

Chapter 11: On the transfer of nature of the planets

It was the opinion of certain philosophers that one planet transfers the nature of one to another unconditionally. For they said that when a light planet is being separated from a heavier one, and is joined to another (whether it is heavier or lighter than it), that it transfers the nature of the first to the second.¹⁶⁹ Which seems to me obscure in a certain way, I freely confess. For it does not seem accurate that even though one planet is joined to another (unless it is joined to it from one of its dignities) that it would give it its own virtue, or commit its own nature or disposition to it, according to what the philosopher says. A planet does not give something in a place in which it promises nothing. Whence if a planet does not give its nature or virtue to it, it does not seem that it can carry the nature of one to another. And even if it gave or committed it to it, by the same reasoning it does not seem that it would give it to another unless it were joined to that same one from one of its own dignities. And I believe that this was their intention, even if they did not express it.

But if a light planet were joined to a heavier planet from some dignity of the heavier one, the heavier one would commit its nature and disposition to it, [and] it could carry it with itself until it were joined to another planet whom it finds in one of its own dignities,¹⁷⁰ and commit to it what it had accepted—unless perhaps the virtue were to lie hidden¹⁷¹ from the conjunction of another, even if it did not commit it to it. For it does not seem accurate that one would give to an unknown person in a strange land what it had acquired for itself. However, because they were wiser than me, their statements ought to be upheld, whatever their intention was.

And they said a planet carries the nature of a planet to another, with such an example:

¹⁶⁹ This is Abū Ma'shar's first version of transfer (*an-naql*, **لنقل**), in *Abbr.* III.23.

¹⁷⁰ I believe this means the third planet would have to be in one of its own dignities, or in one of the dignities of the transferring planet's (or perhaps in a dignity of the original planet). In the example below, Venus commits disposition to the Moon because the Moon is in Venus's domicile; but the Moon commits what she receives from Venus to Mars, since Mars is in the Moon's exaltation. In other words, there must be reception to transfer nature or virtue.

¹⁷¹ I do not know what Bonatti means by this.

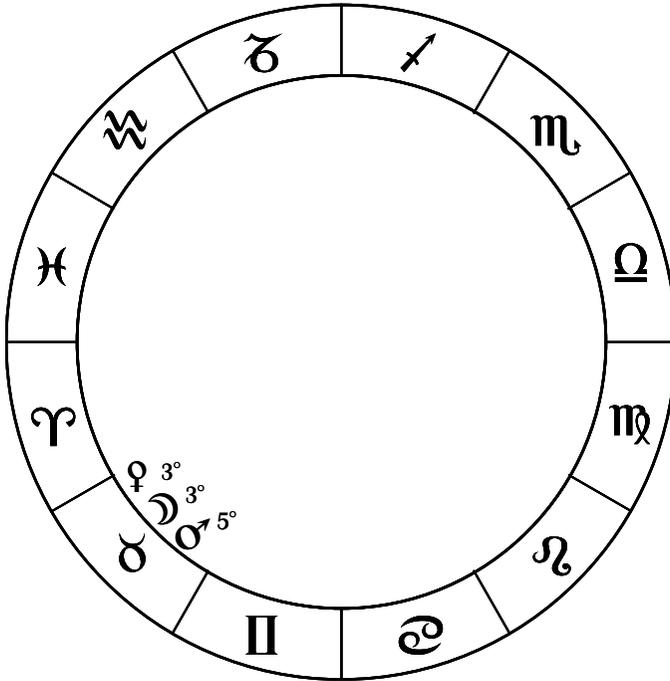


Figure 8: Transfer of Nature (a)

The Moon was joined to Venus in one sign, and in one degree (let her be put in the fourth degree of Taurus); and when she was separated from Venus (or Mercury, who is lighter than her), she was joined to Mars (in the sixth degree of Taurus, or in whatever other degree he was), who is heavier than Venus. Thus the Moon transfers the nature of Venus to Mars, or to another, whichever one she first encountered, or to whom she is first joined. For Venus committed her own disposition and nature to the Moon, and [the Moon] committed to him whom she first encountered, and to whom she was first joined, what she had been committed by Venus.

And they said that there is another method of the transferring of the nature of one planet to another, namely that a lighter planet is joined to a heavier one, and the heavier one is joined to another heavier than he: thus the heavy one who is in the middle between the light one and the heavier one, transfers the nature of the light one to the heavier one.¹⁷² For example, Mercury was joined to Venus in the tenth degree of Pisces, or in any other [degree], and after the

¹⁷² This is Abū Ma'shar's second version of transfer or *an-naql* (*Abbr.* III.23).

separation from Venus he was joined to the Sun in the twelfth degree of Pisces (or in any other [degree]), and the Sun again is joined to Mars in the fourteenth degree of the same Pisces (or in another other [degree]), provided that the degrees are correlated to each other: thus Mercury transfers the nature of Venus to the Sun, and the Sun transfers it to Mars.¹⁷³

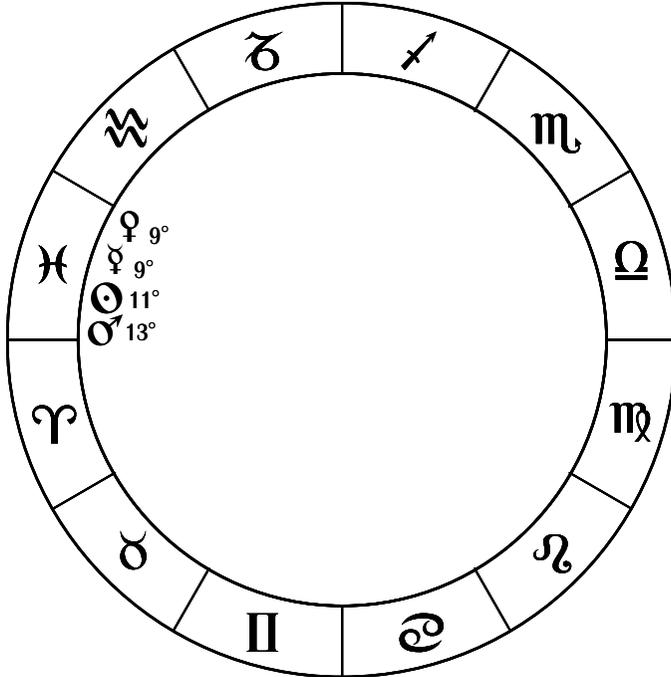


Figure 9: Transfer of Nature (b)

But if neither of those two heavier ones by itself is joined to another planet, but they both are joined at one and the same time to one planet, then that third planet is said to render¹⁷⁴ their light to the place of the circle which it aspects.¹⁷⁵ And this is called the “rendering of light,” with such an example: Mercury was separated from Venus from the tenth degree of Pisces (or from any other [degree]), and after the separation from Venus, he was joined to the Sun and

¹⁷³ In this case, neither Mercury nor Mars nor the Sun are in one of their dignities, but by their being in the exaltation of Venus, the transfer has the effect of a reception (and committing of disposition).

¹⁷⁴ *Redditio*. “Returning” is misleading, but “rendering” (another translation for *redditio*) at least is closer to Abū Ma’shar’s “reflecting.” See following footnote.

¹⁷⁵ This is Abū Ma’shar’s “reflecting the light,” or *ar-radd al-nūr* (Ar. الرد النور).

Mars in the twelfth degree of Pisces (or in any other [degree]), and they were joined again to Jupiter in the thirteenth degree of Pisces (or in any other [degree]). But Jupiter is joined to no other planet: thus Jupiter transfers the light of Venus to that place in the circle which he aspects, namely to the thirteenth degree of Taurus in front of him (by a sextile aspect); and to the thirteenth degree of Gemini (by a square aspect); and to the thirteenth degree of Cancer (by a trine aspect); and to the thirteenth degree of Capricorn behind him (by a sextile aspect), and to the thirteenth degree of Sagittarius (by a square aspect), and to the thirteenth degree of Scorpio (by a trine aspect).¹⁷⁶

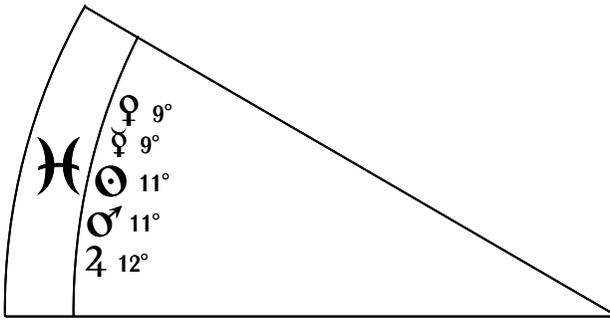


Figure 10: Rendering of Light

Chapter 12: On the return of the light of the planets, and its cutting-off

Having spoken of the transfer of the nature of the planets, it remains to speak of the return of their light and its cutting-off.¹⁷⁷ And this is when one planet seeks the conjunction of the other, but they are not joined together thus far, and another planet besides them is joined beforehand to the one whose conjunction the first [planet] was seeking, and that third one returns the light of the first¹⁷⁸ to the first: it is called the “return of light,” and it is called its “cutting-off.”

¹⁷⁶ But not to the thirteenth degree of Cancer by a trine, or to Virgo by an opposition? Perhaps Bonatti accidentally omitted these.

¹⁷⁷ This entire example seems to be Abū Ma’shar’s second version of “cutting the light” or *al-qaṭ’ al-nūr* (Ar. **القطع النور**) in *Abbrev.* III.46.

¹⁷⁸ Reading *primi* for *tertii* (“of the third”).

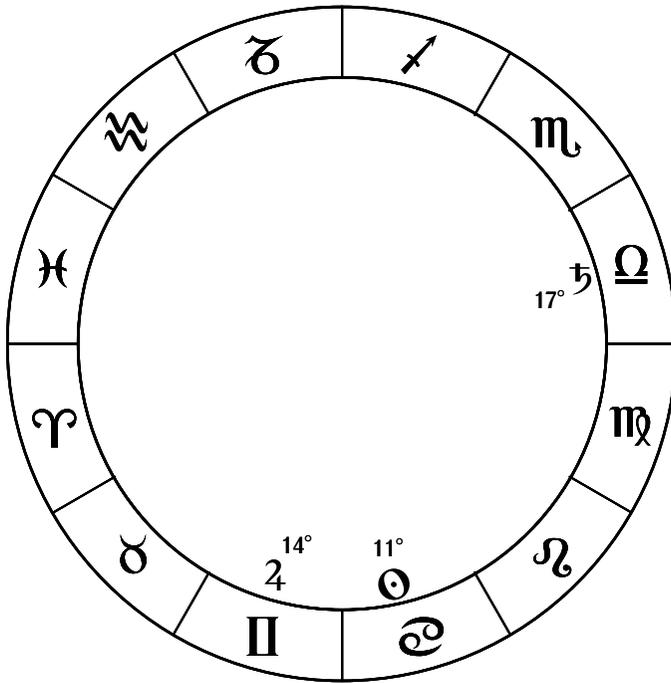


Figure 11: Return and Cutting-Off of Light

For example, let it be put that the Sun is in the twelfth degree of Cancer, and Saturn is in the eighteenth degree of Libra, and Jupiter in the fifteenth degree of Gemini: thus it is the Sun seeking the conjunction of Saturn by a square aspect. But Jupiter, who is closer to the conjunction of Saturn than the Sun, is [already] joined to him by a trine aspect, and cuts off the light of the Sun from Saturn: and this is called the “cutting-off of light.”

And likewise it is called a return of light:¹⁷⁹ because Saturn returns the light to the Sun which he had undertook to receive from him, and [Saturn] receives [instead] the light of Jupiter, who is more close: because [Jupiter] is in the fifteenth degree of the sign in which he is, and the Sun is only in the twelfth degree of the sign in which he is, and thus the matter about which the question came about (or hope was had), can be destroyed. And this comes to be by a method which some merchants use, or anyone else, who are wont to sell and buy things: for one seeks someone else in order to buy¹⁸⁰ some thing for

¹⁷⁹ “Returning” the light is not supported by the definition of *ar-radd* in Abū Ma’shar’s text (or Sahl’s), but it could be Bonatti’s way of describing what results from the cutting.

¹⁸⁰ Reading *emat* for *vendat*.