

and inseparable), and it is cadent from the Ascendant (nor does it aspect it), and it is the place of the joy of Mars; and the twelfth [sign] from the Ascendant is the place of enemies and of labor and sorrow; and it is cadent from the Ascendant (nor does it aspect it), and it is the place of the joy of Saturn (for Saturn rejoices in lamentation and wailing and tribulation).

And know that every sign aspects the third one in front of it, and the third one behind it (which is the eleventh sign): and this aspect is called the sextile, because it holds one-sixth of the circle (that is, 60° of the 360° of the whole circle). For example, a planet which was in the beginning of Aries, aspects him who is in Gemini in front of him,³⁰ and him who is in Aquarius behind him. And he aspects the fourth [sign] in front of him, and the fourth one behind him (that is, the tenth [sign]): and this aspect is called the square, because it holds one-fourth of the circle (that is, 90°). And he also aspects the fifth one in front of himself, and the fifth one behind himself (that is, the ninth): and this aspect is called the trine, because it has one-third of the circle (that is, 120°). It even aspects the seventh by opposition: and this aspect is of enmity. And if planets were in these signs, they are said to aspect one another.

On the aspects of the planets

These are the aspects of the planets: that is, the conjunction, sextile, and the square, trine, and the opposite. For the conjunction is when two planets are joined in one sign, and there are 12° and less between them:³¹ this is the boundary of the conjunction. But the sextile aspect is from the third sign and from the eleventh.³² The square aspect is from the fourth sign and the tenth. The trine aspect is from the fifth sign and the ninth. Indeed the opposite is from the seventh sign. Therefore the conjunction and opposition are stronger than these [other] aspects, and these are of stronger work and enmity; and these aspects signify enemies openly harming; and they signify contrarieties and participations. The square aspect is a middle: that is, it does not wholly expose enmities. And the second sextile aspect (that is, which comes to be from the eleventh) is stronger than the first sextile aspect. And

³⁰ Here and below Sahl does not even say the planet only aspects a particular *degree* in the relevant sign—he simply says it aspects the sign itself.

³¹ I am not sure what the rationale behind the 12° is. Abū Maʿshar gives 15° as a relevant distance in *Gr. Intr.* VII.5.754.

³² Note that Sahl does not specify degree-based distances as with the conjunction here.

the second square aspect (that is, which comes to be from the tenth) is stronger than the first square aspect. And of the trine aspects, the 9th domicile (that is, the second aspect) is stronger than the first trine aspect: and this aspect³³ is called “elevation,” that is, “the higher.”³⁴ But the signs which do not aspect each other, nor does a planet which is in them aspect another, are these: the second sign, the sixth, the eighth, and the twelfth. Indeed the rest besides these do aspect each other.

§5.0

*The chapter of explanation
on being and decay*

*On the effecting and detriment of the
planets*³⁵

Know that everything indicated by the stars from what is created or is corrupted will be regarding 16 aspects. They are:³⁶

Know that everything which the stars signify must be done or not, comes to be in 16 ways:

[1] *the approach*³⁷

[1] This is *al-'iqbāl*³⁸ in Arabic, which in Latin is sounded “advancement.”³⁹

³³ I.e., the “second” aspect. See next footnote.

³⁴ In traditional astrology, the “first” or “leading” aspect is the sinister aspect cast forward in the order of signs (e.g., from a planet in Aries forward to Leo). The “second” or “following” aspect is the dexter aspect cast backwards against the order of signs (e.g., from a planet in Aries backwards to Sagittarius). Sahl or the Latin translator rephrases the description of the “second aspect” by making it seem as though it is coming *from* the earlier signs. But stated that way it would be a first or leading aspect from the earlier sign.

³⁵ See my Introduction for the use of “detriment” here for the Arabic “decay.”

³⁶ Stegemann’s critical edition shows that the Greek list is incomplete, has terms corresponding to the wrong Arabic term, and adds at least one term not actually in the Arabic list. I will match the Greek terms as best as I can to the correct terms here.

³⁷ Another possibility would be “arrival.”

³⁸ Lat. *alibel*. Gr. *to chrematistikon*, “the busy [place],” “able to conduct business.” Stegemann translates this as *das Glück* (“good luck, happiness”), which is indeed another valid translation—except that it has nothing to do with planetary motion, and is not paired easily with the second term. We should follow the translations above rather than Stegemann in this case.

- [2] *the falling-back*⁴⁰ [2] *al-^oidbār*,⁴¹ that is, “making lower.”⁴²
- [3] *the connection* [3] *al-^oittiṣāl*,⁴³ that is, “conjunction.”
- [4] *the departure*, [4] *al-^oiṣārāf*,⁴⁴ that is, “separation” or the disjoining of the planets from their conjunction;
- [5] *the transmission*, [5] *an-naql*,⁴⁵ that is, “transfer.”
- [6] *the collection*, [6] *al-jam*^c,⁴⁶ that is, “assembling” or “collection” (which sounds better).

³⁹ *Profectus*, which also has connotations of profit and of setting forth (as on a journey), as this word is the fourth principal part of both *proficio* (to profit, be successful) and *profiscor* (to set out, advance).

⁴⁰ This word has been difficult to translate. It comes from a root meaning to flee, turn one’s back, or to veer toward the west. Literally it means “declining, setting,” but given its root it means something like “being in a state of retreat or showing your back,” and has a connotation of being low and bad. So there are three ideas here: declining or moving down, showing one’s back, and being low or bad. Sociologically they must be related through the idea that only contemptible and worthless people flee from a fight or go into retreat. Stegemann favors *Sich-abwenden*, “turning away,” and relates it to the Greek *apoklima*, “decline” (referring to cadent places). On the Latin side, *deterioratio* is a neologism that seems to mean “making something worse, lower, more wicked” (from the comparative *deterior*). But the astrological meaning of all of this is to be cadent or “falling” from an angle—that is, for a planet to have passed the angle by primary motion, and now to be declining from it and “showing its back” to the angle, so to speak. Finally, we note that this term is meant to be contrasted with “approach” above. With all of these meanings and relationships in mind, we feel that translating *al-^oidbār* as “falling-back” is best, as is translating *deterioratio* as “making lower.”

⁴¹ Lat. *alidber*. Gr. *to achrematiston*, “the unbusy [place],” “unable to conduct business.”

⁴² *Deterioratio*. See footnote above.

⁴³ Lat. *alictisal*. Gr. *sunaphe*, “conjunction.”

⁴⁴ Lat. *alinciraf*. Gr. *aporroia*, “separation” (lit. “flowing away”).

⁴⁵ Lat. *annacl*. Gr. *metakomide*, “transporting, conveying.”

⁴⁶ Lat. *algennee*. Gr. *theriodes*, “reaping, harvesting.” But the Gr. *sunagoge*, “gathering together,” might also be appropriate here.

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| [7] <i>the prohibition,</i> | [7] <i>al-man</i> ^{c,47} that is, “forbidding”
or “prohibition.” |
| [8] <i>the reception,</i> | [8] <i>al-qubūl</i> , ⁴⁸ that is, “reception.” |
| [9] <i>not-reception,</i> | [9] <i>ghayr al-qubūl</i> , ⁴⁹ that is, “[not]-
reception.” ⁵⁰ |
| [10] <i>void of movement,</i> | [10] <i>khalā as-sayr</i> , ⁵¹ that is, the
“voiding of course.” |
| [11] <i>the return,</i> | [11] <i>ar-radd</i> , ⁵² that is, “returning.” |
| [12] <i>the pushing of strength,</i> | [12] <i>daf^cu-l-quwwah</i> , ⁵³ that is,
“pushing of virtue.” |
| [13] <i>the pushing of arrangement [and] the
nature,</i> | [13] <i>daf^c at-tadbīr wa-at-ṭabī^cah</i> , ⁵⁴
that is “pushing of disposition and
nature.” |
| [14] <i>the strength,</i> | [14] <i>al-quwwah</i> , ⁵⁵ that is, “virtue
and strength.” |
| [15] <i>the weakness, and</i> | [15] <i>aḍ-ḍa^cf</i> , ⁵⁶ that is, “weakness.” |

⁴⁷ Lat. *almane*. Gr. *empodismos*, “impediment, hindrance.”

⁴⁸ Lat. *alcobol*.

⁴⁹ Lat. *gairalcobol*.

⁵⁰ Lat. *inreceptio*. This term is missing from the Arabic, but Stegemann has followed the Latin’s lead and supplied it.

⁵¹ Lat. *galaacen*. Gr. *kenodromia*, “void of course.”

⁵² Lat. *airchad*. Gr. *apostrophē*, “turning back/away.”

⁵³ Lat. *dapha alchia*. Gr. *paradosis tēs dunameōs*, “bequeathing/transmission of the power/strength.”

⁵⁴ Lat. *dapha aredir*. Gr. *paradosis tēs kubernēseōs*, “bequeathing/transmission of the steering.”

⁵⁵ Lat. *alcdetib*. Gr. *dunamis*, “power/strength.”

⁵⁶ Lat. *adof*. Gr. *astbeneia*, “weakness.”

[16] *the condition of the Moon.*

[16] *alḥwālu-l-qamar*,⁵⁷ that is, “the condition of the Moon.”

§5.1

Concerning *the approach*. It is if the planet is in a stake⁵⁸ or in what follows the stake.

The exposition of *al-ʿiqbāl*. *Al-ʿiqbāl* is if a planet were in an angle or in one following an angle.

§5.2

Falling-back is if the planet is falling from the stakes.

Al-ʿidbār is like if a planet is cadent from the angles.

§5.3

The connection is if the light and quick star is pursuing the heavy star, the light one will be lesser in degree than the heavy one, and so the [light] planet continues to go towards the [heavy] planet, and closes in on it, and it will become [joined] with it in the degree, minute to minute: then it is called *connected*.

Al-ʿittiṣāl is when a light and quick planet would seek the conjunction of another, slower and heavier planet, and the lighter planet would be in fewer degrees than the slower one as long as he went to him, until he is joined to him and was in such a minute through an aspect: [and this is called] *al-ʿittiṣāl*,⁵⁹ that is, conjoined or stuck⁶⁰ together.

⁵⁷ Lat. *wanuelhacamar*. (No Greek given).

⁵⁸ Ar. *watad*. See Introduction.

⁵⁹ Lat. *Mutatil*, a misspelling.

⁶⁰ *Conglutinatus*.

And concerning when it has become [joined] with it, minute to minute, then it is *connected* with it, and at that time [it will be as if] in position⁶¹ two men are under one covering.

The *connection* in position is a thread extending from the middle of the body of the light planet to the middle of the body of the heavy planet. The planet will not cease [to be thus] until it *departs* from the [other] planet by a complete degree. And so if the planets were coupled in one zodiacal sign, then the planet is not considered *departed* from the [other] planet until the lighter one *departs* the heavier one by half of its body. It is its light, because each of the planets has a body, a light, and individual parts, so half of the parts are from the front of the planet and half are from behind it. So when it is exceeding that distance, it is said to be separated.⁶²

It is so called until he is separated from him by the space of one degree (and then it is called *al-ʿinṣarāf*, that is, separated from him).

But if the planets are conjoined in one sign, the planet is not said to be separated from the other until he would cross over him by a space of half of his orb (that is, of his light): because every planet has an orb of light, and individual parts:⁶³ and one-half of those parts is in front of the planet itself, and the other half is behind him. Provided that the planet has crossed over the other by that space, he is said to be separated from him.

⁶¹ Ar. *bimanzilah*, “grade, rank, position,” here evidently used as a synonym for the corporal conjunction, as both planets are in the same place. Stegemann ignores this word.

⁶² The distinctions Sahl means to be drawing are between (a) applying or connecting but not yet *connected* (this is the 12° rule above); (b) actually connected (i.e., in the same degree); (c) separating but not wholly *separated* (i.e., no longer in the same degree); (d) wholly separated (by orbs).

⁶³ That is, degrees.