

## *Aspects between planets a comparative study of time and space*

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Aspects were seen quite differently by Hellenistic astrologers comparing to the Medieval Arabic point of view.

In Hellenistic astrology the aspects were usually considered from sign to sign, even if we have some evidence of a distinction between exact and applying aspects compared to separating ones. The orbs were not used and planets were considered in aspect to the other if they were distant a maximum of three degrees.

The question of orbs for each planet is a Medieval astrology's issue. There were controversial points of view on how distant in degrees one planet had to be from the other in order to be able to hurling its rays to it. We noticed that it was given a bigger orb to planets with greater visibility, such as the Sun and the Moon. So orb was not only a question of visibility, but also took into consideration the size of the planet.

Both Hellenistic and Medieval astrology had in common the use of the Ptolemy's aspects. As a matter of fact, this kind of aspects was not a Ptolemy invention, since they existed before him. These aspects are: opposition, trine, sextile and square. The reason why these aspects are considered instead of any others was based upon the concept which was greatly emphasized by the Greeks, i.e. relationship between planets have to always take into account if a sign is able to "see" the other. So the notion of giving testimony was underlying the idea of aspects. In other words the notion of aspect by whole sign was never abandoned.

Due to the invisibility, the so called conjunction is not considered an aspect, because two planets together are not able to look at themselves in the same way that we are not able to look to ourselves, except through a mirror, and in this case we would be using an opposition.

But if the conjunction is not an aspect, the opposite is true: any aspect is a conjunction. Two planets in aspect are said in "**con iuntio**" a Latin word that can mean the carnal relationship. Therefore all aspects are conjunctions, some of them by body, others "by aspect".

The idea of be together is very important and when the orb of a planet, which is an orb of light, reaches the orb of the other, something like a marriage occurs, that can be harmonious or not.

Ptolemy gave a somewhat confusing explanation for the existence of these aspects in his *Tetrabiblos*, whose real name was *Apothelesmatica* (that means the reason of what is happening)

Ptolemy was a great scholar and he mastered many subjects. He had the opportunity to deal closely with the precious volumes of the library of Alexandria, which later burned down destroying a huge part not only the writings of the beginnings of astrology but also the human knowledge's history until that time.

Ptolemy wrote, among other things, a book about music, specifically about harmony, and this book has not survived except fragmentarily. The interesting fact is that the missing part is precisely the part referring to the harmonics and just the point where it referred to astrology! Probably the hand of the Catholic Church had a big influence in this kind of subject. Perhaps the Church tried to avoid to see publicized the notion that the harmony of their sacred chants, like any music, followed the same astrological principles: the harmonic principles.

Who knows a bit of music theory is aware that the most basic harmony is based on the first note plus the 3rd departing from it and added to the 5th. When they are played together we get a chord named the "perfect chord." Underlying the concept of harmony, we can observe that it is obtained from the distance of a note to its third (sextile) and its 5th (trine). However if you press together in a piano or any other instrument a note added to the 7th departing from it, you will get a jarring sound: it is the musical correspondence representing the opposition. If you press together two musical sequential notes such as C plus D, then you will have again a horrible sound, a big and nasty dissonance. That is because C and D are very close, as Aries and Taurus. But pressing together A + C + E (1st, 3rd and 5th) makes the perfect chord, the harmony that happens among the triplicities of water, earth, fire and air.

Hypothetically Ptolemy could have explained harmonies in relation to astrological aspects based in something like that, but we will never know for sure.

Let's talk now about the orb adopted by traditional astrologers until the 17th century. In modern astrology the idea of orb is quite different from the traditional point of view.

The orbs are presently related to aspects instead of planets: for example, the orb of the square and the opposition are larger than the one of sextiles.

If you had said to any author before the 17th century that the orb depends on the kind of aspect he would answer "what are you talking about?" because orbs refer to planets and not the other way around!

That's the main difference between modern and medieval idea about orbs.

The teachings introduced by Alan Leo after the nineteenth century, were responsible for different orbs to different aspects. Perhaps due to the fact that he began using the so-called minor aspects (semi-sextile, sesqui-square, quintile, etc.) basically knowing that such orbs worked poorly, he may have suggested the use of narrow orbs when working with them.

Anyway this does not make sense, traditionally speaking.

The term orb refers to the orb of light and supposes a circle of light surrounding the body of a planet. The moment when a planet is touching or overlapping the orb of another one it is considered an aspect. We can't forget that within the circle of light is the body of the planet, and this is important when discussing the present issue.

Another word virtually synonymous of "light" is "ray" and it is told that a planet hurls its rays to another.

In his book CA page 107, William Lilly says that each planet has its own arc or radius of combustion, i.e. how many degrees it needs to be distant of the Sun to not be burned. The orb of light has to do with the apparent magnitude of the planet: the lower level is

8 degrees (Venus and Mars), the medium is 12 degrees (Moon) and the highest is 17 degrees (Sun).

So it is really possible that the idea of degrees of orb came from a visibility criterion. Therefore, since planets beyond the orbit of Saturn are never visible, they have no orb. Therefore we can consider that since planets beyond the orbit of Saturn are not visible, they have no orb.

On Hellenistic times, the fact that planets were in trine (trigon), tetragon (squares) or hexagon (sextiles) by sign, was already enough to show a relationship between them. It is observed in our practice that although the relationship between those planets is less intense, the aspect by sign has significance. This is why the Greek authors attach a strong negative importance if for example the ruler of a house/sign does not aspect his own domicile.

However, and that is for sure, aspects by degree are more effective.

As an aside, Lilly has one theory which says that squares can become a sextile in signs of short ascension. In this case we can think that the difference of 150 degrees between signs which are not visible to each other, depending on their time of ascension can turn into a trine. Lilly seemed not to be aware in this moment that the aspect involves a visual relationship and through this relationship it will be classified as friendly, like sextiles and trines, which possess a common basic element, or unfriendly, such as a square, when the signs have different basic elemental qualities. No matter how you will look at it you cannot turn into friendly signs with different elementary properties.

## *Aspects inter-signs -The sign as a barrier*

There is a tendency in modern astrology to consider out of signs aspects. However the concept of aspects comes from the word **aspicio** that in Latin means *to look*.

Aspects inter signs are not accepted by almost all traditional authors. Sahal and Ibn Ezra, though, considered that a planet in the last degree of a sign can aspect another planet in the following sign, but they only accepted the conjunction and are isolated voices and not the mainstream.

The Hellenistic idea was that each sign is a barrier: there are no doors or windows to let in the light from one room to another.

The current theory of quantum in physics is the modern equivalent to the Greek concept.

For example, if we break a stone, we have two stones, but if we divide a person we will have two pieces of meat: the essence is lost, the quality and identity no longer exists. A living being is not deductible to the sum of its parts. Likewise, the signs were considered as living beings possessing a not divisional unity: they were seen as a whole being.

So, when a planet changes signs he does exactly what happens when the electron changes of energy level within an atom. A planet is never between two zodiac signs at the same time. Instantly he goes from one sign to another. This notion is totally foreign to us and it was only recovered by the quantum mechanics that restored the Greek notion of unity.

When a planet will complete some aspect to another, but to do so he will have to change signs, it will happen a big, total, complete change of direction and quality, because the planet will be in a different domicile, ruled by another master.

Although we are accustomed to think that all happens in a continuum, there is instead a discontinuity, a jump from a quality to another. Actually there are groups of discontinuous entities. Therefore we calculate a chart of the Ingress for the Sun in Aries at 0 ° 0 '0". This is precisely because of this kind of rationale; a single second in time changes everything.

For example, if we use the twelvefold division of the sign (dodecatemoria), a procedure that is equivalent to multiply by 12 every degree, minute and second of a chart, and compare the charts of twins born seconds apart, you will notice differences in the position of the planets, explaining important differences in their lives. The sign and the division's extent are a "quantum".

The word "moira" means degree in Greek and we can find in all ancient languages a common philological root when we want to refer to destiny. Moira is the portion pertaining to each one in life. **Pars** is the Latin word to **moyrae** in Greek.

Therefore we say that an event will change when a significator that was intertwined with another one, in **con juntio** with it changes its grade. If the planets are still **moiricon** or "**partile**" they change together. If not, not.

Therefore there are not aspects out of signs because it does there is not any continuity after the end of each sign.

That **does not means that a planet in the last degree will not aspect the other immediately in the following sign**: he will, for better or worse, but the important here is that **it change entirely** the essence of the matter.

In horary astrology this fact is seen often and clearly.

## *Moon and planets void in course*

We consider the Moon void, or walking into emptiness, using a Greek expression, when she made all the aspects she could in that sign and will not aspect any other planet until she change signs. The Moon is actually out of course and it is an impediment but only to the point that when she will change signs the situation we are asking about will totally change. The Moon will be under the influence of other ruler.

If you do not look at the next sign the Moon seems isolated and alone, but in the next sign she will do an aspect and the situation will be quite different: an event will occur, even with different meanings. This is important in Horary and Elective astrology. It means an impediment to the subject, but temporarily. In Natal astrology also means an impediment to the areas represented by the Moon or any other planet which is void. But, repeating, if the next aspect is a positive aspect the situation will change after some time.

In this sense I find quite interesting Bonatti's statement that a planet in the last degree of a sign has little power over that sign and has power over the next one.

I have some regards about it. The planet continues to be a significator and be linked to the primary sign it occupied, although the direction it will adopt is new and according to the new dispositor.

## *Time and Space*

Such changes in a planet cannot be attributed to the permeability between signs. What we can see is that aspects in traditional astrology are seen mostly in time and not in space.

In Mesopotamia, for example, the notion of time was of a constant flow; hence they do not have *horoskopus* which is a special point in the first house, a certain degree. The Hellenistic also had the same idea: the time flows and it was more important than space. So if we have one planet applying to another one it is worth to apply the notion of time when the conjunction will be perfected, even if in another sign.

One should not confuse this idea with the permeability between signs, which are still seen as separate spaces of different qualities. The next moment is totally different from the present one, and nobody ever swim in the same water.

Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, discussed this idea a lot.

Plato says about Heraclitus: "He compares things with the current of a river - you cannot bath twice in the same water", the river flows and we touch every time different waters.

Heraclitus' successors said that you even can't get two times the same river, because it changed into another river.

Aristotle says that Heraclitus teaches that only the ONE remains (and I compare the One to the sign unity), and all things are always changed and transformed, everything besides this One flows, and nothing is firm and nothing last.

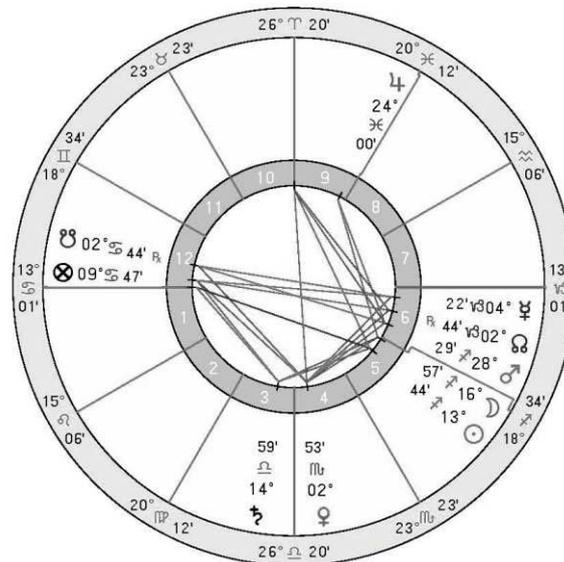
The fact is that only after the nineteenth and twentieth century there was a return to the philosophical level that was characteristic of the Hellenistic age.

Persian-Arabic and Medieval astrology emphasizes the time factor: hence the prohibitions, the frustrations, and other accidents described in the works of Abu Mashar, Alchabitius and Bonatti.

In an opposite way Modern astrology is focused much more on spatial proximity between planets and that is another important difference between the two kinds of astrological approach.

Thus we can understand that the Moon or any planet void of course is not prevented to behave IF they will be in aspect in the next sign. However the dispositor the planet changing signs will change quality.

For example, let's take a look at the following Horary chart, in which Mars was the significator of the querent's job.



Mars is about to change signs. The Moon, the querent's significator will apply first to Jupiter, but we cannot say that Jupiter will impede the Moon, since, as Masha'allah pointed out, a benefic and a receiver or received planet does not impede. Jupiter is a benefic and receives the Moon. So the Moon can continue her way to reach Mars: the job.

However, when the Moon reaches Mars, both Moon and Mars will be in another sign: Capricorn. The Moon loses the reception from Jupiter and will be in her detriment. This is really bad to the Moon. A change of goals will happen: the job will be exalted and the querent will be in detriment. The matter can have a positive outcome if we think that the significators will meet, but it will not be as good as it looked like in the beginning. This is a typical example of how a planet in later degrees of a sign may change a possible outcome, denying or improving it.

In Horary astrology such things are observed and the astrologer can predict the outcome of a question using the ephemeris, which gives the moment when a planet will move, if it will be in retrogradation, changing signs, etc.

In Natal astrology the time depends not only on the ephemeris data, but also on the revolutions and other predictive techniques.

The difference between applicative and separative aspects is precisely the time: one has already happened and the other will happen in the future.

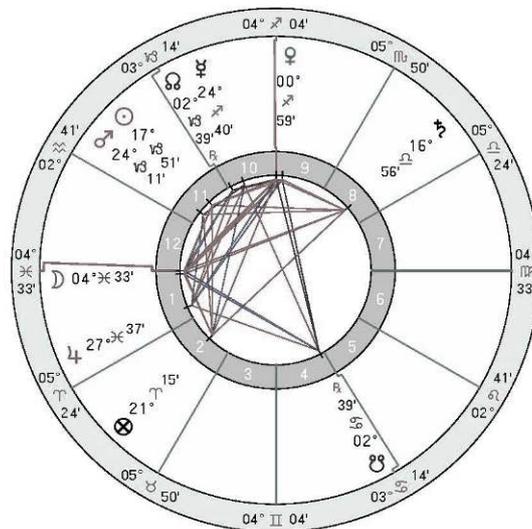
In Horary astrology the past aspects help the astrologer to identify the radicality of the chart.

In Natal astrology aspects happened in the past identify prenatal influences in the family's environment and/or in the uterus which can affect the native in a positive or negative way.

The aspects start to separate when they are a degree after the exact conjunction: once again we see the importance of the degree's unity, representing the individuality of each part of the zodiac.

Therefore separating aspects show a change of direction and the loss of the unity among the signifiers.

Let's see other Horary example.



In the last month the querent was trying to break off the relationship with her boyfriend, mostly because she perceived he was not what she was looking for. But she was not able to persist in her pursuit by fearing of the loneliness and because the boyfriend every time pleaded to another chance.

The question was: "Should I break the relationship this time? "

Venus , the ASC almuten was retrograde for a while in the sign of her detriment, Scorpio, and Mercury, the boyfriend significator, was also retrograde in Sagittarius, sign in which Mercury has its detriment. Both significators were debilitated. Venus moved to the next sign the day before she asked me the question. Venus in Sagittarius is still peregrine, but it is better than to be in Scorpio. She is less weakened. The partner significator, being in direct motion, shows that the partner will not ask to stay with her, he will go ahead. Mercury is applying to Jupiter, his dispositor, so Jupiter receives Mercury. Also, Jupiter is in the 1<sup>st</sup> house. My opinion is that they will not break off because even if he is not what she was looking for, in some way they are connected and intertwined by the same ruler: Jupiter.

Now I invite you to think in terms of time: Mercury will change signs entering in Capricorn, being ruled by Saturn. Saturn is exalted in the sign of Venus: perhaps this lady will be more interested in her boyfriend and this romance will be set to last for some time to come.

In fact, they are still together and well.

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