

BOOK VIII: SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

§VIII.1: Pregnancy, birth, longevity: al-Qabīṣī

[al-Qabīṣī IV.1] The fourth section, on the exposition of the [technical] terms of the astrologers.

§VIII.1.1: *Pregnancy*¹

[al-Qabīṣī II.44a] But concerning the order of the planets in the conception of children, one must know that the first month, namely from the hour of conception, belongs to Saturn; the second to Jupiter; the third to Mars, the fourth to the Sun, the fifth to Venus, the sixth to Mercury, the seventh to the Moon, the eighth to Saturn, but the ninth to Jupiter.

§VIII.1.2: *Birth: determining a more exact Ascendant*

[al-Qabīṣī IV.3] And from this the *namūdār*.² And many of the astrologers think that the [exact] degree of the Ascendant of some native itself would be found through it, but this is false. And I have already made this clear in the book which I wrote about the indicator. But through it is found the more worthy of [the rest] of the degrees of the circle after the ascending degree in that same hour according to the natural course.³ And it is often agreed that the ascending degree itself would be found through it.

The understanding of which matter is that the degree of the conjunction or degree of the prevention⁴ which was before the nativity should be considered: because if it were the conjunction which was be-

¹ For more on pregnancy, see Appendix F.

² Or, “indicator.” John adds: “which is the investigation of the degree of the Ascendant of some nativity.” There are several methods for determining a more exact birth Ascendant: see Appendix F.

³ That is, the Ascending degree in the approximate hour of birth, as the heavens turn.

⁴ The New Moon or Full Moon, respectively.

fore the nativity—[that is,] closer to the nativity than the past prevention—the nativity is called “conjunctional.” And if there were a prevention closer to it, it is called “preventional.” And since the degree of the conjunction is the same degree in which the luminaries are joined, there is no [need to] search [for it] there. But in the prevention, since each luminary is in its own degree, it is necessary for us to know which of these degrees want s to be understood as the degree of the prevention. And Ptolemy has already said⁵ that the degree of the luminary which was above the earth [at the time of the prevention] is the degree of the prevention. And certain ones of the sages said: if it came about in a prevention that one of the luminaries is in the degree of the east and the other in the degree of the west, then the degree of the east is the degree of the prevention. And Valens said⁶ that the degree of the prevention is the degree in which the fullness is—wanting the degree of the Moon to be understood [as being that]. But since this method is Ptolemy’s,⁷ it is good for us to return to his opinion in it.

If therefore the degree of the conjunction or the degree of the prevention were made perfectly clear, you will establish the ascending degree by estimation at the hour of the nativity, and [then establish] the four angles at the hour of the nativity.⁸ Then, you will look at the degree of the conjunction or the degree of the prevention which was before the nativity, and see which of the planets is more worthy or stronger in it at that same hour of the conjunction or the prevention, by a multitude of dignities.⁹ Therefore, you will calculate that planet for the hour of the nativity. Then, you will look to see whether the degree of that planet (in the sign in which it is [at the nativity]) is closer to the degree of the [estimated] tenth house or to the degree of the Ascendant: and the one to which it is closer, you will make that [degree] the angle, in the image of the degree of that planet itself and its minute, and you will distribute the twelve houses through it.

⁵ *Tet.* III.3.

⁶ Cite uncertain, but this is also ‘Umar’s opinion in *TBN* I.4.1.

⁷ That is, al-Qabīṣī is about to teach us Ptolemy’s method rather than that of Hermes or another (see footnote above).

⁸ That is, based on that approximate time.

⁹ Ptolemy (*ibid.*) lists the following as relevant: a planet aspecting by a trine, and rulership by domicile, exaltation, bound, and “phase or configuration.” It is unclear exactly what this latter means, but very possibly being in a station or making an appearance from out of or going under the rays. See the passage below in al-Qabīṣī IV.6.

Ptolemy said:¹⁰ if many planets agreed in the rulership of that same place, and they were equal in strength, you will establish the one which was the Lord of the sect¹¹ as the Lord of that place.¹² Which if they even agreed in this, you will establish the one which should be changed more quickly from its own being to one which was better.¹³

§VIII.1.3: Longevity¹⁴

[al-Qabīsi IV.4] And from this, the *hīlāj*¹⁵ in nativities, the knowledge of which is that you should look at the hour of the nativity. Which if it were in the day, you will begin from the Sun—which, if he were before¹⁶ the degree of the ascending sign by 5° or less, or he were in the tenth or in the eleventh (whether that sign were masculine or feminine), he will be fit to be the releaser. But if he were in the seventh or in the eighth or in the ninth in a masculine sign, he will likewise be fit to be the releaser. If however he were in a feminine sign in these three [latter] places, he will not be fit to be the releaser.

Then you will look at the Moon. Which, if she were in the Ascendant or in the second or in the third, also in the seventh or eighth, she will be fit to be the releaser, were the sign masculine or feminine. And if she were before the degree of the ascending sign by 5° or less, or she

¹⁰ There is some understandable confusion about what Ptolemy was saying, since Ptolemy spoke both about the number of degrees, and planets with greater numbers of dignities or relationships. But according to Schmidt's Ptolemy, it is the following: if there is one planet with all or most of these dignities or relationships, then use its degree; if there are two or more (with roughly equal amounts of relationships, it seems), then use the one which is closer in *ascensional* degrees (though why not zodiacal degrees?); but if these two or more should be very close in distance by degrees, then use the one which has more of a "relationship" with the angles and the sect.

¹¹ Ar. *ḥayyiz*, "domain," but here clearly a synonym for sect.

¹² The Ar. instructs us to make some planet the Lord of the sect, but doesn't tell us which; at any rate, both the Arabic and Latin texts depart from Ptolemy.

¹³ This last part is not in Ptolemy. But for examples of planetary "changes," see IV.7 above.

¹⁴ For more on the longevity techniques of the releaser and *kadukḥudhāh*, see Appendix F below and my Appendix B in *PN1*.

¹⁵ A Persian word meaning "releaser" (because it is used in primary directions, usually glossed as "releasing" in traditional astrology), often spelled *hyleg* by Latin authors. I will translate it as "releaser" from now on.

¹⁶ That is, in an earlier zodiacal degree. He is "before" or "in front of" the ascending degree only by the primary motion of the heavens.

were in the tenth or in the eleventh or in the fourth or in the fifth in a feminine sign, she is made fit to be the releaser. If however she were in a masculine sign in some one of these places, she will not be fit to be the releaser, if the nativity were in the day.

But if the nativity were nocturnal, we begin from the Moon. Which, if she were in some one of the aforesaid places according to what we have said before, she will be fit to be the releaser. If however the Moon were not in them, you will look after this to the Sun. Which, if he were before the degree of the seventh by 5° or less, or he were in the fourth or in the fifth, he will be in a fit place to be the releaser, were the sign masculine or feminine. But if he were in the Ascendant or in the second, in a masculine sign, he will even be made fit to be the releaser. If however he were in a feminine sign in some one of these places, he will not be fit to be the releaser.

Which if the luminaries were not fit to be the releaser, you will look after this to the nativity to see if it is conjunctional or preventional. Which if the nativity were conjunctional and the degree of the conjunction were in some one of the angles or in the succedents of the angles, it will be in a fit place to be the releaser. But if the aforesaid degree were cadent from these eight places, it will not be the releaser. Then look at the degree of the Lot of Fortune. Which, if it were in some one of the angles or in their succedents, it will be in a fit place to be the releaser. But if it were cadent from these eight places, it will not be fit to be the releaser. After this, you will look at the degree of the Ascendant, and establish it as the releaser.

But if the nativity were preventional, you will begin from the degree of the prevention, and you will look in it just as you did before with the degree of the conjunction; and after this at the Lot of Fortune, and after that to the degree of the Ascendant, in the order in which we said before with the degree of the conjunction.

You will look to see whether the signs are masculine or feminine only in the case of the luminaries. But for the degree of the conjunction and the prevention and the Lot of Fortune, you should not consider whether they are in masculine signs or in feminine signs: these three will only be fit to be the releaser if they were in these eight places, namely in the angles or their succedents. But if they were in the places receding from the angles, they will not be fit to be the releaser.