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# BOOK I: THE CONSULTATION

## UNDERSTANDING THOUGHTS<sup>1</sup>

### Chapter I.1: By what means the path of judgments comes to be

The path of the judgments of the stars is wholly divided into two parts: one is that of the questions of a birth or even of annual [predictions];<sup>2</sup> the other, that of counsel and the thoughts of men and a concealed thing and the proper quality of persons.<sup>3</sup> For just as nature has created diverse things, so the observation of astronomy leads to an understanding of them by a dissimilar method [for each], a treatment of whose types<sup>4</sup> follows. And so:

**[1]** The first thing for us [to consider] is how Māshā'allāh relates it: the nature of the stars and planets must be observed (to the extent that this category demands it).<sup>5</sup>

**[2]** Next, as Hermes lays it out, one must follow up with how much pertains to their accidents.<sup>6</sup>

**[3]** Finally, by what search the significator of this whole art can be chosen,<sup>7</sup> and at the same time we will sneak in [how] its assistance [may be] applied.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I have derived this title from Hermann's own text, since the beginning of Book II explicitly states that Book I is on this topic. *Consilium* can mean "consultation" (as I have it here) as well as "advice, counsel, deliberation, intention."

<sup>2</sup> That is, nativities and the revolutions of years. This topic is covered fully in *Persian Nativities I-III*.

<sup>3</sup> This second branch of astrology is precisely the topic of *Search*, though this sentence does not clearly state the difference between thoughts and questions proper: for that distinction, see Ch. II.4.1.

<sup>4</sup> That is, the specific types just mentioned: Book I deals with thoughts, and Book II with objects and persons (along with more strictly horary approaches, timing methods, *etc.*). Book III will deal with methods for determining victors or chief significators over an entire chart and a particular topic.

<sup>5</sup> See Chs. I.2-I.2.4, and I.2.6.

<sup>6</sup> See Ch. I.2.5.

<sup>7</sup> See Chs. I.3-5, I.9-10. I will omit this boldface designation below, because the chapters are not continuous and it might cause confusion.

<sup>8</sup> See Chs. I.6-8, I.11. I will omit this boldface designation below, because the chapters are not continuous and it might cause confusion.

**Chapter I.2: On the natures of the signs, houses and planets**

[1] Therefore the principal [significations]<sup>9</sup> of the signs are twelve, of which certain ones are allotted the nature of [each individual triplicity]:

*Chapter I.2.1: Objects signified by the signs*

<b>Fiery Signs</b>	
♁	Everything engraved, polished, and tempered in fire, as are precious metals like gold and silver and what is like these.
♌	Bright and planed [gems] and those which are of great value: as is hyacinth, <sup>10</sup> emerald and that kind—unless the Sun or Mars are joined as signifiers, for then [Leo signifies] copper or iron.
♍	What is more low-quality in this category, as are gypsum, bricks, tiles and earthenware, and what is like these, tempered by fire.

<b>Airy Signs</b>	
♊	First to men, then to animals of a light and small body; hands and feet or feathers.
♎	[Beings] whose feet are different and of diverse form, <sup>11</sup> part of whose color [is] different from [other] parts, of heavier animals. <sup>12</sup>
♏	Vile things, as are four-footed things in the waters or living in dung <sup>13</sup> (that is, things creeping on the earth).

<b>Earthy Signs</b>	
♋	Higher trees whose fruits are handed over for use.
♍	Those which require irrigation, <sup>14</sup> like crops, flax, <sup>15</sup> cotton and vegetables.
♎	Thorny trees, thickets, <sup>16</sup> orchards, edible reeds, <sup>17</sup> and pastures.

<sup>9</sup> *Principalia*.

<sup>10</sup> Or yellow zircon, which appears in igneous rocks.

<sup>11</sup> This probably means, “whose feet are different from the upper limbs.”

<sup>12</sup> I confess I am not sure what kinds of animals this would include.

<sup>13</sup> Or, “muck” (*stercoralia*). This probably includes both pigs and insects such as flies.

<sup>14</sup> Or, good watering (*irriguum*).

<sup>15</sup> I.e., for linen.

<sup>16</sup> Or, “brushwood” (*virgulta*).

<sup>17</sup> *Arundinetum victus* (tentative): from *harundo*, “reed,” and *victus*, “food, nourishment.”

Watery Signs	
☾	Among aquatic animals, those like crabs, turtles, and that kind, unless the Moon is equally in a watery [sign]: for then it signifies frozen or boiled water, as is salt or sugar and what is like these. <sup>18</sup>
♁	Much wateriness and every heavy liquid and commixture, such as mud, [what is] curdled, or anything massed together, <sup>19</sup> and that type.
♆	The rest of the kinds of fish.

*Chapter I.2.2: Limbs and regions signified by the signs*

But they apportion lands and the human body in this way:

	Limbs	Regions
♁	Head & face	Persia and Babylonia
♃	Neck	[Al-Suwād, Māhīn, Hamadhān, and the cities of the Kurds who live in the mountains] <sup>20</sup>
♁	Arms	Greater Armenia and Memphis <sup>21</sup>
☾	Chest	Lesser Armenia
♁	Back	Parthia <sup>22</sup>
♁	Belly	[Jarāmaqa, Syria, the Euphrates, al-Jazīra, and Persia following Kirmān] <sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Hermann must mean things that are crystalline or boiled in water to draw them out (such as when sugar cane is boiled).

<sup>19</sup> *Commassatum*.

<sup>20</sup> Adding from *ITA* I.3.

<sup>21</sup> That is, “Egypt,” here and below.

<sup>22</sup> *ITA* I.3: the lands of the Turks.

<sup>23</sup> Reading with *ITA* I.3 for Hermann’s *Furaa*, probably a transliteration for “Euphrates.”

Ω	Flanks & thighs	Rome and thence to Africa, thence to the boundaries of Memphis
♁	Groin	The countrysides of the Arabs
♃	Buttocks & hips <sup>24</sup>	Monastic areas and places of prayer <sup>25</sup>
♄	Knees	Valleys and the Moors and India
♅	Shins	Farmers <sup>26</sup>
♆	Feet	Aracoa <sup>27</sup> and from Rome up to Syria

Chapter I.2.3: Significations of the houses

Then it follows that:

<i>The east:</i>	The life of a man and [his] mind and body
<i>Second:</i>	The possessions of a man, and [his] livelihood, & assets
<i>Third:</i>	Brothers and sisters
<i>Fourth:</i>	Parents, an estate, <sup>28</sup> and the ends of things
<i>Fifth:</i>	Offspring, heralds, gifts
<i>Sixth:</i>	Slaves, the sick, beasts
<i>Seventh:</i>	Betrothals, sexual intercourse, adversaries, controversies
<i>Eighth:</i>	Death and dread
<i>Ninth:</i>	Travel, dreams, wisdom, law
<i>Tenth:</i>	Dominions, kingdoms, and trades
<i>Eleventh:</i>	Supremacy, <sup>29</sup> monies, hope
<i>Twelfth:</i>	Enemies, prison, and beasts of burden <sup>30</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Including the thighs.

<sup>25</sup> *ITA* I.3: “Baghdad and al-Jibāl, Isfahān, places of the Herpads and fire-worshippers.” I have read “monastic areas” for *Search’s* “Cenobia,” under the assumption that Hermann means places of cenobites, viz., monks who live communally.

<sup>26</sup> *ITA* I.3. reads: “al-Suwād toward the mountains, and Kūfa and its parts, and the rear of the Hijāz, and the land of the Copts of Egypt, and the western region of the land of Sind, and it has partnership in the land of Persia.”

<sup>27</sup> Uncertain. *ITA* I.3. reads: “Tabarīstān and the northern region of the land of Jurjān, and a partnership in Roman [lands] up to Syria, and it has al-Jazīra and Egypt and Alexandria and the sea of Yemen.”

<sup>28</sup> Or, “farm” (*fundum*).

<sup>29</sup> *Regnum*, normally Hermann’s word for “exaltation.”

<sup>30</sup> *Iumenta*. This helps to clarify the attribution of large animals in the twelfth: it is not so much that they are large, as that they are beasts of *burden*, which is a theme of the twelfth.

## Chapter I.2.4: Regions signified by the planets

But concerning the proper qualities of the stars, these things must be said:

	People & things	Regions
♄	Old men and common people	Mountains, <sup>31</sup> wintry places <sup>32</sup> and earthy and rocky places
♃	Socially important people, <sup>33</sup> judges, and friends	Media, Persia, Babylonia
♁	Arms and militias	Syria
♀	Princes and kings	Rome and Anicosea <sup>34</sup>
♆	Women, foods, drink, expensive clothes	Arabia (with Mars)
♄	Possessions, merchants, books	India
♃	Heralds, commissions, <sup>35</sup> and mothers	Parthia and Armenia

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<sup>31</sup> Or specifically, the Alps (*alpes*).

<sup>32</sup> Lit., “Ireland” (*Hiberniam*).

<sup>33</sup> *Praelatos*, which could mean simply “prelates.”

<sup>34</sup> Possibly Khurāsān: see *ITA* V.4.

<sup>35</sup> That is, people commanded (*mandata*) by an authority to perform a special function.

*Chapter I.2.5: Solar phases and planetary motions*

[2] Which, since the natures of the stars are in a certain way put under the whole circle, there is a variety of accidents by means of [their] change in place; [and] by means of the various applications amongst themselves, there is an alteration of outcomes. As a matter of fact, for this reason:

Eastern [planets] are in charge of youths and the newness of things; western ones, the contrary.<sup>36</sup>

Retrograde ones, complications and reversals; direct ones, the contrary.<sup>37</sup>

Those lofty and adding, increase; pressed down and subtracting, made low.<sup>38</sup>

In their own dignities, strong; foreign,<sup>39</sup> weak.<sup>40</sup>

*Chapter I.2.6: Senses ruled by the planets<sup>41</sup>*

Senses	
♃ ♆	Hearing
♂ ♀	Smell
☉ ☽	Vision
☿	Speech

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<sup>36</sup> See also *ITA* II.10.3.

<sup>37</sup> See also *ITA* II.10.4.

<sup>38</sup> *Detrimetum*. See also *ITA* II.1 and II.4. This paragraph has to do with planets in their apogees or perigees, and probably planetary speed.

<sup>39</sup> Or, “peregrine.”

<sup>40</sup> See also *ITA* I.8.

<sup>41</sup> Note that touch is not represented here: the planets are really indicating orifices in the head: the ears, nostrils, eyes, and mouth.

### Chapter I.3: Finding the significator of thought<sup>42</sup>

These things having been observed, it is first necessary that the east be established most exactly, and the pivots of heaven made firm so that there could be an exact discernment of the places of the stars. For sometimes [it happens that a star] occurs within the pivot of heaven [while the pivot is] in its own proper place,<sup>43</sup> or it falls into the ninth or in the eleventh; but once these are distinguished it sometimes happens that a star placed in the east<sup>44</sup> is in the second or in the twelfth [quadrant-based house], which is not an insignificant error. Therefore, if this happened, it will comply with the majority [of cases].<sup>45</sup>

These things having been put in order, then the whole industry of the art is taken up by the choosing of the significator of the matter. Once it has been found, then at last it is appropriate for the suitable testimonies to be applied<sup>46</sup>—[but] not by judging immediately before all testimonies of the significator are fully understood, and its counsels examined in detail. [Rather], the place of its principal significator (both the natural and accidental one)<sup>47</sup> should be carefully and soundly [examined] first, and both its nature and accidents should be examined in detail. Then the rulerships, applications and separations; then also its place, strength, and manner. When these have been diligently and fully looked at, there is nothing which could overwhelm a cautious mind.

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<sup>42</sup> The methods in this chapter are based on the Ascendant and its lord, perhaps on the principle that the rising sign shows all matters, including questions, emerging from out of darkness into light (Sahl, *Introduct.* §3).

<sup>43</sup> Namely, in the tenth sign.

<sup>44</sup> That is, the rising sign.

<sup>45</sup> Most of this paragraph is extremely dense and Hermann has omitted some operative verbs for stylistic purposes. But Hermann or his source is indeed endorsing quadrant-based houses. The paragraph up to this point reads: *Hiis conspectis, primum necesse est oriens certissime constitui, cardinesque caeli firmari, ut locorum stellarum certa possit esse discretio. Nonnichil enim est inter caeli cardinem proprio in loco consistere aut in nonum aut in undecimum incidere; hiis enim in discretis plerumque accidit stellam in oriente locatam in secundo esse aut in 12o, cuius non est levis error. Id igitur cum acciderit maiori parti concedetur.*

<sup>46</sup> See Ch. I.3.5 below.

<sup>47</sup> I am not quite sure whether this refers to a natural and accidental significator, or to its “natural” and accidental place (such as by rulership or location).

*Chapter I.3.1: Finding the significator (al-Rāzī/Māshā'allāh)*

As al-Rāzī teaches, as we are following him: After the east was established by degrees and minutes, and the rest of the domiciles put in order, and also the degrees and points of the stars made firm, then at last I search first for the place<sup>48</sup> of the significator, according to the opinion of Māshā'allāh (which must be followed).<sup>49</sup> Nor, as Māshā'allāh says, is a significator fit unless it is either the lord of the east, or of the sovereignty of the east, or the first lord of the trigon of the degree of the east, or [of the luminary of] its sect,<sup>50</sup> or the lord of the hour. Others<sup>51</sup> add [to this] from the lord of the decan and from the lord of the bound.

Which if all of these were adverse, and none among them were fit,<sup>52</sup> and the question were diurnal, the Sun will have to be consulted; if nocturnal, the counsel of the Moon should be applied, or the lord of the Lot of Fortune. Which if all of these were adverse, so that (of all of them) none were fit, let [these] be left aside, [and] let us embrace the Moon by day and night, wherever she is in the places.

*Chapter I.3.2: Finding the significator (a "Dorothean" Lot-like method)*

But the opinion of Dorotheus<sup>53</sup> is that the number of degrees should be taken up from the degree of the lord of the hour to the degree of the lord of the east, and the whole [number which is] counted will begin from the degree of the Sun (with the degrees of the Sun being added [to the beginning of the sign]),<sup>54</sup> or from the pivot of the Midheaven, namely assigning 30° to each

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<sup>48</sup> Reading *locum* for *loco*, as the object of *indago*.

<sup>49</sup> Reading *prosequendam* for *prosequenda*, to modify *sententiam*.

<sup>50</sup> *Haizēbu*. Hermann is probably drawing on Māshā'allāh's mainly lost translation of *Carmen*, since Dorotheus is famous for his promiscuous use of triplicity lords. The lists of possible significators in *Thought* (Appendix C below) do include the sect light (the Sun in the day, the Moon in the night), but not the triplicity lord.

<sup>51</sup> The Indians mentioned in Ch. I.9.3 below and in *OHT* §2 (see Appendix C).

<sup>52</sup> For fitness, see Ch. I.4 below and *ITA* IV.1-2.

<sup>53</sup> This is probably a pseudo-Dorotheus.

<sup>54</sup> This is a standard medieval way to make the counting out of Lots easier. See the example in *ITA* VI.1.1. Put more simply, the Lot being described here is taken from the lord of the hour to the lord of the Ascendant, and is projected from either the Sun or Midheaven. But my sense is that this calculation has gotten garbled. In Ch. I.11.2 below, the calculation is switched (measuring from the lord of the Ascendant to the lord of the

sign: therefore, where the number left off, [the rulership] will be bestowed between the lords of its sign and its bound. Therefore, the one which appeared familiarly,<sup>55</sup> and to whom many testimonies were conceded, will no doubt obtain the signification.

*Chapter I.3.3: Finding the significator (a proportional dignity-house method)*<sup>56</sup>

However, we can also find the significator in this way: that the portions of the stars' dignities would be computed, and the one to whom they conceded more, were it [also] established better, will obtain it.

But the [initial] distribution of portions of this kind is: the lord of the east claims 18; the lord of the sovereignty 13 (provided that it is eastern in that degree);<sup>57</sup> the first lord of the trigon, 10; the lord of the bound, 6.

With these distinctions having been applied, one must observe that the number of parts is whole [if the planets are] in the pivots; outside the pivots, [they are] diminished in this way: while they were in the third or ninth or fifth or in the eleventh, they retain one-half; in the four averse places (in the second, sixth, eighth, twelfth), one-third.

These things being accurately examined, the one to which they conceded more parts, and were better established, that one will no doubt obtain the signification.

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hour), and the projection from the Midheaven is part of a different Lot described in Ch. I.11.1.

<sup>55</sup> *Familiarius*. This refers to how well a planet aspects and from what kind of place: see Chs. 1.3.4 and I.6.1.

<sup>56</sup> This method seems to be based on the Dorothean "advantageous" places, which include the Ascendant and all signs aspecting it, except for the third (which is still considered a good place, but the weakest of all); those places in aversion to the Ascendant are not considered advantageous. In the diagram, all places configured with the Ascendant (including the third) have either full or half strength, and the places in aversion have one-third. But see another version attributed to Dorotheus and based on *Carmen* I.5, in Ch. III.1.1 below.

<sup>57</sup> This sentence might actually mean, "if the degree of the east *has* a lord of the sovereignty [exaltation]."

## APPENDIX A: AL-RIJĀL'S *THE BOOK OF THE SKILLED*

### 1. *Skilled* I.7: On the hour for taking the Ascendant

The ancients were discordant in this:

[1] Hermes said that the hour of taking the Ascendant over the question is at the meeting which is between the querent and the master, and the master should take the question then.<sup>1</sup>

[2] The Indians, and those from Persia, and those from Babylon, say that questions are put down upon the querent's will, and they say that the significations of questions are in disagreement according to the alternation of the querent's will in [those] hours.<sup>2</sup>

[3] Valens says<sup>3</sup> that the Ascendant of the question should be taken in the hour in which the questioner comes to the master.

But I say that<sup>4</sup> the hour of taking the Ascendant of the question should be [the Indian and Persian and Babylonian view]: when the querent says to the master that he should take it, and not when he comes to him; because if he would come and *not* state that he should take the Ascendant, there is not an Ascendant unless he said so.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This seems to mean that the astrologer decides if and when to cast a chart, and is close to our sense of a horary question.

<sup>2</sup> This sounds like statements by Māshā'allāh and 'Umar in *Judges* §§0.1 and 0.2 respectively, that the chart will reflect the clarity or confusion in the client's own mind.

<sup>3</sup> Cite unknown. It could belong to a pseudo-Valens in Arabic, or as part of a commentary on Valens which was mistaken for Valens's own view. It sounds like a straightforward casting of a consultation chart to determine thoughts.

<sup>4</sup> 1485 reads, "And I see well that...", which sounds like al-Rijāl's own personal experience.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Rijāl seems to mean that the casting of the Ascendant really requires the explicit decision and consent of the querent, after having explored the issue with the astrologer. In a way, this reflects the ultimate triumph of explicit horary questions, because the whole procedure of finding signifiers of thought is pointless if we prefer explicit discussions before casting the chart—in Hermann's words, we would only have questions "in speech," and not "in thought" (*Search* Ch. II.4.1)

## 2. *Skilled* I.5.2: On disagreements over signifiers of thoughts

They even disagree on learning the querent's thought, and how they can understand it, and what signification they<sup>6</sup> ought to have over him.

[1] Dorotheus<sup>7</sup> says: If you wished to know the querent's thought, look to the first lord of the triplicity of the Ascendant: which if it were in its own house or exaltation or triplicity or bound, judge through that place in which you found it. And if you found it in the second house, know that the question was about assets, or about what accrues to him; and judge about this according to the place in which it was, and in whatever house, and judge from the significations<sup>8</sup> of that house. On the other hand, if the planet found there were in the cadents or in its own fall, or in places in which it has no dignity, you will *not* judge through its place, but you will look to the planet which projects its own rays upon it, without the Sun or another planet cutting it off: and you will judge through *that* planet and *its* place.

[2] And this was [also] the opinion of Hermes and of the great fellowship of the ancients who followed him.

[3] Valens says:<sup>9</sup> If you wished to know the thought, look in this at the planet from which the Moon is being separated, or the one which is in her opposition or in her square, and you will know the thought from that. Which if you did not have such a planet, look at the planet to which the Moon applies herself first, and see if it has some dignity in the Ascendant or in the place in which she<sup>10</sup> is. And if it did not have dignity in the Ascendant nor in her place, look at the house of another planet which is regarding it,<sup>11</sup> and is in its own exaltation, and judge by that.

[4] And this<sup>12</sup> is [also] the opinion of the Persians, and the great fellowship of the Roman sages—nor do others operate with it.

<sup>6</sup> This is possibly an error in the Latin translation, accidentally reading *debent/debeant* (pl.) for *debet/debeat* (sing.).

<sup>7</sup> Cite unknown at this time, but the use of triplicity lords is certainly Dorothean.

<sup>8</sup> Reading with 1485 for “significators.”

<sup>9</sup> Note that this is virtually identical to the opinion of “Māshā'allāh” on the victor of the whole chart, in *Skilled* I.5.2 (in excerpt 5), below.

<sup>10</sup> Here and in the next sentence, I am reading with the opinion of “Māshā'allāh” in excerpt 5 below, and assuming al-Rijāl is speaking about the Moon's sign.

<sup>11</sup> I believe this refers to the Ascendant: so it seems the last option is to take an exalted planet that can aspect the Ascendant.

<sup>12</sup> I believe al-Rijāl means that the last sentence about an exalted planet is the view of the Persians and Romans.