</sup> place in the 6<sup>th</sup> place of work and, *most especially*, the place of those who are in servitude, whether for wages or not.

The Ascendant, **Lot of Fortune**, and **Lot of Spirit** are all in Aquarius, the sign of “new world orders.” If we look at the 11<sup>th</sup> place from the **Lot of Fortune** as mentioned above, we find Uranus and Neptune therein. Marx derived “gain” from his writings about revolution.

All of the Taurus planets (the Sun, Moon, and Venus) are in the 4<sup>th</sup> place. This gives a strong emphasis on immovable property, i.e., real estate, as well as the kind of property associated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> place. The Moon and Venus are both in major dignity, Venus in its sign and the Moon in its exaltation and triplicity.<sup>1</sup> The Moon, in addition, is the ruler of the 6<sup>th</sup> place of the workers and it disposes of Mars in the 6<sup>th</sup> place. The Moon, in turn, is applying to the conjunction of the Sun, that is, a New Moon and an eclipse, giving Marx a strong identification with the working classes, even though he was in no way a member of them.

At the risk of seeming to want to associate radical Marxism with

---

<sup>1</sup> Planets rule by triplicity as well as by sign and exaltation. The following table shows the Ptolemaic system:

	Diurnal Charts	Nocturnal Charts
Fire	Sun	Jupiter
Earth	Venus	Moon
Air	Saturn	Mercury
Water	Mars	Mars

This is not as powerful a dignity as sign and exaltation, but it is important.



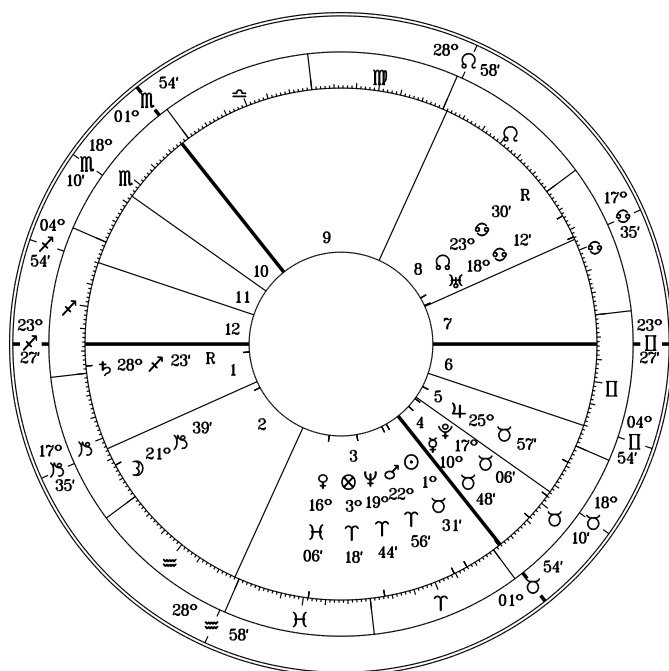


Diagram 6 – Lenin

Whole-Sign houses, my next example is another member of that tradition, Lenin. This chart is similar to that of Edward VII in that, as Lenin was born in high latitudes with late Sagittarius rising, there is an extremely oblique relationship between the Midheaven and the Ascendant such that the Midheaven lands in the 12<sup>th</sup> place from the Ascendant. The result is that both men had careers strongly influenced by 12<sup>th</sup> house considerations. In Edward's case, he was kept in the background, away from his proper role as prince and king. In Lenin's case, his career was itself one with a strong 12<sup>th</sup> house nature for much of his life. Neither of these men lived very long after his career came “out of the 12<sup>th</sup> house,” as it were. Edward lived less than eight years after attaining the throne, while Lenin lived less than seven after the Bolsheviks came to power. Otherwise, however, the men lived different lives.

Lenin's must be regarded as the paradigm of charts for revolutionaries. Unlike Marx, who was something of an armchair revolutionary and was not usually in any kind of trouble with the authorities, Lenin was the real thing, actively plotting subversion and

actively being sought out by the authorities who wished to throw him in prison. All of this is very evident in the chart, no matter what kind of house system one uses. The strongest indication is the T-square involving the Moon, Uranus, Neptune, and Mars. Moreover, Mars is the ruler of his Midheaven as well as the ruler of the 12<sup>th</sup> place from the Ascendant. Mars was also the ruler of Edward's Midheaven, but his Mars was much more benevolently aspected by a sextile to the Sun. Edward's Mars was also in a T-square, but it involved Venus and Pluto, telling us more about his sexual appetites than about any revolutionary tendencies. Lenin's T-square is pure poison — almost literally, as Mars and Neptune together rule poisoning.

Another difference between Edward VII and Lenin is that Edward has Jupiter in Sagittarius in the 1<sup>st</sup> place and Saturn in Capricorn close to the Ascendant in the 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Lenin has Saturn in Sagittarius rising in the 1<sup>st</sup> place and Jupiter nowhere nearby. For those who are interested in sect effects,<sup>1</sup> it is also worth noting that Edward VII was born in the daytime when Saturn is much more easily made into a positive energy. Lenin was born at night.

With Lenin's Midheaven in the 12<sup>th</sup> place, it is logical that the IC would be in the 6<sup>th</sup> place. The Sun is also on the IC and also in the 6<sup>th</sup> place. This combines early life and family influences (IC) with 6<sup>th</sup> house symbolism. Lenin's self-identification with the working classes was much more intense and real than Marx's, even while, at the same time, he had the arrogance of the professional intellectual. The 9<sup>th</sup> place ruler is the Sun conjunct the IC in the 6<sup>th</sup> place. In the Koch system at least, one would have also gotten the 9<sup>th</sup> house ruler on the IC, but not the fact that the IC is in the 6<sup>th</sup> place.

In addition to the Sun, there are three other planets in the 6<sup>th</sup> place: Mercury, Pluto, and Jupiter. This place has two rulers. Venus is, of course, the sign-ruler of Taurus, but the Moon is both the exaltation-ruler of Taurus and the ruler of the Earth triplicity in nighttime charts. Thus the Moon is at least as important as Venus in evaluating the outcome of 6<sup>th</sup> place indications, and the Moon is in its fall in Capricorn. Venus is exalted in Pisces in the 4<sup>th</sup> place. This could certainly be regarded as a tendency to romanticize the working classes, a tendency stemming from

---

<sup>1</sup> There are two sects, diurnal (the Sun above the horizon) and nocturnal (the Sun below the horizon). Any chart is either diurnal or nocturnal. Planets themselves are considered to be either diurnal or nocturnal. For instance, Saturn is diurnal and is strengthened in a diurnal chart. For more on this topic, see the author's *Night & Day: Planetary Sect in Astrology*, available from ARHAT.

Lenin's earliest years. The Moon, however, is even more indicative, being in the revolutionary T-square mentioned above. In fact, the first aspect that the Moon made after his birth, always one of the two most important aspects that the Moon can make, is the square to Mars, indicating the possible tendency toward the violent outcome of his attitudes toward the working classes. The other most important aspect that the Moon makes in the birth chart, incidentally, is the last aspect previous to birth. That aspect was the square to Neptune. Thus Lenin's Moon is in a state known to medieval astrology as "besieged," moving as it is from one malefic configuration to another one directly without any more benign aspects intervening. This is one of the most difficult states the Moon can be in. More can be said about this chart, but I want to leave off from this chart with the following observation: In modern house systems (except possibly **Equal houses**), there is no way that one could get this strong emphasis on the 6<sup>th</sup> place. In **Equal houses**, we do get Taurus on the cusp of the 6<sup>th</sup> house, but most of the Taurus planets fall into the 5<sup>th</sup> house. So **Equal houses** do not show the strong 6<sup>th</sup> house emphasis either. The 6<sup>th</sup> house in Koch is ruled by Mercury, which is not a particularly strong element in the chart.

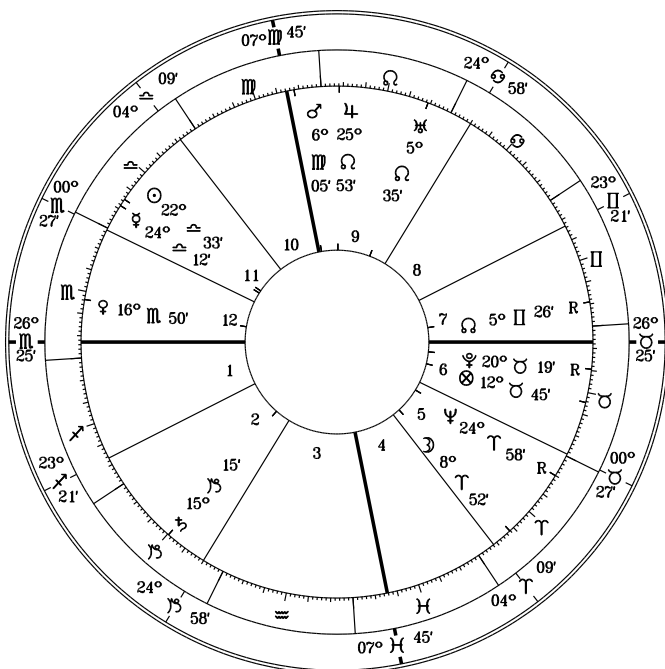


Diagram 7 – Edith Bolling Wilson

Our last example is the chart of Edith Bolling Wilson. Her name is not exactly a household word in modern times, but she did, in fact, play a very important role in American history: She was the *de facto* president of the United States for the last years of Woodrow Wilson's presidency.

After World War I President Woodrow Wilson exhausted himself in his attempts to get the American people and Congress to support America's entry into the League of Nations. The result was a series of strokes that left him largely incapable of acting as president. At the time the U.S. had no provision for replacing a living but disabled president. So his inner circle, working with Edith Wilson, made it appear that Woodrow was getting better and able to function as president when, in fact, Edith Wilson was doing most of the work.

How is this shown in the chart? First of all, the Midheaven is in the 11<sup>th</sup> place from the Ascendant. This is an indication of a person whose life-direction has something to do with groups or with the larger social order. This is itself one of the most common Midheaven placements and

is not an especially unusual indication. Mars is conjunct the Midheaven in Virgo and rules the Ascendant in Scorpio. This indicates a strong tendency to take action and individual initiative, and especially, an ability to handle vigorously the day-to-day details of things (Virgo). Her Descendant is in Taurus and, interestingly enough, is in the Pleiades, a nebulous fixed-star cluster. This can definitely be read as dangerous for one's spouse. (This is because the Pleiades have been traditionally regarded as a somewhat violent star cluster, leading to injuries and illness. They are usually supposed to be of the nature of Mars and the Moon combined. While they do not always have a strong deleterious effect, I have found that when important points in the chart are conjunct the Pleiades, the situation bears watching. The 7<sup>th</sup> house cusp, of course, stands for the spouse.) Also, Venus is the ruler of the 7<sup>th</sup> place and it is in the 1<sup>st</sup> place in Scorpio. Intellectual honesty compels me to mention that in modern houses, including Equal, this Venus would be in the 12<sup>th</sup> house, which might be regarded as decent symbolism. My only problem with that is that she did not marry someone who was of the nature of the 12<sup>th</sup> house. A president is not a 12<sup>th</sup> house figure, and Wilson was president when she married him. Insofar as he could be described by her 12<sup>th</sup> house, it was later on and only in the last couple of years of the marriage which ended with his death. But Venus, being in detriment in the 1<sup>st</sup> place, does indicate that she might have to take control of the affairs of a spouse who was in some state of weakness (the detriment).

Using Whole-Sign houses, we note that Pluto is also in the 7<sup>th</sup> place. This is an indication that she would be attracted to power in a spouse, but that the marriage would also be likely to have a significant crisis at some point.

We have noted that Mars is conjunct the Midheaven and rules the Ascendant. But the Midheaven is not in the 10<sup>th</sup> sign. The 10<sup>th</sup> sign is Leo, ruled by the Sun. The Sun, in turn, is in Libra in the 12<sup>th</sup> place. This means that something about her social role, her action in the world, would lead to a state of withdrawal and confinement or would involve secrets. The big secret was that Wilson was too ill to govern and that she was actually more or less running the country. Note that the Sun is in its fall in Libra, so that, in her career, she could not come out and be who she was, and that her career was not carried out on her own behalf but on behalf of a relationship.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> place we find Jupiter and Uranus. The planet Uranus there indicates that her career involved something unconventional and extraordinary, and Jupiter indicates something very high up on the social scale. In traditional astrology, all fire signs, especially Leo, are considered to be royal signs; being involved with the presidency is about as "royal"

as one can get in this country.

## Conclusions

Now, having presented all of this, what should you, the reader, do? Should you junk everything that you have learned about your favorite house system and just take up Whole-Sign houses? That is, of course, entirely up to you, but I would like to make some suggestions. First of all, I have not entirely given up modern house systems, in my case, specifically Koch, especially as they pertain to the strength of a planet. I still draw charts in the manner that you see in this article, with the spokes of the wheel indicating Koch house cusps, and the signs of the zodiac around the cusp lines so that I can see the Whole-Sign relationships. I am still checking out the two approaches together. However, I have to say that there are more instances when I cannot account for something in modern houses than there are instances when I cannot account for something in terms of Whole-Sign houses. Many of my associates have given up modern houses altogether in favor of a completely Whole-Sign approach.

There is something satisfying about the possibility that the entire house controversy may have been a mistake from the beginning, and that the resolution of the controversy is to not use houses at all as separate from signs. The twelve places are simply the signs of the zodiac taking up any one of twelve functions based on their aspect relationship to a sign that is designated as a 1<sup>st</sup> place or *horoscopus* by the presence of a **horoscopic point** in that sign.

I would suggest the following to those who are reluctant to change over right away, but whose minds are still open (and if you have read this far, yours is probably still open): Draw your charts, as I do, with the spokes for your houses and the signs of the zodiac around the wheel in some way so that you can see them. Most computer programs have such forms, especially European programs. Then, as you analyze your charts, systematically compare the indications and try not to play up or play down the indications of either your current favorite house system or Whole Signs. I have to say, in all honesty, that Whole-Sign houses (as someone once put it) “have compelled my unwilling belief.”

## Chart Data and Sources

Edward VII, November 9, 1842; 10:48 a.m. GMT, 51N30, 00W09; AA:  
Birth data from official announcement.

Karl Marx, May 5, 1818, 2:00 a.m. LMT, Trier, Germany (49N46, 6E39); AA: The Blackwell Database quotes the source as the official birth records of Trier.

V. I. Lenin, April 22, 1870, NS (April 10 OS); 00:00 a.m. LMT (20:46:24 UT, April 21), Simbirsk, Russia (54N20, 48E24); B: The Blackwell Database indicates the birth data of the Soviet head of state is from an official biography of Lenin published in the USSR in 1976; this book (title unknown) gives the time of birth according to astrologer R. Hope in a letter to the compiler of the Blackwell Database.

Edith Bolling Wilson, October 15, 1872; 9:00 a.m. LMT (14:24:16 UT), Wytheville, VA (36N55, 81W04); B: The Blackwell Database has: Birth data given in her book, *My Memoirs* (Knopf, 1931, p. 1).

## Appendix 1 – Horary Astrology and Whole-Sign Houses

**Horary Astrology** is the art of answering questions by means of a chart. The practice is to erect a chart for the moment of the asking of the question. The reason why it is of interest to us here is that almost all contemporary **horary** practice at this time, including the “traditional” practice, is derived from the *Christian Astrology* of William Lilly, along with some material from earlier astrologers such as Guido Bonatti, none of whom used whole-sign houses. But as we have already mentioned, many of the rules used by Lilly and these other astrologers were derived from earlier works that employed whole-sign houses. The following example from Masha’allah’s *On Reception*, an early work on **Horary Astrology**, will illustrate the use of signs as houses in early Arabic **Horary Astrology**.

“And if the Moon were in the seventh angle, the matter would have certainly been accomplished more quickly; and if she were with Saturn in the tenth sign, it would have been still more swift; and in the ascending sign it would be the most swift above all other places.”<sup>1</sup>

The passage cited above demonstrates the efficacy of the Moon in bringing about the accomplishment of whatever matter is inquired about in the **horary** question. The details of this are unimportant. What I want the reader to notice is that the “houses” referred to are in fact signs. There are many other such references to signs as houses in that work making it clear that all of the **horary** done in that work is based on Whole-Sign houses.

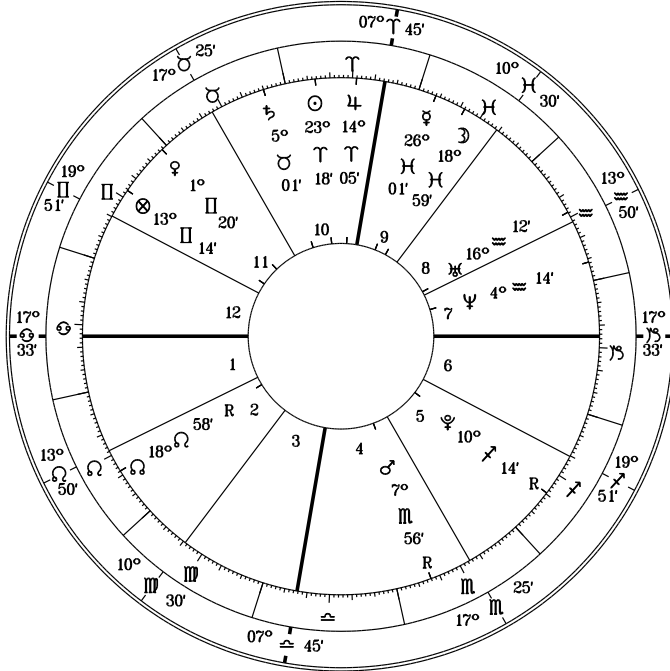
Having said all of this, I have to say that I have been very impressed by the works of those later **horary** astrologers such as Bonatti and William Lilly in which Bonatti used the Alchabitius system, and Lilly the Regiomontanus. Of course even later **horary** astrologers also have used Placidus and other house systems. Lilly with his impressive array of worked out examples of **horary** charts is particularly intimidating to anyone who would propose doing something very different, such as Whole-Sign houses. However, again I have to remind the reader that most of the rules of **horary** were developed originally by ancient and medieval astrologers who used Whole-Sign houses. Therefore, despite some trepidation, I felt compelled to experiment with Whole-Sign houses in

---

<sup>1</sup> Masha’Allah, *On Reception*, trans. Robert Hand, Reston, VA: ARHAT, 1998, p. 45



**Horary Astrology.** How could I justify using Whole-Sign houses for natal work and something else for horary?



Where is My Father? – Koch Version

I am happy to say that the experiment has been a success. Following the same principles as outlined in the main part of this book, I have found that Whole-Sign houses work very well in answering questions. I do this with my clients, and much of the work is financial where accuracy is critical. While I do not believe that I can convert devotees of the Lilly method to Whole-Signs in the space available here, I would like to share one example which is especially compelling because the Whole-Sign chart in this case is so much clearer than the chart using conventional houses. I will show the chart in the Whole-Sign system with the usual Koch house spokes in the center. For devotees of other systems I include these in a table below. However, in this case there is not much difference.

The cusps in Placidus and Regiomontanus are as follows:

	Placidus	Regiomontanus
11 <sup>th</sup>	12° ♂ 14'	13° ♂ 42'
12 <sup>th</sup>	16° ♀ 24'	18° ♀ 44'
2 <sup>nd</sup>	10° ♀ 46'	12° ♀ 21'
3 <sup>rd</sup>	06° ♀ 54'	07° ♀ 38'

I have omitted the data for the sake of client confidentiality. Be assured that the chart is exactly as it should be.

The cusps are quite close in all three modern systems with no planets changing houses. However, the planets do change houses in Whole-Sign houses. So we do have something to compare.

The querent asked about the whereabouts and state of his father. This is a 4<sup>th</sup> house question. The 4<sup>th</sup> house is the same in all four systems except that in the Whole-Sign system it is the whole sign of Libra. Therefore, one might plausibly say that Venus is the significator of the father's condition and person. Venus is in the 11<sup>th</sup> house in all three modern systems. In Whole-Signs it is in the 12<sup>th</sup> house since Gemini is the 12<sup>th</sup> sign from Cancer the rising sign. From the point of view of the querent the Whole-Sign placement is the most ominous because the 12<sup>th</sup> is one of the more unfortunate houses. However, from the point of view of the father, the 12<sup>th</sup> is the 9<sup>th</sup> house from the 4<sup>th</sup>, which is not so ominous.

Many modern astrologers might not notice the following point, but in all three modern systems Taurus is on the cusp of the 11<sup>th</sup> which is the 8<sup>th</sup> from the 4<sup>th</sup>. This makes the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> both have Venus as the ruler and Venus is in the 11<sup>th</sup> although in the next sign Gemini. When one planet rules two houses in traditional Astrology, there is some connection between the two houses. The 11<sup>th</sup> house, being the 8<sup>th</sup> from the 4<sup>th</sup>, is the father's death (among other less unpleasant things), so we have a possible tie-in between the father and death. The modern houses have the ruler of the father's death in the house of the father's death. However, I think that most would have to agree that Venus as a strong indicator of death is not very plausible. Nevertheless, it is an alert.

In Whole-Sign houses Venus is not in the 11<sup>th</sup> but it is still the ruler of both the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup>. Not much difference here between modern and Whole-Sign houses! So what other indications do we have that something has happened? Well, we have an applying Mars-Saturn opposition, mutually applying in fact because Mars is retrograde. Mars is in the 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturn in the 10<sup>th</sup> in the modern systems, with Mars in the 5<sup>th</sup> and Saturn in the 11<sup>th</sup> in Whole-Signs. The modern houses suggest that some encounter may have come to the father from an open enemy (Mars ruling the 7<sup>th</sup> from the 4<sup>th</sup> and being in the 4<sup>th</sup>); however, Mars is much more dignified (in Scorpio) than Saturn (in Taurus), so the open enemy should

be more or less under the father's control. The Whole-Sign houses are a bit more ominous because the opposition involves Saturn in the 8<sup>th</sup> from the 4<sup>th</sup> (namely the 11<sup>th</sup>). But without a direct tie-in to the father's own house, the 4<sup>th</sup>, this would not be very indicative. However, moving the dignified Mars out of the father's house into the 5<sup>th</sup> does dis-empower the father.

But *there is a tie-in* between this opposition and the 4<sup>th</sup> house rulership. Saturn is the exaltation ruler of the 4<sup>th</sup> house in all four systems. Also, air signs are ruled by Saturn in daytime charts.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Saturn has two rulerships over Libra to Venus's one. In Greek Astrology this would be two points to Venus's one point; in medieval Astrology it would be Saturn's seven points to Venus's five. Therefore, according to both Greek and medieval Astrology, Saturn is the proper ruler of the 4<sup>th</sup> sign or house. In Whole-Signs and only in Whole-Signs do we have Saturn in the 11<sup>th</sup> "house", or place, the father's death. In the modern systems it is in the 10<sup>th</sup>. With Whole-Signs there is a strong indication that the father is dead because the ruler of the 4<sup>th</sup> is in the 8<sup>th</sup> from the 4<sup>th</sup> (the 11<sup>th</sup>) and it is severely afflicted by an applying and dignified Mars which rules the father's house of open enemies. It turned out that the father was indeed dead, and not of natural causes, nor by accident, at the time the question had been asked. The only question is how he came to die.

The chart is actually a bit unclear on the subject and I never did get the entire story. The fact that Venus had rulership over the 4<sup>th</sup> (along with Saturn) and ruled the father's 8<sup>th</sup> suggests suicide. This is one of the significations of having the same planet the ruler of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup>, but only if there is **strong** evidence of death or violence from other factors in the chart. In this case there is, the Mars-Saturn opposition. But the Mars-Saturn opposition itself also raises the possibility that he was murdered. However, what little I do know suggests that he did in fact commit suicide to escape some kind of pressure from open enemies. That would account for all of the symbolism.

Could this have been done with modern houses? Yes, but not with such clarity! Venus would have remained the only indicator of death, and the Mars-Saturn opposition would probably have been read as I indicated above, conflict with an open enemy or enemies in which he would have been in the better position.

This is only one case, but it is not atypical. It has happened often enough so that I am quite willing to say that at the very least Whole-Sign houses hold their own with the principal modern systems, and in this case

---

<sup>1</sup> See page 28, footnote 1.

at least, exceed them in clarity.

## Appendix 2 – Glossary of Terms

**Aphetic Point:** Also known in Medieval Astrology as the Hyleg. This is a point used in computing the vitality of the native and it is also used in directing and establishing planetary rulerships over periods of time. Most commonly it is the Sun or the Moon, however, planets may sometimes take over the role. The exact method of computing the **Aphetic Point** varies tremendously from author to author. Describing all of them would be something of a treatise in its own right.

**East Point:** For the common but incorrect definition, see **Equatorial Ascendant**. The true **East Point** in a chart would be that degree of the **ecliptic** that is due east at the moment of the chart. This is the point opposite the vertex and it is also known as the anti-vertex (the vertex being the point of the **ecliptic** exactly due west at the moment of the chart).

**Ecliptic:** As the Earth revolves about the Sun, it appears from our point of view that the Sun is revolving about the Earth. As it does so, it traces a path in the heavens. This path is the **ecliptic**. The zodiac is a band about  $7.5^\circ$  of celestial latitude to either side of the **ecliptic** ( $15^\circ$  in all).

**Equal House System:** In the **Equal House System**, the cusps are at  $30^\circ$  intervals from the Ascendant or other **horoscopic point**, and these cusps mark the beginning, or are at least near the beginning, of each of the houses which are marked by the cusps. In Whole-Sign Houses, the “houses” or “places” begin precisely at the beginning of the sign regardless of where the  $30^\circ$  interval from the Ascendant may fall in the sign. It is not clear, but it seems probable, that the cusps of Whole-Sign houses are the same as the cusps of **Equal Houses**, but they DO NOT mark the beginning of each house.

**Equatorial Ascendant:** This is the degree of the zodiac that would rise in one's chart if one were born at the equator. It is very close to, but not usually exactly, square to the Midheaven. It is sometimes incorrectly known as the **East Point**.

**Horary Astrology:** This is the astrology of answering questions. An individual, known as the Querent, or one asking the question, consults an astrologer to get the answer. A chart is erected for the moment that the querent asks the question of the astrologer. This is in contrast to using a natal chart to ask a question. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, birth

times were not often known and so the horary chart was the best way to answer a specific question. However, even in modern times, persons have questions that are much too specific to answer from transits and progressions to a natal chart. Thus **horary astrology** is still extremely useful and a fascinating study.

**Horoscopic Point:** When a **horoscopic point** falls in a sign, it makes that sign the “1<sup>st</sup> place” of a set of whole-sign houses. The most common of these is the Ascendant. Others include the **Part** or **Lot of Fortune**, the Moon, and various planets, especially in Ptolemy.

**Lesser/Greater Benefic/Malefic:** In modern astrology, as well as among some ancient astrologers, it is generally recognized that no planetary energy is essentially evil or malefic, and also that no planetary energy is always good or benefic. However, ancient astrologers, by and large, classified two planets, Mars and Saturn, as malefic, and Venus and Jupiter as benefic. Of the malefics, Mars was considered to be the “**lesser malefic**,” i.e., less difficult, and Saturn the “**greater malefic**.” With the benefics, Venus was considered to be the “**lesser benefic**” and Jupiter the “**greater benefic**.”

**Lot of Fortune:** Also known as the **Part of Fortune**. It is derived by means of the following formula: Asc. + ☽ - ☾. Most traditional authorities up until the late Renaissance used this formula only for persons born in the daytime (Sun above the horizon). For night births they reversed the positions of the Sun and Moon and used the formula Ascendant + ☾ - ☽. To do the computations it is necessary to convert the longitudes of the degrees in question into 360° notation rather than sign notation using the following table:

For Each of the Signs Below Add the Corresponding Number					
Aries	♈	0	Libra	♎	180
Taurus	♉	30	Scorpio	♏	210
Gemini	♊	60	Sagittarius	♐	240
Cancer	♋	90	Capricorn	♑	270
Leo	♌	120	Aquarius	♒	300
Virgo	♍	150	Pisces	♓	330

Here is an example:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{Asc} & = & 24^\circ \text{Q} 32' \quad 24^\circ 32' + 120^\circ = 144^\circ 32' \\ \odot & = & 10^\circ \text{W} 09' \quad 10^\circ 09' + 300^\circ = 310^\circ 09' \\ \text{D} & = & 17^\circ \text{A} 24' \quad 17^\circ 24' + 180^\circ = 197^\circ 24' \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{Asc} & = & 144^\circ 32' \\ + \text{D} & = & 197^\circ 24' \\ \hline \text{Sum} & = & 341^\circ 56' \\ - \odot & = & 310^\circ 09' \\ \hline \text{Diff.} & = & 31^\circ 47' = \otimes \text{ the Lot or Part or Fortune } 1^\circ \text{O} 47' \end{array}$$

At night, add the Sun and subtract the Moon.

**Lot of Spirit:** Also known as the **Part of Spirit**. The **Lot of Spirit** by day is the same as the **Lot of Fortune** by night and the **Lot of Spirit** by night is the same as the **Lot of Fortune** by day. Thus the **Lots of Fortune** and **Spirit** are always reversed from each other with regard to the Sun and Moon. Thus the formulae for **Spirit** are

$$\begin{array}{l} (\text{day birth}) \quad \text{Asc} + \odot - \text{D} \\ (\text{night birth}) \quad \text{Asc} + \text{D} - \odot. \end{array}$$

Correctly computed, the Ascendant or Descendant of the chart should always lie exactly halfway between the **Lots of Fortune** and **Spirit**.

**Primary Directions:** These are directions based upon the diurnal rotation of the heavens (which we regard as the rotation of the Earth). Six hours after one is born, the heavens rotate about  $90^\circ$ , at one degree for every four minutes. As this rotation occurs, planets are carried along with it to places previously occupied by other planets (these positions are taken with respect to the horizon and meridian, not with respect to the zodiac). In classical astrology one such degree of rotation was held to be equal to one year of time. Other measures were used in the Renaissance. This apparent rotation of the heavens on its axis was called, in Ptolemaic astronomy, “the First Motion” or, in Latin, *Motum Primum*. Hence, directions based on this motion are called **Primary Directions**. The actual method of use and the theory of these is beyond the scope of this text.

**Ptolemaic Aspects:** Also known as Classical Aspects. These are the only aspects used until modern times. They are the sextile, square, trine, and opposition. The conjunction is not technically an aspect, but is treated

more or less as one, and is usually considered, for the sake of convenience, to be one of the classical aspects.

**Semi-Arc System:** As planets and **ecliptic** degrees rise, culminate, set, and anti-culminate, they trace out what are called diurnal and nocturnal arcs. The diurnal arc is the path traced out between rising and setting, and the nocturnal arc between setting and the next rising. Both the diurnal and nocturnal arcs are cut exactly in two by the meridian circle (a circle running from the north point of the horizon overhead to the south point of the horizon, directly underneath and up to the north point again). One half of the diurnal arc so divided is called a diurnal **semi-arc**, and one half of the nocturnal arc so divided is called the nocturnal **semi-arc**. Collectively, these are called **semi-arcs**. Certain house systems are based on further divisions of these arcs, usually into three equal parts. Three parts multiplied by the two diurnal and the two nocturnal **semi-arcs** give twelve houses. This is the basis of the Placidus, Alchabitius, and Koch house systems.



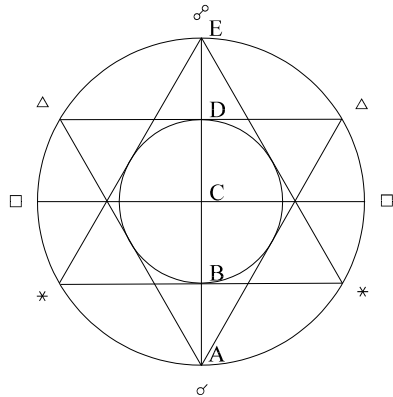
### Appendix 3 – Are Only the Major (Ptolemaic) Aspects Valid?

In Ibn Ezra’s *Book of Reasons* the following passage gives his reasons as to why only the major aspects are valid. I append with this my own commentary on his explanation.<sup>1</sup>

“The principal judgments are [made by] the aspects. Ya'akov Al-Kindi says that since there are 12 signs, they divide by 2 and that is the opposition, and by 3 and 4 and 6, but not by other numbers. Scholars of measurements say that the circle divides only by these aspects. Every circle can be divided by a diagonal from one end to the other, and because every circle has two diagonals<sup>2</sup> it divides into 4 equal sections, each at the end of a diagonal, and these are called poles,<sup>3</sup> as I shall explain, and this is the Quartile (90 degrees) aspect.

“The circle also divides into 3 equal sections; for if you mark the point of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the diagonal (diameter) and mark the arc of the circle from both ends [of the perpendicular line to that point] the circle is divided into 3 equal sections that form an equilateral triangle inside the circle, and this is the trine (120 degrees) aspect. When you mark a point at  $\frac{1}{4}$  of that diagonal and repeat the process an equilateral triangle is formed there [too], and each line as half the diagonal; this is  $\frac{1}{6}$  of the circle and is called the sextile (60 degrees) aspect.”

[My original commentary] The import of Ibn Ezra’s argument can be shown by means of the



<sup>1</sup> Ibn Ezra, *The Book of Reasons*, trans. Meira Epstein, Berkeley Springs, WV: Golden Hind Press, 1994, pp. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> Actually the circle has an infinite number of diameters, however if an ellipse has two lines at right angles to each other such that both lines pass through the ellipse and each other at the center, that ellipse is a circle. But this is necessarily true only if the two intersect at right angles. This appears to be the logic of the statement.

<sup>3</sup> The points at the ends of the two perpendicular diameters are at each others' poles.

diagram contained in this appendix.

Given a circle with diameter AE divided into four equal parts AB, BC, CD, DE. If we draw perpendiculars to the diameter AE at B, C, and D, they will cut the circle at exactly  $\pm 60^\circ$ ,  $90^\circ$  and  $120^\circ$  of the circle. No other perpendiculars drawn to other integral subdivisions of diameters will cut the circle in such a way as to divide the circle into arcs that constitute  $\frac{1}{n}$  of the circle. The **Ptolemaic aspects** are the only harmonics of the circle that can be derived from harmonics of the diameter of the circle. This is yet another way in which the **Ptolemaic aspects** are unique. This is a different argument than the one in Book I of the *Tetrabiblos*, but your author finds it simpler and more compelling than the one given by Ptolemy.

## Index

Alchabitius. . . . .	13, 17, 36, 44
Antiochus of Athens. . . . .	13, 17
aphetic point. . . . .	11, 12, 41
Ascendant. . . . .	7, 9-11, 13, 15, 17-19, 21-24, 26-30, 32, 41-43
Bonatti, Guido. . . . .	6, 8, 36
<i>cardinalis</i> . . . . .	7
<i>cardo</i> . . . . .	7
conjunction. . . . .	3, 4, 28, 43
Descendant. . . . .	23, 33, 43
disjunct. . . . .	7, 9
<i>domus</i> . . . . .	2
East Point. . . . .	19, 41
ecliptic. . . . .	1, 3, 13, 41
electional astrology. . . . .	ii
<i>epanaphora</i> . . . . .	10
<i>epimartureō</i> . . . . .	4
<i>epitheōreō</i> . . . . .	4
Equal House system. . . . .	ii, 3, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 25, 31, 41
equator. . . . .	1, 13, 19, 41
Equatorial Ascendant. . . . .	19, 41
father. . . . .	10, 15, 18, 22, 38, 39
Gate of Hades. . . . .	5
greater benefic. . . . .	9, 42
greater malefic. . . . .	9, 42
Hamburg School. . . . .	19
<i>hōra</i> . . . . .	2
horary astrology. . . . .	ii, 17, 36, 41, 42
horizon. . . . .	1, 11, 21, 22, 42-44
Horoscope. . . . .	2, 5, 14, 15
horoscopic point. . . . .	3, 7, 11, 18, 19, 23, 34, 41, 42
<i>horoscopus</i> . . . . .	3
<i>hōroskopos</i> . . . . .	3
Ibn Ezra. . . . .	45
inconjunct. . . . .	7
Julius Firmicus Maternus. . . . .	ii, 14, 15, 25
<i>kendra</i> . . . . .	7
<i>kentron</i> . . . . .	7
Koch. . . . .	17, 20-22, 26, 30, 31, 34, 37, 44
lesser benefic. . . . .	9, 42
lesser malefic. . . . .	9, 42

locus.....	2
Lot of Fortune.....	ii, 3, 7, 18, 22-24, 28, 42, 43
Lot of Spirit.....	ii, 22-24, 27, 28, 43
Lot of the Father.....	15, 18
Lot of the Mother.....	18
<i>martureō</i> .....	4
Midheaven.....	1, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17-23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 41
mother.....	10, 18
<i>oikos</i> .....	2
Olympiodorus.....	ii, 16, 23
opposition.....	3, 5, 7-9, 11, 38, 39, 43, 45
Paulus Alexandrinus.....	16, 23
pivot.....	7
place of the mother.....	11
Placidus houses.....	1
Porphyry.....	13, 17
primary directions.....	10, 43
prime vertical.....	1
Ptolemaic aspects.....	3, 43, 46
Ptolemy.....	9-11, 13, 17, 42, 46
quincunx.....	3, 4, 7, 9
quintile.....	4, 9
Regiomontanus.....	17, 36, 38
Rhetorius.....	13, 17
semi-arc system.....	10, 44
semi-sextile.....	3, 4
septile.....	4
sesqui-quadrate.....	3, 4
sextile.....	3, 5, 8, 11, 12, 30, 43, 45
Sign-as-House.....	1
<i>skopeō</i> .....	2
<i>skopos</i> .....	2
square.....	3, 5, 7-9, 21, 30, 31, 41, 43
succedent.....	10, 13
<i>theōreō</i> .....	4
<i>topos</i> .....	2, 11, 25
trine.....	3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 28, 43, 45
Uranian System.....	19
Vettius Valens.....	12, 17-19, 21-23
Witte, Alfred.....	19
<i>zōidion</i> .....	11, 16