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INTRODUCTION: THE ART OF PREDICTION IN ASTROLOGY

Predicting the future is an intuitive need in human nature. This is one of the main reasons why humans have always been interested in astrology. We want to know how events will develop and advance, and where they will arrive in the end; in response, we need to take necessary precautions and make decisions as accurately as possible.

Even if we are not aware of it, prediction exists in all areas of life. For example, when we want to make an investment, we need to predict how the stock market may change and what the future trends might be. When we plan a vacation, we need to know how weather conditions will change. When we are taking an important exam for admission to a university, we need to predict which university will be the best decision for our future.

Likewise, certain people in society are appreciated for having foresight; those with the ability to think beyond their time and foresee the future, are always successful in life. Astrology itself is a guiding light which shows us our path, what we may experience, when we might be successful (or not), and the best periods for any new endeavor. Undoubtedly, identifying such indicators beforehand provides an important advantage. We may avoid some negative events, or we may at least be mentally and emotionally prepared for their consequences. This, in fact, shows us that we do have some control over events, and do not have control over others.

Guido Bonatti, the 13th-Century Italian astrologer who compiled texts of Hellenistic and Arabic astrology, states that astrology is a unique science which helps us know and predict things.¹ According to Bonatti, wise men thought that they could prevent some negative events which were otherwise predicted, or at least they could be spiritually prepared for such things, by reading the astrological indications. Ptolemy also states that those familiar with the nature of the stars have the power to prevent some of their effects and get prepared before their manifestation takes place.² With the help of prediction, people may be prepared for the coming events, with calm and strength. Astrological prediction is one of the talents that raises humans to the level of wisdom.

¹ See *Bonatti on Basic Astrology*, Treatise 1, Ch. 11.

² *Tet.* 1.2-3.

Predictive techniques in traditional astrology

Predictive techniques such as secondary progressions, solar returns, solar arc progressions, and especially transits, are widely used by modern astrologers. However, some of the predictive techniques of traditional astrology which should be known by all well-equipped astrologers are not as widespread and familiar.

In fact, the predictive techniques of traditional astrology have made a great contribution to astrology, with a high degree of accuracy. If we have enough information about the techniques of traditional astrology, we may be able to understand the source of modern techniques. I believe these predictive techniques should be used together with new trends in modern astrology and psychological concepts.

The most important contribution of traditional astrology's predictive techniques is to maintain an objective approach to the course of events that the native might experience. Traditional techniques help us to understand fate, and as fated events run in a systematic and orderly way, we are able to foresee both the details and general course of our life. We may easily observe this system in charts of the heavens, because in general the themes and events of our lives are out of our direct control. Likewise, the techniques of traditional astrology are systematic and orderly. They give us certain rules for analyzing the chart and making predictions. So, in principle we are able to predict future events accurately. The methods also offer a hierarchical approach when predicting the general course of life: first the life is divided into main, longer periods, and then these periods are divided into smaller sub-periods.

There is no doubt that secondary progressions and solar arcs are crucial tools of modern astrology. But they were not used in the era of traditional astrology. For example, secondary progressions were first mentioned in the book *Primum Mobile* by Placidus di Tito, an astrologer from the Renaissance who lent his name to the house system he invented.³ However, progressions have been particularly used in the modern age. Traditional astrologers mostly used primary directions, profections, directing by bounds or terms, and *firdaria*. Primary directions (one of the most common techniques) are not used very often by modern astrologers, because they can involve mathematical calculations that intimidate some people, and there are many conflicting

³ Gansten, p. 20.

opinions as to the best way to make them. (We will explain how to perform Ptolemaic directions easily.)

Transits, which traditional astrologers used after studying all of the other techniques, are also widely used by modern astrologers. But one of the biggest problems with transits for modern astrologers, is that they sometimes seem to have no effect. Traditional astrology proposes a solution for this: the transits of planets which are already time lords⁴ in *other* techniques, will be more important and effective than those of just any planet. That is, traditional astrology treats transits as the *triggers* for *firdaria*, profections, solar returns, primary directions, and other techniques, not as independent indicators of events.

Another reason why certain techniques are often not used correctly, is that not all planets in a chart are related solely to the native. Modern astrology tends to assume that the whole horoscope represents the native. This leads to the following: the 1st house represents *me*, the 2nd house represents *my* money, the 3rd house represents *my* ideas, etc... and everything seems to be “mine.” This is an egocentric view which leads us to conclude that there are no outer conditions in life and no genuine “others.” But we always have others in our lives, and much of our experiences are related to these others. In traditional astrology, the native is represented by the 1st house, the lord of the 1st house, and the planets in or in aspect to the 1st house (the Ascendant). The remaining houses and their lords are related to others in the native’s life. When these other indicators are in aspect to transiting planets, the “I” alone may not necessarily be affected. Rather, external things are affected, such as family members, friends, career, money, etc. Thus, when the lord of my 11th house or a planet in my 11th house is in aspect to a transiting planet, I am not affected by that transit, but someone within my circle of friends is affected.

The predictions made by traditional astrological techniques are more accurate because they make certain distinctions (such as those above) which are not always present in modern or psychological astrology. In psychological astrology, predictions are not the backbone of practice, but they do play this role in traditional astrology. By drawing on these traditional techniques, we may make better chart interpretations and more accurate predictions. However, we cannot claim that the accuracy rate is 100%. As humans, we have only limited knowledge: we may predict, but absolute knowledge only be-

⁴ See the Glossary.

longs to God. Everyone who is interested in astrology should know his place and his limits.

Beware of your language in predictions!

An important mission of astrology is to warn against possible negative outcomes, not making up disaster scenarios. When making these warnings and practicing this art for the service of humanity, the conscious astrologer should always be aware of the psychology of the people he is addressing, and take care never to give rise to fear and worries by exaggerating conditions. Some astrologers who know nothing about human psychology and make predictions freely fill the hearts of their clients with fear and suspicion; but if we are careful and knowledgeable, we may help people overcome their fears by showing how their choices can help actively shape the future. Otherwise people may feel scared, thinking that they are victims of the stars and planets, on which they have no control nor effect.

Particularly when interpreting the effects of transiting planets, we should always keep in mind that these planetary movements are predestined—but their precise effects as well as our final destination will be based on how we react to their effects through our free will and awareness. Donna Cunningham emphasizes that transits are not isolated events on which we have no control, but they are parts of our psychological process.⁵

Transits help us increase our awareness about our lives and existence. If you are aware that life is a learning process and everything you experience helps you know your highest being, then transits will never surprise you. Even the hardest transits help us develop our understanding. Instead, sorrow grows as a result of resisting changes, and sometimes difficulties assist our growth. We must be focused on creativity and the developmental process rather than on our sorrows: then we may be thankful for all the difficulties we face, as they have brought us from darkness to light and have helped us reveal our true potentials.

⁵ Cunningham, Ch. 15 *passim*.

A short preview of the techniques

In this book, the predictive techniques we will explore are as follows:

The Ages of Man. This ancient technique described by Ptolemy assigns certain years of life to the basic meanings of the seven traditional planets. The specific meaning of any of these time lords depends on their situation and condition in the natal chart.

Directing by bounds or terms. This directs the degree of the ASC through subdivisions of each of the signs, called “bounds” or “terms.” Each bound is worth a certain amount of time, and the planet ruling it becomes a general time lord over the associated period of life.

Directing by triplicities. Here, we take three planets called “triplcity lords,” and associate each with roughly one third of life: this gives a broad sketch of the quality of that part of life and its chief issues.

Primary directions: This ancient technique is based on the daily rotation of the heavens, and is used for both individual natives and in mundane astrology. According to the method we will follow, seven signifiers can be directed: the ASC, MC, Sun, Moon, Lot of Fortune, and the degrees of pre-natal New Moon and Full Moon.

Solar arc directions: Each planet is advanced by as much as the Sun advances day by day, and each day’s motion is associated with one year of life. For instance, if the native is 38 years old, all planets in his chart are advanced by as much as the Sun moves in the first 38 days from birth. The planets do not retrograde. This technique is related more to the outer conditions of life than to the native’s psychological condition.

Secondary progressions: This technique equates the daily motion of each planet with one year of life. So, the secondary progressed chart of a native for age 30 is in fact a chart of the transits which took place 30 days after his birth (the progressed ASC and MC are handled differently). Secondary progressions explain the psychological development of the native, but since one’s inner and outer conditions are often go together due to the principle of synchronicity, they also give some clues about outer dynamics.

Transits. This technique tracks the real-time motion of the planets in relation to the natal chart, particularly their conjunctions and aspects to sensitive natal points such as the axial degrees.

Eclipses. The charts of solar and lunar eclipses are important indicators of crisis and change, especially if the degree of the eclipse is closely associated with a key natal degree.

Firdaria. This Persian time lord system divides births into day and night births, and assigns the planets to different periods of life for a specific number of years. These long periods (such as 9 years for the Moon) are also subdivided into smaller periods. The general character of the planetary combinations is analyzed according to what those planets are doing in the nativity.

Profections: This traditional technique is based on equation of one year of life to each house. A point (usually the ASC) is advanced by one house for every year of life, beginning with the first house at birth.

Solar and lunar returns. Return charts are charts for the time a planet (especially the Sun or Moon) returns to its natal location. These charts are examined both by themselves and in relation to the natal chart, to make predictions about a particular year or month.

Rectification. Finally, many of these techniques are useful in the always-important area of rectification: determining a more accurate birth time when the true one is not known.

Some details on the charts and approaches in this book

Before continuing, it would be good to explain which planets and house system I use for both nativities and return charts.

First, I use the seven traditional planets, the three modern outer planets, and Chiron. I give priority to the traditional rulers of the zodiacal signs as the rulers of house cusps, but I also use the modern rulers as co-rulers. In addition, I use both the domicile or sign rules as well as the exalted rulers: for instance, Mars is the domicile or sign ruler of Aries, and the Sun is the exalted lord of Aries.

As for houses, I mainly Placidus houses but I do use whole sign houses in order to get further information (particularly with some ancient techniques). I first look at the locations of the planets within Placidus houses, and then in whole signs. If a planet is close to the cusp of the next house I count it as being in that next house, especially if it is in the relevant whole sign. For example, suppose Sagittarius is rising, and Jupiter is placed in Leo in the 8th Placidus house, but close to the cusp of the 9th Placidus house. Since Leo is

the ninth whole sign from Sagittarius already, I treat Jupiter as being in the 9th. Sometimes I prefer whole sign houses in profections because whole signs are traditionally the basis of profections. For intercepted signs, I first consider the ruler(s) of the house cusp and then those of the intercepted sign as secondary rulers.

I do use derived houses and find them very useful in getting further information from both natal and solar return charts, especially regarding individuals other than the native and their conditions.

Finally, although I give priority to the Ptolemaic aspects, I use minor aspects as well (especially the quincunx). I use 13° orb in aspects between the Sun and the Moon, 10° between a luminary and a planet, 8° for aspects between planets in major aspects. For the minor aspects I use 3° between any of the planets and the luminaries. I use the 5° rule for intermediate house cusps and 8° for the conjunctions and aspects to the angles. For the luminaries, I can extend the orb to 10° for the angles. I consider the closer aspects separately, because I find them to be more event-oriented. I give priority to applying aspects, especially applying aspects of the Moon if there are any.

CHAPTER 3: *FIRDARIA*

THE ARABIC (AND LATER, LATIN) *FIRDARIA* COMES FROM PERSIAN, AND ITSELF SEEMS TO TRANSLATE THE GREEK WORD *PERIODOS*, WHICH MEANS A PERIOD OR CYCLE. *FIRDARIA* IS A PLANETARY PERIOD SYSTEM PRESENTED BY MANY ASTROLOGERS, ESPECIALLY ABŪ MA'SHAR (WHO ALSO DESCRIBED MUNDANE VERSIONS OF IT). IT WAS SIMILAR TO THE *DASHA* SYSTEM IN VEDIC ASTROLOGY, SO THAT THE PLANETS ARE ASSUMED TO ACT AS LORDS OVER SUCCESSIVE PERIODS OF LIFE.

In *firdaria* periods, each planet in turn rules a period of life, which we will call “ruling periods.” These ruling periods are also subdivided into seven shorter “sub-periods.” As a result, each *firdaria* has a longer-term primary lord and a shorter-term secondary lord. The two lords determine the quality of the period, with the themes of the primary lord being emphasized. When the longer-term and shorter-term lords are in contact in the nativity, the themes of that particular contact are emphasized. The influence of the period is based on the houses the lords are in and the ones that they rule: so, for evaluating the characteristics of a *firdaria* period, we need to investigate the house positions, dignities, and rulerships of both lords.

Because these positions and rulerships can vary so much, the most comprehensive books on the use of *firdaria* included only the general meanings of the planets instead of their mutual relations, places, and rulerships. Examples of such books include those by Abū Ma'shar¹ and Schoener.²

¹ See *Persian Nativities III* (in Dykes 2010).

² See Bibliography.

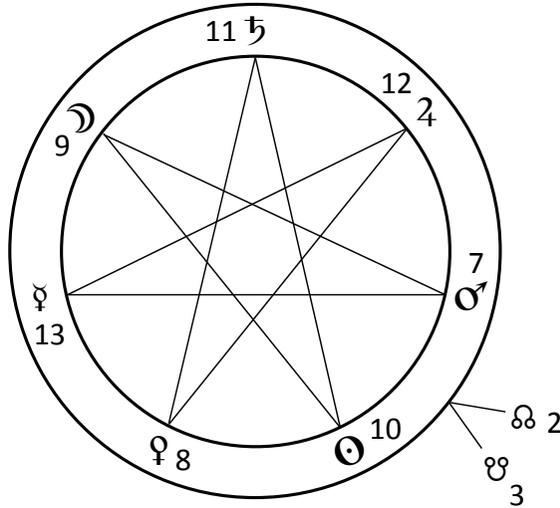


Figure 5: *Firdaria* periods

The order of *firdaria* periods

Firdaria periods follow a simple order, with a slight difference in diurnal and nocturnal charts. In diurnal charts the primary ruling period begins with the Sun, and with the Moon in nocturnal charts. Then the “Chaldean” order is followed, in the order of planets from slowest to the fastest (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon). When we reach the end of this order, we start again with Saturn. In addition to the 7 periods ruled by the 7 traditional planets, there are also Nodal periods: 3 years for the North Node and 2 years for the South Node. The sum of these 9 periods makes 75 years. After 75 years, the cycle begins from the luminary which began the series.

There were two different views on where to add the Nodes. Astrologers like Schoener, but also many others, put them at the end of the series, no matter whether the chart was diurnal or nocturnal. But Bonatti (along with others) puts them between Mars and the Sun, a practice we will follow here. The table below shows the series:

	DIURNAL CHARTS			NOCTURNAL CHARTS		
	Lord	Period	Last Age	Lord	Period	Last Age
1	☉	10	10	☾	9	9
2	♀	8	18	♃	11	20
3	♃	13	31	♄	12	32
4	☾	9	40	♂	7	39
5	♃	11	51	♁	3	42
6	♄	12	63	♂	2	44
7	♂	7	70	☉	10	54
8	♁	3	73	♀	8	62
9	♂	2	75	♃	13	75
	TOTAL	75		TOTAL	75	

Figure 6: Bonatti's *firdaria* periods table

As was stated above, major *firdaria* periods are divided into 7 equal sub-periods. The first sub-period is ruled by the same planet which happens to rule the major period, followed by the others in order. For example, the period of the Sun, broken down into sub-periods, is: Sun-Sun, Sun-Venus, Sun-Mercury, Sun-Moon, Sun-Saturn, and so on. The Nodes do not rule or have sub-periods. The lengths of the subperiods are below.

RULING PERIODS		♄	♃	♂	♁	♀	♆	♅
SUB-PERIOD LORDS	1	♄	♃	♂	♁	♀	♆	♅
	2	♃	♂	♁	♀	♆	♅	♄
	3	♂	♁	♀	♆	♅	♄	♃
	4	♁	♀	♆	♅	♄	♃	♂
	5	♀	♆	♅	♄	♃	♂	♁
	6	♆	♅	♄	♃	♂	♁	♀
	7	♅	♄	♃	♂	♁	♀	♆

Figure 7: Table of *firdaria* sub-period lords

In the table below, you may see the durations of ruling periods and sub-periods.

	RULING PERIOD	SUB-PERIOD
♄	11 years	1 year, 6 months, 26 days
♃	12 years	1 year, 8 months, 17 days
♂	7 years	1 year, 0 months, 0 days
♁	10 years	1 year, 5 months, 4 days
♀	8 years	1 year, 1 month, 22 days
♆	13 years	1 year, 10 months, 9 days
♅	9 years	1 year, 3 months, 13 days

Figure 8: Length of *firdaria* sub-periods

Practical information on the use of *firdaria*

When interpreting a period, the first step is to determine if the chart is diurnal or nocturnal: the periods begin with the Sun in diurnal charts, but with the Moon in nocturnal charts. Remember that the full cycle is 75 years long, so after that age the cycle goes back to the beginning.

After we determine the primary lord and sub-period lords of the periods, we must focus on their total condition: their places, the houses they rule, their dignities, aspects, and their contacts with their dispositors as well as the positions of the dispositors. But really there are three major points to look at with each lord:

1. Its natal house
2. The natal house(s) it rules
3. The natal house it rules by exaltation

After this, the natal aspects of the major period ruler are important.

When looking at a specific period, it may also be helpful to observe the roles of these planets in previous periods. For example, in a diurnal chart Mercury is the sub-period lord between ages 11 and 12 (when Venus is the primary ruler). If we can understand how Mercury worked during this period, then we may estimate how Mercury will work between ages 18 and 31, when he rules the major period itself. In fact, a diurnal native will be in a Mercury-Venus period from ages 29-31, the contrary of ages 11-12. Venus will be more dominant in the first period (when she is the primary lord), but each planet should act in a similar way in each period.

Remember that the Nodes do not have secondary or sub-period lords. We evaluate the Nodes according to the houses they are in: for instance, if the North Node is in Gemini in the 9th, then the native will be focused on the themes of the 9th house when he experiences the 3-year period of the North Node. The placement of the Nodes' lords will also be helpful.

Examples: Princess Diana

As an example, let's consider Princess Diana's chart by examining the *firdaria* period when she had an accident and passed away. In the table below, you may see the beginning dates of each of her *firdaria*:

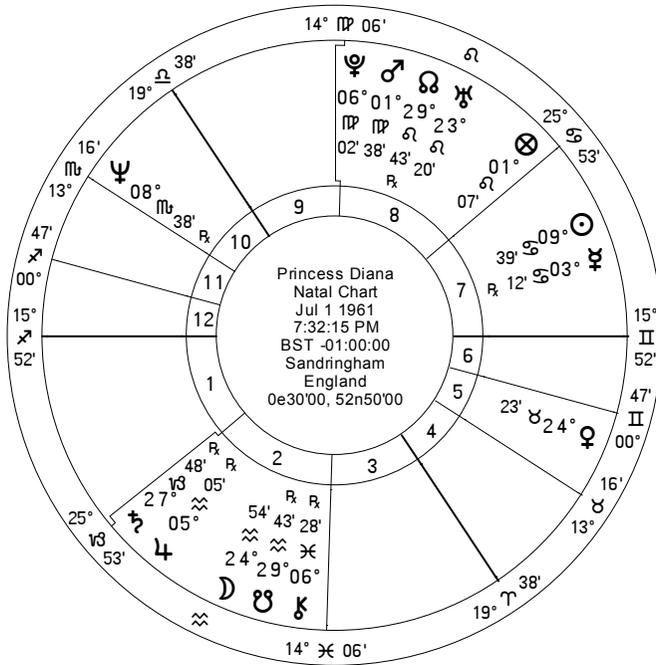


Figure 9: Nativity for Princess Diana

☉ 1 Jul 1961	♃ 1 Jul 1979	♃ 1 Jul 2001	♂ 1 Jul 2024
☉☉ 1 Jul 1961	♃♃ 1 Jul 1979	♃♃ 1 Jul 2001	♂♂ 1 Jul 2024
☉♀ 5 Dec 1962	♃♃ 10 May 1981	♃♃ 26 Jan 2003	♂☉ 1 Jul 2025
☉♃ 10 May 1964	♃♃ 18 Mar 1983	♃♂ 22 Aug 2004	♂♀ 1 Jul 2026
☉♃ 13 Oct 1965	♃♃ 25 Jan 1985	♃☉ 19 Mar 2006	♂♃ 2 Jul 2027
☉♃ 19 Mar 1967	♃♂ 4 Dec 1986	♃♀ 14 Oct 2007	♂♃ 1 Jul 2028
☉♃ 22 Aug 1968	♃☉ 13 Oct 1988	♃♃ 9 May 2009	♂♃ 1 Jul 2029
☉♂ 25 Jan 1970	♃♀ 22 Aug 1990	♃♃ 5 Dec 2010	♂♃ 2 Jul 2030
♀ 1 Jul 1971	♃ 1 Jul 1992	♃ 1 Jul 2012	♃ 1 Jul 2031
♀♀ 1 Jul 1971	♃♃ 1 Jul 1992	♃♃ 1 Jul 2012	♃ 1 Jul 2034
♀♃ 22 Aug 1972	♃♃ 13 Oct 1993	♃♂ 19 Mar 2014	
♀♃ 13 Oct 1973	♃♃ 26 Jan 1995	♃☉ 5 Dec 2015	☉ 1 Jul 2036
♀♃ 4 Dec 1974	♃♂ 10 May 1996	♃♀ 23 Aug 2017	☉☉ 1 Jul 2036
♀♃ 26 Jan 1976	♃☉ 23 Aug 1997	♃♃ 10 May 2019	☉♀ 4 Dec 2037
♀♂ 18 Mar 1977	♃♀ 5 Dec 1998	♃♃ 26 Jan 2021	☉♃ 11 May 2039
♀☉ 9 May 1978	♃♃ 18 Mar 2000	♃♃ 14 Oct 2022	☉♃ 13 Oct 2040

Figure 10: Firdaria for Princess Diana