

*DOROTHEUS OF
SIDON: CARMEN
ASTROLOGICUM
RE-WORKED*

FROM DAVID PINGREE'S TRANSLATION

PREFACE

This is a re-working of David Pingree's translation of Dorotheus of Sidon's *Carmen Astrologicum* primarily to make it easier to reference and study. If you are looking for the original text of the translation, there are a number of them online, notably the original text on [Archive.org](https://www.archive.org).

The public domain [StarFont Sans](#) astrological fonts used in this document were created by Anthony I.P. Owen and made available as a Latex package by Matthew Skala.

This document was built from Latex files created with the [TexWorks](#) editor.

Other works consulted

CAA *Carmen Astrologicum: Dorotheus of Sidon* trans. David Pingree, Astrology Classics, 2005

CAD *Carmen Astrologicum: Dorotheus of Sidon: The 'Umar Al-Tabari Translation* trans. Benjamin N. Dykes. 2019.

CAP *Carmen Astrologicum: Dorotheus of Sidon* trans. David Pingree, Ascella, 1993.

DH *Notes on Dorotheus III: the haylāj, kadhkhudāh, and terms of life* by Deborah Houlding, [URL](#), as at August 03, 2020

Useful Resources

[PlanetDance Astrology Software](#)

A free astrology software application created by J.C. Remers. Includes a number Hellenistic Greek techniques under Horoscope->Classical.

Table of Hellenistic Ascensional Times

Ascensional Rising Times & Oblique Ascension Tables

One of the many astrology tools on the *AstroSeek* web site.

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BOOK I ON UPBRINGING AND THE LIFE'S CONDITION

In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. May the lord be rich in compassion towards you.

This is the first book of Dorotheus the Egyptian, on the judgments concerning nativities. He chose it and selected it and picked it from the books which were before him, and he wrote it for his son Hermes.

He said to his son at the tie of his testament: I shall relate to you, oh my son, and I shall explain to you so that you may depend on and be confident in your heart about what I shall show you of my work and words according to the stars which indicate for men what will pertain to them from the time of a [person's] birth till his leaving the world, if God wills. I have traveled, o my son, in many cities, and I have seen the wondrous things which are in Egypt and in Babylon, which is in the direction of the Euphrates. I collected the best of their sayings from the first [authorities] who were before me like the bees which gather [honey] from the trees and all kinds of plants; for from it there is the honey of medicine.

1.1 Triplicity and Sign Rulers

Know the longitude and latitudes of the seven planets (☉, ☿, ♀, ♂, ♄, ♀, ♁), the degrees of the Ascendant and MC, which signs are straight and crooked² in rising, and that

²The *straight* signs are those that appear to rise straight up from the horizon taking slightly more than two hours each: ♉ thru

the signs, their triplicities and rulers are:

Sign	Ruler	Sign	Ruler
♈	♂	♊	♀
♉	♀	♋	♂
♊	♀	♌	♂
♋	♂	♍	♂
♌	♂	♎	♂
♍	♀	♏	♂

Table 1.1: Signs and their Domicile Rulers

The shaded cells represent the sign the planet ruler *rejoices* or is *happiest* in.

Triplexity	Rulers		
	Diurnal	Nocturnal	Participating
♈-♌-♊	☉	♂	♂
♉-♍-♎	♀	♂	♂
♊-♋-♏	♂	♀	♂
♋-♌-♍	♀	♂	♂

Table 1.2: Signs, their Triplexities and Rulers

The rulers of the triplexities give indications for, and decide, everything.

The masculine, diurnal signs are the ♈-♌-♊ and ♊-♋-♏ triplexities and the diurnal planets are ☉, ♂, and ♂.

The feminine, nocturnal signs are the ♉-♍-♎ and ♋-♌-♍ triplexities and the nocturnal planets are the ♀, ♀, and ♂.

Dorotheus doesn't spell this out here but in latter sections the reader is assumed to understand these categories.

♊, the remaining signs are called *crooked* as they rise at an oblique angle to the horizon and each take slightly less than two hours.

In mundane astrology, the “afflictions and distress” that effect the world are timed and indicated by the triplicity rulers of a solar or lunar eclipse. Every hour that the ☉ is eclipsed is equal to one year while every hour that the ☾ is eclipsed is equal to one month. T

The sign of the solar eclipse gives indications as to who will suffer the afflictions and distress: ♈, sheep; ♊, work-horses and horses, ♌, lions, etc.

1.2 Exaltation of the Planets

Each planet has a sign and degree of *ascent* known as its *exaltation*, and another sign and degree, lying opposite, known as its *descent*¹.

Planet	°	Ascent	Descent
☉	19	♈	♏
☾	3	♊	♎
♂	15	♉	♍
♀	27	♋	♏
♂♂	28	♌	♎
♂	15	♍	♌
♏	21	♏	♈

Table 1.3: Planet Exaltations

1.3 Ease or Difficulty of the Birth

If the ☉, ☾, and Ascendant are in masculine signs (for males) or feminine signs (for females) then the birth was an easy one for the mother. If you find the reverse then there is “misery and death.”

In particular, ♏ angular in a feminine sign has an intense power to make the birth slow, difficult, and unfortunate.

¹The place of *descent* may also be referred to as a planet’s place of *depression* or *fall*.

If ♂ is angular, especially if he is in a feminine sign, the birth will come upon the mother unexpectedly but generally it is easier because ♂ cuts.

The mother will have a difficult time if:

- the ☽ is in a crooked sign (♊,♋,♌,♍,♎,♏) and aspected by ♄ or ♂
- the ☽ is in an angle and aspected by both ♄ and ♂, who are both in crooked signs
- both ♄ and ♂ are in angles and neither the ☉ nor the ☽ aspects the Ascendant

1.4 Upbringing

Don't worry for the person's life because you see a malefic in an angle, there are conditions involving the triplicity rulers of the Ascendant that can increase and strengthen the life.

Mitigating conditions include:

- a triplicity ruler in its own term and angular or in another place where it is strong¹
- all three triplicity rulers in strong places
- two triplicity rulers in strong places, preferably with the first triplicity ruler in a good place²
- all three triplicity rulers in strong places and square or trine each other, and its even better if they aspect the ☉ or ☽, or both

¹It is not clear what he means by "strong" placement; could be by sign, degrees, or good places which he calls *powerful* in §1.5.

²The *good places* are given in §1.5.

- if ♄, ♂, or both are actually in the Ascendant look to see if all three of the Ascendant's triplicity rulers are in strong places and "coming out in their light"¹

If the triplicity lords of the Ascendant are in a "sign of misfortune"² check the first³ triplicity lord of the Lot of Fortune. If it aspects the lot or is in a good place and aspecting the ☉ for day births, the ☾ for night births, then the person will be brought up.

Other conditions that indicate the person will be brought up are:

- ♄ in the Ascendant or in a sign that is of the same triplicity as the sign of the Ascendant
- ♄ in the 2nd place from the Ascendant
- ♄ in the 4th place with the ☾ and ♀ both in the Ascendant
- in a day chart, ♄, ♄, and ♀ in angles
- in a day chart, ♄ angular and in his own triplicity

1.5 The Superior Places

The order of the places⁴, according to their *superiority* or *power* for good events occurring in the person's life⁵, relative to each other is:

¹This usually means the ☉ must be moving away from a conjunction with the planet such that there is 15 to 120° between them.

²The places of *misfortune* are the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 8th or 12th places from the Ascendant, they are described in §1.5.

³This is an assumption on my part as the first triplicity lord rules the first part of the life, which is when *upbringing* occurs.

⁴Where Dorotheus does not provide a descriptive name for a place the commonly given Greek place name is listed.

⁵That the power of the place is related to the *good of the life* is implied by the text. The activities of the *good* places are generally those people consider to involve good events while those of the remaining houses are generally considered to involve difficult events.

1st Ascendant
10th Midheaven
11th [*Good Daimon*]
5th Children
7th Marriage
4th Angle of the Earth
9th [*God*]

3rd Joy of the \mathfrak{D}
2nd [*Gates of Hades*]
8th Death
6th [*Evil Fortune*]
12th [*Evil Daimon*]

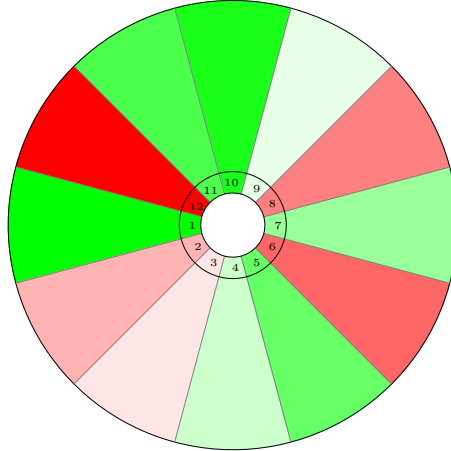


Figure 1.1: The Superior Places

In the figure the seven *good* places are in shades of green; the bad in shades of red.

1.6 Power of the Seven Planets

Every planet in its own sign, exaltation, or triplicity is benefic as “what it indicates of good is strong, increasing.” This is true even of malefics as their “evil becomes lighter and decreases” when they are in their own places.

♄ in a masculine sign¹ in a day chart (even though he is a diurnal planet) can cause harm but it will be less harmful if he is also in one of his own dignities.. The same is true for ♂, a nocturnal planet, in a feminine sign in a nocturnal chart.

A planet’s power *disappears* if it is within 15° of ☉ while the ☉ is moving towards a conjunction with the planet.

A retrograde planet indicates “there is difficulty [and] misfortune” for the person and others.

1.7 More on Upbringing

Good Upbringing

The person will be brought up if diurnal planets in a diurnal chart or nocturnal planets in a nocturnal chart are found in:

- one or more of the seven strong places; it is beneficial if one of them is a benefic
- the 2nd place from the ascending sign if the planet is within 15° of the Ascendant as then “reckon its power as if it were in the ascendent”

¹In §1.4 we are told ♄ (a diurnal planet) is at his worst when in a feminine sign. Here we are told he can still do harm when in a masculine sign but not as much and even less if he is in one of his own dignities. In the same section, ♂ (a nocturnal planet) in a feminine sign is described as less harmful than a feminized ♄.

No Upbringing

The person may not be brought up or have a harsh upbringing if:

- the first triplicity ruler is within 15° of the ☉ or in a bad place; especially if the second triplicity ruler is with him
- both malefics aspect the ♃, especially if she is in an angle and one of the malefics is in opposition while also making an exact aspect to the Ascendant¹ as “this is an indications of ruin”
- the ♃ in the 7th place with no connection to a benefic and while a malefic is in an angle for “then the women give birth to what has no escape from ruin”
- the ♃, not in her own places, in the 4th with ♃ and ♂ or in their opposition
- one of the malefics in the Ascendant opposite the other malefic and the ♃ in the 10th or 7th

Rejection or Exposure

The person may be cast out by his parents if:

- the ♃ in the 4th place with ♃ and ♂ or in their opposition unless the ♃ is in her own triplicity and the benefics are trine the malefics in which case, rather than ruin, the person is brought up by strangers and sometimes they “will be a slav and will be employed and then will be miserable”
- the ♃ “between the two malefics and one them casts its rays upon it” then the person’s livelihood will

¹Dykes indicates it could be an aspect to the Ascendant’s terms rather an exact aspect to the Ascendant’s degree (CAD p.69).

be little and if the ☽ is also waning “it indicates fate and shortness of life” which he may escape if a benefic is also part of the configuration

- the ☽ is with a malefic in an angular or succedent place and is configured with a benefic and if the ☼ aspects the malefics, the father favours casting him out and thinks badly of him; if the ☽ is injured¹, the mother wants to cast the person out; if both lights are injured, both parents want rid of the person
- in a diurnal chart, ☿ angular and opposing the ☽ or the ☼ while they are not in their own places; in a nocturnal chart, ♄ under the same conditions

Calamity

If the ☽ is in the term of a malefic without the aspect of a benefic while a malefic is in an angle there is “calamity” for the person unless first ruler of the sect light’s triplicity aspects the ☽.

Injury to the person and his mother

If there is no benefic in (a) an angle, (b) in the same sign as the Lot of Fortune, or (c) in a sign of the same triplicity as the Ascendant while malefics aspect the ☼, ☽, and SAN² the indications are evil.

If a benefic does not aspect the Ascendant (representing the person) or the ☽, an unfortunate condition is indicated for the person and their mother if the ☽, or worse yet, the ☽ and ♀ (as both indicate the mother) are injured.

¹This is odd as we’ve already been told the ☽ must be with a malefic, which would be an injury; possibly it must also be harmed by the other malefic?

²The most recent new or full moon that occurred prior to the birth.

1.8 Masculine and Feminine Hours

The person represented by the chart will be a male if:

- the ☽ is in a masculine dodecatemorion

To determine the dodecatemoria divide the sign into 2.5° sections¹ with, in a masculine sign, the sections running male, female, male, female, etc. In a feminine sign, the sections running female, male, female, etc²

- the ☉, ☽, and Ascendant are all in masculine signs
- the ☉ in the ascendant in a masculine sign, even if the hour of the birth is “double” (even)
- a masculine planet in the ascendant in a “two-bodied” masculine sign (♈, ♊), even if the hour of the birth is “double” (even)
- a masculine planet in the 1st and in the 7th, even if the hour of the birth is “double” (even)
- the ☉ and ☽, both in masculine signs, and ♋ ruling the Ascendant regardless of gender of the sign on the Ascendant

¹Dorotheus says “two and a half days”, we are basically dividing the 30° of each sign by 12 so it has an analogy with each month of 30 days being equivalent to a sign and the 12 signs being equivalent to a year.

²For more information on the *dodecatemoria* see the Appendix §A Dodecatemoria to see how they are calculated.

Dodecatemoria literally means “the twelfth part”. There are two approaches to finding the dodecatemoria, they both produce the same result by different means².

Firmicus advises us to multiply the degrees and minutes of the planet by 12 and then add the full degrees of the position. For example, to find the dodecatemoria of 27 \approx 24 we take:

$$(27 + 24/60) \times 12 = 27.4 \times 12 = 328.8$$

$$\approx 27^{\circ}24' = 327.4 + 328.8 = 656.2$$

$$656.2 - 360 = 296.2$$

$$296.2 = 296^{\circ} 12' - 270 = 26 \text{ } \text{v} \text{ } 12$$

To find the 12th part of a planet according to Paulus of Alexandria, we are to multiply the degrees by 13 and add the degrees of the sign the planet occupies:

$$(27 + 24/60) \times 13 = 27.4 \times 13 = 356.2$$

$$\approx \text{begins at } 300^{\circ}$$

$$356.2 + 300 = 656.2 - 360 = 296.2$$

$$296.2 = 296^{\circ} 12' = 26 \text{ } \text{v} \text{ } 12$$

²For reference see the [Skyscript glossary entry for dodecatemoria](#), Firmicus’ *Mathesis* Book II.17, James Holden translation or Book II.13 in the Jean Rhys Bram translation; *Paulus of Alexandria Introduction to Astrology* §22, James Holden translation or the same section in *Late Classical Astrology: Paulus Alexandrinus and Olympidorus* translated by Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, MA.

To solely find the 12th parts of each sign (commonly called *duodecimas*), assign 2.5° to the sign itself, 2.5° to the next sign, etc. until you reach the end of the sign. For example, the 12th parts of ♌ run 0°♌ , $2^\circ 30' \text{♍}$, $5^\circ 00' \text{♎}$, $7^\circ 30' \text{♏}$, etc.

A.1 Examples of using the 12ths

Firmicus

Look also [to see] whether the ♌ , full [of light] by day, throws her dodecatemory into the terms of ♈ , or whether of little light, i.e. waning, throws it into [the terms] of ♎ , or whether ♈ in the DSC...or ♏ into [those] of ♈ , and ♈ [into those of ♏ ... and they take their power from the terms and decans and the sects that may help or that may harm.

The beneficence of ♌ lapses when his beneficence is afflicted by the weakness of the sign, or the degrees, or the decan, or the exchanging of sect. But also the malevolence of ♎ increases more strongly when, provoked by the quality of the house, or by the terms, or by the decan, or by the sign, or by the [exchanging of] sect, he receives the power to do harm. In a similar fashion [you may judge] the other stars (MH II.17.4-5)

Paulus

The *dōdekatēmorion* of the benefics contributes much whenever it falls in the *zōdion* where the ♉ , ♌ , or star of ♄ is, or on one of the four pivots, the Lot of Fortune or Spirit or

even Necessity¹, or on the prenatal *Conjunction* or *Whole Moon*. For through this theory it will be necessary to distinguish the fortunate, long-lived and blessed. Just as when the *dōdekatēmorion* of the malefic stars falls in the *zōdion* where the ☉, ☿, or star of ♃ is, or one one of four pivots, or on the Lot of Fortune, Spirit, or Necessity, or on the prenatal *Conjunction* or *Whole Moon*, it points out laborers, those unable to acquire property and cursed, since it sets down short lives, violent deaths, sufferings or feebleness (PAG §22).

Olympiodorus

Olympiodorus says “That if the *dōdekatēmoria* of the benefic stars are found either on the pivots or on the lots of Fortune, Spirit or Necessity or in the place of the preceding *Conjunction* or *Whole Moon* for the nativity, or where the ☉, ☿, or ♃ is, in these circumstances the nativity is fortunate and glorious and producing many years for itself.”

He goes on to say the opposite is true if the dodecatemoirion of malefic planets fall in these places “For it brings about laborers, and those who are ill-spirited and not successful in acquiring property and short-lived, and sometimes violent deaths.”

¹The Lot of ♃.