

The Lot of Fortune: To Reverse or Not?

The objective of the present article is to analyze the question of reversing or not the Part of Fortune in nocturnal charts.

The Hellenistic astrology represents the oldest written western astrological literature we have, so we will base our study of the Lot in the very beginning of its use.

The use of Lots between the Hellenistics was general and we can find several Lots coming from a book called the Panaretos which was attributed to Hermes Trimegistus. He is no doubt a legendary figure with no historical basis, but anything attributed to him before the Middle Ages can be safely ascribed to Hellenistic Egyptian sources or earlier. The Lot of Fortune was attributed to Nechepso and Petosiris, an also legendary pharaoh and his priest.

In this article I will quote passages coming from Valens and Hephaist relating the question of reversing or not the POF's formula to an obscure passage in the book of the king Nechepso.

Almost all the ancient astrologers, except Ptolemy, used to reverse the part of Fortune according to diurnal or nocturnal charts.

Basically, the Part of Fortune is used to describe the way in which the individual is physically connected with the world. It is one of the signifiers of the body and health, and it is also a signifier of prosperity.

Accordingly to Paulus Alexandrinus, a 4th century author:

"And Fortune signifies everything that concerns the body, and what one does through the course of life. It becomes indicative of possessions, reputation and privilege."

The Part of Fortune is sought from the 3 more important points of the chart: the Ascendant, the Sun and the Moon.

But it is not only a point like the planets or the nodes. It is the start of a house system. The sign of the Part of Fortune is the first house of the Fortuna system, and the first house of the Fortuna system extends from 0 degrees to 30 degrees of the sign in which the Part is located.

Hellenistic astrology used to derivate houses or places from an important zodiacal point, as the Moon or the Lot, using them as *horoskopos*. But as they use predominantly if not exclusively whole sign houses, the degree of the Lot in a sign is not important and they depart from the beginning of the sign where the Fortune is to be a *horoskopos*.

Vettius Valens who lived at about the same time as Ptolemy wrote the following: ". . . the Lot itself will possess the power of the Horoskopos, that of life; the tenth zoidion [sign] from this, the power of the Midheaven, that of reputation; the 7th, the power of the Descendant; the 4th, of the subterraneous zoidion, and the remaining places will possess the power of the 12 regions."

In another place he wrote "We have also found the 11th place from Fortune to be an acquisitive place, a bestower of belongings and goods, and especially when benefics are upon it or are testifying."

So this way of constructing a chart departing from the Lot gives us important hints about the native's position, mostly looking at the 10th sign departing from the Lot, the Midheaven of the Lot, and as Valens explained, at the 11th place of the Lot, named the place of Acquisition which is an useful testimony to know about finances in general.

The Lot of Fortune is also named the Moon Ascendant and possibly the more important reason to understand the relationship of the Lot, the Moon and the ASC is verifying that in each new cycle of the Moon, i.e. in the New Moon we find the Fortune in the Ascendant, whichever kind of formula we use.

When the Moon is in opposition to the Sun, in the Full Moon the Lot will appear always in the 7th house, and we know that the 7th house is contrary to the ascendant.

The second more important Lot is the Lot of Spirit, that is calculated just the opposite as the Fortune.

So, if the formula of the Fortune is:

Day Births: Fortune = Ascendant + Moon - Sun Night Births: Fortune = Ascendant + Sun - Moon

The formula of the Spirit is:

Day Births: Spirit = Ascendant + Sun - Moon Night Births: Spirit = Ascendant + Moon - Sun

The Lot of Spirit has much less to do with the body, but it is related to the spiritual path, the motivation, movement, consciousness or the psychological drive of a person.

It is considered related to the Sun in the same way that the Lot of Fortune is related to

the Moon. The Sun represents the spiritual path, the will, and his Lot is related with the intention, opposed with the things that just happen to a native.

The Spirit also has to do with illness, like the Lot of Fortune, but it seems that with the Lot of Spirit we are talking about the spiritual bases of illnesses as opposed to the physical ones.

The Hellenistic astrologers had not use the Spirit as *horoskopus*, maybe because the *horoskopus* is connected with the physical level.

Paulus Alexandrinus says the following about the Lot of Spirit. "Spirit happens to be lord of soul, temper, mindfulness, and every power; and sometimes it also cooperates in the determination concerning what one does."

So, the question of Fortune and Spirit is very important and we have to be sure whether we have to reverse it to nocturnal charts or not, since it's risky to take one for the other.

Why to be born at day time or night time is so important?

The obvious answer here is: it's because of the Light. Sun's light is different from the Moon's light.

We can say that during some nights the Moon is not visible, because she is below the horizon, but the important here is that the Sun is not above the earth as well in nocturnal charts.

Nothing can diminish the importance of the native have being born at day or at night: the question is not only about the quantity of luminosity, but what is the star acting as luminary in the nocturnal sky.

Astrologers used to say that the Moon is the nocturnal luminary, and the Sun the diurnal one.

If the Moon is below the earth at night it is a weakness she has since that in nocturnal nivities the nocturnal planets are considered to be in sect being above the earth and the diurnal ones under the earth.

If besides that any of the planets be also in a feminine or masculine sign according to its own nature they are said to be in *hays* (a dignity attributed by Arabian astrologers and followed by Guido Bonatti).

Knowing that the Moon is the nocturnal luminary even if she does not appears in

heavens it seems pretty clear that the Moon has more importance in nocturnal births than the Sun.

So it appears logic to reverse the position of the planets in the Fortune formula, since that Day and Night are totally different in its way of giving Light.

The Controversial Point

Ptolemy talks about the POF in relation to the *Prorrogators*, i.e, the planet which will be called later Hyleg in Medieval astrology.

According to R.Hand and R.Schmidt one of the translators of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, Ptolemy's calculation of the Fortune formula is tricky, but all points out that he accepts the same formula to day and night charts.

Hephaist of Tebas in *Apotelesmatics* book 2, also in the subject of the length of life quotes Ptolemy on the reversal or not of the Fortune, saying that the confusion is due to an obscure text of Nechepso and Ptosiris:

Page 32, book2, *Apotelesmatics* ".....but if he should not chance to be in a place of relesing in those manner, one must take the star having the relation of rulership to the Moon and the prenatal full moon and of the Lot of Fortune, which is by night a distance equal to that of the interval from the Sun to the Moon, from the place of the Horoskopus, as Ptolemy himself says, that as the Sun is related to the oriental horizon, so the Moon is to the Lot of Fortune. Also that the ancients around Nechepso and Petosiris gave hints for positing in the same way, because they project the interval from the Moon to the Sun in the reverse manner in the case of those born at nigh (that is projecting it from the Hour in the direction of the preceding zoidia)"

Just here a footnote from Robert Schmidt says: " However, the point seems to be that in nocturnal activities, if the interval from the Moon to the Sun is projected backwards from the Ascendant degree, this will give the same position as projecting the interval from the Sun to the Moon **forward** from the Ascendant: thus the position of the Lot of Fortune would be the same both day and night. The question is whether this was really the intention of Nechepso/Ptosiris, since other Hellenist astrologers read their account and concluded that the calculation of the Lot should be truly reversed by day and by night."

Valens, on another hand, talking about the length of life quotes the same king (Nechepso) and in the 3rd Book-11th he says that in his understanding if the Moon appears in the sky the formula must be reversed by night, but if the Moon is declining, **for purpose of length of life** it's necessary to compute from the Sun to the Moon and the same amount from the horoskopus.

The translators of Valens' book. The Anthology, R.Hand and R.Schmidt, pointed out that this is the only moment that Valens points out that issue. In all his other texts and books he always had reversed the formula.

Valens says textually:

“11. Concerning the Lot of Fortune in Regard to the Matter of Length of Life with Illustrations, in which are also the Least Years of the Stars (the stress is mine)

I have also found this choice for length of life to have been entwined: variety of ways by the ancients, but I have made my own judgment after conducting an investigation based on experience, and I believe that more satisfactory than most. For in the 13th book, after the proemium and the disposition of the zoidia the king attacks the Lot Fortune from the Sun, the Moon, and the *Horoskopos*, which he mostly works with and makes mention of throughout the whole book, which he judges to be a supreme place. Concerning the Lot of Fortune, he has indeed presented the inversion and reversal as a riddle.

"And the Sun, beginning for all eternity from the morning, hands over the vault⁴ when it completes the circle in the evening, during which time it is visible, but when night is coming on, the Moon does not always happen to be bringing light, but sometimes in the evening it is setting while being visible, sometimes it remains [visible] up to some part of the night, and sometimes it makes its passages through the completion of the night, wherefore it has entirely entrusted the circle to the Sun."

*Different [writers] have said different things about this thought, but it seems to me that for a diurnal nativity one should take degrees from Sun to the Moon and an equal amount from the *Horoskopos*. However, for a nocturnal nativity, as often as the Moon is above the earth (that is, up to the point where it sets), one should take from it to the Sun and an equal amount from the *Horoskopos*; but after the Moon's setting, from the Sun to it."*

The above text clearly says that the Lot should be used in the diurnal formula whenever the Moon has set, even if the Sun is below the horizon. The problem is that nowhere Valens has followed this method, we don't know why.

I concluded that the only point controversial about switching or reversing the Lot happens when the Lot is used as *prorrogator* in the study of the length of life.

Two of the more important Hellenistic astrologers, Ptolemy and Valens, used the

diurnal formula in the study of length of life, and I don't know why to deny that they were meaning what they said.

The question of choosing a *prorrogator* or Hyleg is tricky and if you can't give a so important role to the Sun or Moon or any planet in the dignities of both in the proper houses, you have to look at the *syzygia post nativitate*n, the POF or the Ascendant. There is a protocol to chose from any of the above hypothesis and we will not discuss about the matter since our subject in the present article does not contemplate length of life.

I think that we might maintain our mind open to the fact that when dealing with the matter of choosing a Hyleg, maybe not reversing the formula when the Moon is below the earth in nocturnal charts can bring more effectiveness in our analysis.

Anyway, this doesn't change to much the situation, since the cases of using the not reversed formula are few, as I will point out.

- 1-If by chance you can't chose the Sun or the Moon as prorrogators,
- 2- Neither a planet in their dignities is in the hylegiacal houses,
- 3- The chart was preventional, so you can't use the Ascendant as Hyleg.
- 4- It is a nocturnal chart.
- 5-The Moon is bellow the horizon.

If the above 5 criteria is found in a nativity then we can think about the problem of not reversing the POF. Even in this case if there is not any planet fit to the role of Alchocoden, we have to discard the POF as Hyleg and continue our research.

In a so tricky and picky matter as the discovery of the Hyleg or *predominator* in a nativity maybe we can try not to reverse the POF in nocturnal charts when the Moon is bellow the earth only to observe and do some personal research to be sure we are doing the right thing reversing or not.

Indeed in any other matter besides the length of life the ancient astrological opinion is coherent and not controversial: the POF has to be reversed in nocturnal charts in any matter of life.

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