

**THE MAKING OF AN ASTROLOGER
IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE**

THE NOTEBOOKS OF S. BELLE:
LISBON, MS 1711 AND PARIS, NAL 398

HELENA CRISTINA FERREIRA AVELAR DE CARVALHO

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Supervisors: Charles Burnett and Sara Miglietti

**THE WARBURG INSTITUTE
·
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

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I declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own.

Signed  Date: 04/12/2018

ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the practice of late fifteenth-century astrology from the perspective of its techniques and methodology. It offers an internalist view of this topic, as a complement to the existing research into its social and cultural impact. The investigation explores two notebooks written by S. Belle, an astrologer who lived in late fifteenth-century France. They are: Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Manuscritos da Livraria, MS 1711, and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouvelles acquisitions latines 398. The detailed study of his methodology, his use of the writings of previous astrologers, and the changes and experiments that he makes, show astrology as a living body of knowledge, and how its methods and practices were refined and developed as in any other cutting-edge science. Belle's work is shown to be an important example of the incipient practice of collecting horoscopes, and of using almanacs and astrometeorology, as well as providing insights into the society of the late fifteenth century.

The study is organized in five sections, each corresponding to different examples of astrological practice: interrogations, conjunctions, solar ingresses and nativities. Each section includes a detailed analysis of the astrological techniques applied by Belle and a comparison with source material, and with other examples of astrological practice in his time. At the end of each section the main topics are highlighted and discussed in the context of the history of astrology. It assesses the duties, professional concerns, and political affiliations of a practicing astrologer, and explores his mentality and personal dilemmas. Moreover, it offers an intimate perspective of astrological practices, techniques, sources, and methods of learning.

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Abbreviations

Books

Albumasar, *Conjunctions* – *Abū Maʿšar, On Historical Astrology: The Book of Religions and Dynasties (on the Great Conjunctions)*, K. Yamamoto and C. Burnett (eds), Leiden, 2000.

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Juste, *CCAL II* – *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Latinorum: Les manuscrits astrologiques latins conservés à la Bibliothèque nationale de France à Paris*, Paris, 2015.

Libro conplido – Haly Abenragel, *El libro conplido en los iudicios de las estrellas*, G. Hilty (ed.), Madrid, 1954.

Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* – Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, F. E. Robbins (ed. and tr.), London, 1998.

Thorndike, *HMES*– Thorndike, L., *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, New York, 1923-1958, 8 vols.

Library and collections – miscellaneous list

BnF Latin – Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin
BnF NAL – Bibliothèque nationale de France, Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines
Arundel – London, British Library, Arundel Collection
Harley – London, British Library, Harley Collection
Royal – London, British Library, Royal Collection
Sloane – London, British Library, Sloane Collection
Ashmole – Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole Collection
Digby – Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby Collection
Oxford, Saint-John's College Library MS 164
BsB – Munich, Bayerische-staatsBibliothek, Clm
Kues – Bernkastel-Kues Cusanusstiftsbibliothek MS 215

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The debate on astrology at the beginning of the modern age, when science was beginning to define its methods in the crisis of the ancient conceptions of the world, which were either waning or coming to life again, is an exemplary document of this impossible problem of theory and practice, of concepts and sentiments, of myths and reasoning. It is indeed because astrology was an all-encompassing, global concept, due to the multiplicity of its aspects, that the debate about its themes came to touch every human activity.

Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance: The Zodiac of Life* (translated by Carolyn Jackson and June Allen), London, 1982. p. XII

INTRODUCTION

Approximately half a century has passed since astrological documents began to be considered valuable historical evidence. For a long time they had remained on the fringes of historiography, and only gradually, with some effort, have they earned their place in historical research. After overcoming a strong initial resistance, they were finally acknowledged as testimonies of a set of ideas and practices that were an integral part and a shaping force of human culture, belief, and science from antiquity until, at least, the early eighteenth century. But even so they were perceived until very recently as yet another curious and mostly embarrassing aspect of human culture; their content, with its own vast history and complexities, remained for the most part unseen by mainstream historiography. Indeed, considering that astrological knowledge was embedded into the very fabric of society, present in all social strata, and that traversed various periods, cultures, and countries, the way its history has been told, and most of all the reluctance to address it in its own terms, tell us much more about the historians than of astrology itself. Having surpassed the initial discomfort of studying such subjects, historians began to focus mainly on the external aspects of astrology. Special attention was given to its social and political impact with many interesting results. But most studies have overlooked its methodology, its technical intricacies and the important differences between theoretical knowledge and debate, and actual practice. Astrological materials seldom receive the attention that is naturally granted to any other historical document. Opinions are formed and hypotheses advanced often without the proper historiographical scrutiny implicitly demanded in any other type of subject. Although the social and cultural contexts are considered, the inner coherence and dynamics of astrology itself are too often overlooked. Thus, the information these documents convey, the lineages of knowledge from which they derive, remain largely unstudied. The aim of this research is to contribute towards the study of astrological documents for their astrological content, in order to draw attention to the internal architecture of this knowledge in the pre-modern world, its techniques, methodologies, goals, transmission, and development throughout history. At its very foundation this thesis attempts the hermeneutical principle of letting the texts speak, allowing a sympathy towards the text without which any understanding is seriously compromised. To accomplish this, this thesis explores the workbooks of S. Belle, an astrologer who lived in late fifteenth-century France, as a case study of an astrologer at work. The detailed study of his methods, his use of the writings of previous astrologers, and the

changes and experiments that he makes, show astrology as a living body of knowledge, and the way its techniques and practices were refined and developed, as in any other science. Additionally, the identification of his clients and of the horoscopes that he copies in his collection, also casts light on the position of the astrologer in his society.

Most studies address astrology in the context of handbooks used to convey the general principles of the doctrine and the main debates surrounding it. The few that deal with the working papers of the astrologer tend to emphasize the social aspects of the practice, his clientele, patronage, and status. Even fewer explore the astrologer's technical expertise and his knowledge of the doctrine. Belle's workbooks provide a rich example of the latter; their practical nature calls for an internalist study of their astrological contents. Thus, this research proposes a detailed study of the astrologer's working method, his theoretical knowledge of the subject matter, and his practical application of astrology. It deals with the questions of how astrologers relate to the traditional sources, its acceptance and criticism, and how they deal with innovations and variations. It favours the comprehensive analysis of its astrological material, detailing the methods applied in order to obtain an in-depth view of Belle's practice of astrology, and at the same time positioning it within the larger context of late medieval astrology.

Although Belle's network of connections and his social interactions form an indispensable part of this study, the main focus is placed on his process of learning and his practical application of astrological doctrine; what shaped Belle's thought and practice, and where and how he became acquainted with them. Thus, the study addresses among its main topics, Belle's sources, his methods of study, his collection of horoscopes, the use of conflicting doctrines, his choices, personal dilemmas, and experimentation, all within the multiplicity of astrological practice in late fifteenth-century Europe. As a result, the research also focuses on the transmission of knowledge between the different generations of astrologers, and the circulation of astrological information at a time when printed books were still a novelty.

These private workbooks show the learning and practice of astrology from the perspective of a student, thus offering the necessary counterpart to the texts on astrological theory. They provide a unique and unfiltered testimony of astrological practice and personal skills, which can then be placed within Belle's network of contacts to reveal the social struggles of a practising astrologer.

This study begins with an overview of the latest research on the practice of astrology in late fifteenth-century France, followed by information about Belle's life, a general description of the notebooks, and notes about the methods applied. The core of the research is a detailed analysis of the astrological contents of these workbooks. It is organized in five sections: interrogations, revolutions of the world (ingresses and lunations, the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction), judgements of three nativities, the collection of horoscopes, and the almanac. At the end of each section there is a discussion of the most important features. The last part is a reflection on Belle's place in the history of astrology, his process of learning, and his astrological practice.

The investigation focuses on two workbooks with astrological notes and horoscopes written over a period of several years entirely in Belle's hand:

- **Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, *Manuscritos da Livraria*, MS 1711, entitled *Almanaque ab anno 68 usque ad annum 80, Nativitates quarundam personarum*, henceforth referred to as **MS 1711**. This is a notebook of 103 folia containing an almanac and a collection of forty-six horoscopes, mostly of kings and noblemen of fifteenth-century France. It has never been studied systematically, although it has been mentioned by some Portuguese researchers.¹ Its author had remained unidentified, and it is yet to be determined how it came to the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, the main Portuguese archival collection.**

- **Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines* 398, *Divers traités d'astrologie*, henceforth **NAL 398**. This is an autograph manuscript by 'S. Belle'. It is composed of 101 folia containing transcriptions of astrological doctrine and thirty-seven horoscopes. It had been mentioned by several scholars but was never published.² Its last owner was the French lawyer and writer Denis de Sallo (1626-1669).**

¹ Such as L. Albuquerque, *Para a historia da ciência em Portugal*, Lisbon, 1973. pp. 14-15.

² See for instance L. Delisle, *Bibliothèque nationale. Manuscrits latins et français ajoutés aux fonds des nouvelles acquisitions pendant les années 1875-1891*, Paris, 1891, I, p. 27-28 ; E. Poulle, 'Horoscopes princiers des XIV^e et XV^e siècles', *Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France*, 1969, 75-77 (reprint in Poulle, *Astronomie Planétaire au Moyen Âge latin*, Aldershot, 1996, VIII, pp. 75-77; 'Les horoscopes princiers des 14^e et 15^e siècles', pp. 63-77); C. Samaran and R. Marichal, *Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds latin (Suppléments) Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines, Petits fonds divers*, Paris, 1981, IV.1, p. 81; J.-P. Boudet, *La recueil des plus célèbres astrologues de Simon de Phares*, II, pp. 49, 91 n. 22, 288-289 n. 204, J.-P. Boudet and T. Charmasson, 'Une consultation astrologique princière' *Comprendre et maîtriser la nature au Moyen Âge. Mélanges d'histoire des sciences offerts à Guy Beaujouan*, Genève, 1994, pp. 255-278, at p. 263, and D. Juste, *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Latinorum: Les manuscrits astrologiques latins conservés à la Bibliothèque nationale de France à Paris*, Paris, 2015, pp. 254-255.

These manuscripts remained unrelated until 2014 when, on the suggestion of David Juste and Charles Burnett, they were compared, revealing striking similarities in the handwriting: the letters, the numerals, and the astrological symbols are virtually indistinguishable. Additionally, several horoscopes are repeated in all details, including occasional errors, and there are many cross-references between the manuscripts. These parallels led to the conclusion that the author of NAL 398, already identified as S. Belle, was also the author of MS 1711.³

The notebooks are important for at least five reasons. Firstly, their personal nature: they provide an unadulterated view of Belle's astrological knowledge, his doubts, errors, and corrections; thus, they offer an important contribution to the knowledge of actual astrological practice, otherwise mainly known indirectly through the theoretical treatises published at the time. Secondly, the diversity of their contents: they cover most of the main genres of general astrology, namely nativities, that is, the birth-charts of individuals; revolutions, the study of events affecting the whole community; and interrogations, through which one can obtain answers by studying the moment the question was asked. Thirdly, their exclusive focus on astrology: they address only the academic version of astrology, based on deduction from celestial configurations, never mentioning other divinatory practices such as geomancy or talismans. Fourthly, the period when they were written, a transitional moment when the practice of astrology and the attitudes towards science were undergoing significant changes. Lastly, the quality of their contents: learned, consistent and thorough but not necessarily groundbreaking. They illustrate the real practice of astrology in late medieval France in all its complexity, apparent contradictions, and diversity in a way that is not transmitted by the printed sources.

It is rare to find documents conveying all the aforementioned components. Belle's workbooks are among the few that can contribute to a deeper understanding of the inner workings of astrological practice in late medieval France and Europe.

³ NAL 398 includes two sections autographed by the Belle, in f. 30r and f. 84v, respectively.

State of research

The practice of astrology in late fifteenth-century France has been the subject of several dedicated studies. Maxime Préaud has produced a survey of astrological practices, instruments, and practitioners in the service of King Louis XI of France (1423-1483).⁴ Emmanuel Poulle complemented these studies with a comprehensive assessment of the collections of horoscopes of French and English provenance from the late medieval to the early modern period.⁵ Jean-Patrice Boudet has also addressed the political and cultural impact of astrology in numerous books and articles.⁶ More recently, David Juste has added crucial contributions to this research with a comprehensive catalogue of the astrological documents extant in the national libraries of France and Germany.⁷

Some studies have focused on renowned practitioners, such as Simon de Boesmare (1380-1438), Roland of Lisbon (Roland l'Écrivain, c.1400-c.1469), and Conrad Heingarter (c.1440-c.1504). Their work was studied by Jean-Patrice Boudet, Emmanuel Poulle, Thérèse Charmasson, Ernest Wickersheimer, Maxime Préaud, and Lynn Thorndike, to mention only a few. Even though Boesmare and Roland probably never met Belle due to the differences of age, they moved in the same intellectual circles and Belle appears to have been acquainted with their work.⁸ The study of Belle's practice reveals how their work was received, developed, and, to a certain degree, changed by the next generation of astrologers.

Belle's work stands in a transitional period and in many aspects reflects that transition. During his lifetime, astrological practice underwent several significant changes, both in social function and in content. Several factors, including wars and political disputes, increased the demand for court astrology. This development becomes evident in the research made into the political and social contexts of astrology and the role of astrologers in the royal courts. Darin Hayton studied the astrological practices in the court of Emperor Maximilian I whose horoscope is included in Belle's

⁴ M. Préaud, *Les méthodes de travail d'un astrologue du xve siècle, Conrad Heingarter*, École nationale des Chartes. Positions des thèses, Paris, 1969; *Les astrologues à la fin du moyen âge*, Paris, 1984, pp. 71-73.

⁵ E. Poulle, 'Les horoscopes princières', p. 64-77. See also J-P. Boudet, 'Les astrologues et le pouvoir sous le règne de Louis XI', in *Observer, lire, écrire le ciel au Moyen Âge. Actes du colloque d'Orléans (22-23 avril 1989)*, Paris, 1991, pp. 7-61.

⁶ Boudet, *La recueuil*, and 'The Archbishop and the Astrologers: a Robert de Mauvoisin's *Questio* in 1316', in W. Deimann and D. Juste (eds), *Astrologers and their Clients in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Wien, 2015, pp. 43-61.

⁷ D. Juste, *CCAL I, CCAL II*; the research is now expanding to other libraries.

⁸ There are noticeable parallels between some sections in NAL 398 and some manuscripts attributed to these authors, as explained in Appendix III.

collection.⁹ This work reveals how Maximilian ‘enlisted astrology as a body of predictive knowledge about the natural world that had clear application in politics’, transforming it into ‘a tool that purported to use nature as evidence, guide, and justification for political actions’.¹⁰ A comparable phenomenon can be observed in the practice of French and English astrologers during the Hundred Years’ War (1337-1453), as studied by Hilary Carey, who states that the demands of the war caused astrology to transform from ‘an honest member of the *quadrivium*, and chiefly of interest to scholars’ to ‘a fully-developed social movement, exercising a profound “influence” over all aspects of life in the sixteenth century’.¹¹ The consequences of this transformation are also analysed by Monica Azzolini who addresses the practice of astrology in Milan in the courts of the dukes Galeazzo Maria Sforza (1444-1476), Gian Galeazzo Sforza (1469-1494), and Ludovico Sforza (1452-1508).¹² In the court of the Sforzas – as in the court of the Bourbons, where Belle lived – ‘astrology was never too far from the sites of power’, and was often subject ‘to various external forces and to the vagaries of time’.¹³ These changes were also explored by Michael Shank in the context of fifteenth-century Vienna, by Joan Cadden for the court of Charles V (1500-1558), Michael Ryan for the Aragonese court, and by Laura Smoller for the case of Pierre d’Ailly (1351-1420).¹⁴

As astrology’s influence grew, so did the voices against it, but these protests had little effect on its practice. Astrological texts continued to be studied and were among the most frequently printed.¹⁵ The increasing demand for astrological services led to significant alterations in its status as one of the liberal arts. Azzolini states that in this period astrology ‘was neither considered a purely academic subject, nor believed to be irrelevant to everyday life’, as it became an important tool of the elites for social

⁹ D. Hayton, *The Crown and the Cosmos*, Pittsburg, 2015.

¹⁰ Hayton, *The Crown and the Cosmos*, p. 199, p. 201.

¹¹ H. Carey, *Courting Disaster. Astrology at the English Court and University in the Later Middle Ages*, London, 1992, p. 16.

¹² M. Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars. Astrology and Politics in Renaissance Milan*, London, Harvard University Press, 2013, pp. 103-114, 186-187.

¹³ Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, p. 212.

¹⁴ M. Shank, ‘Academic consulting in fifteenth-century Vienna: the case of astrology’, in E. Sylla and M. McVaugh (eds), *Texts and contexts in Ancient and Medieval Science. Studies at the occasion of John E. Murdoch’s seventieth birthday*, Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997, pp. 245-270; J. Cadden, ‘Charles V, Nicole Oresme, and Christine de Pizan: unities and uses of knowledge in fourteenth-century France’, in E. Sylla and M. McVaugh (eds), *Texts and Contexts*, pp. 208-244; M. A. Ryan, *A Kingdom of Stargazers*, Ithaca and London, 2011; L. Smoller, *History, Prophecy and the Stars. The Christian Astrology of Pierre d’Ailly. 1350-1420*, Princeton, 1994.

¹⁵ See for instance W. Eamon, ‘Astrology and Society’, in B. Dooley (ed.), *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, Leiden, 2014, pp. 141-192, at p. 147; Veenstra, *Magic and Divination at the Courts of Burgundy and France: Text and Context of Lauren Pignon’s ‘Contre les divineurs’ (1411)*, Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1998, pp. 97-136.

and political planning.¹⁶ In this regard, Belle's workbooks offer an important contribution by showing the practical applications of astrology in several fields. These changing conditions also produced a transformation in individual practice: the growing demand led to a greater number of practitioners, as the practice gradually became more accessible to clients outside the court, such as the lesser nobility, rich merchants, and, ultimately, anyone who could afford it. An example of this situation can be found in Sophie Page's article on the uses of astrology by Richard Trewythian, whose practice includes clients from several social groups.¹⁷ This comprehensive review of fifteenth-century astrological practices, clients, and sources addresses the astrological judgement written by Trewythian for an anonymous native born in 1431 and describes a work environment similar to that revealed by Belle's workbooks.

Medicine was commonly associated with astrological practice, as appears to be the case with Belle; the connection between these two disciplines has been extensively studied by historians.¹⁸ The practice of physicians and the teaching of medicine at the University of Paris, which Belle may have attended, is explored by Danielle Jacquard, revealing the intricacies of the application of astrology to medical practice and the discussions among scholars regarding the validity and extent of its use in the treatment of patients.¹⁹ An example of these debates is the well-known discussion between Roland of Lisbon and Laurent Muste. It concerned whether the favourable days for

¹⁶ Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, p. 212.

¹⁷ S. Page, 'Richard Trewythian and the Uses of Astrology in Late Medieval England', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 64, 2001, pp. 193-228.

¹⁸ Such as Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, New York, 1923-1958 (particularly IV); E. W. Talbot, 'The notebook of a fifteenth-century practicing physician', *University of Texas: studies in English*, XXII, 1942, pp. 5-30; C. H. Talbot, 'A mediaeval physician's *vade mecum*', *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 16, 1961, New York, pp. 213-233, *Medicine in Medieval England*, London, 1967; White Jr., 'Medical Astrologers and Late Medieval Technology', *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 6, 1975, pp. 295-312; M. Préaud, *Les astrologues à la fin de la moyen âge*, Paris, 1984; L. Garcia-Ballester, R. French, J. Arrizabalaga and A. Cunningham (eds), *Practical Medicine from Salerno to the Black Death*, Cambridge, 1994; L. Moulinier-Brogui and M. Nicoud, 'Éthique et pratiques médicales aux derniers siècles du moyen âge', *Mediévales*, M. Nicoud (eds), 46, 2004; M. Schleissner (ed.), *Manuscript Sources of Medieval Medicine*, New York, London, 1995; A. Akasoy, C. Burnett and R. Yoeli-Tlalim (eds) *Astro-medicine, Astrology and Medicine, East and West*, Florence, 2008; H. Carey, 'Medieval Latin Astrology and the Cycles of Life: William English and English Medicine in Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.5.26', in *Astro-medicine*, pp. 33-55; C. Pennuto, 'The Debate on Critical Days in Renaissance Italy', in *Astro-medicine*, pp. 75-98; A. Akasoy, 'Arabic Physiognomy as a Link between Astrology and Medicine' in *Astro-medicine*, pp. 119-141; C. Burnett, 'Doctors versus astrologers: Medical and astrological prognosis compared', in A. Fidora (ed.), *Die mantischen Künste und die Epistemologie prognostischer Wissenschaften in Mittelalter*, Wien, 2013, pp. 101-111

¹⁹ D. Jacquard, 'La prudence dans l'énoncé du pronostic médical' in A. Fidora (ed.), *Die mantischen Künste*, pp. 113-129; D. Jacquard, *La Médecine médiévale dans le cadre parisien*, Paris, 1998. See also D. Jacquard 'Everyday practice and three fifteenth-century physicians', *Osiris*, 6, 1990, pp. 140-160 and D. Jacquard 'De crasis à complexion: Note sur le vocabulaire du temperament en latin médiéval', in *La science médicale occidentale entre deux renaissances (XII^{es}-XV^{es})*, Aldershot, 1997.

medical treatments should be assessed using the aspects of the Moon and its position by sign, or only the latter, as was more commonly practiced.²⁰ Roland supported the first option (which was more complex and therefore would raise the cost of almanac production), while Muste defended the second, simpler option. The detail found in Belle's workbooks suggests that he favoured Roland's position, giving a clear demonstration of how these theoretical debates were reflected in practice.²¹

The practices of other astrologers, such as the physician Girolamo Cardano, who lived a few decades after Belle, offer a useful point of comparison to that of Belle. Cardano's work was 'most eagerly emulated among writers on medical astrology', and it has been studied extensively by historians.²² Especially important to the present study is the comparison between his use of horoscopes to exemplify certain medical conditions or personality traits. Also, the studies of other practitioners who came after Belle, such as Kepler, Galileo Galilei, and Francis Bacon, offer a view of the continuities and changes in astrological methods and practices.²³ Another crucial reference in the field of medicine is the extensive research undertaken by Lauren Kassell in *The Casebook Project*, which is a comprehensive collection of medical records written by two sixteenth and seventeenth-century astrologers and physicians: Simon Forman (1552-1611) and his pupil Richard Napier (1559-1634). Though living more than a century after Belle, their written records of medical encounters offer a comprehensive understanding of the continuing traditions in medical practice.²⁴

In Belle's period astrology also underwent structural changes in techniques and methods, a topic that still requires further research. Some studies already offer a comprehensive view of astrology's theoretical bases, practice, and social impact in the

²⁰ T. Charmasson, 'L'Établissement d'un almanach médicale pour l'année 1437', *Congrès national des Sociétés Savantes*, 99, Besançon, 1974, pp. 217-234.

²¹ Regarding this debate, see Veenstra, *Magic and Divination*, pp. 120-130; Boudet and Charmasson, 'Une consultation', p. 257; J-P. Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance: Astrologie, divination et magie dans l'occident médiéval (XII^e-XV^e siècle)*, Paris, 2006, p. 294.

²² S. Vanden Broecke, *The Limits of Influence. Pico, Louvain, and the Crisis of Renaissance Astrology*, Leiden, New York and Cologne, 2003, p. 232. See also A. Grafton, 'Girolamo Cardano and the Tradition of Classical Astrology, the Rothschild Lecture', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 142, 3, 1998, pp. 323-354, and A. Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer*, Cambridge, 1999; G. Oestmann, H. D. Rutkin and K. von Stuckrad (eds), *Horoscopes and Public Spheres, Essays on the History of Astrology*, Berlin, 2005; particularly K. von Stuckrad 'The Function of Horoscopes in Biographical Narrative, Cardano and after', pp. 225-240, and Vanden Broecke, 'Evidence and Conjecture in Cardano's Horoscope Collections', pp. 207-224.

²³ D. Rutkin, 'Various Uses of Horoscopes. Astrological Practices in Early Modern Europe', *Horoscopes and Public Spheres*, pp. 167-182.

²⁴ See for instance L. Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan England: Simon Forman, Astrologer, Alchemist and Physician*, Oxford, 2005, and L. Kassell, 'The Astrologer's Tables', *History Today*, 61.9, 2011.

late medieval and early modern periods.²⁵ Several early modern astrologers attempted to use their collections of horoscopes to support statistical and empirical research.²⁶ As a result, the compilations of famous nativities and astrological doctrine began gradually to give way to a mixture of personal horoscopes and autobiographical astrological writings. Belle's workbooks reveal an early attempt to use these methods. This new format eventually came to establish a distinct literary *genre*, as noted by Kocku von Stuckrad and Steven Vanden Broecke in their discussion of the use of horoscopes.²⁷ The latter points out that some collections of horoscopes were set up for private use, though many were assembled with the intent of supporting medical research. This is the case of Cardano's collection, no doubt due to his own medical training. Vanden Broecke emphasizes the utility of this new genre, for 'both astrological clients and practitioners' as it provides biographical information on the period's 'celebrities' and also valuable data for any student of astrology.²⁸ Indeed, besides their medical and political applications, the collections of horoscopes also offered a productive field for scientific exploration. As Brendan Dooley points out,

Long before Paul Choisnard, the early twentieth-century *soi-disant* inventor of the statistical method applied to horoscopes, quantitative and observational scientific methods were used for proving the validity of astrological technique. Luca Gaurico (1475-1558) and Girolamo Cardano, who both tried to prove the validity of their different forms of astrology by a selection of some hundred nativities a piece, with the pertinent explanations for how they illustrated the lives in question, were followed by Johannes Gracaeus (1530-1574), in the last third of the sixteenth century, who included no less than four hundred nativities.²⁹

Only recently have historians begun to address the astrological techniques used in the judgement of nativities as an independent field of study within medieval and early modern astrology. Earlier examples of these studies are Walter Curry's article 'O Mars o *atacir*', about two astrological judgements in two tales by Geoffrey Chaucer, Felix Schmeidler's edition of the astrological judgement written by Regiomontanus in 1451 to Empress Eleanor of Portugal (wife of Emperor Frederick III and mother of Maximilian I), and Lawrence Elwell-Sutton's analysis of the horoscope of Asadullah Mirza, born in 1830.³⁰ Recent examples are Dorian Greenbaum's study of the letter

²⁵ Such as North, *Horoscopes and History*, London, 1986, pp. 71-229; Oestmann, Rutkin and von Stuckrad (eds), *Horoscopes and Public Spheres*, pp. 167-224; Dooley, *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 17-59, 87-267; and P. Curry (ed.), *Astrology, Science and Society*, Woodbridge, 1987, pp. 5-18, 57-74, to quote only a few.

²⁶ Dooley, 'Astrology and Science', *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 264-265.

²⁷ Von Stuckrad, *Horoscopes and Public Spheres*, pp. 225-240, Vanden Broecke, pp. 207-224.

²⁸ Vanden Broecke, *The Limits of Influence*, p. 232.

²⁹ Dooley, 'Astrology and Science', *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 264-265.

³⁰ Respectively: W. Curry, 'O Mars, o *atacir*', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Julius Goebel (ed.), XXII.3 (1923), Urbana, Illinois, 1923, pp. 347-368; Chaucer's 'Tales' are *Legend of*

written by Kepler to his teacher, Michael Maestlin, regarding the horoscopes of their children and David Juste's meticulous analysis of the horoscope cast by Master William Misocacus of Brussels for John Siliers of Mechelen.³¹ Juste states that the judgements of nativities are 'arguably the astrologer's most complex work', and remarks that despite their importance 'they still remain in most cases the *terra incognita* of the history of astrology'.³² Belle's examples of judgements contribute to this under-explored field through the application of astrological doctrine to horoscopes.

Another interesting facet of astrological judgements is their political impact, a topic addressed by Wiebke Deimann, who analyses the judgement of the astrologer Johannes Lichtenberger for the nativity of Duke Louis IX of Bavaria-Landshut, and by Darrell Rutkin, who addresses Guiliano Ristori's judgement of Cosimo I's nativity.³³ This impact is also evident in Belle's work as it gathers the horoscopes of several important political figures, some of which he chooses to present with an encoded name, thus hinting at the political intricacies of this time.

The resurgence of Classical culture at the end of the fifteenth century polarized astrologers into Ptolemaic and non-Ptolemaic partisans. The first group was in search of a supposedly pristine Greek astrology, untainted by what was perceived as the nonsense of the Arabic and Jewish authors. Thus, they initiated a revision of the astrological system that would culminate in the mid-sixteenth century. Interestingly, this division was for the most part fallacious, since many of the so-called 'Arabic additions' were originally Greek, which was unknown at the time. The topic was explored by scholars such as Darren Rutkin, Ornella Faracovi, and Dag Hasse, whose work offers context and thus provides a better understanding of Belle's position in this

Hypermnestra and *Man of Law's Tale*; for Empress Eleanor: F. Schmeidler (ed.), *Johannis Regiomontanus Opera Collectanea*, Osnabruck, 1972, pp. 2-33; for Asadullah Mirza: Elwell-Sutton (tr.), *The Horoscope of Asadullah Mirza. A Specimen of Nineteenth-Century Persian Astrology*, Leiden, 1977. For the study of Chaucer's work, see also North, *Chaucer's Universe*, Oxford, 1988.

³¹ Respectively, D. G. Greenbaum, 'Kepler's Personal Astrology: Two Letters to Michael Maestlin', C. Burnett and D. G. Greenbaum (eds), *From Masha'allah to Kepler: Theory and Practice in Medieval and Renaissance Astrology*, Ceredigion, Wales, 2015, pp. 177-200 and D. Juste, 'A Sixteenth-Century Astrological Consultation', *Astrologers and their Clients*, p. 151-204 in W. Deimann and D. Juste (eds), *Astrologers and their Clients*, pp. 151-204.

³² Juste, 'A Sixteenth-Century Astrological Consultation', p. 151-204, 151.

³³ Respectively, W. Deimann, 'Astrology in an Age of Transition. Johannes Lichtenberger and His Clients', *Astrologers and their Clients*, pp. 83-104, and D. Rutkin, 'Astrology, Politics and Power in 16th-Century Florence: Giuliano Ristori's Extensive Judgement on Cosimo I's Nativity (1537)', *Astrologers and their Clients*, pp. 139-151.

debate.³⁴ His work offers an earlier testimony of the changing astrological practices in the transition between the medieval and early modern periods.³⁵

Also contemporary to Belle is the Neoplatonic movement which influenced astrology through works such as those of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499).³⁶ Although not evident in Belle's writings, this line of thought emphasized a complementary view to the mainstream astrological practice, more centered on Aristotelian natural causes by endorsing a Humanist perception of celestial influence in terms of its spiritual and symbolic nature.

So far research has focused mainly on the socio-political context of astrology, that is, where and when it was practiced, and who its practitioners were. The present research intends to explore rather how and why it was practiced. Its main goal is to offer an insider's perspective of the astrologer: a study of the inner processes of understanding and practical application of astrological knowledge and techniques. It intends to expand the historian's external view of the practice by piercing the veil over how astrology was seen and applied by the astrologers themselves.

³⁴ Respectively: D. Rutkin, 'The Use and Abuse of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* in Renaissance and Early Modern Europe: Two Case Studies (Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola and Filippo Fantoni)', in A. Jones (ed.), *Ptolemy in Perspective. Use and Criticism of His Work from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*, Dordrecht, 2010, pp. 135-149. O. Faracovi 'The Return to Ptolemy', *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 87-98. Dag Hasse's *Success and Suppression. Arabic Sciences and Philosophy in the Renaissance*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2016, pp. 248-293.

³⁵ See C. Burnett and D. G. Greenbaum (eds), *From Masha'allah to Kepler*, particularly G. Bezza's 'Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions and General Astrology', pp. 5-48 and Vanden Broeke's 'Self-Governance and the Body Politic in Annual Prognostications', pp. 491-512.

³⁶ See for instance A. Voss, *Marsilio Ficino*, Berkeley, 2006. For an overview of Ficino's impact see also J. North, 'Types of Inconsistency in the Astrology of Ficino and Others', Z. Martels, A. MacDonald and J. Veenstra (eds), *Christian Humanism*, Tournhout, 2009, pp. 21-302; T. Moore, *The Planets Within: Marsilio Ficino's Astrological Psychology*, London, 1982; M. Bullard, 'The Inward Zodiac: a Development in Ficino's Thought on Astrology', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43, 4, 1990, pp. 687-708.

Belle's life and work

Little is known about S. Belle, the author of NAL 398 and MS 1711. Until recently only one of Belle's workbooks, NAL 398, was known to scholars.³⁷ Its historical interest was the subject of some discussion, in the main due to its large collection of horoscopes. Some historians, such as Jean-Patrice Boudet, have classified it as a late example of the 'encyclopaedism of the thirteenth century', although 'no match, neither in length nor in depth, to the writings of authors like Bonatti or Leopold of Austria'.³⁸ Others, like Emmanuel Poulle, saw it as a precursor to 'the collections that would have great success in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'.³⁹ The divergence of opinions originates mainly from the way the document is classified: those who consider it a treatise on astrology tend to find it irrelevant, lacking innovation in astrological doctrine, and not useful for making editions of the theoretical texts it contains, while those who catalogue it as a personal notebook tend to value its diversity and originality.

MS 1711 provided more details about Belle's personal life and shed new light on the value of his work. It includes five horoscopes of children with the family name Belle: Anthonius, who is called firstborn (*primogenitus*), born in 1483 possibly in Châlus; Conrad, born in 1484 possibly in Moulins; Nicholas, in 1485 also in Moulins; and Martha, born in 1487 possibly in Paris. Although only the latter is explicitly identified as Belle's child (*filia mea Martha*), the boys are most likely to be his sons, and they are referred to as such in this study. It also includes the horoscope for a girl born in 1496 in Amboise, whom Belle identifies as his cousin (daughter of my paternal uncle – *filia avunculi mei*). His children's birthdates help to determine Belle's adult years: if he had had children between 1483 and 1487 he is likely to have been born between 1450 and 1460. This is corroborated by the planetary tables in his almanac, which run from 1468 to 1480. These are most likely to be the years for which he was calculating nativities, that is, corresponding to people of his own age group and also

³⁷ Mentioned in E. Poulle, *Astronomie planétaire*, VIII, pp. 75-76; P-P. Boudet, *La recueil*, II, pp. 49, 91 n. 22, 288-289 n. 204; *Observer, lire, écrire le ciel*, pp. 7-61, (pp. 58-59, horoscopes of Louis XI and Charles the Bold); and *Lire dans le ciel*; Carey, *Courting Disaster*, p. 128; *Al-Qabisi (Alcabitius): The Introduction to Astrology*, C. Burnett; K. Yamamoto; M. Yano, (eds), London, 2004, p. 180, and D. Juste, *CCAL II*, Paris, 2011, p. 254. Other individuals with the same name: Jean Belle, 'valet of the countess's hackney horses' (*valet de hanquenées de la comtesse*) from 1447 to 1454, mentioned in M. Sommé, *Isabelle de Portugal, duchesse de Bourgogne. Une femme au pouvoir au XV^e siècle*, Arras, 1998, p. 497; Jean Belle, a Flemish bailiff who served John the Fearless from 1412 to 1416, in R. Vaughan, *John the Fearless: The Growth of Burgundian Power*, II, Woodbridge, 2002, p. 133.

³⁸ Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, pp. 82-87.

³⁹ 'La recueil de Simon Belle me paraît correspondre à une conception fort différent de celle de ses précédents. (...) La vintage de carrés réunis par Simon Belle annonce les collections dont le succès sera grand au XVI^e e et au XVII^e siècle', Poulle, *Astronomie planétaire*, VIII, pp. 75-76.

when he was following the astrological configurations corresponding to current events. MS 1711 also revealed Belle's connections to the dukes of Bourbon, Jean II (1426-1488) and Pierre II (1439-1503), whom he may have served in the capacity of astrologer and physician. The almanac includes some comments suggesting that Belle was acquainted with the Swiss astrologer-physician Conrad Heingarter (c. 1440-c. 1504) and may have been his student.⁴⁰ Heingarter lived in the capital of Bourbon, Moulins, between 1434 and 1488, and Belle also lived there for at least part of that period as shown by his comments on the almanac for the year 1480.⁴¹ Belle is not mentioned in *La recueil*, a collection of famous astrologers, written by his contemporary Simon de Phares between 1494 and 1498, a period when Belle was active.⁴² However, de Phares omitted many astrologers of his generation, having credited only a few for their medical almanacs and ignoring those who wrote only predictions. Boudet attributes this omission, at least in part, to 'the specific evolution of astrology in the kingdom of France in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries'.⁴³ Wickersheimer mentions a certain 'Simon Belle, physician' who was suspected of theft, but there is no evidence that this was the author of the manuscripts.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ For Heingarter as astrologer and physician, see Thorndike, *HMES*, IV, pp. 357-385.

⁴¹ MS 1711 f. 72v.

⁴² See Boudet, *La recueil*, I, p. 564 n. 59a and II, pp. 50-55; 'Simon de Phares et les rapports entre astrologie et prophétie à la fin du Moyen Âge', *Les textes prophétiques et la prophétie en Occident (XII-XVI siècle)*, 102, n° 2, Rome, 1990. pp. 617-648, and 'La bibliothèque scientifique d'un historien de l'astrologie à la fin du XV^e siècle, Simon de Phares', *Scriptorium*, 1993.

⁴³ *La recueil*, II, p. 240.

⁴⁴ 'Simon Belle – Médecin; éprouve un individu suspect de larcin, Avallon, 1477-78 (Archives d'Avallon, CC. 123', in E. Wickersheimer, *Dictionnaire bibliographique des Médecins en France au Moyen Age*, Genève, 1979, I, p. 737.

Belle's workbooks

The two manuscripts written by Belle include a collection of astrological texts, an almanac and a total of sixty-six horoscopes, comprising three of the main applications of astrology: interrogations, revolutions, and nativities.

Lisbon, Torre do Tombo, MS 1711

ANTT-Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, *Manuscritos da Livraria*, Ms. 1711 – ‘*Almanaque ab anno 68 usque ad annum 80, Nativitates quarundam personarum*’. This is a collection of 154 tables with the planetary positions between January 1468 and December 1480, two tables of planetary dignities and forty-six horoscopes, plus ten blank pages. The manuscript is composed of 103 folia of thick brown paper (14.5 cms x 21.6 cms) written in black and red ink. The regularity of the handwriting and the uniformity of the pages suggest that they were all written by the same person and have been bound in a single volume. The covers are made of cardboard with the interior face reinforced with parchment upon which is written some text in French.⁴⁵ This parchment, upside-down in relation to the manuscript, is part of an older document re-used for binding. The title, which may have been added later, translates as ‘an almanac from the year [14]68 to the year [14]80 a collection of nativities of some people’. The manuscript actually contains four parts:

- Folia 1r to 18v and 20r to 77v: Almanac with 154 tables of planetary positions and the aspects of the Moon for every day from January 1468 to December 1480;
- Folio 19r: Tables of planetary dignities, zodiacal degrees, and exaltations;
- Folio 19v: Aphorisms attributed to Seneca (not related to astrology);
- Folia 78r to 103v: forty-six horoscopes
 - Five events (four coronations and one royal entry);
 - Thirty-one nativities;
 - Ten blank charts.

Paris, BnF, NAL 398

Paris, Bnf NAL 398 – Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines* 398. This manuscript is composed of 102 folia (13.6 cm x 20 cm) written in two columns, in Latin and in French, in black, red, and blue ink. It is bound in a more

⁴⁵ See Appendix II.

recent cover with no title. The first part of the manuscript comprises astrological doctrine organized in five texts (see incipits in the table below) in the hand of Belle, who was probably responsible for the introduction to, and the organization of the material.

The first text, spanning ff. 1ra-10vb, concerns astrometeorology; the introduction emphasizes the practical work and the author's own experience.

This is a collection of the words of the Ancient wise men concerning rain and moisture and changes (of air) with the addition of certain rules which I have acquired by means of experiment.⁴⁶

The conclusion ends with the statement that 'in this treatise only pure and simple practical things are included'.⁴⁷ The first reference is to John of York (d. 1348), here referred to as 'the English Perscrutator' who is presented as 'completely secure in what he said, albeit obscurely, and of a profound intellect'.⁴⁸ This reference, together with the statement that these rules are particularly apt for the seventh climate (which encompasses England), suggest that the source of the text lived in England.⁴⁹ A possible author is John of Ashenden, a near contemporary of the Perscrutator; Ashenden is not directly mentioned in this part of the manuscript, although he is named in other sections. The text comprises a collection of excerpts and aphorisms on astrometeorology taken from authors such as Ptolemy, Albumasar, Haly Abenragel, Alkindi, John of Seville, and Leopold of Austria. It addresses the effects on the weather of Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions, the revolutions of the year, and eclipses. Several passages of the text are accompanied by personal remarks such as 'and I confirm this' (*et ego confirmo istud*) or 'and I say that this is true' (*et ego dico quod hoc verum est*), added by the author of the compilation who could be either Belle or an earlier practitioner from whom he copied.

The second text, encompassing ff. 11ra-31vb, is also a collection of 'rules, methods and aphorisms' (*regulis, rationibus et aphorismis*) concerning the judgement of nativities. It begins by defining their subject of study: 'the nativity is the coming out of the new-born from the womb of his mother'.⁵⁰ It offers a description of the significances of the twelve houses of the horoscope, in great part taken from John of

⁴⁶ Hec est collectio dictorum sapientum antiquorum in pluviis et humiditatibus atque mutationibus cum additione quarumdam regularum quas mediante experimento acquisivi, NAL 398, f. 1ra.

⁴⁷ In hoc tractatu non continentur nisi pura et nuda pratica, f. 1ra.

⁴⁸ totus certus in hoc quod dixit, tamen obscure, et profundi fuit intellectus, f. 1ra.

⁴⁹ The seventh climate corresponds to the northern part of Europe, usually beginning above latitude 45°N and extending to 50° N, thus including the most part of England. See 'Climates' in Appendix I.

⁵⁰ Nativitas est exitus nati de utero matris sue, f. 11ra.

Saxony's *Commentary* on Alcabitius,⁵¹ again mentioning as sources several renowned authors such as Ptolemy, Albumasar, Leopold of Austria, Guido Bonatti, and Haly Abenragel. After the eleventh house the text is interrupted and Belle adds his autograph and a date, 1 February 1473.⁵² The text for the twelfth and last house is added on ff. 30va-31ra. Folia 31rb and 31v are blank.

The third text, covering 32ra-36rb, includes excerpts concerning the judgement of the planets and luminaries in the houses, taken from authors such as Abohali, Gergis, and Leopold of Austria.

The fourth text, spanning ff. 36va-38va is a copy of *De Mercibus* by Messahallah, a treatise about the prices of food and other commodities.⁵³

The fifth and last text, covering 39ra-72vb, includes a copy of John of Saxony's *Commentary* on Alcabitius.⁵⁴ It begins with the well-known sentence 'the wise man will dominate the stars' (*vir sapiens dominabitur astris*), often attributed to Ptolemy, and includes the discussion of several technical terms such as *hyleg* (on ff. 63ra-64ra), *alcocodem* (f. 64ra-65rb), and *almutem* (f. 65rb-65vb).⁵⁵ On f. 54va-54vb there are two examples of interrogations dating from March and October 1330, respectively. The first can be found in many editions of John of Saxony's *Commentary* on Alcabitius;⁵⁶ the second was found only in one manuscript, Paris, BnF lat 7322, f. 21r, which includes the judgement of both interrogations but omitted the horoscopes themselves (this is discussed further on).

The rest of NAL 398 is of a more practical nature. It begins with a collection of seven lunations preceding ingresses of the Sun. It spans 73ra-76va and includes the lunation before the Sun's ingress in March 1293, March 1294, June 1294, September 1294, December 1294, March 1295, and May 1295. Some of these horoscopes are exact copies of those in William of Saint-Cloud's almanac, but the corresponding judgements

⁵¹ The initial sentences of the text for each house are similar to the equivalent sections in John of Saxony's *Commentary*.

⁵² See table below. The topic of authorship is addressed further on in this thesis.

⁵³ See incipit in table below. See also the reference to this text in Thorndike, 'The Latin Translations of Astrological Works by Messahalla', *Osiris*, 1956, pp. 49-72, at pp. 68-69.

⁵⁴ The *Commentary* includes many passages of Alcabitius, possibly because it was intended to be read instead of the original. For the text, see Alcabitius, *Introduction*. NAL 398 is mentioned on p. 180.

⁵⁵ Compare to Alcabitius, *Introduction*, pp. 111 for the *hyleg*, 115 for the *alcocodem*, and 117 for the *almutem*.

⁵⁶ Such *Alcabitius cum commento noviter impresso: Libellus isagogicus Abdilazi*, Venice, 1512, p. 48 and *Alcabitii ad magisterium iudiciorum astrorum isagoge: commentario Ioanne Saxoni declarata*, Paris 1521, pp. 63-64. See also the reference in M. Gaida, 'Encounters with Alcabitius: Reading Arabic Astrology in Pre-Modern Europe', PhD Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 2017, pp. 184-185.

are not in Saint Cloud's text and may have been written by Belle himself. These are followed by two judgements of nativities. The first is that of a certain Hubert, born in Florence in the year 1259, obviously copied from an earlier source; the judgement spans 76vb-80ra and the horoscope can be found in 79v. The second is that of a person named Jo. Dap born in 1442, possibly in France, occupying ff. 85ra-89vb; it includes a complete set of calculations, but the horoscope itself is omitted. Between these two nativities there is a judgement for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425, partially written by Belle, partially adapted from John of Ashenden's judgement of an earlier conjunction; it covers ff. 80rb-84va and the corresponding horoscope is in f. 80rb. His investment in this text is revealed by his autograph, which reads 'End of the judgement of the Great Conjunction, written by me, S. Belle, in Châlus, year of the Lord 1473 incomplete, sixth day of February'.⁵⁷ Folia 90r-91v and 93r-93v are occupied by a collection of nativities and events, organized four per page (a total of twelve in the first group and eight in the second). Folia 92ra-92vb and 94ra-100vb encompass the judgement of a nativity, probably written by Belle himself, of a certain Jo. d.c.l. born in 1437. The first set of pages is occupied by the calculations for the horoscope, which is part of the collection (f. 93ra1), and the second comprises the judgement, written in French; this is the only text in French of the entire collection. On f. 101r there are two references, probably not related, and apparently written in a hurry. The first is a reference to the birth of a cousin of Belle whom he simply calls 'daughter of my uncle' (*filia avunculi mei*), born in 1496; he does not calculate the horoscope in this manuscript but includes it in MS 1711 f. 99v. The second, written upside down, is an interrogation about the general condition of life and calculated for August 1477; it is accompanied by the birthdata of Duke Jean II de Bourbon, suggesting that he could be the one asking the question.⁵⁸ The final folia of the manuscript include a few pen trials.

In sum, the manuscript contains five texts of astrological doctrine and a total of thirty-nine horoscopes, fourteen of which include judgements. The horoscopes include twenty-five nativities (one of them repeated three times and one reconstructed based on the data) and fourteen events (three interrogations, seven lunations preceding ingresses, one Jupiter-Saturn conjunction, two coronations and one lunation preceding a nativity).

In most of these texts it is difficult to determine how much of the material was copied and how much was authored by Belle. His autograph, which appears twice in

⁵⁷ See table below.

⁵⁸ See 'Interrogations' in Appendix I.

the manuscript in two of the texts, reveals his investment on this matter, but the words ‘written by me’ (*scripta per me*), while definitely meaning ‘written by me’, could also mean ‘authored by me’. Notwithstanding, the texts include some material which is not attributed to any earlier authority and thus may be the result of Belle’s own experience added by him while copying from other authors. The first three texts – astrometeorology, the twelve houses, and planets in the houses – were obviously written with a practical aim since they are well structured and written in a way that facilitates the consultation.

Table 1 – Incipits and explicits in NAL 398’s texts

<p>Text 1 (ff. 1ra-10vb)</p> <p>‘Hec est collectio dictorum sapientum antiquorum in pluviis et humiditatibus atque mutationibus cum additione quarumdam regularum quas mediante experimento acquisivi’ (f. 1)</p> <p>...</p> <p>‘Aspice significatorem pluvie et si eum inveneris intrantem aliquem angulorum...significat tonitrua, coruscationes, terre motus et similia’ (f. 6r) (6v, 7r, 7v, 8r, 8v, 9r, 9v, 10r, 10v are blank)</p>
<p>Text 2 (ff. 11ra-31vb)</p> <p>‘Nativitas est exitus nati de utero matris sue. Prepositis ergo regulis, rationibus et aphorismis que in hac ratione excusari non possunt ut pretacta fuerint, accedamus breviter ad diffinitionem significatorum 12 domorum’ (f. 11ra)</p> <p>...</p> <p>‘Expliciunt flores sapientum astronomorum per modum regularum sive amporismorum de iudiciis astrorum super 12. domibus que considerande sunt in nativitatibus, revolutionibus, questionibus, electionibus etc. scripta fuerunt hec per me S. belle anno domini 1473 incompleto prima februarii.’ (f. 30v)</p>
<p>Text 3 (ff. 32ra-36rb)</p> <p>‘Iudicia que resultant ex 12. domibus celi et eorum signis per existentiam .7. planetarum in ipsis. Hec ex dictis Aboali, Gergis, Leopoldi etc.’ (f. 32ra)</p> <p>...</p> <p>‘Finis tractatus de sinificatione [sic] planetarum in 12. domibus celi.’ (f. 36rb)</p>
<p>Text 4 (ff. 36va-38va)</p> <p>‘Hunc libellum scripsit Mesahala ad favorem unius amicorum suorum qui erat mercator mediante quo ambo lucrati sunt in parvo tempore magnam pecuniam’ (36va)</p> <p>...</p> <p>‘et si fuerit in ultima quadra erit hoc utile venditori. Explicit Messahallah de mercibus.’ (38va)</p>
<p>Text 5 (ff. 39ra-72vb)</p> <p>‘Vir sapiens dominabitur astris. Ptholomeus in sapientiis Alma(gest)i. Et potest sic declarari. Ille dominatur astris que effectus ex ipsis pervenientes potest impedire vel prohibere. Sed hoc potest facere vir sapiens quare etiam maior est manifesta. Ille dominatur alteri qui potest sibi dicere: Fac hoc et facit, et dimitte hoc et dimittit.’ (f. 39ra)</p> <p>...</p> <p>‘non erit multum carum donec exierit casum suum etcetera.’ (f. 72vb)</p>

Methods and norms

The author of the workbooks, S. Belle, is designated simply as ‘Belle’ since there is no direct account of his first name. Some scholars took the initial ‘S.’ as the abbreviation of ‘Simon’, because of a reference by Thorndike to a physician called Simon Belle, as explained in the section ‘Belle’s Life and Work’, but there is no direct connection between said physician and the author of these texts.

The astrological vocabulary used by Belle has been adopted in this work. The terms ‘horoscope’, ‘figure’, and ‘chart’ are used interchangeably. The horoscopes of individuals are also called ‘nativities’, and the individuals for whom the horoscopes were made are designated ‘natives’. The Sun and the Moon are often referred to as ‘planets’ following the etymological sense of the word in this period, *planetai*, that is, wandering stars (as opposed to the fixed stars, which maintain their relative position). They are also described as ‘the luminary of the day’ and ‘the luminary of the night’, respectively, or as a pair simply as the luminaries. The words ‘benefic’ and ‘malefic’ describe the constructive or destructive qualities of certain planets, and ‘significator’ describes a planet or lot that represents, or signifies, a certain topic. Regarding the aspects, the terms ‘orb’ and ‘sphere of influence’ are interchangeable and define the margin allowed to each planet when forming an aspect.

The Latin word *dominus* is used both as a term of respect and as an astrological term; in the latter, it was translated as ‘lord’ when referring to the *dominus* of the Ascendant, of the nativity, of the year, and of the quarter, and as ‘ruler’ when referring to the *dominus* of the astrological houses, the day, the night, and the hour. Similarly, *domina*, sometimes used when Venus or the Moon rule the Ascendant, is translated as lady. Belle occasionally uses the term *dominus* to designate the *almutem* of a certain point; in these instances, the word is translated as *almutem*, to avoid confusion.⁵⁹

The interpretation of a horoscope is called ‘judgement’; the term applies both to the horoscope as a whole, and to its parts, such as a house, an aspect, or a ruler.

⁵⁹ The term *almutem*, from the Arabic *al-mutazz*, means the victor or the winner. It is the planet that accumulates most dignities at a given point of the horoscope; it is usually the planet that has rulership or exaltation in that point. In some cases, the astrologer calculates the *almutem* for a specific matter or the *almutem* for the entire horoscope called the *almutem figure*. See ‘Almutem’ in Appendix I.

Latin and French texts: transcription and translation

The translations are as close to the original as possible, thus following the Latin or French spelling of the time and including archaisms, ambiguities and occasional mistakes. The lengthier passages are accompanied by the Latin or French original in a footnote; shorter sentences are included in the main text, followed by the original in parentheses. The text in the footnotes expands all abbreviations, except when astrological symbols replace the names of planets or signs (such as ☿ for Mercury or ♌ for Leo).

Organization

The collections of horoscopes in MS 1711 and in NAL 398 are organized differently. In the former, the horoscopes are depicted one per folio, some accompanied by detailed calculations mainly for the length of life. In the latter, they are generally assembled in groups of four per folio. In order to tell one horoscope from the other, they are labelled from top to bottom and from left to right. A horoscope placed at the top of the page and to the left is referred to as a1; that at bottom left as a2, at top right as b1, and at the bottom right as b2. For instance, in folio 93r the horoscopes are referred to as f.93ra1 (top left), f. 93ra2 (bottom left), f. 93rb1 (top right), and f. 93rb2 (bottom right), as illustrated in the image.

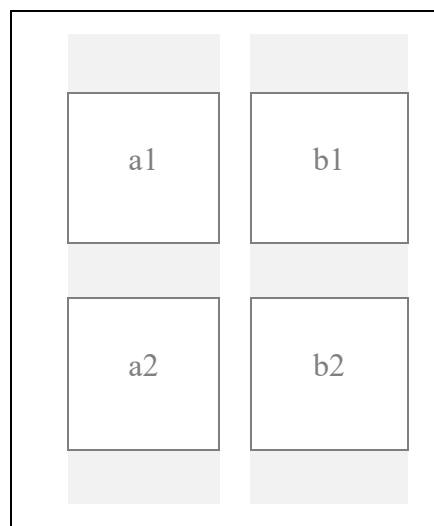


Figure 1 – Designation for horoscopes in NAL 398

In this text, each horoscope is accompanied by the title in Latin and in English, a table explaining the symbols and, where necessary, additional tables with calculations. In most cases, a short biographical note is also included highlighting the native's social

position and possible connections to other horoscopes in the collection. When the related horoscopes are mentioned for the first time they include a complete reference designating their location in the workbooks; further references are shortened or omitted for brevity. Also for brevity, most references to the text in NAL 398 include only the folio number but not the shelfmark. Thus, all short references, such as ‘f. 32va’ or ‘ff. 94vb-95ra’, relate to NAL 398; the extended form is used only when there could be some confusion.

Encoded names

In several horoscopes the names are written in a numeric code, which has been mentioned by Emmanuel Poulle.⁶⁰ The code is easily deciphered by replacing the numbers by the respective vowels: **1 = A**; **2 = E**; **3 = I**; **4 = O**; **5 = U**. Using this simple key, it becomes possible to read all the encoded names:

Table 2 – Examples of the numeric code in Belle’s workbooks

	NAL 398 f. 90ra2	NAL 398 f. 90rb2
Code	<i>d4m3n3 K1r4l3 1q53t1n32</i>	<i>K1r4l3 d5c3s b5r.</i>
Transcription	Domini Karoli Aquitanie	Karoli Ducis Bur[gundiae]
Name	Lord Charles of Aquitaine	Charles Duke of Burgundy

Symbols

Some astrological symbols used by Belle are different from those used today but similar to those in other astrological manuscripts of the same period. Such is the case with the symbols for Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the Moon (represented as a waning Moon not as a crescent as later became standard), for the signs of Taurus, Scorpio, Sagittarius, and Capricorn and for the sextile aspect. The symbols for the North and South Nodes are similar to those in current use except that they are inverted: Belle’s symbol for the North Node is the one used today for the South Node, and viceversa.

⁶⁰ In *Astronomie Planétaire*, p. 76, Poulle relates the codes in NAL 389 and those in another manuscript of a medical nature written by J. de Borlees in 1463 and mentioned by J. Camus in ‘Un manuscrit namourais do XV^e siècle’, in *Revue des langues romanes*, XXXVIII, 1895, pp. 26-43.

Table 3 – Astrological symbols used by Belle

Signs		Planets		Aspects	
Aries	♈	Saturn	♄	Conjunction	☉
Taurus	♉	Jupiter	♃	Sextile	♌
Gemini	♊	Mars	♂	Square	♋
Cancer	♋	Sun	☉	Trine	♌
Leo	♌	Venus	♀	Opposition	♍
Virgo	♍	Mercury	♁		
Libra	♎	Moon	☾	Other	
Scorpio	♏			North Node	♁
Sagittarius	♐			South Node	♋
Capricornus	♑			Pars Fortune	♁
Aquarius	♒			Syzygy (conjunction)	♁
Pisces	♓			Syzygy (opposition)	♁

The symbol for the *syzygy*, the lunation preceding birth, is usually accompanied by the reference *gradus coniunctionis* or *gradus oppositionis*: the former is the degree of the New Moon, when the Sun and the Moon are conjunct, and the latter, of the Full Moon, when they are in opposition.

Calculations

All the horoscopes presented are facsimiles of Belle’s work and therefore reproduce his calculations. The differences between Belle’s calculations and those produced by the computer are in general negligible, but the more significant differences, or eventual errors, are signalled in the text.⁶¹ In the case of horoscopes duplicated in both workbooks the significant differences are highlighted.

House system

The house system used by Belle in his calculations is the ancient system also called the Alcabitius System; which is based on the ascension degree of the Ascendant. It was commonly used by astrologers during this period.⁶²

⁶¹ For purposes of comparison the horoscopes were calculated using the computer program *Solar Fire*, and the calculations were in Local Apparent Time (LAT). See ‘Time notation’ in Appendix I.

⁶² For medieval house systems, see North, *Horoscopes and History*, pp. 1-69; R. Hand, ‘Signs as Houses (Places) in Ancient Astrology’, *Culture and Cosmos*, 11.1-2 (2007), pp. 135-162; Bezza, ‘Representation of the Skies and the Astrological Chart’, in B. Dooley (ed.), *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, Leiden, 2014, pp. 59–86; Casulleras, ‘Methods for Determining the Houses of the Horoscopes in Medieval Arabic Astrology’, *Al-Qantara*, 30, 1, 2009, pp. 41-67; E. Kennedy, *Astronomy and Astrology in the Medieval Islamic World*, Aldershot, 1998. See also ‘Houses’ in Appendix I.

The five-degree rule

This rule states that when a planet is placed at less than five degrees from the cusp of the next house it is judged as if it were in the next house.⁶³ For instance, if the third house of a given horoscope begins at fifteen degrees of Sagittarius and there is a planet at twelve degrees of that sign, this planet, although in the second house, is judged as if it were placed in the third because it is less than five degrees away from the beginning, the cusp, of the third house. Belle follows this rule in his judgements and in some horoscopes he actually draws the planet in the following house whilst indicating the correct degree for both the house and the cusp. These representations appear in several horoscopes, some of which may have been copied from other manuscripts, suggesting that this was a relatively common depiction in the medieval period.

Fixed stars

The fixed stars in MS 1711 are positioned correctly for the late fifteenth century. In NAL 398 only one horoscope, f. 90vb2, includes a fixed star, Spica.

The Lots

Belle calculates most of the lots according to the formulas presented in Alcabitus's *Introduction* translated by John of Saxony and adopted by most medieval astrologers.⁶⁴ Alternative formulas and mistakes are signaled in the text.

Time notation: years, days and hours

Most horoscopes include a reference to the year, the day, the month, the hour and the minute *ante* or *post meridiem* (before or after midday), the planetary rulers, and, in some cases, the Dominical Letter and the Golden Number, usually in this order.⁶⁵ Belle seems to favour the *post-meridiem* notation. Of the thirty-seven complete charts in MS 1711, twenty-two have the *post meridiem* notation; the remaining fifteen have alternative notations such as midnight (*post mediam noctem*) or sunrise (*hora ante diem*). In the thirty-seven horoscopes in NAL 398, Belle uses the *post meridiem* notation in eighteen, *ante meridiem* in only one, and no specific notation in the

⁶³ A more complete explanation of this rule can be found in Appendix I.

⁶⁴ See Alcabitus, *Introduction*, V.1-20, pp. 141-155, and Abū Ma'šār *Abbreviation*, pp. 41-49. The respective calculations can be found in Appendix I.

⁶⁵ See "Dominical Letter" and "Golden Number" in Appendix I.

remaining eighteen. In some cases he uses the notation *dies equalis* or *dies inequalis*, referring respectively to the mean solar day and the true solar day.

When copying examples from other authors Belle adopts their style, which sometimes results in alternative time notations. For clarity, some horoscopes include not only the date given by Belle, but also the date in present-day notation in parentheses.

Birthplace

Not all horoscopes mention the birthplace, although in the charts of recognized figures it can be inferred easily. In horoscopes of unidentified people, the birthplace can be deduced by calculating the horoscope for several plausible locations and comparing the house cusps in each case to those of the horoscope in the manuscript. The corrected location should present a similar configuration of the house cusps and, particularly, the same distance between the Ascendant and the Midheaven. However, there are significant differences between medieval tables and computer programs, making this calculation somewhat imprecise; as these calculations cannot offer decisive confirmation, the birthplaces deduced by this method are presented as possibilities.

THE HOROSCOPES

The following study comprises a systematic analysis of all horoscopes in the workbooks from the perspective of their astrological techniques. Each horoscope includes a facsimile and a photo of the chart, a description of its contents, an explanation of the relevant comments and, in some cases, a comparison with other versions of the horoscope. The analysis is organized into five sections each corresponding to a different application of astrology; they all include detailed explanations of the astrological techniques applied by Belle, comparison to source material, and to other examples of astrological practice in his time. At the end of each section the most relevant topics addressed in the analysis are summarized and discussed in the context of the history of astrology.

I – THE INTERROGATIONS

This is the application of astrology that provided direct answers to all sorts of questions. These could range from high politics, like ‘Is it advantageous to forge an alliance with the neighbouring king?’ to everyday life, like ‘Will I recover my stolen horse?’, or ‘Is my brother alive?’.⁶⁶

Belle included two interrogations in NAL 398 between the transcription of the first and second chapters of John of Saxony’s *Commentary* on the *Introduction of Astrology* by Alcabitius. They were calculated for 18 May 1330 and 2 October 1330, respectively, and for the coordinates of Paris; both dates fall within the period when John of Saxony taught at the University of Paris.⁶⁷ The first judgement is similar to that in the edition of the *Commentary* produced in 1521.⁶⁸ The second is not included in this edition and is also missing in most of the manuscripts consulted.⁶⁹ The exception is Lat. 7322, a fifteenth-century manuscript which includes the judgement for the two interrogations and blank spaces at the end of each text, where the respective horoscopes should have been drawn.⁷⁰ There are many similarities between these judgements and those in Belle’s workbook suggesting that both were taken from an earlier source.

The horoscopes have the heading ‘Explanation of some questions by way of examples for touching upon the judgements of the stars’.⁷¹ They are drawn on the lower section of the page and some traces of ink below them suggest that something had been written there but the words were cut out, possibly in the binding process. Belle keeps the explanation in the first person offering a vivid description of this practice.

⁶⁶ See ‘Interrogations’ in Appendix I.

⁶⁷ His academic career in Paris spans 1327-1355. See T. Glick, S. J. Livesey and F. Wallis (eds), *Medieval Science, Technology and Medicine: An Encyclopedia*, Abingdon-on-Thames, 2005, p. 292.

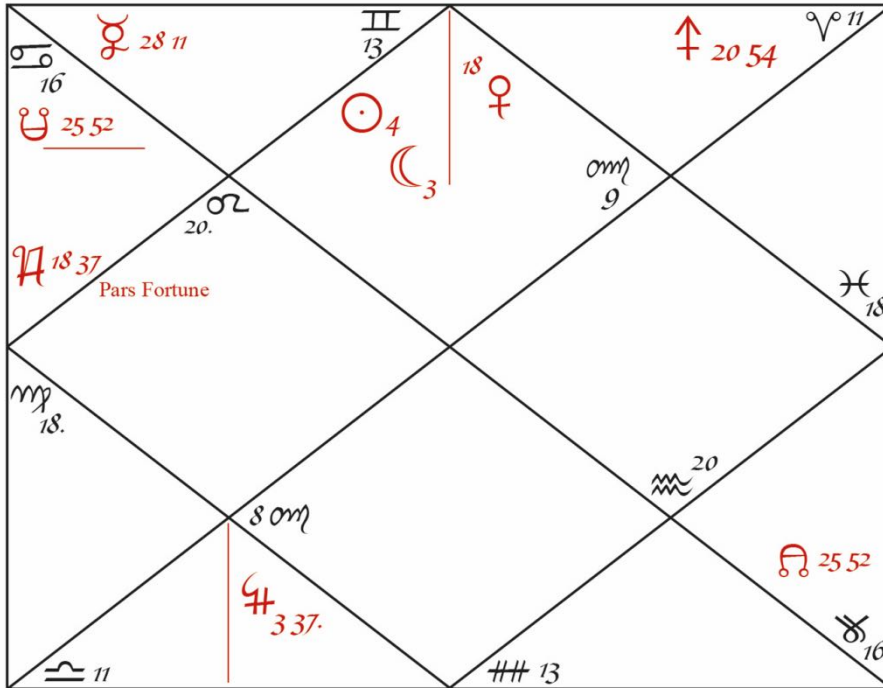
⁶⁸ *Alcabitius cum commento noviter impresso*, Venice, 1521, p. 48. Mentioned by Boudet in *Entre science et nigromance*, p. 293.

⁶⁹ Such as Paris, BnF Lat. 7306, ff. 64v-87r, and Lat. 7324, ff. 59r-68v.

⁷⁰ Lat. 7322; John of Saxony’s *Commentary* is on ff. 1ra-39vb; the blank spaces are on ff. 20v-21r.

⁷¹ *Expositio quarundem questionum per modum exempli ad iudicia stellarum pertingenda*, NAL 398 f. 54va.

Interrogation 'Is this person alive?'
NAL 398 f. 54va: 18 May 1330, 10:10 am (LAT), Paris



House I – 20° Leo	House VII – 20° Aquarius
House II – 18° Virgo	House VIII – 18° Pisces
House III – 11° Libra	House IX – 11° Aries
Jupiter 03°31' Scorpio	Mars 20°54' Aries
House IV – 8° Scorpio	House X – 8° Taurus
	Venus 18° Taurus
	Moon 03° Gemini
	Sun 04° Gemini
House V – 13° Sagittarius	House XI – 13° Gemini
	Mercury 2°11'
House VI – 16° Capricorn	House XII – 16° Cancer
South Node 25°52' Cancer	North Node 25°52' Cancer
	Saturn 18°37' Leo
	Pars Fortune Leo

The first question is about an absent person:

‘Somebody asked concerning a certain absent [person] whether he was alive or dead.
The Ascendant of the question was 20° Leo.’⁷²

The judgement follows the traditional process of judging interrogations: identification of the significators, evaluation of their condition, and then the answer itself. The first step determines which planets represent the person about whom the question was asked, in other words, which planets are the significators of the querent:

I looked into this question and I gave the Ascendant and its Lord and the Moon to the absent person, since the question was made for him.⁷³

This was the standard procedure for questions about absent people: even though the absent is not the one who has asked the question, the Ascendant is attributed to him. Usually, the Ascendant is given to the person who asks the question, but in this case the question was asked by a concerned party on behalf of the absent. As to the Moon, it is always taken as a co-significator of the situation under scrutiny.⁷⁴ At first glance the horoscope seems to offer a positive answer:

I found the Lord of the Ascendant in the Midheaven, and because of this it seems, at first sight, that he will live and be prosperous.⁷⁵

The Lord of Ascendant in this horoscope is the Sun, which is placed at 4° Gemini in the tenth house. Being angular and in a masculine sign, the Sun is sufficiently strong to signify life and prosperity for the person in question. But the judgement does not stop at first impressions, it must consider all the relevant factors. In this case the other factors are strong enough to modify the preliminary judgement:

But because I discovered Saturn in the Ascendant, close to the angle, two degrees below, you may doubt about his life, especially because in that place it has damaged the Lot of Fortune.⁷⁶

Saturn is a malefic, and its placement in the Ascendant – the most important angle in the chart – is strong enough to counteract the good testimony suggested by the Lord of the Ascendant. Furthermore, Saturn is also conjunct the Lot of Fortune, damaging it and thus depleting it of all its usual qualities of wealth and good luck. The reference to

⁷² Quidam quesivit de quodam absente utrum esset vivus vel mortuus. Et fuit ascendens questionis 20 gradus Leonis, NAL f. 54va.

⁷³ Aspexi in hac questione et dedi ascendens et eius dominum et Lunam absenti quoniam questio pro eo facta fuit, NAL f. 54va.

⁷⁴ See ‘Interrogations’ in Appendix I.

⁷⁵ Et inveni dominum ascendentis in Medio Celi propter quod videtur prima facie quod viveret et esset in prosperitate, NAL 398 f. 54va.

⁷⁶ Sed quia inveni Saturnum in angulo ascendentis prope angulum inferius duos gradus dubitaris de vita illius specialiter quia ibidem infortunavit partem fortune, NAL 398 f. 54va.

Saturn ‘close to the angle two degrees below it’, is an allusion to the five-degree rule.⁷⁷ In this case Saturn is placed at 18°37’ Leo, less than five degrees from the Ascendant, which is at 20° of the same sign; this rule determines that Saturn is sufficiently close to the Ascendant to affect it. The astrologer then seeks the ruler of the eighth house, the house of death, to determine if it is harming any of the signifiers of the person in question:

Then I looked at the ruler of the house of death and I discovered Venus stronger in the house of death close to the Moon, because of having many testimonies.⁷⁸

In this chart, the eighth house begins at 18° Pisces; the ruler of Pisces is Jupiter – and yet it is Venus, not Jupiter, that is chosen as signifier of death. This is probably because Venus is the *almutem* at 18° Pisces. It has ‘many testimonies’ because it rules Pisces both by exaltation and triplicity, thus it is stronger than Jupiter, the sign’s ruler.⁷⁹ Additionally, Venus closely aspects the Ascendant by a square, and Jupiter has no aspect to it. In this case Belle is taking the specific significance of the planet over its natural meaning of love and beauty. If judged by this natural significance, Venus would be a benefic factor, but in this configuration it acquires a negative meaning due to its rulership over the house of death. This idea is reinforced by three other signs of death:

I looked at its place in the horoscope and how it was positioned in respect to the Ascendant and to the Lord of the Ascendant and to the Moon, and I discovered it aspecting the Ascendant by a square aspect, and Saturn was there, separating from the same aspect, because of which I more greatly doubted of life. Afterwards I looked at the Moon, and I discovered it aspecting the Ascendant by a square, and because it was opposite the Sun’s rays, that is the second sign of death. I also discovered the Moon separated from Venus and moving towards conjunction with the Lord of the Ascendant, transferring the nature of the ruler of the house of death to the Lord of the Ascendant; this was the third sign of death.⁸⁰

The Moon, acting as a carrier, transfers the light from Venus (the ruler of the eighth house of death) to the Sun (the Lord of the Ascendant – the absent), thus carrying death

⁷⁷ When a planet is at less than five degrees of the cusp of the next house, it is deemed as ‘acting’ in that house; its effects in the preceding house are not considered. See ‘Five-degree rule’ in Appendix I.

⁷⁸ Deinde aspexi ad dominum domus mortis et inveni Venerem fortiolem in domo mortis propter plura testimonia, f. 54va.

⁷⁹ The only part of Pisces where Jupiter is stronger than Venus is from 13° to 17° where it has rulership, term and face. See ‘*Almutem*’ and ‘Essential dignities’ in Appendix I.

⁸⁰ Et aspexi ad locum eius in figura et qualiter se haberet ad Ascendens et ad dominum Ascendentis et ad lunam, et inveni eam aspicientem ascendens aspectu 4° et Saturnum ibidem exeuntem eodem aspectu propter quod magis dubitavi de vita. Deinde aspexi ad Lunam et inveni eam aspicientem ascendens aspectu 4° et quia erat opposita subradiis Solis hoc fuit unum signum mortis. Inveni etiam Lunam separatam a Venere et euntem ad coniunctionem domini Ascendentis transferendo naturam domini domus mortis ad dominum Ascendentis, hoc fuit tertium signum mortis, f. 54va-54vb.

to the absent.⁸¹ Presented with these configurations, the astrologer's judgement is clearly negative:

And from these I have deduced that the man for whom the question has been made was truly dead.⁸²

This, however, is not the end of the judgement. When everything seemed resolved, an unexpected revelation arises:

And because Saturn, placed in the Ascendant, was the ruler of the seventh house, significator of the wife of him for whom the question was made, and Venus, significator of death, aspected it [the Ascendant] by a square, a bad aspect, it signified that perhaps the killer committed fornication with the wife of him for whom the question was made, etc.⁸³

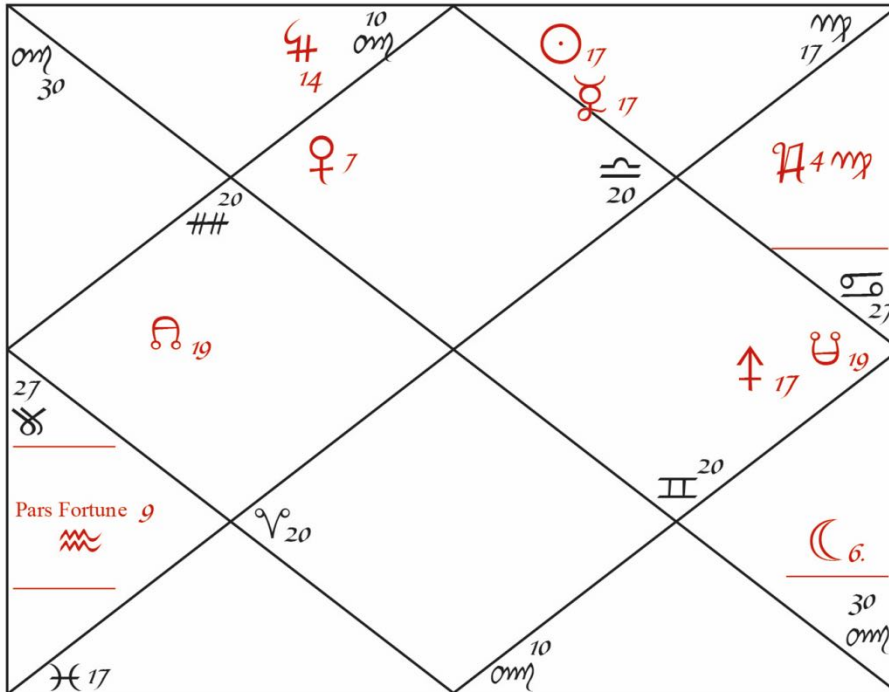
Thus, the aspect between Saturn and Venus raises suspicions of an illicit relationship between the absent man's wife and his alleged killer. This deduction, based solely on one aspect, seems somewhat irresponsible, as adultery was a very serious accusation.

⁸¹ This configuration, called 'transference of light', occurs when a fast planet (usually the Moon or Mercury) moves away from an aspect with one planet and towards an aspect with another.

⁸² Et ex hiis collegi quod homo ille pro quo facta fuit questio erat mortuus, f. 54vb.

⁸³ Et quia Saturnus existens in Ascendente fuit dominus 7^o domus significator uxoris illius pro quo facta fuerat questio, et Venus significatrix mortis aspexit eum 4^o et maligno aspectu significabat forte interfectorem qui considerat fornicationem cum uxore illius pro quo facta fuit questio. Etc., f. 54vb.

Interrogation: ‘Will the messenger be back? Will he bring the money?’
NAL 398 f. 54vb: 02 October 1330, 12:10 am (LAT), Paris



House I – 20° Sagittarius South Node 19° Capricorn	House VII – 20° Gemini Mars 17° Cancer North Node 19° Cancer
House II – 27° Capricorn Pars Fortune? 09° Aquarius	House VIII – 27° Cancer Missing: Part of Fortune in Leo Saturn 04° Virgo
House III – 17° Pisces	House IX – 17° Virgo Sun 17° Libra Mercury 17° Libra
House IV – 20° Aries	House X – 20° Libra Venus 07° Scorpio
House V – 10° Taurus	House XI – 10° Scorpio Jupiter 14° Scorpio
House VI – 30° Taurus Moon 06° Gemini	House XII – 30° Scorpio

The second interrogation is dated 2 October 1330, less than five months after the first and, again, calculated for the latitude of Paris, suggesting that it is also taken from John of Saxony in his *Commentary*, as mentioned before.

The judgement, written in the first person, is about the return of a messenger:

Someone else asked whether the messenger he had sent had returned or not. And he added, on the presumption that he is coming back, whether he is bringing the money for which he had been sent or not. The Ascendant of this question was 20° Sagittarius.⁸⁴

There are two parts to this question: the return of the messenger and the delivery of the money. The judgement begins, as before, by the identification of the signifiers:

And I looked at this question and gave the Ascendant and its Lord to the querent, the fifth house and its ruler to the messenger, and I made the Moon a participant with the significator of the messenger.⁸⁵

This time the Ascendant is attributed to the querent, who asks the question on his own behalf; the messenger is defined by the fifth house, that of messengers.⁸⁶ In this case, the Ascendant is Sagittarius, its Lord is Jupiter, and the fifth house begins in the sign of Taurus, which is ruled by Venus. The Moon, in Gemini, is taken as a co-signifier, as is typical in interrogations.

And I discovered Jupiter very strong in the Ascendant. It was therefore the significator of the querent, and Venus strong in the fifth house was therefore the significator of the messenger, and I made it participant with the Moon because it had some dignity in the fifth house.⁸⁷

The statement that Jupiter is ‘very strong in the Ascendant’ refers to the planet’s power over the Ascendant not to its placement there. Jupiter is actually in the eleventh house at 14° Scorpio, but it rules the ascending sign, Sagittarius, both by domicile and triplicity; it is therefore ‘strong in the Ascendant’. Likewise, Venus is ‘strong in the fifth house’ because it rules over Taurus, the sign on the fifth cusp, although it is placed in the tenth house in Scorpio. The Moon is relevant in this horoscope because it is a natural co-signifier in any interrogation horoscope and because it signifies

⁸⁴ Quidam alter quesivit utrum nuntius quem miserat esset redditus vel non. Et addidit supposito quod esset in redditu utrum apportaret pecuniam pro qua fuit missus vel non. Ascendens huius questionis fuit 20 Sagittarii’, NAL 398 f. 54vb.

⁸⁵ Aspexi in hac questione et dedi ascendens et dominum eius querenti, quintam domum et eius domini nuntio. Et feci Lunam participem cum significatore nuntii, NAL 398 f. 54vb.

⁸⁶ All sources quoted by Belle agree on this. For instance, Haly Abenragel states that the fifth house speaks, among other things, ‘of gifts and pleasures and messengers’ (*de los presentes e los gozos e los mensageros*), Haly Abenragel, *El Libro Conplido Libro en los Iudizios de las Estrelas*, G. Hilty (ed.), Madrid, 1954, I, 40, p. 42.

⁸⁷ Et inveni Jovem fortiorem in Ascendente fuit ergo significator querentis et Venerem fortiorem in 5 domo fuit ergo significatrix nuntii et feci ei participem Lunam quia habuit in 5 domo partem dignitatis, NAL 398 f. 54vb.

movement and travel due to its fast motion.⁸⁸ After determining which planets played a role in this question, he looked for the relationships between them:

Afterwards I looked at how it [the Moon] and the significator of the messenger applied to the significator of the querent [Jupiter]. I discovered Venus, significator of the messenger, approaching the conjunction of the Lord of the Ascendant [Jupiter], and there were between them seven degrees and four minutes, this means that the messenger was very near and because Venus was direct and increasing in motion, she signified a quick approach.⁸⁹

The return of the messenger is deduced from the movement of the significators: Venus, ruler of the fifth house and therefore significator of the messenger, is moving toward an aspect of Jupiter, significator of the querent. Venus is moving swiftly and so, therefore, is the messenger. In the matter of timing, the Moon is not taken into account, because it does not aspect either of the significators, Venus or Jupiter.⁹⁰ The time of his arrival, counting from the moment the question was asked of the astrologer, can also be deduced from the number of degrees between the significators:

And seven degrees and four minutes existing between the significators of the messenger and the querent signified that the time of his arrival would be seven hours from the time of the question, with a few parts of the hour, and if he does not come back then, it will be in seven days, with some hours.⁹¹

The distance between Venus (the messenger) and Jupiter (the querent) is seven degrees and four minutes of arc and signifies the time that will elapse until they meet. While this method allows the astrologer to determine a precise number, it is less clear about the unit of time. In this case, seven degrees and four minutes may signify either seven hours and some minutes or seven days and some hours. Usually, two or three possibilities are presented to the querent within the context of the question. Having given this answer, the judgement then moves on to the second part of the question:

And because it was added in the question whether he was bringing back the money for which he had been sent, I looked at whether the significator of the messenger had any application to the ruler of the house of substance, and I discovered Venus, significator

⁸⁸ The Moon has dignity in the fifth house by exaltation and face because the cusp of the fifth house is at 10° Taurus; the Moon is exalted in Taurus and has face between 10° and 20° of Taurus. Thus, due to the accumulation of rulership and face, the Moon is co-*almutem* with Venus at 10° Taurus. See 'Almutem' in Appendix I.

⁸⁹ Deinde aspexi qualiter applicavit hec et significator nuntii ad significatorem querentis. Inveni Venerem significatricem nuntii euntem ad coniunctionem domini ascendentis et fuerunt inter eos 7 gradus et 4 minuta. Significabat hoc quod nuntius esset bene prope et quia Venus fuit directa et aucta motu significabat adventum velocem, NAL 398 f. 54vb.

⁹⁰ In medieval astrology, only the conjunction and four aspects (sextile, square, trine and opposition) were taken into account. See for instance Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I.13. pp. 73-75 or Al-Bīrūnī, *The Book of Instruction on the Elements of the Art of Astrology (Tafhim)*, R. R. Wright, (tr.) London, 1934, 373-376.

⁹¹ Et 7 gradus et 4 minutorum existentia inter significatores nuntii et querentis significabat quod tempus sui adventus ab hora questionis essent 7 hore cum aliquibus fractionibus et si tunc non rediret essent 7 dies cum aliquibus horis, NAL 398 f. 54vb.

of the messenger, separating from the sextile of Saturn, ruler of the house of substance, signifying that he had received the money from that one to whom he had been sent.⁹²

Another significator is brought into consideration: Saturn, ruler of the second house, that of substance, representing the querent's money. Again, the movement of the planets is the answer: Venus (the messenger) separates from the sextile of Saturn, suggesting that the messenger had received the money. However, Venus is in a debilitated condition being both detrimented in Scorpio ('in opposition to her house') and too close to the Sun ('exiting from under the rays'), thus suggesting a negative outcome.⁹³

But because Venus was unfortunate, that is in opposition to her house and exiting from under the rays of the Sun, this meant the loss of his substance or money.⁹⁴

The judgement ends with a laconic comment 'The messenger came' (*Nuntius iste venit*) but does not mention the money. As this is the very last line of the folio, it seems that Belle abbreviated the text to fit the page, although traces of ink below the horoscopes indicate that something was written at the bottom of the page and was cut off in the binding process. This might well be the missing final lines of the judgement, because in Lat. 7322 that includes the two judgements, there is a more complete conclusion:

The messenger came seven hours after the time when the question was asked and had received the money and did not bring it [because] it was seized while at sea by order of the king who was the enemy of the querent.⁹⁵

The king in question could be Philip VI (r. 1328-1350), who faced several revolts in the first years of his reign, and the querent was probably a nobleman opposing him.

⁹² Et quia additum fuit in questione utrum apportaret pecuniam pro qua missus erat ad hoc aspexi utrum significator nuntii haberet aliquam applicationem ad dominum domus substantie et inveni Venerem significatricem nuntii separantem a sextili aspectu Saturni domini domus substantie significans hoc quod nuntius receperat pecuniam ab illo ad quem missus erat, NAL 398 f. 54vb.

⁹³ There are twenty degrees between Venus and the Sun, which hardly qualifies as 'under the rays'. See 'Under the rays' in Appendix I.

⁹⁴ Sed quia Venus infortunata fuit scilicet in opposito domus sue et exeundo de sub radiis Solis significabat hoc amissionem substantie sive pecunie, NAL 398 f. 54vb.

⁹⁵ Nuntius iste venit post 7 horas ab hora facte questionis et receperat et pecuniam et eam non apportavit, arrestata(?) erat in mari ex parte regis inimici querentis, Paris, BnF Lat. 7322, ff. 20v-21r.

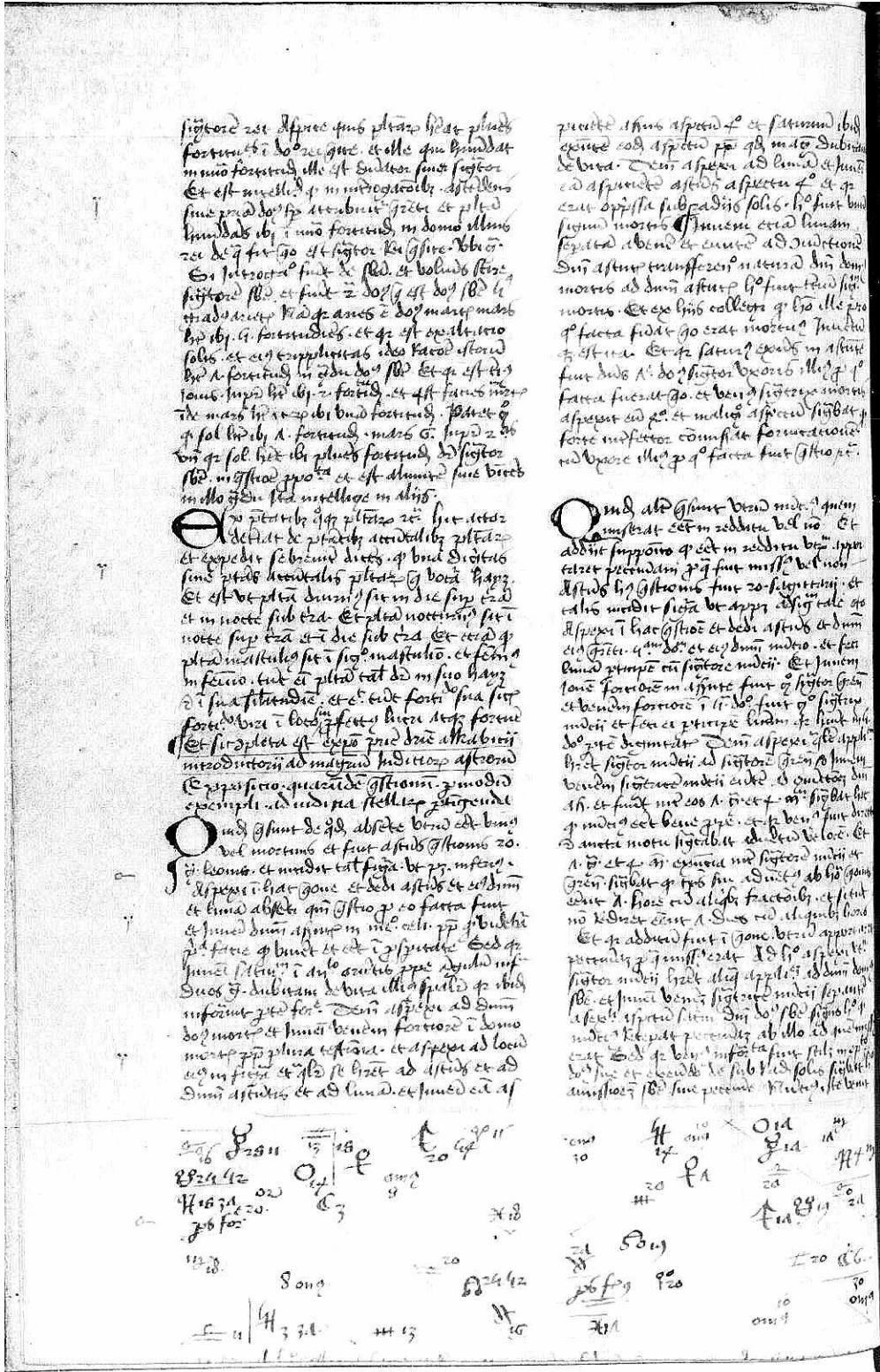


Figure 2 – Interrogations on NAL 398, f. 54v

Highlights

These judgements reveal the standard method for the judgement of interrogations, consisting of three main steps. The first, the identification of the significators and their evaluation, allows the astrologer to draw preliminary assumptions, much like a baseline for a final answer. These are then expanded in the second step, by adding other contributing factors, which either confirm or contradict the first assumptions. The third and final step is the answer to the question, which is deduced by considering all the aforementioned factors according to the rules of astrology. Both judgements in this section explain the whole process in detail, thereby emphasising the knowledge involved in astrological judgements. This three-step process also applies to revolutions and nativities since they are also based upon questions, much as in interrogations, but in these cases the question is implicit rather than explicit. For instance, in a revolution an inherent question would be ‘will the crops be good this year?’, while a nativity will naturally generate questions such as ‘what is this native’s character?’ or ‘what is the most suitable vocation for this person?’ (this will be explained further on).

The presence of the second interrogation in Belle’s notes, and its omission in the printed editions of the *Commentary*, published some decades later, illustrates the differences between manuscript and printed material: the former generated divergent copies, while the latter crystallized the doctrine into a single version, often abridged and simplified. This was caused by certain typographical limitations in the printing process and by the intention to reach a wider, probably less educated, section of the public. It also generated a significant difference between the astrologers who learned from manuscripts and those who learned exclusively from printed books: the first had access to much richer sources, often enlivened with additional commentaries, sidenotes and examples, most of which were lost in the printed editions. These factors combined may have contributed to the promotion of a less erudite kind of astrology.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ As stated by Boudet in *Entre science et nigromance*, pp. 325-333. For a discussion on the role of printed books in the populatization of astrological texts and almanacs, see Rivest, *Printing and Astrology in Early Modern France: Vernacular Almanac-Prognostications, 1497-1555*, MA Diss., Carleton, 2004, pp. 86-88, 181-186. For context, see also B. Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press. English Almanacs 1500-1800*, London, 1979, pp. 180-214.

II – REVOLUTIONS OF THE YEARS OF THE WORLD

The prognostication of collective events was one of the most complex applications of astrology. It required the application of a considerable number of techniques and involved the judgement of several horoscopes, such as the Sun's ingresses (*introitus*) into a sign, the lunations preceding the ingress, eclipses, and the conjunctions of the superior planets of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. It also included the judgement of comets and other phenomena.⁹⁷

This section includes two parts: the revolutions for the years 1293-1295, and the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425. In both cases, Belle chose to judge the horoscopes of events that happened long before his time and whose outcome was already known. He may have selected them as case studies precisely for this reason; in this way he could test his predicting techniques and compare them to the actual events, much like an experiment and part of a learning process.

⁹⁷ See 'Revolutions of the Year' in Appendix I.

1. Ingresses and lunations

This section includes seven judgements: one for the year 1293 (spring), four for 1294 (the four seasons), and two for 1295 (spring and summer). The first judgement is presented in detail, the others are abridged. Most of these horoscopes are taken from the *Almanac Planetarum* written by the thirteenth-century astrologer William of Saint-Cloud.⁹⁸ The judgements, however, are probably written by Belle, since the almanac includes only instructions for the use of the tables, not chart judgements.

These lunations encompass a period of two-and-a-half years, from spring 1293 to autumn 1295, during the reigns of Philip IV of France (1268-1314) and Edward I of England (1239-1307).⁹⁹ They also coincide with the the papal Interregnum (4 April 1292 to 5 July 1294) and the beginning of the papacy of Boniface VIII (1230-1303) marked by intense conflicts with Philip IV of France.

⁹⁸ I am grateful to David Juste, who called my attention to the connection between Belle's lunations and Saint-Cloud's writings, and generously shared information about the almanac. For details, see *The Astrological Autobiography of a Medieval Philosopher. Henry Bate's Nativitas (1280-81). Edited and introduced by Carlos Steel, Steven Vanden Broecke and David Juste, with the collaboration of Shlomo Sela*, Leuven, 2018, pp. 8-11. Saint-Cloud's tables can be found in Paris Bnf Lat. 16210 and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Lat. 4572.

⁹⁹ Regarding the role of astrology in politics, see for instance Vanden Broecke, 'Astrology and Politics', *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 193-232, and 'Self-governance and the body politic in annual prognostications', in C. Burnett, and D. G. Greenbaum, (eds), *From Masha'allah to Kepler*, pp. 491-512; see also Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*; Ryan, *A Kingdom of Stargazers*.

Lunations and revolutions of the year

The ‘revolution of the year’ is the moment when the Sun, having completed an entire circle around the Zodiac, returns to the sign of Aries. This horoscope, called the Aries ingress (*introitus*), determines the quality of the year from spring to spring: the weather, its effects on the crops and economy, and political, social, and cultural events.¹⁰⁰ Some astrologers, including Belle, preferred to judge from the lunations preceding the ingresses instead of the ingresses themselves, and some combined both; this is discussed at the end of this section. The table below summarizes the horoscopes in NAL 398.¹⁰¹

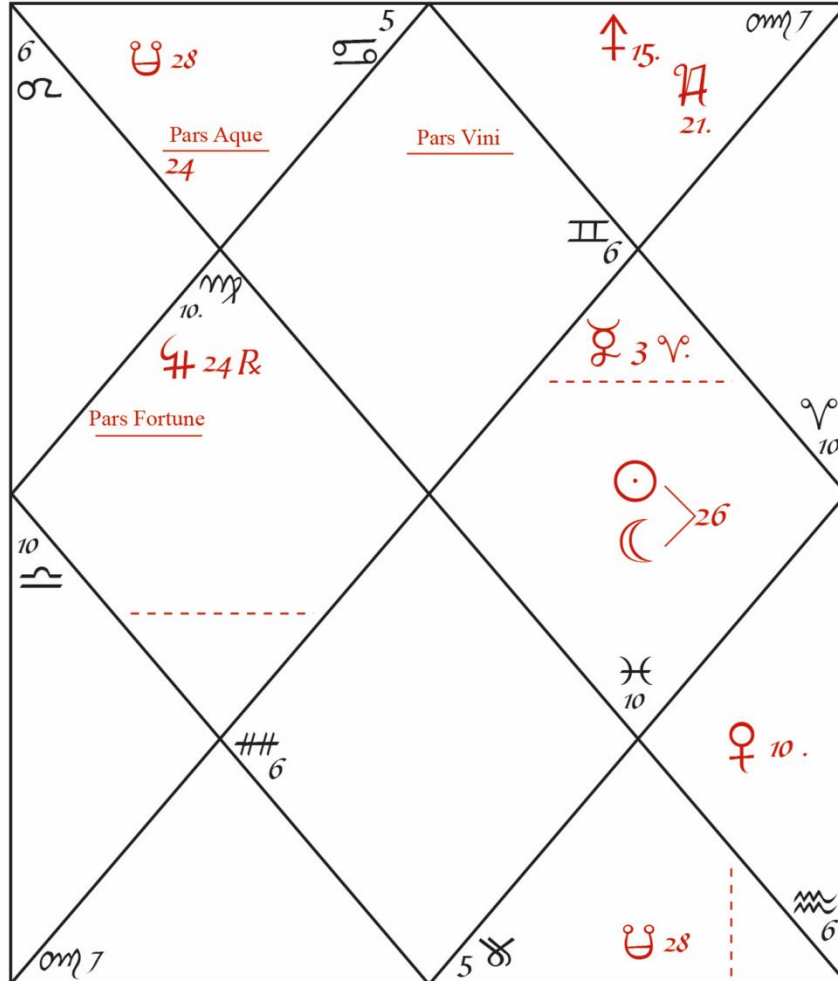
Table 4 – Lunations preceding ingress in NAL 398

Folia	Horoscope	Date
f. 73ra-73vb	New Moon before Aries ingress	9 March 1293
f. 73vb-74rb	Full Moon after Aries ingress	12 March 1294
f. 74rb-74vb	Full Moon (lunar eclipse) before Cancer ingress	09 June 1294
f. 74vb-75ra	Full Moon before Libra ingress	06 September 1294
f. 75ra-75vb	Full Moon (lunar eclipse) before Capricorn ingress	03 December 1294
f. 75vb-76ra	New Moon before Aries ingress	03 March 1295
f. 76ra-76va	Full Moon (lunar eclipse) before Cancer ingress	30 May 1295

¹⁰⁰ For more details, see ‘Revolutions’ in Appendix I.

¹⁰¹ In MS 1711 Belle includes the lunations before and after the ingresses and the ingresses themselves for the beginning of each season, as is discussed further on.

**Lunation preceding the Aries ingress (Spring equinox) 1293
NAL 398 f. 73ra:**



House I – 10° Virgo Pars Fortune (no degrees – 09° Virgo) Jupiter 24° retrograde	House VII – 10° Pisces Sun 26° Pisces Moon 26° Pisces Mercury 03° Aries
House II – 10° Libra	House VIII – 10° Aries
House III – 07° Scorpio	House IX – 07° Taurus Saturn 21° (should be 05° Taurus) Mars 15° Taurus
House IV – 06° Sagittarius	House X – 06° Gemini Pars Vini (no degree)
House V – 05° Capricorn South Node 28° Capricorn	House XI – 05° Cancer Pars Aque 25° North Node 28° Cancer
House VI – 06° Aquarius Venus 10° Aquarius	House XII – 06° Leo

This is a detailed judgement for the year 1293 beginning with the spring equinox, the ‘natural’ beginning of the year and comprising the four seasons.¹⁰²

Time of the true conjunction preceding the Sun’s ingress into Aries, year of the Lord 1293, 9 days, 4 hours, 28 minutes of the month of March.¹⁰³

The horoscope seems to be calculated for the latitude of Paris (48°51’N, 02°21E) and the judgement begins with the identification of the lord of the year, that is, the planet that is strongest in the horoscope:

Having considered all the planets, I find Mercury to have more virtues than the other planets because it is the lord of the house and of the exaltation degree. Therefore, it is the ruler of the year.¹⁰⁴

Mercury rules the Ascendant both by domicile and by exaltation and thus accumulates more dignities than any other planet.

And because it is in the seventh exiting from under the rays [of the Sun], strong, direct and in fast movement, I say that the year will be good and there will be much cereal and it will be sold at moderate prices, because it is in the seventh [house].¹⁰⁵

The potentially negative condition of Mercury ‘under the rays’ is hardly mentioned because the planet is seven degrees distant from the Sun and moving away it. This differs from the criterion used in the second interrogation (f. 54vb), copied from the John of Saxony’s *Commentary*, where Venus was twenty degrees from the Sun but still considered ‘under the rays’. This difference may derive from the context of each planet: Mercury is naturally dry, which keeps it from being overly harmed by the proximity of the Sun, while Venus is a moist, nocturnal planet, and therefore vulnerable to damage by its proximity to the Sun; also, it is exiled in Scorpio, thus further weakening its condition. This also illustrates the differences between authors.

As Mercury is considered strong, Belle makes a general assumption that the year will be good and that there will be plenty of food. The judgement mentions different types of food – cereal, meat, milk, fish, and vegetables – all of which require a planetary signifier; some of the correlations derive from the planet’s nature, others from the house or the sign where it is placed.¹⁰⁶ As cereals played a crucial role in

¹⁰² A similar horoscope (without the lots) can be found in Paris, BnF, Lat. 16210 f. 2vg, a copy of Saint-Cloud’s *Almanac Planetarum*. It includes references to the Cancer and Capricorn *introitus* for 1293, (f. 6v and 11v), but not the respective horoscopes and judgements.

¹⁰³ Tempus vere coniunctionis precedentis introitum Solis in Arietem anno domini 1293, 9 dies 4 hore, 28 minuti, mensis Martis, f. 73ra.

¹⁰⁴ Planetis omnibus consideratis invenio Mercurium plures habere virtutes quam alius planeta quia est dominus domus et exaltationis. Ergo est dominus anni, f. 73ra.

¹⁰⁵ Et quia est in septima exiens de subradiis fortis directus et velox cursu dico quod annus erit bonus et erit copia bladi et vendetur mediocriter quia est in 7^a, f. 73ra.

¹⁰⁶ See ‘The signifier’ in Appendix I.

medieval nourishment they are addressed first. Mercury is chosen as their significator for being the lord of the year and ruler of the Ascendant, and Jupiter is added for being conjunct to the Ascendant.

Jupiter in the Ascendant signifies the health of the people for the most part and much cereal. But because it is retrograde in the domicile opposing its own, peregrine in its place, it [the cereal] will not be expensive.¹⁰⁷

Jupiter, the greater benefic, is angular, thus bringing health and abundance, but these beneficial effects are diminished by several debilitating conditions: retrogradation, exile ('in the domicile opposing its own', that is, in Virgo), and peregrine, that is, with no essential dignities in that place.¹⁰⁸ This leads to the conclusion that, though abundant, the cereal is 'corrupted', that is, improper for consumption.

Because Jupiter is retrograde, the substance of cereal will be corrupted. You should also make the horoscopes of the conjunction and of the opposition, whichever will agree, and you should say whether Jupiter or Mercury, or both, are strong in these horoscopes, and if the Moon aspecting them.¹⁰⁹

The passages 'you should also make the horoscopes' and 'you should say' seem to be a generic use of the second person, like those in rules and prescriptions. This could be simply a common use, or it could suggest a teacher-student context. Since Belle seems to be the author of these judgements, this could hint at his intention to use them as examples for students.

The poor quality of the cereal in this horoscope urges the astrologer to analyse the subsequent lunations in search of ameliorating factors, such as Jupiter and Mercury. After the cereals, the judgement turns to another kind of food, meat:

Mars in the ninth shows meat of good market, as that of cows, sheep and pigs. Saturn in the ninth signifies the same, when is ruler of the sixth and it is peregrine and these animals are sold better when Saturn and Jupiter are oriental and strong in the figures of the conjunction and opposition.¹¹⁰

Mars and Saturn are both taken as significators of meat in this horoscope, though for different reasons. For Mars, the correlation is due to the planet's nature: a hot and dry planet signifying strife and blood, connected to the colour red and, therefore, to meat.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Jupiter in ascendente significat sanitatem populi ut plurimum vel multitudinem bladi. Sed quia est retrogradus in opposito domus sue peregrinus in loco suo non erit carum, f. 73ra.

¹⁰⁸ See 'Dignities' in Appendix I.

¹⁰⁹ Quia Jupiter est retrogradus substantia bladi corrumpetur debes etiam facere figuras coniunctionis et oppositionis utrum concordabunt et hoc tibi dicendum utrum Jupiter aut Mercurius aut ambo sunt fortes in illis figuris et si Luna est in aspectu eorum, f. 73rb.

¹¹⁰ Mars in 9^a ostendit carnes ad bonum forum scilicet bonum pecudum et porcorum. Idem significat Saturnus in 9^a quando est dominus 6 et est peregrinus et hec animalia melius vendentur quando Saturnus et Jupiter erunt orientales et fortes in figuris coniunctionis vel oppositionis, f. 73rb.

¹¹¹ For the attributes of Mars see for instance Alcabitus, *Introduction*, II.13-17, pp. 69-71.

For Saturn, the connection is due to the planet's rulership over the sixth house in this horoscope, which signifies, among other things, farm animals.¹¹² The judgement then proceeds to other topics relating to milk, wool, fabrics, and medicines.

Venus in the sixth in its own term: the animals producing milk are good and useful, and wool and fabrics, and medicines will not be expensive.¹¹³

Venus signifies milk and wool in this horoscope both because of its position and its nature. It is in the sixth house of animals and is thus chosen as their significator. It is also a moderate and feminine planet, which further reinforces its connection to these products, which are obtained from domestic animals without killing them. As to the fabrics, possibly made of wool, the signification derives again from the nature of Venus, the planet of beauty and pleasures.¹¹⁴ In the case of medicines, the connection comes again from both the planet's nature and its position: being a benefic, it signifies cures and health and being in the sixth house of illnesses it suggests healing. In any of these cases, the good condition of Venus indicates the good quality of these commodities.¹¹⁵ After addressing these issues, his judgement turns to another important source of nourishment and trade, that of fish.

The Moon with the Sun in an aquatic sign means that the sea will be good and the fish will be sold at a moderate price. Similarly, it signifies an abundance of rain whenever they are strong in the horoscopes of the conjunction and of the opposition and aspecting the Ascendant and to Venus.¹¹⁶

As both luminaries are 'in an aquatic sign', Pisces, they are taken as signifiers of the abundance of fish. Here, the attribution is due to the importance of the luminaries in a horoscope: the presence of the Sun and the Moon in any given sign enhances whatever that sign signifies. Additionally, the conjunction of the luminaries in Pisces suggests the abundance of rain. The judgement then returns to the lord of the year, Mercury, which is strong enough to guarantee the quality of the cattle and the cereal:

Mercury, lord of the year in the seventh, means good sheep and that they are sold at a moderate price and the new cereal will be healthy.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Saturn is associated with husbandry, and specifically with cattle. See for instance Albiruni, *Instruction*, 418, which associates Saturn with 'oxen, goats, horses, sheep'.

¹¹³ Venus in 6 in terminis propriis animalia lac facientia erunt bona et utilia et lana et panni et apothecaria non erunt cara, f. 73rb.

¹¹⁴ For the attributes of Venus see Alcabitius, *Introduction*, II.25-30, pp. 75-77.

¹¹⁵ Venus at 10° Aquarius is 'in its own term' in the Egyptian table of terms, the one more frequently used in this period, as stated by Boudet in *La recueil*, II, p. 31. See 'Term' in Appendix I.

¹¹⁶ Luna cum Sole in signo aquatico significat quod mare erit bonum et Pisces vendentur mediocriter. Similiter significat habundantiam pluviarum quotiens scilicet fuerit fortis in figuris coniunctionum vel oppositionum et in aspectu ascendentis et Veneris, 73rb.

¹¹⁷ Mercurius vero dominus anni in 7^a significat oves bonas et quod vendentur mediocriter. Et bladam novum sanum erit, f. 73rb.

The judgement then returns to Venus to discuss its other significations:

Because Venus is in the sixth house and the [Dragon's] Tail in the fifth, there will not be in this year many celebrations or feasts in comparison to other years. Yet, the servants and maids will be good and the illnesses will for the most part be from too much eating and drinking, and filling of the stomach continuously and from abundance of humours, because Venus is in an aerial and fixed sign.¹¹⁸

The assembling of feasts, servants and illnesses in the same paragraph might seem strange but is consistent with astrological rules. Venus, the natural significator of pleasurable activities in the sixth house of illnesses, associates the celebrations with their unpleasant consequences. This is further reinforced by the presence of the Dragon's Tail in the fifth house of pleasures, which has a diminishing effect in these matters.¹¹⁹ In this case, the judgement was obtained by the combination of significators of different types – a planet and a house – which reinforce each other due to their concomitant significations: Venus, the planet of pleasures placed in an unfavourable house, and the fifth house of pleasures containing a restrictive factor (the Dragon's Tail). As to servants and infirmities, both subjects of the sixth house, they are in good condition in this year because of the presence of Venus in that house; even if infirmities are prolonged by an excess of pleasant activities: 'too much eating and drinking, and filling of the stomach continuously'.

But the infirmities for the most part will be healed because Mars is in the ninth [house] cadent and moves towards the opposition of Jupiter.¹²⁰

The promise of a cure is deduced from the condition of Mars, but the reference to its opposition to Jupiter is probably a slip of the pen, since Mars moves towards a trine not an opposition, of Jupiter, thus moderating its negative effects. Still within the subjects pertaining to the ninth house the judgement moves on to travel.

[If] Venus aspects Mars, and Mars is in the ninth and Saturn similarly, it will be dangerous to travel by sea and by land, because the ships will be broken up and looted, and the pirates will reign.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Quia Venus est in 6 et cauda in 5 non sunt in hoc anno multa festa nec convivia per comparacionem ad alios annos. Tamen servi et ancille erunt boni et infirmitates erunt ut plurimum longe ex nimia comestione et potu et repletione stomachi continue et ex habundantia humorum quia Venus est in signo aereo firmo, f. 73rb.

¹¹⁹ See 'Lunar Nodes' in Appendix I.

¹²⁰ Sed infirmitates ut plurimum erunt sanate quia Mars est in 9^a cadens et vadit ad oppositionem Jovis, f. 73rb.

¹²¹ Venus Martem respicit et Mars est in 9^a et Saturnus similiter periculosum erit ire per mare et per terram quoniam naves frangentur et derobabuntur et predones regnabunt, 73rb.

The Latin term meaning ‘to be looted’, *derobabuntur*, can be found in Haly Abenragel’s *Libro Conplido* in a similar context, suggesting that Belle may have used this author as one of the sources for this judgement.¹²²

The problems with travel derive from the natures of the malefics placed in the ninth house: Saturn is related to shipwrecks and Mars to violence such as piracy; the square aspect of Venus, ruler of the ninth, further aggravates this.¹²³ Although Venus is in essence a benefic planet, its aspects being therefore positive, its position in the sixth house together with the difficult nature of the square aspect gives it an adverse significance. In this case, the negative result is taken not from any particular factor but from the whole configuration.

And similarly, soldiers and noblemen will travel because of Mars in the ninth, and [Mars] itself is lord of the third and aspects the Ascendant. And there will be a discussion over the king of the Jews and over their faith.¹²⁴

Mars, a natural significator of the military, rules the third house of short journeys and it is placed in the ninth house of long journeys, thus reinforcing the signification of travel that these houses have in common.¹²⁵ The ‘discussion about the king of the Jews’ may result from the presence of Saturn, the planet traditionally related to the Jews, in the ninth house of religion.¹²⁶ In the period encompassed by this judgement, the long-standing tension between Christians and Jews was going through a temporary truce: King Philip IV had decreed that the Jews were not to be imprisoned by order of the inquisitors if there were no accusation against them.¹²⁷ The said discussion may be

¹²² Haly Abenragel, *Preclarissimus in Judiciis Astrorum Albohazen Haly filius Abrenragel Noviter Impressum et fideliter emendatum, etc.*, s.l., 1503, I, pp. 50v, 54. See also C. Burnett, ‘Cleaning up the Latin Language in Mid-Sixteenth-Century Basel: Antonius Stuppa’s purgation of Albohazen’s *De iudiciis astrorum*’, *Centri e periferie nella storia del pensiero filosofico*, (unpublished paper given at the conference).

¹²³ For Saturn and shipwreck see for instance S. Sela (ed.), *Abraham ibn Ezra, The Book of the World. A Parallel Hebrew-English Critical Edition of the Two Versions of the Text*, Leiden, 2010, p. 81: ‘Saturn portends diseases, baseless hatred, disputes, the destruction of places, and the sinking of ships’. For Mars and piracy, see S. Sela, *Abraham ibn Ezra on Interrogations and Medical Astrology*, Leiden, New York and Cologne, 2011, p. 64: ‘Mars indicates pirates and highwaymen’.

¹²⁴ Et similiter viabunt milites et nobiles propter Martem in 9^a et ipse est dominus 3^a et aspicit ascendens. Et fiet sermo super regem iudeorum et super fidem eorum, f. 73rb.

¹²⁵ For the meanings of the houses see Alcabitius, *Introduction*, pp. 49-55.

¹²⁶ The association between Jews and Saturn is stated in Avenezra, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, Mansfield, 1939, p. 194, S. Sela, *Abraham ibn Ezra and the rise of Medieval Hebrew Science*, Leiden-Boston, 2013, pp. 151-158 and in S. Sela, *Abraham ibn Ezra on Nativities and Continuous Horoscopy*, Leiden and Oslo, 2014, p. 32. Haly Abenragel states that Saturn is ‘under Jewish law’ (*so ley iudiega*), *El Libro Conplido*, I, 4, p. 12. See also S. Sela, *Abraham ibn Ezra and the Rise of Medieval Hebrew Science*, Leiden, 2003, pp. 151-158, G. F. Vescovinni, ‘The Theological Debate’, *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 108-109 and M. Idel, *Saturn’s Jews: On the Witches’ Sabbath and Sabbateanism*, London, 2011, pp. 7-9.

¹²⁷ This put an end to the active persecution that the Jews had suffered since 1273, when Pope Gregory X ordained that relapsed Jews were to be treated as heretics. But this unstable peace was short-lived: in 1299 the king cancelled this injunction, and in 1306 he ordered their expulsion.

related to these orders, or to those who disagreed with them. The conflicts in the field of religion were also felt within Christianity:

Similarly, Mars and Saturn in the ninth indicate impediment and discord in the Church for the most part, and the defection of an important prelate.¹²⁸

This is probably a reference to the papal interregnum that occurred after the death of Pope Nicholas IV on 5 April 1292, as mentioned before. In the period encompassed by this judgement, March to June 1293, almost a year had passed, and the college of cardinals still had not agreed on the papal nominee.¹²⁹ The ‘defection of an important prelate’ may refer to the loss of Cardinal Jean Cholet, who died during this period.¹³⁰ The judgement resumes the discussion of food and drink and introduces the lots.¹³¹

And because the Lot of Wine is in the tenth and Mercury its ruler in the seventh, wine will abound, and they will be good because Venus aspects the part and this ruler. Similarly, beans, peas and chickpeas and barley [will be sold] at a moderate price.¹³²

The Lot of Wine is angular and therefore strong in this horoscope, as is its ruler, Mercury, and points to abundance and good quality; this is further reinforced by the aspect of Venus to both the part itself and to its ruler. In this case, the placement of Venus in the sixth house does not seem to impair its benefits. The positive judgement also applies to grains which, because of their abundance, only reach a moderate price at the market. After some comments about food, the topic of the markets is resumed:

The Head [of the Dragon] in the eleventh signifies that trade will be good but merchants will not make the profit they expected because Venus lady of the second is in the sixth, and because of this, most profit will be from animals.¹³³

The eleventh house of hopes benefits from the Head of the Dragon placed therein, but its beneficence is somewhat diminished by the weak position of Venus in the sixth. Venus is included in this consideration because it is the ruler of the second house of wealth, although it is not directly related to the eleventh house, nor to the Tail of the Dragon. As the ruler of the second is placed in the sixth, the profits come from animals, which pertain to the sixth house. This shows how several parts of the horoscope can be

¹²⁸ Similiter Mars et Saturnus in 9^a designant impedimentum et discordiam in ecclesia et plurima et defeccio prelati principalis, f. 73rb.

¹²⁹ The election dragged on for a total of two years and three months until, until 5 July 1294.

¹³⁰ For Cardinal Cholet’s life, see F. Duchesne, *Histoire de tous les cardinaux François de naissance*, Paris, 1660, pp. 291–301.

¹³¹ See ‘Lots’ in Appendix I.

¹³² Et quia pars vini est in 10 et Mercurius dominus eius in angulo 7e vinum habundabit et erunt bona quoniam Venus aspicit partem et dominus eius. Similiter fave pisa cicerones et ordium mediocriter, f. 73rb-f.73va.

¹³³ Caput in 11 significat quod mercancia erunt bona tamen mercatores non tantum lucrabuntur [quantum] oppinabuntur quia Venus domina 2^o est in 6 et propter hoc maius lucrum erit animalibus, f. 73va.

brought together to answer an implicit question – in this case ‘how will the finances be?’ The recurrent allusions to Venus in various contexts illustrate how a planet can be taken as significator of different things: some by the planet’s nature, others by its placement, yet others by its rulership over certain houses. The judgement then turns to the political sphere, namely the kingdom of France.

Mercury, Lord of the Ascendant and tenth being in the seventh and in a mobile and fiery sign signifies that the lord of the region, that is France, should go a long distance towards the borders of his kingdom, or that another great person sent by him should go, and at least there will be discussion about this, since Mercury departs from the aspect of Venus which is the lady of the ninth. It seems also that he should be sick, since Venus is in the sixth.¹³⁴

Mercury is the ruler of both the signs on the Ascendant (Virgo) and the Midheaven (Gemini), thus representing respectively both the general condition of the year and the condition of the king. As it is in sextile to Venus, the ruler of the ninth house of journeys, it is concluded that the king (or someone in his name) will make a journey ‘to the borders of his kingdom’. This long sentence brings together several concepts: the placement of Mercury in Aries, a mobile and fiery sign and associated with royalty suggesting movement of a noble or royal person, and its position in the ninth house indicates a journey.¹³⁵ Therefore, the king or ‘another great person sent by him’ would travel or there would be some ‘discussion about this’. The latter is taken primarily from the natural meaning of Mercury: messengers and messages. In this period, France was on the verge of war with England following the failure of peace negotiations. The sextile between Mercury and Venus suggests both journeys and illnesses because Venus is placed in the ninth house of journeys and rules the sixth house of illnesses.

It might be because of soldiers, and Saturn shows the same, [because it is] ruler of the sixth, in aspect to the Ascendant in a fixed sign, [it means] that the infirmities will be long and caused by cold humours.¹³⁶

The presence of the malefics in the ninth house suggests unpleasant effects according to the distempered nature of each planet: hot Mars signifies war and bloodshed, while cold Saturn brings illness caused by ‘cold humours’. The latter is more damaging in this case due to its rulership over the sixth house of illness. The other aggravating factors, ‘in aspect to the Ascendant in a fixed sign’, apply to both planets.

¹³⁴ Mercurius dominus ascendentis et 10 existens in 7 et in signo mobili et igneo significat quod dominus regionis hoc est Francie debeat ire longe versus extremitatem sui regni vel alius magnus missus ab eo et saltem fiet sermo de hoc quoniam Mercurius vadit ad aspectum Veneris que est domina 9e. Videtur etiam quod debeat esse infirmus cum Venus sit in sexta, f. 73va.

¹³⁵ See for instance Albiruni, *Instruction*, 360, mentioning Leo and Sagittarius as signs bestowing ‘kingly manners’.

¹³⁶ Sit occasione militum et similiter ostendit Saturnus dominus sexte in aspectu ascendentis in signo firmo quod infirmitates erunt longe et ex frigidis humoribus, f. 73va.

And Mars in a fixed sign signifies this, i.e., length of the infirmities, and because they are occidental, their signification will occur after the third quarter of the year, or close to it.¹³⁷

This introduces the notion of occidentality, that is, the position of the planet in relation to the Sun, as a factor of timing the occurrence of illnesses.¹³⁸

And you should know that this judgement falls properly over the land whose latitude is forty-eight degrees and fifty minutes, especially over those whose nativities are naturally prone to these accidents.¹³⁹

These predictions are particularly significant for the latitude of Paris (48°51'N) for which the horoscope is calculated. The effects will be felt by all the inhabitants of said latitude, but especially by those whose horoscopes hint at a predisposition to these kinds of events. The judgement then turns to the timing of events and suggests the calculation of horoscopes for each season to determine greater accuracy.

And to know in which time these things will happen, make other horoscopes of the other quarters [of the year] and the horoscopes of the [respective] conjunctions and oppositions, and see how the signifiers of those things that I have said will be in the horoscopes.¹⁴⁰

Belle is being thorough, as not all authors deem it necessary to take into consideration that four ingresses of the year; some consider only the spring ingress.¹⁴¹ The judgement ends with general considerations about the weather.

Mars in aspect to the Ascendant and Venus signifies much thunder and lightning, however they will nor have any strength in the air because [Mars] is in a cold and dry sign and the Ascendant is similar. Accordingly, there will be few scintillations nor *assuhub* [shooting stars] due to the same cause.¹⁴²

Mars is associated with lightning and bad weather because of its hot and dry nature, but its placement in an earthy (thus, cold and dry) sign, Taurus, moderates these unpleasant effects; it reduces the occurrence of 'scintillations' and *assuhub*, that is, shooting stars,

¹³⁷ Et hoc significat Mars in signo firmo scilicet longitudinem infirmitatum et quia sunt occidentales eorum significatio erit post tertiam quartam anni vel circiter, f. 73va.

¹³⁸ See 'Oriental and Occidental' in Appendix I.

¹³⁹ Et scias quod istud iudicium cadit proprie supra terram cuius latitudo est 48 gradus 50 minuta generaliter et specialiter super illos quorum nativitates sunt ad hec accidentia naturaliter disposite, f. 73va.

¹⁴⁰ Et ad sciendum tempus in quo huiusmodi res evenient facies figuras aliarum quartarum et figuras coniunctionis et oppositionis et videas quomodo significatores rerum que dixi erunt in figuris., f. 73va.

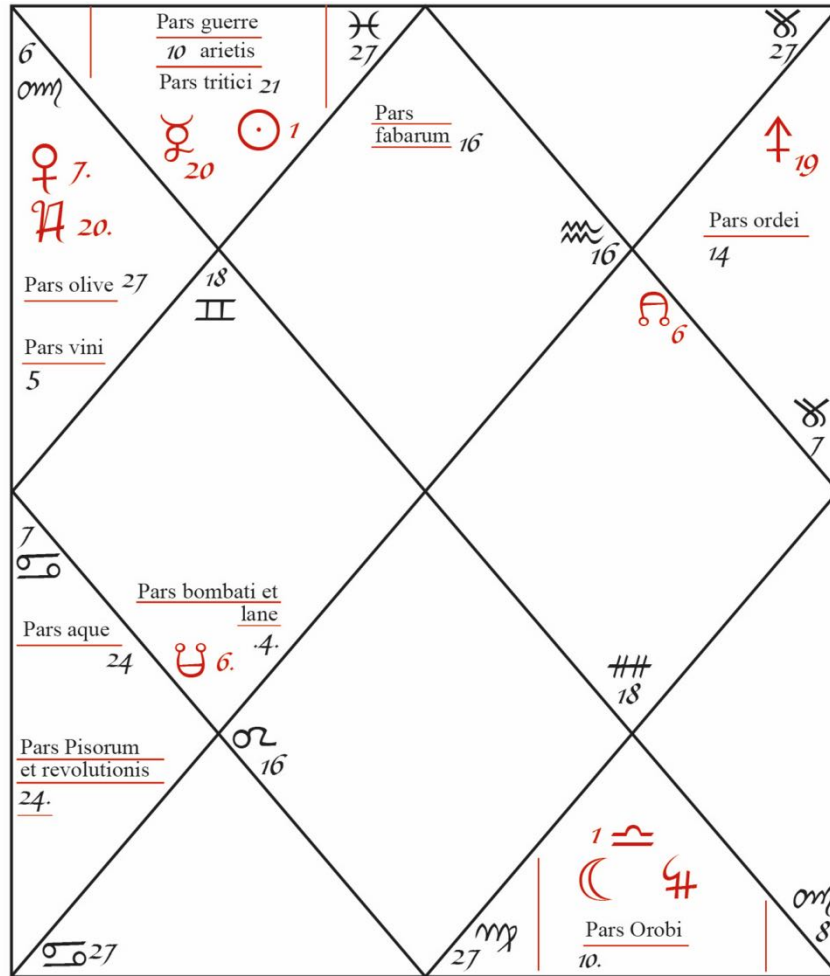
¹⁴¹ See 'Revolutions' in Appendix I and B. Dykes (ed. and tr.), *Works of Sahl and Masha'allah*, Golden Valley, 2008, p. 328.

¹⁴² Mars in aspectu ascendentis et Venus significat tonitrua multa et coruscationes tamen non valebit eis per aera quia est in signo frigido et sicco et ascendens similiter. Conformiter pauce erunt sintilationes nec *assuhub* propter eadem causam, f. 73vb.

also associated with heat, since they were thought to originate in the sphere of fire surrounding the Earth.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ See *Abū Ma'shar, On Historical Astrology: The Book of Religions and Dynasties (on the Great Conjunctions)*, II, p. 296 and n. 32; D. Lindberg, *Roger Bacon and the Origins of Perspective in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1996, p. 201, Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus*, I, R. B. Burke (ed.), Philadelphia, 1928, p. 520, and the reference to 'assub descendant' and 'assub montant' in 'La météorologie en français au Moyen-Âge (XIII^e-XIV^e siècles)', *Le temps qu'il fait au Moyen Âge: phénomènes atmosphériques dans la littérature, la pensée scientifique et religieuse*, J. Ducos and C. Thomasset, Paris, 1998, p. 432.

**Lunation following the Aries ingress (Spring equinox) 1294
NAL 398 f. 73vb**



House I – Gemini 18°	House VII – Sagittarius 18°
Pars Bombati and Lane 04° Cancer	
House II – 7° Cancer	House VIII – 07° Capricorn
Pars Aque 24°	Pars Ordei
Pars Pisorum et Revolutionis	Mars 19° Capricorn
House III – 27° Cancer	House IX – 27° Capricorn
House IV – 16° Leo	House X – 16° Aquarius
	Pars Fabarum 16° Aquarius
House V – 27° Virgo	House XI – 27° Pisces
Moon Libra 01°	Sun 01° Aries
Jupiter Libra	Pars Guerre 10° Aries
Pars Orobi	Pars Tritici 21° Aries
	Mercury 20° Aries
House VI – 08° Scorpio	House XII – 08° Taurus
	Venus 07° Taurus [5° rule]
	Saturn 20° Taurus
	Pars Olive
	Pars Vini 05° Gemini

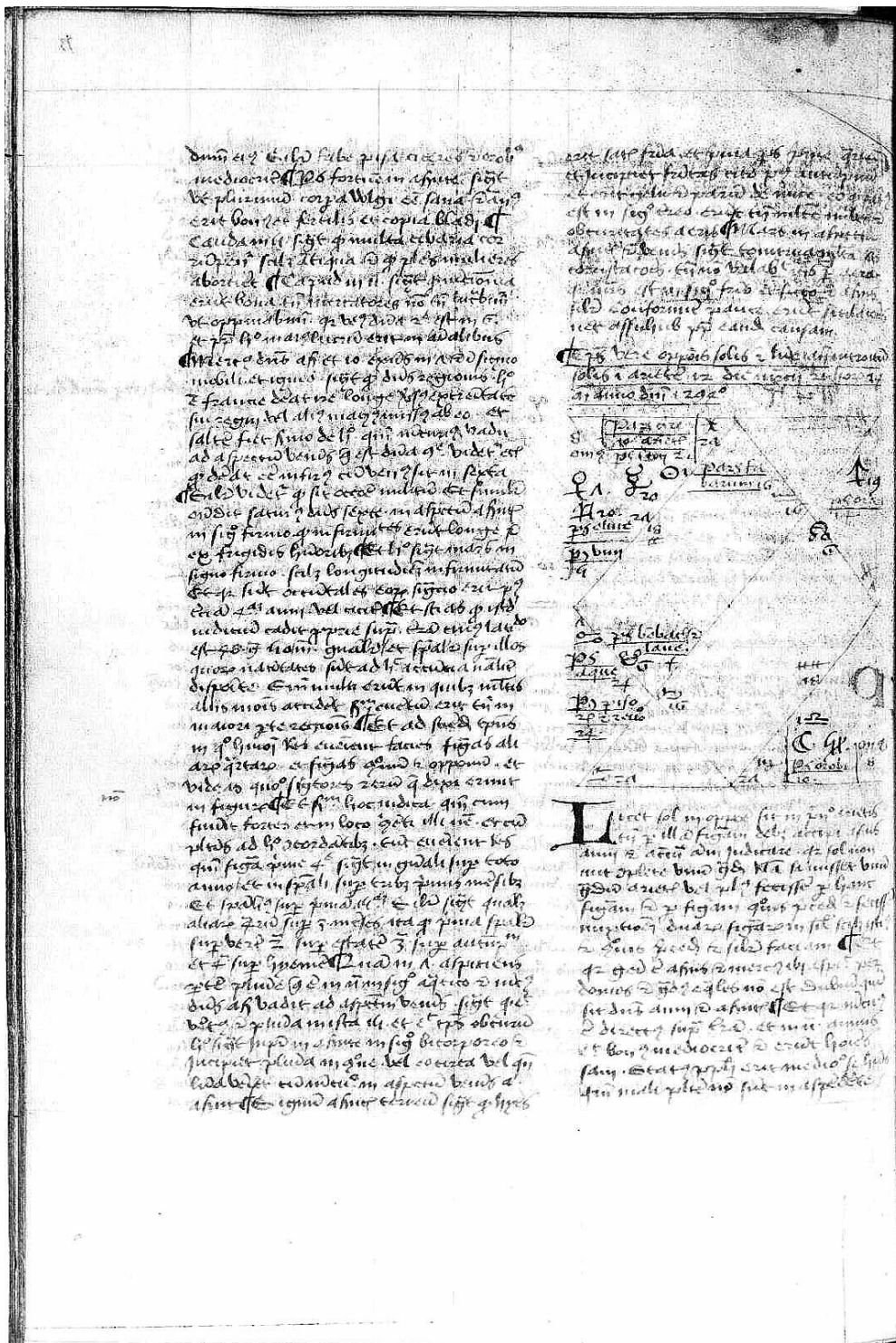


Figure 4 – NAL 398, folio 73v

This judgement and the three that follow it, one for each season, offer an overview of the year 1294.¹⁴⁴ The present horoscope is the lunation preceding the Sun's ingress into Aries; it sets the conditions for the entire year, while the others offer more detail for each season. As the Ascendant is in the double sign of Gemini the rules state that it would be necessary to calculate only two horoscopes: this and the one for the lunation preceding the ingress in Libra.¹⁴⁵ However, the astrologer decided to calculate all four horoscopes, possibly in the hope of obtaining more detail. The title states:

The time of the true opposition of the Sun and the Moon [after] the ingress in Aries, 12 days of March, twenty-one hours, fourteen minutes, year of the Lord 1294.¹⁴⁶

Interestingly, this is not the lunation that preceded the ingress, but the one that followed it and the reasons for this choice are explained in detail:

Although the Sun in opposition [to the Moon] is in the beginning of Aries, we should nevertheless accept this horoscope as the Ascendant of the year, and judge from the testimony of the year, because the Sun had not completed one degree, for if it had moved one degree of Aries or more, I would have made [the judgement] by this horoscope, and by the one of the preceding conjunction, and I would have mixed the two horoscopes together, that is, of this figure and of the preceding conjunction, and I will do the same.¹⁴⁷

This lunation was chosen because it occurred immediately after the ingress by less than a day, whereas the previous lunation had occurred two weeks before the ingress on 26 February. However, Belle did not discard the previous lunation altogether, instead he took both horoscopes into consideration, again suggesting that the astrologer may occasionally adapt the rules to suit particular situations.¹⁴⁸ The judgement follows the usual sequence of topics: identification of the Lord of the year, followed by information about the weather, the health of the people, the quality of food, beverages, and textiles. It also includes the Lot of War (*pars guerre*), thus hinting at the underlying concerns of the astrologer, which are revealed by the opening comments:

¹⁴⁴ The Head and Tail of the Dragon are missing; a similar horoscope can be found in Paris, BnF, Lat. 16210 f. 14v.

¹⁴⁵ See 'Revolutions of the Year' in Appendix I.

¹⁴⁶ Tempus vere oppositionis Solis et Lune [ante? sic for 'after'] introitum Solis in Arietem 12 die Marcii 21 hora 14 minuto anno domini 1294, f. 73vb.

¹⁴⁷ Licet Sol in oppositione sit in principio Arietis tamen per illam figuram debet accipi ascensus anni et a testimonio anni iudicare quia Sol non ivit complete unum gradum nam si ivisset unum gradum Arietis vel plus fecissem per hanc figuram et per figuram coniunctionis precedentis et fecissem mixtionem duarum figurarum in simul scilicet istius et coniunctionis precedentis, et similiter faciam, f. 73vb.

¹⁴⁸ This is also the case of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425, discussed in the next section.

Because Mercury, Lord of the Ascendant, is in aspect to Mars and in the eighth, it means that the people will be in great thought about wars and combats and death, because Mercury is separated from Mars.¹⁴⁹

Mercury as ruler of the Ascendant signifies the people and it is the natural significator of thought. It separates from Mars, the significator of war, suggesting that war will be on the minds of the people, and also death because Mars is placed in the eighth house of death. The year 1294 was marked by the beginning of open hostilities between England and France.

Saturn, ruler of the tenth, in the twelfth signifies that the king and those who pretend to be kings will be hated by the people.¹⁵⁰

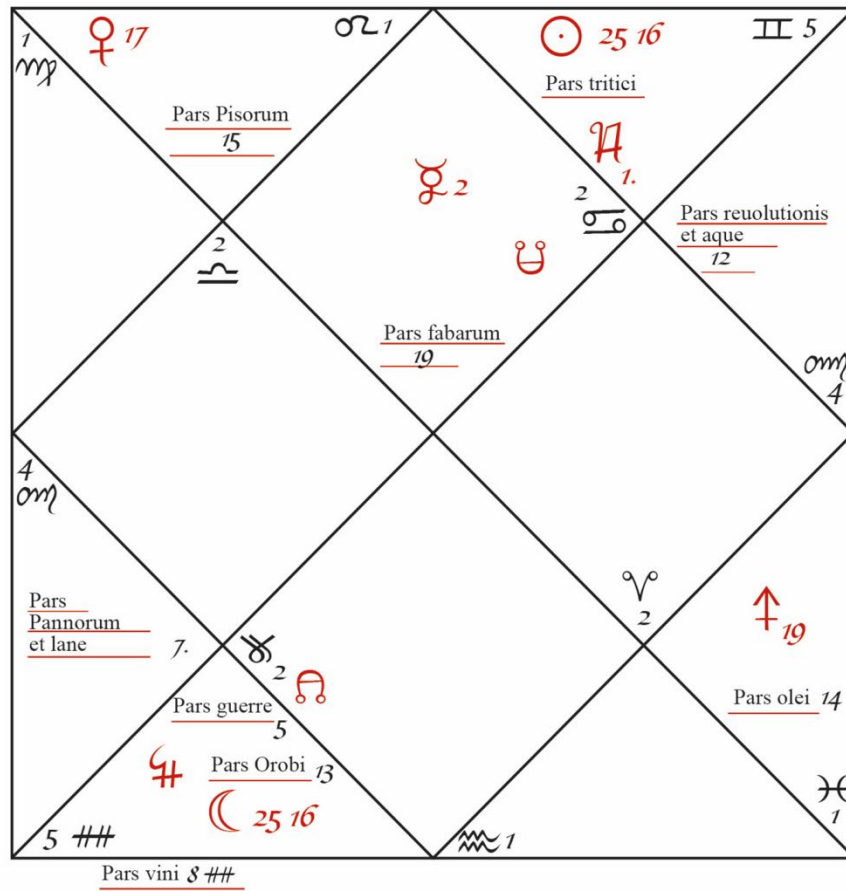
The presence of Saturn (lord of the tenth house of kings) in the twelfth suggests treason and hidden actions.¹⁵¹ The reference to ‘those who pretend to be kings’ may be directed to Edward I who was both king of England and duke of Aquitaine. For King Philip IV of France, it would be more convenient to ignore the first title and acknowledge only the second, thus reducing Edward to the status of a vassal. On the other hand, this may also be an allusion to the Count of Flanders, Guy Dampierre (c. 1226-1305), who in 1294 unsuccessfully attempted to arrange a marriage between his daughter, Phillipa, and King Edward’s son. In any case, the situation is averse to those who hold power.

¹⁴⁹ Sed quia Mercurius dominus ascendentis est in aspectu Martis et in 8 significat quod populus erit in magnis cogitationibus propter guerras et bellum et mortem quia Mercurius separatus est a Marte, f. 74ra.

¹⁵⁰ Saturnus dominus 10 in 12^a significat quod rex vel ille qui se nominat de regno erit populo odiosus, f. 74rb.

¹⁵¹ See Alcabitius, *Introduction*, I.68, p. 55: ‘the twelfth is the place of enemies, misfortune, sadness, grief, envy, slander, cunning, stratagem’.

Lunation preceding the Cancer ingress (Summer solstice) 1294, lunar eclipse
NAL 398 f. 74rb



House I – 02° Libra	House VII – 02° Aries
House II – 04° Scorpio Pars Pannorum et Lane 07° Scorpio	House VIII – 04° Taurus Pars Revolutionis et Aque 12° Taurus
House III – 05° Sagittarius Pars Guerre 05° Sagittarius Pars Vini 8° Sagittarius Jupiter Pars Orobi 13° Sagittarius Moon 25°16' Sagittarius	House IX – 05° Gemini Sun 25°16' Gemini Pars Tritici Saturn 1° Cancer
House IV – 02° Capricorn	House X – 02° Cancer Mercury 2° Cancer Pars Fabarum 19° Cancer
House V – 01° Aquarius	House XI – 01° Leo Pars Pisorum 15° Leo Venus 17° Leo
House VI – 01° Pisces Pars Olei 14° Pisces Mars 19° Pisces	House XII – 01° Virgo

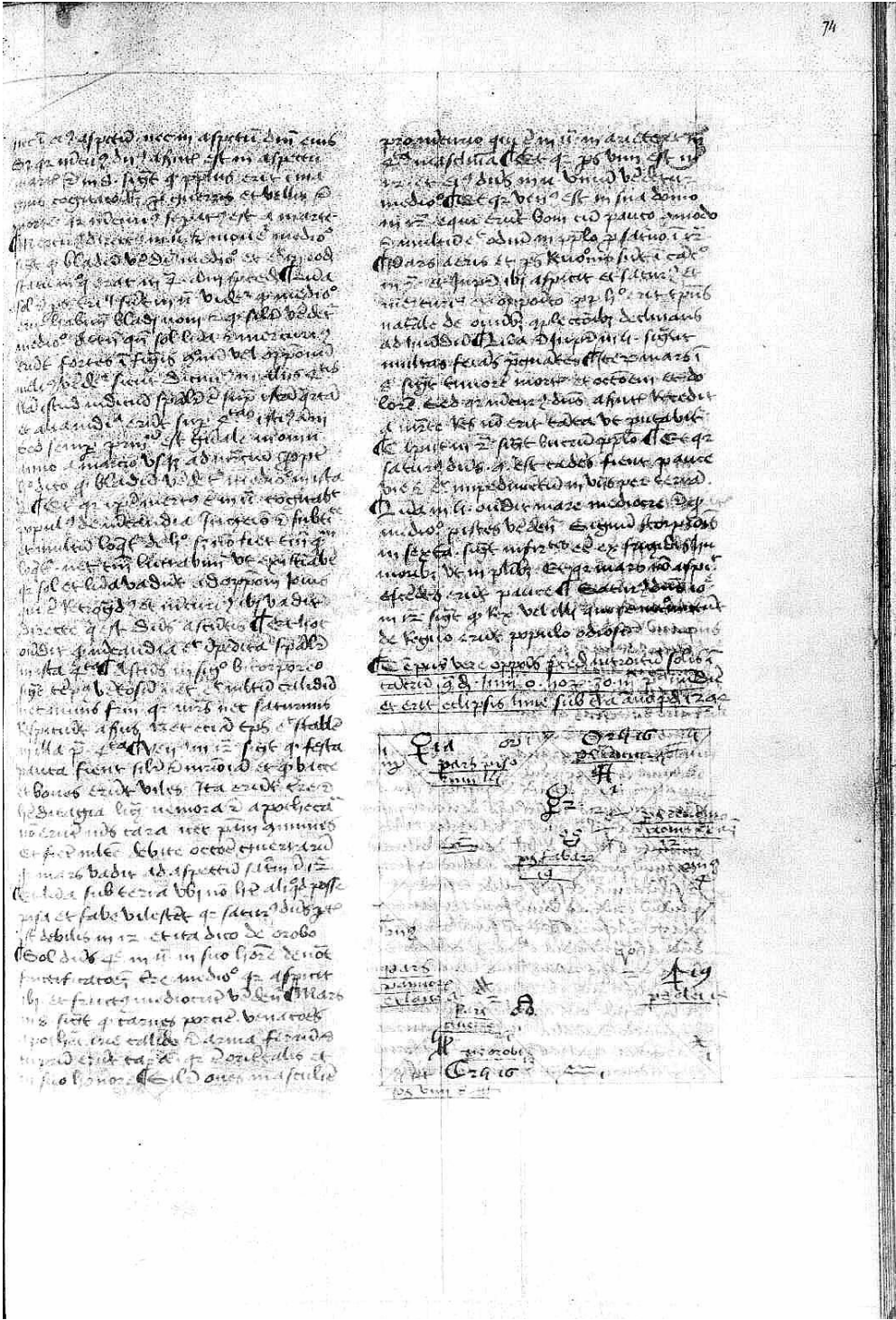


Figure 5 – NAL 398, folio 74r

This horoscope is valid solely for the summer and its effects are subordinate to the conditions established by the previous ingress.

The time of the true opposition before the ingress of the Sun into Cancer, ninth day of June, zero hours, thirty minutes post meridiem, and there will be an eclipse of the Moon [occurring] under the Earth, previous year 1294.¹⁵²

The benefic Venus is the lady of this quarter of the year, and since it is in good condition, the general prognosis is therefore optimistic:

Venus, lady of the Ascendant is the lady of this quarter, because she aspects the Ascendant and is in the eleventh, in good aspect to the Ascendant, and Jupiter in aspect moves towards the direction [of Venus], and both are free from aspects of malefics; it signifies that the people in this quarter will be happy, in good peace, righteousness and healthy in their bodies.¹⁵³

The benefic effects promised by Venus prevail even though this horoscope is of a lunar eclipse, which is often a sign of conflicts and death. However, the eclipse occurred while the Moon was ‘under the Earth’, that is, below the horizon, and therefore was not visible in the place where the horoscope was calculated, so its negative effects are diminished and the overall judgement remains positive. The optimistic judgement focuses especially on religion:

The Sun in the ninth [house] and the Moon in the third [house], in their [respective] joys, occidental, attest that the Church will be in good state and the Pope will do good work and good ordination.¹⁵⁴

The Sun placed in the ninth house of its joy brings its power to the subjects of religion and, by extension, clergymen.¹⁵⁵ After some comments about other subjects, the author returns to the topic of the papal election:

Mercury, ruler of the ninth, is in the tenth, because of this it seems that there will be agreement for making a pope, neither will there be any discord, because Jupiter aspects the ninth and the tenth house.¹⁵⁶

Mercury, ruler of the ninth house of religion, thus representing the clergy, is placed in the tenth house of honours suggesting that the clergy will be successful, specifically

¹⁵² Tempus vere oppositionis precedentis introitum Solis in Cancrum 9^o die Junii 0 hora 30 minutis post meridiem et erit eclipsis Lune sub terram anno precedente 1294, f. 74rb.

¹⁵³ Venus domina ascendentis est domina istius quarte, quia aspicit ascendens et est in 11^a in bono aspectu ascendentis et Jupiter in aspectu venient ad directionem et sunt isti duo extra aspectum infortunarum significat hoc quod populus in ista 4^a erit jocundus in bona pace rectitudine et sani in corporibus, f. 74va. In this case the comment refers to occidentality *in mundo* (that is, in relation to the horizon, in a quadrant that is descending towards the angle). See ‘Orientality or occidentality’ in Appendix I.

¹⁵⁴ Sol in 9 et Luna in 3^a in suis gaudiis occidentalibus deurant quod ecclesia erit in bono statu at ibi erit papa scilicet concordabitur faciens scilicet quod si ipse fuerit faciet bonum regimen et bonam ordinationem, f. 74vb.

¹⁵⁵ See ‘Joys of the planets’ in Appendix I.

¹⁵⁶ Mercurius dominus 9^o est in 10 fortis. Propter hoc videtur quod concordatur ad faciendum papam nec ibi erit discordia quia Jupiter aspicit ad 9^{am} et ad 10^{am}, f. 74vb.

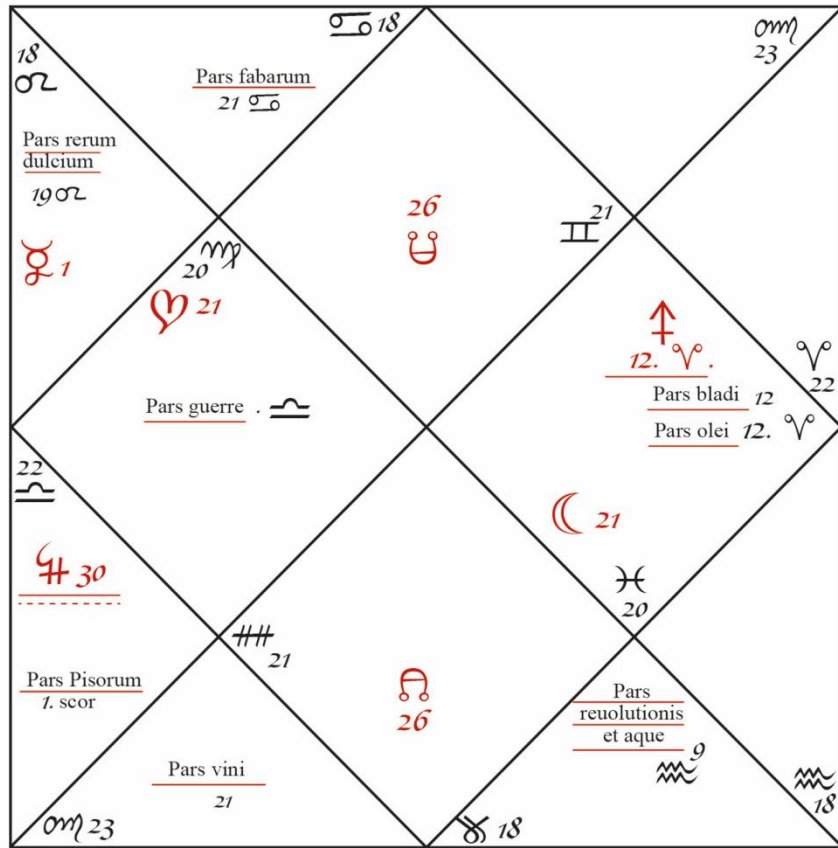
here in electing a pope. The tenth house is also the house of authority, therefore a fitting significator for the papal throne. Celestinus V was elected on 5 July, a choice that pleased the king of France and promised a period of harmony:

Because Jupiter, which is the ruler of the Lot of War aspects it by a sextile aspect, it reveals peace.¹⁵⁷

The peace achieved by this election would last only until winter and was brought to an abrupt with the resignation of Pope Celestine V in December.

¹⁵⁷ Et quia Jupiter qui est dominus partis guerre aspicit ipsam sexto aspectu ostendit pacem, f. 74vb.

**Lunation preceding the Libra ingress (Autumn equinox) 1294
NAL 398 f. 74vb**



House I – 20° Virgo Sun 21° Virgo [different symbol] Pars Guerre Libra	House VII – 20° Pisces Moon 21° Pisces (26° Pisces) Pars Olei 12° Aries Pars Bladi 12° Aries Mars 12° Aries
House II – 22° Libra Jupiter 30° Libra [in fact 0° Scorpio] Pars Pisorum 1° Scorpio	House VIII – 22° Aries
House III – 23° Scorpio Pars Vini 21° Scorpio	House IX – 23° Taurus Saturn 5° Gemini
House IV – 21° Sagittarius South Node 26° Sagittarius	House X – 21° Gemini North Node 26° Gemini
House V – 18° Capricorn Pars Revolutionis and Aque 9° Capricorn	House XI – 18° Cancer Pars Fabarum 21° Cancer [missing: Venus 11° Leo]
House VI – 18° Aquarius	House XII – 18° Leo Pars Rerum Dulcium 19° Leo Mercury 1° Virgo [it should be 17° Virgo]

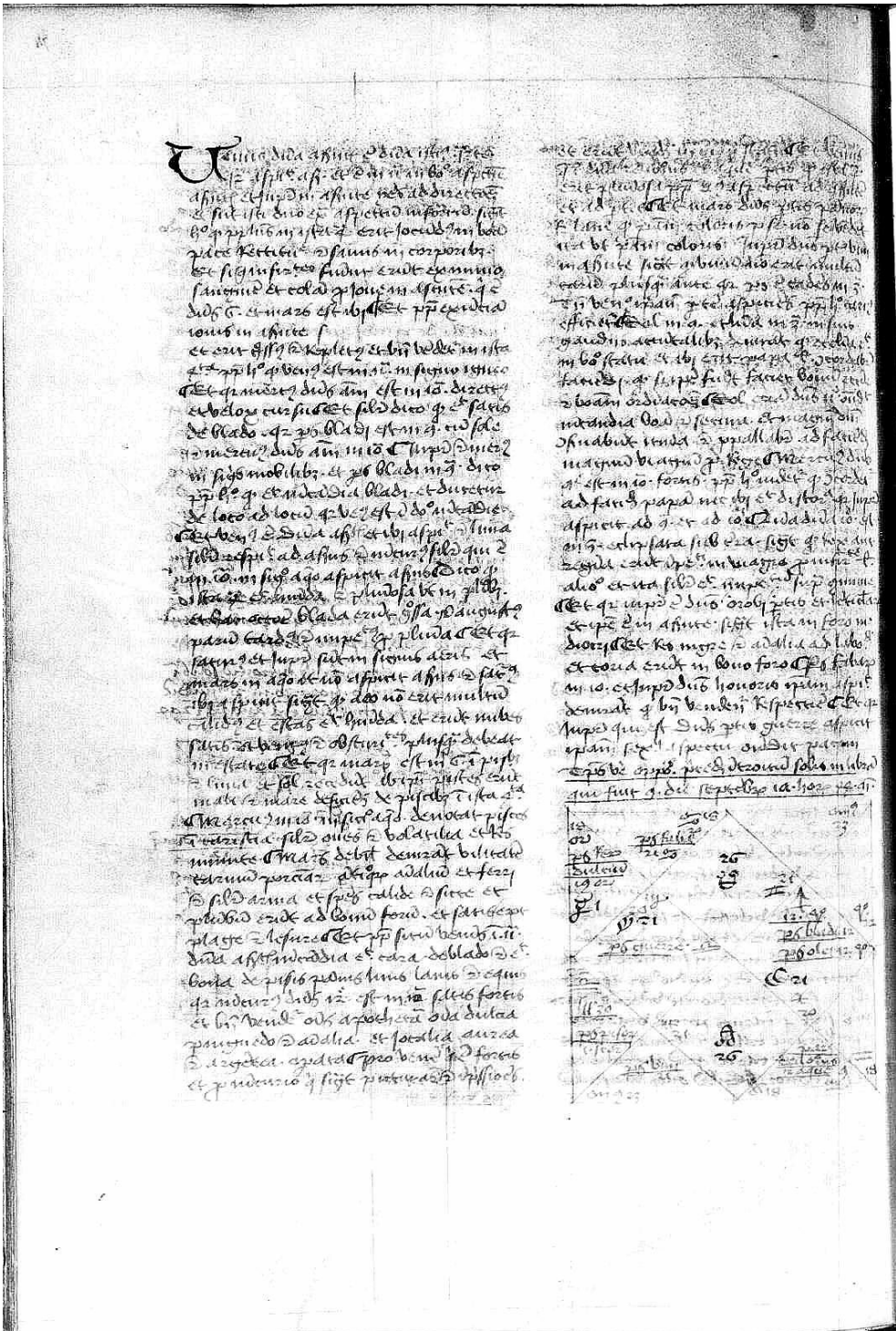


Figure 6 – NAL 398, folio 74v

This is the horoscope for autumn 1294, the third quarter of the year, that is from the autumn equinox to the winter solstice.

The time of one opposition preceding the entry of the Sun in Libra that was on the 9 September, 17 hours, 44 minutes.¹⁵⁸

Mercury is again the Lord of the quarter and the outlook is not positive:

And because Mercury is in the twelfth, debilitated but in its own domicile and exaltation, so it signifies that the state of the cereal is moderate. Thus, if it is in the Ascendant, it signifies great scarcity [of food].¹⁵⁹

But not everything in the horoscope is negative and some other planets can ameliorate the difficulties promised by the weak Mercury:

The Sun in the Ascendant shows the good state of the people, and there will be health in the community of the people.¹⁶⁰

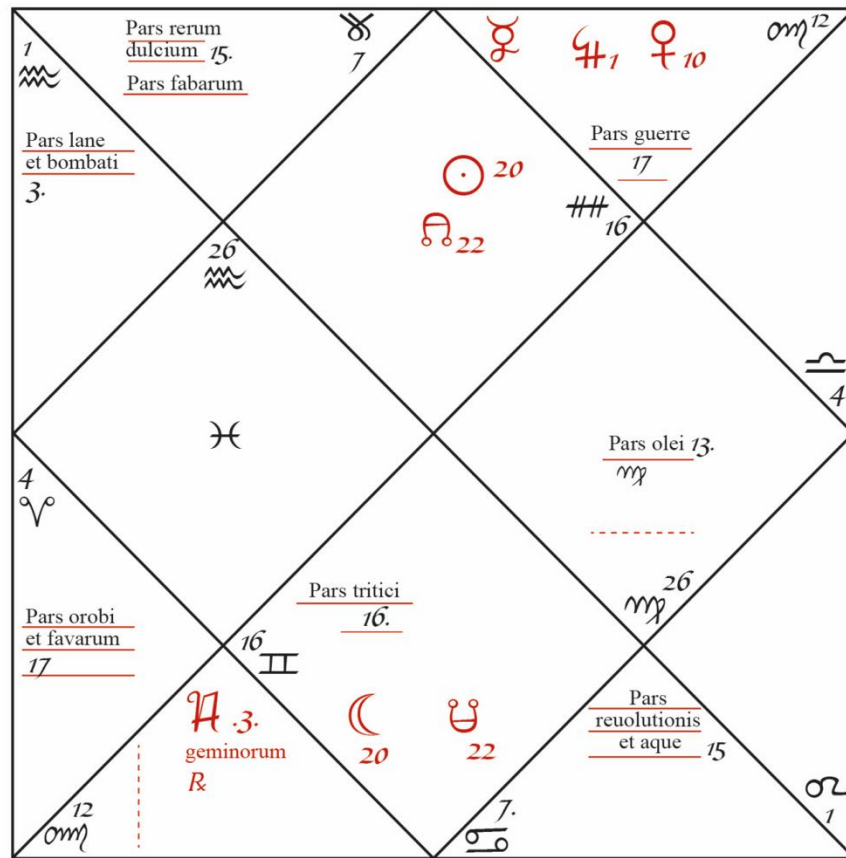
The presence of the Sun in the Ascendant seems to be sufficient to compensate for the problems signified by Mercury. All things considered, the author concludes that despite the scarcity of food suggested by Mercury, the general condition of the people is good. This is a good example of how a natural significator may affect the condition of a principal significator, as with the ruler of the ascendant. In this case the Sun's position in the angle of the ascendant, being a luminary and a natural significator of life counteracts the weakness of Mercury, ruler of the ascendant and the main significator for conditions of the year.

¹⁵⁸ Tempus vere oppositionis precedentis introitum Solis in Libram qui fuit 9 die Septembri 17 hora 44 minuto, f. 74vb. The planetary positions correspond roughly to those of 6 September, the actual date of the lunation; this is probably a copying mistake.

¹⁵⁹ Et quia Mercurius est in 12^a debilitatus sed in domo sua et exaltatione ideo significat statum bladi mediocrem. Nam si est in ascendente significat magnam caristiam, f. 75ra.

¹⁶⁰ Sol in ascendente ostendit bonum statum populi et erit sanitas in communitate populi, f. 75ra.

Lunation preceding the Capricorn ingress (Winter solstice) 1294, lunar eclipse
NAL 398 f. 75ra



House I – 26° Aquarius	House VII – 26° Leo
	Pars Olei 13° Virgo
House II – 04° Aries	House VIII – 04° Libra
[Omitted: Mars 12° Aries] Pars Orobi et Fabarum 17° Aries	
House III – 12° Taurus	House IX – 12° Scorpio
Saturn 3° Geminorum retrograde	Venus 10° Scorpio [5° rule] Jupiter 01° (sic for 18°) Scorpio Pars Guerre 17° Scorpio Mercury [omitted: 29° Scorpio]
House IV – 16° Gemini	House X – 16° Sagittarius
Parts Tritici 16° Gemini Moon 20° Gemini South Node 22° Gemini	Sun 20° Sagittarius North Node 22° Sagittarius
House V – 07° Cancer	House XI – 07° Capricorn
Pars Revolutionis et Aque 01° Leo	Pars Rerum Dulcium 15° Capricorn Pars Fabarum
House VI – 01° Leo	House XII – 01° Aquarius
	Pars Lane et Bombati 03° Aquarius

The horoscope for the winter of 1294, from the winter solstice to the spring equinox.

The horoscope of the true opposition preceding the entry of the Sun into Capricorn, wh.ch was the 3 December, 23 hours, 40 minutes, and it was an eclipse of the Moon under the Earth.¹⁶¹

The sign of the Ascendant is Aquarius, and the sign of Pisces is completely enclosed within the first house.¹⁶² Thus, there will be two lords of this quarter: Saturn, the ruler of Aquarius, and Jupiter, the ruler of Pisces.

Saturn is the Lord of the Ascendant, and Jupiter also, because their domiciles are in the Ascendant and they aspect the Ascendant.¹⁶³

The judgement then focuses on the lunar eclipse. Again, the eclipsed Moon is below the horizon, but in this case the lack of visibility does not seem to obstruct its effects:

The Moon eclipsed under the Earth in the sign of Gemini, with the Head of the Dragon, means hindrances from wars, mortalities and hindrances over all that lives, and hindrances in the lands of a great prelate from the east or the north.¹⁶⁴

The emphasis on the negative may be due to the angularity of the eclipse; here it occurs in the fourth and tenth houses while the previous eclipses fell in cadent houses.¹⁶⁵ The reference to east and north may possibly relate to Philip IV's foreign policy, such as his attempted negotiations with the Mongols and the Byzantine Empire, which were by then his allies, and the tension between France and Flanders, which ultimately led to his defeat at the Battle of the Golden Spurs in 1302.¹⁶⁶

Pope Celestine V resigned on 13 December 1294 and was replaced by Boniface VIII on 24 December. He was consecrated on 23 January 1295 in the presence of King Charles II of Naples (r. 1285-1309) and his son Charles Martel (1271-1295). The new pope displeased Philip IV and the situation soon turned into a bitter feud between the king and the pope.

¹⁶¹ *Figura vere oppositionis precedentis introitum Solis in Capricornum que fuit 3 die Decembris 23 hora 40 minuto et erit eclipsis Lune sub terram, f. 75ra.*

¹⁶² When a sign is totally contained in a house it is said to be intercepted.

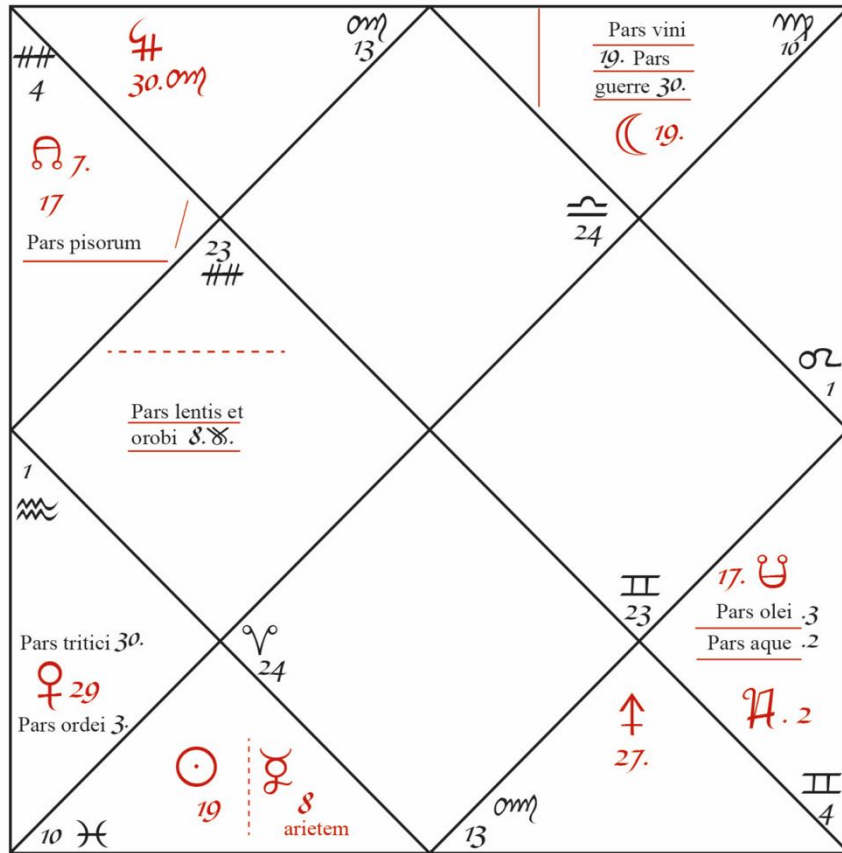
¹⁶³ *Saturnus est dominus ascendentis et Jupiter similiter quia eorum domus sunt in ascendente et respiciunt ascendens, f. 75rb.*

¹⁶⁴ *Luna eclipsata sub terra in signo Geminorum cum capite draconis significat impedimenta bellorum mortalitates et impedimenta super omnia viventia et impedimenta in terris alicuius prelati magni ex parte orientis vel septentrionalis, f. 75rb.*

¹⁶⁵ The angular houses, I, X, VII, and IV, were considered the most important of the horoscope. See 'The astrological houses (or places), 'Accidental dignities' and 'Position by house' in Appendix I.

¹⁶⁶ This connection may be due to the Ptolemaic association of Gemini with part of the north-eastern quadrant of the world. See 'Astrological Geography' in Appendix I.

**Lunation preceding the Aries ingress (Spring equinox) 1295
NAL 398 f. 75va**



House I – 23° Sagittarius Pars Lentis et Orobi 09° Capricorn	House VII – 23° Gemini
House II – 01° Aquarius Venus 29° Aquarius Pars Tritici 30° Aquarius Pars Ordei 03° Pisces	House VIII – 01° Leo
House III – 10° Pisces Sun 19° Pisces Mercury 08° Aries	House IX – 10° Virgo Moon 19° Virgo Pars Vini 19° Virgo Pars Guerre 30° Virgo
House IV – 24° Aries	House X – 24° Libra
House V – 13° Taurus Mars 27° Taurus	House XI – 13° Scorpio Jupiter 30° Scorpio
House VI – 04° Gemini Saturn 02° Gemini Pars Aque 02° Gemini Pars Olei 03° Gemini North Node 17° Gemini	House XII – 04° Sagittarius South Node 17° Sagittarius Pars Pisorum

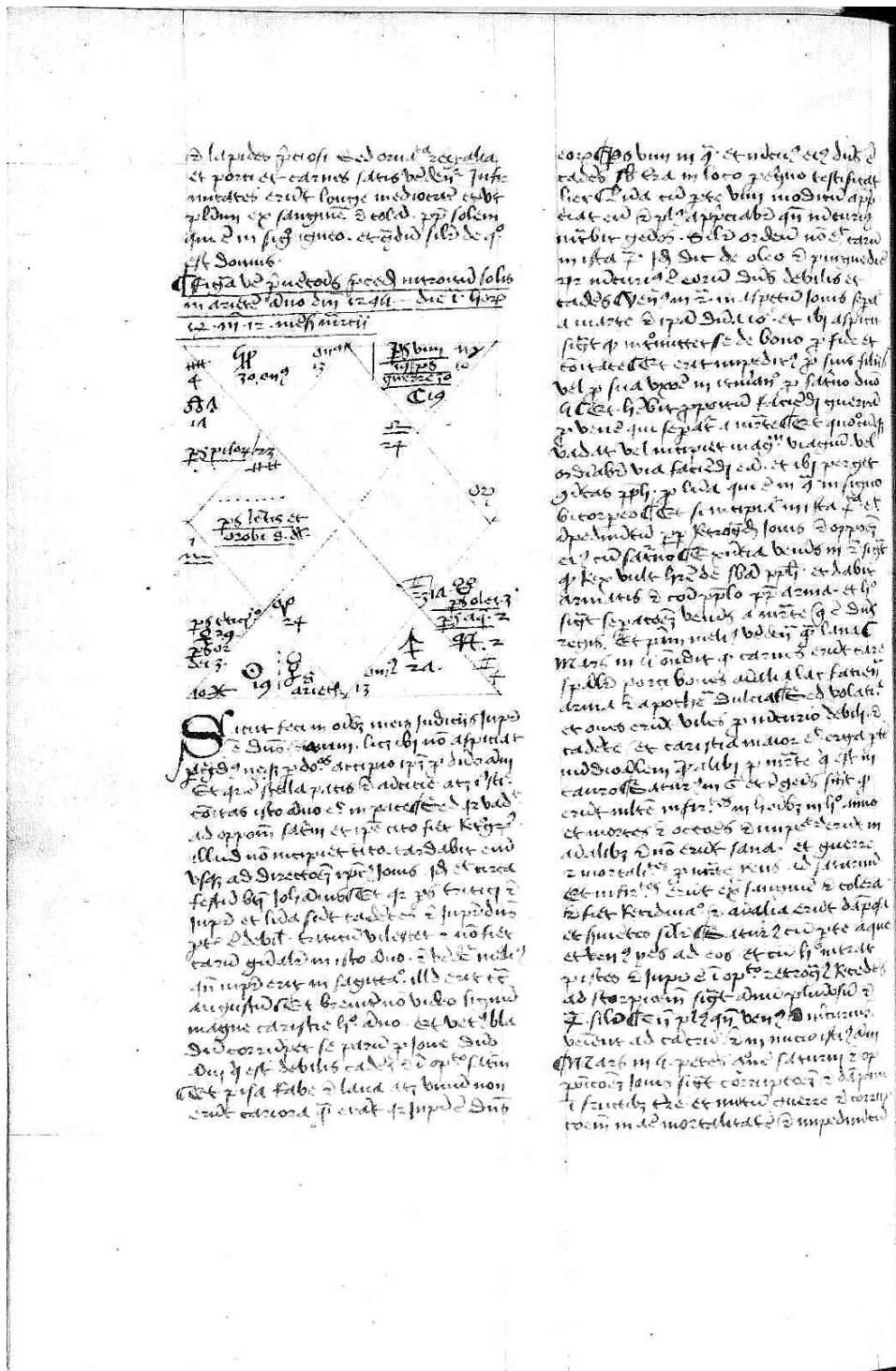


Figure 8 – NAL 398, folio 75v

The judgement for 1295 applies to the entire year and it begins with a detailed title.

The horoscope of the true prevention [Full Moon] preceding the entry of the Sun into Aries, year of the Lord 1295, day 1, hour 14, minute 12, the month of March.¹⁶⁷

Jupiter, Lord of Ascendant is chosen as the lord of the year because of its benefic nature even though it does not aspect the Ascendant, a condition usually deemed necessary. Its strong position in the eleventh house, where it has its joy, reinforces this choice.

As I have done in all my judgements, Jupiter is Lord of the year. Although in this position it does not aspect [the Ascendant] neither by degrees nor by house, I take it as Lord of the year, and because it is the star of peace and friendship and justice, the community this year will be at peace.¹⁶⁸

Here the author writes in the first person, possibly to add more weight to his choice of Jupiter as lord of the year, despite its lack of aspects to the Ascendant. The expression ‘neither by degrees nor by house’ reveals the concomitant use of two different systems of aspects: one considering the angular distance between the planets and the other considering either their relationship by sign or by house position (the latter is sometimes called aspect *in mundo*).¹⁶⁹

The desire of peace expressed in this passage turned out to be overly optimistic, since the period covered by this judgement falls in the middle of the dispute over territories between France and England, namely the region of Gascony in the south-west of France. There were military campaigns in 1294-98 and again in 1300-03.

The presence of Venus in the second house signifies that the king wants to have some of the wealth of his people, and he will give it to the soldiers and to the common people for arms, and this signifies the separation of Venus from Mars, which [Mars] is the ruler [significator] of the king.¹⁷⁰

Venus, the ruler of the tenth house, is placed in the second house of wealth, suggesting that the king’s attention was centred on the wealth of the nation. Venus separates from Mars, which in this horoscope rules the fourth house signifying the land, and the eleventh, which is the second derived from the tenth of the king and, therefore, signifies that king’s wealth. Therefore, the author concludes that the king will give away the property as a reward to the soldiers and common people, both naturally signified by

¹⁶⁷ Figura vere preventionis precedentis introitum Solis in Arietem anno domini 1295, die 1 hora 14 minuto 12 mensis Martii, f. 75va.

¹⁶⁸ Sicut feci in omnibus meis judiciis Jupiter est dominus anni licet ibi non aspiciat per gradus neque per domos accipio ipsum pro domino anni et quia est stella pacis et amicitie atque iustitie comunitas isto anno erit in pace, f. 75va.

¹⁶⁹ See ‘Aspects’ in Appendix I.

¹⁷⁰ Existencia Veneris in 2^a significat quod rex vult habere de substantia populi et dabit armatis et communi populo propter arma et hoc significat separationem Veneris a Marte, qui est dominus regis, f. 75vb.

Mars. The king mentioned in this passage is probably Philip IV. The judgement skilfully combines astrological interpretation and political propaganda, while strictly following astrological rules.

Relations with the Church were equally tense: in February 1296, still within the twelve-month period encompassed by this judgement, Pope Boniface VIII issued the bull *Clericis Laicos* forbidding the transference of church property, further aggravating the tension between Church and Crown.¹⁷¹

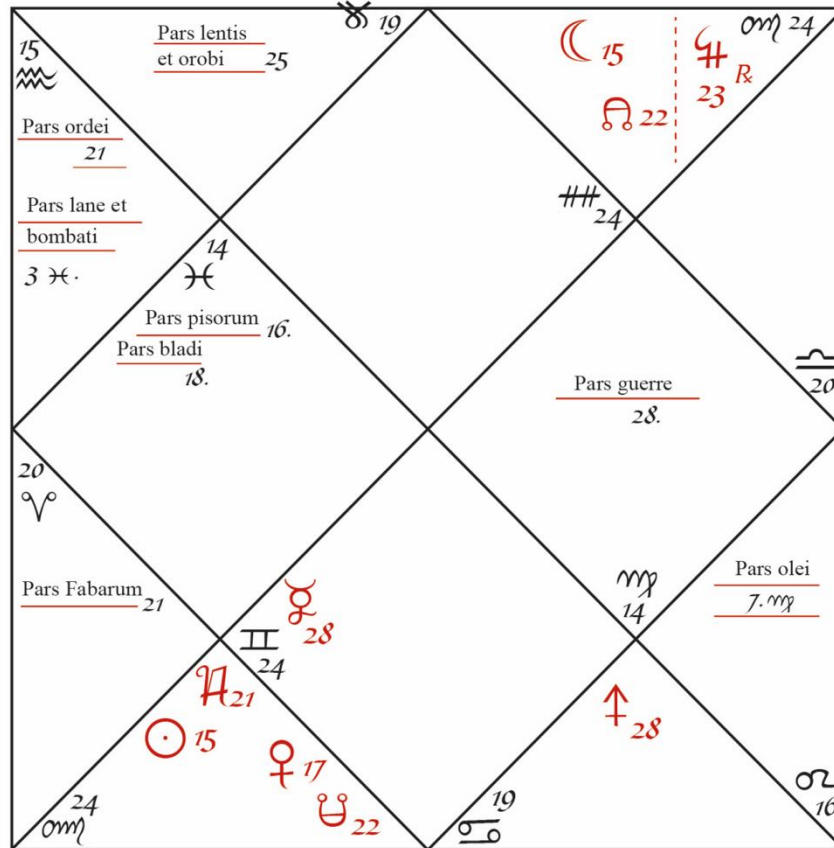
And because the Moon is in the ninth, movement and travel, which shall be the arrival of the pope at the cabinet, and this Mars signifies in the fifth house, in opposition to the eleventh of which it is the ruler and in opposition to Jupiter.¹⁷²

This may refer to the relocation of the papacy from Naples to Rome, one of the first measures taken by Boniface VIII in an attempt to escape the control of the Neapolitan court. In this judgement Belle deduces the pope's journey from the combination of the Moon's natural signification of movement to the meaning of the ninth house of travel and religion. He then supports this conclusion by the opposition, thus conflict, between Mars in the fifth house of embassies and Jupiter in the eleventh house of allies. With this he reinforces the primary level of signification (Moon in the ninth house) with an independent set of significators (Mars-Jupiter), mutually reinforcing each other within the context of the horoscope. This is an example of how an astrologer combines the specific significators of a given subject (planets in houses, or ruling houses) with other configurations (planets in angles, oppositions of relevant significators) of the chart to ascertain possible outcomes.

¹⁷¹ This bull, intended to stop the kingdoms of Europe from appropriating the profits of the Church without the permission of the pope, generated fierce opposition especially from France and England.

¹⁷² Et quia Luna est in 9^a motus et viagia qui erunt erunt [sic] ex incesso pape in consistorium, et ita significat Mars in 5^a in opposito 11^a de qua est dominus et in opposito Jovis, f. 76ra.

Lunation preceding the Cancer ingress (Summer solstice) 1295, lunar eclipse
NAL 398 f. 76ra



House I – 14° Pisces Pars Pisorum 16° Pisces Pars Bladi 18° Pisces	House VII – 14° Virgo Pars Guerre 28° Virgo
House II – 20° Aries Pars Fabarum 21° Aries	House VIII – 20° Libra
House III – 24° Taurus Sun 15° Gemini Venus 17° Gemini Saturn 21° Gemini [should be 10°]	House IX – 24° Scorpio Jupiter 23° Scorpio retrograde [5° rule] Moon 15° Sagittarius South Node 22° Sagittarius [should be 12°]
House IV – 24° Gemini Mercury 28° Gemini [should be 1° Cancer]	House X – 24° Sagittarius
House V – 19° Cancer Mars 28° Cancer [should be 21°]	House XI – 19° Capricorn Pars Lentis et Orobi 24° Capricorn
House VI – 16° Leo Pars Olei 7° Virgo	House XII – 16° Aquarius Pars Lane et Bombati 19° Aquarius

The judgement for the summer of 1295, applicable until the autumn equinox.

The horoscope of the lunar eclipse in the year of the Lord 1295 before the entry of the Sun into Cancer, that was on the 29th days of May, in the following night, and it began after midnight, by one hour and eighteen minutes.¹⁷³

It is not clear why this horoscope, a Full Moon at 15° Gemini still very distant from the Cancer ingress, was chosen instead of the following New Moon, at 29° Gemini, which occurred only one day before the ingress. Belle may have consulted Saint-Cloud's almanac, which includes the horoscopes for the Aries ingresses and all the planetary positions necessary for the calculation of the other ingresses.¹⁷⁴ In the tables for May 1295 there is a comment that may explain Belle's preference for this lunation:

at 12 hours and 39 minutes in the afternoon of the 29th day of this month [of May] there was a total eclipse of the Moon.¹⁷⁵

The date corresponds to 30 May at thirty-nine minutes after midnight, which is very close to the horoscope calculated by Belle.¹⁷⁶ This and other similarities between Belle's horoscope and the tables suggest that he had consulted Saint-Cloud's almanac, possibly the copy in Lat. 16210.¹⁷⁷ It is possible that Belle preferred this lunation despite its considerable distance from the Cancer ingress simply for being an eclipse. The New Moon at 14 June (at 29° Gemini) would have been the logical choice because it was much closer to the Cancer ingress.¹⁷⁸ As eclipses are often associated with negative events the overall judgement of this horoscope is not good. There are fears of the death of a king or ruler.

In this year an important man will die, a man of our faith, and the impediment of death or of a serious illness will fall upon an important man, like the pope or a king or such a man, because the kingdom is harmed due to Saturn in the third and Jupiter in the ninth.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ *Figura eclipsis Lune in anno domini 1295 precedens introitum Solis in Cancrum qui erit per 29 diem Maii, nocte sequente et incipiet ... mediam noctem per unam horam, 18 minutis, f. 76ra.*

¹⁷⁴ A copy of this almanac can be found in Paris, BnF Lat. 16210.

¹⁷⁵ *12 horis et 39 minutis post meridiem, 29^o diei huius mensis erit eclipsis lune totalis, Paris, BnF Lat. 16210, f. 28v.*

¹⁷⁶ The time mentioned in the title, midnight and eighteen minutes, is for the beginning of the eclipse; the horoscope is calculated for its culmination, which occurred around thirty-five or forty minutes after midnight according to modern calculations.

¹⁷⁷ This is supported by some considerable deviations in the planetary positions, which occur both in the tables on Lat. 16210 and Belle's horoscope. For instance, in both cases Mercury is placed at 28° Gemini when it should be at 1°12 Cancer, and Mars is at 28° Cancer, when it should be at 21° Cancer.

¹⁷⁸ Lat. 16210, f. 29v.

¹⁷⁹ *In hoc anno morietur vir magnus vir nostre legis vel cadet impedimentum mortis vel gravem infirmitatem supra magnum hominem sicut papa rex vel talis qua propter regnum erit impeditum pro Saturno in 3^a et Jove in 9^a et propter hoc veniet aliquod novum, et impedimentum populo et fidei et regimini et regno, f. 76rb.*

This negative prognosis is certainly due to the combination of two factors: the eclipse, always a sign of disturbances, and the opposition of the two slower planets, Jupiter and Saturn. Jupiter, although benefic, is weak because it is peregrine and retrograde, and is afflicted by the opposition of Saturn; as Jupiter rules the two main angles of the horoscope – the Ascendant and the tenth house – its weak condition suggests death, or at least the grave illness of ‘an important man’, either a king or the pope. It is not clear to whom the author is referring. This could be related to the death of Charles Martel of Anjou, one of the supporters of Boniface VIII; he died on 12 August 1295, within the period encompassed by this judgement. In any case, the consequences of this death are deemed to be harmful:

And because of this there will come something new, and an impediment to the people, to the faith, and to the rulership and to the kingdom.¹⁸⁰

These dire consequences may be extended to all living things because of the power of the eclipse. The judgement also includes the timing of the effects:

And the impediment falls upon the men by waters and deaths and illnesses, and over all things which have life. And it will last for three months because the eclipse will last for three hours. And its will begin six or seven weeks after the end of May and then it will be noticed.¹⁸¹

As this lunar eclipse lasted for three hours its effects extend for three months.¹⁸² And as the Moon was eclipsed in the ninth house (between the Midheaven and the Descendant in the second part of the day), the stronger effects should be expected right after the second half of this period. The reference to ‘six to seven weeks’, that is, the second half of the total period of three months, locates the stronger effects at the end of July 1295. This is the only eclipse judgement that specifies timing perhaps because it is the only one visible at Paris, the place where the horoscope was calculated.

¹⁸⁰ Et propter hoc veniet aliquod novum et impedimentum populo et fidei et regimini et regno, f. 76rb.

¹⁸¹ Et cadet impedimentum super homines per aquas et mortalitates et per infirmitates et super omnia quae vitam habent. Et durabit illud per 3 menses quia eclipsis durabit per 3 horas. Et incipiet per 6 septimanas vel septem post finem maii et tunc percipietur, f. 76va.

¹⁸² If it were a solar eclipse, its effects would extend for years, one for each hour of the eclipse. The weeks are measured by the distance of the eclipse from the angles. See ‘Eclipses’ in Appendix I.

Highlights

The most obvious fact in this set of horoscopes is that they relate to events occurring long before Belle's lifetime and thus have no direct implications for him. This is not an example of prediction, but rather a retrospective analysis focused on explaining past events through the astrological study of the planetary configurations of the time. Belle appears to be using them to exercise his skills by studying horoscopes of past events. By doing so, he could confirm the results of his 'predictions' and correct occasional errors of judgement. This could be one of the reasons why he preferred to judge thirteenth-century ingresses and not those in his own almanac, spanning from 1468 to 1480, well within his lifetime.¹⁸³ This experimental attitude seems to be an important part of astrological practice. An early example of similar methods can be found in the work of English astrologer William Morley (d. c.1347), who addressed astrometeorology.¹⁸⁴ A more systematic development of this approach was later suggested by Francis Bacon (1561-1626) in *The Advancement of Learning* as one of the four routes to 'a total reconstruction of sciences, arts and all human knowledge, raised upon the proper foundation'.¹⁸⁵ In the case of astrology, Bacon suggested that practitioners should 'draw from real history all greater accidents, such as inundations, plagues, wars, seditions, deaths of kings' to generate 'a probable rule of prediction'.¹⁸⁶ A practical attempt at this systematization, again in the field of astrometeorology, would be made later by John Goad (1616-1689) in his work *Astro-Meteorologia*.¹⁸⁷

Ingresses (*introitus*) vs lunations

Throughout the late medieval period there was a debate about the best horoscope to judge for the revolution of the year. Some astrologers judged the event itself (whether the Sun's entry into a sign, usually Aries, or the conjunction of the superior planets), while others preferred the lunation that preceded the event, that is, the New or Full Moon that occurred immediately before it. The validity of each of these methods was

¹⁸³ See Appendix II.

¹⁸⁴ William Merle wrote the treatise *De prognosticatione aeris* in 1340 and a weather diary concerning the years 1337 to 1344.

¹⁸⁵ See Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, Joseph Devey (ed.), New York, 1901, Book 3.4.

¹⁸⁶ For a discussion on this topic see Dooley, 'Astrology and Science', *A Companion to Astrology*, p. 240 and D. Rutkin, 'Various Uses of Horoscopes. Astrological Practices in Early Modern Europe', *Horoscopes and Public Spheres*, pp. 167-182.

¹⁸⁷ J. Goad, *Astro-Meteorologia: or Aphorisms and Discourses of the Bodies Cæstial, their Natures and Influences*, London, 1686.

intensely debated by uncompromising advocates on both sides. For instance, in his judgement for the year 1476, Conrad Heingarter made his position very clear:

Many among the astrologers base their principles on the ingress of the Sun into Aries, or into another sign which is found to be absurd and devoid of reason, and against the doctrine of Ptolemy. Others [base them] on the conjunctions and oppositions of the luminaries preceding the entry of the Sun into Aries, or another sign and rightly so. Others on the conjunctions and oppositions and squares of the superior planets and these are divided into two [groups]. For one part of them makes their foundation on these conjunctions, oppositions and squares at the very time which they obtain the calculations from the tables; and to these, Abraham ibn Ezra replies that they are braggarts, with no experience of the science. The other part relies on the conjunctions and oppositions of the luminaries before that time. And of this opinion is Ptolemy and his followers, and his path is correct, and not erroneous. For his rules are based on reason and experience, and he who follows them does not fall into error.¹⁸⁸

Quoting Haly ibn Ridwan, Heingarter presents four reasons to explain his choice:

- the combination of the Sun with the Moon (that is, the lunation) is more powerful than the combination of the Sun with any point in the horoscope;
- the circumference (of the Zodiac) does not have a starting point (therefore, the point chosen for the beginning of the year is arbitrary);
- it is impossible to know the exact moment of the entry of the Sun into the beginning of Aries due to the discrepancy of the tables (while the lunations can be calculated with precision);
- the signs are mere dwellings, while the stars hold the 'operating power'; thus, the beginning of Aries (or any other sign), cannot have influence over the whole year.¹⁸⁹

This was the method adopted not only by Ptolemy, but by many Arabic authorities.¹⁹⁰

Regardless, not all astrologers of his period followed this method; for instance, Simon de Phares, who was Heingarter's pupil from 1469 to 1471, preferred the ingresses for his predictions.¹⁹¹

In Belle's text for the years 1293-1295, he chooses to judge the lunations before the ingresses, apparently agreeing with Heingarter; he could also have simply copied the original text from William of Saint-Cloud. Regardless, in his almanac he chooses to combine the two methods, by calculating both the ingress and the New and Full

¹⁸⁸ Multi ex astrologis super introitum solis in Arietem sua principia fundant vel aliud celi signum, quod absurdum sine ratione, et contra Ptholomei doctrinam reperitus. Alii super coniunctionem et preventionem luminarium precedentem introitum solis in Arietem, vel aliud signum et probe. Alii super conjunctiones et oppositiones atque quadraturas superiorum planetarum et illi bipartiti sunt. Nam una pars eorum fundat se super ipsas coniunctiones, oppositiones, seu quadraturas in tempore ipso quod per tabulas extrahunt, et illis respondet Abraham Filius Noesre quod sunt iactatores sciencie expertes. Pars altera se fundant super luminarium coniunctiones et oppositiones ante hec tempora. Et de hac oppinione est Ptholomeus et sui sequaces et sua via est vera non erronea. Nam regule eius ratione et experientia fulcite quas qui sequitur in errorem non cadet. Paris, BnF Lat. 7450, f. 5r. See also Préaud, *Les astrologues*, pp. 142-143, and Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, II.10, pp. 195-201.

¹⁸⁹ Summarized from Lat. 7432, f. 58v. Complete translation in Bezza, 'Saturn-Jupiter conjunctions', pp. 5-48, at 39-40.

¹⁹⁰ See for instance Abū Ma'shar, *On Historical Astrology* I, p. 19.

¹⁹¹ See Préaud, *Les astrologues*, pp. 142-143.

Moon for each month.¹⁹² This combined method seems to be favoured by many astrologers.¹⁹³

The astrological rules are the same for ingresses and lunations: both follow the typical sequence already explained in the section on interrogations and are valid for all applications of astrology: identification of significators, assessment of their condition, inclusion of additional factors, and conclusion. As with interrogations, these judgements are organized around implicit questions, such as ‘how will this year be?’, ‘will there be plenty of food?’ or ‘will there be a rise in the price of bread?’.

Aspects by degree and by house

The judgements include two types of aspect: ‘by degree’, which takes into account only the aspects that fall within the spheres of influence, or orbs, of the planets, and ‘by house’, in the sense of the signs, which includes all aspects, regardless of their orb, if placed in signs that aspect each other.¹⁹⁴ In this section, Belle seems to have taken into account mainly the aspects by degree, perhaps because they are more precise, but in some cases he also included the wider aspects by sign, incorporating in his judgement as many aspects as possible. Again, he may have been simply copying the original text.

The Lots

The lots have a crucial role in the judgements of revolutions. They complement the judgement acting as extra significators whenever necessary and, in some cases, they are as prominent as the planets. For example, in the judgement on foods where a variety of vegetables and grains are mentioned, the lots help to differentiate each food group, providing a more detailed account. Their presence in a horoscope reveals the prevailing concerns for the corresponding period. The lots mentioned in each horoscope in NAL 398 (in the order of the houses) are:

- Spring 1293 (f. 73r): Lot of Fortune (*Pars Fortune*), Lot of Wine (*Vini*), Lot of Water (*Aque*);
- Spring 1294 (f. 73v): Lot of Cotton and Wool (*Pars Bombati et Lane*), Peas and Revolution (*Pisorum et Revolutionis*), Vetch (*Orobi*), Barley (*Ordei*), Fava Beans (*Fabarum*), War (*Guerre*), Wheat (*Tritici*), Olives (*Olivarum*), Vini (Wine);

¹⁹² See also Belle’s almanac on Appendix II, for more examples of the use of both horoscopes.

¹⁹³ See for example Lat. 15971, a collection attributed to Pierre de Limoges, attesting to the use of both horoscopes in late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, both in nativities (ff. 233r-233v) and in revolutions of the year (f. 233v-234r).

¹⁹⁴ See ‘Orb (Sphere of influence)’ in Appendix I.

- Summer 1294 (f. 74r): Lot of Cloths and Wool (*Pars Pannorum et Lane*), War, Vetch, Oil (*Olei*), Revolutions and Water (*Revolutionum et Aque*), Wheat, Fava beans, Peas;
- Autumn 1294 (f. 74v): Lot of War, Peas, Wine, Revolutions and Water, Oil, Grain (*Bladi*), Fava beans, Sweet Things (*Rerum Dulcium*);
- Winter 1294 (f. 75r): Lot of Vetch and Fava Beans, Wheat, Revolutions and Water, Oil, War, Sweet Things, Wool and Cotton;
- Spring 1295 (f. 75v): Lot of Lentils and Vetch (*Pars Lentis et Orobi*), Wheat, Barley, Water, Oil, Wine, War and Peas;
- Summer 1295 (f. 76r): Lot of Peas, Grain, Fava Beans, Oil, War, Lentils and Vetch, Barley, Wool and Cotton.

The predominance of lots related to food clearly reveals the concern surrounding this topic; furthermore, in judgements the topic of food is always addressed in the first place, even before political considerations. The first foods mentioned are usually cereals and beans, followed by meat, milk, fish, oil, ‘sweet things’, and wine, not necessarily in this order. There are no direct references to fruits, except for olives, which were mainly used for lamp oil. Also under this topic are the lots of medicines, of cotton, and of wool. The judgements mention not only the quality and quantity of different kinds of food, but also the variations in their prices, as explained by Alcabitus’s *Introduction*, translated by John of Saxony:

Likewise, there are other lots, which are employed at [the time of] the revolution of the years of the world by which what will become expensive in price and will become cheap are known.¹⁹⁵

The foods signified by stronger planets or lots are expected to achieve high prices in the market. This judgement illustrates the perspective of the merchant: strong planets signify rare and, therefore, expensive commodities.¹⁹⁶ For the buyer, strong planets would be undesirable in this context because they signify higher prices.

It is difficult to discern precise patterns in Belle’s choices of the lots. There is no apparent correlation between them and the correspondent season. For instance, the Lot of Wine would be expected to appear mainly in the autumn ingresses, since it was produced and sold during that season, and the Lot of Wool would appear mainly in the

¹⁹⁵ Alcabitus, *Introduction*, V.19, p. 153; Latin version in p. 361: Item sint hic alie partes quibus utimur in revolutione annorum mundi, sciturque per eas quid gravetur de rebus in foro vel quid erit leve in pretio, quidque pretiosum vel vile, multum seu parvum. See also ‘Lots’ in Appendix I

¹⁹⁶ See G. Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, 8.18, pp. 1092-1093: ‘Because however much better he [the significator] were disposed, grain will be much more expensive, and however much he were more badly disposed, by that much more will it be cheap and worth less.’ And also ‘Because those which were well disposed will make for the increase of price and the scarcity of thing; and those which were badly disposed will make for the cheapness of the price and for its own abundance’.

winter charts, since wool would be in greater demand in the cold months. Yet, these lots, as well as all the others, appear quite randomly, again suggesting that Belle used these horoscopes as examples for his studies. The table below summarises the use of lots in the seven revolutions studied by Belle. Most of them can be found in Alcabitus, but he also mentions other sources, such as Haly Abenragel or Albumasar.

Table 5 – The Lots in the revolutions on NAL 398

Lots	Formula		Seasons						
	Distance projected from the Asc.		Spring 1293	Spring 1294	Summer 1294	Autumn 1294	Winter 1294	Spring 1295	Summer 1295
Pars Aque (water)	Moon	Venus	X	X*** ¹⁹⁷	X	X	X	X	
Pars Bladi (grain)	Sun	Mars				X			X***
Pars Bombati (cotton) ¹⁹⁸	Mercury	Venus		X			X		X
Pars Fabarum (fava beans)	Saturn	Mars		X	X	X	X ¹⁹⁹		X
Pars Fortune ²⁰⁰	Sun	Moon	X						
Pars Lane (wool)	Mercury	Venus		X	X		X		X
Pars Lentis (lentils)	Mars	Saturn						X	X
Pars Olivarum (olives) and Pars Olei (oil)	Mercury	Moon		X ²⁰¹	X	X	X	X	X
Pars Ordei (barley)	Moon	Jupiter		X***				X	X
Pars Orobi (vetch)	Mars	Saturn		X	X		X		X
Pars Pannorum (cloths)	Mercury	Venus			X				
Pars Pisorum (peas)	Venus	Sun		X	X	X		X***	X
Pars Rerum dulcium (sweet things)	Sun	Venus				X	X		
Pars Triticici (wheat) ²⁰²	Sun	Mars		X	X		X	X	
Pars Vini (wine)	Saturn	Venus	X	X		X		X	
*Lots which occur in particular matters*²⁰³									
Pars Guerre	Unknown ²⁰⁴			X	X	X	X	X	X
Pars Revolutionis	Moon	Venus			X	X	X		

Belle includes the Lot of Fortune only in the first horoscope, that for Spring 1293. This lot is calculated by taking the distance from the Sun to the Moon and projecting it from the Ascendant if the horoscope is diurnal, or the distance from the Moon to the Sun projected from the Ascendant if nocturnal. As these horoscopes are either a New Moon or a Full Moon, the lot would always be conjunct to the Ascendant or opposed to it, respectively. Since this lot's calculation is so simple, Belle may have deliberately omitted it from these horoscopes.

The Lot of Oil (*Pars Olei*) and the Lot of Olives (*Pars Olivarum*) seem to be one and the same, since oil is made from olives. Belle used the term *olive* only once, in

¹⁹⁷ Mistaken position (the same for all the lots marked with 'X***').

¹⁹⁸ Belle uses the term *bombati* in some horoscopes and *bombatis* in others.

¹⁹⁹ Belle applied the formula for vetch to fava beans, but corrected the mistake, as explained in the text.

²⁰⁰ This is the diurnal formula; the nocturnal formula is Moon to Sun from Ascendant.

²⁰¹ Belle seems to have merged the two lots, as explained in the text.

²⁰² Albiruni, *Instruction*, 479, p. 292: Lot of Wheat: Sun to Jupiter from Ascendant.

²⁰³ Alcabitus, *Introduction*, V.16, p. 151.

²⁰⁴ This formula is not in any of the sources consulted, which are: Alcabitus, *Introduction*, p. 151: Saturn to the Moon from the Ascendant; Albiruni, *Instruction*, 479, p. 290: Mars to the Moon, form the Lot of Victory (Lot of Victory: Sun to ruler of the seventh house, from the Ascendant); *Abū Ma'šar, On Historical Astrology*, I. p. 596: Mars to Moon, projected from the Sun.

the horoscope for the Spring 1294, where the lot does not correspond to any known formula; it may have been taken from an unknown source or simply be an error. In the other six horoscopes calculated by Belle, the Lot of Oil (*Pars Olei*), which according to Al-Bīrūnī should be the distance from Mars to the Moon projected from the Ascendant, is instead obtained using the formula given by Alcabitius to the Lot of Olives (*Pars Olivarum*), the distance of Mercury to the Moon, projected from the Ascendant.²⁰⁵

In the horoscope for the Winter of 1294 Belle applied the formula for the Lot of Vetch (*oribus*) – the distance from Mars to Saturn projected from the Ascendant – to calculate both the Lot of Vetch and the Lot of Fava Beans (*fabarum*) and placed this at 17° Aries. He seems to have realized his mistake, so he calculated the formula for the latter with its correct formula – Saturn to Mars from the Ascendant – and placed it at 15° Capricorn.

The lots faded out of astrological practice in the sixteenth century creating much speculation by current researchers about how exactly and how extensively they were applied in chart judgements.²⁰⁶ Regarding the medieval period, there are few examples beyond the theoretical explanation provided by the doctrine. The prominent use of the lots in Belle's horoscopes only a few decades before their disappearance from the mainstream, offers an important contribution to the understanding of their practical application in judgements. As these lots are not present in Saint-Cloud's tables from which Belle copied the horoscopes, they are almost certainly an addition of his own, making them an even more valuable example of the practical application of the doctrine. They show the extent and context of their application in revolutions, as well as in nativities (as will be addressed further on).

²⁰⁵ Albiruni, *Instruction*, 479, p. 293; and p. 155, respectively

²⁰⁶ For a discussion on this topic, see for example Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, p. 265-267.

2. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn

Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions, also included in the revolutions, were considered markers of major political and religious changes. Together with the lunations and the ingresses, they offered a method of prediction for the unfolding of world history. These conjunctions, which occur approximately every twenty years, established the main trends of events on a larger scale, either by decades or centuries, while the ingresses, lunations and eclipses addressed the shorter periods.²⁰⁷

Belle wrote this judgement in 1473, forty-eight years after the event, and it is likely that the conjunction itself occurred before he was born.²⁰⁸ There were two other conjunctions between 1425 and 1473, both of which were closer to his time: one in July 1444 in the sign of Cancer, and the other in March 1464, in Pisces. The former was studied by several astrologers,²⁰⁹ while the latter was widely scrutinized and some authors, such as Jean de Bruges, saw it as a sign of the coming of the Antichrist.²¹⁰ Belle, however, preferred to judge the 1425 conjunction, ignoring those that occurred closer to his time. The reason for his choice is hinted at in the title, where Belle states that this conjunction occurs ‘in the new triplicity’ (*in nova triplicitate*).²¹¹ Belle considers this conjunction as the first of the cycle of the water triplicity.²¹² Being the first in a new element, this conjunction rules over not only the twenty years of the cycle, that is, until 1444, the date of the next conjunction, but also establishes the general conditions for the whole cycle in that element, which spans about 240 years (twelve conjunctions at one every twenty years). However, the choice of the conjunction of 1425 was disputed as some astrologers considered that the first in the new element was the one of 1465. This discrepancy resulted from the natural irregularities in the cycle when shifting from one element to the other, as is discussed at the end of this section.

²⁰⁷ See ‘Jupiter-Saturn Conjunctions’ in Appendix I. Studies on other conjunctions can be found in J. North, ‘Astrology and the Fortunes of Churches’, *Centaurus*, 24, 1980, pp. 181-211; Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance*, pp. XIII, 1-28; Bezza, ‘Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions’, pp. 5-48 (pp. 39-40); D. Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, p. 272-289; W. Hübner, ‘The Culture of Astrology, from Ancient to Renaissance’, *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 17-58 (pp. 29-31); L. Smoller, *History, Prophecy and the Stars*, pp. 20-22, 70-74; and Avenezra, *World*.

²⁰⁸ Belle was probably born in the fourth or fifth decade of the 15th century, as discussed before.

²⁰⁹ See for instance the horoscope in Paris, BnF, Nouvelles Aquisitions Latines 208, f. 18r.

²¹⁰ See for instance L. Smoller, ‘Apocalyptic Calculators of the Later Middle Ages’, *Knowing the Time, Knowing of a Time. 3rd Annual Conference of the Center of Millennial Studies*, Boston, 1998, pp. 1-7.

²¹¹ NAL 398, f. 80rb.

²¹² These conjunctions follow the zodiacal order of the elements – fire, earth, air, and water – and the whole cycle, with ten or twelve conjunctions in each element, takes about 794 years to complete. See Bezza, ‘Saturn-Jupiter Conjunctions’ pp. 5-48. See also ‘Jupiter-Saturn Conjunctions’ in Appendix I.

The two decades encompassed by the effects of the 1425 conjunction fall within the period of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) and are better understood in this setting.²¹³ In the year of the conjunction, the throne of France was being disputed by the Dauphin Charles (the future Charles VII), and the infant King Henry VI of England. However, Belle seems to be more interested in the religious aspects of the judgement, possibly because this conjunction happened in the aftermath of the Papal Schism.²¹⁴ He makes indirect references to the crusade against the Ottoman Empire, prompted by Pope Martin V, the first pope after the schism.²¹⁵ The rapid spread of the bubonic plague was also cause for concern in this period and many fourteenth- and fifteenth-century astrologers connected the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1345 to the plague that ravaged Europe between 1347 and 1350. Belle does not establish an explicit connection between the 1425 conjunction and the last waves of the plague, perhaps fearing the criticism that surrounded the matter.²¹⁶

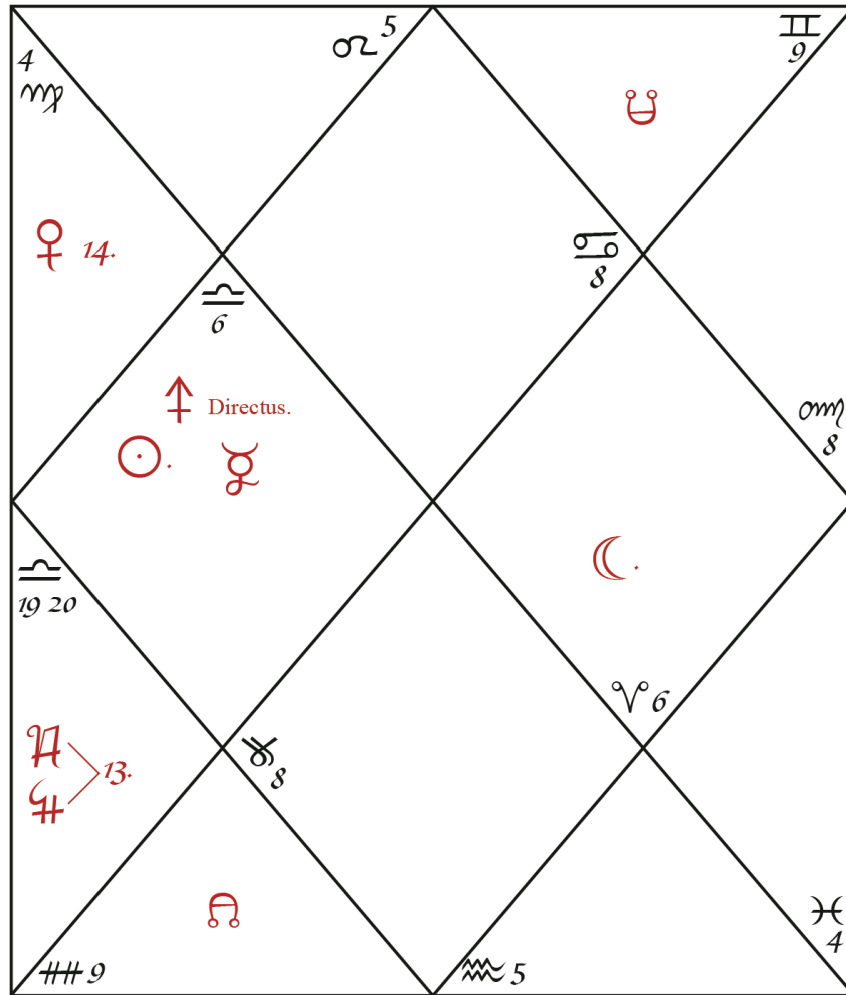
²¹³ The topic has been addressed by Boudet and Charmasson, 'Une consultation', pp. 255-278; J-P. Boudet, 'Prevision de l'avenir et connaissance du passé: les relations entre astrologie et histoire à la fin du Moyen Age', *Pratiques de la culture écrite en France au Xve siècle*; M. Ornato, E. Pons (eds), Louvain-la-Neuve, 1995, pp. 299-312. For context, see also E. Wickersheimer, 'Un judgement astrologique de la Paix d'Arras et le médecin Thomas Broun', in *Association Bourguignonne des Sociétés Savantes*, Douzième Congrès, Dijon, 1937, pp. 202-204. See also R. Hand, *The Use of Military Astrology in Late Medieval Italy: the Textual Evidence*, PhD Dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 2014.

²¹⁴ The Papal Schism (1378-1417) was seen by some as the first sign of the Apocalypse, as debated in Smoller, 'Apocalyptic Calculators', pp. 1-7.

²¹⁵ The impending menace of destruction of Christianity by the Ottomans was also considered a sign of the Apocalypse. See S. E. Hendrix, 'Astrological Forecasting and the Turkish Menace in the Renaissance Balkans', *Antropologija*, 13, 2, 2013, pp. 57-72, and Hendrix, 'From the margins to the image of "The Most Christian Science": Astrology and Theology from Albert the Great to Marsilio Ficino', *Culture and Cosmos*, 20.1-2 (2016), pp. 129-146; see also S. P. Blake, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calendar, Ceremony and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal and Ottoman Empires*, New York, 2013, pp. 143-144.

²¹⁶ See R. Johnson, 'From Sin to Science: Astrological Explanations for the Black Death, 1345-1350', *Ex Post Facto, Journal of the History Students at San Francisco State University*, XVIII, 2009, pp. 1-16; Weill-Parot, 'La rationalité médicale à l'épreuve de la peste: médecine, astrologie et magie (1348-1500)', *Médiévales*, 46, 2004, pp. 1-14.

Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425
 NAL 398 f. 80r: composite chart drawn by Belle



House I – 06° Libra Mars Libra directus Sun Libra Mercury Libra	House VII – 06° Aries Moon Aries
House II – 08° Scorpio Saturn 13° Scorpio Jupiter 13° Scorpio	House VIII – 08° Taurus
House III – 09° Sagittarius South Node	House IX – 09° Gemini North Node
House IV – 08° Capricorn	House X – 08° Cancer
House V – 05° Aquarius	House XI – 05° Leo
House VI – 04° Pisces	House XII – 04° Virgo Venus 19° Virgo

This horoscope does not depict a specific configuration of planets as would be expected, but a composition of several horoscopes related to the conjunction. In the title, Belle mentions the year of the conjunction but omits the date. It seems that his first intention was to write a precise date since he leaves spaces for the day and month:

Judgement of the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the new triplicity, which was in the year of the Lord 1425 incomplete, month [blank] day [blank] of that month.²¹⁷

In this case, Belle had to make some important decisions before he could cast the horoscope. Firstly, as this was a triple conjunction, he had to choose between three possible horoscopes, one for each stage of the event.²¹⁸ Secondly, he had to decide whether he wanted to calculate the moment of the conjunction itself or the moment of the lunation preceding it (much like he did before in the revolutions of the year). Finally, he had to determine whether this was indeed the first conjunction of the cycle in the triplicity of water: some astrologers argued that the first conjunction of the water cycle had occurred in 1365, while others, such as Belle, favoured that of 1425 (this discussion is addressed in further detail at the end of this section). Belle seems undecided about which horoscope to choose given the multiple choices presented by this conjunction. All things considered, he opted for a hybrid horoscope, apparently resulting from the merging of the other two, that for the third conjunction of August 1425 and that for the Full Moon of September. The zodiacal degrees of Mercury, Mars, Sun and the Moon are not presented furthering the notion of a composite chart.

The judgement is written in the future tense perhaps as a strategy to mask its retrospective nature, or simply because they were copied, at least partially, from an earlier source. The judgement begins with the customary defense of the value and accuracy of astrology and the denouncement of bad practitioners:

As Ptolemy says in the first book of *Tetrabiblos* in chapter two, some people have dared to call those asserting the truth of astrology, liars and masters of falsity, belonging to another race. And this is not because of an error in the art, but rather because of the imperfect practice and the temerity of those who should fear to ascribe the ministry of astrology to themselves.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ *Judicium super coniunctione Saturni et Jovis in nova triplicitate qui erat anno domini 1425 imperfecto mense [blank] die [blank] huius mensis*, f. 80rb.

²¹⁸ Triple conjunctions happen when the meeting of the planets coincides with a phase of retrogradation, producing a first conjunction with both planets in direct motion, followed by an intermediate one when both are retrograde, and a final conjunction again with both direct.

²¹⁹ Sicut dicit Ptolemeus in primo *Quadripartiti capitulo 2^o* huius artis scilicet astrologie veritatem asserentes mendaces et falsitatis magistros de alio grege quidem ausi sunt appellare. Non tamen hoc ex artis errore sed potius ex imperfecta eorum exercitatione et eorum temeritate qui huius sibi ministerium timeret ascribere, f. 80rb. Belle is paraphrasing Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I.2, pp. 12-13.

The text carries on the defensive tone with the author admitting his own fallibility and inexperience while insisting on the validity of astrology:

Wishing therefore to write certain predictions about the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the new triplicity, which will happen in the year 1425, I fear that I might fall into error because of the subtlety and excellence of the astrological art and because of my imperfect preparation and inexperience, and certain people who will look into this work will not fear to ascribe – to me, rightly, and to the art, wrongly – stupidity and error.²²⁰

Before the judgement, Belle offers an overview of the planetary configurations following the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction.

About 13 October they [Jupiter and Saturn] will be conjunct with Mars, the Sun and Mercury and immediately after, namely in October there will be an eclipse of the Sun in the same sign, and in the same month there will be an eclipse of the Moon in Gemini; it follows that this conjunction signifies great changes in the world.²²¹

The conjunction of the Sun with the aforementioned planets occurred in October, but the solar eclipse occurred on 10 November, at 26° Scorpio, and the lunar eclipse on 25 November, at 12° Gemini.

From this point on, Belle's account of the 1425 conjunction shows remarkable similarities to the judgement for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1365 written by John of Ashenden.²²² There are several surviving copies of this judgement, most of them in English libraries, and one of the most complete, Lat. 7443, in a French library.²²³ The latter displays many similarities to Belle's workbooks: it comprises not only the judgement for the 1365 conjunction, but also several nativities also included in Belle's collection. However, there are some divergences in the judgement of this conjunction, discussed below, suggesting that he may also have consulted other manuscripts or perhaps one copy that has not survived. In this analysis Belle's text was compared not only to Lat. 7443, but also to three texts in English libraries: Sloane 1713, Harley 637,

²²⁰ Volens igitur quasdam pronosticationes scribere super coniunctionem magnam Saturni et Jovis in nova triplicitate que erit anno domini 1425 timeo ne propter artis astrologie subtilitatem et excellentiam et mei ruditatem et inexperientiam incidam in errorum et sic michi digne et arti indigne fatuitatem et errorum qui hoc opus aspecturi ascribere non timebunt, f. 80rb.

²²¹ Circa 13 Octobris erunt coniuncti cum eis Mars Sol et Mercurius et statim scilicet in Octobrem erit eclipsis Solis in eodem signo et in eodem mense erit eclipsis Lune in Geminis sequuntur iterum quod ista coniunctio significat magnas mutationes in mundo, f. 80va.

²²² John of Ashenden, fellow of the Merton College in Oxford and author of *Summa astrologiae iudicialis de accidentibus mundi* (*Summa Anglicana*). See Thorndike, HMES, New York 1933, III, pp. 325-346 and Appendix 20, pp. 720-721, J. North, *Stars, Mind and Fate*, pp. 70-75; North, 'Astrology and the Fortunes of Curches', *Centaurus*, 1980, 24, pp. 181-211; pp. 10-11; Carey, *Courting Disaster*, pp. 75, 188-191; Boudet, *La recueil*, I, p. 497, n. 68, and II, p. 149; Thorndike, HMES, III, p. 340-341; L. R. Mooney, *The Calendarium of John Somer*, Athens, Georgia, 1998 and the references in Juste, *CCAL II*, pp. 129, 167, 269-270.

²²³ Paris, BnF Lat. 7443, ff. 221r-227v. Boudet considers Ashenden's text the most complete astrological prediction on planetary conjunctions of the 14th century, in *Lire dans le ciel*, pp. 147-150.

Royal 12.F.XVII.²²⁴ There are many parallels between these texts and Belle's account, but for brevity only the most relevant are mentioned in this analysis.

Both the conjunction of 1365 judged by Ashenden and that of 1425, judged by Belle, occurred in the sign of Scorpio and in the second house. These common traits allowed Belle to use Ashenden's judgement as a model for his own. He transcribed the passages that apply to both judgements and replaced those that differ with his own words while maintaining the overall structure of the judgement. The resulting text is a skilful mixture of copying, editing and original writing. These adaptations were not uncommon: for instance, in MS Prague 1544 there is a prediction for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1229, which is adapted, almost literally, from a prediction for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1186 also in Libra.²²⁵

Belle's judgement begins with the enumeration of the four considerations deemed essential to the judgement: the location of the events, their timing, their magnitude, and their nature, whether good or bad.²²⁶ It follows the list of regions and kingdoms where the effects of the conjunction should take place, that is, the lands ruled by the sign where the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction should fall and by its planetary ruler. As both conjunctions occur in Scorpio, a sign ruled by Mars, Belle and Ashenden present virtually the same list of lands and climates and they quote the same authorities in the same order.²²⁷ The sequence is as follows: Mars rules the end of the third climate, specifically the land of Egypt, and Scorpio rules Germany and Arabia according to Ptolemy, Albumasar, and Haly Abenragel. Haly also connects Mars to Turkey and the Promised Land, while the 'Indi' (Indian astrologers) link it to Alexandria and the Promised Land. Ptolemy correlates Scorpio and Mars to 'the Land of Black People and the Mauri, Syria, Getulia, Commagene, and Capadocia'.²²⁸ After this, both mention

²²⁴ Respectively London, British Library, Sloane 1713, ff. 1r-14v; London, British Library, Harley 637, ff. 129av-143v (with horoscopes); London, British Library, Royal 12 F. XVII, ff. 172r-180v. There are also copies of Ashenden's judgement of the 1365 conjunction in Cambridge, Emmanuel College 70, ff. 4v-14v Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 345; Ashmole 393, ff. 81v-86r; Ashmole 192, I, 1, pp. 1-10, (a copy of the former); Ashmole 1471; Digby 176, ff. 42r-49v; Digby 57.

²²⁵ See G. de Callatay, 'La grande conjunction de 1186 dans les sources occidentales et orientales', *Annus Platonicus. A Study of World Cycles in Greek, Latin and Arabic Sources*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1996, Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, pp. 74-82, and Glick, Livesey and Wallis (eds), *Medieval Science, Technology and Medicine*, p. 480, judgements for revolutions of the world.

²²⁶ The list in NAL 389 f. 80va (which is similar to Lat. 7443 f. 221v), is the standard method in the judgements for revolutions of the world. See for instance the judgement of an eclipse by Heingarter, in Préaud, *Les astrologues*, pp. 143-155. See also 'Climates' and 'Rulership of the signs over certain regions' in Appendix I.

²²⁷ NAL 398 f. 80vb-81ra and Lat. 7443 ff. 221v-222v.

²²⁸ 'The Land of the Black People' is possibly Nubia, present-day Sudan; the Mauri, Mauretania, part of present-day Morocco; Getulia, a region inhabited by the ancient Berber tribe of the Gaetuli near the

Scotland because of its association to Scorpio and include a derogatory comment about the Scots:²²⁹

And *Abraismus* in the Book of the Revolutions of the Years says that Scorpio rules the Land of Scotland and the men in that land obey Scorpio in character. For they are cruel and carried away by the force of sexuality, dedicated to bestiality, false, deceitful in faith and trustworthiness, unyielding.²³⁰

For Ashenden, this comment was probably seen as natural given the difficult relations between England and Scotland in the context of the Hundred Years War, but for Belle, a French astrologer living a century later, this hostility could seem out of place. Thus, Belle introduces some changes to Ashenden's text, revealing his awareness of the political context of his time. For instance, some paragraphs below he omits Ashenden's comment about France being one of the lands possibly affected by the conjunction, replacing it with another reference, also astrologically correct, but related to the Scots, who seem to be safer targets for negative predictions:

the effects of this conjunction will appear mainly in the region of Scotland, because of the aforementioned causes.²³¹

At the end of the list, Belle quotes 'a certain person called Henry de Seuly' who states that the Moon rules the English and Saturn the Scots.²³² This author is also mentioned by Ashenden in the judgement for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1365 as 'Henricus de Seubi' and in *Summa Anglicana* as 'Henricus Silen'.²³³ The term 'Silen' may be an abbreviation for 'Silvanectum', the Latin name of Senlis. The similarities between 'Seuly' and 'Seubi' suggest that Belle copied this passage not from Ashenden's *Summa*, but from his judgement on the 1365 conjunction.²³⁴ This attribution is probably related to the climates since the Moon rules of the seventh climate, between 45° and 50°

Atlas Mountains; Commagene is an ancient Armenian kingdom part of present-day Turkey, and Capadocia is a region in central Anatolia, also in Turkey.

²²⁹ '*Abraismus*' is usually the name given to a book of instructions for the use of astrological tables written by Abraham ibn Ezra, but in this context it seems to refer to the book *On Eclipses of the Moon and the Sun, the Conjunctions of the Planets and the Revolutions of the Year*, written by Masha'allah and possibly translated by Avenezra. See Avenezra, *World*, pp. 241-259.

²³⁰ Et *Abraismus* liber de Annorum Revolutionibus dicit quod Scorpio preest terre Scotie et quod homines illius terre audiunt Scorpium in moribus. Sunt enim crudeles et vi elati luxurie et bestialitati dediti falsi subdoli fide et fidelitate intransigentes, NAL 938, f. 80vb.

²³¹ Apparebunt effectus istius coniunctionis maxime in regione Scotie propter causas predictas, f. 81ra. Asheden's comment is on Lat. 7443, f. 222r.

²³² Et quidam qui vocatur Henricus de Seuly dicit quod Luna dominatur super Anglos et Saturnus super Scotos, NAL 398 f. 81ra.

²³³ Et dicit quidam valens astronomus anglicus qui vocabatur magister Henricus de Seubi quod Luna dominatur super Anglos at Saturnus super Scotos, in Lat. 7443, f. 222v, Royal MS 12 F. XVII, f. 178r and Harley 637, f. 140r, f. 10v (using the variant 'Feuby'). Et dicit quidam valens astrologus magister Henricus Silen quod Luna dominatur super Anglicos et Saturnus super Scotos, in *Summa Astrologiae Iudicialis de Accidentibus Mundi (Summa Anglicana)*, Venice, 1489, 8.IV, p. 46.

²³⁴ The printed edition, mentioned in the preceding footnote, dates from 1489, sixteen years after Belle's text, but he could have consulted a manuscript version.

approximately, thus including England situated between 49°N and 55°N approximately. The seventh climate is the last region mentioned in the classical sources and there are no attributions for the regions situated further north, such as Scotland (between 54°N and 58°N), so the sequence was resumed and Saturn, the first planet, was attributed to them.²³⁵

The judgement then moves on to the sensitive topic of religion but before presenting any judgement, Belle provides a caveat, again taken from Ashenden's text: he assures the reader that he does not intend 'to say something that might be opposed to the catholic faith and to offend the ears of the pious.'²³⁶ Only after this apologetic remark does he present the conclusion:

That conjunction will signify mutation or destruction of an old sect or the beginning of a new one, or the rise of a new prophet in the world, or both.²³⁷

In the centuries that preceded the Protestant Reformation there was a pervasive sense of religious dissatisfaction expressed by reformers such as the German theologian Peter Waldo (c. 1140-c. 1205), the English philosopher and Oxford professor John Wycliffe (c. 1320-1384), the Czech priest Jan Hus (c. 1372-1415), and, closer to Belle's time, the Italian friar Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498). The idea of a 'little prophet', that is, a reformer of the established religion,²³⁸ had been present in Christian culture since the translation of Albumasar's books into Latin in the twelfth century.²³⁹ The 'little prophet' was greatly anticipated and several possible birth dates were advanced. One of the strongest possibilities was the year 1484 when yet another Jupiter-Saturn conjunction occurred in Scorpio; the possibility was advanced by many astrologers, among them the Dutch cleric and professor Paul of Middleburg (1446-1534) and the German astrologer Johannes Lichtenberger (1440-1503).²⁴⁰ They are both

²³⁵ See 'Climates' in Appendix I.

²³⁶ *aliquid asserere quod poterit fidei catholice obviare seu pias aures offendere*, f. 82vb.

²³⁷ *Nam quia ista conjunctio significabit mutationem seu destructionem alicuius secte antique vel aliquam novam incipere, seu aliquam novam prophetam insurgere in mundo vel utrumque illorum*, f. 82vb.

²³⁸ This concept was complemented by that of the 'great prophet', who would create a new religion.

²³⁹ Particularly *De Magnis Coniunctionibus*. See Abū Ma'shar, *Great Conjunctions*, K. Yamamoto and C. Burnett, Leiden, 2000, I, p. 37-43.

²⁴⁰ Respectively: Paul of Middelburg, *Prognostica ad viginti annos duratura*, Cologne, 1484 and Johannes Lichtenberger, *Prognosticatio in Latino*, Heidelberg, 1488. In the context of these predictions, Martin Luther, who was born with the Sun in Scorpio, and in Germany, a country attributed to Scorpio, was considered by some as the manifestation of the new and long-awaited prophet. For prophecies regarding Luther, see A. Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, D. Britt (tr.), Los Angeles, 1999, pp. 597-667, at pp. 617-632; J. Hoppmann, 'The Lichtenberger Prophecy and Melancthon's Horoscope for Luther', *Culture and Cosmos*, 12, 1997, pp. 49-59; J. Green, *Printing and Prophecy: Prognostication and Media Change 1450-1550*, Ann Arbor, 2012, pp. 39-61, and G.-A. Schoener, *The*

contemporary to Belle, who was likely to have been aware of their predictions when he wrote his judgement in 1473.

Belle also predicts ‘the destruction of the sect of the Saracens’ (the Muslims, encompassing Arabs and Turks) deduced from the weak position of Venus, the planet traditionally associated with them.²⁴¹ In the horoscope of the conjunction of 1425, Venus is at 14 degrees of Virgo, the sign of its fall.²⁴² It is also in the twelfth house of enemies and treason. Pondering these and other difficult conditions, Belle concludes:

This conjunction [of 1425] will signify mutation and destruction for the sect of Venus, which is the sect of the Saracens, and this by their enemies. And their enemies, as was previously deduced, are Mercury and Mars; and Mercury, according to the above [book of] Albumasar, means the sect of the Christians.²⁴³

Ashenden makes a similar prediction about the Saracens in his judgement for 1365, and also mentions the weak condition of Venus to support his claim.²⁴⁴ In this horoscope Venus is in the third house, also a cadent house, and in Scorpio, a sign where it has its detriment, among other unfavourable conditions. In both horoscopes Venus is weak, so both astrologers draw similar conclusions, although taking into account the differences in the respective horoscopes. Still adapting from Ashenden’s text, Belle quotes Avenezra to further explain the reasons for this defeat:

In this conjunction Saturn is elevated over Jupiter and it will be stronger than it, which means that the ancient people living in the place will not be defeated but become stronger, and since the sect of the Christians is older than the sect of the Saracens, the Christians will overcome.²⁴⁵

The term ‘elevated over’ refers to the latitude of the planet, that is, its distance north or south of the ecliptic. The planet with the most northern latitude is the one ‘elevated’ over the other. Both Belle and Ashenden state that Saturn is elevated over Jupiter in

Coming of a 'Little Prophet': Astrological Pamphlets and the Reformation, in Esoteric.msu.edu.

<http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeVI/Schoener.htm>

²⁴¹ destructionem secte Sarracenorum, f. 82vb. Lat. 7443, f. 225v, and Secundum Albumazar prima *De Coniunctionibus* differentia 8 [sic for differentia 4] Venus super sectam Sarracenorum demonstrat, f. 83ra. For the correlation between Venus and the Saracens see *Abū Ma‘šar On Historical Astrology: The Book of Religions and Dynasties (on the Great Conjunctions)*, *Abū Ma‘šar De Magnis Coniunctionibus*, II, Yamamoto, Burnett (eds), Leiden, 2000, p. 28.

²⁴² Venus in ista coniunctione magna erit in 14 gradu Virginis in suo casu, f. 83ra.

²⁴³ Ista coniunctio significabit mutationem et destructionem secte Veneris que est secta Sarracenorum et hoc per suos inimicos. Et sui inimici ut prius deductum est sunt Mercurius et Mars. Et Mercurius secundum Albumasar ubi supra significat sectam Christianorum, f. 83ra.

²⁴⁴ For other predictions associated with the 1365 conjunction, and the two others that preceded it, see Boudet *Entre science et nigromance*, p. 316-321.

²⁴⁵ In ista coniunctione Saturnus elevatur super Jovem et erit fortior eo significat quod gens antiqua locum inhabitans itaque demota non erit sed superabit cum ergo secta Cristianorum antiquior sit secta Sarracenorum ipsi Cristiani devinent, f. 83ra.

their respective conjunctions.²⁴⁶ As both are correct, the conclusions reached by Ashenden could also be applied with minor adjustments to Belle's judgement. As Saturn is a significator of old things and old people, they take it as the significator of the older sect, in this case, the Christians, which will destroy the younger one, the Saracens. The form of that destruction is signified by Mars (the *almutem* of the degree of this conjunction):²⁴⁷ war and conflicts, destruction and depopulation of the lands by the sword.²⁴⁸ This destruction will take place in all the aforementioned lands, particularly in the land of the Saracens and the land of the Scots due to their connections to Mars and Scorpio (and in the case of Scotland also to Saturn).²⁴⁹ This is not the only disaster that may afflict the lands ruled by Scorpio and Saturn. Both Ashenden and Belle mention the possibility of a deluge:

This conjunction therefore should mark some deluge clearly in any of the aforesaid lands, which are of the signification of Scorpio and Saturn.²⁵⁰

This is a bold, although not unprecedented, judgement as predictions of calamities were common in this period.²⁵¹ Belle, again following Ashenden, substantiated his claim by quoting Albertus Magnus who described the four hypothetical conditions that would lead to a universal deluge:²⁵²

²⁴⁶ In the conjunction of 1425, Saturn, with a latitude of 02°05' north of the ecliptic, is 'elevated' (thus more visible and therefore stronger) over Jupiter, which is only at 00°50' north. See for instance Bonatti, *De Astronomia tractatus X uniuersum quod ad iudiciariam rationem natiuitatum aeris, tempestatum attinet, comprehendentes*, Basel, 1550, IV, pp. 490-491: Cum planeta fuerit septentrionalis ab altero, dicitur ire super eum, sive fuerit de superioribus, sive de inferioribus, ille qui fuerit septentrionalis ab altero, dicit ire super eum.

²⁴⁷ See 'Almutem' in Appendix I.

²⁴⁸ Et Mars significat bella et guerras, destructiones et depopulationes terrarum per gladium, f. 83ra. For details about Ashenden's prediction, see Thorndike, *HMES*, III, Appendix 20, pp. 720-721.

²⁴⁹ destructiones vel depopulationes regni Scotie depopulationes in eisdem terris, f. 83ra-f. 83rb.

²⁵⁰ Ista etiam coniunctio rationabiliter signare debet aliquod diluuium preclare in aliqua predictarum terrarum que sunt de significatione Scorpionis et Saturni, f. 83rb. Again, the similarities with Lat. 7443 are evident: Isti etiam coniunctione potuit rationabiliter significare aliquod diluuium particulare in aliqua predictas terrarum que sunt de significatione Scorpionis et Saturni, Lat 7443, f. 226r.

²⁵¹ The most famous was the prediction for 1524 when all the planets conjoined in Aquarius and Pisces. In the planetary ephemeris for 1499-1535, Jacob Pflaum and Johannes Stöffler mentioned some 'changes' as possible effects of this conjunction. Their prediction was repeated and amplified, soon escalating into catastrophic forecasts of a new universal deluge which spread panic throughout Europe. Its failure ignited fierce criticism against astrology. See for instance W. Eamon, 'Astrology and Society', *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 142-151; J. Green, *Printing and Prophecy: Prognostication and Media Change 1450-1550*, Ann Arbor, 2012, pp. 139-150; J. Rivest, 'Printing and Astrology in Early Modern France', pp. 65-73; P. Zambelli, *Astrology and Magic from the Medieval Islamic World to Renaissance Europe: Theories and Approaches*, Aldershot, 2012, IV p. 25, VI pp. 1-28, VII pp. 239-263.

²⁵² Albertus libro 2º *De Proprietatibus Elementorum*, capitulo 9º ex causa diluuii universali, f. 83rb. I. M. Resnick, *On the Causes of the Properties of the Elements*, Milwaukee, 2010 (*Liber de causis proprietatum elementorum*). See also P. Zambelli, *The Speculum Astronomiae and its Enigma. Astrology, Theology, and Science in Albertus Magnus and His Contemporaries*, Dordrecht, 1992, p. 98.

First, I believe it is a conjunction of the seven planets in aquatic signs; second is that they are all in the lower part of their circles, otherwise epicycles; third, is that it was this conjunction that began in the sign of Aquarius and transited into the sign of Pisces, namely at the four stars that are called Hydra of Aquarius, or the Pouring the water of Aquarius, and transited as was said into the sign of Pisces; fourth, the Moon was strengthened in power [dignified] at the hour of the conjunction.²⁵³

Both Belle and Ashenden concede that their respective horoscopes fail to meet all these conditions because in both cases the planets ‘will not all be [conjunct] in Aquarius nor in Pisces’, but emphasize that they will nevertheless be ‘in a sign of water’.²⁵⁴ At this point, Belle mentions several planetary configurations that happened only in 1425:

Mars and Mercury on the 23th day of October [of 1425] in the sign of Scorpio, the Moon going forward in Pisces, and Venus in Virgo. And later, on 10 November, there will be an eclipse of the Sun – the Sun and the Moon will conjoin the Tail of the Dragon; likewise, Saturn and Jupiter [will be] with them.²⁵⁵

These configurations reinforce the similarities between the 1425 conjunction and Albertus Magnus’s description of a hypothetical horoscope with all the planets gathered in a sign of water. Venus in Virgo, the sign of its fall, can be seen as a symbol of the weak position of the Muslims. But before delivering a conclusion Belle quotes Ashenden:

Abraismus in the Book of Revolutions of Years, in the chapter on the State of the Church, says: from the concord of the two swords, the secular and the spiritual – that is, from the concord of the emperor and the pope – Christianity profits, from their discord it is hindered.²⁵⁶

Yet, there seems to be little hope for concord, as is revealed by this pessimistic, though astrologically accurate, judgement:

Also Jupiter, which is the significator of the pope, in the second house [of the horoscope] will be conjunct with Saturn, which is elevated over it in this conjunction.

²⁵³ Prima est septenaria planetarum coniunctio credo in aquaticis. 2^a est quod sunt omnes in inferiori parte suorum circularum aliter epicyclorum. 3 est quod fuerit talis coniunctio quod inceperit in signo Aquarii et transiverit in signum Piscium videlicet iuxta 4 stellas que dicuntur Ydria Aquarii seu Effusor aque Aquarii que transierit ut dictum est in signum Piscium. 4^a quod Luna fuerit confortata viribus hora coniunctionis, f. 83va. See also *HMES*, III, p. 341.

²⁵⁴ non erit omnis planetarum in Aquario neque in Piscibus erit cum coniunctio cuiusquam planetarum este in signo aqueo, f. 83va. Similar to Lat 7443, f. 226v, which adds: Saturn, Jupiter, the Sun, Venus and Mars in the sign of Scorpio (Saturni, Jovis, Solis, Veneris et Martis in signo Scorpionis scilicet in signo aqueo), for that was the configuration in 1365.

²⁵⁵ Martis Solis et Mercurii 23 die Octobri in signo Scorpionis Luna proeunte existente in Piscibus et Venus in Virgine. Et postea 10 die Novembris erit eclipsis Solis et Sol et Luna coniungentur cum Cauda Draconis similiter Saturnus et Jupiter cum eis, f. 83va.

²⁵⁶ Dicit *Abraismus* libro *De Annorum Revolutionibus*, Capitulo de Statu Ecclesie, quod ex concordia duorum gladium et secularis et spiritualis videlicet ex concordia imperatoris et pape proficit cristianitas et ex eorum discordia impeditur, f. 83vb. This passage is not directly identifiable in *Avenezra*.

And because, according to this [Ezra's] opinion, by this conjunction is to be feared a great oppression of the pope and prelates by the kings and princes of the land.²⁵⁷

Belle echoes Ashenden's cautionary remark, 'this I say under the aforementioned claim' and seems to share his hesitations on this topic:²⁵⁸

It could also be said that this conjunction signifies that some new sect and some new prophet may arise, but this I do not affirm as in this conjunction none of the three superior planets will be in either the ninth house or in the third, which is required for this conjunction to signify the nativity of prophets.²⁵⁹

None of the superior planets is placed in the houses of religion, the third and the ninth, thus there are no certainties.²⁶⁰ The new sect, if it arises, will be full of 'cruelty and depravity, falsity and deception'.²⁶¹ Belle and Ashenden keep hinting at this appearance, although never declaring it openly. Ashenden concludes his judgement at this point, but Belle carries on, addressing the sensitive matter of determinism:

it is not my intention to assert that the aforesaid effects signified by the great conjunction will inevitably or necessarily happen from the aforesaid conjunction.²⁶²

He establishes a distinction between the prediction all possible effects and the identification of those which will actually come to pass, this way circumventing any accusation of interfering in free will.

it should not be thought that significators procede inevitably over what they signify or towards those things that occur by divine disposition and cannot be avoided, and it is no less true that they happen out of necessity. This [says] Ptolemy.²⁶³

Even after these cautionary remarks, he hesitates in giving a direct opinion:

I do not say that the aforementioned effects will necessarily happen, nor do I want to affirm with all certainty that they come about from the aforesaid conjunction, but I do want to state that this conjunction and other subsequent conjunctions with eclipses are

²⁵⁷ Jupiter etiam qui est significator pape in 2^o loco erit junctus Saturno. Qui Saturnus elevabitur super eum in ista coniunctione. Et quia coniunctione iuxta istam sententiam quod timendum est de magna oppressione pape et prelatorum ecclesie a regibus et principibus terre, f. 84ra.

²⁵⁸ NAL 398 f. 84ra. Similar to Lat. 7443, f. 227v: *Ista dico sub protestatione premissa.*

²⁵⁹ Posset etiam dici quod ista coniunctio aliquam novam sectam et aliquem novum prophetam de novo significat insurgere, sed hoc non assero eo quod per istam coniunctionem nec aliquis trium superiorum erit in 9 domo nec in 3^a quod requiritur ad hoc quod talis conjunctio significat nativitatem prophetarum, f. 84ra.

²⁶⁰ See *Abū Ma'šar On Historical Astrology: The Book of Religions and Dynasties (on the Great Conjunctions)*, *Abū Ma'šar De Magnis Coniunctionibus*, Yamamoto, Burnett (trads and eds), Leiden, 2000, II, p. 23.

²⁶¹ totius crudelitatem et nequitiam, totius falsitatem et fallaciam, f. 84ra. Similar to Lat. 7443, f. 227v.

²⁶² Non est mee intentionis asserere quod effectus predicti significati per coniunctionem magnum evenient inevitabiliter vel necessarie ex coniunctione predicta, f. 84ra.

²⁶³ non estimandum quod superiores [sic, for 'significatores'] super sua significata procedant inevitabiliter vel ad illa que divina dispositione contingunt que nullatenus sunt vitanda, nec non et veraciter que ex necessitate contingunt. Hec Ptholomeus. f. 84ra-84rb. This passage can be found in Ptolemy. *Tetrabiblos*, pp. 23-25, and also in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III. 86, 14 'Quod corporales effectus in istis inferioribus non sequuntur ex necessitate a corporibus caelestibus'.

signs which signify that the aforementioned effects that will happen, according to the judgement of the astrologers.²⁶⁴

The comment about the nature of the celestial configurations seems to be taken from Roger Bacon's discussion regarding astrology and the influence of the stars in *Opus Maius*.²⁶⁵ Bacon states that the planets are 'signs hinting to us those things which God has disposed from eternity' (*planetas esse signa innuentia nobis ea que Deus disposuit ab eterno*).²⁶⁶ Belle also quotes an extensive passage of Bacon's introduction to the *Secretum Secretorum* ascribing it to Aristotle.²⁶⁷ This text disputes those who say that astrology is too complex to allow prevision, contesting that 'to the power of the intellect nothing is difficult, and all is knowable by reason' (*ad potentiam intellectus nihil est difficile et cuncta sunt scibilia in via rationis*).²⁶⁸ To those who consider that all is pre-ordained and one cannot avoid future events, the text responds:

although some things will necessarily happen, however if they are foreknown, [they] will be better tolerated and prudently deflected and somehow avoided. Because it is plausible that if you should know when it will happen, consequently you take it to discreetly pass without trouble or major harm.²⁶⁹

Belle endorses these arguments, in this way shielding his judgement against criticism. Still quoting the *Secretum*, he emphasizes the utility of astrology, one of Bacon's main arguments in defense of its practice.²⁷⁰

It is thus very useful to have foreknowledge of the future, because it is better to decline according to the men when they foreknow what to come and when by their prudence they avoid future evil.²⁷¹

²⁶⁴ Nolo ergo dicere quod predicti effectus contingent necessario nec volo certitudinaliter asserere quod contingent ex predicta coniunctione, sed volo asserere quod ista coniunctio et alie coniunctiones sequentes cum eclipsibus erunt signa quedam significantia predictos effectus contingere seu futuros esse iuxta sententias astrologorum, f. 84rb-84va.

²⁶⁵ Roger Bacon, *Opus Maius*, J. Bridges (ed.), Oxford, 1900, p. 266 (and others).

²⁶⁶ Bacon, *Opus Maius*, I, p. 266. However, Bacon does not endorse this idea in all instances, as noted by Gee, *Strategies of Defending Astrology: a Continuing Tradition*, PhD thesis, Toronto, 2012, pp. 230-231.

²⁶⁷ Bacon, *Opera Hactenus Inedita Rogeri Baconi, V. Secretum Secretorum cum Glossis et Notulis. Tractatus Brevis et Utilis ad Declarandum quedam Obscure Dicta*, Robert Steele (ed.), Oxford, 1620, Capitulum 22 de regimine vite per astronomiam, pp. 60-62.

²⁶⁸ NAL 398, f. 84vb.

²⁶⁹ licet quedam sunt necessario ventura tamen si presciantur levius tolerantur et prudentius declinantur et sit quodammodo evitantur. Quia verissimile est si sciveris futura quando accidunt proinde recipiunt etiam discrete transeunt sine molestia et magna lesione, f. 84vb.

²⁷⁰ For Bacon's defence of astrology, see Gee, *Strategies of Defending Astrology*, pp. 218-238, 251-259. For the arguments used by later authors who rejected some aspects of astrology, namely prognostications for nativities, see for instance P. Kibre, 'Giovanni Garzoni of Bologna (1419-1505). Professor of Medicine and Defender of Astrology', *Isis*, 58, 4, 1967, pp. 504-514, and Livingston, J. W., 'Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: a Fourteenth Century Defense against Astrological Divination and Alchemical Transmutation', *Journal of the American Society*, 91, 1, 1971, pp. 96-103.

²⁷¹ Confert ergo multum futura prescire quia melius declinare prout homines quando ventura precognoscunt et quandoque per prudentiam futura mala evadunt, NAL 398, 84rb.

After affirming God's prevalence over this matter, 'for one should not be predestined in such a way that they can take away some of his power' (*non enim ita predistinatur quod in aliquo sue potentie derogare possint*), Belle concludes: 'Here ends the judgement of the great conjunction, written by me, S. Belle, in Châlus in the year of the Lord 1473 incomplete, day 6 of February.'²⁷²

²⁷² Explicit iudicium coniunctionis magne scripta per me S. Belle in Castro Lucio anno domini 1473 imperfecto die 6 Februarii, f. 84va.

Highlights

This section explores the techniques used for judging the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction and the way an astrologer would deal with different, and often contradictory, opinions, techniques and data. It also exemplifies the learning process of a medieval astrologer, and the complexities of copying, editing and writing an original text.

This is the first judgement to have some direct connection to Belle's life since it occurred only a few decades before his time. In this case, Belle is not simply studying the past as an exercise, as with the interrogations and revolutions, but scrutinizing its implications in the present. He regarded it as the first of the cycle of conjunctions in the same element, therefore determining the general conditions of the following two centuries.

In this case, the study could serve not only as a learning exercise about the past, but as a true prediction capable of forecasting the events of years to come – a future that directly affected Belle's life. The identification of the first conjunction of the cycle allowed him to predict and, more importantly, to ascertain amelioration, or even prevention, of the less desirable effects (the details for specific periods were taken from other horoscopes, such as lunations and ingresses). This attitude, identified by Boudet as 'a mixture of both the determinist and totally non-fatalist nature of the influences of the heavens', is clearly manifested in Belle's judgements not only in this instance, but also perhaps even more noticeably in the nativities.²⁷³

The first conjunction of the water cycle

As seen before, Belle chose the 1425 conjunction as the first of the water triplicity, while other astrologers opted for the conjunction of 1365. This divergence being explained by some irregularities in the cycle of conjunctions.²⁷⁴ There was one conjunction in the element of water (Scorpio) in 1365, which theoretically should have been followed by one last conjunction in the element Air (Gemini) in 1385, but the fact that it was followed by two, in 1385 and 1405 (Gemini and Aquarius, respectively), brought doubts as to the exact end of the cycle. The table below shows the transition:

²⁷³ 'la nature à la fois déterministe et totalement anti-fataliste de l'influence du ciel, selon l'opinion de nombreux astrologues de la fin du Moyen Âge', Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, p. 319.

²⁷⁴ See Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, pp. 272-289. See also 'Jupiter-Saturn Conjunctions' in Appendix I.

**Table 6 – Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions
transiting from the air to the water element**

1365	07°00' Scorpio
1385	25°53' Gemini
1405	23°46' Aquarius
1425	17°18' Scorpio, 16°33' Scorpio, 12°40' Scorpio (triple)

John of Ashenden was one of the proponents of the 1365 conjunction as being the first in the water sequence, as mentioned before. In his judgement for the conjunction of 1365, reproduced in Lat. 7443, he states his position clearly:

The beginning of the treatise of John Ashenden, former fellow of Merton College in Oxford, about the signification of the great conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, which will be in the year of Christ 1365 complete, in the month of October, 24th day, 14 hours and 29 minutes, in the sign of Scorpio and in the new triplicity, which will signify many great changes in the World and grave and terrible events, according to all astronomers who talk about this matter.²⁷⁵

While Belle does not question Ashenden's judgement, he rejects the 1365 conjunction as the first of the sequence, proposing that of 1425 instead:

In the year of Christ of 1357 [John of Ashenden] wrote very well of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in Scorpio, that was in the future year of 1365, 30 days of October, believing that this conjunction changed from the aerial triplicity to the watery triplicity, [but] in fact in the year of Christ 1385 their conjunction returned to the aerial triplicity, and they were conjoined in the sign of Gemini, and later in the year of Christ 1405 they were conjoined in the sign of Aquarius, and in the year of Christ 1425 their conjunction will return finally to the triplicity of water and in that triplicity it will stand for 240 years.²⁷⁶

Belle is not the only one to offer alternatives to Ashenden's choice: in Lat. 7443, below a horoscope for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1365 there is a comment stating: 'In this conjunction the triplicity changed' where there was another note added by a later hand 'according to some'.²⁷⁷ Regardless of this, Belle did not dismiss the prediction itself, instead, he incorporated it into his own judgement. As both conjunctions occur

²⁷⁵ Incipit tractatus Johannis Veschinden (sic), cond. [quondam] socii aule de Merton in Oxonia, de significatione coniunctionis magne Saturni et Jovis que erit anno Christi 1365 completo mense Octobris 29 diebus 14 horis et 29 minutis in signo Scorpionis et in nova triplicitate que significabit valde magnas mutationes in mundo et accidentia grandia et terribilia secundum omnes astronomos loquentes de hac materia, Paris, BnF, Latin 7443, ff. 221r.

²⁷⁶ In anno Christi 1357 optime scripsit de coniunctione Saturni et Jovis in Scorpione ut futura in anno Christi 1365 30^a die Octobris credens ipsam coniunctionem plene tunc mutasse de triplicitate aerea in triplicitatem aqueam cum de facto anno Christi 1385 redibat coniunctio eorum ad triplicitatem aeream et iungebantur in signo Geminorum, et postea anno Christi 1405 iungebantur in signo Aquario, et modo anno Christi 1425 redibit coniunctio eorum perfecte ad triplicitatem aqueam et in illa triplicitate stabit 240^a annis, ff. 82va, 82vb.

²⁷⁷ In ista coniunctionem fuit mutatio triplicitatis / secundum aliquos, Lat. 7443 f. 125rb2. The other horoscope for the 1365 conjunction is on f. 221r, as part of Ashenden's judgement. For details, see Juste, *CCAL II*, ff. 165-167.

in Scorpio, he used parts of Ashenden's text for 1365 and transferred them to his own judgement for 1425. He supports his argument by quoting Ptolemy and Haly:

Ptolemy says in *Centiloquium* in the first proposition, 'the knowledge of the stars is from you and from them [the stars]'; Haly says 'he who desires to write of future events should choose one of two ways; one is to look at the movements of the stars as the Ancients wrote about in the books, and he should add to this whatever he can prove in his own time'. Therefore, I am intending to act by doctrine and experience, not for the vainglory of men, but for public benefit. Therefore, this conjunction, according to the astrologers, ought to be of great significance because it is in a new triplicity.²⁷⁸

This does not imply any criticism of Ashenden, whom Belle calls 'reverend master of good fame' (*reverendus magister et bone memorie*), quite the contrary, he made a point of praising him:

This [the conjunction of 1425] is therefore the great conjunction mentioned by the great master [Ashenden] whom I follow in many things, first because he says many things which will happen later, almost like a prophet, just as is clear to anyone who wants to look at his writings.²⁷⁹

The reference to Ashenden's quasi-prophetic capabilities is interesting, considering that his judgement includes several references to a new prophet. By using the term in relation to Ashenden's work, Belle confers on it an unimpeachable quality.

Lunations versus conjunction

The second example of Belle's attitude in the face of divergent data is his choice between two methods of prediction: one using the horoscope of the lunation before the conjunction, and the other the horoscope of the conjunction itself. This comes back to the previous discussion regarding the use of lunations for the prediction of collective events. Both the revolutions of the years and the Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions shared the same technical difficulty: the determination of the exact moment of the event. Thus, it was common to use the horoscope of the lunation preceding the event to make the judgement, a technique well-grounded in Ptolemaic tradition. As Belle had already adopted Heingarter's views favouring the use of lunations in his judgement for the revolutions of the year, he could also be expected to follow his lead again, but in this

²⁷⁸ Dicit Ptholomeus in *Centiloquio* in propositione prima 'scientia astrorum ex te et ex illis est' super quo inquit Haly. Qui res futuras scire desiderat duabus viis oportet incedere, una aspiciat motus stellarum in Libris quos scripserunt antiqui de significatione motuum ipsarum et adiungat hiis quecumque probabit suo tempore hoc ille. Igitur per doctrinam et experientiam, non propter laudem hominum et vanam gloriam sed pro bono publico, intendo in hoc opere procedere. Cum igitur ista coniunctione secundum astrologos debet esse magne significationis quod est in nova triplicitate, f. 80rb.

²⁷⁹ Ista enim est magna coniunctio de qua loquebatur ille reverendus magister quem multis sequor per primum eo quod tempore pro tunc multa prius dicit quasi ore prophetico que postea contingebunt sicut plane patet cuilibet volenti inspicere sua scripta, f. 82vb.

case he seems undecided.²⁸⁰ The result, displayed in NAL 398 f. 80r, is not a true horoscope since it does not correspond to any real planetary configurations but is a construct combining two distinct astrological events: the last of the three conjunctions corresponding to August 1425, and the Full Moon of October of the same year. It is not uncommon for astrologers to use two or more horoscopes in their judgements for collective events. Belle himself made a brief mention of this practice in the judgement of the Aries ingress of 1492, when he chose the lunation that followed the ingress instead of that which preceded it, which would have been the standard choice. He adds that if the Sun ‘had moved one degree of Aries or more’ (*si ivisset unum gradum Arietis vel plus*) he would have ‘mixed the two horoscopes together (*mixtionem duarum figurarum in simul*).²⁸¹ In both cases, Belle considered the two horoscopes he thought to be more relevant and made the judgement from them, but instead of presenting them side by side, he displayed the combination in pictorial form, merging parts of the two relevant charts in a composite horoscope. The image below shows the horoscope used by Belle and the other two horoscopes from which it derived.

In this combined horoscope, the house cusps and the positions of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn correspond to the chart for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction on 26 August 1425, the last of the three conjunctions.²⁸² The positions of the Sun and the Moon (Libra and Aries, respectively), for which Belle does not provide the exact degrees, are those of the Full Moon of 27 September. Mercury’s position, which is given as conjunct to the Sun as well as Mars, also corresponds to the Full Moon of 27 September. Venus is at 14° Virgo, mid-way between the chart of 26 August where it is at 20° Virgo, and the Full Moon chart where it is at 9° Virgo. Belle also wrote the notation ‘direct’ in the first house close to the planets Mars and Mercury, though neither of these planets had been retrograde recently. Venus was the only retrograde planet at the moment of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction and had recently become direct by the time of the September Full Moon, but he does not acknowledge this fact. The following table displays the planetary positions for both horoscopes highlighting those that are closer to Belle’s chart.²⁸³

²⁸⁰ As seen before, Belle copied Saint-Cloud’s calculations based upon the lunation preceding the Sun’s ingress into the sign, as also Heingarter had advocated, and not upon the ingress itself.

²⁸¹ NAL 398, f. 73vb.

²⁸² The dates given by Belle in f. 82vb are the end February for the first, the end of August for the last; he omits the second conjunction possibly because, being the one in the middle, it is deemed as less important. The calendar in Lat. 7443, f. 126r. mentions only 30 August 1425. The dates calculated by computer are 14 February at 17°18’ Scorpio; 18 March at 16°33’ Scorpio; 26 August at 12°40’ Scorpio.

²⁸³ Modern computarion using *Solar Fire*.

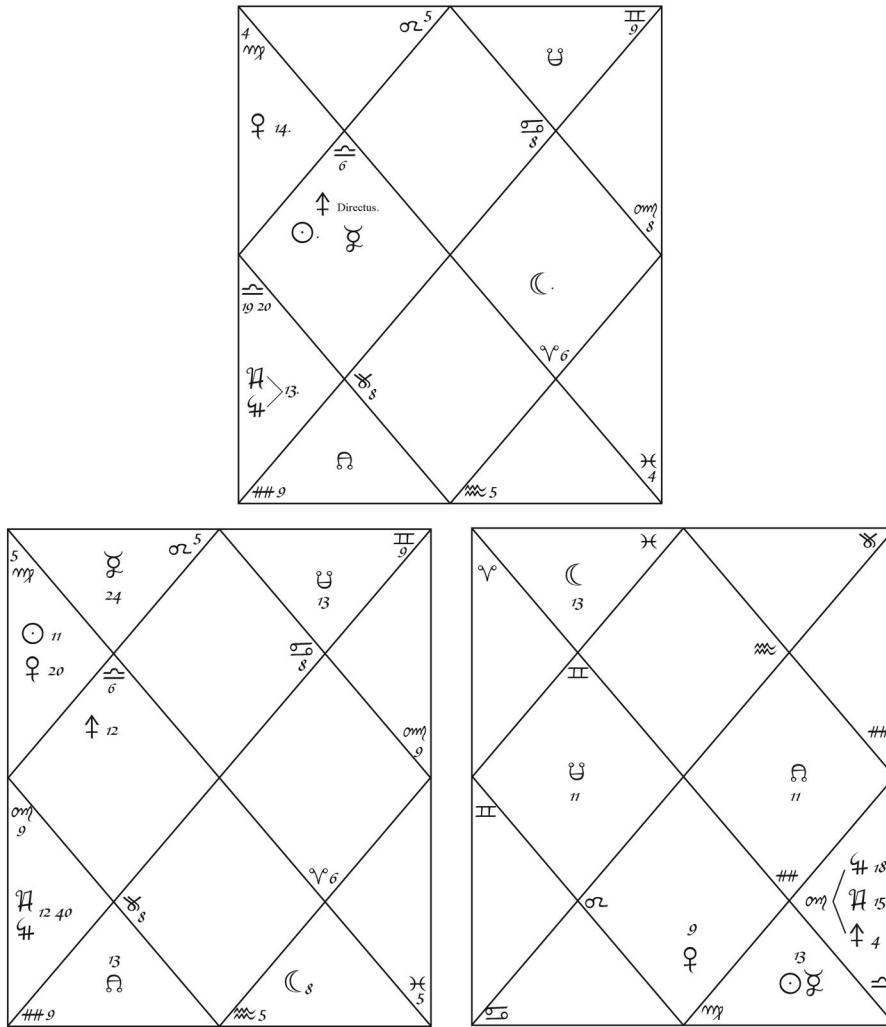


Figure 11 – Belle's horoscope for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425
 Top: Belle's composite horoscope-like scheme, showing the two horoscopes that originated it: the 1425 conjunction (bottom left), and the Full Moon of October 1425, preceding the ingress of the Sun in Libra (bottom right)

Table 7 – The conjunction and the preceding Full Moon

Planetary positions: (the positions closer to Belle's chart are highlighted)	Jup-Sat conjunction (26 August 1425)	Full Moon (27 September 1425)
Sun	11° 12' Virgo	13° 08' Libra
Moon	08° 37' Piscis	13° 08' Aries
Mercury	24° 37' Leo	13° 50' Libra
Venus	20° 41' Virgo (retrograde)	09° 31' Virgo
Mars	12° 30' Libra	04° 34' Scorpio
Jupiter	12° 40' Scorpio	15° 39' Scorpio
Saturn	12° 40' Scorpio	18° 30' Scorpio
Ascendant	06° 25' Libra	07° 34' Gemini

Belle seems to be trying to link several relevant planetary configurations occurring around this period. By selecting the lunation following the Libra ingress he may be connecting the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction to the ingress that followed by superimposing the Sun and Moon positions (Sun in Libra, Moon in Aries) of the lunation on the Jupiter-Saturn horoscope. He selected this particular lunation instead of the ingress itself or the preceding lunation because this is the only one that connects with the conjunction chart: The Sun-Moon opposition occurs in the same degree that Mars occupied at the moment of the conjunction, that is 13° of Libra. This might have been relevant in Belle's mind because Mars is the ruler of the conjunction as he made abundantly clear in his judgement.

Copying, editing, and authorship

Belle adds his name and a date, 6 February 1473, at the end of his judgement for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction even though the text is a mosaic of passages from other authors. However, he is not attempting to obliterate the contribution of others: in fact, he mentions them clearly and repeatedly, indicating the book, chapter and page number whence he took his inspiration. Thus, the signature seems to be claiming authorship, not of the texts, but of the research and assembling of the sources.²⁸⁴

The text draws extensively from Ashenden's judgement with contributions from almost all of the standard medieval sources; the final paragraphs are almost entirely copied from Roger Bacon's introduction to the *Secretum Secretorum*, with a few additions from Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*.

The image below shows the parallels between the horoscopes: on the left, the 1365 conjunction presented by Ashenden, as depicted in Lat. 7443, ff. 125rb2, 221v, in Sloane 1713, f. 9v (incomplete)²⁸⁵ and in Harley MS 637, f. 139r; on the right, Belle's horoscope for the conjunction depicted in NAL 398, f. 80r.

²⁸⁴ The only other text signed by Belle is *Flores Sapientum Astronomorum*, another compilation of texts, dated from 1 February 1473, NAL 398, f. 30ra.

²⁸⁵ Boudet reproduces this horoscope in 'La papauté d'Avignon et astrologie', *Fin du Monde et signes du temps. Visionnaires et prophètes en France méridionale (fin XIII^e-début XV^e siècle)*, 1992, p. 273.

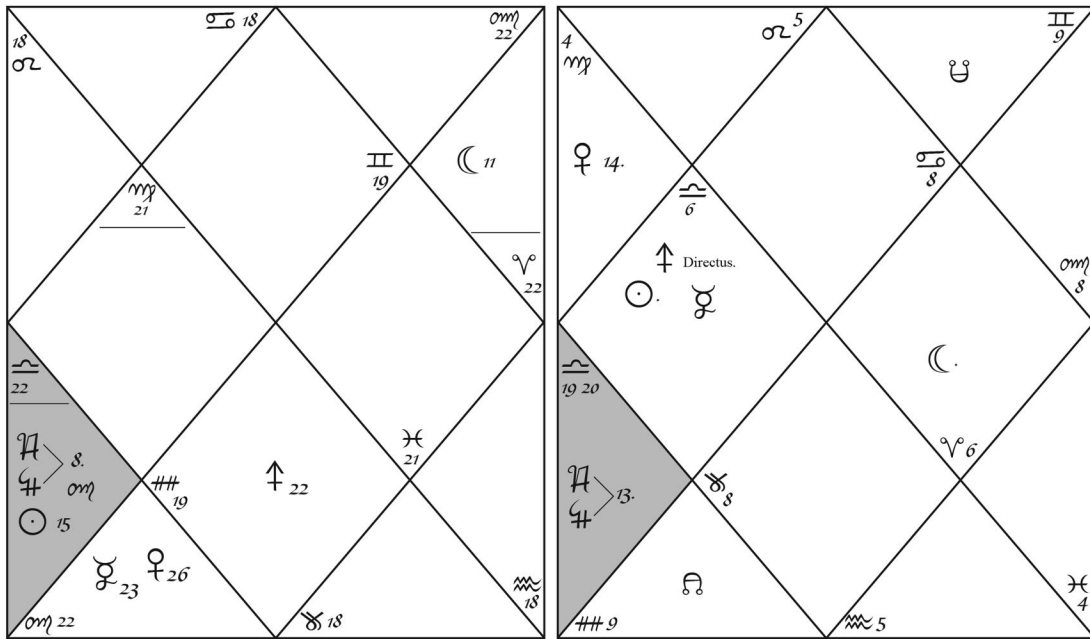


Figure 12 – Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions of 1365 (Ashenden) and 1425 (Belle)

In both cases the conjunction occurred in Scorpio and in the second house and in both Saturn was elevated above Jupiter. Another similarity is the weak position of Venus, which in the first horoscope is in fall in Virgo in the cadent twelfth house, and in the second is detrimented in Scorpio in the cadent third house. Also relevant is the phase of the Moon, which is full or close to it, in both cases. All these resemblances allowed Belle to transcribe some passages of Ashenden’s text almost to the letter.

However, Belle was not simply copying Ashenden’s texts he was adapting it to his own purposes and making the necessary adjustments in the parts that differed. An example of these edits is the comments about the extra-zodiacal constellations.²⁸⁶ As the two horoscopes have different ascending signs – Virgo in Ashenden’s judgement, Libra in Belle’s – they also have different neighbouring constellations, but as these are neighboring signs in the Zodiac they also have some adjacent constellations in common. Furthermore, both Virgo and Libra are signs of human form, which further reinforces their similarities.²⁸⁷ Belle adapted Ashenden’s text accordingly.

²⁸⁶ This passage illustrates the importance of constellations in the judgement of collective events. Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, II.6-7, p.171-175, exemplifies the application of this technique to eclipses.

²⁸⁷ For signs of human form, see for instance Albiruni, *Instruction*, 347-356, pp. 212-214.

<p>Ashenden on the conjunction of 1365 Lat. 7443, f. 223v</p>	<p>Belle on the conjunction of 1425 NAL 398, f. 81vb</p>
<p>And for this it is known that the Ascendant of this conjunction should be twenty-one degrees of Virgo, because as is said in book 2 of Ptolemy's <i>Quadripartitum</i> 'Virgo is a sign of human form', the events resulting from this conjunction will appear in human kind. And because Virgo is a winged figure, the effects of the conjunction will be especially in winged animals, in those that are eaten by mankind. Also because Virgo is a common sign, [the effects] will appear in men and in kings.²⁸⁸</p>	<p>From this it should be known that the Ascendant of this conjunction is six degrees Libra, and because according to Haly, in the thirteenth chapter of Ptolemy's <i>Quadripartitum</i>, and also in Haly, first part, of the first chapter, Libra is a sign of human form, [thus] the effects of this conjunction will appear in human beings, and principally in males.²⁸⁹</p>

The thirteenth chapter of *Tetrabiblos* referred to by Belle is likely to be the one in the Latin version with Haly ben Ridwan's commentary.²⁹⁰ The second reference to 'Haly' is to Haly Abenragel's *Preclarissimus in Iudiciis Astrorum*, first chapter, where Libra is mentioned as a masculine sign and of 'human form' (*forma humana*).²⁹¹

Similarly, while Ashenden related the Ascendant of his horoscope at 21° Virgo to the constellations of Libra, Virgo, Bootes (Arcturus), part of Draco towards the north, and Crater, Hydra, and part of Argos to the south; Belle related his Ascendant at 6° Libra to the same constellations, but omitted Draco as being out of range.

²⁸⁸ Pro quo est sciendum quod Ascendens istius coniunctionis erit 21 gradus Virginis, quia igitur iuxta sententiam Ptholomei 2° *Quadripartiti*: 'Virgo est de forma humana'. Eventus istius coniunctionis in humano genere apparebit. Et quia Virgo est figura habens alas, apparebit eventus coniunctionis in volatilibus et maxime in volatilitus que ab hominibus comeduntur. Item quia Virgo est signum commune apparebit eventus coniunctionis in hominibus et regibus, Lat. 7443, f. 223v. This quote can be found in Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, II.7, p. 173.

²⁸⁹ Unde sciendum est quod Ascendens istius coniunctionis est 6° gradus Libre, quia ergo secundum Haly, super capitulo 13° *Quadripartiti* Ptolomei, et idem Haly parte prima capitulo primo, Libra est sigum de forma humana, effectus istius coniunctionis apparebunt in hominibus et potissime masculis, f. 81vb.

²⁹⁰ Ptolemy, *Liber Quadripartiti Ptholomei idem Quatuor Tractatum*, Venice, 1484, I.13.

²⁹¹ Haly Abenragel, *Preclarissimus in Iudiciis Astrorum*, I.1.

Ashenden on the conjunction of 1365 Lat. 7443, f. 224r	Belle on the conjunction of 1425 NAL 398, f. 81vb
In direct [movement] the Ascendant of this conjunction that will be in twenty-one degrees of Virgo in the ninth sphere, are now these images of fixed stars in the eighth sphere, namely towards the north the image of Libra, the image of Virgo, the hand of Lanceatoris, that is called Bootes or Arcturus, and part of Draco towards the [north] pole, and towards the south they are Crater and Hydra and part of the vessel called Argos. ²⁹²	Again the Ascendant of this conjunction will be in the sixth degree of Libra, which was the seventeenth degree of Virgo in the time of Ptolemy, but in the direction of the sixth degree of Libra in the ninth sphere are now towards the north the last part of Virgo, and Bootes (or Vociferens). ²⁹³

These edits could also have political purposes. Belle omitted the references to France in the text perhaps because it would not be wise to include them even if the ‘prediction’ was already forty-eight years *post-facto*.²⁹⁴ So, when Ashenden mentioned France as one of the kingdoms under the rulership of Mars and therefore subject to the effects of the conjunction, Belle either omitted it or replaced it with another mention of Scotland, affected by the conjunction because of its connection to Scorpio. In other instances, he omitted some passages for technical reasons: Ashenden connected France and Burgundy to Mercury, ruler of Virgo, which is the Ascendant in the 1365 horoscope; Belle left this passage out of his copy because in his horoscope, which has Libra rising, there is no such connection.²⁹⁵

This is followed by a reference to Simon Bredon, a fellow of Merton College, which can be found in several other manuscripts, such as Sloane 1713, f. 4r and Digby 176, f. 45r, but not in Lat. 7443:²⁹⁶

Because the 8th sphere, from the time of Ptolemy up to this year has passed through 19 degrees, these things are clear according to master Simon Bredon, who around the year 1340 equated the motion of the said sphere in Oxford with great diligence.²⁹⁷

²⁹² In directo Ascendentis coniunctionis quod erit 21 gradus Virginis in sphaera nona sunt modo iste ymagines stellarum fixarum in sphaera 8, videlicet versus septentrionem ymago Libre, ymago Virginis, manus Lanceatoris qui dicitur Bootes sive Arcturus, et pars Drachonis circa polum, et versus meridiem sunt Crather et ydra et pars navis qui dicitur Argos, Lat. 7443, f. 224r. See ‘Precession of

²⁹³ Ascendens istius coniunctionis erit 6us gradus Libre in directo cuius fuit 17^a gradus Virginis in tempore Ptholomei sed in directo 6^u gradus Libre in sphaera 9^a sunt modo versus septemtrionem ultima pars Virginis et Bootes aut Vociferens, f. 81vb.

²⁹⁴ As explained before, Belle is writing in 1473, as an exercise of prediction for events that had already happened sometime between 1425 and 1445.

²⁹⁵ Possibly because Paris is traditionally attributed to Virgo being therefore ruled by Mercury.

²⁹⁶ For Bredon see C. H. Talbot, ‘Simon Bredon (c. 1300-1372): Physician, Mathematician and Astronomer’, *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 1, 1962, pp. 19-30; K. Snedegar, ‘Simon Bredon, a Fourteenth-Century Astronomer and Physician’, in L. Nauta and A. Vanderjagt (eds), *Between Demonstration and Imagination*, Leiden, 1999, pp. 285–309.

²⁹⁷ Nam 8^a sphaera a tempore Ptholomei usque in hunc annum per transit 19 gradus Ista patent secundum magistrum Simonem de Bredion que circa annum Christi 1340^a equavit motum dicte sphere in Oxonia cum magna diligentia, f. 81vb.

Belle may have had access to several manuscripts with concomitant data. This is supported by his collection of nativities, discussed in the next section, where he mentions several, and sometimes conflicting, sources for the same horoscope.

Apart from transcribing from Ashenden's text, Belle also wrote his own judgement in all the sections that differ from Ashenden's judgement. The table below illustrates the segments of the 1425 judgement written by Belle himself and, in grey, the parts copied or adapted from Ashenden's text for the 1365 conjunction. The sequence, similar in both judgements, is typical of judgements of these kind.

Table 8 – Sequence of topics in Ashenden and Belle's text	
Lat. 7443	NAL 398
Introduction for the 1365 conjunction	Introduction for the 1425 conjunction
Importance of this event	Importance of this event
Configurations surrounding the conjunction at 30 October 1365	Configurations surrounding the conjunction at 7, 13 October 1425
Description of the method	Description of the method
Conjunction in Scorpio – lands and regions	Conjunction in Scorpio – lands and regions
Ascendant at 21° Virgo – lands and regions	Ascendant at 6° Libra – lands and regions
Time calculation – 3 years	Time calculation – 2 years, 4 months
Fixed stars; weather; spheres	Fixed stars; weather; spheres
***	Reference to Simon Bredon
Dominant planet – method	Dominant planet – method
Saturn, Mars, Mercury – effects	Saturn, Mars – effects
***	Reference to John of Ashenden's judgement
Configurations surrounding the conjunction	Configurations surrounding the conjunction
***	Comments about prediction (from Roger Bacon's introduction to <i>Secretum Secretorum</i>)
***	Explicit

Timing the events: *firdarie*, years of the planets and ascension time

Belle considers that the total duration of the effects of the conjunction will be 'according to the greater years of the *firdaria*'.²⁹⁸ Mars and Saturn were chosen for being the dominant planets of the horoscope, as mentioned before; their greater years are sixty-six for Mars and fifty-seven for Saturn.²⁹⁹ These numbers differ from the common *firdaria* that attribute seven years to Mars and eleven to Saturn. The term seems to be used in its broader, etymological sense of 'period' as *firdaria* is derived from the Persian *firdariyyah*, which in turn is a transliteration of the Greek word

²⁹⁸ secundum annos maiores firdarie, f. 81va. Similar to Lat. 7443, f. 223v. See also Albumasar, *Abbreviation*, p. 50. See also 'Firdaria' in Appendix I.

²⁹⁹ anni firdarie maiores istorum sunt videlicet Saturni 57 et Martis 66, f. 81va.

periodos.³⁰⁰ Belle is therefore using *firdaria* to refer to another predictive technique based on periods of time, the ‘years of the planets’, which attribute sixty-six years to Mars and fifty-seven to Saturn. The greater years of the planets were normally applied to the calculations for nativities as they fit better with the duration of human life, while for collective horoscopes such as the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction, the usual choice was the *maxima* years of the planets corresponding to 284 years for Mars and 256 for Saturn. The table below shows the years attributed to Mars and Saturn.³⁰¹

Years of Mars and Saturn

Years	Saturn	Mars
Lesser	30	15
Median	43.5	40.5
Greater	57	66
Maxima	256	284

Belle resorts to Ashenden’s theory to explain his choice: the *maxima* years should be chosen if the conjunction had occurred in Aries and in an angular house, but as it occurred in Scorpio and in a succedent house (the second), he concludes that the *firdarie* should take into account only the greater years.³⁰² He also adapted the text to the 1425 horoscope by including only Saturn and Mars in his calculations leaving aside Ashenden’s account for Mercury as being irrelevant to his case:

The dominant planets in this conjunction will be Saturn and Mars, and their years of the greater *firdarie* are namely 57 for Saturn and 66 for Mars.³⁰³

Belle does not explain how these numbers should reflect of the 1425 conjunction. Ashenden, on the other hand, explains the process and concludes that the effects of the 1365 conjunction should extend for approximately 70 years, that is, until 1435.³⁰⁴ Belle also calculated the time of their culmination by measuring the conjunction’s ascension

³⁰⁰ See ‘*Firdaria*’ and ‘Years of the Planets’ in Appendix I. See also Albumasar, *Abbreviation*, p. 50, Avezra, *World*, pp. 21-22, 67-69; B. Dykes (tr.), *Persian Nativities III: On solar revolutions*, Minneapolis, 2010, pp. 37-41.

³⁰¹ A complete table of the Years of the Planets can be found in ‘Length of Life’ in Appendix I.

³⁰² The complete explanation can be found in NAL f. 81va. Similar to Lat. 7443, f. 223v.

³⁰³ *Dominatores in ista erunt Saturnus et Mars, et anni firdarie maiores istorum sunt videlicet Saturni 57 et Martis 66, f. 81v. Similar to Lat. 7443, f. 223v.*

³⁰⁴ Ashenden’s calculation: *Cum istorum anni firdarie Martis qui principaliter dominabitur in ista coniunctione erunt 66, addo etiam 4^{or} annos ad supplendum 70^a annos propter dominium Mercurii et Saturni. Dico igitur quod eventus istius coniunctionis durabunt per 70^a annos a tempore coniunctionis secundum magnum et minus, Lat. 7443, f. 223v.*

time, that is, how many unequal hours the conjunction takes to reach the ascendant point.³⁰⁵ The method is concisely explained by Ashenden:

This is known by the inequal hours coming between the Ascendant and the place of the conjunction.³⁰⁶

In the horoscope for 1365, the conjunction took three unequal hours to reach the ascending point, so Ashenden concluded that the effects should culminate within three years. Belle applied the same method to the 1425 conjunction, which, according to him, took two unequal hours and a third to reach the ascendant point; he, therefore, concludes that the effects would take two years and four months to reach their peak.³⁰⁷ This would place the culmination in around 1427, or the beginning of 1428. In both cases, the calculation also includes other factors such as the mode of the sign (moveable, fixed, or common) and house placement (angular, succedent, or cadent) to help determine the time frame.³⁰⁸ Again, Belle transcribed Ashenden's judgement, adapted some passages regarding the practical application of the technique to the features his horoscope, and added his own judgement whenever the horoscopes differed.

Prediction and determinism

Belle addresses the topic of prediction with caution making a point to avoid determinism and recognize the primacy of free will, a position shared by many astrologers of his time.³⁰⁹ He describes all the possible effects of the 1425 conjunction but refuses to identify which of these effects are avoidable and which are not. This way, he circumvents any possible accusations of determinism, while maintaining the validity of his predictions. However, the attention he devotes to this point seems somehow exaggerated considering that he is writing his 'prediction' in 1473, almost half a century after the fact. His cautious comments about determinism seem dislocated, unless they are a collection of arguments copied from other sources and intended for future works.

³⁰⁵ This method is similar to directions in that it considers the primary motion (the ascension) of the significator (in this case the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction), but it is much more simplified. Regarding unequal hours, see 'Planetary hours' in Appendix I.

³⁰⁶ hoc autem scientur ex horis inequalibus interceptis inter Ascendans et locum coniunctionis, Lat. 7443, f. 223r.

³⁰⁷ et quia erunt due hores inequalis et una tertia hore, significat hoc duos annos et 4 menses ante quos appareant effectus, f. 81rb.

³⁰⁸ As also happens with interrogations, this calculation gives a number, but not a time unit; that is deduced from the sign and house of the significator. See 'Timing events' in Appendix I.

³⁰⁹ Astrologer Joannes Laet, for instance, a contemporary of Belle, adopted the term 'possible future' (*futura contingentia*) in the letter of dedication of his prognostications for 1479. See Vanden Broecke, *The Limits of Influence*, pp. 49-53. Since Belle adopted much of Bacon's views on this matter, see also 'Roger Bacon on Astronomy-Astrology: the Sources of the *Scientia Experimentalis*', J. Hackett (ed.), *Roger Bacon and the Sciences. Commemorative Essays 1996*, Leiden, 1997, pp. 175-198.

Belle's concept of determinism seems to differ according to the context: while it allows a considerable degree of freedom in the case of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction (and, by extension, in any astrological event related to the collective), in the case of nativities, this freedom extends even more, as will be detailed further on.

III – NATIVITIES: THREE JUDGEMENTS

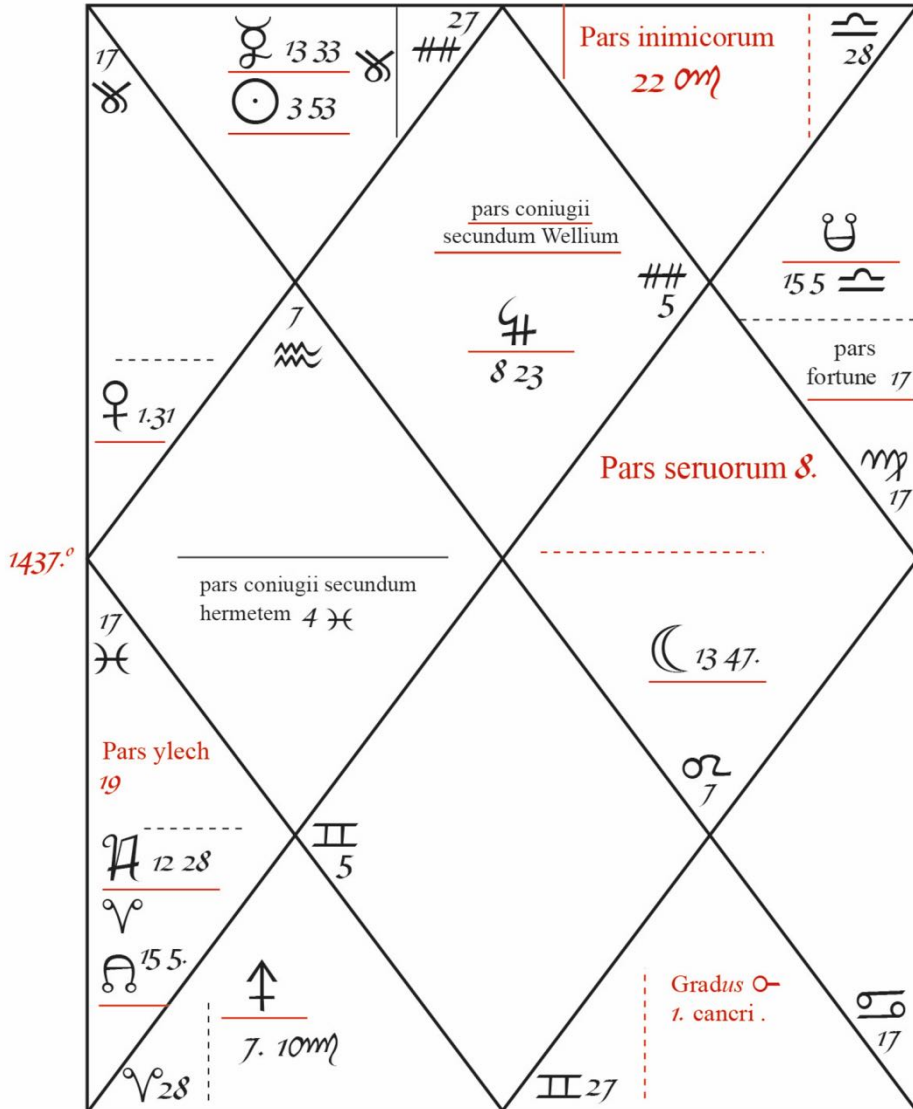
This section addresses three nativities in NAL 398: Hubert, born in 1260 (f. 79v), Jo. Dap. born in 1442 (f. 85ra) and Jo. d.c.l. born in 1437 (93r1). These three judgements address the same topics, but their organization and length differ considerably. The table below compares the length and organization of these three horoscopes.

Table 9 – The judgements of nativities on NAL 398: organization and length

Jo d.c.l.	Hubert	Jo Dap.
Date: 16 December 1437 Time: 09:47 Birthplace unknown Horoscope: f. 93ra Judgement: ff. 94ra-100vb; French	Date: 08 October 1260 Time: 03:18 am Florence, Italy Horoscope: f. 79va Judgement: ff. 76vb-80ra; Latin	Date: 03 November 1442 Time: 1:220 am Birthplace unknown Horoscope: f. 85ra (reconstructed) Judgement: ff. 85ra-89vb; Latin
Description	Description	Description
f. 94ra: introduction, description of contents, length of life: <i>hyleg, alcocodem</i>	76vb: <i>animodar, trutina</i> length of life, judgement	85ra: introduction description of the contents
f. 94rb: <i>hyleg, alcocodem</i> , directions	77ra: judgement houses I, II, III	85rb: houses; ages of men; directions
f. 94va: directions; complexion	77rb: judgement houses III, IV	85va: table triplicities, list of parts, title
f. 94vb: complexion, triplicities of Asc.	77va: judgement houses IV, V, VI	85vb: length of life, physical description
f. 95ra: triplicities of Asc., house II	77vb: judgement houses VI, VII	86ra: physical description; soul/intellect
f. 95rb: house II	78ra: judgement houses VII, VIII, IX	86rb: soul/intellect; houses II, III
f. 95va: II, III, IV	78rb: judgement houses IX, X, XI	86va: houses III, IV, V
f. 95vb: IV	78va: judgement houses XI, XII	86vb: houses V, VI
f. 96ra: IV, V	78vb: directions	87ra: houses VI, VII
f. 96rb: V, VI	79ra: directions	87rb: houses VII, VIII, IX
f. 96va: VI (mentions VII)	79rb: directions	87va: houses IX, XI, XII
f. 96vb: VI	79va: directions; horoscope, <i>mora</i>	87vb: houses XI, XII, X; directions
f. 97ra: VI, VII	79vb: <i>trutina</i> , directions	88ra: directions
f. 97rb: VII, VIII	80ra: directions	88rb: directions; <i>divisor</i>
f. 97va: VIII, IX		88va: table of directions for the Ascendant
f. 97vb: IX		88vb: tables of directions for Moon and Sun
f. 98ra: IX, X		89ra: table of directions for Midheaven
f. 98rb: X		89rb: table of profections
f. 98va: X, XI		89va: comments
f. 98vb: XI, XII, directions		89va: tables of revolutions
f. 99ra: directions		
f. 99rb: directions		
f. 99va: directions		
f. 99vb: profections		
f. 100ra profections		
f. 100rb profections		
f. 100va profections		
f. 99rb-100vb: profections, <i>divisor</i>		

The judgement of Jo. d.c.l. is the only text written in French and the most extensive of the three: it includes a lengthy description of the horoscope and detailed section on prediction. It is thus examined in more detail than the other two

Jo. d.c.l.
NAL 398 f. 93ra1 (judgement in NAL 398 f. 94ra-100vb): 17 December, 19:54
 [16 December 1437, 09:47], France



House I – 7° Aquarius Pars Coniugii Secundum Hermetem 04° Pisces	House VII – 7° Leo Moon 13°47 Leo Pars Seruorum 8° Virgo
House II – 17° Pisces Pars Hylech 19° Pisces Saturn 02°28 Aries South Node 15°05 Aries	House VIII – 17° Virgo Pars Fortune 17° Virgo North Node 15°05 Libra
House III – 28° Aries Mars 07°01 Taurus	House IX – 28° Libra Parts Inimicorum 22° Scorpio
House IV – 05° Gemini	House X – 05° Sagittarius Pars Coniugii secundum Wellium (Vettius Valens) Jupiter 08°29 Sagittarius
House V – 27° Gemini Gradus coniunctionis [sic for opposition] 01° Cancer	House XI – 27° Sagittarius Sun 03°53 Capricorn Mercury 13°33 Capricorn (8°)
House VI – 17° Cancer	House XII – 17° Capricorn Venus 01°31 Aquarius

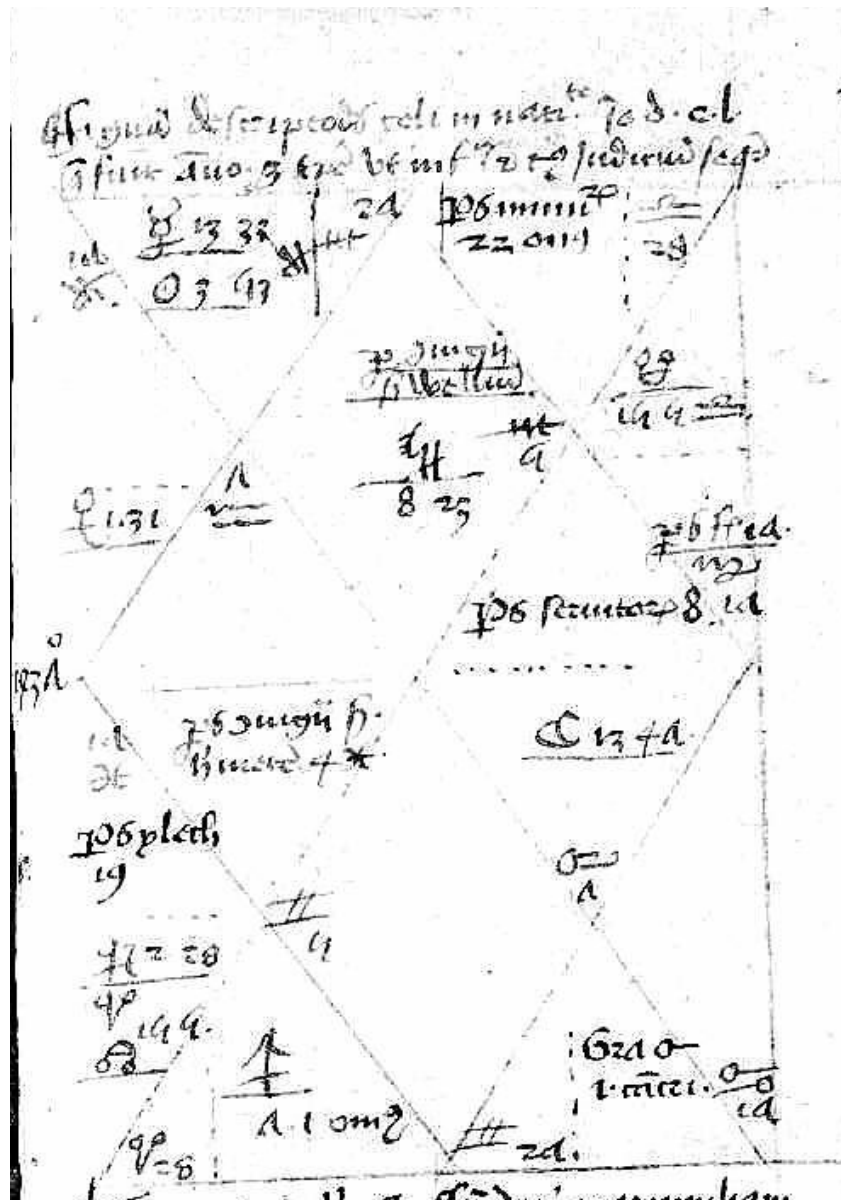


Figure 13 – NAL 398, folio 93r (Jo. d.c.l.'s chart is on the top left)

Judgement of Jo. d.c.l., born on the 16 December 1437, at 09:47 am.³¹⁰ The birth horoscope is on f. 93r; it omits the date and time of birth, but these can be deduced straightforwardly from the horoscope itself. The judgement is organized in three sections explained in f. 94ra:

- the calculation of ‘the native’s quantity of life’;³¹¹
- his condition ‘according to the order of the twelve houses of heaven and the accidents’ of the nativity;³¹²
- techniques for determining ‘the years in which the native will be more prone to retain the good or evil promised to him by the places of his nativity, so that he can prepare to flee and escape the evil and retain the good’.³¹³ This part divided into three sub-sections each corresponding to a predictive technique: directions of the *hyleg*, profections, and directions of the Ascendant by term (*divisor*).³¹⁴

The table below summarizes the several sections of the judgement, which begins with the horoscope of the lunation, in f. 92r (see below). The horoscope itself is on f. 93ra1 as part of the collection of horoscopes.

Table 10 – NAL 398 astrological judgement of ‘Jo. d.c.l.’

Section	Topic	Details
f. 92rb	Lunation prior to birth	No judgement
f. 94ra-94va	Length of life	<i>Hyleg</i> <i>Alcocodem</i> The native’s life span
f. 94va-99rb	Judgement	The astrological houses
f. 99rb-100vb	Prediction	Directions of the <i>hyleg</i> <i>Profections</i> <i>Divisor</i> (directions of the Ascendant by terms)

³¹⁰ This may be the illegitimate son of John II of Burgundy (Jean de Clamecy), whose horoscope is included in MS 1711 f. 85r and in NAL 398 f. 91ra2.

³¹¹ la quantite de la vie du ney, f. 94ra.

³¹² selon lordre des 12 maisons du ciel et des accidens, f. 94ra.

³¹³ les annees esquelles le ney sera plus convenable a retenir le bien ou le mal a luy promis des lieux de sa nativitate affin quil se puisse preparer a fuyr et eschiver le mal et retenir le bien, f. 94ra.

³¹⁴ See the respective entries in Appendix I.

This judgement entails several features that set it apart from the other two and from the entire collection of horoscopes:

- of the three judgements it is the only one that is written in French;
- this is the only horoscope with a judgement that is part of Belle's collection; it is also the only one in the collection that has a complete judgement;
- it is the only one that includes the horoscope of the lunation prior to birth;
- it is the only one that omits the rectification of the horoscope suggesting that Belle knew the native's time of birth.

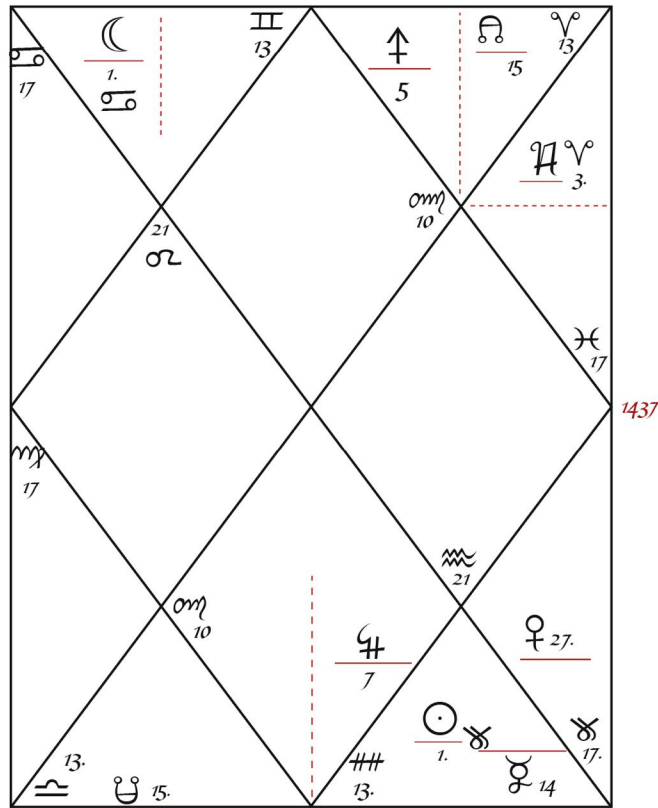
The horoscope's description includes only the name, without the birthdata or any other reference, implying that Belle knew the native and considered it unnecessary to go into greater detail:

Figure of the heaven's description in the nativity of 'Jo. d.c.l.', which was in the third year as below and whose judgement will follow.³¹⁵

All this suggests that the judgement was written by Belle himself.

³¹⁵ Figura descriptionis celi in nativitate Jo. d.c.l. que fuit anno 3 [possibly 37] tempore ut infra et cuius iudicium sequetur, NAL 398 f. 93ra1.

**Full Moon preceding the nativity of Jo. d.c.I.
NAL 398 f. 92r – 12 December 1437, 20:30**



House I – 21° Leo	House VII – 21° Aquarius
House II – 17° Virgo	House VIII – 17° Pisces
House III – 13° Libra	Saturn 03° Aries
North Node 15° Libra	House IX – 13° Aries
House IV – 10° Scorpio	South Node 15°13 Aries
Jupiter 07° Sagittarius	Mars 04° Taurus
House V – 13° Sagittarius	House X – 10° Taurus
Mercury 14° Sagittarius	House XI – 13° Gemini
Sun 01° Capricorn	Moon 01° Cancer
House VI – 17° Capricorn	House XII – 17° Cancer
Venus 27° Capricorn	

Horoscope of the lunation preceding the nativity on f. 93r1 (16 December 1437).

Figure of the opposition of the Sun and the Moon preceding the nativity predicted year, day of Mercury and hour as above.³¹⁶

The chart is slightly incorrect, although probably accurate according to Belle's tables.

³¹⁶ Figura oppositionis Solis et Lune precedens nativitatem predittam anni Mercurius diei et hore ut supra, NAL 398 f. 92r. Compare to the lunation preceding the birth of Henry VI, in Lat 7443, 80v.

Les lieux de plebs qui sont leste
 1472a conat le 11^o du mois
 de decembre a sept heures et 44 minutes
 1473a conat le 11^o du mois
 de decembre a sept heures et 44 minutes
 1474a conat le 12^o du mois
 de decembre a sept heures et 44 minutes
 1475a conat le 13^o du mois
 de decembre a sept heures et 44 minutes
 1476a conat le 14^o du mois
 de decembre a sept heures et 44 minutes
 1477a conat le 15^o du mois
 de decembre a sept heures et 44 minutes
 1478a conat le 16^o du mois
 de decembre a sept heures et 44 minutes
 1479a conat le 17^o du mois
 de decembre a sept heures et 44 minutes
 1480a conat le 18^o du mois
 de decembre a sept heures et 44 minutes

Medius motus solis	4 50 17 34
Medius motus lune	1 31 37 24
Medius motus terre	3 1 14 43
Medius motus mercurij	0 2 37 44
Medius motus venus	0 10 22 24
Medius motus saturni	0 14 0 24
Medius motus jovis	2 30 12 22
Medius motus martis	1 30 12 22
Medius motus stellarij	0 12 41 32
Medius motus stellarij	4 12 33 41
Medius motus stellarij	2 4 1 41
Medius motus stellarij	2 14 32 2
Medius motus stellarij	1 14 26 14
Medius motus stellarij	4 21 10 38
Medius motus stellarij	0 2 37 44
Medius motus jovis	2 9 29 10
Medius motus jovis	2 42 20 49
Medius motus jovis	1 16 22 11
Medius motus jovis	0 20 44 24
Medius motus jovis	6 12
Medius motus jovis	2 1 4 44
Medius motus martis	0 40 0 3
Medius motus martis	12 22 12
Medius motus martis	4 41 30 42
Medius motus martis	4 42 33 42
Medius motus martis	3 32 13 30
Medius motus martis	5 27 18 30
Medius motus martis	0 31 30 34

Medius motus solis	2 7 44 12
Medius motus lune	4 29 48 27
Medius motus terre	2 7 44 30
Medius motus mercurij	4 41 11 44
Medius motus venus	1 0 40 41
Medius motus saturni	2 24 44 41
Medius motus jovis	7 42 16 49

Figura oppositio solis et lune procedit
 in oriente per dicitur in die
 et hoc ut sup.

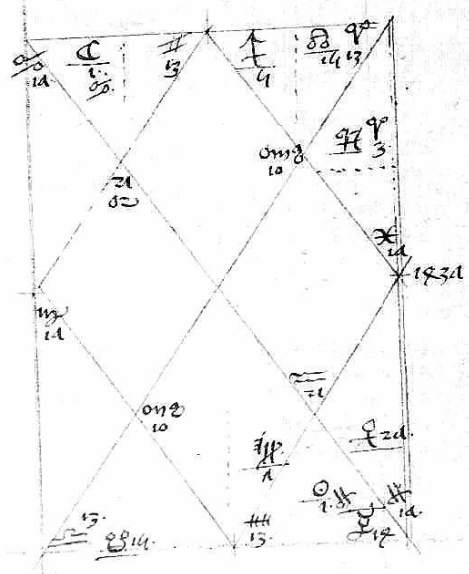
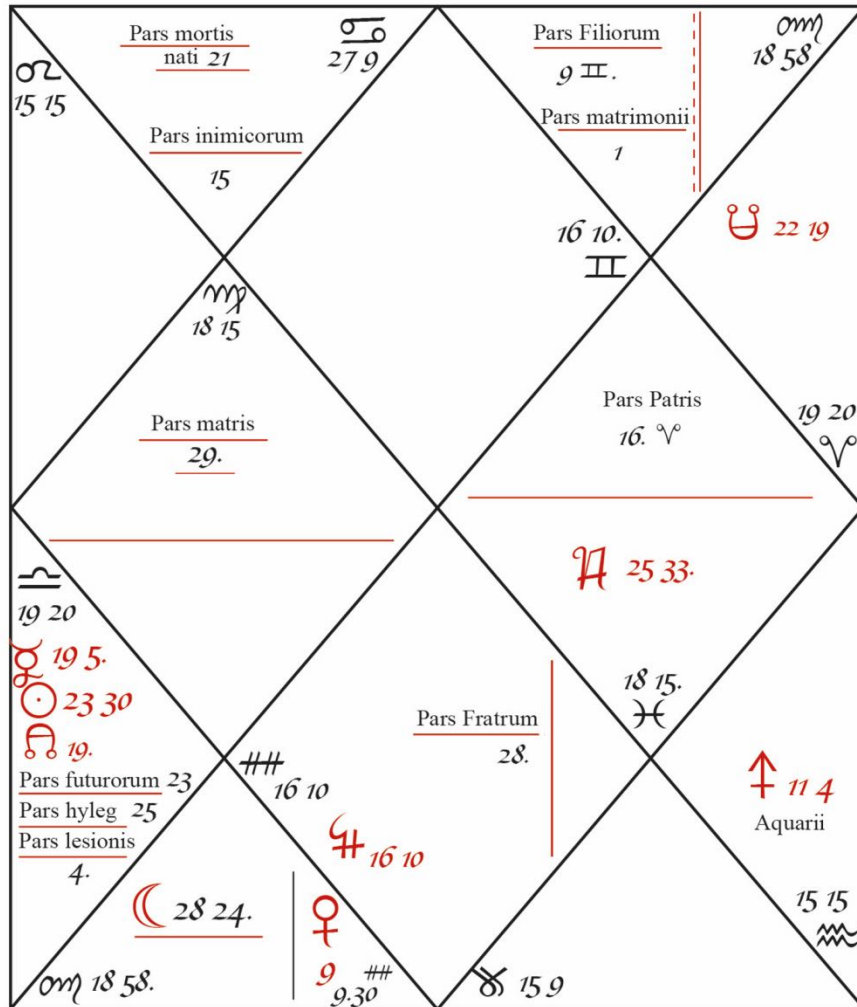


Figure 14 – NAL 398, folio 92r

Hubert
NAL 398 f. 79va: 08 October 1260, 14:09, Florence, Italy (43°46'N, 11°15'E)
 [correct date: 09 October 1260, 03:32 am]



House I – 18°15' Virgo Pars Matris 29°	House VII – 18°15' Pisces Pars Patris 16° Aries Saturn 25°33' Aries
House II – 19°20' Libra Mercury 19°05' Mercury [5° rule] Sun 23°30' Libra South Node [22°] 19' Libra Pars Futurorum 23° Libra Pars Hyleg 25° Libra Pars Lesionis 4° Scorpio	House VIII – 19°20' Aries North Node 22°19'
House III – 19°58' Scorpio Moon 28°24' Scorpio Venus 09°30' Sagittarius	House IX – 19°58' Taurus Pars Filiorum 09° Gemini Pars Matrimonii 1° Gemini
House IV – 16°10' Sagittarius Jupiter 16°10' Sagittarius Pars Fratrum 28°	House X – 16°10' Gemini
House V – 15°09' Capricorn	House XI – 27°09' Cancer [should be 15°] Pars Mortis nati 21° Cancer Pars Inimicorum 15°
House VI – 15°15' Aquarius Mars Aquarius 11°00' [5° rule] [should be 29° Capricorn]	House XII – 15°15' Leo

Nativity of Hubert, born in the city of Florence in the mid-thirteenth century. This judgement was obviously copied from an earlier astrologer.

In the name of God, amen. Here begins the judgement of the nativity of a certain person whose Ascendant I have made to agree with the instruction of Ptolemy and Juveni that Jupiter is the *animodar*.³¹⁷

The nativity is depicted on f. 79va accompanied by the respective data:

It follows the places of the planets and the figure of the nativity of Hubert, born in the city of Florence in the fifth climate, year of the Lord 1259 complete, from seven months whole from March, to eight days of October, fourteen hours, nine minutes of the day, and this was a nocturnal nativity, the night before Saturday. This is the horoscope of the nativity of the abovementioned explanation.³¹⁸

The notation is different from Belle's usual system: 'year of the Lord 1259 *perfecto*', means the year was completed, and 'seven months from March' points to October.³¹⁹

The planetary positions correspond to 9 October 1260, a Friday ('the night before Saturday'). The judgement includes the *animodar* and the *trutina* of Hermes.³²⁰

An interesting detail in this judgement's figure is the pictorial representation of the five-degree rule.³²¹

- Mercury at 19°05' Libra should be in the first house, but it is placed in the second, although this house only begins at 19°20' Libra;
- Mars at 11° Aquarius should be in the fifth house, but it is placed in the sixth, which begins at 15°15' of Aquarius.

The planets are not only judged as if they were in the next house, but are actually depicted there, thus illustrating the importance of this widely known but seldom mentioned rule.

³¹⁷ In nomine domini amen. Incipit iudicium cuiusdam nativitatis cuius ascendens concordavi per instructionem Ptholomei et Juveni [unidentified author] quod Jupiter est *animodar*, f. 76vb.

³¹⁸ Sequitur loci planetarum et figuram nativitatis Huberti nati in civitate florentie in 5^a climate anno domini 1259 perfecto cum a 7 mensibus a Martio et 8 diebus Octobrem 14 hore 9 minutis diei et fuit nativitas nocturna ante diem sabbatum. Est figura nativitatis expositionis supradicte, NAL 398 f. 79va.

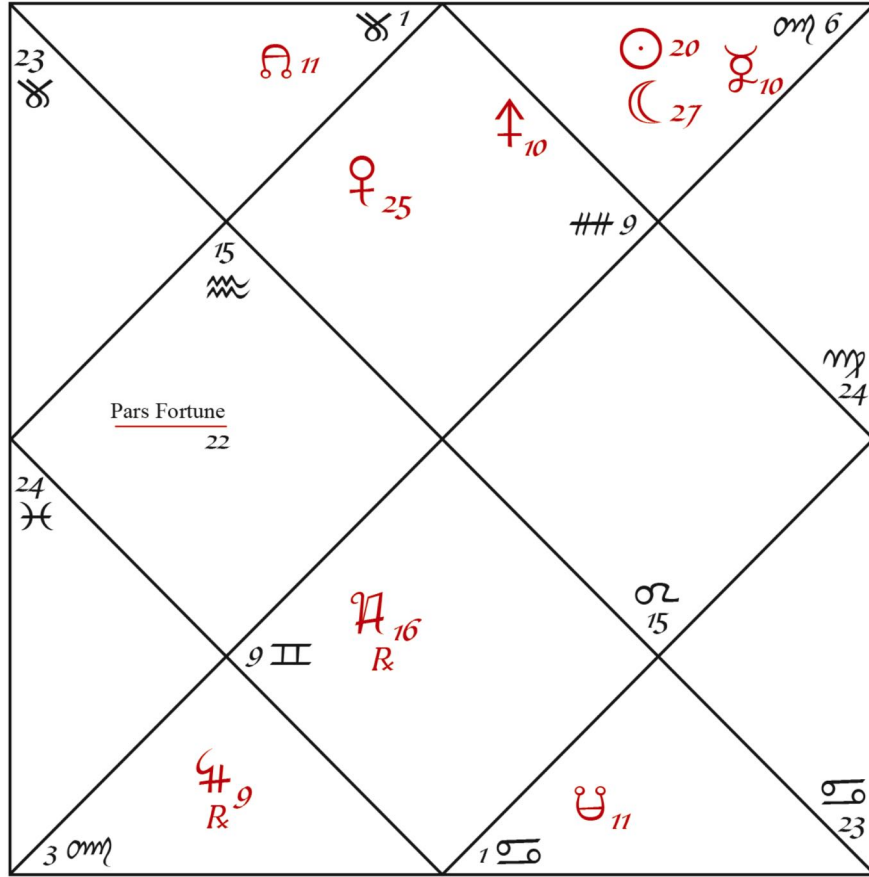
³¹⁹ The counting began in March because spring marked the beginning of the agricultural year.

³²⁰ See 'Animodar' and 'Trutina' in Appendix I.

³²¹ See 'Five-degree rule' in Appendix I.

Jo. Dap

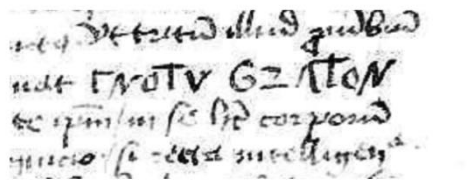
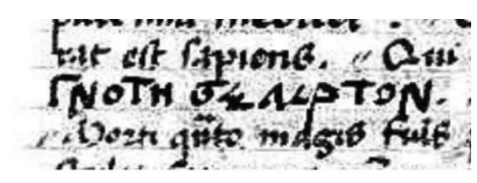
NAL 398 f. 85v: 03 November 1442, 1:20 pm, Paris
 Reconstructed from Belle's judgement (ff. 85ra-89vb)



House I – 15° Aquarius Pars Fortune 22° Aquarius	House VII – 15° Leo
House II – 24° Pisces	House VIII – 24° Virgo
House III – 03° Taurus Jupiter 09° Taurus	House IX – 03° Scorpio Mercury 10° Scorpio Sun 20° Scorpio Moon 27° Scorpio
House IV – 09° Gemini Saturn 16° Gemini	House X – 09° Sagittarius Mars 10° Sagittarius Venus 25° Sagittarius
House V – 01° Cancer North Node 11° Cancer	House XI – 01° Capricorn South Node 11° Capricorn
House VI – 23° Cancer	House XII – 23° Capricorn

Although this native is contemporary to Belle, the judgement may have been copied from another astrologer. It is delivered in erudite Latin, more consistent with Heingarter’s education than with Belle’s direct style.³²² The preface is followed by a detailed table of contents, which is also typical of Heingarter’s work.³²³ Furthermore, the initial paragraphs of this judgement include the sentence ‘γνῶθι σεαυτόν’ (know thyself) in Greek characters, which is also found in *De Vita Ptholomei* (Latin 7532), a work attributed to Heingarter.³²⁴ The table below compares the two sentences: on the right, the one written by Belle, on the left the one by Heingarter.

Table 11 – Greek writing in Belle’s and Heingarter’s texts

Paris, BnF, NAL 398, f. 85r	Paris, BnF, lat. 7432, f. 1r
	

The text is organized in fourteen chapters. The first four comprise the matters of the first house: the length of life, complexion, state of the body and state of the soul. The other chapters follow the usual order of the houses: wealth, brothers, parents, children, infirmities, marriage, death, journeys, friends, and enemies, except for the tenth house, which is presented after the eleventh and the twelfth houses.³²⁵ The judgement is completed by seven chapters dedicated to prediction: the ages of the planets (ages of men), the directions of the Ascendant to the terms (*divisor*), the directions of the Sun, the Moon, the Lot of Fortune and the Midheaven, and a final chapter encompassing profecions and *firdarie*.³²⁶ Only after this does the author present the birth data:

Jo. Dap was born in the current year 1442 complete, the third of November, plus one hour and twenty minutes, and this was verified by *animodar*. And this nativity was conjunctional, diurnal, in the day of the Lord [Sunday], the hour of the artificial day

³²² For comparison, see Heingarter’s judgement for the horoscope of Jean II de Bourbon, Lat. 11232, ff. 1v, and for Jean de la Goutte, Lat. 7446, ff. 2r-3r.

³²³ See L. Thorndike, ‘Conrad Heingarter in Zurich manuscripts, especially his medical advice to the duchess of Bourbon’, *The Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, IV, 2 (1936), p. 82: ‘a table of contents follows the preface, as indeed was the rule in all Heingarter’s works’. The complete description of the chapters in Jo. Dap’s judgement can be found in f. 85rb.

³²⁴ *De Vita Ptholomei*, Paris, BnF, 7432, f. 1r.

³²⁵ The complete description can be found in f. 85rb.

³²⁶ The complete description is in NAL 398, f. 85rb. See also these techniques in Appendix I.

[was] the eighth, which is ruled by the Sun, dominical letter [blank], golden number 18.³²⁷

Belle drew a grid for the houses in f. 85va but omitted the degrees on the cusps and the positions of the planets. They can be deduced from the birth data and from some passages in the text, which mention Aquarius as the native's Ascendant, the Lot of Fortune at 22° Aquarius, and the Moon 'in the domicile of Mars', in this case, the sign of Scorpio. The birthday was not a Sunday, but a Saturday, the day of Saturn. Nevertheless, the horoscope displays the planetary positions of Saturday, 3 November; on Sunday, the Moon had moved from Scorpio to Sagittarius, and therefore it could not be 'in the domicile of Mars' as specified in the judgement. This is the only horoscope in the manuscripts that gives the date in ordinal numbers, again suggesting a copy.

The degree of the Ascendant, 15° Aquarius, and the degrees of the house cusps were ascertained by reversing the formula of the Lot of Fortune. The birth place, Paris, was deduced by comparing the house cusps of the horoscope, taking 15° Aquarius rising, with the table of triplicity rulers for each house. This table provides the elements of the signs on each cusp: air (the triplicity rulers being Saturn, Mercury, and Jupiter) for the first and fourth houses; water (Venus, Mars, and the Moon) to the second, fifth, sixth, and ninth houses; fire (Sun, Jupiter, and Saturn) to the seventh, and tenth houses; and earth (Venus, Moon, and Mars), to the third, eighth, eleventh and twelfth. Only the horoscope calculated for Paris with 15° Aquarius rising can generate the configuration of house cusps corresponding to that in the table.³²⁸

³²⁷ Natus fuit Jo. Dap. anno millesimo quadringesimo quadragesimo secundum currente, 3° Novembris completo cum hora una et 20 minutis et hoc verificatione facta per *animodar*. Erat autem hec nativitas coniunctionalis diurna in die domenica hora autem diei artificialis octava, quam Sol regit. Lictera dominicalis [blank] aureus autem numerus 18, f. 85rb.

³²⁸ For determining the horoscope's location by the use of house cusps, see North, *Horoscopes and History*, pp. 17-20.

Comparative judgement of the houses

In this section the horoscope of Jo. d.c.l is presented as an example of Belle's practice. It is analysed section by section and compared to similar segments of the other two horoscopes in order to map the differences and similarities of the astrological practice of these three authors. This judgement includes lengthy sections of the original text with the French original in footnotes. The other two include only shorter quotations followed by the original Latin in parentheses in the main text. All three are abridged versions, addressing only the main points in each judgement.

The astrological houses offer a complete description of the native's life and circumstances. The first house, the most important, describes the native's physical appearance, temperament and manners. The other houses, from the second to the twelfth, relate respectively to wealth, siblings, parents, children, diseases, marriage, death and inheritance, travel and religion, honours, friends and hopes, and enemies.

Each house encompasses several topics. For the ninth house, for example, the main topics are religion, knowledge (both academic and prophetic) and long journeys, while for the tenth they are vocation, honour and the conditions of the mother. Each house also responds to several implicit questions. For instance, the second house offers answers to questions such as 'what is the condition of the native's finances?' or 'will this person be able to accumulate wealth?', while the eleventh replies to questions like 'will the native have many allies?' or 'are the allies trustworthy?'.

As usual, the judgement of each topic begins with the identification of the significators, proceeds to the assessment of their state and of any modifying factors and ends with the judgement of that particular topic.

Judgement of the first house

This is the most important part of the judgement of any nativity. Broadly, the first house describes the native’s conduct, motivations, strengths, and weaknesses. It entails some of the most complex calculations of the entire judgement: the length of life, physical and psychological characteristics, and tendencies to illness (that is, the complexion); rational and emotional traits, demeanour, ethics and manners, and general predictions for the entire lifetime.³²⁹ The other eleven houses represent the native’s surrounding circumstances: finances, children, marriage, friends, and so on, and operate within the context of the characteristics revealed by the judgement of the first house.

Belle writes a thorough judgement for the first house of Jo. d.c.l.’s nativity (ff. 94va-94vb). It is organized under three major topics: length of life, complexion, and predictions using the triplicities. The following table summarizes the structure of his judgement and its main conclusions.³³⁰

Table 12 – Judgement of the first house for Jo. d.c.l.

	Contents
Length of life	<i>Hyleg</i> : the Sun <i>Alcocoden</i> : Saturn (with additions from Jupiter and Venus): 63 and a half years Directions: Sun to the place of Mars at 78 years
Complexion	Mixed temperament Melancholic with choleric attributes
Prediction (triplicities)	1 st third of life: Saturn – ‘weak complexion’ 2 nd third of life: Mercury – ‘melancholies, unrest of the mind’ 3 rd third of life: Jupiter – ‘benign, sweet and loveable, honourable’

The length of life

The calculation of the length of life is arguably the most demanding part of the judgement requiring the best of the astrologer’s skills. It requires the ability to evaluate certain conditions of the planets (such as dignity, house position, or relation to the Sun) that belong to different categories and are difficult to appraise when selecting one point over another. A seasoned astrologer could ponder so many factors of different natures, and determine, according to the rules, which ones to prioritize in the judgement.

³²⁹ The general forecasts are addressed in this section; the more specific predictions are addressed after the judgement.

³³⁰ Compare to the comprehensive account of a nativity in Juste, ‘A sixteenth-century astrological consultation’, p. 151-204. Although written almost a century later, the judgement has many similarities to that of Jo. d.c.l., both in the order of the topics addressed and in the techniques applied.

The estimation of the native's life span centres mainly on the identification of the *hyleg*, which is selected by a method of exclusion from one of five possible points of the horoscope: The Sun, the Moon, the ascending degree, the Lot of Fortune and the degree of the syzygy (lunation) immediately preceding birth. The *hyleg* is usually one of the luminaries: preferably the Sun in a diurnal nativity, and the Moon in a nocturnal one. If neither of the luminaries gathers the conditions necessary to be *hyleg*, the astrologer chooses the Ascendant, the Lot of Fortune or the degree of the lunation before birth (the order varies in diurnal and nocturnal horoscopes). Once the *hyleg* is identified, the astrologer has to determine a second point, the *alcocodem*, the planet that measures the length of life. It is usually a planet that aspects the *hyleg* while having some dignity (domicile, exaltation, triplicity, term or face) in the degree where the *hyleg* is placed. The *alcocodem* gives a certain number of years according to its nature and its condition in the horoscope: if in good condition, it can give the planet's greater years; in average condition, its median years; in bad condition, its lesser years.

Table 13 – Years given by the *alcocodem*

Condition	Saturn	Jupiter	Mars	Sun	Venus	Mercury	Moon
Good greater years	57	79	66	120	82	76	108
Median median years	43.5	45.5	40.5	69.5	45	48	66.5
Bad lesser years	30	12	15	19	8	20	25

This is further adjusted by the planets that aspect the *alcocodem*, which add or subtract a certain number of months according to their condition. It is also complemented by the native's temperament and by the rulers of the Ascendant's triplicity. Even so, this is not yet the final result: the life expectancy can be significantly extended if there are no dangerous directions in the years close to the limit set by these calculations; the native can also extend this limit by leading a moderate and healthy life.³³¹

In the judgement for Jo. d.c.l. (ff. 94ra-94va), Belle determines that the Sun is the *hyleg* because it is a diurnal chart, and he considers it to be in good condition. Saturn

³³¹ See 'Length of life' in Appendix I. The technique combining the years of the *alcocodem* and the directions to potentially harmful places will be disputed in the sixteenth-century by those wanting to expurgate astrology from the 'Arabic superstitions', returning it to the 'Greek tradition'. As the *alcocodem* is not mentioned by Ptolemy in *Tetrabiblos*, it will be considered a late addition and thus contested. However, other Greek sources, unknown at the time, attribute years to the planets, and are the probable origin of this method, as referred in Hasse, 'Astrology. Ptolemy against the Arabs', *Success and Suppression*, pp, 262-265.

is taken as *alcocodem* because it aspects the Sun and rules Aquarius in which the Sun is placed.³³² As Saturn is not strong in this horoscope it can give only its median years: forty-three and a half. This calculation is refined by the contributions from the planets aspecting the *alcocodem*. In this case, the two benefics, Venus and Jupiter, aspect it favourably, therefore adding their lesser years – eight and twelve years, respectively. Adding these years to the initial calculation, Belle concludes that the native’s life could be prolonged up to sixty-three years and a half. Again, this is not the final number; it must be confirmed by the more precise predictive method of the directions. As there are no life-threatening directions around the native’s sixty-third or sixty-fourth year, Belle conjectures that life can be further extended. The only difficult direction occurs at the age of seventy-eight, so Belle concludes that the native,

may well arrive, by good regime and a good government, if he can guard himself against melancholy and deep cogitations, until seventy-eight years or close to that.³³³

In conclusion, he can live at least for sixty-three and a half years according to the *alcocodem*, and at most for seventy-eight years according to the direction. The exact duration of his life lies within these limits and varies according to the native’s capacity to maintain physical and spiritual health by deliberately avoiding excesses. He is urged to be especially wary of melancholy, the most difficult of the four humours.³³⁴ While death is seen as an unescapable part of life, there are also many possibilities for prolonging life.

In the judgement of Hubert’s nativity (ff. 76vb-77ra) the first choice for *hyleg* is the Moon, and Saturn is the *alcocodem* because it rules the Moon’s term and aspects it by trine. But this choice is brought into question by the weak condition of Saturn:

But because Saturn is weak and the *alcocodem* is retrograde, peregrine, I looked at the Sun in the second [house] in a masculine sign, and Jupiter, ruler of the triplicity. First I consider it, and it [Jupiter] is in an angle in its house and triplicity and in a masculine sign, therefore I say that the Sun is the *hyleg* and Jupiter is the *alcocodem*.³³⁵

³³² Saturn is the ruler of Aquarius, where the Sun is positioned, being therefore the Sun’s dispositor.

³³³ le dit ney porrat bien parvenir per bon regime et bon gouvernement se il le peut garder de melancolie et de profondes cogitations jusqua a lan 78 ou environ ce temps, f. 94 b - f. 94v a.

³³⁴ For diverse views on the melancholic humor, see R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky and F. Fritz, *Saturn and Melancholy, Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art*, London, 1964; A. Voss, ‘The Power of a Melancholy Humour. Divination and Divine Tears’, *Seeing with Different Eyes*, P. Curry and A. Voss (eds), Cambridge, 2007, pp.150-169; I. McCleery, ‘Both ‘*illness and temptation of the enemy*’: melancholy, the medieval patient and the writings of King Duarte of Portugal (r. 1433–1438)’, *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 1.2, June 2009, pp. 163–178 and A. N. Feld, *Melancholy and the Otherness of God*, Lanham, 2011.

³³⁵ Sed quia Saturnus est debilis et *alcocodem* retrogradus peregrinus, respexi ad Solem in 2a in signo masculino et Jupiter dominus triplicitatis, respicite primum et est in angulo in domo sua et triplicitate et in signo masculino, ideo dico quod Sol est *hyleg* et Jupiter *alcocodem*, f. 76vb.

As Saturn is considered unsuitable as *alcocodem*, the Moon is also rejected as *hyleg* and the Sun is taken instead. Interestingly, the *hyleg* was rejected due to the weak condition of the *alcocodem*, not because of its own deficiencies. The new *hyleg* requires a new *alcocodem*: Jupiter.³³⁶ Jupiter is in good condition in Sagittarius and in an angular house, therefore able to bestow its greater years, which are 79. Further adjustments are made from the aspects of Mars, a malefic and ruler of the eighth house of death, which deducts fifteen months, and of Mercury, which deducts twenty months because of its combustion. After further adjustments, it is concluded that the native will live at least 73 years. Again, his life may extend significantly coming only to its end when the *hyleg*, moving in direction comes to ‘dangerous places’ (*ad loca periculosa*).

In the nativity of Jo. Dap (f. 85vb) the calculation of the length of life follows a different method. It begins straightforwardly with the directions of the *hyleg*, therefore assuming that the *hyleg* had already been determined. The author follows Ptolemy’s doctrine of prorogations to make his evaluation.³³⁷ After further calculations involving the Sun, Mars, and the occidental degree, he concludes, perhaps too optimistically, that the native will live a total of ninety-eight years, ten months, and eighteen days, an exceptionally long life, which would place his death at 21 September 1541.³³⁸

Regarding the topic of the length of life, there are no significant differences in the technique applied by the first two authors; both use the standard methodology of the *hyleg* and *alcocodem*. The only noteworthy aspect is the replacement of the initial *hyleg* in Hubert’s judgement because it led to a weak *alcocodem* and therefore a shorter lifespan. Although this substitution is unusual, it remains within the accepted methodology and examples of similar alternative calculations are present in the writings of Haly Abenragel and Guido Bonatti.³³⁹ The third judgement uses a less common

³³⁶ There was another possible *alcocodem* for the Moon – Mars, the ruler of Scorpio, at 11° Aquarius, squaring the Moon – but it was ignored, possibly because of the distance of 17° between the planets. However, in other horoscopes some aspects were taken into account regardless of their distance. This may be the criterion of the author from whom Belle copied, not of Belle himself.

³³⁷ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, III.10, pp. 271-307.

³³⁸ The complete calculation: Sol cum Marte ad gradum occidentis interfectorem ut Ptholomeo placet a sole namque usque ad interfectorem sunt 89 gradus cum uno minuto. Sed a Marte usque ad interfectorem sunt 188 cum 47 minutis. Subtraham ergo gradus solis a gradibus Martis et remanebunt 19 gradus cum 48 minutis Medietatem autem illorum graduum subtraham eosquem gradibus solis addam et excrescent mihi gradus 98 cum 54 minutis. Qui gradus hunc nato per spatio sui vite significabit annos 98 cum 10 mensibus et 18 diebus hec enim erit mensura sue vite ad quam naturaliter pervenire potuit scilicet se ab accidentibus extrinsecis advenientibus custo duerit et hec de quantitate vite huius nati sufficient, f. 85vb.

³³⁹ For example, Haly Abenragel, *El Libro Conplido*, IV 3-6, pp. 164-173, and Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, Treatise 9.II.2, pp. 1133-1140: “On the diversity of opinion which exists concerning the *hilaq*”.

approach to the matter of length of life by using Ptolemy's prorogations. Nonetheless, the directions of the *hyleg* used by Belle and referred to in Hubert's judgement are a variation or development of the Ptolemaic concept because they also rely on the movement of the significator of life towards a threatening position to determine a possible moment of death.

The native's complexion

Complexion is part of the calculation for the length of life since much of the native's health, and therefore his longevity, depended on the innate tendency to moderation or excess. A good, balanced complexion promised good health, while an unbalanced one, with excesses of cold or heat, could cause many ailments and, therefore, a short life. To calculate the native's complexion, Belle accounts,

the Ascendant of the nativity and its lord, the seventh and sixth houses, their rulers and the planets therein according to their powers, the houses that aspect them, and the place of the Moon.³⁴⁰

The inclusion of the seventh house among the more conventional factors (the Ascendant, its ruler, the Moon, and obviously the sixth house, that of illnesses) seems to be inspired by Ptolemy, in his chapter about bodily injuries and diseases:

it is necessary to look at the two angles of the horizon, that is, the orient and the occident, and especially to the occident itself and the sign preceding it, which is disjunct from the oriental angle. We must also observe what aspect the maleficent planets bear to them.³⁴¹

Belle may have learned this method from Heingarter who also uses this it in his judgement of 1469 for Jean de la Goutte.³⁴² The seventh house is considered because it signifies, among other things, what may oppose and hurt the native.³⁴³ After pondering all factors, Belle concludes that the native's complexion will be mixed, because:

all the planets give testimony in the complexion and always it will be naturally tempered by the four humours.³⁴⁴

But beyond this apparent balance of humours Belle identifies underlying melancholy, possibly because of the ruler of the Ascendant, Saturn, which is cold and dry and, therefore, melancholic. This causes the native to be 'often heavy, slow in words, seldom

³⁴⁰ l'ascendant de la nativite et le seigneur diceluy par la 7 et 6 maison et leurs seigneurs et par les planets estans en icelles scelon leurs forces et iselles maisons regardans et por le lieu de la Lune, f. 94va.

³⁴¹ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, III. 12, p. 317.

³⁴² Lat. 7446, ff. 15r-33v. See Poulle, *Les Astrologues*, p. 180.

³⁴³ See for instance Alcabitus, *Introduction*, I.63, p. 53, mentions: 'controversies, disputants, partners and opponents'.

³⁴⁴ les planets portent tesmoignage en la complexion dicelluy toutesfois elle sera naturellement asses attempree de 4 humeurs, f. 94va.

joyous or prone to laughter, and often sad'.³⁴⁵ Moon is in Leo, a fiery, thus choleric, sign allowing him to 'deceive the melancholy with the participation of choler'.³⁴⁶ The aspect of Mars aggravates the choleric tendency making the native 'very wrathful, with little mercy and without patience'.³⁴⁷ But all is redeemed by the conjunction of Venus to the Ascendant which could 'moderate much of the bad complexion given to him by Saturn and Mars'.³⁴⁸

The other two judgements are not as detailed. The judgement of Hubert (f. 77ra) is less focused on the native's health and more on his appearance, something that is not taken into consideration in Belle's judgement. It emphasizes the prevalence of 'human signs in this horoscope - Virgo in the Ascendant, and both Mercury, and Jupiter, the *almutem* of the nativity, in Libra – stating that they confer beauty (*signa humana donant pulchritudinem*).³⁴⁹ The temperament is 'sanguine, tending towards moist' (*sanguinea declinans ad humiditatem*), associated with the air element, which is hot and moist. The moist quality is increased by the occidental position of Jupiter, emphasizing the feminine and, thus, moisture, the position of the Moon in Scorpio, a watery sign, and the opposition of Saturn in Pisces, also a watery sign, to the Ascendant. Although it is not stated in the text, the author is considering the positions of the main significators of complexion referred to above, but excludes the sixth and the seventh house. This author also adds a brief comment on the native's abilities, which begins with a less pleasant note: Mercury, Lord of the Ascendant and natural significator of speech, is combust, thus suggesting some impediment in communication.³⁵⁰ However, the sextiles of the Moon to the Ascendant and of Mars to Jupiter indicate, respectively, good memory (*bonam memoriam*) and audacity (*audaciam*).

Similarly, Jo. Dap's judgement (ff. 85vb-86rb) begins with the physical description of the native with no detailed calculation of temperament: he is 'red mixed with the colour of honey, his body [will be] thick and not thin, his hair black and moderately thick' (*colori mellis mixta rubedine corpus eius spissum et non rarum nigri erunt eius capilli in capite mediocriter spissi*); he has beautiful eyes (*oculi eius pulchri*),

³⁴⁵ souvent pesant, tardif en parole, peu joieux et riant, et souvent triste, ff. 94v-94vb.

³⁴⁶ 'elle dechivera a mellancolie avec participacion de collere, f. 94va.

³⁴⁷ fort ireux et de petite misericorde et sans pacience, f. 94vb.

³⁴⁸ luy attempa fort malle complexion a luy donnee par Saturne et Mars, f. 94vb.

³⁴⁹ The signs associated with beauty are the 'human' signs, the ones represented by a human figure: Gemini, Virgo, Libra, the first half of Sagittarius and Aquarius. See 'Attributions of the signs' in Appendix I.

³⁵⁰ A planet is said to be combust when it is less than eight degrees from the Sun when it is not visible because of the Sun's brightness and it is considered ineffective. See Albiruni, *Instruction*, 153, p. 64, 486, pp. 298-299.

large shoulders (*spatula ipsum ampla*), and ‘a good body of a moderate composition’, bestowed by the human sign of the Ascendant (*corpus bonum et temperate composicionis hoc probat ascendens signum humanum*).³⁵¹ Additionally, the native’s mind is fixed and firm (*fixa et firma*) because both signifiers, Mercury and the Moon, are in the fixed sign of Scorpio, and he has ‘a strong mind, subtle and sharp’ (*consilio forti subtili et acuto*). Mars, which is angular in the tenth house in Sagittarius, describes his manners: ‘a diligent winner in wars, exposing himself to death and danger spontaneously and willingly, disobedient, bold, manly, scornful, arrogant’ (*diligens victor in bellis ad mortis pericula se exponent sponte et voluntarie, inobediens, audax, virilis, dedignosus, superbus*).

As to the native’s complexion, the main difference between the three judgements is Belle’s focus on the medical aspects, while the other two emphasize appearance and behaviour. Yet, in broader terms, they all use the same signifiers to ascertain the native’s complexion.

The triplicities³⁵²

In the very last segment of the judgement of the first house for Jo. d.c.l., Belle includes a wide-ranging overview of the native’s life, which does not appear in any of the others. He divides the native’s life into three segments and establishes the general condition of his health throughout his life. For this particular calculation he quotes Dorotheus, an author that he had not mentioned before:³⁵³

according to Dorotheus Book 3, [the] lords of the triplicity of the Ascendant mean the complexion of the native according to his life divided in three.³⁵⁴

To estimate how long each third will last, it is necessary, of course, to know the total length of life. Belle had previously calculated the native’s life span between a minimum of sixty-three and a half and a maximum of seventy-eight years thus corresponding to three periods between twenty-two and twenty-six years each (an intermediate value of twenty-four years is used in this text). As the Ascendant is in Aquarius, a sign of the air triplicity, and the horoscope is diurnal, the triplicity rulers are Saturn, Mercury and Jupiter, respectively.

³⁵¹ The human signs are those represented by human figures.

³⁵² See ‘Triplicity’ in Appendix I.

³⁵³ Dorotheus of Sidon (*fl.* 75), a Hellenistic Astrologer, author of *Carmen Astrologicum*. See *Dorothei Sidonii Carmen Astrologicum*, D. Pingree (ed.), Leipzig, 1976, and Dorotheus of Sidon, *Carmen Astrologicum*, D. Pingree (tr.), London, 1993.

³⁵⁴ les 3 seigneurs de la triplicite de l'ascendant signifient la complexion du ney selon sa vie partie en trois, f. 94vb.

Table 14 – Triplicities of the Ascendant for Jo. d.c.l.

Diurnal triplicity ruler	Saturn	First third of life
Nocturnal triplicity ruler	Mercury	Second third of life
Participant ruler	Jupiter	Third third of life

The quality of each third is determined by the condition of the respective ruler in this horoscope. The first period, from birth to twenty-four years of age, is ruled by Saturn, ruler of the diurnal triplicity: ‘the first part of his life will be of a very weak complexion and principally in the beginning’.³⁵⁵ Saturn, the harbinger of melancholy, is in Aries, the sign of its fall suggesting difficulties. Things do not improve in the second period, between twenty-four and forty-eight years of age, under the rulership of Mercury:

the native will be drawn to deep cogitations and melancholies, which he cannot properly know, and to great solicitude and unrest of the mind, from which he will need to flee and be protected, if he wants to maintain and protect his complexion in prosperity.³⁵⁶

In this case, the difficulties originate not so much from the nature of the planet, which is neutral, but mainly from its situation in this horoscope: ‘retrograde and under the Sun’s rays and in the square aspect with Saturn’.³⁵⁷ Life improves significantly in its last third, from approximately the forty-eighth year for the end of his life, because the ruler, Jupiter, is a benefic planet, and it is well placed in the horoscope: angular in the tenth house and dignified in Sagittarius by rulership, triplicity and term, oriental to the Sun, and in *hayz*’.³⁵⁸

[The native] will be well-tempered and noble and he will be free from worries, tribulation and melancholy, and he will be more benign, sweet and loveable, honourable and of honest prudence and good conversation, and his body will be, according to the complexion and his age, in better disposition than in the two other parts of his life.³⁵⁹

These benefic effects will reflect on all three periods because Jupiter is the participant, and because it aspects the Ascendant by trine. The beneficial effects of Jupiter are felt

³⁵⁵ la premiere partie de sa vie il sera de moult debille complexion et principalement au commencement, f. 94vb.

³⁵⁶ sera ce ney mene a profondes cogitations et melancolies es lesquelles il ne pourra pas bien cognoistre et a solicitude grande et inquietations dentendement lesquelles il fauddra quil fuye et sen garder sil veult tennir et garder sa complexion en prosperite, f. 94vb

³⁵⁷ retrograde et soubz les rayx du Soleil et au quart regard de Saturne, f. 94vb.

³⁵⁸ The planet’s ‘natural position’ or ‘preferential position’. See ‘Hayz’ in Appendix I.

³⁵⁹ sera bien attemperee et noble et quil sera hors de solicitude de triblacion et de melancolie et sera plus benignin doux et aimable honourable et donneste prudence et bonne conversacion et sera son corps selon sa complexion et son eage en milleur disposicion qui es deux aultres parties de sa vie, f. 95ra.

not only in the last third, which it rules, but during the entire life because Jupiter, ruler of the third triplicity of the Ascendant, is also the participant triplicity, that is, the co-ruler of the three parts. All things considered, the outcome is positive and although there are many negative factors in the horoscope, they might be overcome.

This three-fold prediction offers a broad outline of the native's life, and after a complete description of the astrological houses, it is followed by a more detailed set of prognostications based on several predictive techniques.

Second house: wealth, moveable property

In the horoscope of Jo. d.c.l. (ff. 95ra-95va) Belle identifies the significators of wealth: Pisces, the sign on the cusp of the second house; Jupiter, the ruler of Pisces; and Saturn, the planet in the second house. Additionally, the Lot of Fortune, which is in Leo, is also taken into consideration. After pondering their conditions, he concludes that the native,

will notably acquire substance and he will be rich and he will be provided [with a] good and large fortune. And there will come to him profit from the side of strong princes and grand lords and also from people from the churches, noblemen such as bishops, cardinals and other fathers of the holy church, and on occasion by aid from his mother.³⁶⁰

Jupiter the greater benefic, is strongly placed in the angular tenth house and in Sagittarius, one of its domiciles. Jupiter represents lords and clergymen, especially when placed in the tenth house, a place of achievement and power. The tenth house also signifies the mother, hence the reference to the native's mother as a possible source of wealth. The placement of Saturn, lord of the Ascendant, in the second house denotes the native's interest in the acquisition of wealth, but it also suggests difficulties:

because the lord of the Ascendant is in the second house it means that the native will acquire his said substance properly and that in acquiring it he will have tribulations, sadness and melancholies.³⁶¹

These problems are related to the malefic nature of the planet, aggravated in this horoscope by its placement in Aries, the sign of its fall. Although Saturn has a triplicity in the signs of fire, being in its fall in Aries suggests impatience and instability leading to unwise decisions. For this reason, Belle recommends caution:

it will be convenient that he uses not only his own sense, because he will deceive himself, but also the counsel of noble people and of a noble situation.³⁶²

This judicious advice is possibly inspired by the trine between Jupiter in the tenth house of honours and Saturn in the second house of wealth. It offers the native the opportunity to overcome the difficulties signified by a malefic planet by means of wisdom represented by the strong position of Jupiter in the tenth house.

The other two judgements use the same general significators, although with a different emphasis. In Hubert's nativity (ff. 77ra-77rb) the judgement begins by

³⁶⁰ ce ney acquerira notablement substance et sera riche et proviendra bonne fortune et grande et luy viendra bien proffit et honneur de la partie des fors princes et grans seigneurs et aussy des gens desglises nobles comme evesques cardinaux et autres peres de sancte esglise et a locasion et pour suite de sa mere, f. 95 b.

³⁶¹ pour ce que le seigneur de l'ascendant est en la 2^e maison il signifie que le ney acquiera sa dite substance proprement et que en lacquirant il aura tribulations tristesses et melancolies, f. 95 b.

³⁶² et conviendra quil ne use pas seulement de son scens car luy mesme se decevroit maix use par le conseil de gens nobles et de noble lieu, f. 95 b.

noticing that Mercury, Lord of the Ascendant, is placed in the second house revealing the native's interest in the acquisition of wealth. This goal is hindered by Mercury's combustion by the Sun and to the South Node, which has a diminishing effect. The sextile of Jupiter ameliorates these difficulties and brings prosperity, although only in the later period of his life because Jupiter is occidental of the Sun. Venus, ruler of the second house, is in Sagittarius in the third, aspecting Mars in Aquarius in the sixth. The aspect is a sextile, but the author considers it harmful because 'according to the computations of the houses' (*secundum equationes domorum*) the aspect is a square, as the third and sixth houses form a natural square.³⁶³ It may therefore signify 'harm by some of his partners in the second half of his life' (*dampnum aliquorum sociorum suorum post medietatem vite*). In this instance, the aspect by house overlaps the signification of the aspect by zodiacal degree. Success is still possible because the aspect of the Sun to Jupiter promises 'great abundance of honours in the second half of his life' (*magnam habundantiam honorum post medietatem vite eius*). The reference to mid-life is due to Jupiter's occidentality of the Sun.

In Jo. Dap's nativity (f. 86rb), the emphasis is placed on the Lot of Fortune: Saturn, the dispositor of the Lot of Fortune, is in the fourth house of the father suggesting that part of his wealth comes from his family. However, Saturn is retrograde, thus reducing the benefits. Another possible source of wealth is the trade of marine products (*per mercancias maris*) implied by Pisces on the cusp of the second house.

Third house: short journeys, siblings

Despite the multiple significations of this house, all three judgements only address the topic of siblings. But, surprisingly, in Jo. d.c.l.'s judgement (f. 95va) regarding brothers the third house is not taken into account; the significators chosen are the rulers of the tenth and eleventh houses and the benefic planets.³⁶⁴ Belle's judgement is notably concise and optimistic:

[the native will] have several brothers and sisters and that they will be very fortunate and noble of courage and of good mind, and that they will love this native.³⁶⁵

³⁶³ Note that each house is a 30° section of the heavens (measured in the Celestial Equator or Prime Vertical, or another great circle depending on the house system used), thus the third house is always 90° from the sixth house regardless of the house system used, and its projection on the Zodiac.

³⁶⁴ la x et la xi et les plusieurs fortunes, f. 95va.

³⁶⁵ ce ney aura plusieurs freres et seurs et quil seront bien fortunnes et nobles de corage et dentendement et quil aimeront le ney, f. 95va.

Belle's method is apparently based on a common interpretation of a passage of *Tetrabiblos*.³⁶⁶ Although the original text is unclear, authors such as Bonatti believed that in the matter of brothers Ptolemy considered the placement of benefic or malefic planets in the tenth and eleventh houses.³⁶⁷ Following this methodology, Belle judges favourably, as the benefic planet Jupiter is strongly placed in the tenth house and also rules the eleventh. Most astrologers of this period would typically use the third house as a primary signification, in which case the presence of a debilitated Mars in the third would strongly suggest difficulty with the siblings.

In the judgement for Hubert (f. 77rb), the emphasis is also on the number of brothers and sisters of the native, which is calculated by the position of the signifiers in fertile or barren signs, a feature that Belle omits.³⁶⁸ The cusp of the third house is in Scorpio, a fertile sign, and the Moon is placed therein, which should point to many siblings. Regardless, the configuration is deemed unfavourable because Mars, ruler of the third house, and Jupiter, the greater benefic, are in Aquarius and Sagittarius, respectively, both are signs of few children, thus suggesting few brothers.³⁶⁹ Mars also rules the eighth house of death indicating that the native 'will see the death of many of his brothers and some of his sisters' (*videbit mortem plurium fratrum suorum et quarundam eius sororum*).

In Jo. Dap's judgement (f. 86rb-86va) the selected signifiers are Jupiter, placed in the third house, and Venus, the house's ruler. The opposition between Venus and Saturn suggests harm to the native's older brothers (*malum nocebit fratribus maioribus*). Nevertheless, Jupiter aspects the cusp of the eleventh house by favourable aspects (a sextile and a trine, respectively), attesting to the virtues of his brothers.

Fourth house: father, parents, ancestry, immoveable property

In Jo. d.c.l.'s judgement (ff. 95va-96ra), Belle gives precedence to the Sun, the natural signifier of the father in a diurnal horoscope, instead of the ruler of the fourth house in this horoscope, Mercury.

³⁶⁶ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, III.5, pp. 251-255.

³⁶⁷ Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, pp. 1238-1239.

³⁶⁸ This method is also applied to the fifth house to ascertain the native's fertility and to the second to calculate wealth.

³⁶⁹ Mars dominus 3 domus in Aquario signum paucorum filiorum et Jupiter similiter in signo paucorum filiorum, f. 77rb.

because the Sun is in the eleventh house and it is close to Jupiter [which is] oriental and in the tenth, it signifies that the father of the native is noble and amiable and of good complexion and he [the father] will have long life.³⁷⁰

This is the standard methodology for the fourth house.³⁷¹ Although the Sun is in a relatively good condition there is some exaggeration in this statement, and the contribution of the ruler of the tenth, Mercury, curbs this optimism:

his father will be of profound cogitation and will want to have his [own] opinions and on that occasion some tribulations or losses will come to him, and he will be slow and of few words and of a complexion tending to the melancholic, and in this the father will participate with the son.³⁷²

Belle includes in this judgement a brief reference to the native's mother, probably to complete the description of the family, despite the fact that this topic pertains to the tenth house. Belle attributes to her 'a good sanguine complexion and tempered' (*bonne complexion sanguine et attemperee*), deduced from the position of Jupiter, a sanguine and temperate planet, strongly dignified in the tenth house. She is also

of noble conversation and of high courage, and full of humility, God-loving, and serving Him.³⁷³

The nativity of Hubert (ff. 77rb-77va) concisely describes the meanings of the fourth house as 'heritages and the end of things' (*herditates, finis rerum*). Differently from Belle's, it focuses only on the father's patrimony not on his complexion. Jupiter, the ruler, is in Sagittarius and in sextile with Mars, ruler of the eighth, thus promising inheritance (*hereditas*) to the native. As this is a nocturnal nativity, Saturn takes precedence over the Sun as significator of the father. Saturn is retrograde and peregrine, thus diminishing the inheritance and its placement in the seventh house suggests difficulties in business partnerships. This section also includes a less common reference to the length of life of the native's father using a method similar to the calculation of the native's length of life, as seen in the first house. The natural significator is taken as the father's *hyleg* and an *alcocodem* is selected accordingly. As this is a nocturnal nativity, Saturn is taken as *hyleg* and the Moon as *alcocodem* because it has triplicity in the sign where Saturn is placed and aspects it by trine. Saturn's poor condition foretells a short life to the father (*significat parvam vitam patris*); the Moon, though in

³⁷⁰ Et pour ce que le Soleil este en la 11 et est environne de Jupiter oriental en na 10 il sinifie que le pere du ney est noble et aimable et de bonne complexion et quil sera de longue vie, f. 95ra.

³⁷¹ See for example Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, III. 4, p. 240, or Haly Abenragel, *El Libro Conplido*, IV, 14, p. 206.

³⁷² icelluy pere sera de profondes cogitations et voudra tenir ses oppinions et a loccasion de ce aucunes triblions ou perdes lui en viendront et sera tardif et peu parlant et de completion tirant au melancolique et en ce la participera le pere avec le fils, f. 95vb.

³⁷³ de noble conversacion et de hault corage et plaine dumilite amant dieu et le servant, f. 95vb.

its joy, is in Scorpio the sign of its fall, so ‘it cannot give more than twenty-five years or twenty-five months or less’ (*non potest dare ultra 25 annos vel 25 menses vel infra*).

Jo. Dap’s judgement (f. 86va) follows the usual rules. Being a diurnal horoscope, the Sun takes precedence for the father and Venus for the mother.³⁷⁴ The Sun is in its joy in the ninth house suggesting nobility of soul and acuity of senses (*nobilitatem animi acuitatem sensus*), but Saturn retrograde in the fourth house threatens great destruction of his honours (*patri magnam honorum destructionem*). Mercury, ruler of the fourth, is under the Sun’s rays, therefore unable to assist. Again, the astrologer ponders the testimonies and decides for the strongest, in this case, the planet placed in the house.

Fifth house: children, entertainment, gifts, messengers, embassies

These three judgements are mainly focused on the number of children. In Jo. d.c.l.’s nativity (96ra-96rb), Belle selects as significators the Ascendant, the other angular houses (tenth, seventh and fourth), the eleventh house of hopes, and the fertile planets, Jupiter, the Moon, and Venus.³⁷⁵ These significators determine ‘the children of the native, if he wants to marry’.³⁷⁶ Marrying and having children are thus personal choices regardless of the indicators of fertility. He does not include the fifth house or its ruler in his list of significators, although he mentions them in the judgement. Belle seems optimistic in this judgement:

because the Moon is found in the seventh, and it is lady of the fifth which is a sign of many children, and similarly Jupiter is strong in the tenth and Venus very close to the Ascendant, from this it is signified that he may have several children.³⁷⁷

Typically, this judgement would take into account the position of the planets in fertile or barren signs, a step that Belle omits here, perhaps because none of the significators is in a fertile sign. He considers the number of benefic planets in the angular houses enough to warrant many children regardless of the signs therein.

In Hubert’s judgement (f. 77va) the significations are summarized as ‘children, food, drink, and clothes’ (*filios, cibaria, potus, et vestimenta*). Saturn, the ruler, is

³⁷⁴ See ‘Significator’ in Appendix I.

³⁷⁵ Les lieux en sa nativité signifians les enfans sont l’Ascendant la 10 11 7 et la 5 et les planetes sont Jupiter la Lune et Venus, f. 96ra.

³⁷⁶ des enfans du ney sil se veult marier, f. 96ra.

³⁷⁷ Et pour que la Lune est trouvee en la 7 et elle est dame du 5, signifie que est signe de moult d’enfans et samblement Jupiter est en la 10 fort et Venus asses près de l’ascendant pour laquelle chose il est signifie quil pourra avoir plusieurs enfans. Et pour ce que aucuns des significateurs sont orientaux et les autres sont occidentaux il en pourra avoir en son eage jeune moienne et vielle, f. 96ra.

retrograde and weak (*debilis*) in the seventh house, suggesting few children in youth (*paucos filios in juventute*). Jupiter promises children later in life (*filios post mediam etatem*), because it is in the fourth house and occidental to the Sun, but they will be few because Saturn does not aspect Mercury, the ruler of the Ascendant. For the same reason, he will not be much interested in food (*non erit multum curiosus in cibariis*), one of the pleasures associated with this house.

The judgement of Jo. Dap 's nativity (ff. 86va-86vb) relies mainly on the position and strength of the benefic planets: Venus in Sagittarius in the tenth house and in mutual reception with Jupiter in Taurus in the third house.³⁷⁸ As the cusp of the fifth house is in the feminine sign of Cancer, and its ruler, the Moon, is in Scorpio, also feminine, it is concluded that the native will have more daughters than sons. The number of children may be diminished by the presence of malefic planets in the angles: Mars in the tenth and Saturn in the fourth houses. These are not directly related to the fifth house but their angularity is considered strong enough to be taken into account.

Sixth house: servants, small animals, illnesses

The sixth house receives much attention from Belle especially in the part related to health. He begins by briefly judging the condition of Jo. d.c.l.'s servants, signified by 'the sixth house, the part of servants and their lords, the planets aspecting them, and Mercury' (f. 96rb). Because of the poor condition of Mercury, which is retrograde and combust, the servants will be many but not trustworthy, and some will secretly plot against him even though they appear to be loyal (*ja soit ce quil semble quil soient loyaux*). Commerce in animals is also signified by the sixth house, its ruler, and Mars, which, due to its debilitated conditions, will not bring much profit to the native.

The topic of health is explored in much detail again suggesting that Belle was a physician or a student of medicine. He begins by identifying the signifiers of illnesses, quoting Ptolemy:

The places signifying the illnesses of the native are the Ascendant, the seventh and the sixth, the Lot of Illness, and their rulers, and the planets in those places aspecting or being [placed] there, both benefic and malefic.³⁷⁹

In fact, Belle is paraphrasing rather than quoting Ptolemy who never mentions the Lot of Illness (nor indeed any lot other than the Lot of Fortune), nor the places signifying

³⁷⁸ See 'mutual reception' in Appendix I.

³⁷⁹ les lieux sinifians les maladies du ney sont l'ascendant la 7 la 6 la partie des maladies et leurs seigneurs et les planetes iceux lieux regardans ou estans en eulx itant bonnes que mauvaises, f. 96rb.

illness. In fact, Ptolemy makes no mention of the houses in his book and he organizes the topics in a different order. Belle may be quoting from one of Ptolemy's many commentators or perhaps merging several authors.³⁸⁰ The judgement lists the possible difficulties caused by the adverse configurations of the horoscope and concludes by suggesting that relief may come from certain planetary placements. Venus will help,

by the assistance of some good saint and prayers and orisons, which will be made by him [the native], the said illnesses will be ameliorated by the intercession of the blessed saints.³⁸¹

The reference to the saints, though unexpected, is consistent with this configuration: Venus rules the ninth house and it is close to the Ascendant, thus connecting the native signified by the Ascendant with religion signified by the ninth house. The second is Jupiter, the other benefic, although on a more mundane level, assists:

by a good regime of medicine and the help of good government and principally by the aid, effort and work of his mother, which will naturally be the cause of his well-being, health, profit, good and honour.³⁸²

The mother's assistance is deduced from the placement of Jupiter in the tenth house, that of the mother.

The judgement indicated the native's propensity to certain illnesses, while the study of directions, revolutions of the year, and profections helped to establish the periods when these illnesses were most likely to manifest. The goal was to prevent any possible health problems, by anticipating the difficult periods and taking certain preventative actions.

The other two judgements are less extensive. In Hubert's nativity (f. 77va-77vb) the ruler of the sixth house, Saturn, is in Pisces, occidental of the Sun, signifying illness in old age and in the feet, which are ruled by Pisces. Mercury, ruler of the Ascendant, is in Scorpio, combust and conjunct the South Node; as Scorpio rules the reproductive organs (*virgam et testiculos*), the native is prone to suffer damage in them (*impedimentum in hiis partibus*).

Jo. Dap's judgement (ff. 86vb-87ra) begins on a positive note, by noticing the absence of malefic planets in the Ascendant, the sixth, and seventh houses (*non video infortunat in ascendente nec in sexta nec in septima*). Even so, the native risks harm

³⁸⁰ See for instance Bonatti, *Book on Astronomy*, pp. 1265-1269.

³⁸¹ per layde daucun bon saint et prieres et oroisons lesquelles seront faites pour luy lesdites maladies lui seront allegee per lintercession des benois sains, f. 96vb.

³⁸² per bon regime de medicine et layde de bon gouvernement et principalement per layde labour et travail de sa mere laquelle naturellement sera cause de son salut sante proffit bien et honneur, f. 96vb.

‘by iron or fire’ (*ex ferro vel igne*) possibly because Saturn, the Lord of the Ascendant, receives the opposition of Mars, which is angular in the tenth in Sagittarius, a fiery sign.

Seventh house: marriage, partnerships, adversaries

In the nativity of Jo. d.c.l. (ff. 96rb-97rb), the significators chosen by Belle are the seventh house (Leo), and its ruler, the Sun, the Moon, which is placed in the seventh, and Venus, the natural significator of love. Belle states that:

if this native wants to marry, he will be conveniently and moderately fortunate in marriage because on that occasion he will have and participate in the benefits and in the honours and also sometimes tribulations, toil and trouble.³⁸³

Marriage is regarded as optional and described realistically, with both pleasant and unpleasant consequences. His wife is described as ‘moderately wise and beautiful, and often happy’ (*moienement sage et belle et souvent joieuse*). The native will be ‘moderately afflicted because of lust’ (*moienement enclui au fait de luxure*), a worrying condition since it was considered a sin. However, salvation is at hand,

by the good advice of some noblemen and people of good conversation, he will be able to preserve himself.³⁸⁴

By his own volition the native may avoid, or at least diminish, even the most pernicious traits represented in the horoscope.

In Hubert’s nativity (ff. 77vb-78ra), the author begins by addressing the topic of opponents. Jupiter, the house ruler, is angular in the fourth house and dignified in Sagittarius, indicating strong adversaries and conflicts, but the sextile of Mars, the natural significator of battles, promises concord. The judgement moves on to marriage; Jupiter in the fourth house suggests that the native’s wife may be a member of his own family (*de parentela sua*). The wife’s appearance is not pleasant, ‘because neither Saturn nor its sign [Pisces] shows beauty’ (*quia Saturnus nec eius signum demonstrant pulcritudinem*). However, this does not hinder the couple’s happiness: the sextile between Jupiter, ruler of the seventh house signifying the wife, and Mercury, Lord of the Ascendant signifying the native, promises love between them (*amor erit inter eos*).

³⁸³ Et pour ce que les dessusdites sinificateus sont aucuns fors moienement et les autres debiles sensuit que se ce ney se veult marier il sera conveniement en mariage et moienement fortune car a locasion dicelluy il ara et participera des biens et des honneurs et aussy parfois des tribulations penne et travail, f. 97ra.

³⁸⁴ Maix per le bon conseil daucuns nobles et gens de bonne converstion il sen pourra preserver, f. 97rb. For a discussion on medieval sexuality, see H. Lemay, ‘The Stars and Human Sexuality: Some Medieval Scientific Views’, *Isis*, 71, I, 1980, pp. 127-137.

In the case of Jo. Dap (ff. 87ra-87rb), the author addresses marriage and describes the native's behaviour regarding relationships. As this is the nativity of a man, the Moon is taken as signifier of marriage. It is oriental *in mundo* and occidental in the nativity (*orientalis in mundo et occidentalis in nativitate*),³⁸⁵ suggesting that 'the native will copulate in his middle-age with any female he meets, or with a girl, if he has passed middle-age' (*natus ille in media etate copulabitur cum quacumque sibi accidat aut copulabitur cum puella si mediam etatem transierit*). However, the Moon is 'in a sign of one figure' [a fixed sign] (*Luna est in signo unius figure*) and does not aspect other planets.³⁸⁶ The fixed quality indicates enduring and, therefore, fewer relationships, and is corroborated by the absence of aspects suggesting that the native 'will copulate with only one woman' (*solum uni mulieri copulabitur*).³⁸⁷ Apparently, the native was expected to settle down after marriage. Leo in the seventh house promises a wife of great beauty (*pulchritudinem magnam*).

Eighth house: death, losses, fears, inheritances

All of the three judgements follow a standard astrological approach to this house by studying the cusp of the eighth house, its ruler, and any planets positioned in the house, or aspecting any of the signifiers.

In the judgement of Jo. d.c.l. (f. 97rb-97va) reveals 'the way by which he will be in danger of ending his days and receive death.'³⁸⁸ Belle states that a potentially fatal moment could occur at the age of sixty-one, when the Sun, *hyleg* of the horoscope, reaches the conjunction of Saturn by direction. But salvation is possible:

Though it was said before that his life can be prolonged up to the year seventy-eight, it must be understood that [by] a good regime and a good government he can surpass the year around sixty-one in which he will be in danger.³⁸⁹

As this direction precedes the age indicated by the *alcocodem* of the Sun, which is sixty-three years and a half, danger can be bypassed or at least reduced to non-fatal proportions. The native's melancholic temperament is a potentially fatal tendency:

by abundance of melancholy and by those cogitations and poor mind, and by headache and defence of the sensitive and natural spirits and of similar things, of which he should

³⁸⁵ See 'Orientality or Occidentality' in Appendix I.

³⁸⁶ The Sun is not taken into consideration in this instance.

³⁸⁷ Quantity is deduced from the mode of the sign of the signifier and from its aspects, as stated in Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, p. 1294-1295.

³⁸⁸ la maniere per laquelle il sera en danger de finir ses jours et prendre mort, f. 97rb.

³⁸⁹ Combien quil soit dit devant que sa vie se peut eslonger jusqua lan 78 cest a entendre se bon regime et bon gouvernement il peut passer l'an dessudite on environ ce temps de 61 auquel il sera en danger, f. 97rb.

guard throughout his life, which by the will of God, all things considered, will finish honestly.³⁹⁰

In Hubert's case (f. 78ra), death may be caused by violent attacks such as beatings (*percussiones*) in the context of wars and disputations (*bellis et litigantibus*) because the ruler of the eighth house, Mars, is a malefic planet and it is in the human sign of Aquarius.³⁹¹ Mars, a hot and dry and malefic planet, is in the sixth house of illnesses, so even if he escapes the attacks, he has to face several potentially fatal illnesses such as fevers or dysentery. Even more alarming is 'the will to kill or to hurt himself' (*voluntatem se ipsam occidendi vel maleficiandi*) suggested by the poor condition of the ruler of the Ascendant, Mercury, which is under the Sun's rays, conjunct to the South Node in Libra, again a human sign. But despite these gloomy predictions the placement of Jupiter in the fourth house and its sextile to Mars, ruler of the eighth, suggests that death will occur 'in his own place and in his own bed' (*quia Jupiter ibi aspicit morietur in suo loco et lecto*).

Jo. Dap's judgement (f. 87rb), using the same line of reasoning as the previous two, concludes that the native may die 'of natural death, with riches and honours outside his own land' (*morte naturali in divitiis et honore extra terram tuam*), revealed by the ruler of the eighth house, Mercury, placed in the ninth house, that of travel. His demise will be smooth and easy (*suavis et dulcis*) as suggested by the sextile between Venus and Mercury, ruler of the eighth house, except if it occurs by accident and before its natural time, in which case it will be bitter and sad (*amara et tristis*).

Ninth house: manners (*mores*), piety, religion, education, peregrinations

In the judgement for the horoscope for Jo. d.c.l, Belle includes manners (*mores*) in the judgement of the ninth house, an association that only becomes common in sixteenth-century texts; the other two authors judge manners in the context of the first house. Belle lists the significators of manners as Mercury, the Moon, and the signs on the ninth and third houses, Libra and Aries.³⁹² Following Ptolemy, he judges:³⁹³

the Moon signifies the sensitive part [of the soul] and Mercury the rational part [of the soul], and the Moon is stronger than Mercury, [thus] it follows that the sensitive

³⁹⁰ por habundance de melancolie et per queles cogitations et pauvre dentendement et douleur de teste et deffanse desprits sensitifs et natureles et choses samblables desquelles il se devira garder tout le temps de sa vie laquelle au plaisir do dieu toutes choses considerees il finera honnestement, f. 97v a.

³⁹¹ Human signs signify events caused by individuals or groups, in this case, by violence.

³⁹² The third house is included in the judgement of piety by some authors as it also signifies religious practices. See for instance Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, pp. 1320-1330, Haly Abenragel, *El Libro Conplido*, V, 8, pp. 240-247.

³⁹³ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, III.12, pp. 333-363.

part in this native will not obey voluntarily the rational part, but often the sensitive part will have power over it.³⁹⁴

The native's propensity to be more emotional than rational is intensified by the poor condition of Mercury, which is retrograde and under the Sun's rays, does not aspect the Moon and is dispositioed by Saturn. All things considered the native,

will be of small discretion and of precise cogitation and will want to follow his own advice and will want to take his opinion, and he will not want to take into account the opinion of others. And will detain himself in his opinions and will be several times disobedient to reason, of rude conscience and of profound and envious thoughts.³⁹⁵

His reluctance to accept counsel makes him unfit for matters of the Church and the presence of Mars in the third house (opposing the ninth) adds hostility towards religion:

He will want to dispute the faith and to argue [against] people of the church, and by his natural condition he will not want to be a man of the church because Mars is in opposition to the ninth house.³⁹⁶

Regardless, his intellect and education are irrefutably positive:

he will practice the sciences and he will be an associate of kings, princes, and people of the church, and he will be a governor of their things and he will be of good conversation and honest and he will love his parents.³⁹⁷

The judgement is completed by a reference to the native's travels:

Because Mars is the lord of the ninth and it is in opposition to this [house] and weak, it signifies that this native will not have any profit in these voyages and in several of them will have problems and hardship, principally towards the parts of south and east. But as to those [voyages] where he will be [heading] towards the north, he should have profit and pleasure and do them with certainty, and likewise the voyages that he will be towards the west.³⁹⁸

The poor profit derives from the placement of the Lot of Enemies in the ninth house. As to the directions, the presence of Mars is in Taurus, a sign associated with the south

³⁹⁴ selon Ptholome la lune signifie la partie sensitive et 3 la partie raisonnable et la lune est plus forte que Mercure il sensuit que la partie sensitive en ce ney ne obeira pas volentiers a la partie rationelle maix souvent la partie sensitive ara domination sur elle, f. 97va. In this context, 'sensitive' means 'using the senses'.

³⁹⁵ quil sera de petite disresion et de cogitation precise et quil se voudra gouverner par le conseil de luy mesme et voudra porter son oppinion et des autres oppinions ne voudra tenir conte et se deteura lui mesme en ses opponions et sera plusieurs foix inobedient a raison de grosse conscience et de profondes pensés et inveilleuses, f. 97vb.

³⁹⁶ luy mesme voudra disputer de la foy et arguir gens desglise, et de sa naturelle condition ne voldra pas estre home desglise pour ce que Mars est en l'opposition de la 9^o maison, f. 97vb.

³⁹⁷ il se exercera en sciences et quil se joindra avec roys princes et gens desglise et sera gouverneur de leurs choses et sera de bonne conversation et honeste et aimera ses parens, f. 97vb.-f. 98ra.

³⁹⁸ Mais pour ce que Mars est seigneur de la 9^e et il est en l'opposition dicelle debille ce signifie que ce ney n'ara point de proffit en ces voyages et en plusieurs diceux ara probleme et travail et principalement deuns la partie de midi et d'orient. Quant a ceux quil sera deuns septentrion il devra avoir proffit et plaisance et les faire seurent. Et parellement es voyages quil sera deuns occident, f. 98ra.

and of Saturn in Aries, which is related to the east, causes Belle to advise against travelling towards these directions.³⁹⁹

In the judgement of Hubert's horoscope (ff. 78ra-78rb), after defining this house as 'roads [travel], faith, religion and philosophy' (*vias fidem religionem et sophiam*), the judgement focuses on the matter of journeys. Venus, the ruler of the ninth, is positioned in the third house allowing the native to 'travel far from his land' (*ire multum longe ex terra sua*), while the Moon positioned in the third, its house of joy, also promises much travel (*multas vias*). Regarding religion, the presence of the fixed sign of Taurus on the ninth cusp suggests that the native is 'persistent in faith' (*firmus in fidem*), and Mercury, lord of the Ascendant, in the first house indicates 'a diligent astrologer, geometrician, and similar' (*diligens astronomus, geometra et similis*).

The judgement of Jo. Dap (ff. 87rb-87va) begins by stating that the Moon in the ninth hints at 'many changes from one place to another (*multas mutationes de uno loco ad alium*) because of its fast movement, but its proximity to the Sun, the ruler of the seventh house of opponents, announces 'trouble and danger' (*laborem et periculum*). As Mars rules the ninth house and disposes the Moon, the profits through journeys will be few and the dangers many; they may originate from natural causes, from human actions such as 'thieves and evil plunderers' (*per latrones et per malos homines spoliatores*), or even from the attack of wild animals (*raptum malarum bestiarum*). On matters of religion, Mars in the tenth house of honours suggests that he is of 'good faith and good law' (*bone fidei bone legis*).

Tenth house: social position, vocation, public life

The tenth house is addressed in diverse ways in each of the three judgements. Belle's study of Jo. d.c.l.'s nativity is mainly centred on the matter of honours and office (ff. 98ra-98va). He points to the Sun and the Moon, the Midheaven, the Lot of Magistracy, and its ruler as significators.⁴⁰⁰ The Sun aspects Saturn, the ruler of the Ascendant, by a square, but this difficult aspect is ameliorated by the mutual reception between the planets.⁴⁰¹ The Moon is angular in the seventh house aspected by a trine to Jupiter, the ruler of the tenth house. After considering these factors, Belle concludes that the native

³⁹⁹ See 'Directions of Space' in Appendix I.

⁴⁰⁰ The Lot of Magistracy is possibly the Lot of Rulership and Authority taken in a diurnal chart from Mars to the Moon and projected from the Ascendant, which in this case would fall at 15° Taurus. It may also be the Lot of Honours taken in a diurnal chart from the Sun to the degree of its exaltation (19° Aries) and projected from the Ascendant, which would fall at 23° Taurus.

⁴⁰¹ See 'Mutual Reception' in Appendix.

‘will be accompanied by kings, dukes and counts, and from them [he] will acquire profit and honour’.⁴⁰² These connections will lead to promising outcomes:

he will have administration and lordship, power, and [he] will be a man that will exert justice and will be acquainted with the science of the laws.⁴⁰³

Belle suggests a religious career for this native, despite having considered him unfit for such position in the judgement of the ninth house. This is motivated by the addition of a new factor that comes forth in the judgement of the tenth, but not of the ninth: a planet in the tenth house, in this case Jupiter, natural significator of religion, strong and thus capable of overcoming the native’s issues with religion:

[As] all his good and his honour are principally to happen because of Jupiter, and Jupiter naturally means people of the church, it will be more profitable by making him a man of the church⁴⁰⁴

Apparently, the possibility of profit may overcome the trouble caused by the native’s natural reluctance and stubbornness – in other words, the opposition of Mars to the ninth house may be surpassed by the strong position of Jupiter. Additionally, as Jupiter is a ‘sanguine’ planet, this career may diminish his melancholy, ‘because he will not have so many thoughts and cogitations in this ecclesiastic state as in the secular’.⁴⁰⁵

Hubert’s judgement (f. 78rb) estimates how many years the native’s mother will live after giving birth to him.⁴⁰⁶ The Moon is taken as the mother’s *hyleg*, but Saturn, which would be the natural choice for *alcocodem*, is replaced by Jupiter, which is stronger in the horoscope and aspects the cusp of the tenth house. Jupiter’s good condition gives more than forty years, so ‘the mother lives for as long as she can after this native’s birth’ (*tantum potest vivere mater post nativitatem huius nati*).⁴⁰⁷ Mercury, ruler of the tenth house and thus also a significator of the mother, is also taken into consideration. As there are four degrees of separation between Mercury and the Sun (*quia sunt quattuor gradus inter Mercurium et Solem*), the mother may suffer from some debility within four years of the native’s birth (*post annos quattuor a nativitate*). However, this is improved by the sextile between Mercury and Jupiter. As Mercury is also the Lord of the Ascendant these considerations also apply to the native, although

⁴⁰² ce ney sacompaiguera avec roys ducs et contes et deulx acquererira proffit et honneur, f. 98ra.

⁴⁰³ ara administration et seignorie et sera homme qui exercera iustice et sera conoissant en la science des loys, ff. 98ra-f. 98rb.

⁴⁰⁴ tout son bien et son honnouer lui soit principalement a avenir a cause de Jupiter et Jupiter naturellement signifie gens deglise il luy sera plus proffittable le fesaint homme desglise, f. 98, b.

⁴⁰⁵ pour cause de ce que il nara pas tant de pensees et de cogitations en cest estat ecclesiastique que au seculer, f. 98rb.

⁴⁰⁶ For the parent’s life span, see Avenezra, *Nativities*, pp. 56-59.

⁴⁰⁷ The median years of Jupiter are forty-five and a half.

in a different context, that of office and dignity: the sextile from Jupiter suggests that his work will be very lucrative (*multum lucrandi*) and its combustion cautions against possible damage coming from great lords (*magnus dominus*).

The judgement of Jo. Dap 's tenth house (ff. 87va, 87vb) focuses on honours and reputation. After announcing that 'great profit will come from what we now address' (*magni profectus erit res quam nunc agimus*), the judgement advises the native to compare his own nativity to those of potential partners, to determine 'with whom it is convenient to associate and those to be removed due to their enmity' (*cui homini convenit associari et qui removendus est propter eius inimicitiam*). The Sun, natural significator of power, is in joy in the ninth house, suggesting 'very strong friendship' (*amicitia firma valde*), while Mars, ruler of the tenth and placed therein, promises future honours (*honores futuros*), and Saturn, ruler of the Ascendant, angular and dignified by triplicity and face, supports this optimistic judgement.

Eleventh house: friends, allies, hopes

Belle's judgement of Jo. d.c.l.'s eleventh house is quite brief (ff. 98va-98vb). He considers as significators the eleventh house and its ruler, the Sun, the Moon, and the Lot of Friends. He states that the native 'will have much damage from those friends, as much from the church as from the secular world.'⁴⁰⁸ Moreover, some friends 'will be secret enemies, from whom is convenient that he guards himself' because the same sign, Capricorn, occupies the cusp of the eleventh house of friends and the cusp of twelfth houses of enemies.⁴⁰⁹ He does not offer any suggestions to moderate the difficulties.

Hubert's judgement (ff. 78rb-78va) emphasizes business. The Moon, ruler of the eleventh house, is strong in the third, the house of its joy, and has triplicity in Scorpio,⁴¹⁰ thus promising fame and success if he travels for business (*per mercandia*) towards the north, as Scorpio, a sign of water, is related to the north.

In Jo. Dap 's nativity (f. 87va-87vb), the focus is on allies: as the eleventh and twelfth houses both begin in Capricorn, the author suggests that friends may turn into enemies. The native is urged to be on guard against friends who 'carry honey in their speech' (*mel in ore gerunt*), but may, in fact, be traitors.

⁴⁰⁸ ara mouit danns desqueles les amis serount nobles et riches tant desglise comme de secularite, f. 98va.

⁴⁰⁹ seront ses ennemis secretes desquelles il comviendra quil se garde, f. 98va.

⁴¹⁰ The Moon has the riplicity in all signs of water, even in Scorpio, the sign of its fall.

Twelfth house: enemies, imprisonment, treasons, large animals

These judgements are also very brief. In the nativity of Jo. d.c.l. (f. 98vb), the significators selected for this topic are the sign on the cusp of the twelfth, the Lot of Enemies, and their rulers, and the house describes ‘the secret enemies and [their] jealousy of the native and their strength to damage him.’⁴¹¹ Belle concludes that:

because Saturn is lord of the twelfth [and] Mars is its *almutem*, it follows that the enemies of the native will be old people and black religious, and people of vile condition, and because [of] Mars [they will be] men of arms, criminals, sad people and of bad condition. But because Mars is very weak, cadent, and in its detriment, it seems that with the aid of God they will cause him little damage.⁴¹²

Fortunately for the native the weak condition of Mars suggests that the enemies are unable to cause him much damage. In this case, Belle took the significance of the *almutem* over all other factors included in the judgement.

Hubert’s judgement (f. 78va) is not as fortunate: as the twelfth house is ruled by the Sun, a natural significator of power and authority, the author mentions ‘powerful and strong enemies’ (*inimicos magnos et fortes*). This is aggravated by the position of Mercury, the Lord of the Ascendant, under the rays of, and therefore subdued by, the Sun. Both Mercury and the Sun are in the second house, so there may occur damage to the native’s body and wealth (*dampnum in corpore et substantia*).

In the case of Jo. Dap ’s nativity (ff. 87va, 87vb), the author begins the judgement by presenting three astrological rules concerning enemies. The first: ‘whoever has Aquarius in the Ascendant makes many enemies for himself (*quicumque habent Aquarium pro ascendente sibi ipsi faciunt multos inimicos*). Due to the natural configuration of the Zodiac, when Aquarius is in the Ascendant, Capricorn is usually on the cusp of the twelfth house of hidden enemies; as both signs have the same ruler, the native may ‘make many enemies for himself’. This configuration occurs in this horoscope so the author adds a word of caution: ‘beware lest you generate them [the enemies] for yourself, as you are inclined to do’ (*caves ergo ne tibi eos generes quemadmodum inclinatus es*). The second rule: ‘in any nativity when the rulers of the twelfth house are strong and unafflicted nuisance and harms will come to him from hidden enemies, and they will have victory over him’ (*cuiuscumque nativitate domini domus duodecime fuerint fortes et salvi nocumentum et danpna ei venient per*

⁴¹¹ des enemis secretes et envieux du ney et de leurs forces a lui nuire, f. 98vb.

⁴¹² Et pour ce que Saturne est seigneur de la 12 Mars est *almutem* dicelle il sensuit que les enemis du ney seront gens vieulx et noires religieus et gens de ville condition et pour la cause de Mars gensdarmes malfaitteurs gens tristes et mal conditionnes. Maix pour ce que Mars est moult debille cadente et en son detriment il samble que a laide de dieu il luy nuiront peu, f. 98vb.

occultos inimicos et victoriam super eum habebunt). A strong ruler of the twelfth house signifies strong enemies, so the author advises caution: ‘as this is the case in your nativity, so they may hurt you’ (*sed sic est in tua nativitate ergo tibi nocebunt*). Third rule: ‘in any nativity where the lord of the seventh house is unafflicted and strong, the native will be slandered in pleas and unfortunate’ (*cuiuscumque nativitate septime domus domini fuerint salvi et fortes talis maledictus erit in placationibus et infortunatus*). The seventh house signifies manifest enemies and disputes among other things, and a strong ruler of the seventh may indicate strong opponents. The author considers that in this nativity the ruler of the seventh, the Sun, is strongly placed in the ninth house where it has joy and, therefore, advises against getting involved in his own court cases (*a placationibus tuis propriis abstineas*).

Prediction of future events

In order to study the future developments of the native’s life, the astrologer applies a set of techniques to the horoscope, the most common of which are directions. Using this method, particular planets or points in the nativity are advanced, or directed, by calculation to other planets or points in the nativity. Another method is the profections, which symbolically advance all points of the horoscope by 30° of the Zodiac, that is, one sign, for each year of life. The revolutions of the years of the native provide the annual return of the Sun to exactly the same point it had at birth (for that reason, they are called by some authors ‘anniversary horoscopes’). Finally, the *firdarie* are the planetary periods of each planet applied to the nativity.⁴¹³ The resulting predictions complement those applied at the beginning of the judgement and should be taken in that context. Like most astrologers, Belle applies the general techniques at the beginning, leaving the more precise methods to the conclusion. In Jo. d.c.l.’s horoscope:

This third part I will divide into three parts. In the first I will determine the years in which the significator of his life will come by direction to the body of malefic planets or to their rays; in these years the native will be in danger of great malady or of death. In the second part [I will] determine the years in which the several significators will come by profection to the good places or bad. In the third part and last part I will determine the rulership of the planets over the native in the course of his life by the direction of the terms of the planets, and I will end it.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹³ See ‘Prediction’ in Appendix I.

⁴¹⁴ Cette tierce partie je diviseray em 3 parties. En a premiere je determineray les années esquelles le sinificateur de sa vie perviendra per direction aux corps des mauvaix planètes ou a leus rays, esquelles annees ce ney sera en danger de maladie grande ou de mort. En la 2^e partie je termineray les annees esquelles les sinificateurs divers viendront per profection aux lieux bons ou mauvaix. Et en la tierce et desrannie partie je determineray le régime des planètes sur le ney selon le cors de sa vie per la direction des termes das planetes et la feray fin, f. 94ra.

Belle applies three main techniques: the directions of the *hyleg* marking the main events of the native's life, the profections, and the *divisor*, that is, the directions of the Ascendant throughout the terms of the signs.⁴¹⁵

Directions of the hylegical points

Belle identifies eight main directions all associated with illnesses, the last of which is the one he had already associated with the native's death:

Table 15 – Directions for the horoscope of Jo. d.c.l.

Year	Direction	Effects according to Belle
7	Moon square to Mars	great danger of death by hot illnesses
30	Moon opposition to Mercury	great cogitations and profound thoughts
32	Sun square of Mars	pain of heart and of pain of feet
36	Sun opposition of the Moon	illness caused by phlegm
37	Moon sextile of Mars	illness caused by heat
41	Moon square of Saturn	illness caused by cold and melancholy
61	Sun conjunction of Saturn	headache, caused by great phlegm with melancholy
78	Sun conjunction of Mars	he should finish his days in the way mentioned before

There are no forecasts regarding other relevant aspects of life such as marriages or children except for a brief paragraph on the topic of substance. In it, Belle takes into consideration the directions of the Lot of Fortune to the rays of malefic planets in order to determine the 'years in which he will be in danger of having some displeasure on the occasion of his substance'.⁴¹⁶ He does not detail the exact directions but lists the years of the native's life when they occur – 16, 17, 31, 50, 53, and 59 – stating that the last is the most perilous.

Profections

This technique is based on the advance of all points of the chart by thirty degrees, for each year of the native's life. The cycle is completed every twelve years at the ages of 12, 24, 36, 48 and so on, when the natal positions are repeated. However, as the other techniques do not repeat, the resulting judgement is never the same.

⁴¹⁵ These techniques are addressed in Appendix I. Again, there are many similarities between this section and Juste, 'A sixteenth-century astrological consultation', pp. 166-171. Belle's techniques have parallels to Heingarter's texts, namely those in Lat. 7450, ff. 3r-21v, Lat. 7447 ff. 1r-19v, and Lat. 11232 ff. 1r-55r.

⁴¹⁶ autres annes esuelles il sera en danger davoit aucun desplaisie a lacasion de sa subsance, f. 99ra.

Belle uses the cyclic nature of the profections to access the overall conditions of the twelve-year sequence listing the general characteristics of each year. He calls this technique ‘the years in which the several significators will come by profection to the good places or bad’.⁴¹⁷ As every part of the horoscope moves by one sign per year, he takes the conditions of each sign in the nativity (that is, the house it falls in, any planets positioned there and their condition, and aspects of other planets) and judges ‘the convenient and profitable or inconvenient and damaging years’.⁴¹⁸ Of the five *hylegical* points, he listed four: the Ascendant at 7° Aquarius; the Sun at 4° Capricorn; the Moon at 14° Leo; the Lot of Fortune at 17° Virgo. The fifth point – the Midheaven – is implied in the judgement in the references to honours and office, but is not mentioned by name. The table below shows the general predictions for the entire twelve-year sequence, repeating the same prognostications as the cycle unfolds.

Table 16 – Profections for the horoscope of Jo. d.c.l.

Year of life	Prediction
01, 13, 25, 37, 49, 61, 73	Melancholy and sadness, hot maladies; two offices or benefices
02, 14, 26, 38, 50, 62, 74	Joys, well temperate, living honestly, good health; decrease in substance
03, 15, 27, 39, 51, 63, 75	Maladies from cold, danger to the mind; profit
04, 16, 28, 40, 52, 64, 76	Fevers, impatience; benefices and honours
05, 17, 29, 41, 53, 65, 77	Moderation, study; danger to honour
06, 18, 30, 42, 54, 66, 78	Several maladies of diverse origin; not good for honour and substance
07, 19, 31, 43, 55, 67, 79	Variable, inclination to luxury; indifferent for honour; acquisition of riches
08, 20, 32, 44, 56, 68	Good wealth, good for reason and understanding; acquisition of health
09, 21, 33, 45, 57, 69	Damage to the eyes; indifferent for substance, magistracy and honour
10, 22, 34, 46, 58, 70	Good complexion and health; indifferent for substance and honour
11, 23, 35, 47, 59, 71	Healthy, but danger to the eyes; moderate for honour and substance
12, 24, 36, 48, 60, 72	Melancholy, prone to science, cogitations; tribulations in honour and substance

Belle deduces his predictions from the condition of the five *hylegical* points in the natal horoscope. For example, in the native’s fourth year the Ascendant moves by profection to Taurus where Mars, a hot and dry planet, is positioned, thus foretelling fevers and impatience; the Midheaven, signifier of honours, moves to Aquarius and thus to the natal Ascendant bringing benefit to the native. The other years follow the same rules.

⁴¹⁷ les anneés esuelles les sinificateurs divers viendront per profection aux lieux bons ou mauvaix, f. 94 a. Note that Belle accounts ‘years of life’, not ‘years of age’: the sequence begins in the first year of life, year 1, and ends in the year 12, when the native is eleven years of age; it resumes when the native is twelve years of age, that is, when beginning his thirteenth year of life.

⁴¹⁸ es anneés esuelles les sinificateurs divers viendront per profection aux lieux bons ou mauvaix, f. 94a.

Divisor

The divisor is the ruler of the term the Ascendant, moving by direction, is crossing at any given moment.⁴¹⁹ The general tone of that period is set by the divisor's nature and conditions in the natal chart; if the Ascendant, moving by direction, happens to aspect another planet, that planet is said to participate in the significations of the divisor. For example, in Jo. d.c.l.'s chart, the Ascendant is at 7° Aquarius and in the term of Venus; it takes approximately four years for it to be directed to the end of the term at 13° Aquarius, during which time Venus is the divisor.⁴²⁰ As Venus is a benefic planet, Belle forecasts an agreeable period. But while moving through the term of Venus, the Ascendant aspects Mars by a square aspect and the Moon by opposition making these two planets participants with Venus. As Mars is malefic and both it and the Moon have difficult aspects to the Ascendant, Belle deduces that their participation may bring illnesses. Afterwards the Ascendant moves into the term of Jupiter at 13° to 20° Aquarius; Jupiter is the strongest planet in this horoscope, so a good phase is to be expected. The progression of the divisor in this horoscope is as follows:

Table 17 – Divisor – direction of the Ascendant

Horoscope of Jo d.c.l. – the Ascendant is at 7° Aquarius		
birth up to 4 years	Venus	moderately healthy
up to 8 years	Jupiter	his body should frequently be moderated
up to 10 and a half	Mars	complexion distempered in heat; danger of fever and headache
up to 13 and a half	Saturn	often sad and melancholic, seldom happy and laughing
The Ascendant moves into Pisces		
up to 19 and a half	Venus	happy and animated; will entertain with study and live in pleasure
up to 22 and a half	Jupiter	disposed to have a good office or dignity
up to 24	Mercury	disposed then to acquire substance
up to 29	Mars	well complexioned but irate, belligerent, sad, and perverse
30 and 4 months	Saturn	plagued by many tribulations, melancholy and other sufferings
The Ascendant moves into Aries		
up to 33	Jupiter	he will have little of the said tribulations
up to 37	Venus	this period will be moderately convenient to him in all his actions
up to 40	Mercury	he must carefully guard his eyes and keep a good regime
up to 42 and 3 months	Mars	inclined to illness of headache
up to 45	Saturn	dangerous to him from both hot and cold illnesses
The Ascendant moves into Taurus		
up to 49	Venus	may have debates with his brothers and sisters
up to 53	Mercury	dangerous
up to 58	Jupiter	beneficial and convenient to his health
up to 60	Saturn	heavy and grave, and full of sadness, and melancholy, and painful
up to 63	Mars	sickly
The Ascendant moves into Gemini		
up to 69	Mercury	he will think of his life and how he lives and ordains his affairs
up to the end of his life	Jupiter	he will be able to surpass [<i>pervenir</i>] the duration of his life

⁴¹⁹ See 'Divisor' in Appendix I.

⁴²⁰ As the signs rise at different velocities, this same distance of six degrees may take more time or less time depending on the sign rising.

This sequence of terms corresponds to the Egyptian, not to the Ptolemaic order, which Belle includes in his table of dignities, in MS 1711, f. 19r. The difference is detected in the sign of Aquarius: from seven degrees on the Egyptian sequence, chosen by Belle, is Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, and Saturn; the Ptolemaic table is, again from seven degrees on, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, and Mars. As each term encompasses a different number of degrees, the duration of each period necessarily varies.

Combining predictive techniques

Belle relies heavily on these three methods of directions, profections, and divisor to identify the overall conditions of the native's life, and deduces further details by other methods, such as *firdarie* and revolutions of the years of the native.⁴²¹ He mentions the latter once when describing a difficult period in the native's life stating that it may turn out to be dangerous 'principally if the revolution of the year and of this period brings testimony'.⁴²² As the revolutions of the year require complex calculations for each year of the native's life they were often excluded from the overall predictions.⁴²³

Predictions for Hubert and Jo. Dap

Hubert's nativity includes a meticulous account of the directions of the Ascendant (ff. 78va-80ra), up to the square of Mars, a potentially lethal 'dangerous place', at the age of seventy-one. It is followed by a meticulous account of other directions including specific details such as a direction to the Lot of the Death of Women, pointing out a possible date for the death of the native's wife. Several directions are connected in sequence, thus establishing the flow of events. There is no use of any other technique. By contrast, the predictive section of Jo. Dap's nativity (ff. 85rb, 87vb-88rb), although concise, applies a wide variety of predictive tools and offers much detail on the techniques applied. The author mentions the seven ages of the planets, the directions of the five *hylegical points*, the profections, and the *firdarie*. The judgement is complemented by a set of tables displaying the directions of the *hylegical points*, the *firdarie*, and the revolutions of the year. In all three cases, the importance of prognostication in nativities is made patent either by the use of a varied set of techniques or by the detailed study of a single one.

⁴²¹ See 'Combining predictive techniques' in Appendix I.

⁴²² principalement si la revolution de lan et de ces temps porte tesmoignage, f. 97rb.

⁴²³ For the use of revolutions, see for instance the judgement in Boudet et Charmasson, *Une consultation astrologique*, Appendice II, pp. 273-278, where the astrologer (possibly Roland of Lisbon) combines the nativity and the revolution to answer direct questions. See also Veenstra, *Magic and Divination*, 2, App. II, pp. 366-371.

Highlights

All three judgements share a didactic approach, explaining in some detail the astrological doctrine applied in each segment. This offers an insight into the practical application of astrological rules and, most importantly, an understanding of Belle's thinking. Jo. d.c.l.'s judgement appears at the very end of Belle's notebook and is most likely his last entry in NAL 398. While following the astrological rules thoroughly, in this judgement Belle expresses his own style and practice. It comes after his transcriptions of extensive passages of astrological doctrine and of the judgements of Hubert and Jo. Dap, which present differences in method and style. Perhaps inspired by these two judgements, Belle recognized the distinctiveness of Jo. d.c.l.'s chart and was able to draw his own conclusions: a combination of astrological doctrine, the practical examples and his own experience.

Method of interpretation

As in other applications of astrology, the judgement of nativities is organized around questions, most of them implicit. In this case, the main implicit question is 'who is this person?' The answer is taken from the combined judgements for the native's behaviour, mentality, manners and temperament; the astrologer evaluates all these parts in context to deduce the main traits of the native. Many other questions can be posed to the horoscope following the traditional organization of topics according to the houses: wealth, brothers, family, marriage, children, health and so on.

The standard method of addressing each topic consists of examining the sign on the cusp of the house, its ruler, any planets that might be placed in the house, and the planet, or planets, that naturally represent those matters (the natural significators). In some cases priority is given to the use of house rulers, while in others the natural significators are preferred. All three judgements in Belle's notebook display a standard use of significators in the interpretation of the topics for each of the houses, but the order in which they are considered, as well as their relative importance, varies slightly with each author. An example can be found in the judgement of brothers in Jo. d.c.l.'s nativity: although this topic usually pertains to the third house and its ruler, Belle chooses to use the rulers of the tenth and eleventh houses as well as the benefic planets (f. 95va), favouring the method presented in *Tetrabiblos*. Occasionally, these differences in emphasis also result from specific configurations in the horoscope. For instance, a planet placed in the house under scrutiny is typically prioritized over the

house ruler or a natural significator. If, however, any of the two latter are more prominently placed in the horoscope, they might be given more weight in the judgement. The ability to ponder the relative strength and the relevance of each significator in the context of the chart is the mark of a seasoned astrologer. These three judgements exemplify the application of these rules in the context of three different horoscopes, as well as the way three different authors use the significators in their own distinctive manner, while following the same astrological doctrine.

Personal agency and ‘counselling’

The nativity of Jo. d.c.l. illustrates Belle’s proficiency and style. Although never straying from the astrological rules, he created a narrative specifically designed to convey his conclusions to the native, presumably a layman. While offering insights into the prospects, fears and hopes of the client, Belle also unintentionally reveals his attitude towards the judgement of nativities. His discourse reveals incipient traits of counselling, which are evident not only in the content, intended to bring awareness and self-knowledge to the patient, but also in the form, which is not strictly deterministic, and it allows – and in fact encourages – self-improvement. When it comes to offering counsel, Belle adopts a non-authoritative style. And although he presents the information in a direct and often blunt way, he leaves room for hope and redemption. His writing is often more categorical when presenting positive matters, and more tempered when talking about undesirable or frightening subjects. In this aspect, Belle’s judgement differs from the other two, which are more concise and less oriented towards counselling. These ethical considerations are not strange to practitioners of astrology, particularly when dealing with sensitive subjects. Bonatti for instance, when dealing with the interrogation judging if a woman is a virgin or not, warns the practitioner to be judicious in his answer due to the gravity of the matter. Specifically, he discusses the many malicious reasons why the question may be asked, as well as the many circumstances that may surround her supposed loss of virginity which do not imply her willingness.⁴²⁴

The delicate balance between freedom and determinism is present in every step of Jo. d.c.l.’s nativity, from the calculation of the native’s length of life in the introduction, to the closing section where future events are described. But in this case, contrary to the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction, the topic is not addressed directly, but

⁴²⁴ Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, VI.4, pp. 440-443. For an extended discussion on astrology and sexuality see Lemay, ‘The Stars and Human Sexuality’ (for Bonatti’s example see pp. 130-131).

implicitly. It is also tempered by several non-astrological factors, such as the condition of the native's parents and even divine intervention.⁴²⁵ Astrological prediction is seen as a part, albeit a crucial part, of a wider set of factors, which Belle takes into account in his judgement much like a physician collects all symptoms to make a diagnosis. This seems to be the common practice for the learned astrologer from antiquity to the early modern period. And as in a medical diagnosis, the predicted events are seen as possibilities that might be avoided, or at least significantly modified, by certain actions taken by the native. Belle's view on prediction is more probabilistic than deterministic; it does not disallow the possibility of free choice for the native; quite the contrary, it is prediction and the foreknowledge it brings that necessarily provides the native with more choices. In the events that can be totally or partially modified, prediction helps the native to avoid the undesirable effects and to capitalize on the desirable ones. In those that cannot be avoided the native must, in a truly stoical fashion, endure the outcome with dignity and forbearance.

Even when addressing the inescapable event of death, Belle allows some space for personal agency. In the horoscope of Jo. d.c.l., he states that the native's length of life is somewhere between sixty-three and seventy-eight years of age. The first number is given by the *alcocodem*, after considering all the relevant contributions; the second, by a direction of the *hyleg* to the conjunction of Mars, which Belle considers to be life-threatening.⁴²⁶ The difference between the shortest and the longest life span lies in the native's life choices, specifically those regarding his health and lifestyle, as explained before. The end of life cannot be avoided since it will necessarily happen to all human beings, but it can be significantly postponed by the individual's choices.

The advantages of foreknowledge are not limited to an augmented lifespan, they rather extend to all aspects of the native's life. For instance, Belle states that Jo. d.c.l. 'will be moderately afflicted because of lust' but that he will be able to preserve himself if he accepts beneficial influences, such as the good advice of 'noblemen and people of good conversation'.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁵ In this matter, he seems to be echoing Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I. 3, p. 23: 'We should not believe that separate events attend mankind as the result of the heavenly cause as if they had been originally ordained for each person by some irrevocable divine command and destined to take place by necessity without the possibility of any other cause whatever interfering.' See also the reference to the contribution of non-astrological factors, such as country, upbringing, and customs, in I. 2, pp. 17-19.

⁴²⁶ NAL 398, ff. 94rb-94va. See 'Alcocodem' and 'Hyleg' in Appendix I.

⁴²⁷ NAL 398, f. 97rb.

The notion of free will is also embedded in the judgement of the different houses and topics, but in this case, its relative weight varies according to the matters pertaining to each house. In the houses related to matters that depend more directly on the native's actions there is more room for choice, thus Belle offers counsel to avoid the predicted difficulties. For instance, in the judgement for the second house of money, the native is advised to use not only his own commonsense, but also the counsel of noble people to avoid possible 'tribulations, sadness and melancholies'.⁴²⁸ Likewise, in the judgement of the sixth house of illness, Belle offers the native plenty of room to improve his condition by his own choices. This is, in fact, one of the areas where the native has more agency. Also in the ninth house of customs (*mores*), religion and travel, he offers a detailed account of the native's manners and piety, again signalling possible difficulties and offering advice on dealing with them. He states that the native is unwilling to accept opinions other than his own and that his 'sensitive part' will in most cases 'not obey voluntarily to the rational part'; he wants to follow his own advice and is averse to other opinions.⁴²⁹ This gives the native a good understanding of his own inclinations allowing him to curb them and to make informed choices, thus preventing greater difficulties. In this case, Belle advises the native to avoid a career in the Church for that would bring conflicts with clergymen and instead follow a career in sciences as it is more suitable for his natural condition.⁴³⁰ Again these are only possibilities: he may still choose to become a clergyman in spite of his tendency to dispute other people's opinions. Thus, in the judgement of the tenth house, Belle resumes the idea of a career in the Church because it will be profitable and cause him 'less thoughts and cogitations' than in the secular world.⁴³¹ In any case, the native has the last word. As to the other topic pertaining to the ninth house of travel (*peregrinationes*), Belle offers advice as to the favourable directions for travelling, again leaving the final decision to the native.

In the houses pertaining to matters where the native has no direct agency, there is less room for personal choices. For instance, the judgements for the native's father and friends are notably concise, offering few, if any, recommendations for ameliorating possible difficulties. In the first case, a description of the complexion of the parents is given, but no suggestions are offered to temper the father's melancholy.⁴³² In the second case, the native is warned that damage may come from his friends, both from

⁴²⁸ NAL 398 f. 97rb.

⁴²⁹ NAL 398, f. 97vb.

⁴³⁰ NAL 398, ff. 97vb-98ra.

⁴³¹ NAL 398, f. 98rb.

⁴³² NAL 398, ff. 95vb-96ra.

the ecclesiastical and from the secular worlds, and that some of his friends may be, in fact, secret enemies. Apart from the standard advice about the convenience of guarding himself from false friends, no other advice is offered.⁴³³ Indeed, these are not matters that depend entirely on the native's choices.

Regardless of these two variations, the strength of determinism is also dictated by each author's personal attitude towards it. Belle's judgement seems to leave more room for the native's choices than in the other two judgements, and this is also evident in the predictive section at the end of his text. He had already included a first set of predictions addressing the possible duration of the native's life and its main periods at the beginning of the judgement. However, in the last segment Belle declares the prophylactic role of prediction in no uncertain terms:

[I will] determine the years in which the native will be more prone to retain the good or evil promised to him by the places of his nativity, so that he can prepare to flee and escape the evil and retain the good.⁴³⁴

He also emphasizes that all predictions must be taken in context and that those presented at the closing of the judgement have to be pondered together with those presented at the beginning:

it is to be understood that what is said here about the good and evil in this last part are to augment or tantalize those who are promised the things mentioned before, and it is not possible to contemplate one without the other.⁴³⁵

This notion of context is especially evident in the considerations about health since its conservation depended mainly on the balancing of the four humours according to the specific configurations of a given nativity. The illnesses are presented not as inevitabilities but as possibilities, that derive mainly from the imbalance of humours, and are therefore, at least in great part, preventable. The identification of critical periods was also an instrument of prevention since it allowed the native to act in advance, taking adequate measures to avoid any possible malady. In the nativity of Jo. d.c.l. the topic is addressed twice: first at beginning of the judgement as part of the general assessment of temperament, indicating the native's propensity for certain ailments; the second, in the judgement of the sixth house, where the topic is resumed to add more specific information. Belle also adds other factors such as 'the good regime of medicine and the

⁴³³ NAL 398, f. 98va.

⁴³⁴ les annees esuelles le ney sera plus convenable a retenir le bien ou le mal a luy promis des lieux de sa nativite affin quil se puisse preparer a fuyr et eschimer le mal et retenir le bien, f. 94ra.

⁴³⁵ Et est a entendre que ce qui est dit des biens et des maux par ceste deruame partie sont pour accroistre ou appeticier ceux qui sont promis per les choses devant dittes et ne fault pour regarder les unes sans les aultres, f. 100vb.

help of good government', as essential factors to maintain good health.⁴³⁶ Again, it is the foreknowledge of possible events that allows the native to avoid, or at least partially prevent, their undesirable effects.⁴³⁷

In these judgements, as in all applications of astrology, there was a complex balance between determinism and personal choices. On one hand, there is the conditioning determined by the astrological configurations of the horoscope, on the other, the freedom obtained by the native's personal choices when aware of celestial tendencies. The task of the astrologer was to make the balance tend towards the latter, by informing the native of all the conditions reflected by the horoscope and offering advice, so that the native could be prepared and take the adequate preventative measures. The efficacy of this preparation, however, depended almost entirely on the native who could follow a well-balanced and tempered life, or let natural tendencies take command. Thus, these judgements required the native to assume some responsibility over the maintenance of his or her own well-being.

Astrology and religion

In Belle's judgement, astrological practice and Christian faith are seamlessly interlocked with no hint of conflict. For instance, in his comments about the sixth house he states that 'the assistance of some good saint, prayers and orisons' will prompt 'the intervention of the blessed saints' and thus improve any health problem the native may suffer.⁴³⁸ Divine intervention is deduced from the position of Venus, a benefic planet and ruler of the ninth house, of religion, close to the Ascendant. Like many astrologers of his period, Belle does not see any conflict between astrology and religion. For example, the court astrologer Pellegrino Priscianni (1435-c.1518) advised Isabella d'Este Gonzaga, Marchesa de Mantua (1474-1539), to begin her prayers 'in the moment of the arrival of the beneficent configuration of the Dragon's Head at Midheaven' because this configuration would increase their effectiveness.⁴³⁹ Priscianni is alluding to elections, an application of astrology that selects the best astrological configurations for each situation, while Belle is referring to a natal horoscope, but both exemplify the harmonious integration of astrology and religious practice. The very last example of

⁴³⁶ f. 96vb.

⁴³⁷ Similar considerations are also evident in Heingarter's judgements for Jean II de Bourbon and the duke's governour, Jean de la Goutte. See Lat. 7447, Lat. 11232 and Lat. 7446, respectively.

⁴³⁸ NAL 398, f. 96vb.

⁴³⁹ Vescovinni, 'The Theological Debate', in *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 99-140 (at p. 117). For a study on magical and astrological practices in religious settings, see S. Page, *Magic in the Cloister. Pious Motives, Illicit Interests, and Occult Approaches to the Medieval Universe*, Pennsylvania, 2013.

the coexistence of astrology and religion is the closing sentence in Jo. d.c.l.'s judgement. When talking about death, the most inexorable of events, Belle predicts that the native's end will be 'good and honest, according to the will of God' (*bonne et honeste au plaisir de dieu*), thus promising reward in the afterlife.⁴⁴⁰

⁴⁴⁰ f. 100vb.

IV – THE COLLECTION OF HOROSCOPES

The first part of this section addresses Belle's collection of horoscopes in MS 1711, the second, the horoscopes in NAL 398. Each horoscope is presented with the title, the identification of the native or event, and a short biographical note to explain their historical significance and their connections to other horoscopes; it also includes a facsimile of the horoscope and a table explaining the symbols. None of these horoscopes has a complete judgement, though some include the calculation of the native's length of life. Belle seldom mentions the locations of his horoscopes, even though they are crucial to their calculation. In some cases, the approximate location of the horoscopes was deduced by the configuration of the house cusps.

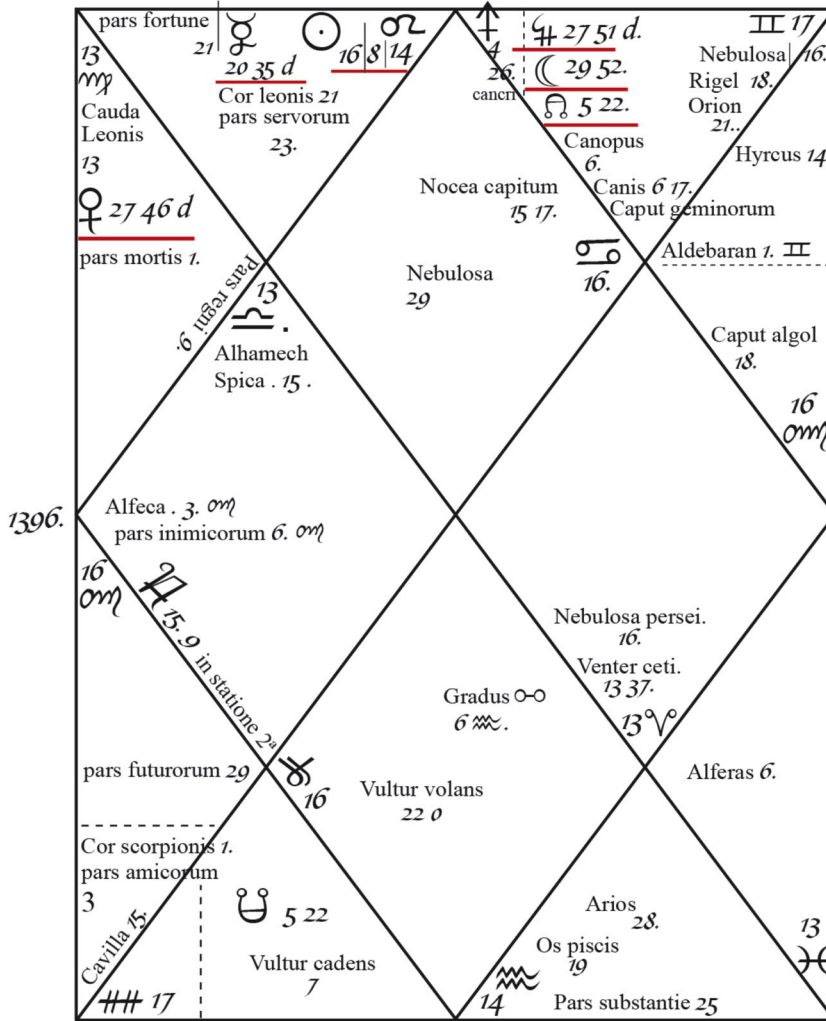
As an overview of fifteenth-century political events was already presented for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425, the historical references in this section are limited to the background information for the horoscopes to provide context and highlight the connections between them.

1. The horoscopes in MS 1711

There are thirty-six horoscopes in this section, thirty-one of which are nativities and the remaining five are events. Eighteen of these horoscopes can also be found in NAL 398, organized in a different order. In these cases, the horoscopes are presented according to the sequence in MS 1711, and include the corresponding reference in NAL 398. The duplicate horoscopes are identical in every detail, including minor errors, except for occasional differences in the titles.

Most of the nativities are of well-known political agents of fifteenth-century France. Belle does not write judgements for any of these horoscopes, but rectifies some of the nativities through the *animodar*, and in some cases calculates their length of life or at least determines the *hyleg* and *alcocodem*, although without coming to any conclusions. Some of these horoscopes, particularly the ones with earlier birthdates, may have been examples for the study of longevity, while others could have served to test other techniques, such as the *animodar* or the *trutina* of Hermes.

Philip the Good (Phillippe le Bon), duke of Burgundy
MS 1711 f. 78r – NAL 398 f. 90ra1: 31 July 1396, 10:00, Dijon (47°17'N, 05°02'E)



<p>House I – 13° Libra Alhamech (Simak/Spica) 14° Libra Alpheca 3° Scorpio Pars Inimicorum 6 Scorpio Saturn 14°09 Scorpio in statione secunda</p>	<p>House VII – 13° Aries Nebulosa Persei 16° Aries Venter Ceti 13° 37 Aries</p>
<p>House II – 16° Scorpio Pars Futurorum 29° Scorpio Cor Scorpionis (Antares) 1° Sagittarius Pars Amicorum 3° Sagittarius Cavilla 15° Sagittarius</p>	<p>House VIII – 16° Taurus Caput Algol 18° Taurus Aldebaran 1 Gemini Hyrcus 14° Gemini (Capella?)</p>
<p>House III – 17° Sagittarius North Node 05°22 Capricorn Vultur Cadens (Vega) 7° Capricorn</p>	<p>House IX – 17° Gemini Nebulosa 16° Gemini (Orion) Mars 04°16 Cancer Rigil 18° Gemini South Node 05°22 Cancer Orion 21° Gemini Canis 06°17 Cancer Jupiter 27°51 Gemini directus Caput Geminorum (Pollux) Moon 29°42 Gemini Canopus 06° Cancer</p>
<p>House IV – 16° Capricorn Vultur Volans (Altair) 22° Capricorn Gradus coniunctione 6° Aquarius</p>	<p>House X – 16° Cancer Nocea Caputum 14° 17 Cancer (Castor) Nebulosa 29° Cancer</p>
<p>House V – 14° Aquarius Os Pisces (Fomallaut) 19° Aquarius Pars Substantie 25° Arios 28° Aquarius</p>	<p>House XI – 14° Leo Sun 16°08 Mercury 20°35 directus Cor Leonis 21° Leo Pars Servorum 23° Leo Pars Fortunae 27° Leo</p>
<p>House VI – 13° Pisces Alferaz 6° Aries</p>	<p>House XII – 14° Virgo Cauda Leonis 13° Virgo Pars Mortis 01° Libra Venus 27 49 Virgo directus Pars Regnis 09° Libra</p>

The son of John the Fearless (*Jean sans Peur*), duke of Burgundy, and Margaret of Bavaria. He was one of the main political agents of the fifteenth century and perhaps for this reason his horoscope is the first nativity in both of Belle's manuscripts. As already noted, his horoscope and those of Louis XI of France and Henry VI of England often appear together in fifteenth-century collections.⁴⁴¹

Born in Dijon, Philip inherited the duchy of Burgundy in September 1419, after his father's assassination by order of the dauphin, the future Charles VII of France.⁴⁴² To avenge his father, he forged an alliance with Charles VI of France and Henry V of England. This alliance resulted in the Treaty of Troyes of 1420, by which Henry V was nominated regent and future ruler of France. It took fifteen years for Philip to reconcile with the new king by signing the Treaty of Arras. Under his rule, Burgundy expanded its territories and achieved independence. He was married three times: in 1409 to Michelle of Valois; in 1425 to Bonne d'Artois, who died soon after, leaving him with her two sons from a previous marriage, Charles de Bourgogne and Jean de Clamecy; in 1430 to Isabelle of Portugal, mother of Charles the Bold.

He died in 1467, after prolonged and debilitating ailments.

The horoscope:

Figure of the most illustrious prince Lord Philip, by the grace of God Duke of Burgundy, which was by 12 hours after noon [in the] 30th year of Christ 1396, and was in the day of the Moon [and] in the hour of Venus.⁴⁴³

In NAL 398 the chart is similar, the only difference being the duke's encoded title: *gran b5rg4nd32 d5c3s* (replacing the numbers by the respective vowels: *gran burgondie ducis* – grand-duke of Burgundy).⁴⁴⁴ This is the horoscope that includes the most fixed stars and lots in the entire collection. The horoscope in NAL 398 assembles a total of eleven lots, eight of which are also in MS 1711. The three extra lots in NAL 398 are alternative calculations for the Lot of the Kingdom, the Lot of Children, and the Lot of Brothers.

⁴⁴¹ See Poulle, 'Horoscopes princiers', pp. 72-73, Carey, *Courting Disaster*, pp. 138-153 and Carey, 'Astrology at the English Court in the Later Middle Ages', pp. 41-56, at p. 49.

⁴⁴² For a discussion of Philip of Burgundy's place of birth, see Picard, 'Le lieu et la date de naissance de Philippe le Bon', *Revue de Bourgogne*, 1926, p. 341-354.

⁴⁴³ *Figura illustrissimi principis dominus Philippi Dei gratia Burgundie ducis que fuit per 22 horas post meridiem 30 Jullii anno Christi 1396. Et fuit dies Lune hora ♀*, MS 1711 f. 78r.

⁴⁴⁴ See Boudet, 'Une consultation astrologique', p. 263, n. 26, mentioning a different version of this horoscope in Lat 7443 f129r with the birth time at 7:25 am and 16° Virgo rising.

The tables below depict the lots and fixed stars in Louis XI's horoscope organized in the order of the houses.

Table 18 – The Lots in Philip's horoscope

In NAL 398	In MS 1711
Lot of the Enemies – <i>Pars inimicorum</i> : 6° Scorpio	Lot of the Enemies – <i>Pars inimicorum</i> : 6° Scorpio
Lot of the Future – <i>Pars futurorum</i> : 29° Scorpio	Lot of the Future – <i>Pars futurorum</i> : 29° Scorpio
Lot of Friends – <i>Pars amicorum</i> : 3° Sagittarius	Lot of Friends – <i>Pars amicorum</i> : 3° Sagittarius
Lot of the Kingdom – <i>Pars regni</i> : 13° Capricorn	
Lot of Substance – <i>Pars substantie</i> : 25° Aquarius	Lot of Substance – <i>Pars substantie</i> : 25° Aquarius
Lot of Children – <i>Pars filiorum</i> : 30° Aquarius	
Lot of the Brothers – <i>Pars fratrum</i> : 25° Taurus	
Lot of the Servants – <i>Pars servorum</i> : 23° Leo	Lot of the Servants – <i>Pars servorum</i> : 23° Leo
Lot of Fortune – <i>Pars fortune</i> : 27° Leo	Lot of Fortune – <i>Pars fortune</i> : 27° Leo
Lot of Death – <i>Pars mortis</i> : 1° Libra	Lot of Death – <i>Pars mortis</i> : 1° Libra
Lot of the Kingdom – <i>Pars regni</i> : 9° Libra	Lot of the Kingdom – <i>Pars regni</i> : 9° Libra

While there are no fixed stars in Philip's horoscope in NAL 398, the horoscope in MS 1711 has twenty-three stars (of which two are nebulas).

Table 19 – Fixed stars Philip the Good

<i>Alhamech</i> (Spica) 14° Libra	<i>Aldebaran</i> 01° Gemini
<i>Alphecca</i> 03° Scorpio	<i>Hyrcus</i> 06° Gemini
<i>Cor Scorpionis</i> (Antares) 01° Sagittarius	<i>Nebulosa</i> (possibly M42 in Orion) 18° Gemini
<i>Cavilla</i> (Zeta Bootis) 15° Sagittarius	<i>Rigil</i> 18° Gemini
<i>Vultur Cadens</i> (Vega) 7° Capricorn	<i>Orion</i> (Betelgeuse) 21° Gemini
<i>Vultur Volans</i> (Altair) 22° Capricorn	<i>Canopus</i> 06° Cancer
<i>Os Piscium</i> (Fomalhaut) 19° Pisces	<i>Caput Geminorum</i> (Castor) 12° Cancer
<i>Arios</i> (Biham or Sadalachbia) 28° Aquarius	<i>Nocea Caputum</i> (Pollux) 15°17 Cancer
<i>Alferaz</i> 06° Aries	<i>Nebulosa</i> (possibly M44) 29° Cancer
<i>Venter Ceti</i> (Baten Kaitos) 13° Aries	<i>Cor Leonis</i> (Regulus) 21° Leo
<i>Nebulosa Persei</i> 16° Aries	<i>Cauda Leonis</i> (Denebola) 13° Virgo
<i>Caput Algol</i> 18° Taurus	

Charles VII, king of France

MS 1711 f. 78v – Blank chart

Charles VII, the disowned son of Charles VI and Isabeau of Bavaria, was the principal enemy of Philip the Good. His struggle to seize the throne of France has already been mentioned. He was crowned in July 1429 and reigned until his death in 22 July 1461.

Nativity of the most Christian King of the Franks Charles VII, which was in the year of Christ 1403.⁴⁴⁵

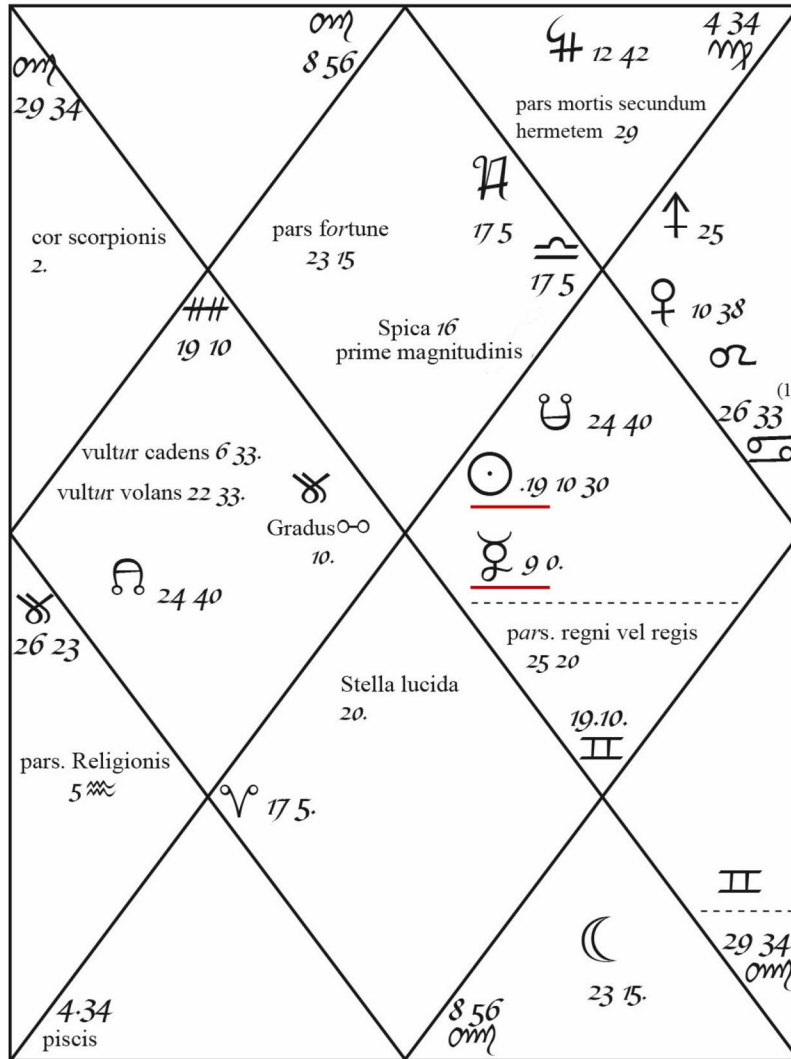
Belle seems to have little interest in this nativity. He does not calculate the king's horoscope and does not even mention his day and time of birth. This data would have been easily available to him, but he may have had doubts about the accuracy of the data since there were conflicting accounts of the king's birth.⁴⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Belle includes the horoscope for the king's coronation on 16 July 1429 in both manuscripts.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁵ Nativitas christianissimi francorum Regis Karoli 7imi que fuit in anno Christi 1403, MS 1711 f. 78v.

⁴⁴⁶ For instance, in Lat. 7443: judgement of Charles VII's nativity in ff. 73v-78v, horoscope in f. 79r, list of planetary positions in f. 129r. Both indicate the same date, in different notations, and 28° Sagittarius Ascendant; the second refers to Charles VII as Dauphin, suggesting it was written before his coronation in 1429. See also Boudet, *Lire dans le ciel*, pp. 131-132, and 'Une consultation astrologique', p. 263, n. 26.

⁴⁴⁷ J-P. Boudet and E. Poulle, 'Les jugements astrologiques sur la naissance de Charles VII', *Saint-Denis et la royauté: études offertes à Bernard Guenée*, F. Autrand, C. Gauvand, J.-M. Moeglin (eds), Paris, 1999, pp. 169-179 (at pp. 174-176).

Louis XI, king of France
MS 1711 f. 79r – NAL 398 f. 90rb1: 3 July 1423, 17:45, Bourges (47°05'N, 02°23'E)



House I – 19° 10 Sagittarius Vultur Cadens 06°33 Capricorn Gradus coniunctionem Vultur Volans 22°10 Capricorn South Node 24°40 Capricorn	House VII – 19° 10 Gemini Pars Regni vel Regis 25°30 Cancer Mercury 09°00 Cancer Sun 19°10 Cancer North Node 24°40 Cancer
House II – 26° 23 Capricorn Pars Religionis 04° Aquarius	House VIII – 26° 23 Cancer Venus 02°38 Leo Mars 24° Leo
House III – 4° 34 Pisces	House IX – 4° 34 Virgo Jupiter 12°42 Virgo Pars Mortis secundum Hermetem 29° Virgo
House IV – 17° 04 Aries Stella Lucida 20° Aries	House X – 17° 04 Libra Saturn 17°04 Libra Spica 16° Libra prima magnitudinis Pars Fortune 23°14 Libra
House V – 8° 15 Taurus Moon 23°14 Taurus	House XI – 8° 15 Scorpio
House VI – 29° 39 Taurus	House XII – 29° 39 Scorpio Cor scorpionis 02° Sagittarius

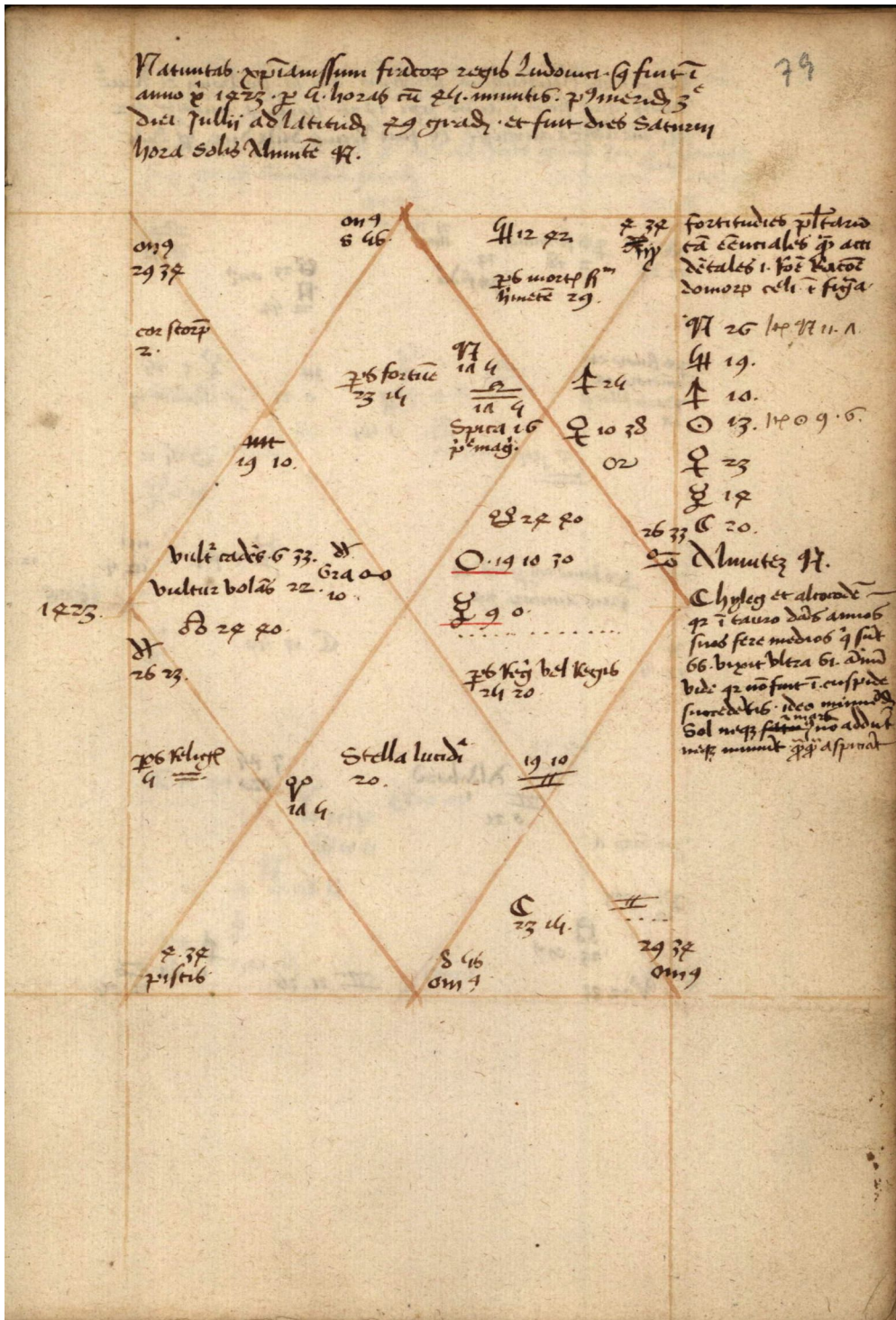


Figure 17 – MS 1711, folio 79r

King Louis XI of France, known as ‘the Prudent’ or the ‘Universal Spider’, the son of Charles VII and Marie of Anjou. He had a conflictual relationship with his father and often turned to the Duke Philip of Burgundy, his father’s greatest enemy, for political support. In 1456 he was granted asylum in Burgundy where he stayed for fifteen years. He returned only to be crowned at Reims, on 15 August 1461. His attempts to limit the powers of the noblemen led to the creation of the League of Public Weal (*Ligue du Bien Public*) in 1465. The League, commanded by his brother Charles de Berry, assembled some of the most powerful noblemen in France.⁴⁴⁸ He died in 1483.

Nativity of the most Christian King Louis, which was in the year of the Lord 1423, at five hours and forty-five minutes after noon, the third day of July, at the latitude of 49 degrees. And it was the day of Saturn, hour of the Sun. *Almutem Saturn*.⁴⁴⁹

NAL 398 is similar with the name encoded: *xrs31n3ss3m3 francorum r2g3s l4dov3ci* (*xristianissimi francorum regis Ludovici*: most Christian king of the Franks, Louis).

Boudet considers this as the first known horoscope of Louis XI but remarks that the hour of birth given by Belle, 5:45 pm, is incorrect because the official letters state ‘about five hours after noon’ (*environ cinq heures après midi*). However, the data provided by this horoscope was accepted by coeval astrologers, such as Jean de Vésale and Jacques Loste.⁴⁵⁰ The horoscope in NAL 398 is similar, differing only in the lots.

Table 20 – The Lots in Louis XI’s horoscope

In NAL 398	In MS 1711
Lot of Life and Children – <i>Pars vitae et filiorum</i> : 24° Sagittarius	Lot of Religion – <i>Pars religionis</i> : 04° Aquarius
Lot of Friends – <i>Pars amicorum</i> : 02° Aquarius If calculated as expected, it should have been 05° Aquarius, not 02° Aquarius	Lot of the Kingdom or of the King – <i>Pars regni vel regis</i> : 25°30’ Cancer (Not the usual <i>pars regni</i> ; there is no angular distance between the planets in this chart that could provide a part in this position if the calculation is made from the Ascendant.)
Lot of Religion – <i>Pars religionis</i> : 04° Aquarius	Lot of Death according to Hermes – <i>Pars mortis secundum hermetem</i> : 29° Virgo (not the usual calculation using the distance from the Moon to the cusp of the 8 th house cusp, projected from Saturn)
Lot of the Future – <i>Pars futurorum</i> : 15° Aquarius	Lot of Fortune – <i>Pars fortune</i> : 23°14’ Libra
Lot of the Kingdom – <i>Pars regni</i> : 17° Piscis	
Lot of the King – <i>Pars regis</i> : 07° Virgo (unknown calculation)	
Lot of Enemies – <i>Pars inimicorum</i> : 26° Libra	

⁴⁴⁸ Some of these noblemen are included in Belle’s collection of horoscopes: Charles the Bold, Jean II, duke of Bourbon; Jacques d’Armagnac, duke of Nemours; Charles II count d’Albret. See P. M. Kendall, *Louis XI: The Universal Spider*, New York, 1971, p. 143.

⁴⁴⁹ Nativitas cristianissimi francorum regis Ludovici que fuit in anno Christi 1923 per 5 horas cum 45 minutis post meridiem, diei Julii ad latitudinem 49 gradis et fuit dies Saturnii hora Solis, *almutem* ♄, MS 1711 f. 79r.

⁴⁵⁰ ‘Les astrologues et le pouvoir’, p. 28, n. 3, p. 58. See also the judgement written by Heingarter for the year 1476 addressed to Louis XI in Lat. 7450.

The only lots that appear in both horoscopes are *Pars Fortune* and the Lot of Religion. In MS 1711 he also includes five fixed stars: Vultur Cadens (Vega) at 6°33' Capricorn; Vultur Volans (Altair) at 22°10' Capricorn; Stella Lucida (possibly Alrisha) at 20° Aries; Spica, at 16° Libra; Cor Scorpii (Antares) at 2° Sagittarius.

Belle calculates the king's length of life by analysing the condition of the planets in this chart and concludes that the Moon is both *hyleg* and *alcocodem*:

The Moon is *hyleg* and *alcocodem*. Because it is in Taurus, it gives almost [all of] its median years, which are 66. He lived over 61 years. See, because it was not in the succedent cusp, neither [the years] of the Sun, neither those of [Saturn] and Mars [which] should not be adding nor diminishing, though both are aspecting it.⁴⁵¹

He indicates how many years the king lived, thus this was calculated after 1483 when he died. Although the first choice should have fallen to the Sun, since the chart is diurnal, he chose the Moon, probably for being very powerful in the chart (with exaltation and triplicity in Taurus). But the Moon is not placed in an angular house, thus unable to grant its maximum years of one-hundred and eight; it can give only its median years, sixty-six and a half. Belle settles for 'almost' sixty-six, but even this prudent calculation turns out to be excessively optimistic as the king died at the age of sixty. According to Belle, the discrepancy is explained by the position of the *alcocodem* (the Moon) close to the cusp of the sixth house – a cadent and, therefore, weak position. However, the Moon should be judged as being in the fifth house, as it is more than five degrees away from the cusp, therefore outside the five-degree rule. The fifth is a house of median strength, so the Moon as *alcocodem* should have granted its medium years: sixty-six and a half. As it gave less than expected, Belle reconsidered the Moon's position and, due to its proximity to the sixth house cusp, decided to count it as already acting in the sixth, a weaker house and adjusted his calculations accordingly.⁴⁵² This new calculation dismisses the addition of years from the sextile of the Sun at 19°10' Cancer or the reduction from the square from Mars at 24° Leo. These adjustments suggest that this calculation was made after the king's death, not as a forecast but as an exercise.

Belle also determines the *almutem*, the planet that has most power in the five *hylegical* points: Ascendant, Sun, Moon, Lot of Fortune, and lunation previous to birth:

⁴⁵¹ ☽ *hyleg* et *alcocodem* quia in Tauro dat annos suos fere medios qui sunt 66. Vixit ultra 61 annos vide quia non fuit in cuspide succedentis ideo minuendum Sol neque [*crossed out*: Saturnus] et Mars non addunt neque minuunt quamquam aspiciant, MS 171 f. 79r.

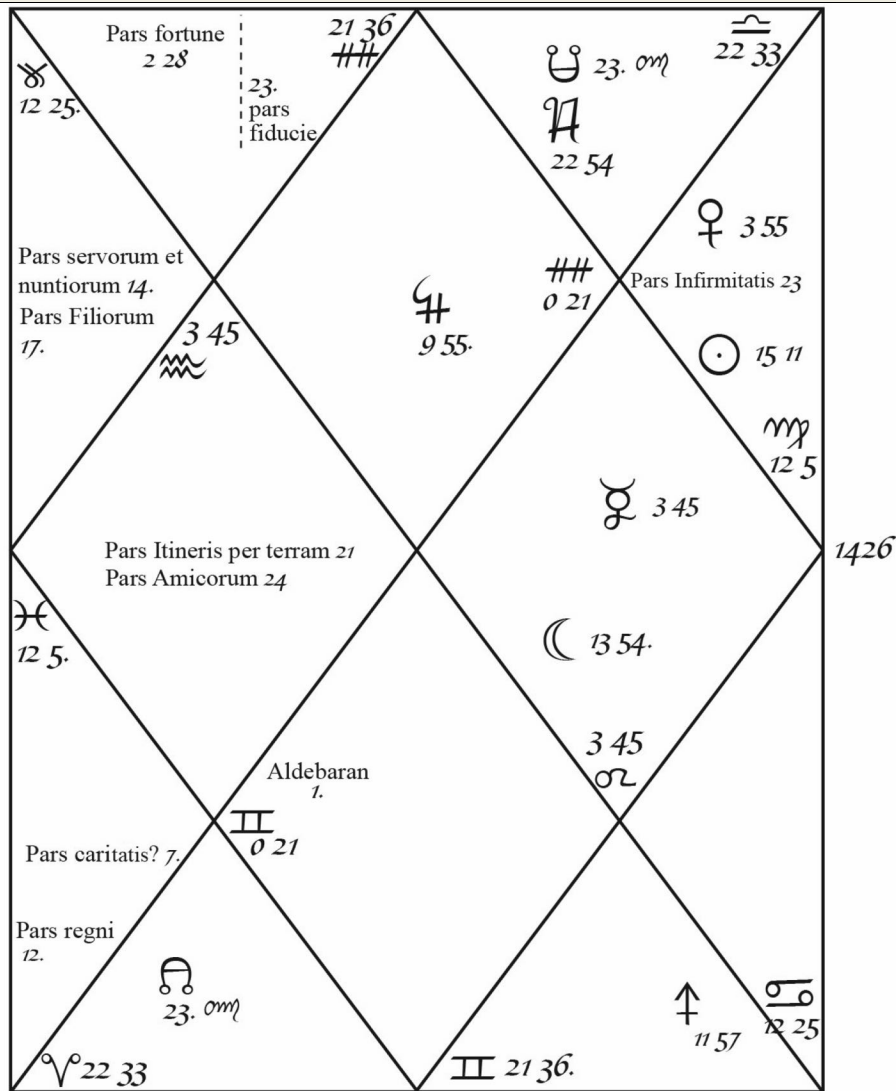
⁴⁵² He may also have taken into account the Moon's orb, which is 12°, more than enough to reach the cusp of the sixth house cusp and therefore be considered conjunct to it.

Planetary strengths, both essential and accidental, that is for the reason of the heavenly houses in the horoscope. <i>(Fortitudines planetarum tam essenciales quam accidentales id est rorem (sic) rationem domorum celi in figura)</i>	♄	26 item ♄ 11.7
	♃	19
	♂	10
	☉	13 item ☉ 9.6
	♀	23
	♆	14
	♅	20
	Almutem ♄	

The first row of numbers is the account of essential dignities of each planet (that is, their strength in the signs); the second, which he includes only for the Sun and Saturn, are their accidental dignities, that is, their strengths in the houses and their rulerships over the day and the hour of birth). According to this calculation, Saturn is the most dignified planet in the horoscope gathering twenty-six essential dignities to which are added eleven for its placement in the tenth house and seven for being the ruler of the day. It is not clear which table of essential dignities Belle was using, nonetheless the figures are approximate.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵³ To avoid repetition, these calculations are omitted in the other horoscopes of the collection.

John II (Jean II de Bourbon), duke of Bourbon
 MS 1711 f. 79v – NAL 398 f. 93vb1: 30 August 1426, 16:52, Moulins (46°33'55"N, 03°20'00"E)



House I – 3° 45 Aquarius Pars Itineris per terram 21° Aquarius Pars Amicorum 24° Aquarius	House VII – 3° 45 Leo Moon 13°54 Leo Mercury 03°45 Virgo
House II – 12° 04 Pisces Pars Caritatis [?] 7° Aries Pars Regni 12° Aries	House VIII – 12° 04 Virgo Sun 15°11 Virgo Pars Infirmittatis 23° Virgo Venus 03°55 Libra
House III – 22° 33 Aries North Node 23° Taurus	House IX – 22° 33 Libra Saturn 22°54 Scorpio South Node 23° Scorpio
House IV – 00° 21 Gemini Aldebaran 1° Gemini	House X – 00° 21 Sagittarius Jupiter 09°55 Sagittarius
House V – 21° 26 Gemini Mars 11°57 Cancer	House XI – 21° 26 Sagittarius Pars Fiducie 23° Sagittarius Pars Fortune 2° 28 Capricorn
House VI – 12° 25 Cancer	House XII – 12° 25 Capricorn Pars Servorum et Nuntiorum 14° Capricorn Pars Filiorum 17° Capricorn

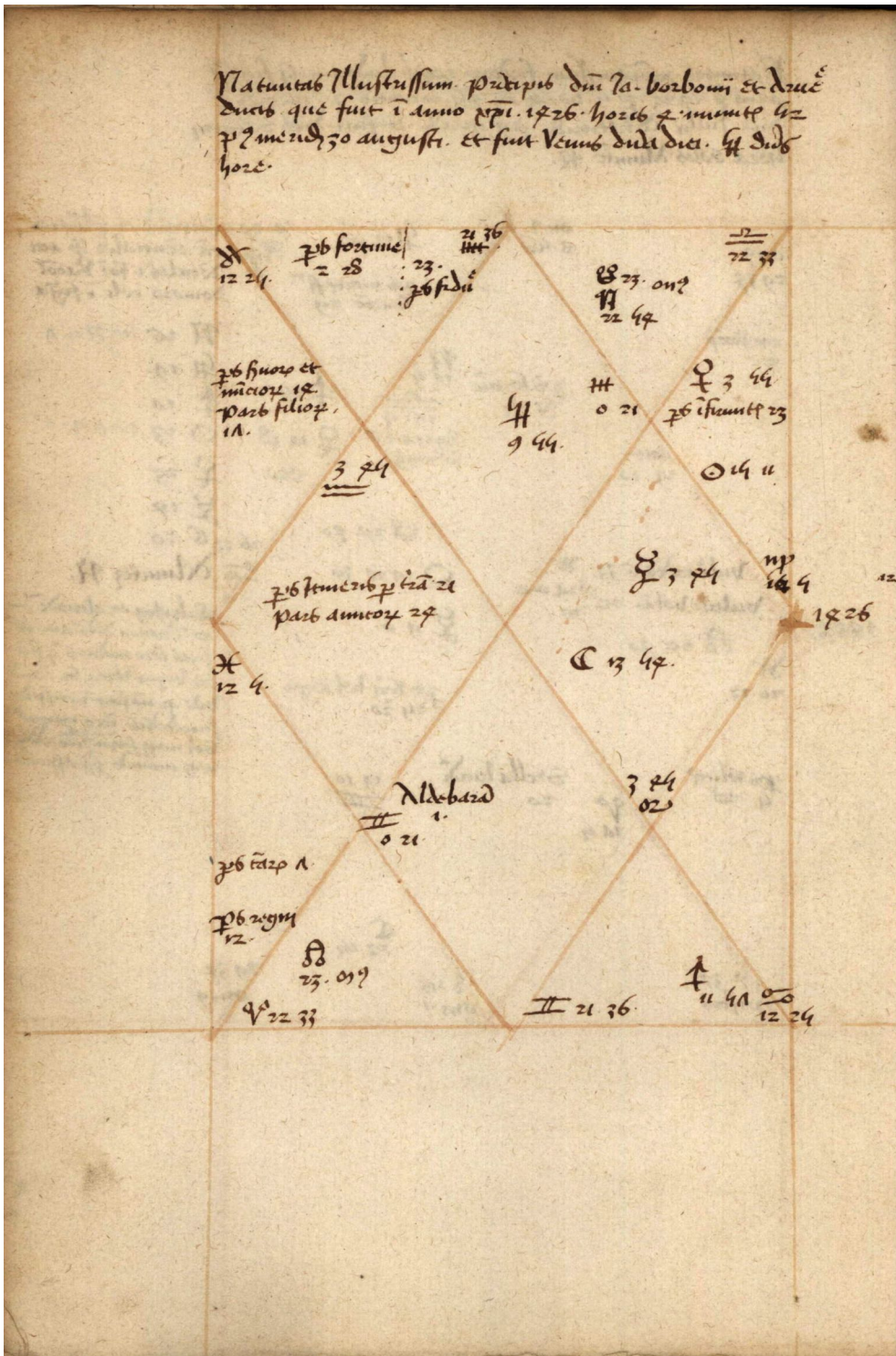


Figure 18 – MS 1711, folio 79v

John II of Bourbon, duke of Bourbon and Auvergne, the son of Charles I de Bourbon and Agnes de Bourgogne.⁴⁵⁴ In 1447 he married Jeanne de Valois, the sister of Louis XI, in this way positioning himself at the side of the French king.⁴⁵⁵ Nonetheless, in 1484, two years after becoming a widower and only one year after the king's death, he married the young Catherine d'Armagnac, whose father had been executed for treason against Louis XI; this was part of the duke's plan to distance himself from the king, a process that also included his involvement in the League of Public Weal.⁴⁵⁶ When Catherine died, in 1487, the duke married Jeanne de Bourbon-Vendôme, his cousin to the fifth degree; their union lasted only a few months, as he died in the following year.⁴⁵⁷ Upon his death, the title passed to his younger brother Charles, archbishop of Lyon, and soon after to their younger brother, Pierre. Jean II had no legitimate heirs but had many sons and daughters by several mistresses, some of whom may be part of Belle's collection: the unidentified native in NAL 398 f. 91vb1 may be Louise d'Albret, his mistress, and the one on f. 93rb1 may be his illegitimate daughter, Marguerite.⁴⁵⁸

Belle seems to have some proximity to the duke, or at least to Heingarter, who served the duke between 1463 and 1488.⁴⁵⁹ Both Jean de Bourbon and Heingarter are mentioned in Belle's almanac on f. 72v, corresponding to February 1480.

The horoscope in MS 1711, f.79v states:

Nativity of the most illustrious prince Lord John Duke of Bourbon and Auvergne, which was in the year of Christ of 1426, hours 4, minutes 52 after noon, 30th of August, and Venus was lady of the day, Jupiter ruler of the hour.⁴⁶⁰

The title in NAL 398 f. 93vb1 omits the year of birth, but adds the latitude:

Horoscope of the most illustrious prince and Lord Jean de Bourbon, which was in the horizon [latitude] of 47 degrees, approximately. Afternoon of the day of Venus, 30 August, hour 4, minutes 52, Jupiter ruler of the hour.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁴ See Surirey de Saint-Remy, *Jean II de Bourbon, duc de Bourbonnais et d'Auvergne, 1426-1488*, Paris, 1944 and O. Mattéoni, *Un prince face à Louis XI. Jean II de Bourbon, une politique en procès*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France (PUF), 2012.

⁴⁵⁵ Jeanne of France (4 May 1435–1482), daughter of Charles VII of France and Marie D'Anjou.

⁴⁵⁶ Catherine d'Armagnac (1465-1487), daughter of Jacques d'Armagnac and Louise d'Anjou, whose horoscope is in MS 1711 f. 80r.

⁴⁵⁷ Jeanne de Bourbon Vendôme (1465-1511), daughter of Jean VIII de Bourbon, count of Vendôme and of Isabelle de Beauvau.

⁴⁵⁸ Louise d'Albret, born *circa* 1440, daughter of John I d'Albret and Catherine of Rohan; Marguerite, born in 1445. This could also be the horoscope of Marie, sister of Alain d'Albret.

⁴⁵⁹ For Heingarter's services to the duke, see for instance Lat. 7432, Lat. 7447 and Lat. 11232. For his medical services to the duke's first wife, Jeanne de France, see Zurich Zentralbibliothek CH 131-27.

⁴⁶⁰ Nativitas illustrissimi principis domini Johannis Borbonii et Arvernie ducis que fuit in anno christi 1426 horis 4 minutis 52 post meridiem 30 Augusti et fuit Venus domina diei 4 dominus hore, MS 1711 f. 79v.

⁴⁶¹ Figura nativitatis illustrissime principis dominus Johannes de Borbono que fuit in orizonta 47 gradus fere. Post meridiem die 4 30 Augusti hora 4 minutis 52 6 dominus hore, NAL 398 93 f. 93vb1.

The two horoscopes are similar except for minor differences in the house cusps: for instance, on MS 1711 the Ascendant is at 3°45', while on NAL 398 it is at 4° Aquarius; these variances may result from the rounding of numbers. The chart in NAL 398 mentions the latitude '47 degrees approximately', possibly a reference to Moulins located at 46°33'N. In MS 1711, Belle gives a more accurate latitude for Moulins.⁴⁶² The horoscope on MS 1711 displays one fixed star, Aldebaran, at 1° Gemini in the fourth house, while in NAL 398 there are none. MS 1711 also includes nine lots:

Table 21 – The Lots in Jean II de Bourbon's horoscope

<p>Lot of Fortune - calculated as expected Lot of the journeys by land – <i>Pars itineris per terram</i> – 21° Aquarius Lot of Friends – <i>Pars amicorum</i> – 24° Aquarius Lot of Charity (?) – <i>Pars caritatis (?)</i> – 07 Aries (<i>Pars retributionis</i>) Lot of the Kingdom – <i>Pars regni</i> – 12° Aries If calculated in the usual manner, it would be at 5° Pisces; its placement at 12° Aries, does not coincide with any known calculation for this part. Lot of the Illnesses – <i>Pars infirmitatum</i> – 23° Virgo Lot of Confidence – <i>Pars fiducia</i> – 23° Sagittarius Lot of Servants of Messengers – <i>Pars servorum et nuntiorum</i> – 14° Capricorn Lot of Children – <i>Pars filiorum</i> – 17° Capricorn</p>

The lots chosen by Belle are fitted for a figure such as the duke representing what would be his main concerns (allies, confidence, fertility and succession, servants) and his ability to rule. Oddly, the Lot of the Kingdom in this chart does not correspond to any known variation for its calculation; it can be a simple miscalculation or a copying error. The lot at 7° Aries in the second house, apparently called *Pars Caritatis* (Lot of Charity), is not mentioned by this name in the main sources consulted. It is 63°15' distant from the Ascendant; assuming that this lot is calculated by the most common formula, that is, the distance between two planets projected from the Ascendant, the only two planets in this horoscope that fit this interval are Mars and the Sun, which are 63°14' from each other (Mars at 11°57' Cancer and the Sun at 15°11' Virgo). This distance projected from the Ascendant falls at 7° Aries. The only part that is calculated by projecting the distance between these two planets from the Ascendant is *Pars Retributionis* (Lot of Retribution or Lot of Repayment).⁴⁶³ This lot is linked with the ability of the native to repay those who have done good for him, symbolic of a noble

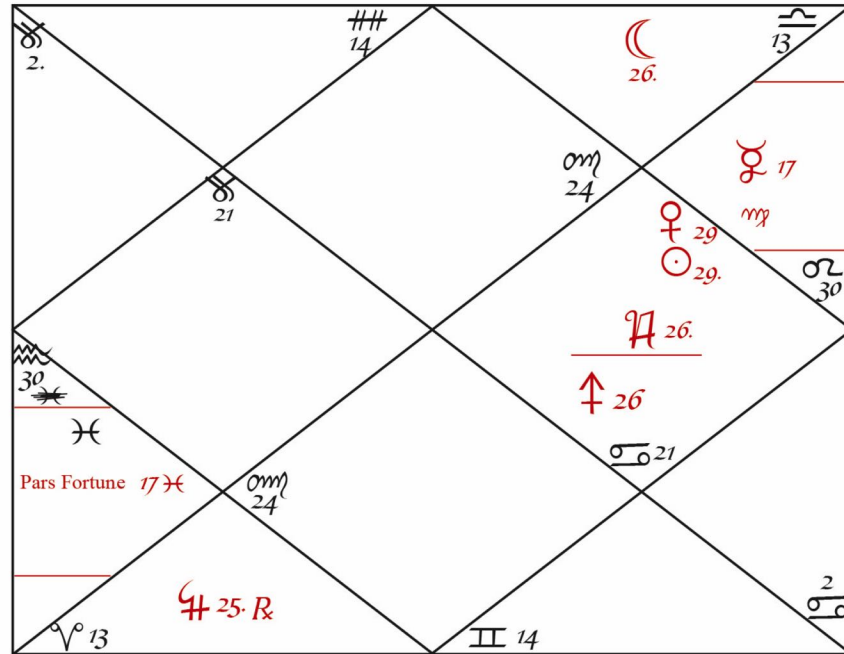
⁴⁶² On f. 93v he mentions that his son Conrad was born 'at the horizon of Moulins, in Bourbon, which latitude is 46 degrees and 35 minutes'.

⁴⁶³ Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, p. 1090. This is the formula for diurnal horoscopes; for nocturnal ones, it is the distance from the Sun to Mars.

quality fitted for someone in the duke's position. If indeed the duke was Belle's patron, this could also be a discreet reminder appealing to the duke's generosity.

There is another horoscope associated with Jean II de Bourbon, an interrogation:

Universal interrogation: status of life, substance, and honour
NAL 398 f. 101r – 13 August 1477, [17:17 LAT], Paris?



House I – 21° Capricorn	House VII – 21° Cancer
	Mars 26° Cancer
	Saturn 26° Leo
	Sun 29° Leo
	Venus 29° Virgo (sic for Leo)
House II – 30° Aquarius	House VIII – 30° Leo
Pars Fortune 17° Pisces	Mercury 17° Virgo
House III – 13° Aries	House IX – 13° Libra
Jupiter 24° Aries retrograde	Moon 26° Libra
House IV – 24° Taurus	House X – 24° Scorpio
House V – 14° Gemini	House XI – 14° Sagittarius
House VI – 2° Cancer	House XII – 2° Capricorn

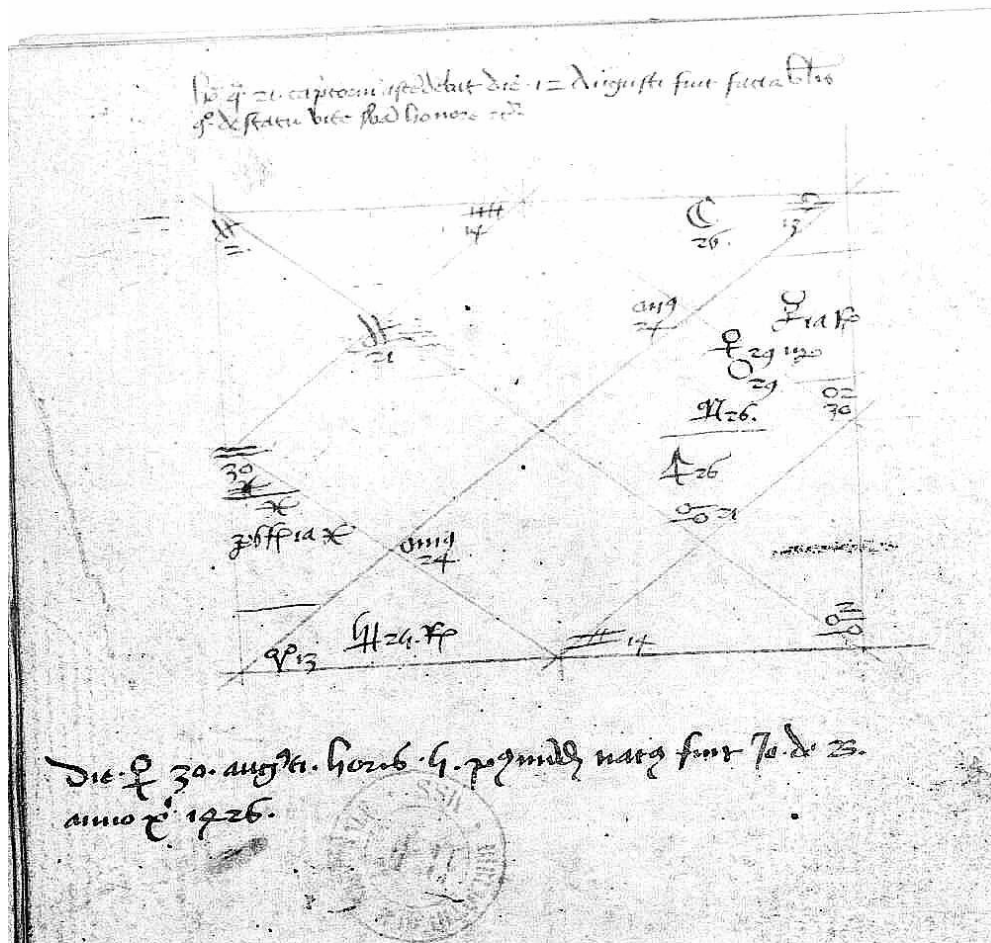


Figure 19 – NAL 398, folio 101r

On the last folio of NAL 398 there is a horoscope calculated for 13 August 1477, at 5:17 pm, with a comment mentioning the duke of Bourbon. The latitude is possibly Paris (48°52'N) but Belle appears to be using tables for 50° N for many of his horoscopes. This is not the duke's nativity but another horoscope drawn upside-down in the folio, as if written in a hurry. The comment above the chart reveals its purpose:

'In the hour when 21° Capricorn ascended, on the 12th day of August, a universal question was asked about the state of life, substance and honour, etc.'⁴⁶⁴

There is no judgement for this interrogation further supporting the idea that the question was posed suddenly, the horoscope drawn in a hurry, and the answer perhaps delivered

⁴⁶⁴ Hora quando 21 Capricorni ascendenbat die 12 Augusti fuit facta universalis questio de statu vite substantie honoris etc., NAL 398 f. 101r. Due to the time notation used by Belle, this corresponds to the 13th August, as explained before.

verbally. The subject of this enquiry is the duke himself, Jean II de Bourbon, whose birthdate is written below the horoscope:

Day of Venus, 30th of August, five hours in the afternoon, was born Jean de Bourbon,
in the year of Christ 1426.⁴⁶⁵

The birth time, 'five hours in the afternoon', is slightly less precise than the 'four hours and fifty-two minutes' mentioned in the horoscope, again indicating that Belle calculated this chart in a hurry having resorted to memory for the duke's birthdate. The reference to the nativity suggests that the question was posed by the duke himself.

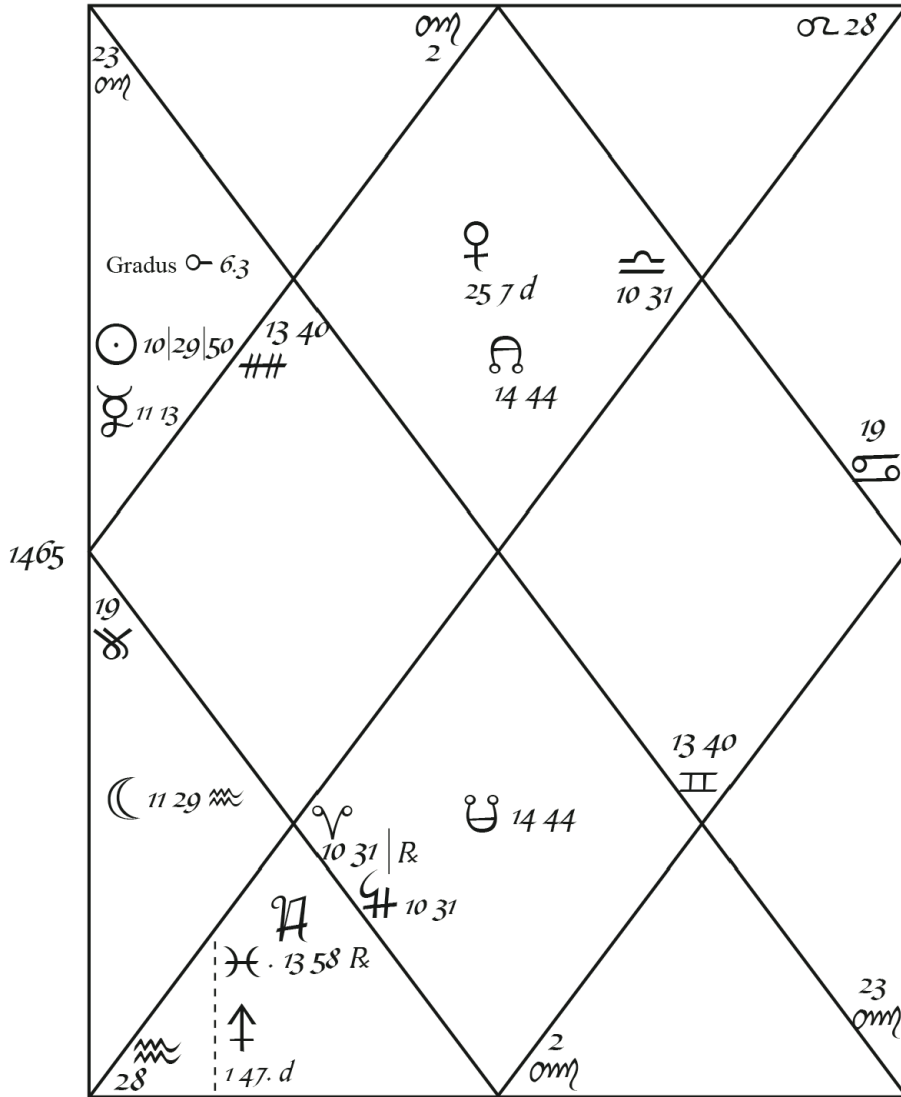
This is an important question touching all the main aspects of lives and it would not have been asked lightly. The date for this horoscope provides an important clue: it was calculated on 13 August 1477, only nine days after the execution of the duke of Nemours, Jacques d'Armagnac, and it may have a direct connection to this event. D'Armagnac was a former favourite of Louis XI but he decided to join the League of Public Weal of which Jean II de Bourbon was also a member and became one of the king's most active opponents. After a succession of conflicts, reconciliations, and new conflicts, he was imprisoned by Louis XI in August 1476. He remained in prison for a year having been interrogated under torture several times. Condemned to capital punishment, he was executed in Paris on 4 August 1477.⁴⁶⁶

This interrogation horoscope was calculated on 13 August 1477 in the aftermath of this execution. The duke of Bourbon may have consulted an astrologer to ask about the status of his life, substance, and honour – in a word, about his situation. As a former member of the League of Public Weal, he may have feared being incriminated by d'Armagnac as a co-conspirator against Louis XI. His fears seem to have been unsubstantiated, as his 'life, substance and honour' remained intact until the end of his natural life in 1488.

⁴⁶⁵ Die 4, 30 Augusti horis 5 post meridiem natus fuit Johannes de Borboni anno christi 1426, f. 101.

⁴⁶⁶ There is a reference to this execution BnF Lat. 7427, f. 204r; it is a comment in the margin, corresponding to 4 August 1477: 'At the Halles of Paris, in the evening, the Duke of Nemours was decapitated' (Aux haies de Paris, sejour, fuit decapité le duc de Nemours). It is mentioned in Boudet, *Lire dans le Ciel*, p. 104. See also Boudet, *La recueil*, II, p. 99, 277, 280-281 and 286-287.

N. (encoded name)
MS 1711 f. 80r: 23 November 1465, 08:04, Nemours (48°16'N, 02°41'E)



House I – 13°40 Sagittarius	House VII – 13°40 Gemini
House II – 19° Capricorn	House VIII – 19° Cancer
Moon 11° Aquarius	
House III – 28° Aquarius	House IX 28° Leo
Saturn 13°48 Pisces Retrograde	
Mars 14°07 Pisces	
House IV – 10° 31 Aries	House X – 10°31 Libra
Jupiter 10°31 Aries Retrograde	South Node 14°44 Libra
North Node 14°44 Aries	Venus 24° 07 Libra
House V – 02° Taurus	House XI – 02° Scorpio
House VI – 23 Taurus	House XII – 23 Scorpio
	Degree of the conjunction 06°03 Sagittarius
	Sun 10°19' 40" Sagittarius
	Mercury 11°13 Sagittarius

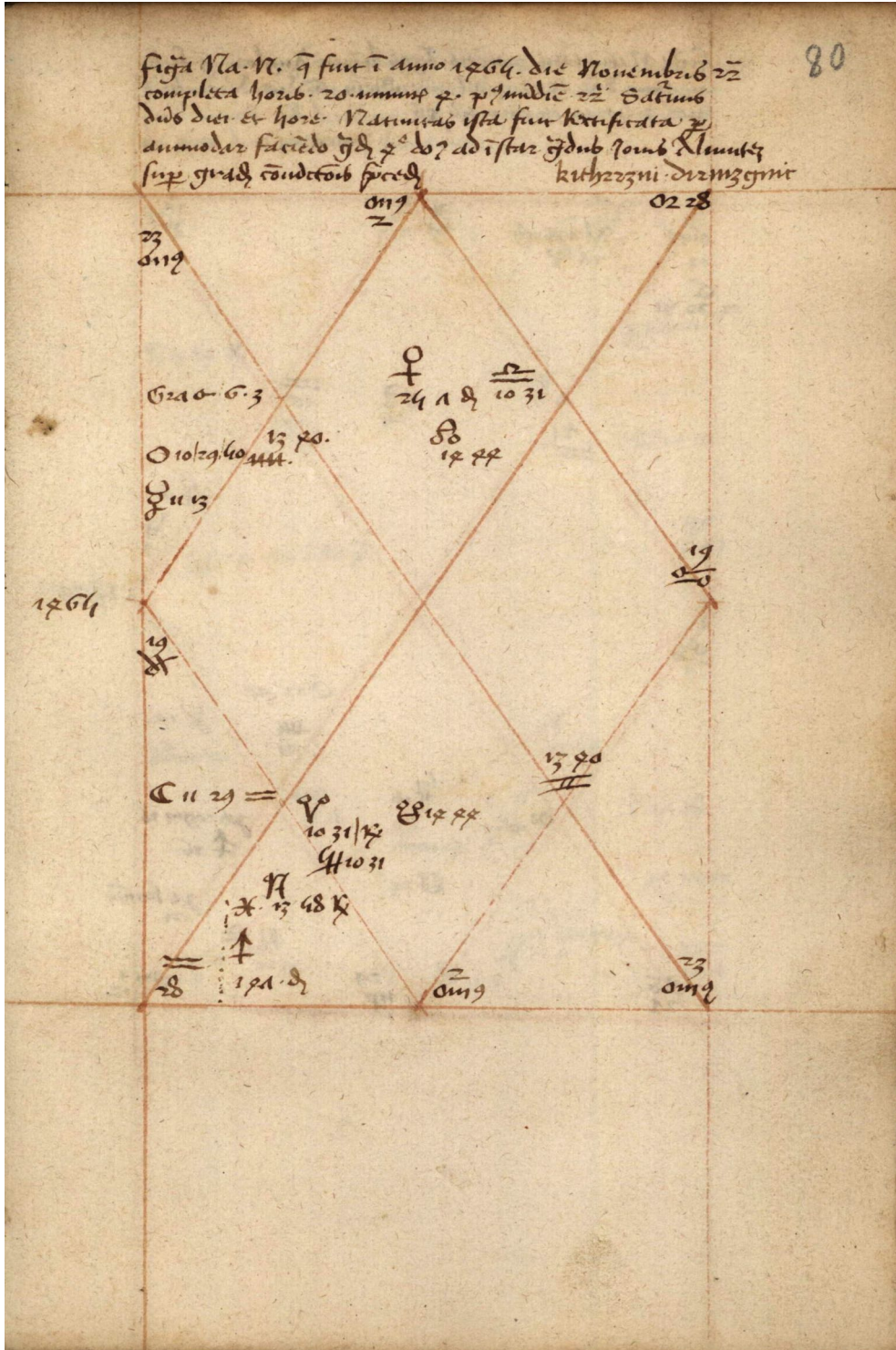


Figure 20 – MS 1711, folio 80r

Although the subject of this horoscope is not explicitly named within it, the author has left a clue to his identity by placing a numeric code after the title:

Chart of the nativity of N., which was in the year 1465, day of November 22nd complete, hour 20, minutes 4 after noon, 22 (sic) Saturn ruler of the day and hour. This nativity was rectified by *animodar*, by making the degree of the 4th house like the degree of Jupiter, [which is] *almutem* over the degree of the previous conjunction.⁴⁶⁷

Belle calculated the exact moment of birth by using the method of *animodar*, in this case by adjusting the degree of the fourth house to the position of Jupiter, which is the *almutem* of the conjunction previous to the birth.

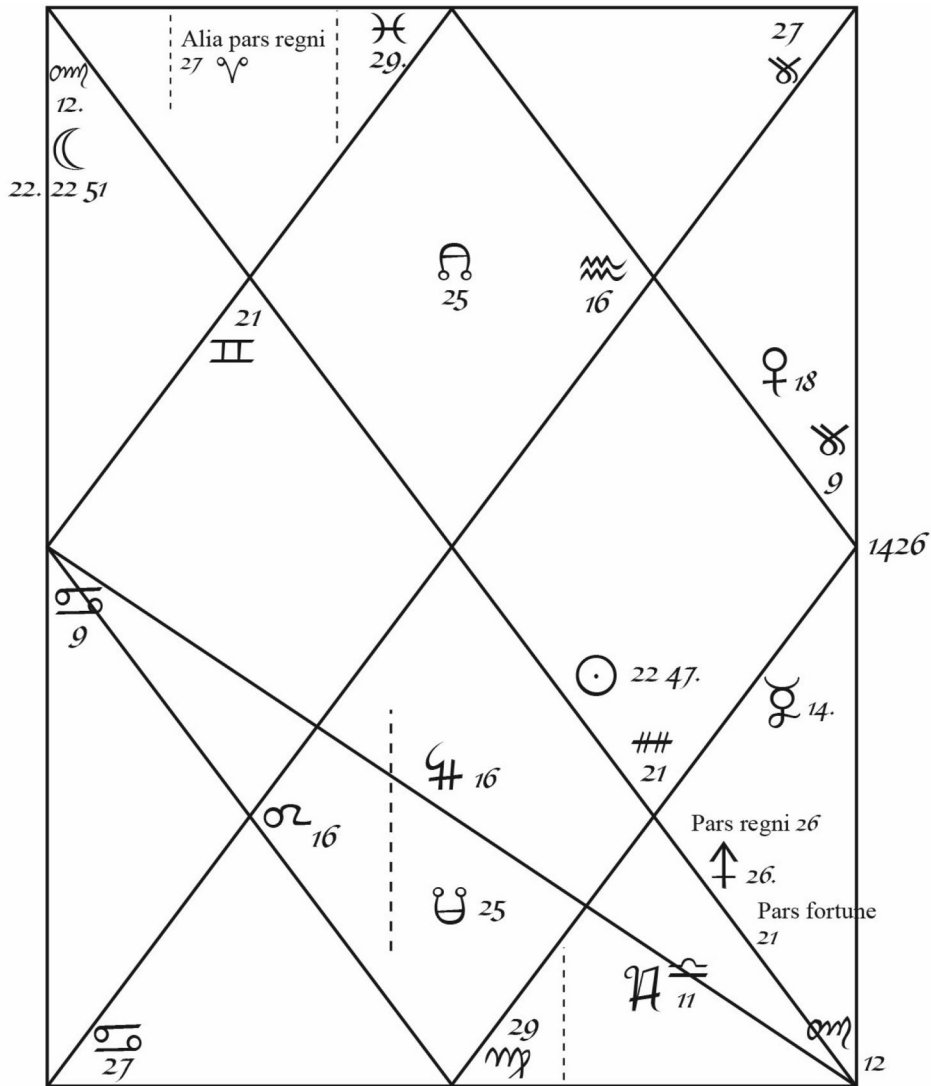
After the title, on the right-hand side of the page, there is an encoded name – *klth2r3n1 d1rm3gn1c* – written with a lighter shade of ink and looking as if it were added later. Belle may have intended to keep this nativity a secret but later decided to leave a clue about its identity; or, he may have copied the horoscope from another astrologer who only later revealed the native’s identity. The code is easy to decipher:

Code	<i>klth2r3n1 d1rm3gn1c</i>
Transcription	Katherina darmignac
Name	Catherina D’Armignac

This is therefore the horoscope of Catherine d’Armagnac (or Armignac), the second wife of John II of Bourbon; daughter of Jacques d’Armagnac and Louise d’Anjou. Belle decided to keep this horoscope a secret probably because of the aforementioned conflict between Catherine’s father, Jacques d’Armagnac, and King Louis XI. However, her marriage to Jean II de Bourbon only took place in 1484, one year after the Louis XI’s death. This horoscope may have been calculated on the occasion of her wedding to the duke, as part of Belle’s astrological services. But the situation changed when Catherine and Jean died (in 1487 and 1488, respectively), and the new dukes came to power since they were not sympathetic to the d’Armagnac family. The new duke, Pierre II of Bourbon, was one of Louis XI’s trusted counsellors and, most importantly, his son-in-law: he had married the king’s daughter, Anne de Beaujeu, in 1473. This may be the reason why Belle kept this nativity a secret.

⁴⁶⁷ Figura Nativitatis N. que fuit in anno 1465 die Novembris 22^a completa horis 20 minutis 4 post meridiem 22 Saturnus dominus diei et hore Nativitas ista fuit Rectificata per *animodar* faciendo gradus 4^c domus ad instar gradus Jovis *almutem* super gradum conunctionis precedentis, MS 1711 f. 80r.

Henry VI, king of England
MS 1711 f. 80v – NAL f. 90va2: 6 December 1421, 03:46 pm, Windsor Castle (51°29'N, 00°36'W)



House I – 21° Gemini	House VII – 21° Sagittarius Sun 22°41' Sagittarius
House II – 09° Cancer	House VIII – 09° Capricorn Venus 18° Capricorn
House III – 27° Cancer	House IX – 21° Capricorn
House IV – 16° Leo Jupiter 16° Virgo North Node 24° Virgo	House X – 16° Aquarius South Node 24° Pisces
House V – 29° Virgo Saturn 11° Libra	House XI – 29° Pisces Alia Pars Regni 27° Aries
House VI – 12° Scorpio Pars Fortune 21° Scorpio Pars Regni 26° Scorpio Mars 26° Scorpio Mercury 14° Sagittarius	House XII – 12° Taurus Moon 22°22'51" Taurus

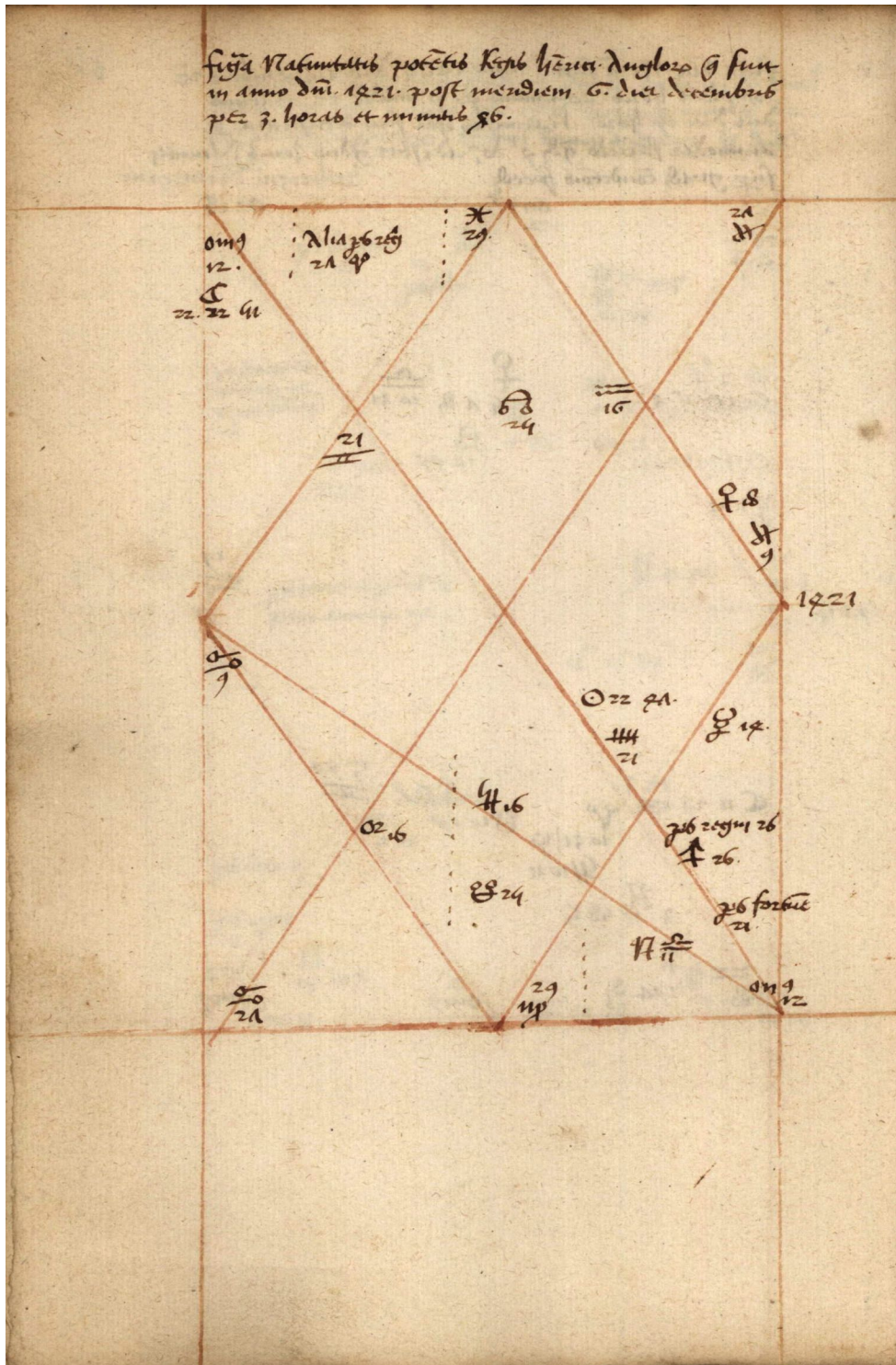


Figure 21 – MS 1711, folio 80v

Henry VI, the son of Henry V and Catherine de Valois, was born in 1421 and succeeded to the throne when he was only a few months old. He was crowned twice: at Westminster Abbey on 6 November 1429 as king of England, and on 26 December 1431 at the Notre Dame de Paris as king of France.⁴⁶⁸ His reign was marked by instability due to his erratic behaviour. He died in 1471, at the age of forty-nine.

Chart of the nativity of the powerful King of the English Henry, which was in the year of the Lord 1421 after noon, 6th day of December by 3 hours and minutes 46.⁴⁶⁹

This horoscope is also in NAL 398, f. 90va2 where again Belle uses the code r2g3s h2nr3c3 Ingl32, (*Regis Henrici Ingle* – King Henry of England):

The order of the heaven in the nativity of r2g3s h2nr3c3 Ingl32, which was in the year of the Lord 1421, afternoon [of the] 6th of December, at three hours and thirty-six minutes.⁴⁷⁰

The presence of an English king in Belle's manuscripts is no surprise as by this time the political affairs of France and England were inextricably linked. Hilary Carey mentions the existence of no less than 'six conflicting and complimentary horoscopes of the king's nativity' in English manuscripts.⁴⁷¹ She attributes this proliferation to the rehabilitation of astrology that occurred in the reign of his predecessor, Henry V.⁴⁷² The horoscopes of Henry VI also represent a notable change in English horoscopy emphasizing the 'attention to fine detail' as is noted by John D. North.⁴⁷³ Similar horoscopes for this king can be found in other French and English manuscripts.⁴⁷⁴

In this horoscope Belle calculates two different Lots of the Kingdom: *Pars regni*, at 29° Scorpio and *Alia Pars regni*, at 27° Aries. Neither of these corresponds to Alcabitius's method of calculation – Mars to Moon from the Ascendant – which would generate a lot at 19° Sagittarius.

⁴⁶⁸ As a consequence of the Treaty of Troyes and a reaction to the coronation of Charles VII in 1429 at Reims. There is any entry for this coronation in Lat. 7443 f. 86v, but only the Ascendant degree (16° Aquarius) was noted.

⁴⁶⁹ *Figura Nativitatis potentis Regis Henrici anglorum que fuit in anno domini 1421 post meridiem 6 diei Decembris per 3 horas et minutis 46*, MS 1711 f. 80v.

⁴⁷⁰ *Est ordo celi in nativitate r2g3s h2nr3c3 Ingl3r que fuit in anno domini 1421 post meridiem 6 diei Decembris per 3 horis et minutis 36*, MS 1711, 80v.

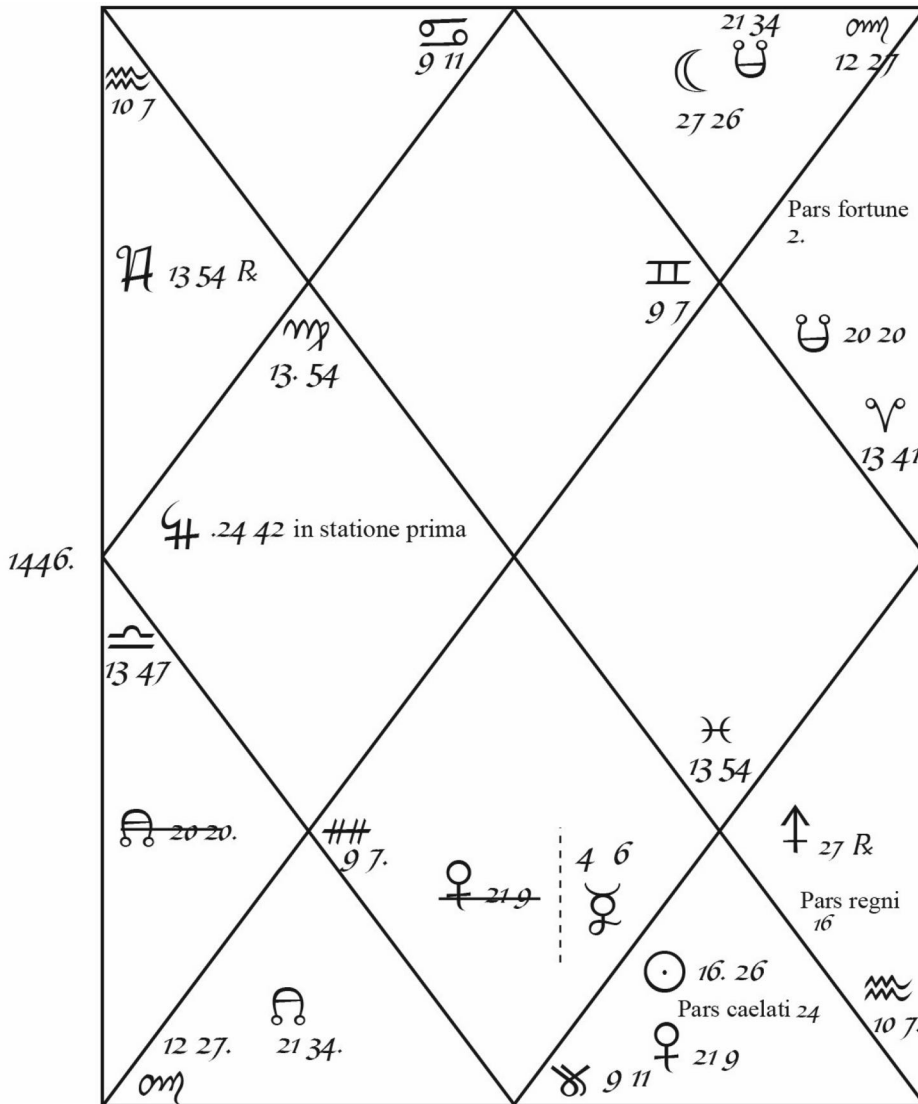
⁴⁷¹ Carey, *Courting Disaster*, pp. 138-153. See also Boudet 'Une consultation', p. 262, n. 25, and North, *Horoscopes and History*, pp. 141-149.

⁴⁷² Carey, *Courting Disaster*, p. 128.

⁴⁷³ North, *Horoscopes and History*, p. 141.

⁴⁷⁴ For France, see for instance Lat. 7443, f. 80r and *Lire dans le ciel*, p. 132. For England, see Egerton Ms 889 f. 5, and S. Page, *Astrology in Medieval Manuscripts*, London, 2002, p. 23.

Charles, duke of Berry and Aquitaine
MS 1711 f. 81r – NAL f. 90ra2: 28 December 1446, 09:21 pm, Tours (47°23'N, 00°41'E)



House I – 13°54 Virgo Jupiter 24°42 Virgo, in statione prima	House VII – 13°54 Pisces
House II – 13°47 Libra South Node 20°20 Libra (<i>Crossed out but correct</i>)	House VIII – 13°47 Aries South Node 20°20 Aries (<i>Correct position</i>) Pars Fortune 02° Taurus
House III – 12°21 Scorpio South Node 21°39 Scorpio (<i>Wrong position</i>)	House IX – 12°21 Taurus South Node 21°39 Taurus (<i>Wrong position</i>)
House IV – 09°07 Sagittarius Venus 21°09 Sagittarius (<i>Crossed out</i>)	House X – 09°07 Gemini
House V – 09°11 Capricorn Sun 16°21 Capricorn Venus 21°09 Capricorn Part of Heaven (Pars Caelaty) 24 Capricorn	House XI – 09°11 Cancer
House VI – 10°07 Aquarius Pars Regni 16° Aquarius	House XII – 10°07 Aquarius (<i>sic for Leo</i>)

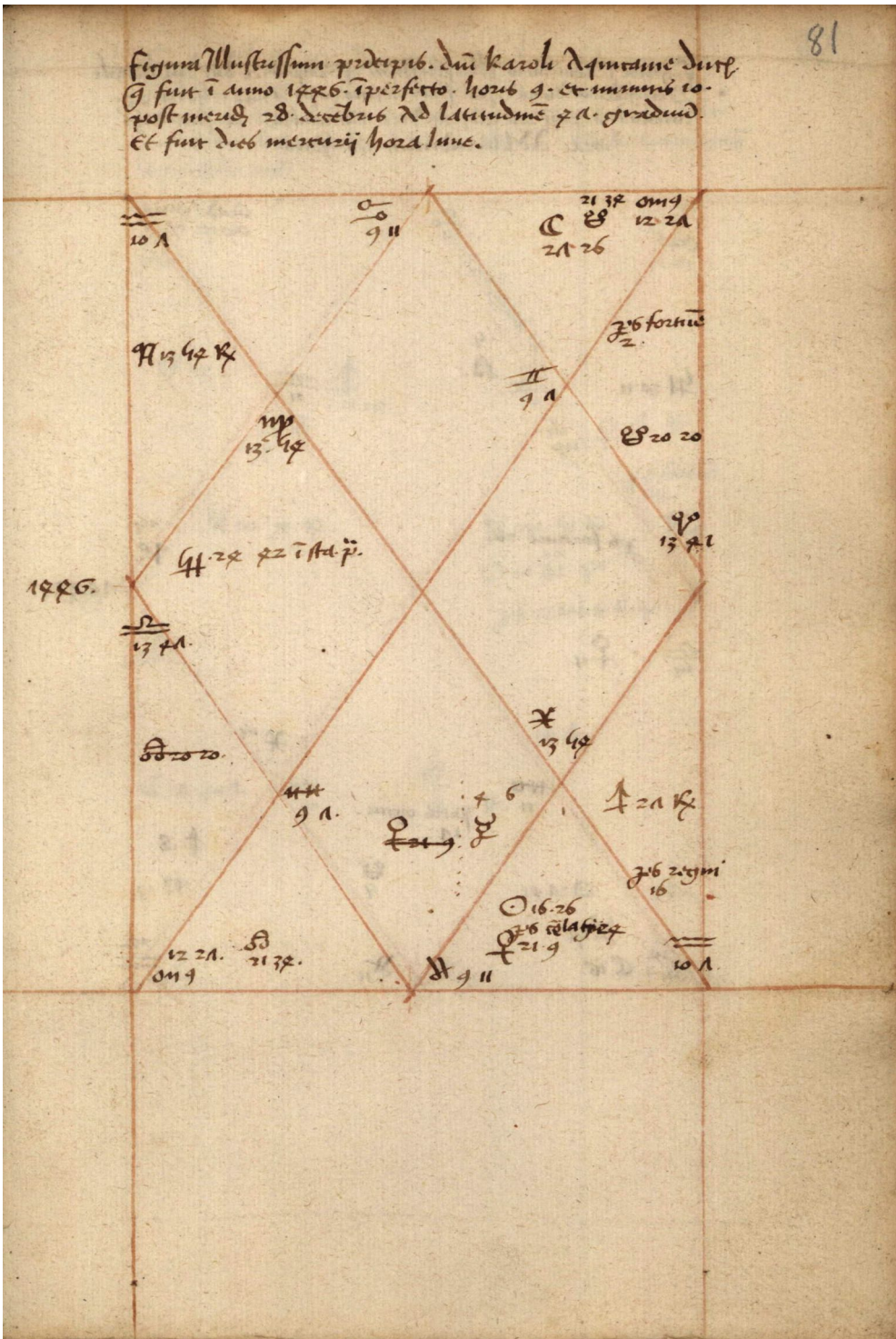


Figure 22 – MS 1711, folio 81r

Charles, duke of Berry, Normandy, and Aquitaine, was the younger brother of King Louis XI and one of his fiercest enemies. As his brother was in permanent conflict with their father, Charles VII, he secretly hoped to take advantage of this situation and attain the throne. But his hopes were shattered in 1461 when their father died and Louis hastily returned from his exile to seize the crown. Charles was granted the duchy of Berry as a compensation; disappointed, he left the kingdom and created the League of Public Weal.⁴⁷⁵ He died in 1472. The horoscope title is:

Figure of the most illustrious prince Lord Charles Duke of Aquitaine, which was in the year 1446 imperfect, hour 9 and minutes 10 after noon, 28th of December, at the latitude of 47 degrees, and it was the day of Mercury, hour of the Moon.⁴⁷⁶

It displays a correction of the position of Venus and two sets of nodes. The horoscope in NAL 398 f. 90ra2 is similar including the correction of Venus but the nodes are in the correct position: 20°20' Aries and 20°20' Libra.

Horoscope of the disposition of the heaven in the nativity of the most illustrious prince and lord, Lord Charles Duke of Aquitaine, which was in the year 1446, incomplete, 28 of December, about 9 hours, 10 minutes, and it was the day of Mercury, the hour of the Moon.⁴⁷⁷

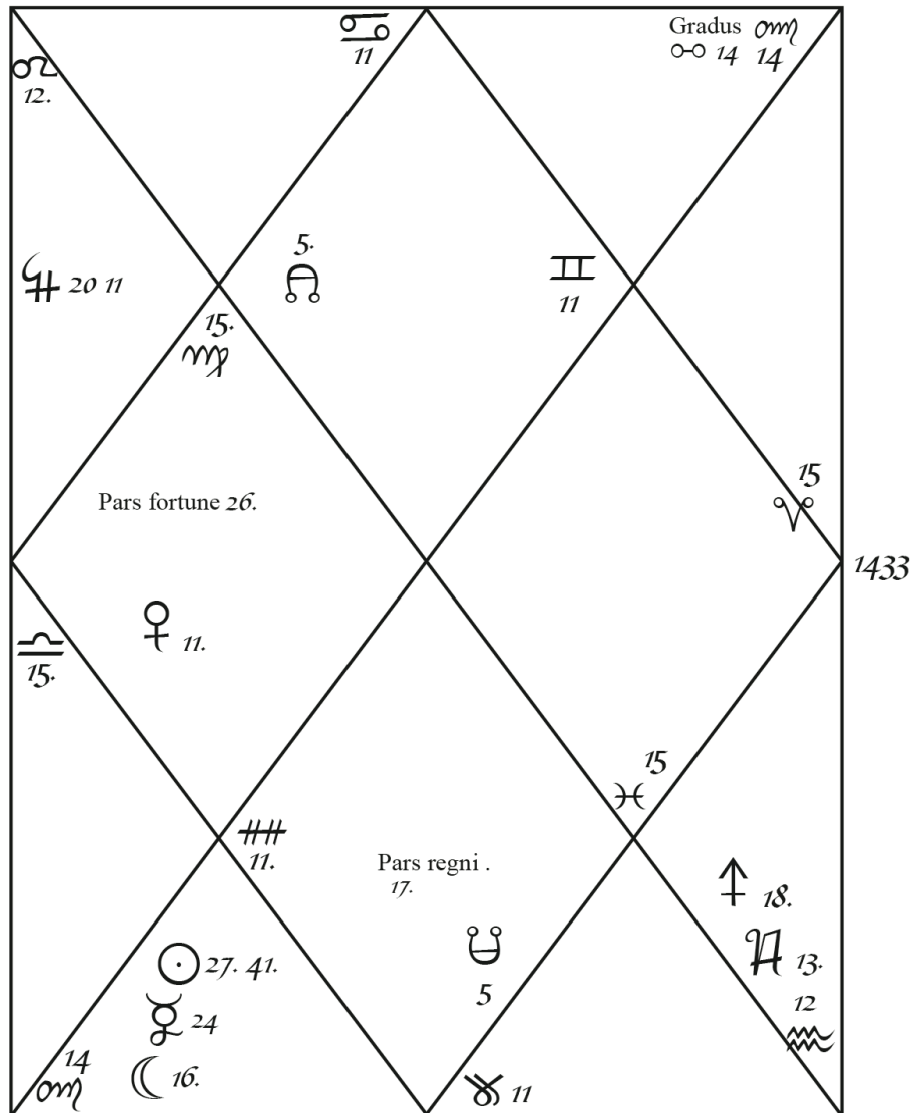
The name of this title is encoded: *d4m3n3 K1r4li 1q53t1n32: domini Karoli Aquitanie ducis* (Lord Charles duke of Aquitaine); and surprisingly, also the word *n1t353t1t2: natiuitate* (nativity).

⁴⁷⁵ See H. Stein, *Charles de France, frère de Louis XI*, Paris, 1921, pp. 535 and 541-543.

⁴⁷⁶ Figura illustrissimi principis domini Karoli Aquitanie ducis que fuit in anno 1446 imperfecto horis 9 et minutis 10 post meridiem 28 Decembris ad latitudinem 47 graduum et fuit dies Mercurii hora Lune, MS 1711 f. 81r.

⁴⁷⁷ Figura dispositionis celi in *n1t343t1t2* illustrissimi principis at domini, *d4m3n3 K1r4li 1q53t1n32* ducis qui fuit anno 1446 imperfecto 28 Decembris per 9 horas cum 10 minutis et fuit dies ☿ hora ☽.

Charles the Bold (Charles le Téméraire), duke of Burgundy
 MS 1711 f. 81v, 83v – NAL 398 f. 90rb2: 11 November 1433, 01:10 pm, Dijon (47°17'N, 05°02'E)



House I – 15° Virgo / 17°33' Virgo Pars Fortune 26° Virgo / missing Venus 11° Libra / 10°47' Libra	House VII – 15° Pisces / 17°33' Pisces
House II – 14° Libra / 18°18' Libra	House VIII – 15° Aries / 18°18' Aries
House III – 14° Scorpio / 17°40' Scorpio Moon 16° Scorpio / 15°47' Scorpio Mercury 24° Scorpio / 24°55' Scorpio Retrograde Sun 27°41' Scorpio / similar	House IX – 14° Taurus / 17°40' Scorpio Gradus oppositionis 14°14'
House IV – 11° Sagittarius / 14°46' Sagittarius Pars Regni 17° Sagittarius / missing North Node 05° Capricorn / 04°19' Capricorn	House X – 11° Gemini / 16°46' Gemini (sic) missing / Pars Patris 02°30' Cancer South Node 05° Cancer / 04°19' Cancer
House V – 11° Capricorn / 13°56' Capricorn	House XI – 11° Cancer / 13°56' Cancer
House VI – 12° Aquarius / 14°21' Aquarius Saturn 13° Aquarius / 12°44' Aquarius Mars 18° Aquarius / 17°13' Aquarius	House XII – 12° Leo / 14°29' Leo (sic) Jupiter 20°11' Leo / similar

This table includes the positions in NAL 398 and MS 1711 (variations in f.81v and 83v)

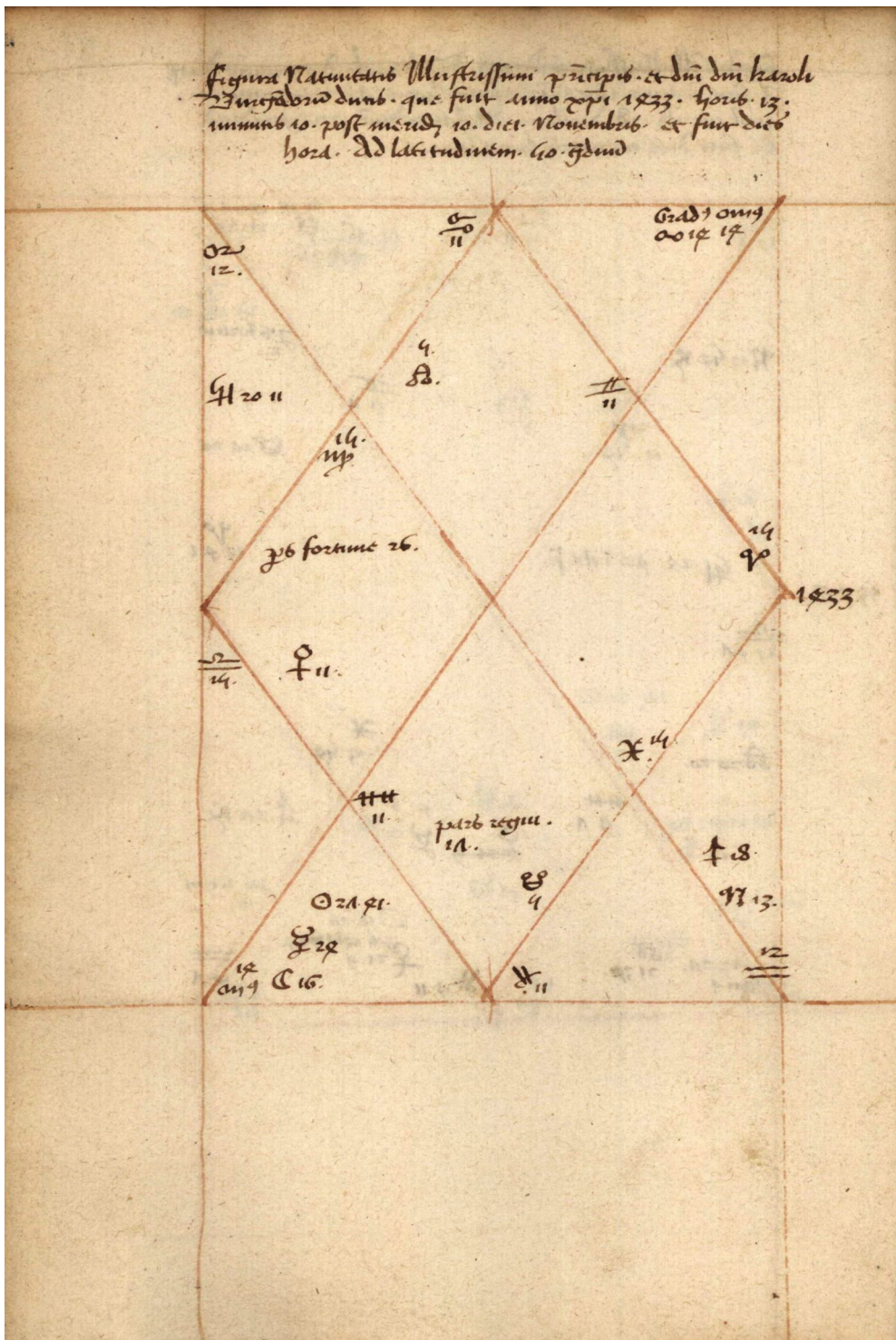


Figure 23 – MS 1711, folio 81v

The son of Duke Philip the Good and Isabella of Portugal, he was the last Duke of Burgundy of the House of Valois. In his younger years he was on friendly terms with Louis (the future Louis XI), who lived at the court of Burgundy from 1456 until he ascended to the throne in 1461. But this friendly disposition ended when Louis invaded some parts of the Burgundian territory. Charles reacted by joining the king's younger brother, Charles, duke of Berry, and creating the League of Public Weal. After many confrontations, he died at the battle of Nancy in January 1477, leaving the duchy to his only daughter and heiress, Marie de Bourgogne (Mary the Rich of Burgundy).

There are three horoscopes for him in Belle's manuscripts: two in MS 1711 and one in NAL 398. They all display the same birth date and time but the one on f. 83v has a slightly different configuration.

Charles the Bold – Horoscope 1: MS 1711 f. 81v:

Figure of the nativity of the most illustrious prince and Lord Charles duke of the Burgundians, which was in the year of Christ 1433, hours 13, minutes 10 after noon, 10 days of November, and it was the day of [blank] hour [blank] at the latitude of 50 degrees.⁴⁷⁸

In this horoscope Charles is referred to as 'duke of the Burgundians', a title that he received only after his father's death in 1467. The latitude given is 50°, although Charles was born in Dijon, at 47° North.

Charles the Bold – Horoscope 2: MS 1711 f. 83v:

Chart of the nativity of the Lord of Charlus [Charolais], which was in the year of Christ 1433 incomplete, afternoon 10 days of November by 13 hours and 10 minutes, in the night following the day of Mars, which is the night of Saturn. And the Moon was the lady of the hour.⁴⁷⁹

This horoscope has the same birth data and adds the planetary rulers for the day and hour, which were omitted in the previous chart. It refers to Charles as 'lord of Charolais' (*dominus de Charlus*), a title he used only during his father's lifetime before he inherited the title of duke. This suggests that this horoscope was calculated before Philip's death in 1467, although Belle may have copied it long after that date. Under the title he adds a comment about this chart's origin:

⁴⁷⁸ Figura Nativitatis Illustrissimi principis et domini domini Karoli Burgundorum ducis que fuit anno Christi 1433 horis 13 minutis 10 post meridiem 10 dies Novembris et fuit dies [blank] hora [blank] Ad latitudinem 40 gradus, MS 1711 f. 81v.

⁴⁷⁹ Figura nati[vitatis] domini de Charlus, que fuit anno Christi 1433 imperfecto, post meridiem 10 dies Novembris per 13 horas cum minutis 10, in nocte sequente diem Martis, qui fuit nox ♃. Et fuit Lunam domina hore, MS 1711 f. 83v.

Thus it was written in the exemplar: horoscope of the nativity of *domini d5 Charl5s* [domini di Charlus – Lord of Charlus], etc.⁴⁸⁰

This suggests that Belle had access to some archive or the private notes of an astrologer, perhaps one from a previous generation, who had obtained the horoscope when Charles was not yet duke of Burgundy.

The planetary configurations in this chart are slightly different from the previous ones probably due to a more accurate calculation or the use of a different table; they are also more precise noting not only the degree but also the minute for every planet and house cusp. For instance, the Ascendant is at 17°33' instead of 15° Virgo and the Midheaven at 16°46' instead of 11° Gemini. This horoscope omits the two lots calculated in the previous chart but includes the Lot of the Father (*Pars Patris*) at 2°30' Cancer in the tenth house (a significant calculation, considering his father was Philip the Good). In the margin Belle adds a list with the most relevant planetary aspects in the horoscope:

*	♃	♃	<i>veniens</i>
♂	♂	♃	<i>transiens</i>
☐	♃	♃	[illegible]
♁	♂	♃	<i>veniens</i>
☐	♀	♃	<i>per retrogradum</i>
♁	♃	♃	<i>per retrogradum</i>

The first aspect is incorrectly noted as a sextile and is in fact a square (Moon at 16° Scorpio, Jupiter at 20° Leo). The term *veniens* means that the faster planet in the pair is moving towards (in astrological terms: applying to) the exact degree of the other; the aspect is forming and therefore getting stronger; *transiens* means that the faster planet is moving away (separating from) and that the aspect is weakening. *Per retrogradum* means that the faster planet is applying to the other in retrograde movement.

Charles the Bold – Horoscope 3: NAL 398 f. 90rb2:

Figure of the disposition of the orb [horoscope] at the time of birth of the most illustrious *pr3nc3p3s* et *dom3n3 k1r4l3 d5c3s b5r* (*principis et domini Karoli ducis Bur* – prince and Lord Charles Duke of Burgundy), which was in the year of Christ 1433, in 10 days of November, by 13 hours and 10 minutes afternoon. Day of [blank], hour [blank].⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸⁰ Sic erat scripta in exemplari. Figura nativati domini *54 Chayl5s*, etc., MS 1711 f. 83v.

⁴⁸¹ Figura dispositionis orbis tempore ortus illustrissimi *pr3nc3p3s* et *dom3n3 k1r4l3 d5c3s b5r* que fuit in anno Christi 1433 in 10 die Novembris per 13 horas et 10 minutis post meridiem dia [blank] hora [blank], NAL 398 f. 90rb2.

This horoscope is identical in every aspect to the one in MS 1711 f. 81v; the horoscope in MS 1711 f. 83v seems to have been calculated with tables of planetary positions.

In all three cases, the planetary configurations correspond to 11 November 1433, not the day before as Belle states in the three horoscopes. This apparent discrepancy is explained by the use of the different systems for time notation: Charles was born at 1:13 am, that is, in the first hours of 11 November, but for Belle, who was using a system based on the planetary hours, that would still be the night of the 10 November; the 11 November would only begin at sunrise. This notation is explained in more detail in the duplicate of Charles's horoscope in f. 83v where Belle states that the birth took place 'after midday of 10 days of November by 13 hours and 10 minutes, in the night following the day of Mars, which is the night of Saturn'.⁴⁸²

In Lat. 7427, f. 134v, there is another horoscope for Charles the Bold with 25° Virgo rising;⁴⁸³ Jean Vesale also calculated a horoscope for Charles the Bold, with Libra rising.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² Post meridiem, 10 diei Novembris, per 13 horas cum minutis 10, in nocte sequente diem Martis, que fuit nox ♃, MS 1711 f. 83v.

⁴⁸³ Paris, BnF Lat. 7427, f. 134v; the folio also includes the horoscope of Charles's daughter, Mary of Burgundy, who is not part of Belle's collection.

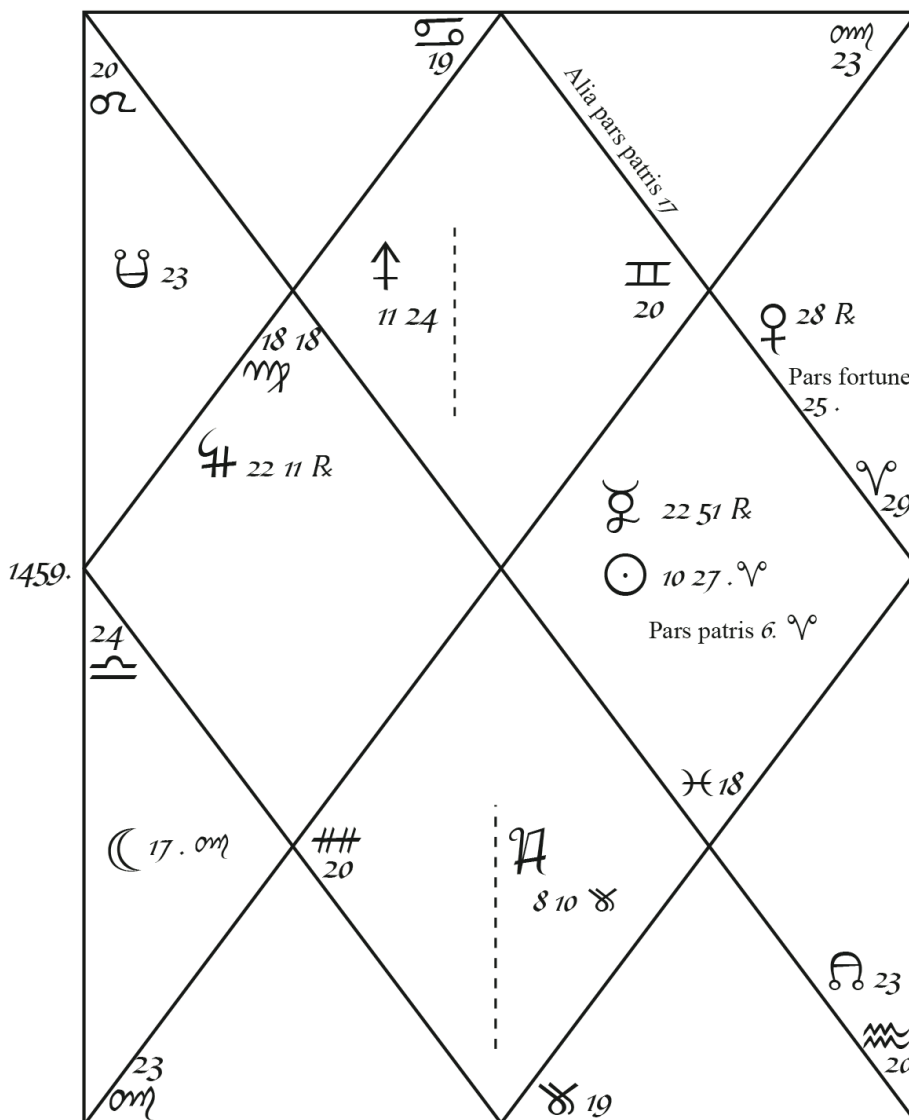
⁴⁸⁴ Boudet, 'Les astrologues et le pouvoir', pp. 28-29; the horoscope is reproduced on p. 59.

Table 22 – Horoscopes for Charles the Bold

MS 1711 f. 81v and NAL 398 f. 90rb2		MS 1711 f. 83v	
House I 15° Virgo	Venus 11° Libra	House I 17°33' Virgo	Venus 10°47' Libra
House II 14° Libra	Pars Fortune 26° Virgo	House II 18°18' Libra	Pars Fortune 17°40' Scorpio
House III 14° Scorpio	Moon 16° Scorpio Mercury 24° Scorpio Sun 27°41' 27°41' Scorpio	House III 17°40' Scorpio	Moon 15°47' Scorpio Mercury 24°55' Scorpio R. Sun 27°41' Scorpio
House IV 11° Sagittarius	North Node 05° Capricorn Pars Regni 17° Capricorn	House IV 14°46' Sagittarius	North Node 04°14' Capricorn
House V 11° Capricorn		House V 13°56' Capricorn	Saturn 12°44' Aquarius
House VI 12° Aquarius	Saturn 13° Mars 18° Aquarius	House VI 14°21' Aquarius	Mars 17°13' Aquarius
House VII 15° Pisces		House VII 17°33' Pisces	
House VIII 14° Aries		House VIII 18°18' Aries	
House IX 14° Taurus		House IX 17°40' Taurus	
House X 11° Gemini	South Node 05° Cancer	House X 14°46' Cancer	Pars Patris 02:30 Cancer South Node 04°19' Cancer
House XI 11° Cancer		House XI 13°56' Cancer	
House XII 12° Leo	Jupiter 20°11' Leo	House XII 14°21' Leo	Jupiter 20°11' Leo

In most cases the differences are related to the rounding of the planetary positions (for example Saturn at 12°44' Aquarius in one horoscope and at 13° Aquarius in the other); the differences in house cusps are the consequence of slightly different birth times.

Maximilian I, emperor of Austria
 MS 1711 f. 82r – NAL 398 f. 93ra2: 22 March 1459, 16:40, Wiener, Neustadt, Austria
 (47°49'N, 16°15'E)



House I – 18°18' Virgo Jupiter 22°11' Virgo retrograde	House VII – 18°18' Pisces Pars Patris 06° Aries Sun 10°37' 27" Aries Mercury 22°51' retrograde
House II – 24° Libra Moon 17° Scorpio	House VIII – 24° Aries Pars Fortune 25° Aries Venus 28° Aries retrograde
House III – 23° Scorpio	House IX – 23° Taurus Alia Pars Patris 17° Gemini
House IV – 20° Sagittarius Saturn 08°10' Capricorn	House X – 20° Gemini Mars 11°24' Cancer
House V – 19° Capricorn	House XI – 19° Cancer
House VI – 20° Aquarius South Node 23° Aquarius	House XII – 20° Leo North Node 23° Leo

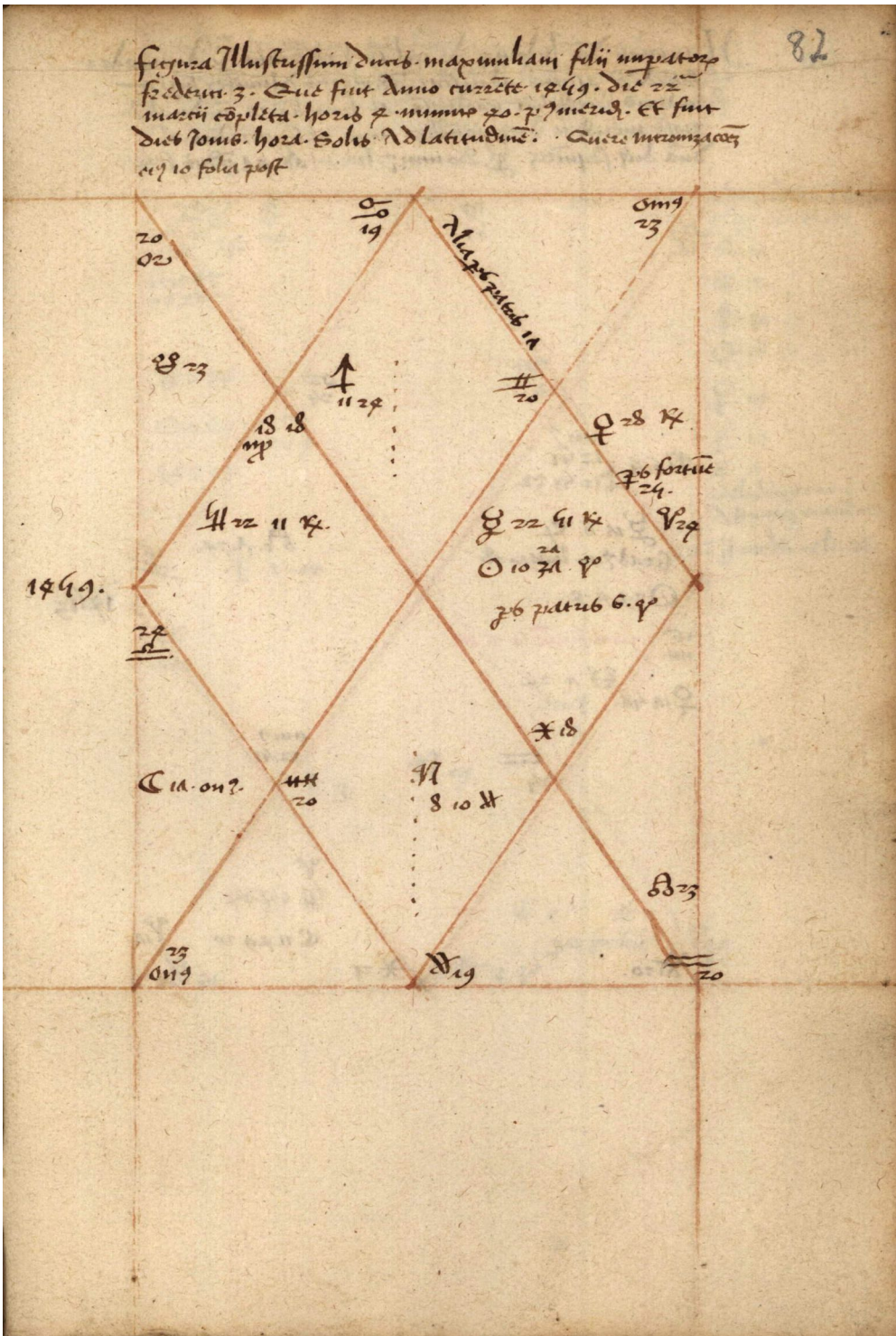


Figure 24 – MS 1711, folio 82r

Maximilian was the son of Emperor Frederick III and Eleanor of Portugal. In 1477 he married Mary of Burgundy (1457-1482), the daughter of Charles the Bold and Isabella of Bourbon. They had two sons: Philip the Handsome and Margaret of Austria. Mary died in 1482 leaving Maximilian her vast estate. In 1483, he betrothed his daughter Margaret to the future Charles VIII of France, as part of the Treaty of Arras. Maximilian was elected king of the Romans in February 1486 and crowned on 9 April of that same year in Aachen. In 1490 he married by proxy Anne of Brittany, but the marriage, which was never consummated, was eventually dissolved by the Pope. In 1493 he became Holy Roman Emperor and died in 1519.

The horoscope in MS 1711 f. 82r states in its title:

Figure of the most illustrious Duke Maximilian, son of the Emperor Frederick III, which was at the current year 1459, 22nd day of March complete, hour 4, minutes 40 after noon. And it was the day of Jupiter, the hour of the Sun, at the latitude of [blank]. Seek his coronation ten pages after [this one].⁴⁸⁵

In NAL 398 f.93ra2, the horoscope presents the same data and adds a reference to the lutation before birth, which in this case occurred at 7° Aries:

Nativity of the most illustrious Lord Maximilian, son of the Emperor Frederick III. Current year 1459, 22nd day of March, hours 4, minutes 40, day of Jupiter, hour of the Sun, degree of the opposition [of the luminaries] 7 Aries.⁴⁸⁶

Both horoscopes have two different Lots of the Father: one at 6° Aries designated *Pars Patris*, and the other at 17° Gemini designated *Alia Pars Patris*. The first, in Aries, was calculated by projecting the distance between Jupiter and the Sun from the Ascendant. This is an alternative formula for horoscopes where Saturn (one of the planets involved in the calculation of the lot) happens to be combust.⁴⁸⁷ This is not the case with Maximilian's horoscope. The second lot, in Gemini, was calculated by the usual method explained by Alcabitius: the distance from the Sun to Saturn projected from the Ascendant.⁴⁸⁸ As no other lot is represented in the chart (except for the Lot of Fortune), the emphasis given to the father must be intentional as Maximilian was the son and heir of Emperor Frederic III. Belle seems to be experimenting with which lot calculation better represents the native's circumstances. The second lot, at 17° Gemini, is placed on the cusp of the tenth house, a much more prominent position and better suited to

⁴⁸⁵ Figura Illustrissimi ducis Maximiliani filii imperatoris Frederici 3 que fuit anno currente 1459 die 22 martii completa horis 4 minutis 40 post meridiem Et fuit dies Jovis hora Solis ad latitudinem [blank space]. Quere intronizationem eius 10 folia post, MS 1711 f. 82r.

⁴⁸⁶ Nativitas illustrissimi domini Maximiliani filii imperatoris F. 3. Anno currente 1459, die 22 martii hora 4 minutis 40, die ♃, hora ☉, gradus ♂ 7 Arietis, NAL 398 f. 93ra2.

⁴⁸⁷ See for instance Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, 8.2.7, p. 1058.

⁴⁸⁸ Alcabitius, *Introduction*, V, 7, p. 143. See 'Lots' in Appendix I.

represent the emperor than the first, which is in the seventh and combust of the Sun. In NAL 398, Belle again represents the five-degree rule pictorially by placing the second Lot of the Father in the tenth house, although the house cusp is at 20° Gemini and the lot is at 17° of the same sign; in MS 1711 the lot is depicted in the ninth house.

A different version of this horoscope was calculated by the court astrologer Regiomontanus (1436-1476) at the request of Maximilian's mother, Empress Eleanor.⁴⁸⁹ This chart has different house cusps because it is calculated for 5 pm instead of 4:40 pm.⁴⁹⁰ Although Maximilian's birthtime had been recorded with reasonable precision, Regiomontanus decided to rectify the chart, a common practice at that time. It is possible that young Regiomontanus, who by then was only twenty-two years old, used this complex calculation to display his astrological proficiency. However, his reputation had already been established by the almanacs for the years 1448 and 1451.⁴⁹¹ The table below shows the differences in these horoscopes.

Table 23 – The house cusps in Maximilian's horoscopes

Belle – birthtime 16:40			Regiomontanus – birthtime 17:00		
House I	18°18 Virgo	18°18 Pisces	House VII	26°12 Virgo	26°12 Pisces
House II	24° Libra	24° Aries	House VIII	27°56 Libra	27°56 Aries
House III	23° Scorpio	23° Taurus	House IX	27°35 Scorpio	27°35 Taurus
House IV	20° Sagittarius	20° Gemini	House X	25°10 Sagittarius	25°10 Gemini
House V	19° Capricorn	19° Cancer	House XI	23°30 Capricorn	23°30 Cancer
House VI	20° Aquarius	20° Leo	House XII	23°36 Aquarius	23°36 Leo

There are also some divergences in some planetary positions, namely Mercury and Mars. This version of Maximilian's horoscope is repeated twice in Clm 10667 with the same birthtime, 5pm, the same Ascendant, 4° Virgo, and MC, 25° Gemini, but with differences in the intermediate house cusps; the planetary positions are similar.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁹ Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, cod. Lat. 5179, 2v. A facsimile is included in Hayton, *The Crown and the Cosmos*, p. 15. See also Hayton, 'Astrology as Political Propaganda: Humanist Responses to the Turkish Threat in Early-Sixteenth-Century Vienna', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 38, 2007, pp. 61-91, and Zinner, *Regiomontanus: His Life and Work*, E. Brown (tr.), Amsterdam, 1990, pp. 32-34. As to the horoscope of Empress Eleanor, a complete transcript of the judgement and be found in *Joannis Regiomontani Opera Collectanea*, Felix Schmeidler (ed.), Osnabrück, 1972, pp. 1-33.

⁴⁹⁰ Regiomontanus calculates Maximilian's horoscope using the Alcabitius house system, not the 'rational system' which he later promoted. The tables for this system were published only in 1490 long after his death.

⁴⁹¹ As noted in Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, p. 32. See also 'Rectification' in Appendix I.

⁴⁹² Munich, BsB, Clm 10667, f. 19 and f. 28. The horoscopes of Empress Eleanor can be found in Munich, Bsb, Clm 453, ff. 78r-85v and Clm 960 ff. 11r-20v, and in the aforementioned Schmeidler (ed.), *Joannis Regiomontani Opera Collectanea*, pp. 2-33.

A third version of this horoscope with 4° Virgo on the Ascendant corresponding to a birthtime at 3pm, can be found in two other manuscripts in BnF, lat. 7443C written by Nicolaus Gugler, and Lat. 7395 by Luca Gaurico.⁴⁹³ The horoscopes are almost identical with some minor differences: the Moon is absent in Lat. 7443C and at 18° Scorpio in Lat. 7395, and Mars is at 23° Leo in the former and at 13° Leo in the latter.

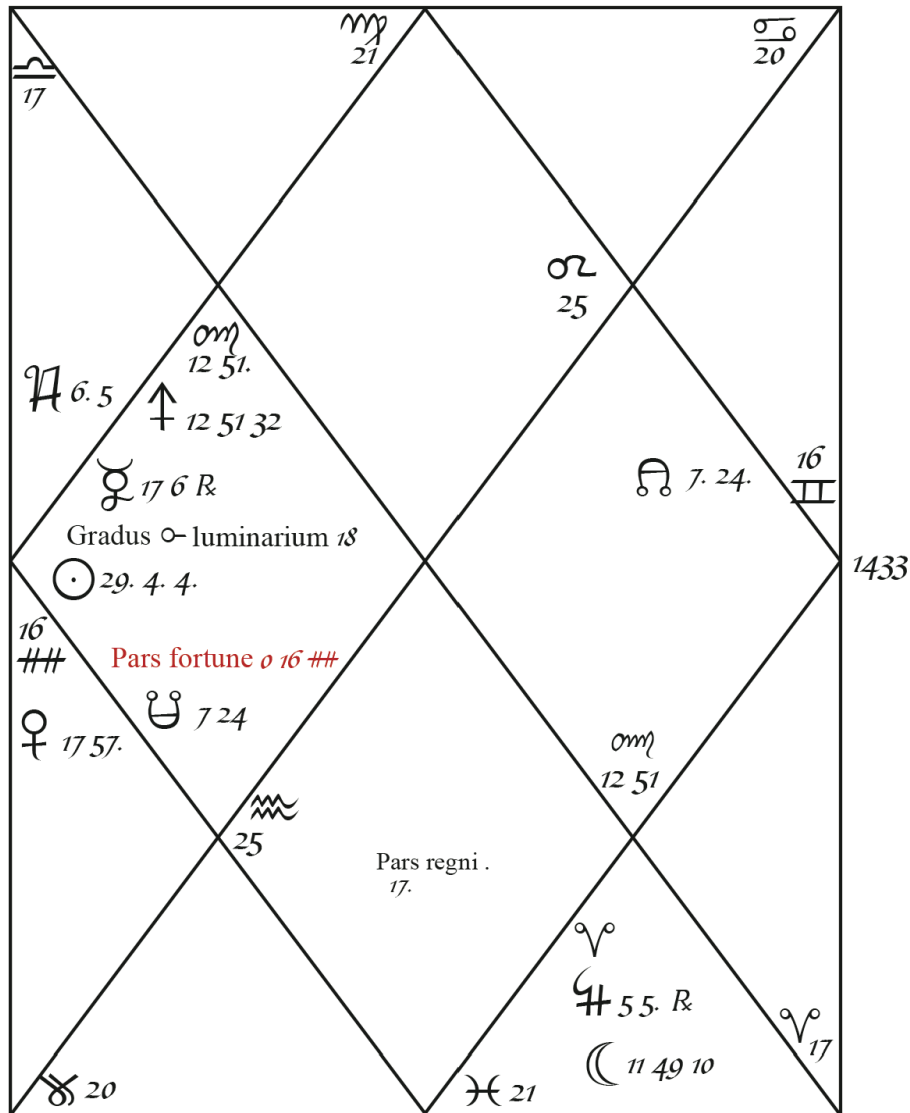
Yet another version of Maximilian's horoscope was calculated by Jos Grubeck shortly before the emperor's death; the birthtime given is 'two hours before sunset'.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ Respectively, Paris, BnF, lat. 7443C, f. 333v and Paris, BnF, lat. 7395, f. 328r. Details in Juste, *CCAL II*, pp 168-169 and 136-139, respectively.

⁴⁹⁴ Zinner, *Regionmontanus*, pp. 34-35.

Louis de Culant

MS 1711 f. 82v: 12 November 1453, 06:0, Chateau de Culant, Cher (46°32'N, 02°21'E)



House I – 12°51 Scorpio Mars 12°51'32" Scorpio Mercury 17°06 Scorpio retrograde Gradus coniunctionis lunarem 18° Scorpio Sun 29°04'04" Scorpio Pars Fortune 00°16 Sagittarius North Node 07°24 Sagittarius	House VII – 12°51 Taurus South Node 07°24 Gemini
House II – 16° Sagittarius Venus 17°51 Sagittarius	House VIII – 16° Gemini
House III – 20° Capricorn	House IX – 20° Cancer
House IV – 25° Aquarius	House X – 25° Leo
House V – 21° Pisces Jupiter 05°05 Moon 11°49'10"	House XI – 21° Virgo
House VI – 17° Aries	House XII – 17° Libra Saturn 06°05 Scorpio

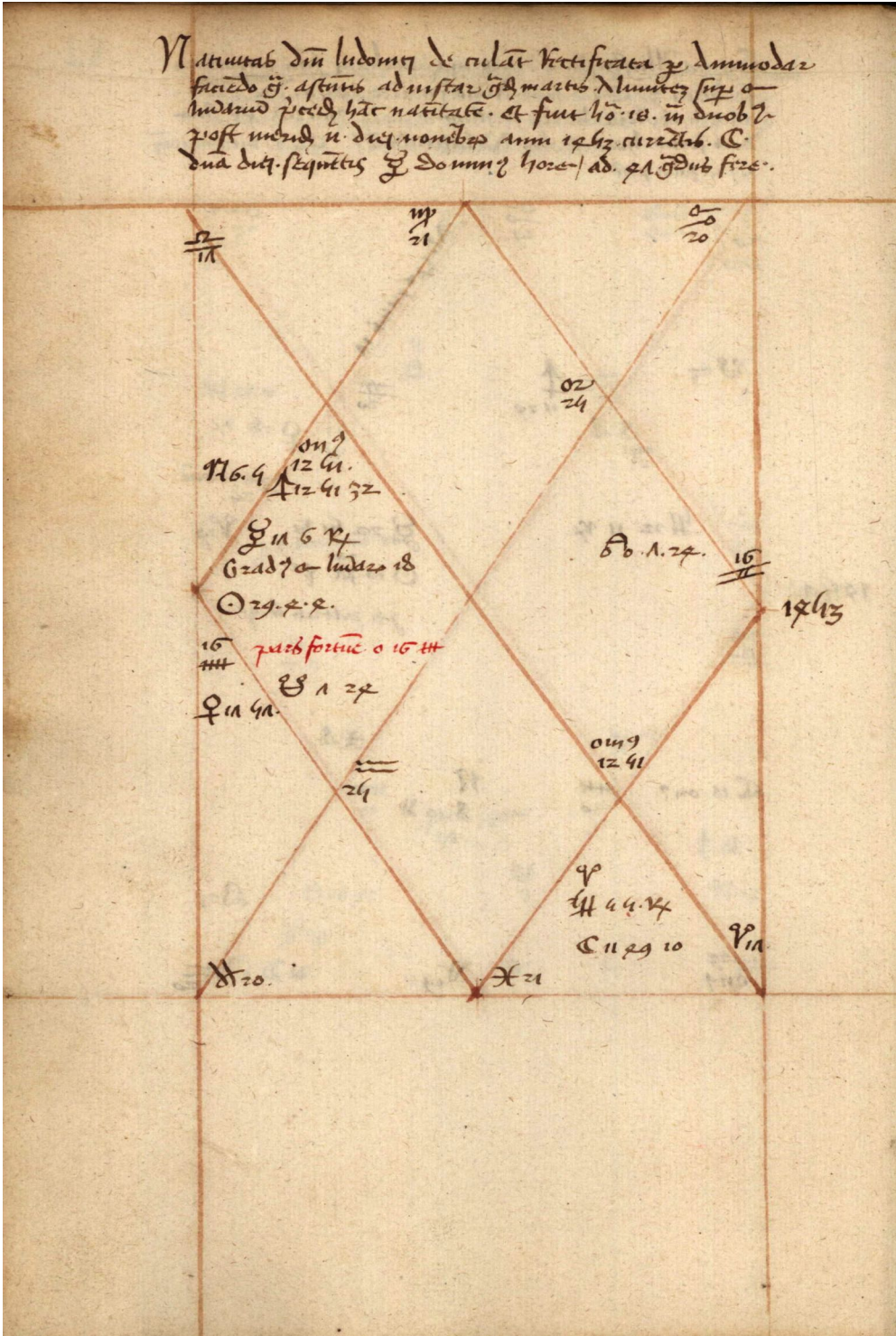


Figure 25 – MS 1711, folio 82v

This native is most probably related to Admiral Louis de Culant (1360-1444), one of the noblemen who carried the Holy Ampoulla from the basilica of Saint-Remi to the cathedral of Reims in 1429 for the coronation of Charles VII. Since the admiral had no children this may be the nativity of the son (or grandson) of one of his two nephews: Philip, *Maréchal* of France, and Charles, *Grand Maître d'Hôtel* of France.

Nativity of the Lord Louis de Culant, rectified by *animodar*, making the degree of the Ascendant like the degree of Mars, *almutem* over the conjunction of the luminaries previous to this nativity. And it was 18 hours, two minutes after noon of the 11th day of November, year 1453 current, the Moon being lady of the following day, Mercury ruler of the hour, at 47 degrees approximately.⁴⁹⁵

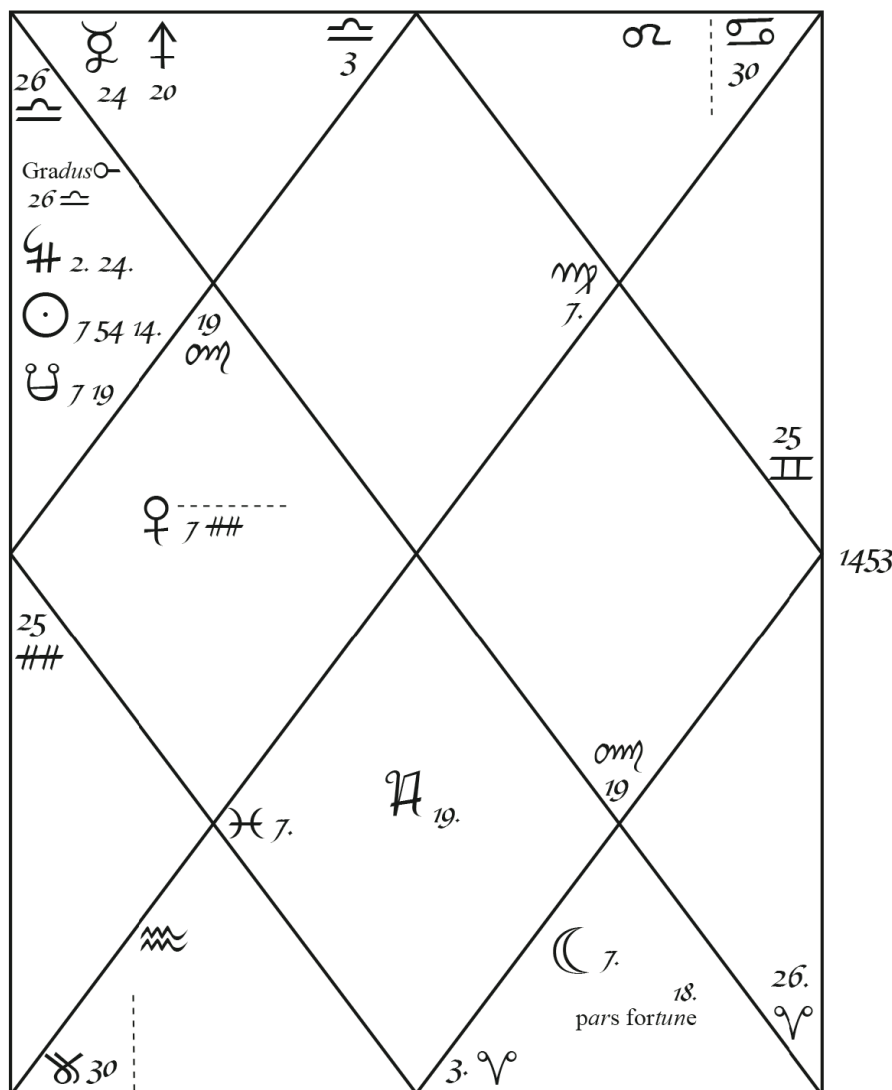
Belle places what appears to be the Lot of Fortune at 00°16' Sagittarius, but if it is indeed the Lot of Fortune he made a mistake, as the lot should be at 24° Capricorn. Perhaps he was calculating the Lot of Boldness (*Pars Fortitudinis*),⁴⁹⁶ which would fall at 29° Scorpio, close enough to Belle's lot.

⁴⁹⁵ Nativitas domini Ludovici de Culant rectificata per *animodar* faciendo gradus ascendentis ad instar gradus Martis *almutem* super ☿ luminarium precedentem hanc nativitatem. Et fuit horis 18 minutis duobus post meridiem 11 diei Novembris anno 1453 currentis ☽ domina diei sequentis dominus hore ad 47 gradus fere, MS 1711 f. 82v.

⁴⁹⁶ The distance between Mars and the Sun projected from the Ascendant. See 'Lots' in Appendix I.

Lord of Craon

MS 1711 f. 83r: 22 October 1436, 08:00, (Château de Sully-sur-Loire: 47°46'N, 02°22'E?)



House I – 19° Scorpio	House VII – 19° Taurus
Venus 7° Sagittarius	
House II – 25° Sagittarius	House VIII – 25° Gemini
House III – 30° Capricorn	House IX – 30° Cancer
House IV – 7° Pisces	House X – 7° Virgo
Saturn 19° Pisces	
House V – 3° Aries	House XI – 3° Libra
Moon 7° Aries	Mars 20°
Pars Fortune 18° Aries	Mercury 24°
House VI – 26° Aries	House XII – 26° Libra
South Node 07°19' Taurus [missing]	Gradus coniunctionis 26° Libra
	Jupiter 02°24'
	Sun 07°59'14"
	North Node 07°19' Scorpio

This is possibly a member of the old Craon family, which died out in 1415 and was assimilated into the Beauvau family in 1421.⁴⁹⁷

Nativity of the lord of Craon, which was in the year of Christ current 1436, day of the Moon 22nd of October, around the 8th hour before noon. And the Ascendant [degree] was verified by *almutem* over the degree of the conjunction preceding [birth] and by the place of the Moon in the nativity and in the conception.⁴⁹⁸

By relating the title 'lord of Craon' to the year 1436 one possibility arises: Georges II de la Trémoille, called lord of Craon (*sire de Craon*), born in Sully-sur-Loire.⁴⁹⁹ The title of lord of Craon was inherited from his older brother, Louis I de la Trémoille, at the request of their mother, Catherine de l'Isle-Bouchard.⁵⁰⁰ He was instrumental in the reconciliation between Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, and King Charles VII of France. After the death of Charles the Bold in 1477, he was nominated governor of Burgundy by Louis XI – a position strongly contested by Charles's daughter, Marie, who gathered an army to expel him. Once defeated, La Trémoille retreated to his lands.

The concealment of this native's name seems unnecessary since the reference to his title made him easy to identify, but Belle might have wanted to omit La Trémoille's name due to his military setback at the service of Louis XI.

Belle seeks to determine his exact moment of birth, by *animodar* and by the *trutina* of Hermes. He also decides that Mars is the *almutem* of the nativity since it is the planet that assembles most dignities in the five *hylegical* places.⁵⁰¹

MS 1711 f. 83v – Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy – *discussed on f. 83v.*

⁴⁹⁷ Jeanne de Craon, wife of Pierre de Beauvau, demanded that her son, Jean IV de Beauvau (1421-1503) would take the arms of the Craon family. See Galand, *Les seigneurs de Châteauneuf-sur-Sarthe en Anjou: de Robert le Fort à la Revolution (vers 852-1791)*, Turquant, 2005, p. 115, and also Saint-Simon, *Mémoires complètes et authentiques du duc de Saint-Simon*, XIX, Paris, 1843.

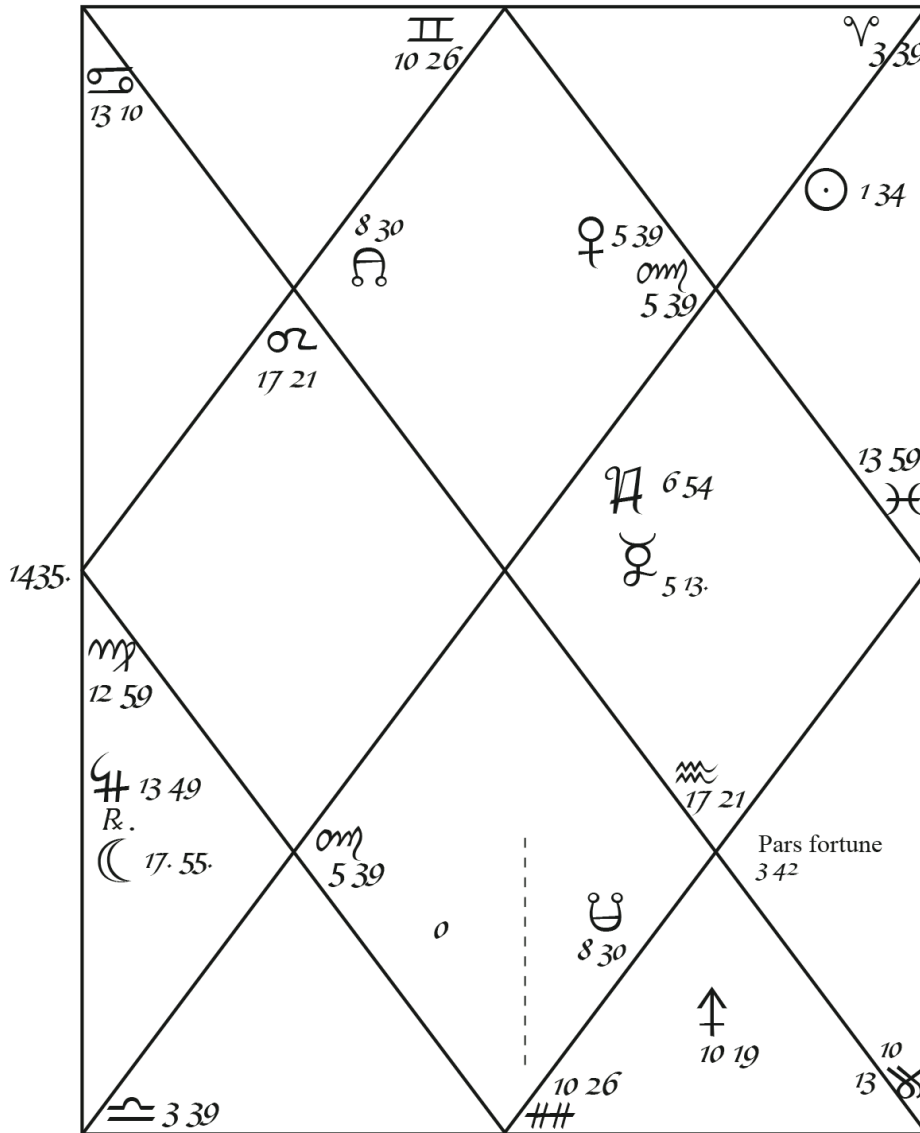
⁴⁹⁸ Nati[vitas] domini de Craon que fuit anno Christi currente 1436 die Lune 22 Octobris circa octava hora ante meridiem et fuit verificatum ascendens per *almutem* super gradum [coniunctionis] precedentis et per locum Lune in nativitate et in conceptione, MS 1711 f. 83r.

⁴⁹⁹ His birthdate is mentioned as 1437 or 1430 depending on the source. The house cusps in this horoscope coincide, in general terms, with the horoscope recalculated for Sully-sur-Loire according to the alcabitus method, which supports the hypothesis of this being La Trémoille's nativity.

⁵⁰⁰ For Georges II de la Trémoille, see Contamine, 'Un serviteur de Louis XI dans sa lutte contre Charles le Téméraire: Georges de la Trémoille, sire de Craon (vers 1437-1481)', *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France*, 1976-1977, pp. 63-80.

⁵⁰¹ See 'Animodar' and 'Almutem' in Appendix I.

Marie d'Albret, countess of Nevers
Ms 1711 f. 84r – NAL f. 91rb2: 13 March 1435, 14:08, Cuffy, Cher 46°57'N; 03°03'E



House I – 17°21 Leo	House VII – 17°21 Aquarius
	Mercury 05°13 Pisces
	Saturn 06°13 Pisces
House II – 12°29 Virgo	House VIII – 12°49 Pisces
Jupiter 13°49 Virgo retrograde	Sun 01°39 Aries
Moon 17°55 Virgo	
House III – 3°39 Libra	House IX – 3°39 Aries
House IV – 5°39 Scorpio	House X – 5°39 Taurus
North Node 08°30 Sagittarius	Venus 05°39 Taurus
	South Node 08°30 Gemini
House V – 10°26 Sagittarius	House XI – 10°26 Gemini
Mars 10°19 Capricorn	
House VI – 13°10 Capricorn	House XII – 13°10 Cancer
Pars Fortune 03°42 Aquarius	

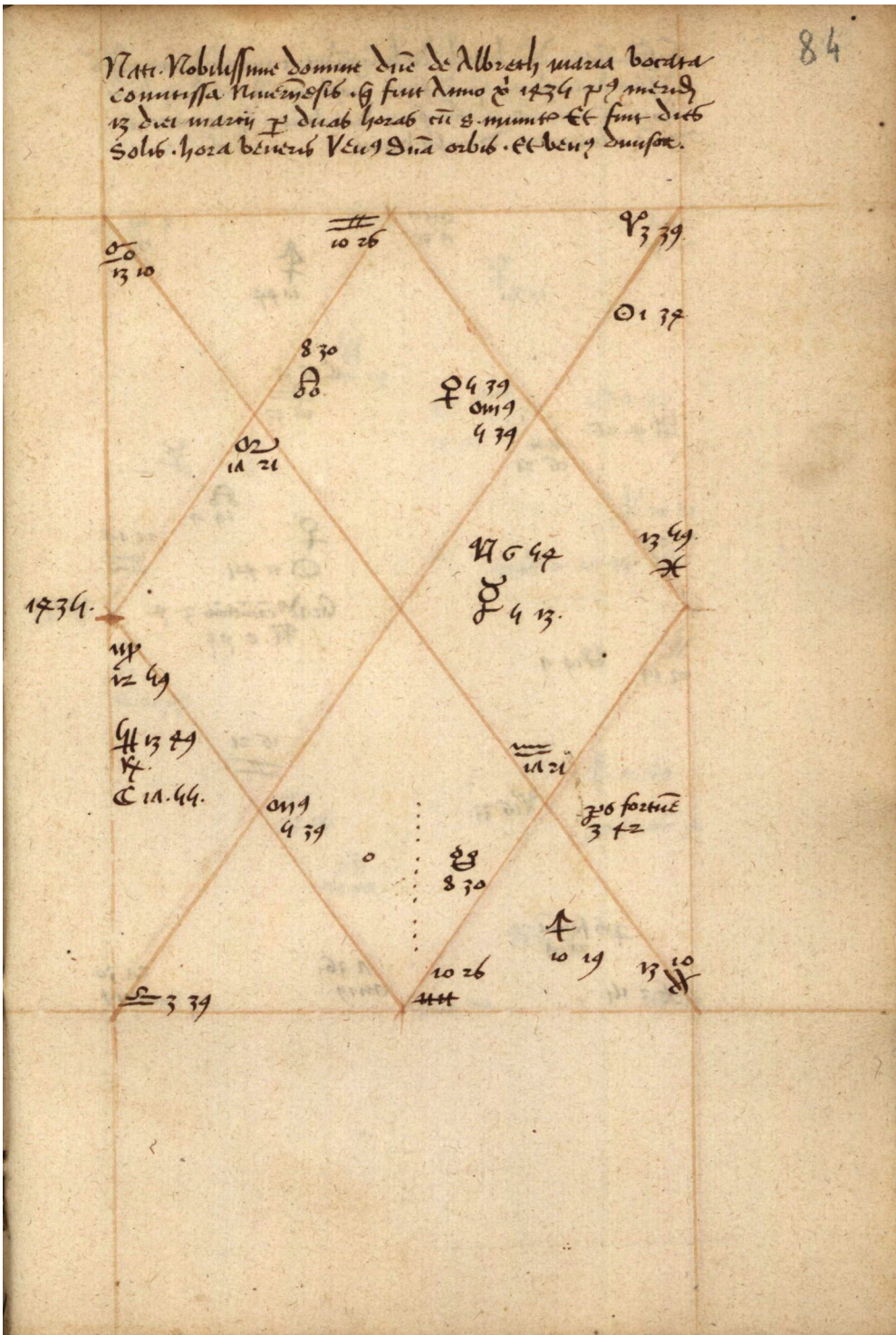


Figure 27 – MS 1711, folio 84r

Daughter of Charles II d'Albret and Anne d'Armagnac, she married Charles de Bourgogne, count of Nevers (horoscope below) in 1456, and became a widow in 1464. The horoscope in MS 1711 states:

Nativity of the most noble lady, Lady of Albreth, called Maria, Countess of Nevers, which was in the year of Christ 1435 after noon of the 13th day of March around two hours with 8 minutes, and it was the day of the Sun, hour of Venus; Venus was the 'lady of the orb' and Venus was the *divisor*.⁵⁰²

In NAL 398:

Nativity of the most noble lady, Lady *Mlr3e dllbr2th* (Marie d'Albret), Countess of Nevers, that was in the year 1435, afternoon of the 13th day of March, by 2 hours and 8 minutes. It was the day of the Sun, hour of Venus. Venus 'lady of the orb' and Venus *divisor*.⁵⁰³

In this horoscope, Belle mentions for the first time two techniques of prediction: the 'lord of the orb' that is, the ruler of the planetary hour at the moment of birth, and the *divisor*, that is, the planetary ruler of the term in which the Ascendant is travelling by means of direction.⁵⁰⁴ Belle chooses Venus as the *divisor* revealing that he is not using the Egyptian table of terms, the more common for this period, but the Ptolemaic table of terms, which he draws in MS 1711 f. 19r.⁵⁰⁵ The following table shows the differences between the two variants for the sign of Leo:

Table 24 – Egyptian and Ptolemaic terms in the sign of Leo

Terms:	1	5	10	15	20	25
Egyptian	♃ 6°	♀ 5°	♄ 7°	♁ 6°	♂ 6°	
Ptolemaic	♄ 6°	♁ 7°	♂ 5°	♀ 6°	♃ 6°	

In this horoscope, Venus is at 17°21' Leo, that is the eighteenth degree of the sign. According to the Ptolemaic sequence, it is in the term of Venus in Leo (where Venus rules from 18° to 24°) and so Venus is the *divisor*. In the Egyptian sequence that same section of the sign would be ruled by Mercury, which would have been the *divisor*.

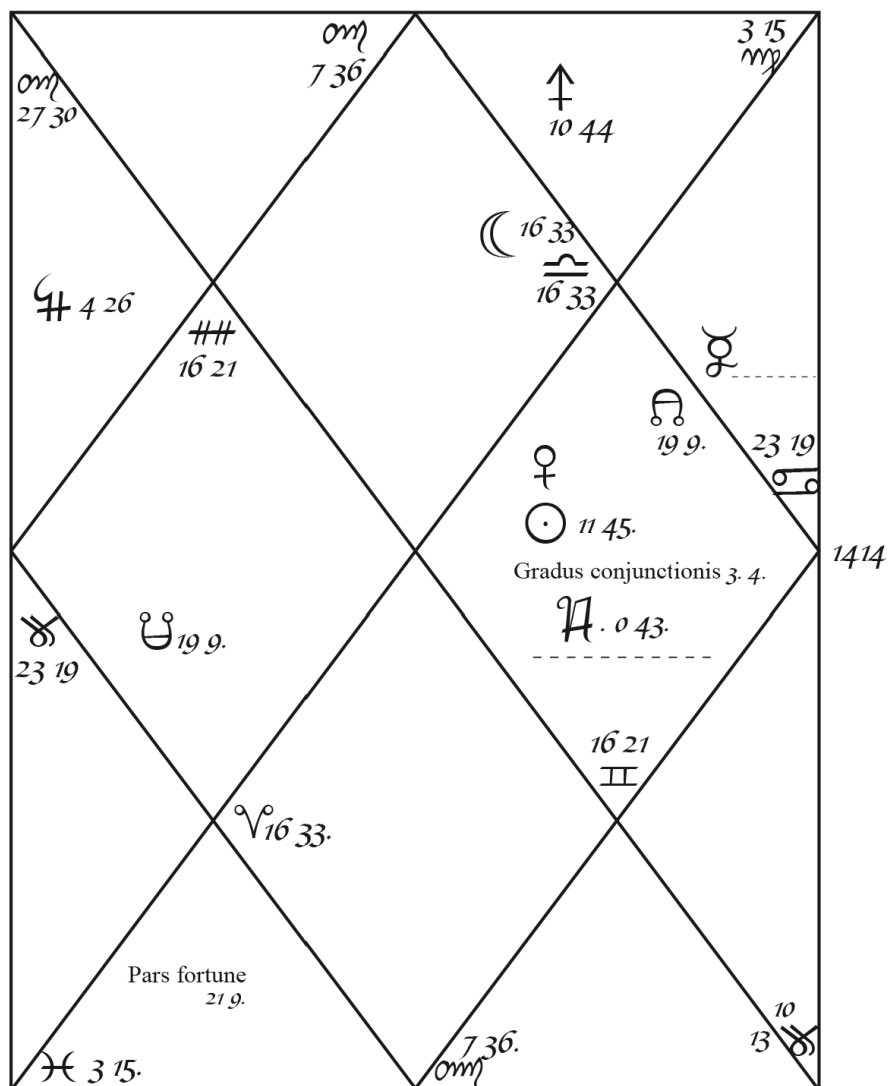
⁵⁰² Nativitas nobilissime domine domine de Albreth Marie vocate comitisse nivernensis que fuit anno Christi 1435 post meridiem 13 diei Martii per duas horas cum 8 minutis. Et fuit dies Solis hora Veneris Venus domina orbis et Venus *divisor*, MS 1711 f. 84r.

⁵⁰³ Nativitas nobilissime domine domine *Mlr3e dllbr2th* comitisse niverniensis que fuit anno 1435 post meridiem 13 diei martii per 2 horas cum 8 minutis. Fuit dies 1 hora 4. Venus domina orbis et Venus *divisor*, NAL 398 f. 91rb2.

⁵⁰⁴ See 'Lord of the Orb' and 'Divisor' in Appendix I. For the latter, see also Alcabitus, *Introduction*, IV.14, p. 129 Boudet, *Lire dans le ciel*, p. 123, n. 87; S. Sela (ed.), *Avenezra, Nativities*, p. 195.

⁵⁰⁵ The Ptolemaic terms can be found, with minor variants and copying mistakes, in other works, such as Alcabitus, *Introduction*, I.19, p. 29, Albiruni, *Instruction*, 453, p. 265, and '*Tabulas astronómicas e almanaque perdurável*', Biblioteca Nacional de España, Mss/3349, f. 10v (also known as '*Almanaques de Madrid*').

Charles I (Charles de Bourgogne), count of Nevers and Rethel
 MS 1711 f. 84v – NAL 398 f. 91ra1: 25 June 1414, 18:11, Clamecy, Nièvre (47°27'N, 03°31'E)



House I – 16°21 Sagittarius North Node 19°09 Capricorn	House VII – 16°21 Gemini South Node 19°09 Cancer Venus – no data Sun 11°45 Cancer Gradus conjunctionis 03°04 Cancer New Moon Saturn 00°43 Cancer (it is 29°22 Gemini)
House II – 23°19 Capricorn	House VIII – 23°19 Cancer
House III – 03°15 Pisces Pars Fortune 21°09 Pisces	House IX – 03°15 Virgo
House IV – 16°33 Aries	House X – 16°33 Libra Moon 16°33 Libra
House V – 07°36 Taurus	House XI – 07°36 Scorpio
House VI – 27°30 Taurus	House XII – 27°30 Scorpio Jupiter 04°26 Sagittarius

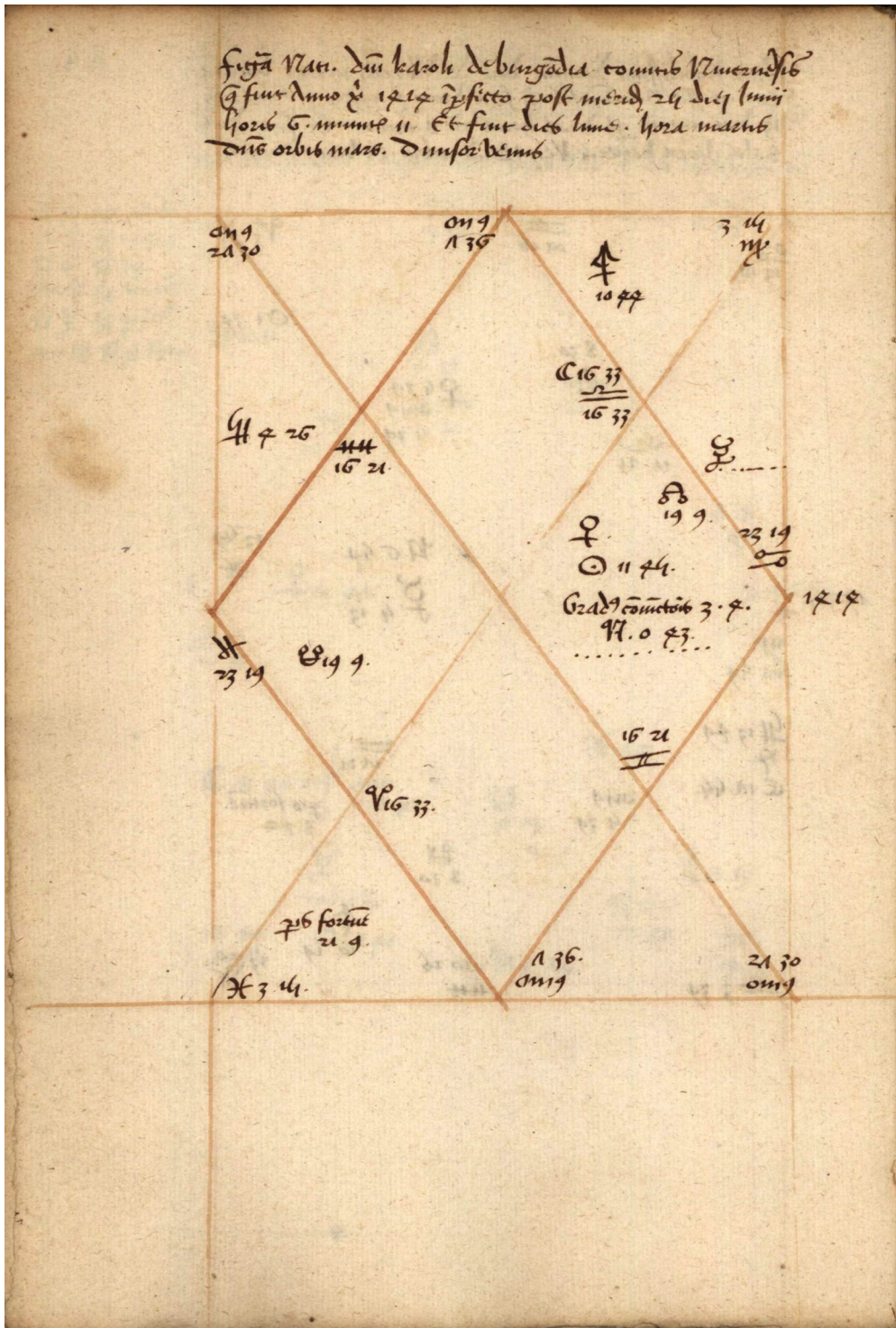


Figure 28 – MS 1711, folio 84v

Charles I, count of Nevers and Rethel (1414-1464), son of Philip II of Nevers and Bonne of Artois. His father died in 1415 at the Battle of Agincourt, and nine years later, in 1424, his mother married Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy. She died the following year, leaving Charles and his younger brother, Jean de Clamecy, with their stepfather. Their situation changed for the worse in 1430, with the marriage of Philip to Isabella of Portugal and was aggravated in 1433 by the birth of their son, Charles the Bold. In 1456, Charles de Bourgogne married Marie d'Albret, reinforcing his connections to Burgundy and his opposition to Louis XI, but not even this alliance could eliminate the growing tension between him and his stepfather: in 1460, Duke Philip accused his stepsons of practicing witchcraft against him and his son.⁵⁰⁶ To avoid further problems, Charles de Bourgogne escaped to France, where he died soon afterwards. The title passed to his brother Jean.

In MS 1711 f. 84v:

Figure of the nativity of the Lord Charles de Bourgogne, Count of Nevers, which was in the year of Christ 1414 imperfect, after noon of the 25th day of June by 6 hours and 11 minutes. And it was the day of the Moon, hour of Mars, 'lord of the orb' Mars, *divisor* Venus.⁵⁰⁷

In NAL 398 f. 91ra1:

Horoscope of the nativity of Lord *K1rol3 c4m3tis nivern2nsis* (Karoli comitis nivernensis – Charles, count of Nevers) which was in the year 1414 incomplete, afternoon, 25 of June, by six hours and 11 minutes. Day of the Moon, hour of Mars, 'lord of the orb' Mars, *divisor* Venus.⁵⁰⁸

The charts are similar, including the omission of the degree of Venus. In this case, Belle used the Egyptian sequence of terms to determine the *divisor* and not, as in the previous case, the Ptolemaic one. This apparent inconsistency may derive from Belle's own doubts in the face of different traditions. He displays a similar attitude towards the calculation of certain lots.

⁵⁰⁶ See K. Oschema, 'Entre superstition et expertise scientifique: l'astrologie et la prise de décision des ducs de Bourgogne', *Publications du Centre Européen d'Etudes Bourguignonnes*, 57, Neuchâtel, 2017, pp. 89-103, at p. 93.

⁵⁰⁷ Figura Nativitatis domini Karoli de Burgondia comitis nivernensis que fuit anno Christi 1414 imperfecto post meridiem 25 diei Junii horis 6 minutis 11. Et fuit dies Lune hora Martis dominus orbis Mars *divisor* Venus, MS 1711 f. 84v.

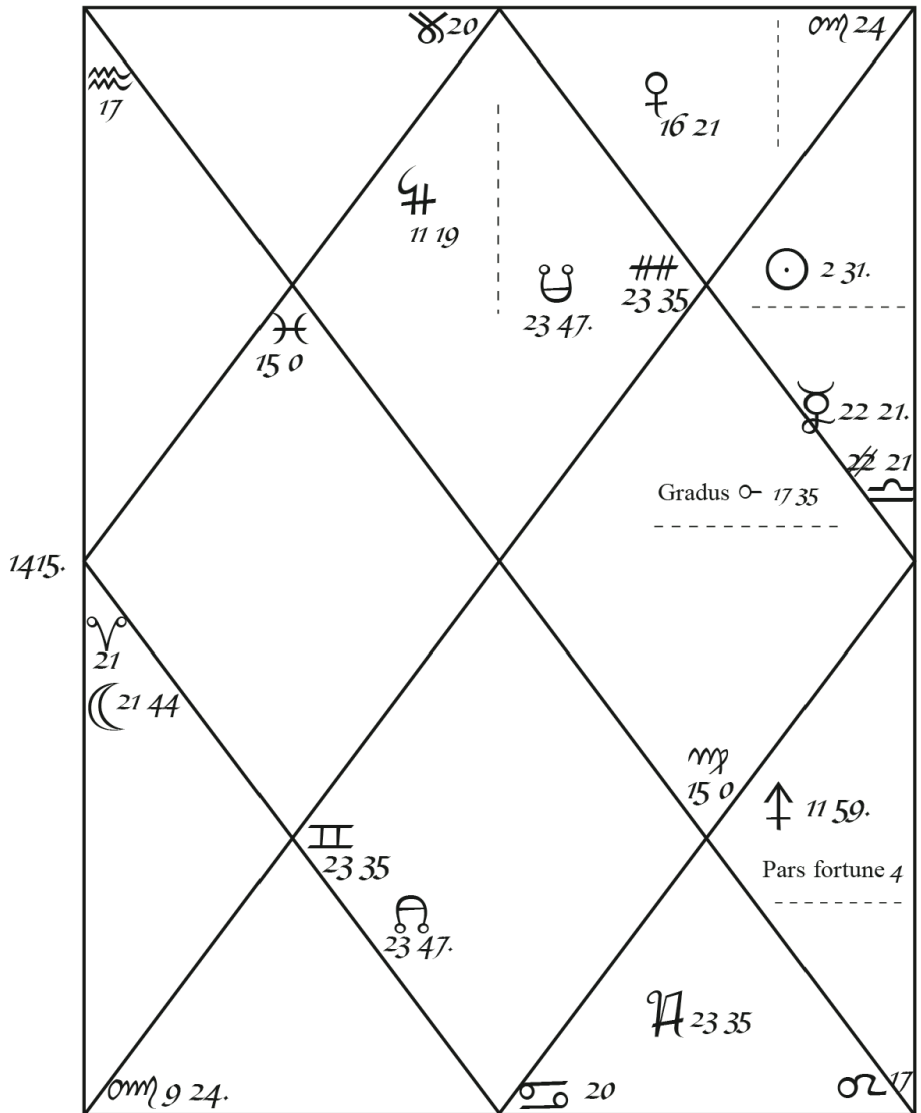
⁵⁰⁸ Figura nativitatis domini *K1rol3 c4m3tis nivern2nsis* que fuit anno 1414 imperfecto post meridiem 25 diei Junii per 6 horas cum 11 minutis. Die Lune hora Martis, dominus orbis ♂ *divisor* ♀, NAL 398 f. 91ra1.

Table 25 – Egyptian and Ptolemaic terms in the sign of Sagittarius

Terms:	1	5	10	15	20	25
Egyptian	♃ 12°		♀ 5°	♁ 4°	♄ 5°	♂ 4°
Ptolemaic	♃ 8°		♀ 6°	♁ 5°	♄ 6°	♂ 5°

In the Egyptian sequence, the term of Venus ranges from 13° to 17° degrees of Sagittarius; as the Ascendant is at 16°21' it falls under this term. Venus is therefore the *divisor*. In the Ptolemaic sequence, the degree of the would fall on the terms of Mercury (from 14° to 19° Sagittarius).

Jean de Bourgogne (Jean de Clamecy), count of Nevers
MS 1711 f. 85r – NAL 398 f. 91ra2: 17 October 1415, 15:31, Clamecy, Nièvre (47°27'N, 03°31'E)



House I – 15°00' Pisces	House VII – 15°00' Virgo
	Gradus conjunctionis 17°35'
House II – 21° Aries	House VIII – 21° Libra
Moon 21°44'	Mercury 22°21' Libra
House III – 24° Taurus	Sun 02°31'
House IV – 23°35' Gemini	House IX – 24° Scorpio
North Node 23°47' Gemini	Venus 16°21' Sagittarius
House V – 20° Cancer	House X – 23°35' Sagittarius
Saturn 13°35' Cancer	South Node 23°47' Sagittarius
House VI – 17° Leo	Jupiter 11°19' Capricorn
Pars Fortune 04° Virgo	House XI – 20° Capricorn
Mars 11°59' Virgo	House XII – 17° Aquarius

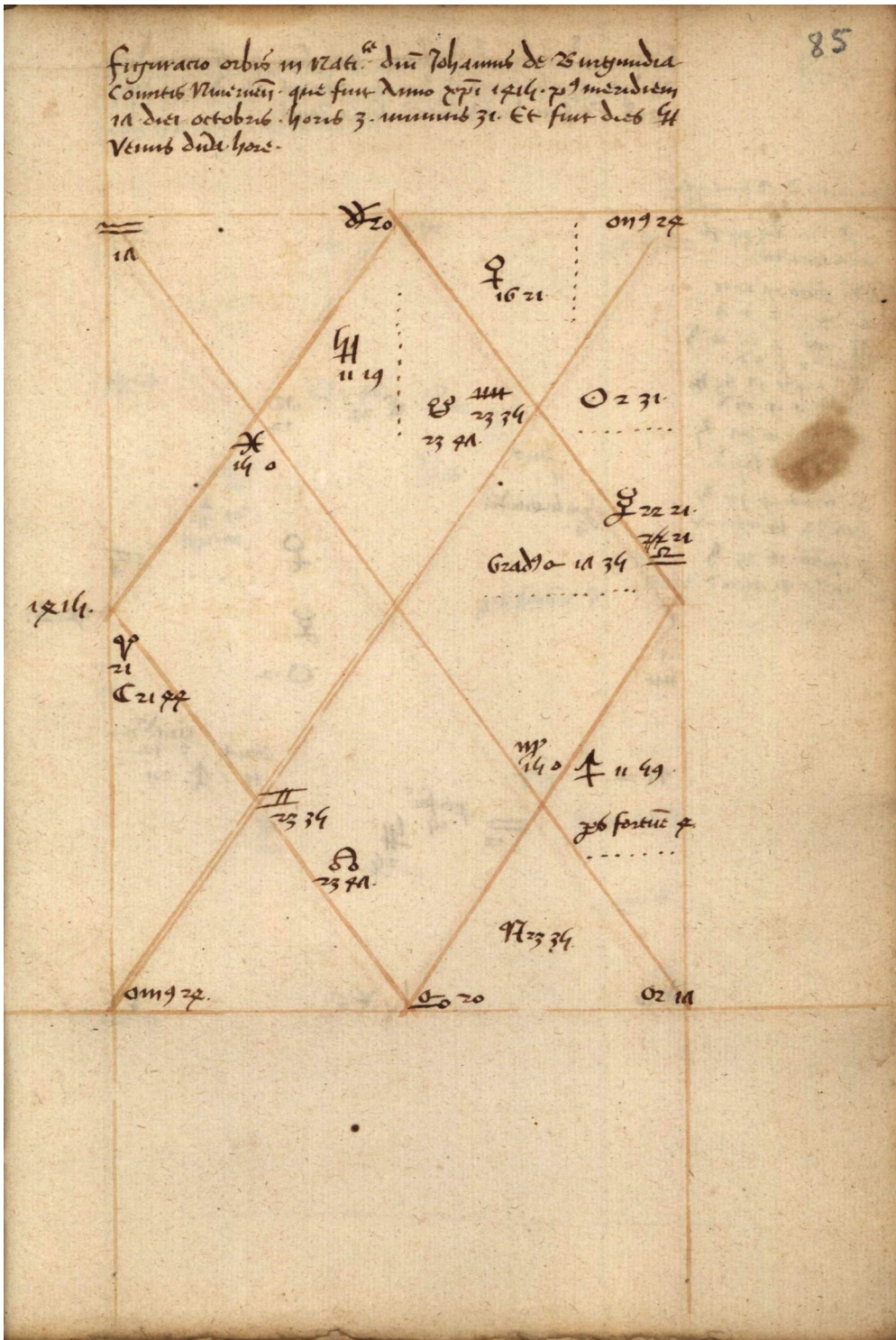


Figure 29 – MS 1711, folio 85r

Known as Jean de Clamecy, he was the posthumous son of Philip II of Nevers and Bonne of Artois. Initially he was on good terms with his stepfather, Philip the Good, and fought by his side in several battles, but he eventually collided with his stepbrother Charles the Bold and deserted to France, to join the army of Louis XI. He inherited the title of count of Nevers and Rethel in 1464 upon the death of his brother.

In MS 1711 f. 85r:

Image of the sphere in the nativity of Lord Jean de Bourgogne, count of Nevers, which was in the year of Christ 1415 after noon of the 17th day of October, 3 hours, 31 minutes. And it was the day of Jupiter and Venus was the lady of the hour.⁵⁰⁹

In NAL 398 f. 91ra2 the title is similar, with minor differences:

Image of the orb [horoscope] in the nativity of the Lord *Johannes de de B5rg5nd31* (Johannes de Burgundia – Jean de Bourgogne), now count of Nevers, which was in the year of the Lord 1415 incomplete, afternoon of the 17th day of October, 3 hours 31 minutes, day of Jupiter, hour of Venus.⁵¹⁰

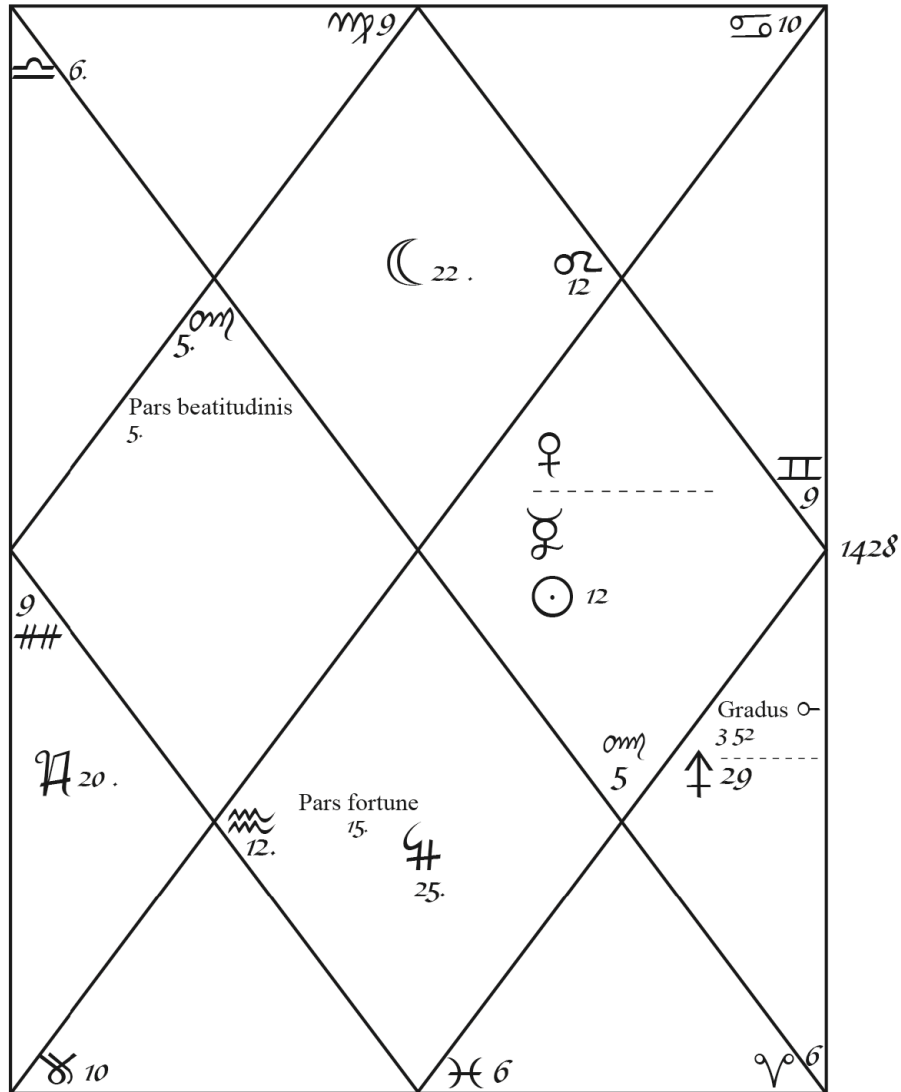
The comment 'now count of Nevers' reveals that his older brother, Charles of Burgundy, was already deceased. The horoscope was therefore calculated, or copied, sometime after 1464. In MS 1711, the native is simply called 'count of Nevers', without any reference to the title's newness, again suggesting this workbook was written sometime after NAL 398.

Contrarily to his brother, Jean was a supporter of Louis XI and thus an opposer of his stepbrother Charles the Bold, one of the leaders of the League of Public Weal.

⁵⁰⁹ Figuratō (*sic*) orbis in nativitate domini Johannis de Burgundia comitis nivernensis que fuit anno Christi 1415 post meridiem 17 diei Octobris horis 3 minutis 31 Et fuit dies ♃ Venus domina hore, MS 1711 f. 85r.

⁵¹⁰ Figuratō (*sic*) orbis in nativitate domini *Johannes de de B5rg5nd31* (Johannes de Burgundia) nunc comitis nivernensis que fuit anno domini 1415 imperfecto post meridiem 17 diei Octobris horis 3 minutis 31, die ♃ hora ♀, NAL 398 f. 91ra2.

Charles d'Albret
MS 1711 f. 85v – NAL 398 f. 91rb1: 23 April 1428, 18:25, Labrit 44°07'N; 00°33'W



House I – 05° Scorpio Pars Beatitudinis 05° Scorpio	House VII – 05° Taurus Sun 12° Taurus Mercury [no degree – 14° Taurus] Venus [no degree – 03° Gemini]
House II – 09° Sagittarius Saturn 20° Sagittarius	House VIII – 09° Gemini
House III – 10° Capricorn	House IX – 10° Cancer
House IV – 12° Aquarius Pars Fortune 15° Aquarius Jupiter 25° Aquarius	House X – 12° Leo Moon 22° Leo
House V – 06° Pisces	House XI – 06° Virgo
House VI – 06° Aries [North Node – 21° Aries] Mars 29° Aries Gradus coniunctionis 03°52 Taurus	House XII – 06° Libra [South Node – 21° Libra]

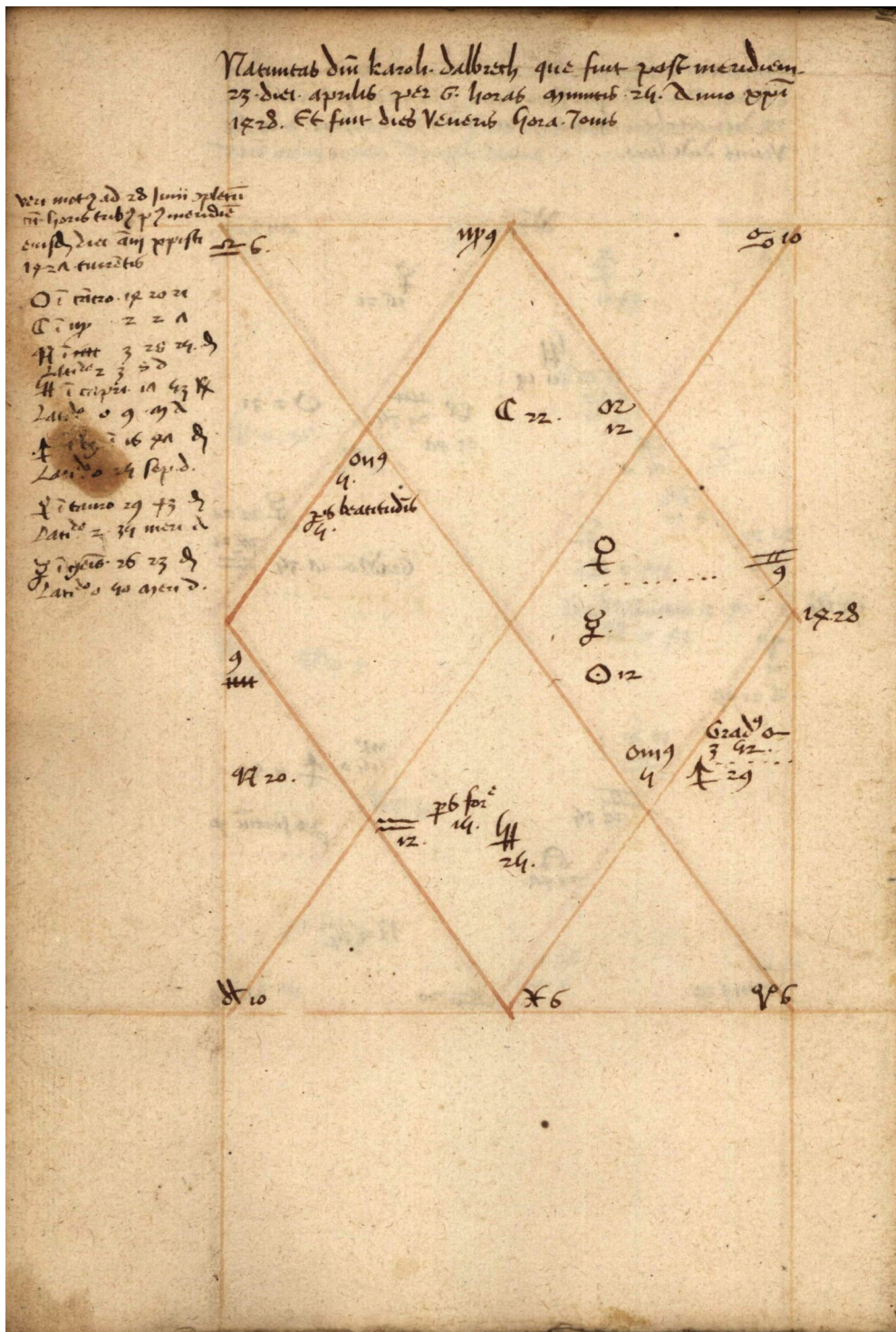


Figure 30 – MS 1711, folio 85v

Charles d'Albret, lord of Sainte-Bazeille, the fourth son of Charles II d'Albret and Anne d'Armagnac, brother of Marie d'Albreth. He was possibly born in the family castle at Labrit.⁵¹¹ In 1471, he joined the League of Public Weal against Louis XI of France. Accused of treason, Charles was imprisoned on 5 March 1473, and executed in Poitiers, on 7 April of the same year.⁵¹² The lordship of Sainte-Bazeille passed to the control of his nephew, Alain d'Albret (1440-1522).⁵¹³

In MS 1711 f. 85v:

Nativity of the lord Charles d'Albreth which was in the afternoon of the 23rd of April, around 6 hours, 25 minutes, of the year of Christ 1428, and it was the day of Venus and the hour of Jupiter.⁵¹⁴

In NAL 398 f. 91rb1, with the same horoscope, and two small variants in the title: the encoded name and a difference in the minutes – seven instead of twenty-five:

Nativity of the lord *K11413 d11br2th* (Karoli d'Albreth – Charles d'Albret) which was in the afternoon 23 days of April, at 6 hours, 7 minutes, year of the Lord 1428, day of Venus, hour of Jupiter.⁵¹⁵

This is the only horoscope where Belle calculates the Lot of Beatitude (*Pars Beatitudinis*), but it is not clear to which lot Belle is referring. The Lot of Beatitude is according to Bonatti is calculated by taking the distance of Saturn to Jupiter and projecting it from the Ascendant (the reverse in a nocturnal chart).⁵¹⁶ In this horoscope the lot would fall at 10° Capricorn and not at 5° Scorpio, on the Ascendant. For this to occur the two had to be in a very close conjunction.

In the margin of the MS 1711 chart, Belle mentions a date, which is set ten months before Charles d'Albret's birthday:

The true motion at the 28th of June complete, three hours after midday of the same day, the year of Christ 1427 current.⁵¹⁷

This could be the horoscope of the native's conception in which case the gestation would have lasted for ten months; it is uncommon, but possible. Nonetheless, according

⁵¹¹ The coordinates for Labrit (44°07'N; 00°33'W) are those that better fit this horoscope.

⁵¹² This case is related to the execution of John V d'Armagnac (1420-1473), the son of John IV d'Armagnac and Isabella of Navarre. Upon his death, the title passed on to his younger brother Charles (1425-1497) and later to his cousin Jean (1467-1500) of the cadet branch of Armagnac-Nemours.

⁵¹³ Alain d'Albret may be the horoscope in NAL 398 f. 91va1.

⁵¹⁴ *Nativitas domini Karoli d'Albreth que fuit post meridiem 23 diei Aprilis per 6 horas minutis 25 anno Christi 1428 et fuit dies Veneris hora Jovis*, MS 1711 f. 85v.

⁵¹⁵ *Nativitas domini K11413 d11br2th que fuit post meridiem 23 diei Aprilis per 6 horas minutis 7 anno domini 1428 die Venus hora Jovis*, NAL 398 f. 90rb1.

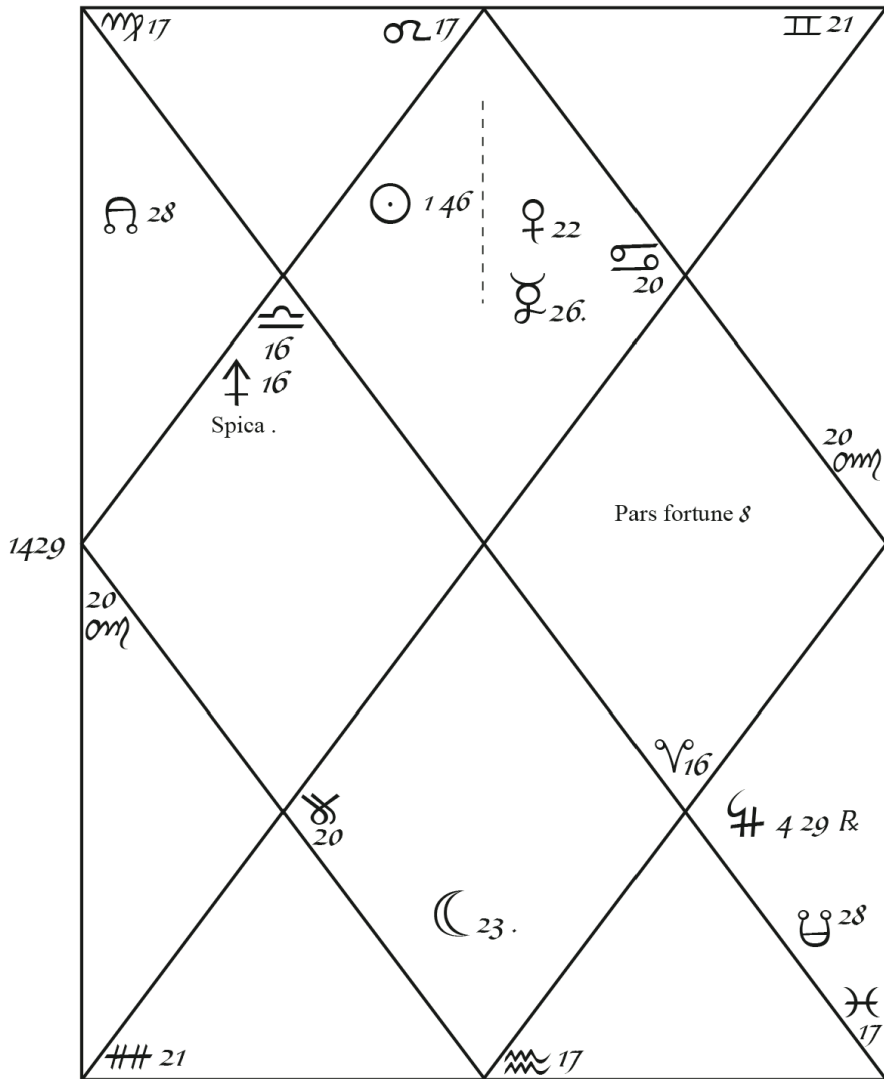
⁵¹⁶ Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, 8.2.5, p. 1056.

⁵¹⁷ *Vero motus ad 28 Junii completum cum horis tribus post meridiem eiusdem diei anni Christi 1427 currentis*, MS 1711 f. 85v.

to the rule, the horoscope of conception must have the Moon in the same sign as the Ascendant in the nativity. In this case the Moon should be in Scorpio, the same sign of the Ascendant in the nativity, but it is Virgo; also, the Ascendant should be in the same sign as the nativity's Moon, that is Leo, but it is in Scorpio.⁵¹⁸ In any case, this date must have been meaningful for Belle as he added a list with a detailed notation of the planet's position on that date including the direction of their movement (*directus* or *retrogradus*), their north or south latitude (*septentrionalis* or *meridionalis*), and their increase or decrease of latitude (which he notes with an A, *ascendens*, or a D, *descendens*, respectively).

⁵¹⁸ See 'Trutina of Hermes' or 'Enoch's Balance' in Appendix I.

Coronation of Charles VII
MS 1711 f. 86r – NAL 90vb2: 17 July 1429, 11:12, Reims (49°15'N, 04°02'E)



House I – 16° Libra	House VII – 16° Aries
Mars 16° Libra	Pars Fortune 08° Aries
Spica (no degree)	
House II – 20° Scorpio	House VIII – 20° Taurus
House III – 21° Sagittarius	House IX – 21° Gemini
Missing: Saturn 27° Sagittarius	
House IV – 20° Capricorn	House X – 20° Cancer
Moon 23° Aquarius (should be in the fifth house)	Venus 22° Cancer
	Mercury 26° [Cancer]
	Sun 01°45 Leo
House V – 17° Aquarius	House XI – 17° Leo
House VI – 17° Pisces	House XII – 17° Virgo
North Node 28° Pisces	South Node 28° Virgo
Jupiter 04°29 Aries retrograde	

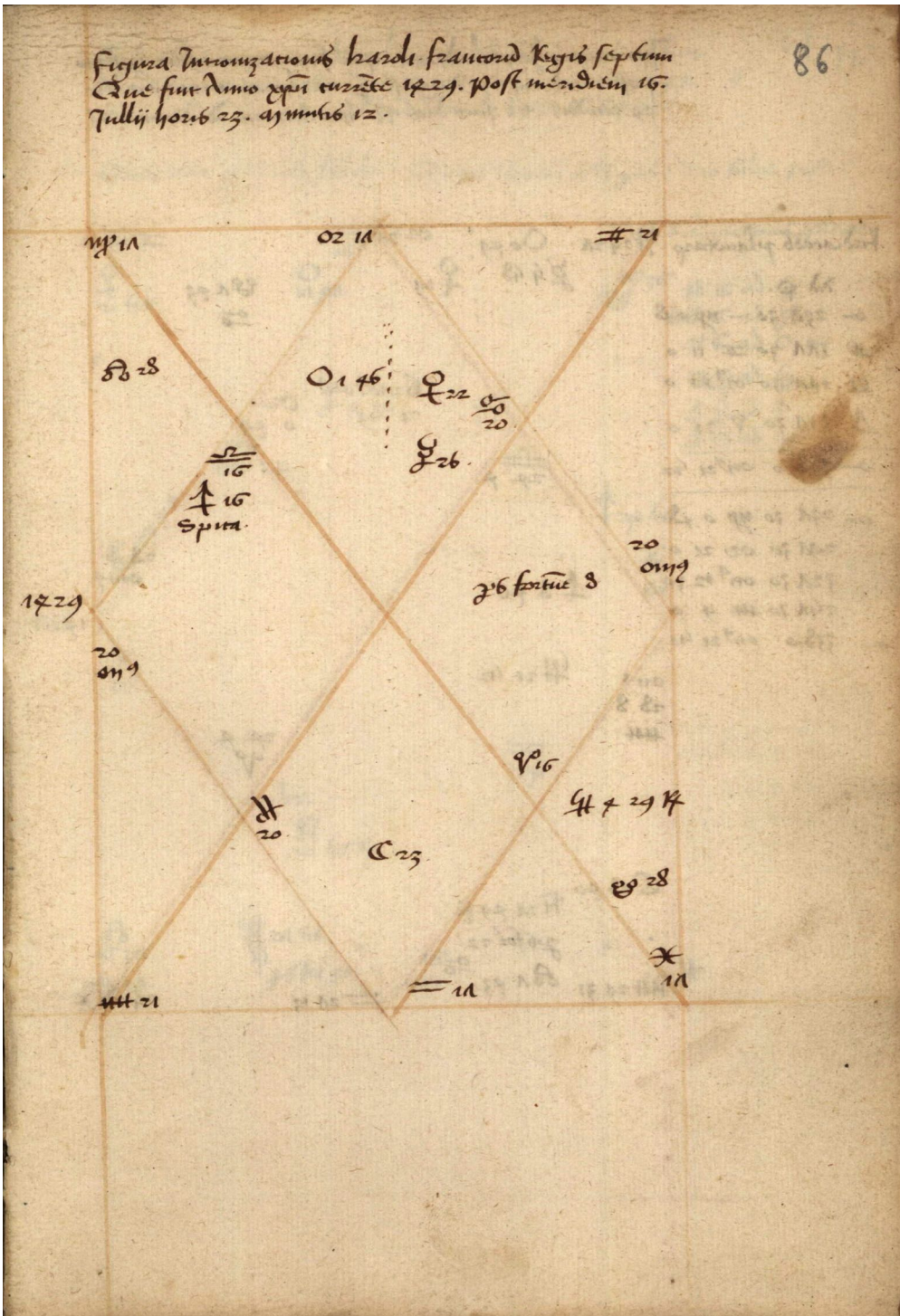


Figure 31 – MS 1711, folio 86r

At the time of this event Paris was under Anglo-Burgundian rule and the French court had moved to Bourges. The French troops, commanded by Jeanne d'Arc, succeeded in reconquering several strategic cities, dispersing the English troops. When the news of these victories reached Reims, the citizens opened their gates enabling the coronation to take place at the city's cathedral on 17 July 1429.

Chart of the coronation of Charles VII King of the Franks, which was in the year of Christ current 1429 after noon of the 16th of July, by 23 hours and 12 minutes.⁵¹⁹

In NAL 398 f. 90vb2 the title is similar, except for the encoded name *klr4l3 septimi* (*Karoli septimi* – Charles VII), and the reference to 'equal days' (*diebus equatis*) after the date. The horoscope itself is identical including the mistaken position of the Moon and the absence of the degree of Spica. The only difference is the depiction of Saturn at 25° Sagittarius, which is missing in MS 1711. Belle's horoscopes resemble those in Lat. 7443 f. 86v attributed to Simon de Boesmare.⁵²⁰ However, an attentive comparison reveals some differences.⁵²¹ Additionally, there seems to be some confusion about the positions of the Moon and of the Lot of Fortune.

Table 26 – Horoscopes for the Coronation of Charles VII

MS lat. 7443	NAL 398	MS 1711
Spica include degree: 16° Libra	Spica in Libra without degree	Spica in Libra without degree
Saturn's position omitted	Saturn at 25° Sagittarius	Saturn's position omitted
Moon: 23° Aquarius fifth house	Moon: 23° Capricorn fourth house	Moon: 23° Capricorn fourth house
No Part of Fortune	Part of Fortune: 8° Taurus	Part of Fortune: 8° Taurus

This horoscope may have been calculated by Roland of Lisbon (Roland l'Ecrivain), later copied by Simon de Boesmare.⁵²² Decades later, Belle could have accessed the copy and used the horoscope as a case study. They seem to be horoscopes of events, not of elections, although the latter were also extensively used at this time.⁵²³

⁵¹⁹ *Figura Intronizationis Karoli francorum Regis septimi Que fuit Anno Christi currente 1429 Post meridiem 16 Jullii horis 23 minutis 12*, MS 1711 f. 86r.

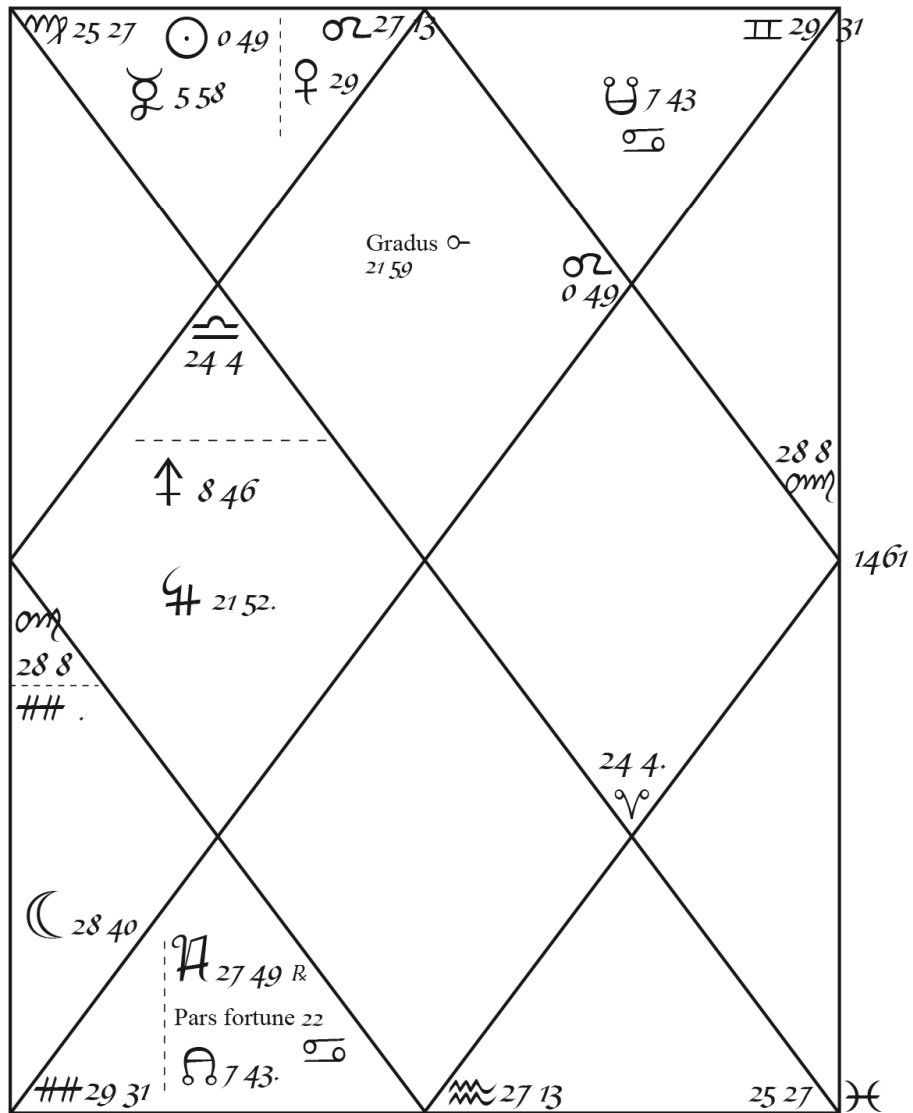
⁵²⁰ Lat. 7443 f. 86v. This was noted by Boudet in *Lire dans le ciel*, p. 133. See also Boudet, 'Une consultation', p. 258, and Juste, *CCAL II*, pp. 162-167.

⁵²¹ Also mentioned by Boudet in *Lire dans le ciel*, p. 133.

⁵²² As stated in Boudet, *Lire dans le ciel*, p. 134. For elections, see for example Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, VII.1, pp. 786-788 and Boudet, *La recueil*, II, pp. 70-73 and 77-78.

⁵²³ See for instance Lat. 7427, f. 151r, the election of a journey (*pro itinere*), calculated for 12 April 1470, in Paris.

Coronation of Louis XI
MS 1711 f. 86v – NAL 398 f. 90vb1: 15 August 1461, Reims (49°15'N, 04°02'E)



House I – 24°04 Libra Mars 08°46 Scorpio Jupiter 21°52 Scorpio	House VII – 24°04 Aries
House II – 28°08 Scorpio Moon 28°40 Sagittarius	House VIII – 28°08 Taurus
House III – 29°31 Sagittarius South Node 07°43 Cancer [sic for Capricorn] Pars Fortune 22° Capricorn Saturn 27°49 Capricorn retrograde	House IX – 29°31 Gemini North Node 07°43 Cancer
House IV – [00°49 Capricorn]	House X – 00°49 Cancer Gradus conjunctionis 21°59 Leo
House V – 27°13 Aquarius	House XI – 27°13 Leo Venus 29° Leo Sun 00°49 Virgo Mercury 05°58 Virgo
House VI – 24°27 Pisces	House XII – 24°27 Virgo

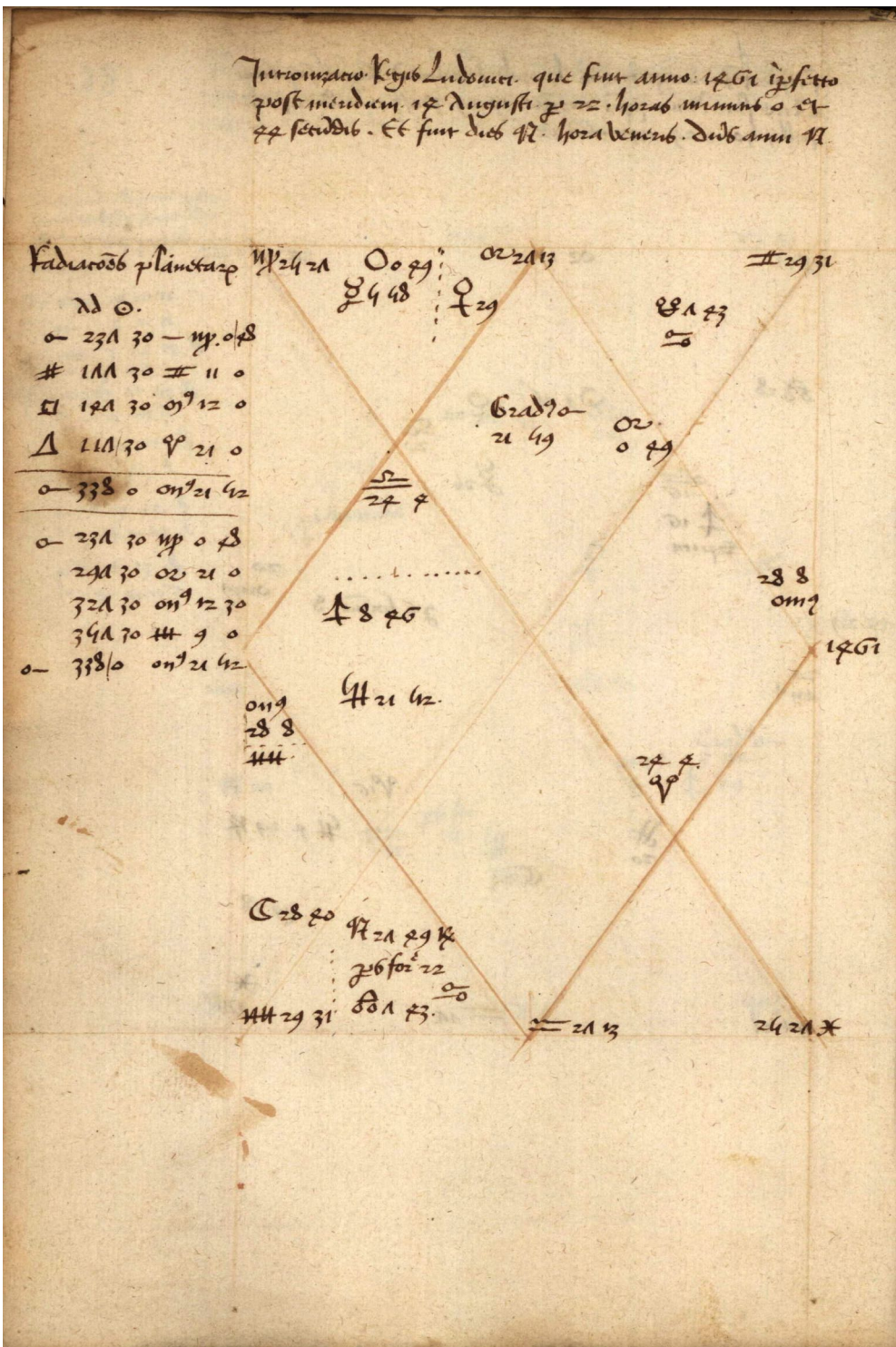


Figure 32 – MS 1711, folio 86v

Louis, dauphin de France, was exiled to Burgundy when he learned of his father's death on 22 July 1461. Fearing that his younger brother, Charles de Berry, might seize the throne, he hastily returned to France. The coronation took place 24 days later on 15 August 1461 in the cathedral of Reims.

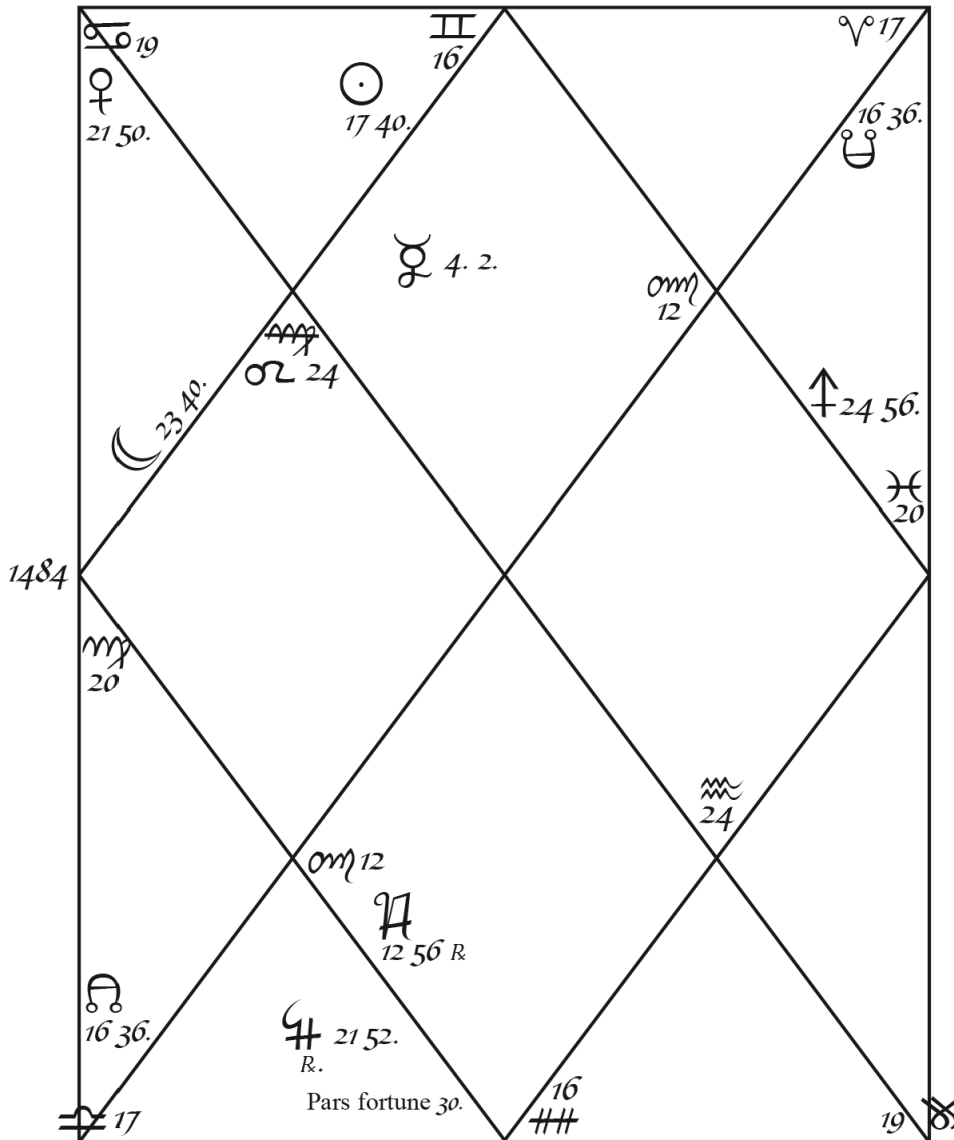
Coronation of King Louis, which was in the year 1461 imperfect, after noon, the 14th of August, around 22 hours, 0 minutes and 44 seconds. And it was the day of Saturn, hour of Venus, Lord of the year Saturn.⁵²⁴

NAL 398 f. 90vb1 has the same title and horoscope, the only difference being the encryption of the king's name: *reg3s L5d4vici*.

The final sentence in the title, 'lord of the year Saturn', is not related to the coronation's horoscope, but to the king's nativity: it refers to the planet that rules the thirty-eighth year of his life, that of his coronation. This is evidence of the use of profections, a technique of prediction explained in Appendix I. The ruler of the sign where the Ascendant falls each year is called the lord of the year. The Ascendant of his nativity was Sagittarius, and every twelve years the Ascendant returned to Sagittarius by profection. Louis XI was thirty-eight years old when he was crowned – that is, two years past his third return of the Ascendant to its original position – therefore, the profected Ascendant at the time of his coronation was Aquarius, which is two signs away from Sagittarius, in the order of the signs, and its ruler, Saturn, was lord of the year. The state of Saturn in the natal chart, combined with the technique of revolutions would determine the general conditions of that period.

⁵²⁴ Intronizatio Regis Ludovici que fuit anno 1461 imperfecto post meridiem 14 Augusti per 22 horas minutis 0 et 44 secundis Et fuit dies 7 hora Veneris dominus anni 7, MS 1711 f. 86v.

Coronation of Charles VIII
MS 1711 f. 87r: 30 May 1484, 09:34, Reims (49°15'N, 04°02'E)



House I – 24° Leo	House VII – 24° Aquarius
House II – 20° Virgo	House VIII – 20° Pisces
South Node 16°36' Libra	Mars 26°46' Pisces
House III – 17° Libra	North Node 16°36' Aries
Jupiter 27°56' Libra	House IX – 17° Aries
Pars Fortune 30° Libra	
House IV – 12° Scorpio	House X – 16° Gemini
	Mercury 04°02'
House V – 16° Sagittarius	House XI – 16° Gemini
	Sun 17°40' Gemini
House VI – 19° Capricorn	House XII – 19° Cancer
	Venus 21°50' Cancer
	Moon 23°40' Leo

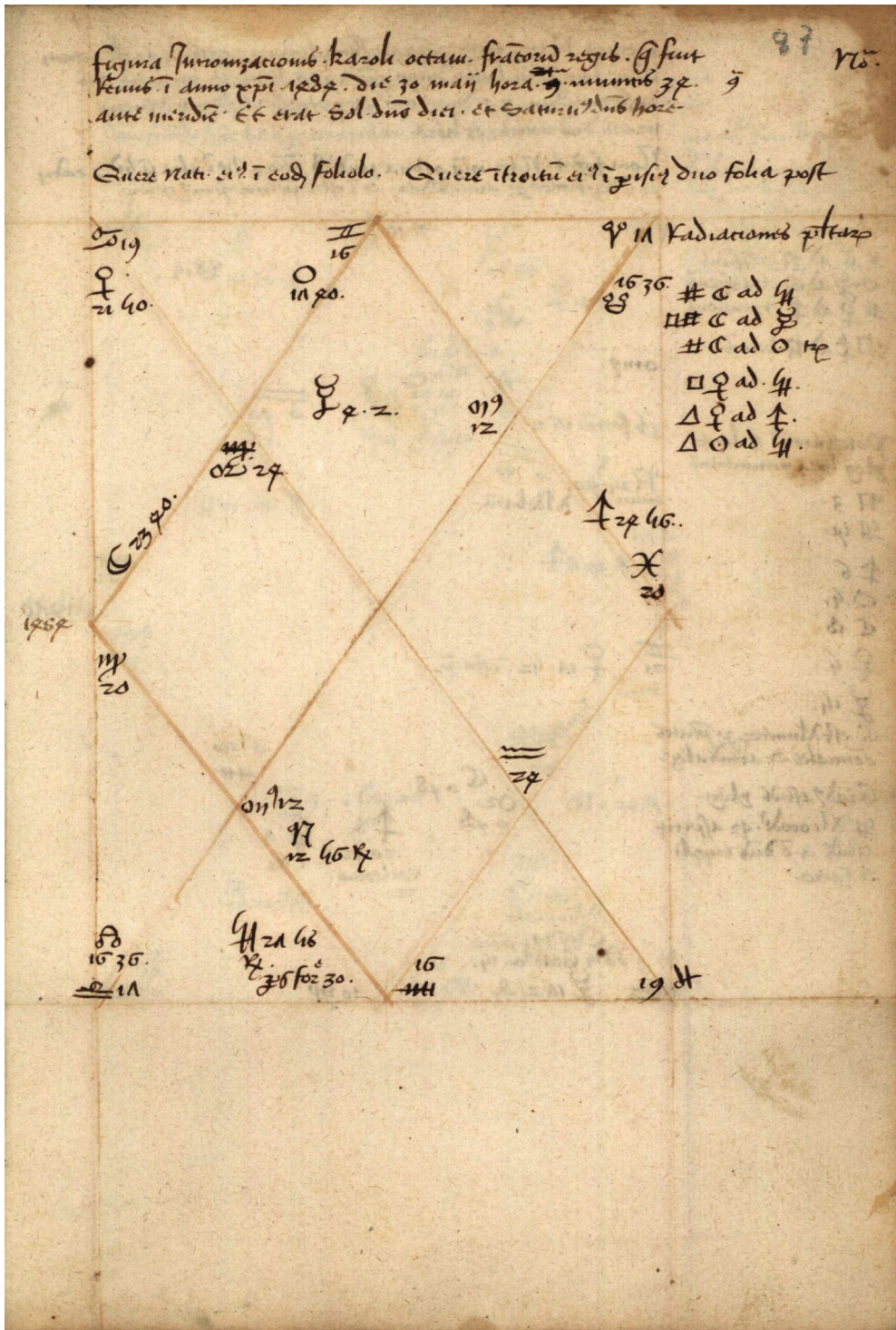


Figure 33 – MS 1711, folio 87r

Charles VIII of France, the son of Louis XI and Charlotte of Savoy, was one-month short of his fourteenth birthday when he was crowned king of France in the cathedral of Reims. The kingdom remained under the regency of his older sister, Anne, until 1491.

Figure of the coronation of Charles VIII, king of the Franks, which was in Reims, in the year 1484, of the 13th day of May, 9th hour, minutes 34 before midday, and the Sun was the ruler of the day, Saturn ruler of the hour.⁵²⁵

Belle seems to take much interest in this coronation. Below the title he adds two comments connecting this event to other horoscopes in the manuscript:⁵²⁶

- The kings's nativity on f. 87v: 'Seek for his nativity in this same little folio'. (*Quere nativitatem eius in eodem foliolo.*)
- His entry on folio 89r: 'Seek for his entry into Paris two *folia* after'. (*Quere introitus eius in Parisius duo folia post.*)

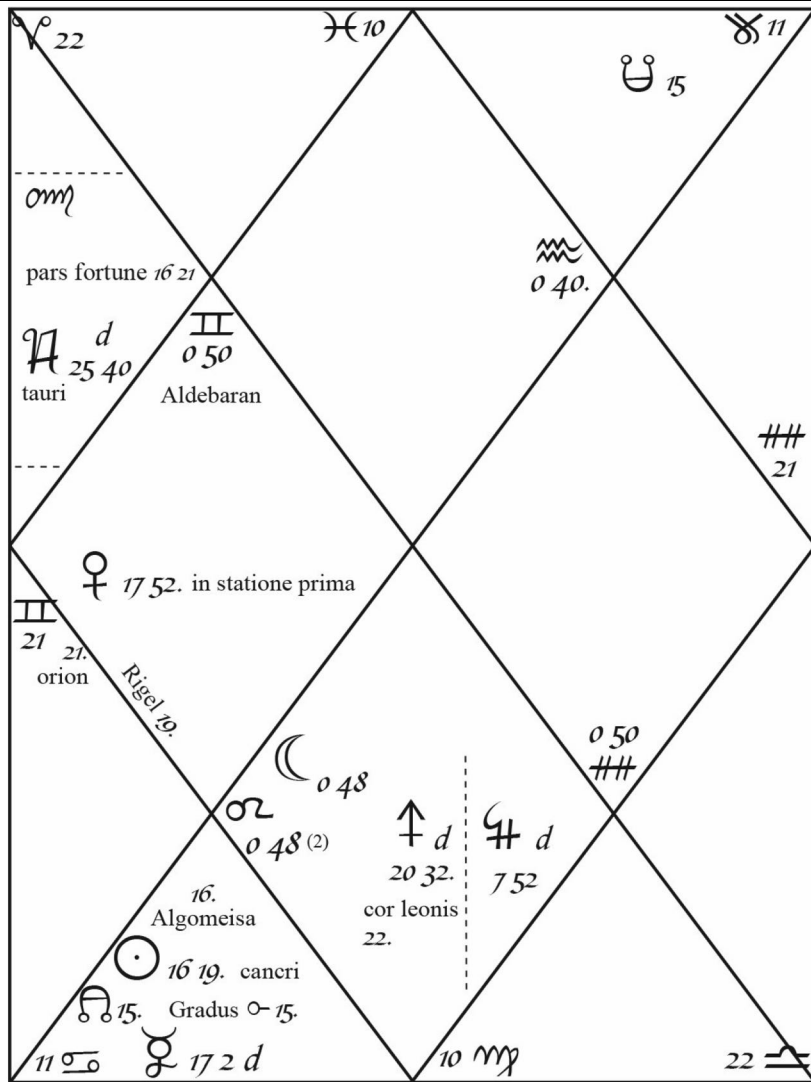
On the top of the folio, on the right-hand side, he writes 'Pay attention' (*Nota*). In the margin below he adds a table with the planetary aspects within the chart:⁵²⁷

⁵²⁵ Figura Intronizationis Karoli octavi francorum Regis que fuit Remis in anno Christi 1484 die 30 maii hora 9 minutis 34 ante meridiem Et erat Sol dominus diei et Saturnus dominus hore, MS 1711 f. 87r. Over the 'hora 9^a' there is a superscript stating '21^a' which was crossed out; in the right margin the number 9 confirms the hour.

⁵²⁶ In NAL 398 he calculates three different nativities for this king: f. 90va1, f. 93rb2 and f. 93va1, which will be addressed later.

⁵²⁷ See 'Aspects' in Appendix I.

Charles VIII, king of France
 MS 1711 f. 87v – NAL 398 f. 90va1; 93rb2; 93va1: 30 July 1470, 01:10, Amboise (47°24'N, 00°59'E)



House I – 00°50 Gemini Aldebaran Venus 17°52 Gemini Rigel 09° Gemini	House VII – 00°50 Sagittarius
House II – 21°21 Gemini Orion 21° Gemini	House VIII – 21°21 Sagittarius
House III – 11° Cancer South Node 15° Cancer Gradus conjunctionis 15° Algemeisa (Procyon) 16° Cancer Sun 16°19 Cancer Mercury 17°02 direct	House IX – 11° Capricorn North Node 15°
House IV – 00°40 Moon 00°48 Leo Mars 20°32 Leo Cor Leonis 22° Leo Jupiter 01°42 Virgo direct	House X – 00°40
House V – 10° Virgo	House XI – 10° Pisces
House VI – 22° Libra	House XII – 22° Aries Pars Fortune 16°21 Taurus Saturn 25°40 Taurus direct

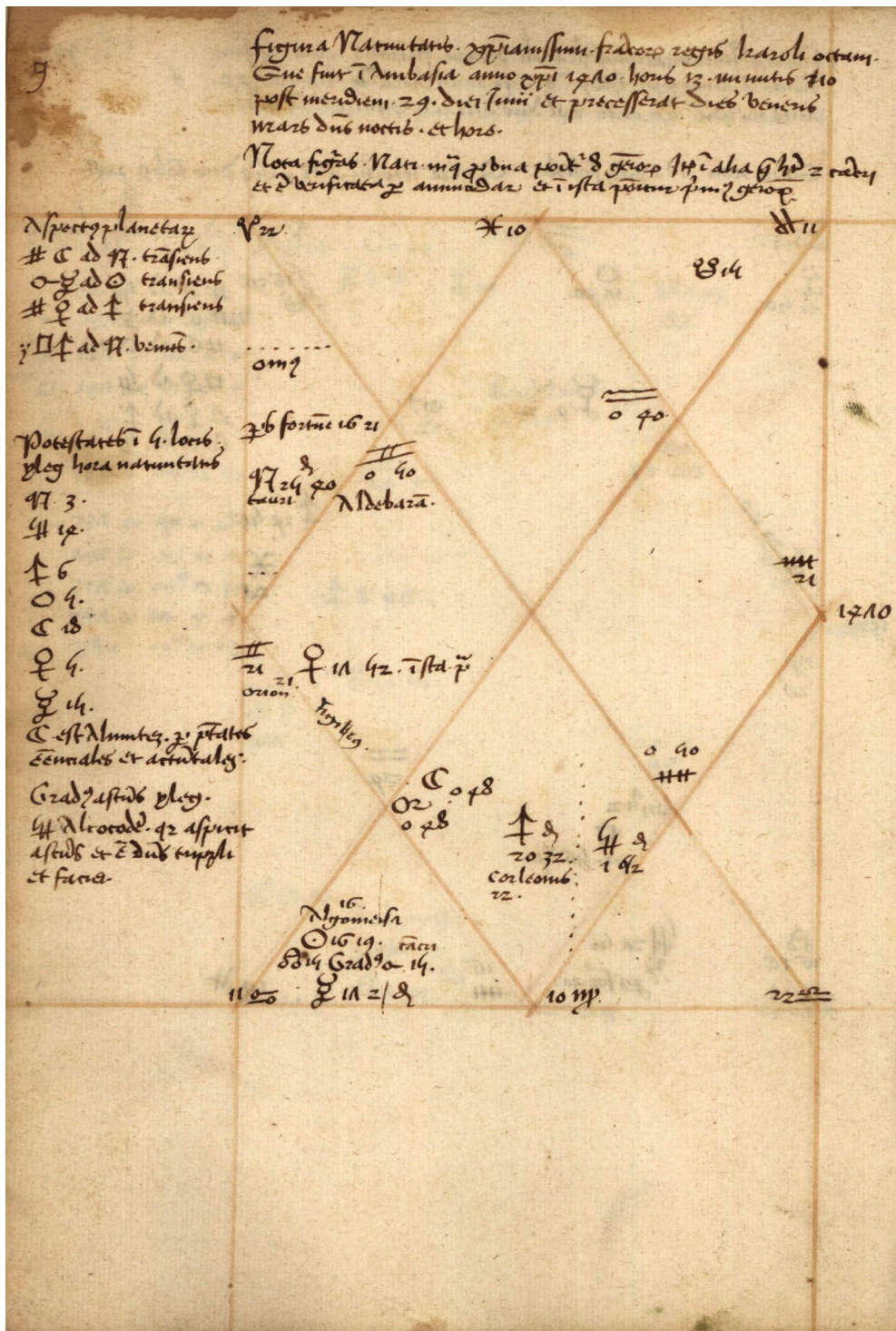


Figure 34 – MS 1711, folio 87v

King Charles VIII of France, known as 'the Affable', whose coronation horoscope is depicted in the preceding folio. In 1483 Charles, aged thirteen, was betrothed to the two-year-old Margaret of Austria, daughter of Emperor Maximilian, as a condition of the Treaty of Arras. But in 1491 he repudiated Margaret and forced Anne, duchess of Brittany, to dissolve her marriage to Maximilian and marry him.⁵²⁸ He died at the age of 29 as a result of an accident.

Belle has four different horoscopes for this king. The first is in MS 1711, f.87v:

Image of the nativity of the most Christian King of the Franks Charles VIII, which was in Amboise in the year of Christ 1470, 13 hours, 10 minutes afternoon of the 29th day of June, and the preceding day was of Venus, Mars [being] the ruler of the night and of the hour.⁵²⁹

He adds a note mentioning the variants of this nativity in NAL 398:

Note the [other] horoscopes of the native, that in one it is placed in 8° of Gemini and in another it has 2° of Cancer. And it was verified by *animodar* and in this one it is placed the first of Gemini.⁵³⁰

Belle adds several additional calculations in MS 1711, such as the aspects of the planets, the *almutem* and the length of life. He determines that Jupiter is the *alcocodem*, but he does not advance the possible number of years of the native's life.

In NAL 398, Belle presents three different possible times of birth for this king, each with a different Ascendant degree.

1 – Charles VIII – NAL 398 f. 90va1, 2° Cancer rising:⁵³¹

Horoscope of the most Christian prince and Lord Charles, firstborn son of King Louis, dauphin of the Viennese,⁵³² which was in the 29th day of June, 14 hours, 54 minutes, year 1470, and it was the night of Mars, 9 hour, [hour] of the Moon. Verified by *mora* it is 7° Cancer.⁵³³

⁵²⁸ As mentioned in the section for Emperor Maximilian I.

⁵²⁹ *Figura Nativitatis Christianissimi Francorum regis Karoli octavi que fuit in Ambasia anno christi 1470 horis 13 minutis 10 post meridiem 29 diei Junii et precesserat dies Veneris, Mars dominus noctis et hore*, MS 1711 f. 87v.

⁵³⁰ *Nota figuras Nati in qua pro una ponitur 8 Geminorum Item in alia que habet 2 Cancris et est verificata per animodar et in ista ponitur primus Geminorum*, MS 1711 f. 87v.

⁵³¹ Boudet mentions a horoscope for Charles VIII in NAL 398 f. 90v (with 2° Cancer rising), but not the variations on f. 93 and f. 93v: '*On ne connait qu'un seul horoscope de naissance de Charles VIII, celui qu'a établi Simon Belle, vers 1483-1491, BnF, Nouvelle Acquisition Latine 398, fol. 90va. Mais cet horoscope, dont la première mouture dut être réalisée par les astrologues de Louis XI, était certainement connu des praticiens du royaume et d'ailleurs*', in Boudet, *La recueil*, II, p. 91, n. 22.

⁵³² The heir of the throne of France was called 'Dauphin de France' or 'dauphin des Viennois'.

⁵³³ *Figura christianissimi principis et domini k4rol3 regis ludovici fic4rum (sic) primogeniti delphini viennensis que fuit 29 die Junii hora 14 minutis 54 anni 1470 et fuit nox Martis 9 hora vero Luni. Verificata per mora est 7 Cancris*, NAL 398 f. 90va1. The term *mora* means 'gestation', that is, the time the baby stayed in the womb. See '*Trutina*' in Appendix I.

This horoscope was rectified by the *trutina* of Hermes changing from 2° to 7° Cancer.⁵³⁴ It includes four lots: *Pars Regni* at 20° Cancer in the second house; *Pars Fortune* at 16° Gemini in the twelfth house; *Pars Regni* at 23° Leo in the third house; *Pars Coniugii* at 24° Cancer in the second house.

2 – Charles VIII – NAL 398 f. 93rb2, 8°47 Gemini rising:

Description of the heavens and the planets in the nativity of the Lord near Touron, 29th of June, 13 hours, 21 minutes after noon of the same day, year of Christ 1470. And it was the day of Venus, night of Mars, but the hour of the Moon.⁵³⁵

In the margin, the abbreviated words *P. Cho9*, possibly a reference to Pierre Choynet (c.1411-c.1484), physician and astrologer of Louis XI. This supports a hypothesis advanced by Boudet that Belle had copied the horoscope of Charles VIII from an official source that of either Jacques Loste or Pierre Choynet.⁵³⁶ This horoscope mentions a different birth place: Touron (45°04'N, 04° 50'E) and denotes Belle's indecision:

Others put in [the Ascendant of] this nativity the first [degree] of Gemini and it is verified by *animodar* and they have said that it was in the day 29 of June, 13 hours, 9 minutes, year 1470 incomplete, and it was the night of Mars, but the hour of the Moon. See the folio and you will see the descriptions.⁵³⁷

This comment ends with the encrypted word *C4r1rdus*, meaning 'Conrad', possibly a reference to Conrad Heingarter, whom he also mentions in MS 1711 f. 72r as *Conrardus*. Belle may have copied this horoscope from Heingarter who probably had access to accurate data since he served both Louis XI and Charles VIII as physician.⁵³⁸ The 'folio' he mentions was most likely written by Heingarter and it is unclear why he encoded Heingarter's name. By the time these horoscopes were calculated during the last years of the fifteenth century there was no longer any active hostility between the houses of France, where Charles VIII was born, and Bourbon, where Belle was presumably living. This concealment may not be related to politics, but to professional courtesy: as Belle collected the opinions of several astrologers – some of them possibly

⁵³⁴ See 'Trutina' in Appendix I.

⁵³⁵ Figura descriptionis celi et planetorum anni nativitatit Domini prope Touronem 29 Junii hora 13 minutis 21 post meridiem eiusdem diei anni Christi 1470. Et fuit dies ♀ nox ♂, hora vero ☽, NAL 398, 93rb2.

⁵³⁶ Boudet, 'Les astrologues et le pouvoir', p. 29, n. 2. See also the references in *Entre science et nigromance*, p. 310 and *La recueil*, II, p. 276-277. For Choynet, see Samaran, *Pierre Choynet, Le Rosier des Guerres et Le Livre des Trois Ages*, Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes, 1926, Tome 87, pp. 372-380.

⁵³⁷ Alii ponunt in ista nativitatem 1^{imi} cum ♊ et verifcarunt esse per *animodar* et dixerint que fuit die 29 Junii hora 13 minutis 9 anni 1470 imperfecto et erat nox ♂ hora vero ☽. Videte folio et videbis descriptiones, NAL 498 f. 93rb2.

⁵³⁸ For Heingarter, see Thorndike, *HMES*, IV, pp. 357-373; Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, p. 6, n. 310, Préaud, *Les astrologues*, pp. 71-74.

rivals – he may have opted to keep their identities veiled, to avoid offending any of them. He could also be concealing the source's identity, because accurate data of the king's chart could be taken as sensitive information.

3 – Charles VIII – NAL 398f. 93va1, 1° Gemini rising (similar to MS 1711):

Description of the nativity of Charles King of the Franks the seventh,⁵³⁹ according to some experts, that was in Amboise, on the 29th day of June, current year 1470, by 13 hours, 10 minutes after noon and preceded the day of Venus in the night of Mars and the hour of Mars at the latitude of 50 degrees.⁵⁴⁰

This last version corresponds to the comment on the previous horoscope (NAL 398 f. 93rb2) and is the one that most resembles the nativity in MS 1711 (which has 0°50' Gemini ascending). The three horoscopes in NAL 398 indicate some indecision as to the 'exact birth time of this king', while the one horoscope on MS 1711 suggests that a choice has been made. This again supports the idea that MS 1711 was written some time after NAL 398. The following table presents the different horoscopes, house cusps, lots and respective sources:

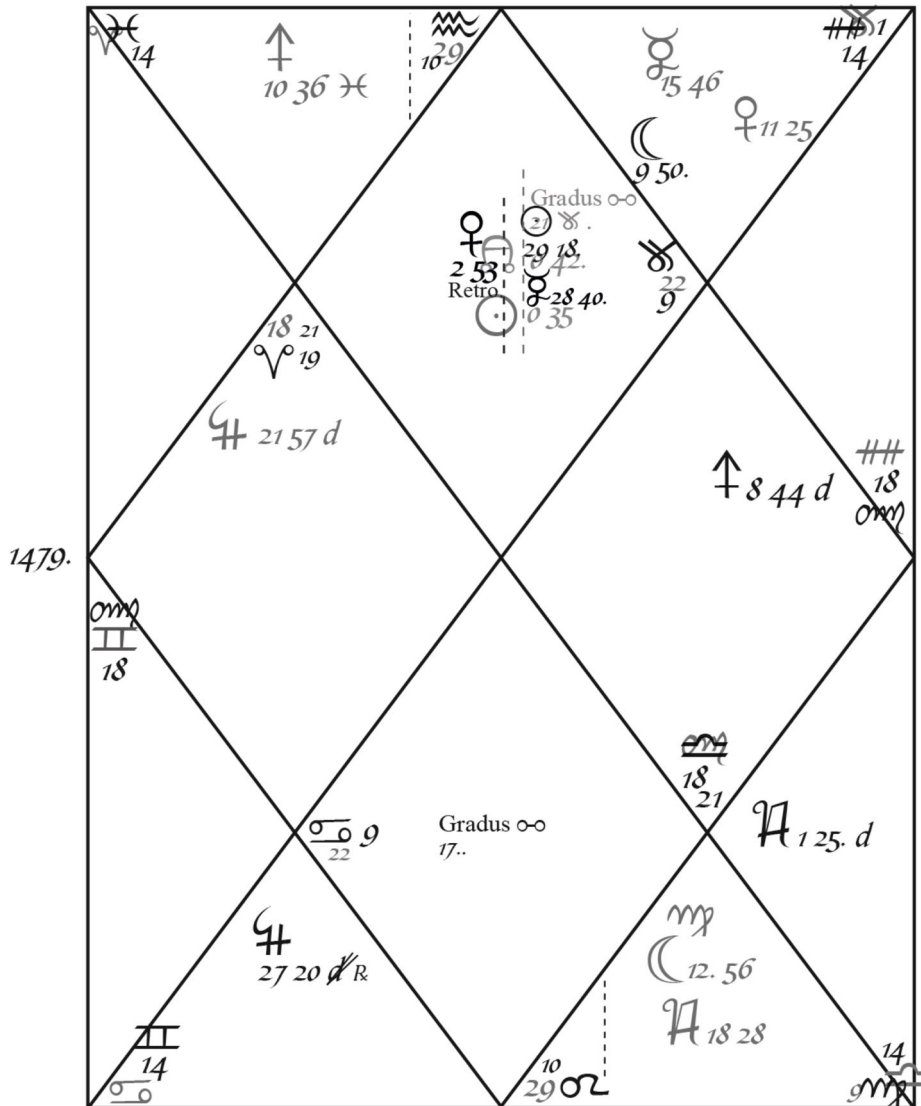
Table 27 – Horoscopes for Charles VIII

	NAL 398 f. 90va1	NAL 398 f. 93rb2	NAL 398 f. 93va1	MS 1711 f. 87v
Time of birth	30 June, 02:54 am	30 June, 01:21 am	30 June, 01:10 am	30 June, 01:10 am
House I / House VII	02° Can / 02° Cap	08°47 Gem / 08°47 Sag	01° Gem / 01° Sag	0°50 Gem / 0°50 Sag
House II / House VIII	20° Can / 20° Cap	28° Gem / 28° Sag	21° Gem / 21° Sag	21° Gem / 21° Sag
House III / House IX	08° Leo / 08° Aqu	16° Can / 16° Cap	11° Can / 11° Cap	11° Can / 11° Cap
House IV / House X	29° Leo / 29° Aqu	08°48 Leo / 08°48 Aqu	01° Leo / 01° Aqu	00°48 Leo / 00°48 Aqu
House V / House XI	12° Lib / 24° Ari	18° Vir / 18° Pis	10° Vir / 10° Pis	10° Vir / 10° Pis
House VI / House XII	24° Scor / 24 Tau	01° Sco / 01° Tau	22° Lib / 22° Ari	22° Lib / 22° Ari
Source	<i>'Verificata per animodar: 7° Cancri'</i>	<i>Animodar and 'P. Choi,' [Pierre Choinet]</i>	<i>'quosdam expertos' 'Conrad' [Heingarter?] mentioned in f. 93rb2</i>	<i>unspecified</i>
Lots	<i>Regni: 20° Can Fortune: 16° Gem Regni: 23° Leo Coniugii: 24° Can</i>	<i>Fortune: 24°2' Tau</i>	<i>- no lots -</i>	<i>Fortune: 16°21'Tau</i>

⁵³⁹ Belle states that this is the horoscope of Charles VII, although the data presented corresponds to the birth date of Charles VIII.

⁵⁴⁰ Descriptiones Nativitatis Karoli Rex francorum 7mi secundum quosdam expertos que fuit in Ambasia die 29 Iunii anni 1470 currente hora 13 minutis 10 post meridiem et presserant dies ♀ in nocte ♂ et hora ♂ ad latitudinem 50 graduum, NAL 398 f. 93va1.

Margaret of Austria
 MS 1711 f. 88r – NAL 398 f. 93vb2: 10 January 1480, 10:36, Brussels (50°51'N, 04°21'E)



House I – 21° Aries (18° Taurus) (Jupiter 21°57 Aries direct)	House VII – 21° Libra (18° Scorpio) Mars 08°44 Scorpio direct
House II – 18° Taurus (10° Gemini)	House VIII – 18° Scorpio (10° Sagittarius)
House III – 14° Gemini (01° Cancer) Jupiter 27°20 Gemini retrograde	House IX – 14° Sagittarius (01° Capricorn) Moon 09°50 Capricorn [should be in House X] (Venus 11°26 Capricorn) (Mercury 15°46 Capricorn)
House IV – 09° Cancer (22° Cancer) Gradus oppositionis 17° Leo	House X – 09° Capricorn (22° Capricorn) Mercury 28°40 Capricorn Sun 29°18 Capricorn Venus 02°53 Aquarius retrograde (Gradus oppositionis 27° Capricorn) (Sun 00°35 Aquarius) (South Node 00°42 Aquarius)
House V – 10° Leo (29° Leo) (Moon – 12°56 Virgo) (Saturn – 18°28 Virgo)	House XI – 10° Aquarius (29° Aquarius) (Mars 10°36 Pisces)
House VI – 14° Virgo (09° Libra) Saturn 01°25 Libra	House XII – 14° Pisces (09° Aries)

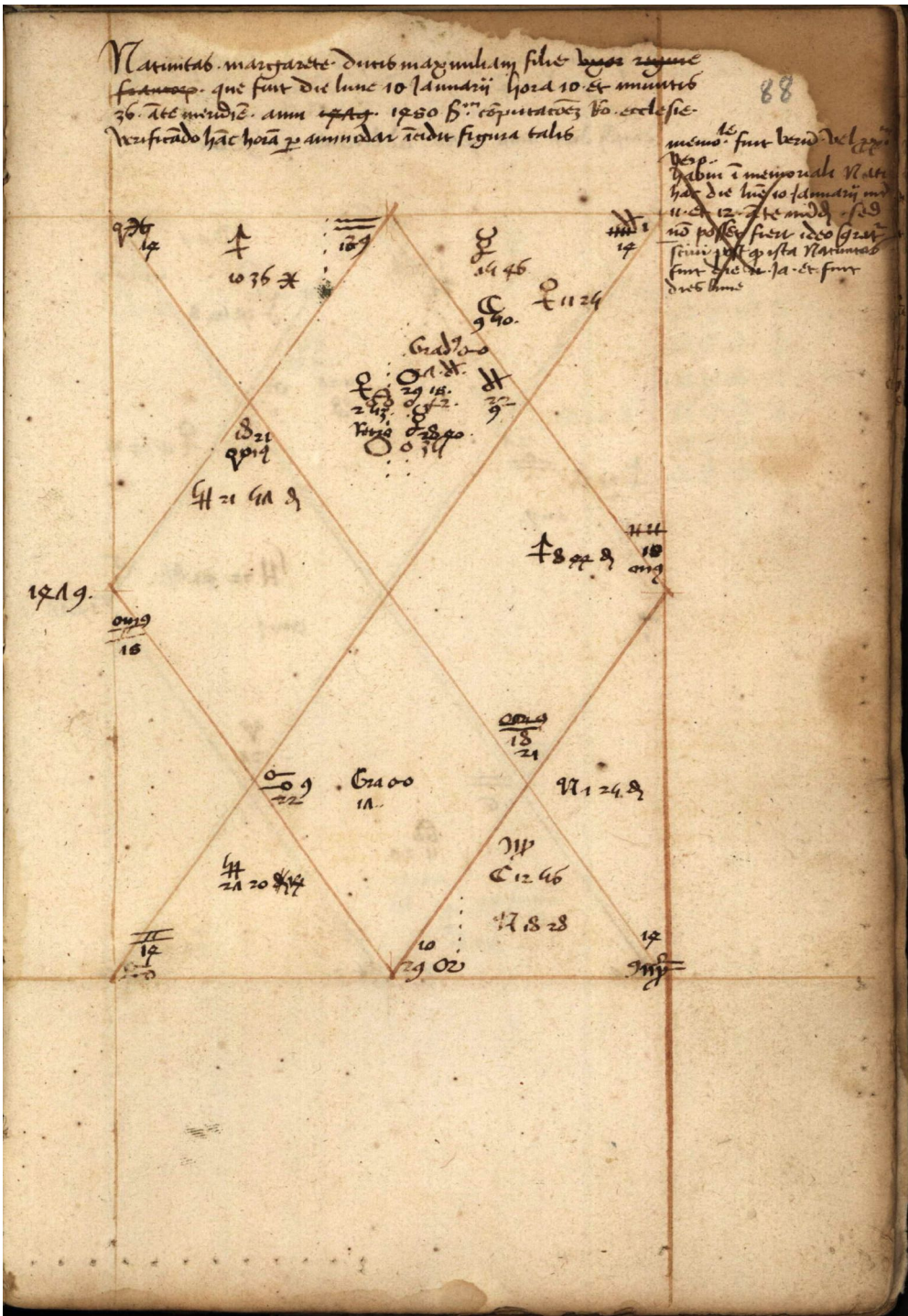


Figure 35 – MS 1711, folio 88r

Margaret of Austria, duchess of Savoy, daughter of Maximilian and his first wife, Marie of Burgundy. At the age of two, Margaret was betrothed to Charles VIII and sent to be raised at the French royal court under the supervision of the regent, Anne. But in 1491 Charles repudiated her and married Anne of Brittany, who was Margaret's stepmother. Margaret remained in France until 1493 when, as a consequence of the Treaty of Senlis, she was finally returned to her father. In 1497, she married Prince Juan de Asturias who died soon afterwards. She married again in 1501 to Duke Philibert II of Savoy, who died three years later. Margaret lived until 1530.

The horoscope in MS 1711 is confusing, displaying superimposed planetary positions for two different dates. Apparently, Belle's first calculation for her chart was the one in NAL 398, f. 93vb2, for 11 January 1479 between 11 and 12 hours before noon with 18° Taurus Ascendant:

Day of the Moon, 11 January of the year 1479, between 11 and 12 [hours] before noon, Margaret was born, daughter of the Duke of Austria, Queen of France.⁵⁴¹

When he copied this horoscope to MS 1711 he changed the hour from 'between 11 and 12' to a more precise birth time: 11:36 – which corresponds exactly to 18° Taurus rising.

Nativity of Margaret, daughter of the Duke Maximilian [wife of the Queen of the Franks (sic)] which was at the day of the Moon, 11 of January, 10 hours and 36 minutes before noon, year [1479].⁵⁴²

He seems uncertain about the day of birth: he adds a note in the margin – which he later crossed out – about the accuracy of the data.

To remember: It was true or closer to the truth. I had in my notebook [that] this nativity was on the day of the Moon, 10th of January, between 11 and 12 before midday, but this could not have been, therefore one should seek [to confirm this]. I knew afterwards that this nativity was on the day 11 of January and it was the day of the Moon.⁵⁴³

In fact, 10 January 1479 was not a Monday (the day of the Moon), but a Sunday (day of the Sun) – hence his first conclusion being that the birth took place on 11 January, a Monday. Later, he seems to have found more accurate information and thus he crossed out this note and again corrected the data. In fact, Margaret was born in 10 January, but in the year 1480 not 1479 as Belle first noted. Indeed, 10 January 1480 was a Monday, the day of the Moon. Belle had noted this from the beginning, but he had been working

⁵⁴¹ Die ʒ [Lune], 11 Ianuarii anni 1479 inter 11 et 12 ante meridiem nata est Margareta filia ducis Autrie regina Francie.

⁵⁴² Nativitas Margarete ducis Maximilianii filie [*crossed out*: uxor regine Francorum (sic)] que fuit die Lune 11 Ianuarii hora 11 et minutis 36 ante meridiem anno 1479, MS 1711 f. 88r.

⁵⁴³ [*Crossed out*:] Memorale: fuit verum vel proprius vero. Habui in memoriali Nati hanc die Lune 10 Ianuarii inter 11 et 12 ante meridiem sed non posset fieri ideo queratur scivi post quod ista nativitatis fuit die 11 Ianuarius et fuit dies Lune], MS 1711 f. 88r.

with the wrong year. He also acquired more precise information about her birthtime and changed it from 11:36 to 10:36. He then changed the title:

Nativity of Margaret, daughter of the Duke Maximilian [wife Queen of the Franks] which was at the day of the Moon 10 of January, 10 hours and 36 minutes before noon, year [1479 *struck throughout*] 1480, according to computations of the Roman church. Verifying this hour by *animodar*, such a figure results [it follows the horoscope].⁵⁴⁴

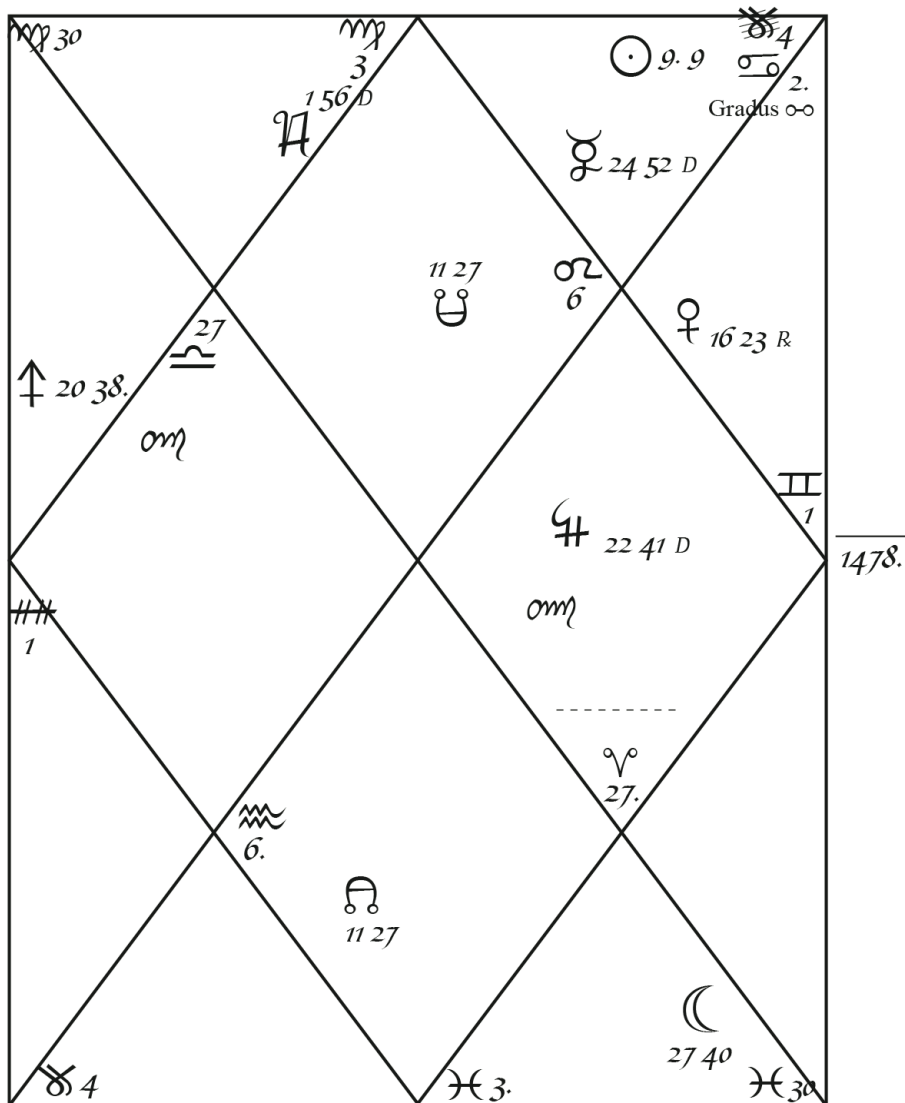
The two final sentences were probably added at the time of these changes to reinforce the validity of his new conclusions. As these changes – especially the year – rendered the older horoscope obsolete, Belle decided to write a new one on the same folio. He tried to erase the previous cusps and planetary computations (which were the same as NAL 398), but as he could not do so, he wrote the new positions and cusps over the previous ones, using a darker shade of ink (in the facsimile version presented above the older computations are in gray). One of the most obvious changes was the Ascendant, that changed from 18° Taurus to 21° Aries. The table summarizes the two different positions (older positions in brackets). All these changes support the argument that NAL 398 precedes MS 1711. Furthermore, in NAL 398 he gives Margaret the title of queen of France (*regina Francie*), thus suggesting that he did not return to NAL 398 to correct it after 1491 when her engagement to Charles VIII was broken; in MS 1711, the designation of ‘queen of France’ is struck through, revealing that the manuscript was still in use then.

⁵⁴⁴ Nativitas Margarete ducis Maximilianii filie [*crossed out*: uxor regine francorum] que fuit die Lune 10 Januarii hora 10 et minutis 36 ante meridiem anno [1479] 1480 secundum computationem Ro[mane] ecclesie verificando hanc horam per *animodar* incidit figura talis, MS 1711 f. 88r.

Table 28 – Horoscopes for Margaret of Austria

NAL 398 F. 93vb2 11 January 1479, 11/12 noon		MS 1711 F. 88r 10 January 1480, 10:36f] 1480	
House I 18° Taurus	Jupiter 21°57' Leo	House I 18°21' Aries	(erased: 19°) Jupiter 21°47' direct
House II 10° Gemini		House II 18° Taurus	(erased: Gemini)
House III 01° Cancer		House III 14° Gemini	(erased: Cancer) Jupiter 27°20' (direct) retrograde
House IV 22° Cancer	[North Node 0°42']	House IV 22°09' Cancer	Gradus oppositionis 17°
House V 29° Leo	Moon 12°56' Virgo Saturn 18°28' Virgo	House V 29/10 Leo	Moon 12°46' Virgo Saturn 18°18' Virgo
House VI 09° Libra		House VI 19° Virgo/ Libra	Saturn 01°24' Libra
House VII 18° Scorpio		House VII 18°21' Libra	Mars 08°44' direct
House VIII 10° Sagittarius		House VIII 18° Taurus/Sag.	
House IX 01° Capricorn	Venus 11°24' Capricorn Mercury 15°46' Capricorn	House IX 14° Sag./Capric.	Moon 09°40' Venus 11°25' Mercury 15°46'
House X 22° Capricorn	Gradus oppositionis 27° Sun 0°35' Aquarius South Node 0°42' Aquarius	House X 22°09' Capricorn	Gradus oppositionis 07° Cap. Sun 29°18' Capricorn Mercury 28°40' Sun 0°35' Aquarius Venus 02°53' South Node 0°42' Aquarius
House XI 29° Aquarius	Mars 10°36'	House XI 29/10 Aquarius	Mars 10°36' Pisces
House XII 09° Aries		House XII 19° Pisces/Aries	

Philip the Handsome (Philippe le Beau)
 MS 1711 f. 88v – NAL 398 f. 93va2: 22 June 1478, 14:30 Bruges (51°13'N, 03°14'E)



House I – 27° Libra	House VII – 27° Aries
House II – 1° Sagittarius	Jupiter 22°41 Taurus direct
House III – 2° Capricorn	House VIII – 1° Gemini
House IV – 06° Aquarius	Venus 16°23 Gemini retrograde
South Node 11°27 Aquarius	Gradus oppositionis 02° Cancer
House V – 03° Pisces	House IX – 4° Cancer
House VI – 30° Pisces	Sun 09°09 Cancer
	Mercury 24°52 direct
	House X – 06° Leo
	North Node 11°27 Leo
	House XI – 03° Virgo
	Saturn 01°56 Virgo direct [5° rule]
	House XII – 30° Virgo
	Mars 20°38 Libra

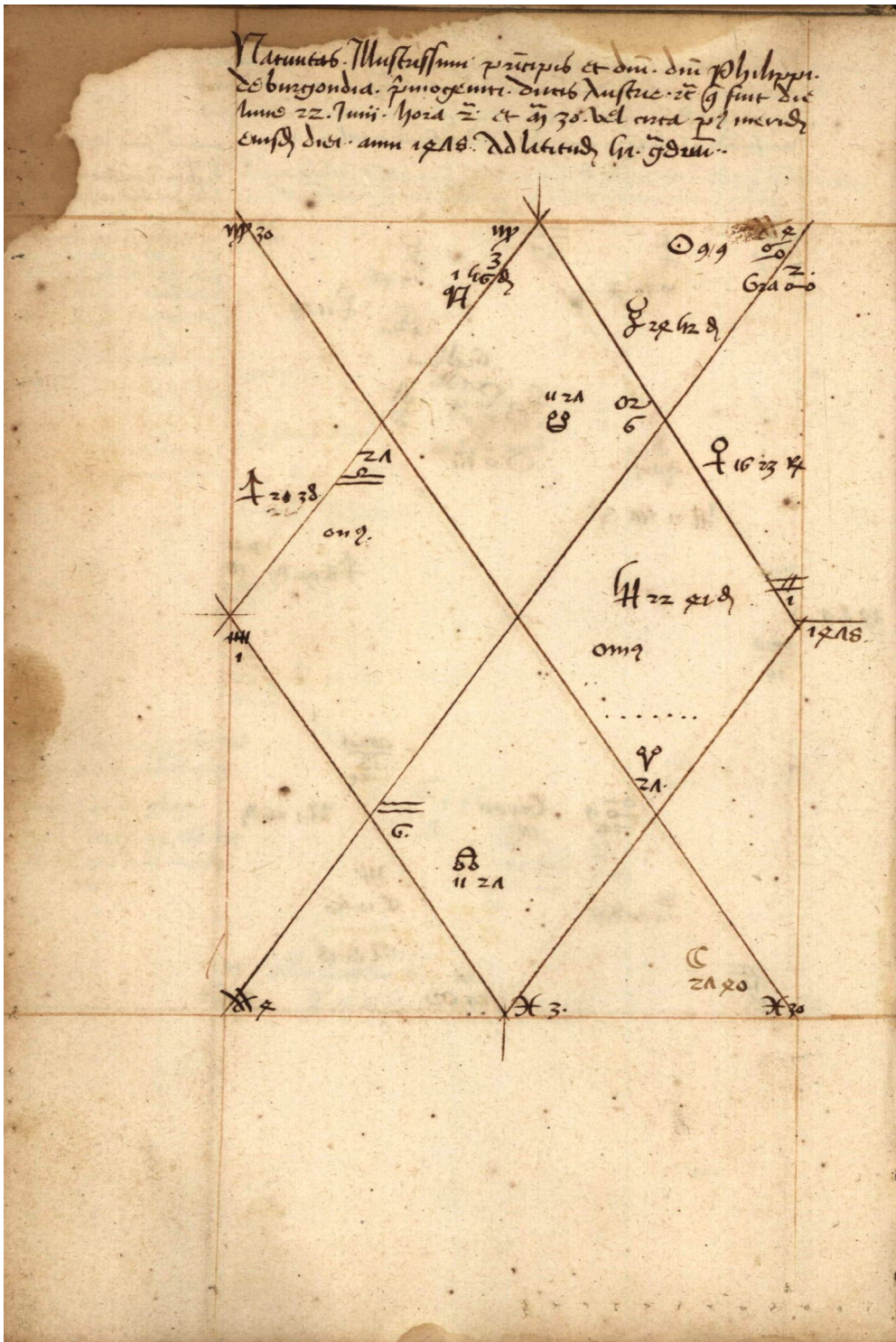


Figure 36 – MS 1711, folio 88v

Philip, the son of Maximilian and Marie de Bourgogne, brother of Margaret of Austria, and father of the emperor Charles V. He married Joana, the daughter of the Catholic king, Ferdinand and Isabella 1496; he died in 1506 in unclear circumstances.

Nativity of the most illustrious prince and lord, Lord Philip of Burgundy, firstborn of the Duke of Austria, etc. which was in the day of the Moon 22 of June, second hour and 30 minutes about after noon of the same day, year 1478 at the latitude of 51 degrees.⁵⁴⁵

There is another horoscope in NAL 398 f. 93va2, with similar, though slightly less precise, data:

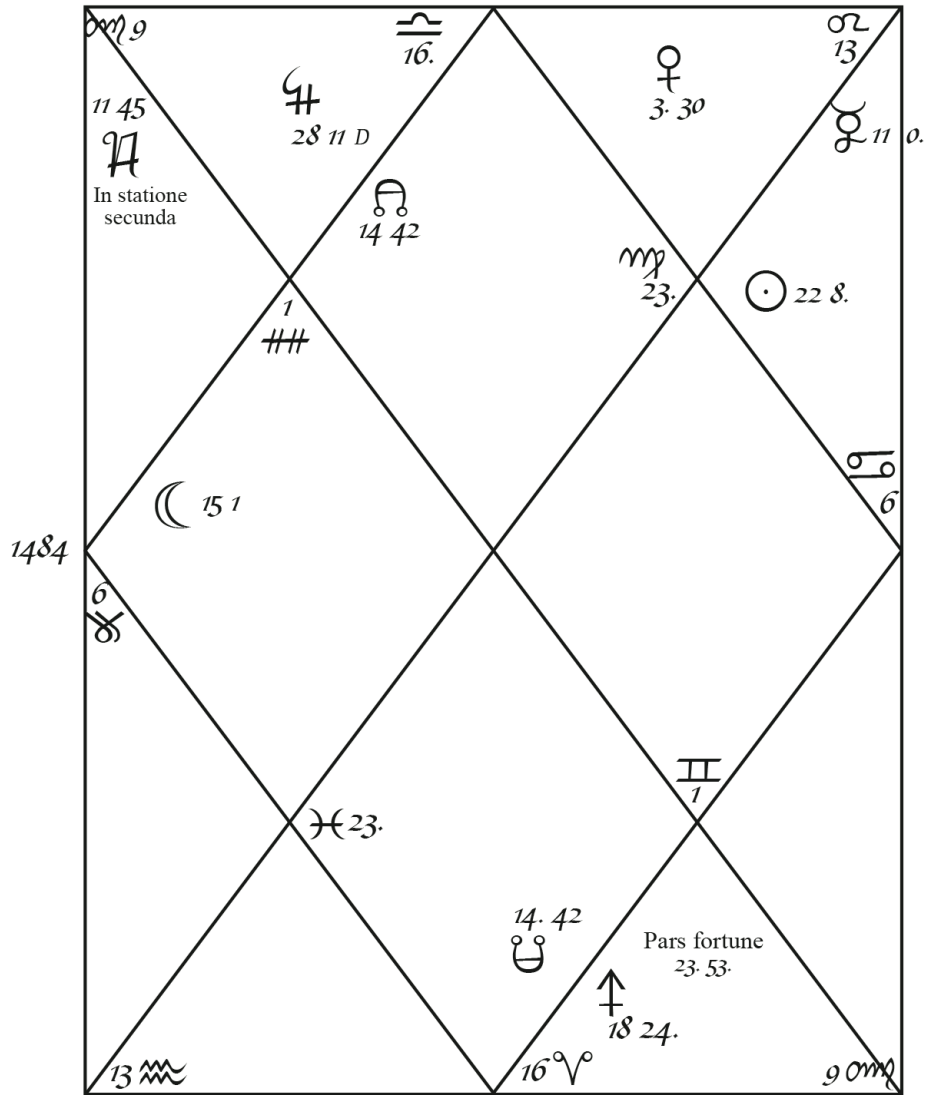
On the day of the Moon 22 of June of the year 1478, between the second and the third [hours] of that same day, was born Philip son of the Lord of Austria.⁵⁴⁶

As in the previous horoscope, Belle perfects the data as he changes from NAL 398 to MS 1711. Again, he follows the five-degree rule in the position of Saturn by placing it in the eleventh house even though it is as 1°56 Virgo, the house cusp being placed at 3° of the same sign. The same occurs in NAL f. 93va2, even though the house cusps are slightly different.

⁵⁴⁵ Nativitas Illustrissimi principis et domini domini Philippi de Burgondia primogeniti ducis Austrie etc que fuit die Lune 22 Junii hora 2^a et minuta 30 vel circa post meridiem eiusdem diei anno 1478, ad latitudinem 51 graduum, MS 1711 f. 88v.

⁵⁴⁶ Die ☾ [Lunae] 22 Junii anni 1478 inter 2^a et 3^a post meridiem ipsius diei natus est Philipus filius dominus Austriae, NAL 398 f. 93va2.

Entry of Charles VIII into Paris
MS 1711 f. 89r: 5 July 1484, 16:00, Paris (48°51'N, 02°21'E)



House I – 01° Sagittarius	House VII – 01° Gemini
Moon 15°01 Sagittarius	
House II – 06° Capricorn	House VIII – 06° Cancer
	Sun 22° Cancer
	Mercury 11°00 Leo
House III – 13° Aquarius	House IX – 13° Leo
	Venus 03°30 Virgo
House IV – 23° Pisces	House X – 23° Virgo
North Node 14°42	South Node 14°42
House V – 16° Aries	House XI – 16° Libra
Mars 18°24 Aries	Jupiter 28°10 Libra direct
Pars Fortune 23°53	
House VI – 09° Taurus	House XII – 09° Scorpio
	Saturn 11°45 Scorpio in second station

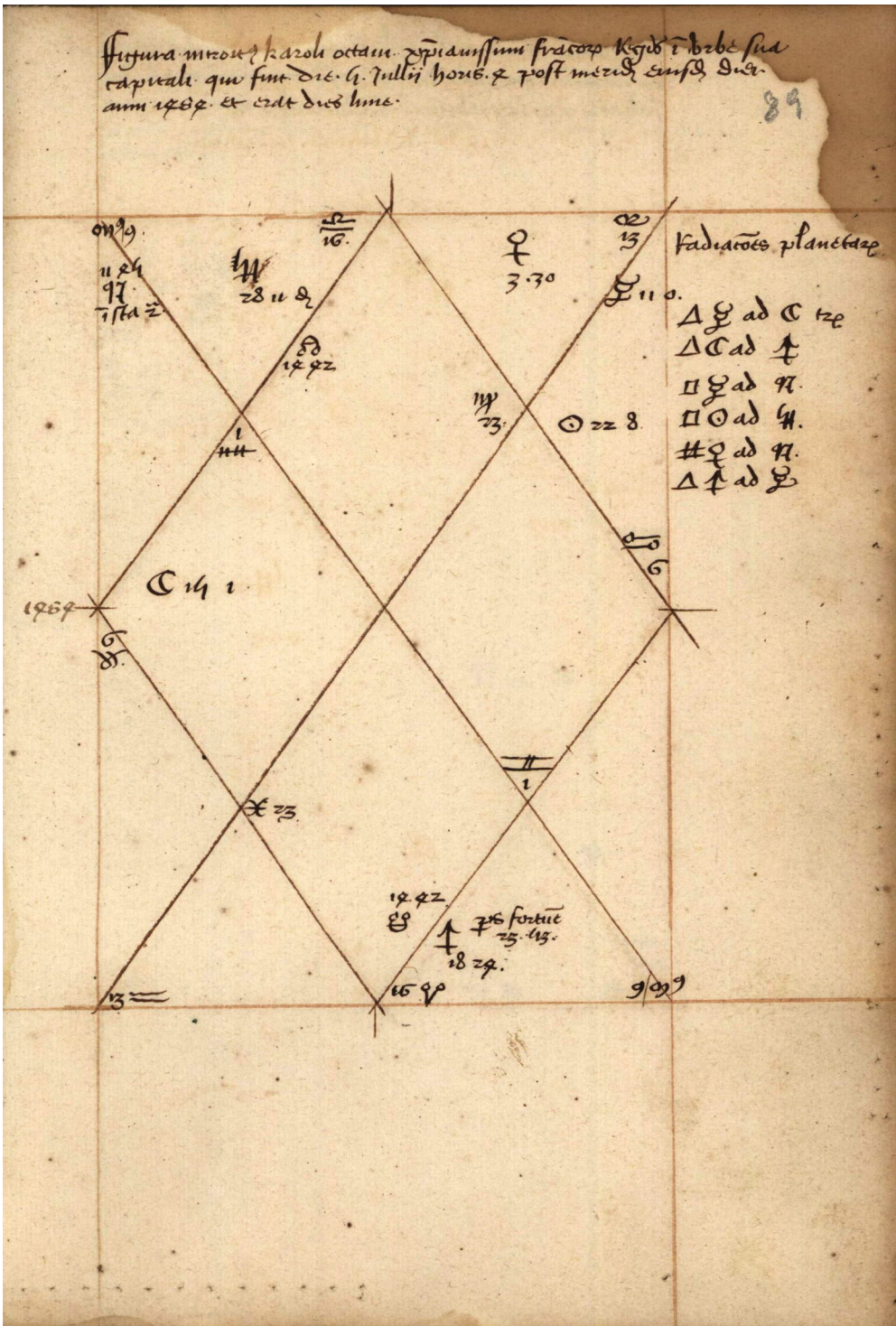


Figure 37 – MS 1711, folio 89r

This event, which happened six days after the coronation of Charles VIII in Reims (MS 1711 f. 87r), symbolized the return of the French king to his capital, after a long period under English domination.⁵⁴⁷ It was therefore a crucial step in securing the French king's power in the face of the strong English forces.

Chart of the entry of Charles VIII most Christian King of the Franks in his capital city, which was on the 5th day of July, 4 hours after noon of the same day, year 1484. And it was the day of the Moon.⁵⁴⁸

The horoscopes for the entrance into a city were given much attention in astrological practice. As in the coronations, Belle adds a table with the planetary aspects within the horoscope.

⁵⁴⁷ Between 1420 and 1436 Paris was under Anglo-Burgundian rule.

⁵⁴⁸ *Figura introitus Karoli octavi christianissimi Francorum regis in urbe sua capitali que fuit die 5 Julii horis 4 post meridiem eiusdem diei anni 1484 et erat dies Lune, MS 1711 f. 89r.*

Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon

MS 1711 f. 98v

Charles (1434-1488), born in Moulins, the brother of Jean II and Pierre de Bourbon. Belle did not calculate this chart, but gives it a title:

Nativity of the Lord Charles of Bourbon cardinal primate of the people of León which was in the year of Christ current 1435, Saturday, 24 of September, dominical letter B.⁵⁴⁹

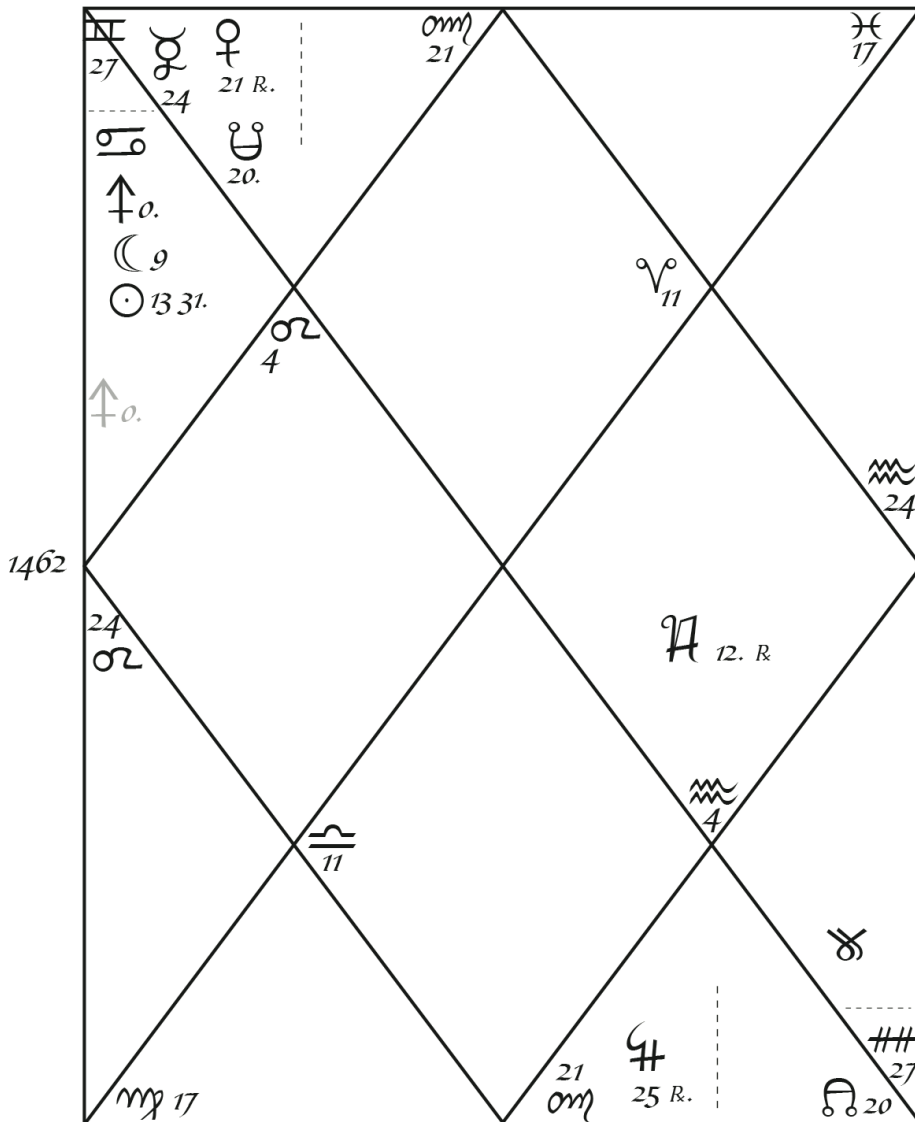
In the margin he writes the remaining data, the time of birth, possibly acquired at a later time: Between eleven and twelve before noon (*Inter 11 et 12 ante meridiem*).

Charles de Bourbon was appointed archbishop of Lyon in 1444, at the age of eleven. In 1465, he served King Louis XI of France as a diplomat in the conflict surrounding the League of Public Weal. He was created cardinal by Pope Sixtus IV on 18 December 1476, probably at a time when Belle was living in Bourbon. After the death of his older brother Jean, in 1488, Charles succeeded him as duke of Bourbon, but after only two weeks he was forced to renounce the title by their younger brother, Pierre, who became the new duke. This may be the reason why Belle does not calculate the horoscope even though he had all the necessary data. He also includes a reference to the dominical letter.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁹ Nativitas domini Karoli de Borbonio cardinalis et primas Lugdunensiem que fuit anno Christi currente 1435 die sabati 24 Septembris, lictera dominicalis B, MS 1711 f. 89v.

⁵⁵⁰ See 'Dominical Letter' in Appendix I.

Louis XII, king of France
MS 1711 f. 90r: 27 June 1462, 05:03, Blois (47°35'N, 01°19'E)



House I – 04° Leo	House VII – 04° Aquarius
House II – 24° Leo	Saturn 12° Aquarius retrograde
House III – 17° Virgo	House VIII – 24° Aquarius
House IV – 11° Libra	House IX – 17° Pisces
House V – 21° Scorpio	House X – 11° Aries
Jupiter 25° Scorpio retrograde	House XI – 21° Taurus
South Node 20° Sagittarius	North Node 20° Gemini
House VI – 27° Sagittarius	Venus 21° Gemini retrograde
	Mercury 24° Gemini
	House XII – 27° Gemini
	Mars 00° Cancer
	Moon 09° Cancer
	Sun 13°31' Cancer

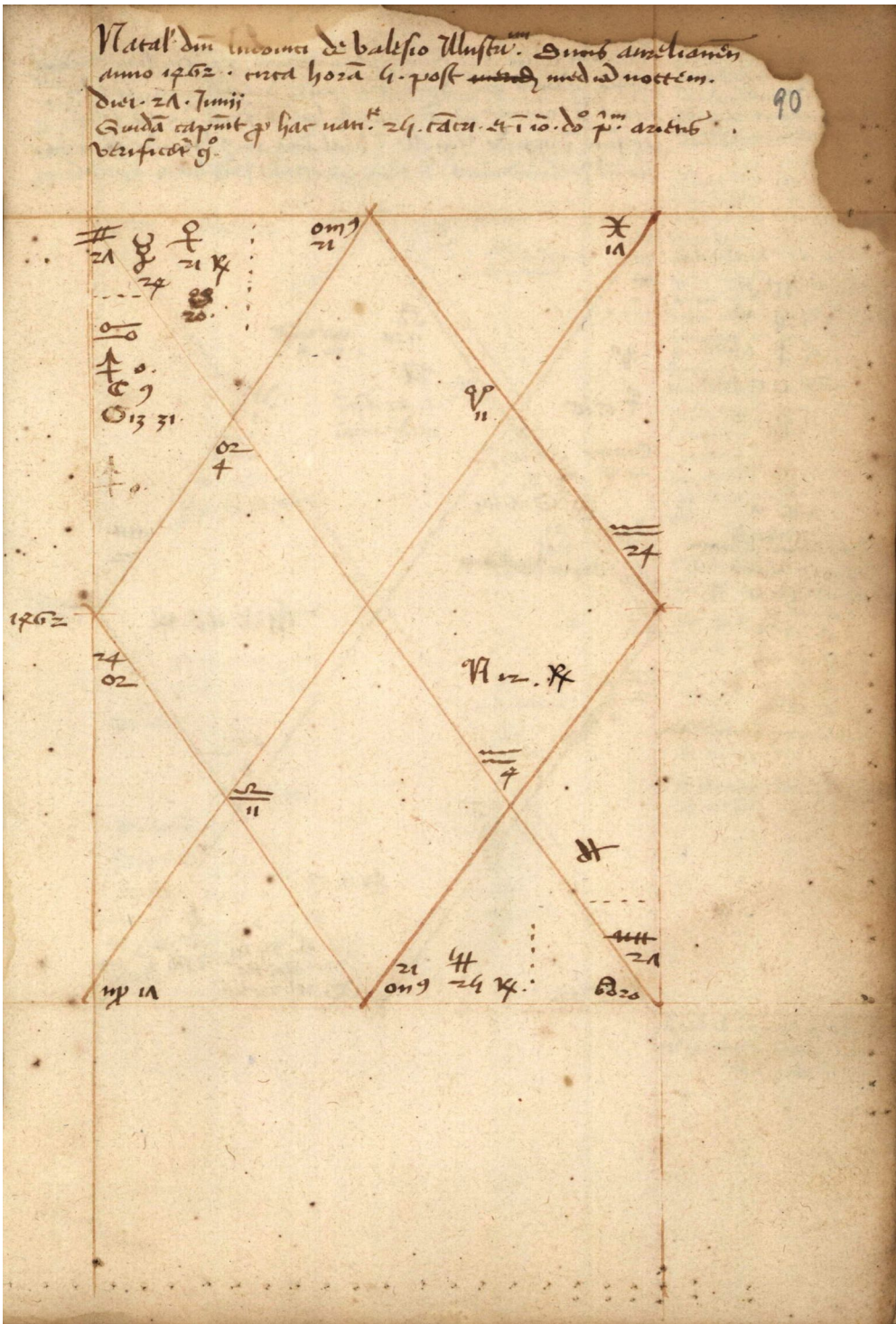


Figure 38 – MS 1711, folio 90r

King Louis XII, the son of Charles, duke d'Orléans, and Marie de Clèves. He succeeded his cousin Charles VIII and reigned from 1498 to his death in 1515.

Nativity of the Lord Louis of Valois, most illustrious Duke of the people of Orléans, year 1462, around the 5th hour after [*crossed out* – midday] midnight, of the 27th day of June.⁵⁵¹

Belle is not sure about this horoscope as is revealed by his comment:

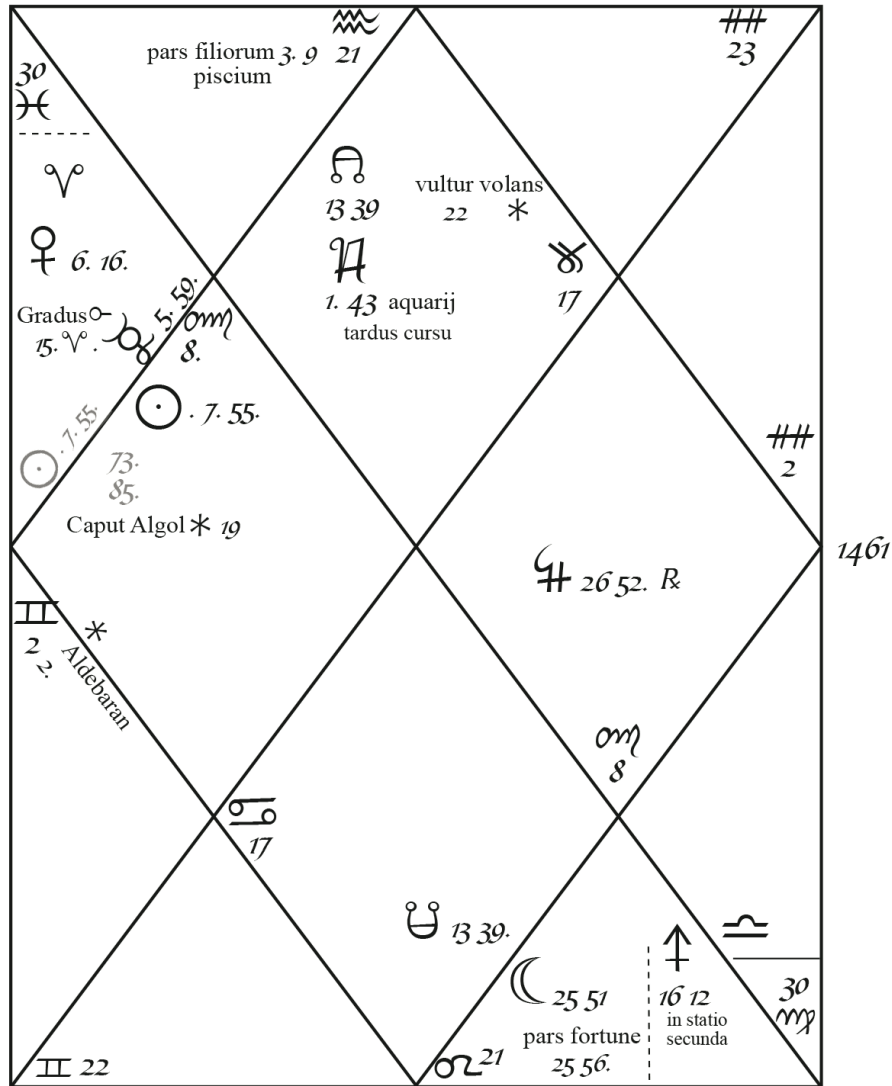
Some take the 25th [degree] of Cancer for this nativity, and in the 10th House the 1st [degree] of Aries. Therefore, it must be verified.⁵⁵²

However, the time he provides, 5 am, corresponds to the horoscope with 25° Cancer rising and not to the one he draws on the folio, which has 4° Leo rising (calculated for a time around 6 am).

⁵⁵¹ Natale domini Ludivici de Valesio illustrissimi ducis Aurelianensium anno 1462 circa horam 5 post [*crossed out*: meridiem] mediam noctem diei 27 Junii, MS 1711 f. 90r.

⁵⁵² Quidam capiunt pro hac nativitate 25 Cancri et in 10 domo primum Arietis verificatur ergo, MS 1711 f. 90r.

Anne de Beaujeu, duchess of Bourbon
MS 1711 f. 90v: 19 April 1461, 04:48, Nivelles (50°35'N, 04°19'E)



House I – 08° Taurus Sun 07°55 Taurus 73 85 Caput Algol 19° Taurus	House VII – 08° Scorpio Jupiter 26°52 Scorpio retrograde
House II – 02° Gemini Aldebaran 02°	House VIII – 02° Sagittarius
House III – 22° Gemini	House IX – 22° Sagittarius
House IV – 17° Cancer North Node 13° 39 Leo [should be Cancer in the III]	House X – 17° Capricorn South Node 13°39 Aquarius [should be Cap. IX] Vultur Volans (Altair) 22° Capricorn Saturn 01°43 Aquarius slow movement
House V – 21° Leo Moon 25°51 Leo Pars Fortune 25°56 Leo Mars 16°02 Virgo in second station	House XI – 21° Aquarius Part of Children 03°09 Pisces
House VI – 30° Virgo	House XII – 30° Pisces Venus 06°16 Aries Gradus coniunctionis 29° Aries Mercury 05°59 Taurus [Erased: Sun 07°55' Taurus]

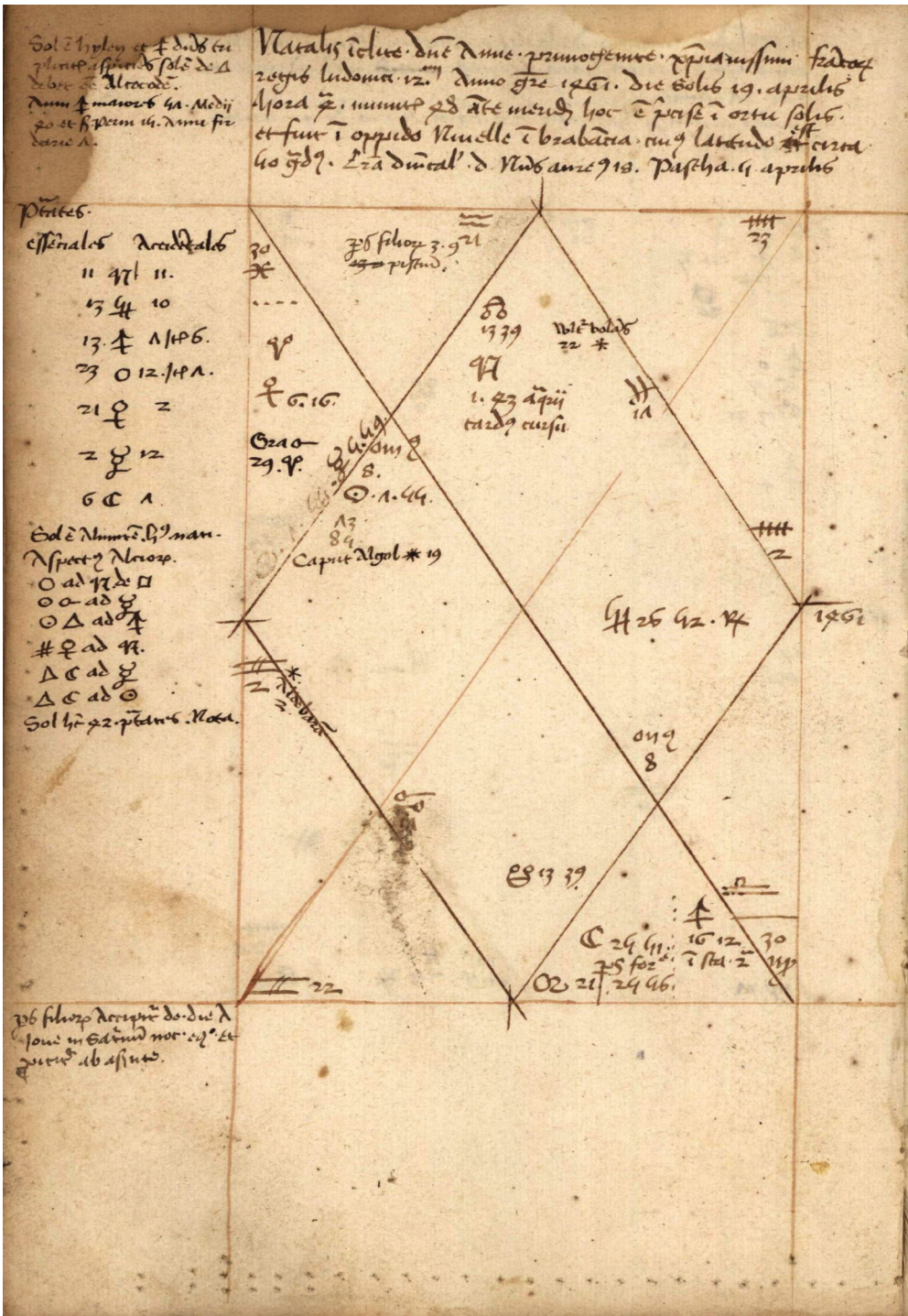


Figure 39 – MS 1711, folio 90v

Anne de Beaujeu, called *Madame la Grande*, daughter of Louis XI and Charlotte of Savoy. Her father called her 'the least foolish woman in France' because of her political skills. She married Pierre de Bourbon in 1473 when she was only twelve years old. Some years later, after her father's death, she assumed the regency of the French kingdom on behalf of her younger brother, Charles VIII, who was then still a minor. In 1491 she gave birth to her only surviving child, Susanne:

Nativity of the illustrious lady Anne, firstborn of the most Christian King of the Franks, Louis XII [sic for Louis XI], year of the grace 1461, day of the Sun 19th of April, 4th hour, 48 minutes before noon. This is precise in the rising of the Sun and it was in the city of Nivelles,⁵⁵³ in Brabant, whose latitude is about 50 degrees. Dominical letter D, golden number 18. Easter [at] the 5th of April.⁵⁵⁴

Following the death of Jean II in 1488, Anne and husband, Pierre, succeeded to the duchy of Bourbon. It is possible that they were Belle's patrons during one or more of the periods that he lived there. This might explain the detailed attention that he pays to this horoscope in which he includes the dominical letter, the golden number, a reference stating that it was Easter Sunday, and a considerable number of fixed stars and lots.⁵⁵⁵ Following the five-degree rule, Belle places the Sun in the first house.⁵⁵⁶ In the left margin, he adds some comments about Anne's length of life:

The Sun is *hyleg* and Mars, ruler of the triplicity, aspects the Sun by a trine, [therefore] it must be the *alcocodem*. The greater years of Mars are 57, intermediate 40 and according to Ptolemy [the lesser years are] 15. Years of the *firdarie* 7.⁵⁵⁷

Belle seems undecided about Anne's life span. He identifies the *hyleg* and from it he deduces the *alcocodem*, but he does not decide the years given by the *alcocodem* according to its condition; he simply enumerates the lesser, median and greater years of the planet. Adding to the confusion, he mistakenly states that the greater years of Mars are fifty-seven, which in fact are the greater years of Saturn; the greater years of Mars being sixty-six. Anne lived for 61 years, having died in the year 1522. By the time Belle calculated her longevity – the final years of the fifteenth century – she was in her forties. This judgement is therefore a true prediction, not a learning exercise. Belle adds

⁵⁵³ It is commonly accepted by historians that Anne was born in the castle of Genappe (50°36'N), about ten kilometers east of Nivelles (50°35'N), the place mentioned by Belle. In practice, the difference is negligible.

⁵⁵⁴ Natalis inclite domine Anne primogenite christianissimi Francorum regis Ludovici duodecimi anno gracie 1461 die Solis 19 Aprilis hora quarta minutis 48 ante meridiem hoc est precise in ortu Solis et fuit in oppido Nivelles in Brabantia cuius latitudo est circa 50 gradus, lictera dominicalis D numerus aureus 18 Pascha 5 Aprilis, MS 1711 f. 90v.

⁵⁵⁵ See 'Golden Number' in Appendix I.

⁵⁵⁶ Interestingly, he does not apply the rule to Mercury, which is at 7°59'. For details, see 'Five-degree rule' in Appendix I.

⁵⁵⁷ Sol est *hyleg* et ♂ dominus triplicitates aspiciens Solem de Δ [trigono] debet esse *alcocodem*. Anni ♂ 57 medii 40 et secundum Ptolomeum 15. Anni *firdarie* 7, MS 1711, 90v.

a table of planetary dignities to calculate the *almutem* where he separates all the essential and accidental dignities. Interestingly, Mercury is given twelve accidental dignities corresponding to a placement in the first house. In practice, Belle is applying the five-degree rule to the planet, even though he draws it in the twelfth house.

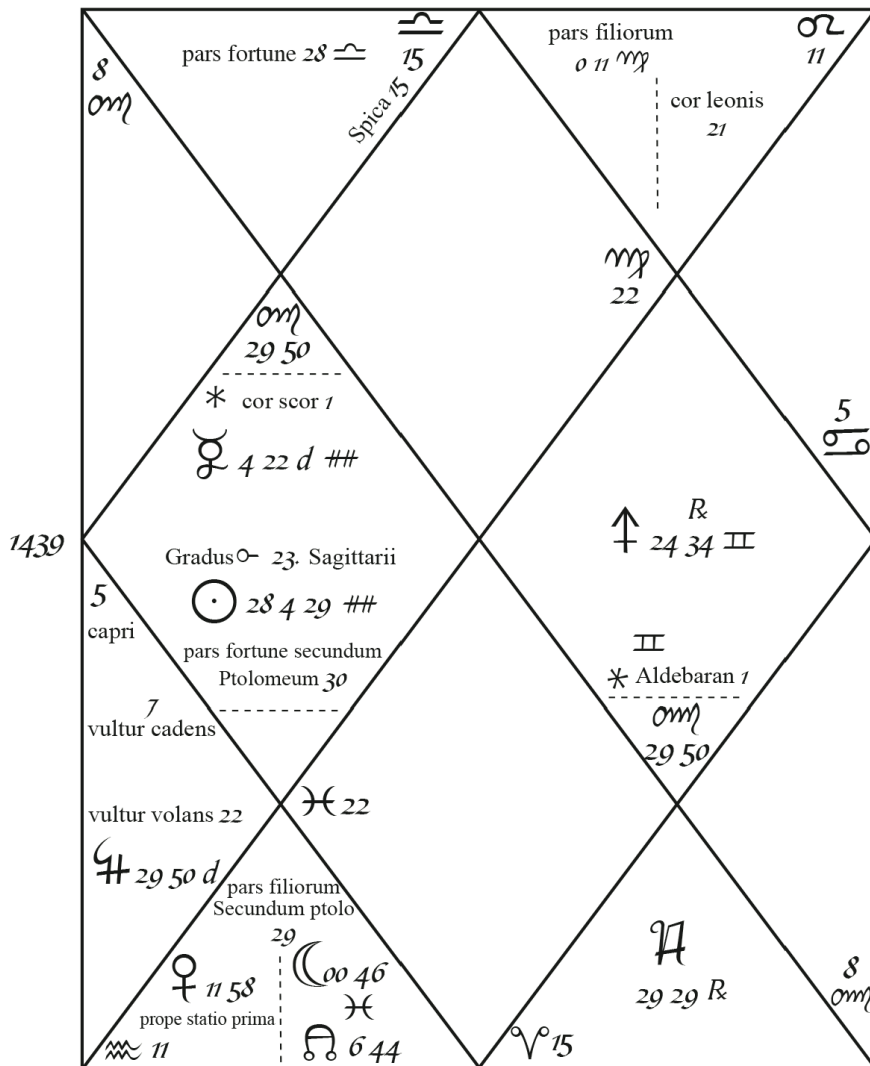
At the bottom right of the page, a comment: ‘the Lot of Children is taken by day from the distance from Jupiter to Saturn (by night it is the same) and starting from the Ascendant’ (*Pars filiorum accipitur de die a Jove in Saturnus noctis equalibus et proicitur ab Ascendente*). The application of the same formula for both diurnal and nocturnal horoscopes suggests that Belle was following, or copying someone who followed, Ptolemy, the only authority who used this ‘unified’ calculation.⁵⁵⁸ This should put the lot at 13° Cancer, but surprisingly, it is at 3° Pisces, a position that corresponds to the inversion of the formula in nocturnal horoscopes: the distance from Saturn to Jupiter taken from the Ascendant. This is the calculation commonly used by authors of the Arabic tradition such as Alcabitius.⁵⁵⁹ Belle may have been unhappy about the Ptolemaic formula and resorted to the traditional Arabic calculation in search of better results. He may also have been trying to ascertain whether the chart was diurnal or nocturnal, using the lot as a test. He repeats this process in the horoscope of Anne’s husband, Pierre de Bourbon. The Lot of Children seldom appears in other horoscopes of his collection; children were probably a concern for the duke and duchess who married in 1473 and only had two children: Charles, count de Clermont, born in 1476 (probably stillborn); and fourteen years later, in 1491, Susanne.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁸ Ptolemy mentions only the Lot of Fortune and calculates solely the diurnal version; this caused some doubts in late-medieval astrology practitioners. See *Tetrabiblos*, III.10, pp. 275-277.

⁵⁵⁹ See Alcabitius, *Introduction*, V.8, p. 145.

⁵⁶⁰ Some genealogical studies state that Charles was a stillborn, others that he died in 1498, aged 22. If the latter was true, his horoscope should have been included in Belle’s collection.

Peter, (Pierre II), duke of Bourbon
MS 1711 f. 91r: 11 December 1439, 05:30, Moulins (46°33'N, 03°20'E)



House I – 29° Scorpio Cor Scopii (Antares) 01° Sagittarius Mercury 04°22' Sagittarius direct Gradus conjunctionis 23° Sagittarius Sun 28°04'29'' Sagittarius Pars Fortune secundum Ptolomeum 30° Sagittarius	House VII – 29° Taurus Aldebaran 01° Sagittarius Mars 24°34' Gemini retrograde
House II – 05° Capricorn Vultur Cadens (Vega) 07 ^a Capricorn Vultur Volans (Altair) 22° Capricorn Jupiter 29°50' Capricorn direct	House VIII – 05° Cancer
House III – 11° Aquarius Venus 11°48' proper statione prima (near 1 st station) Pars Filiorum secundum Ptolomeum 29° Aquarius Moon 00°46' Pisces South Node 06°44' Pisces	House IX – 11° Leo Cor Leonis (Regulus) 21° Leo [Missing: North Node 06°44' Virgo] Pars Filiorum 00°11' Virgo
House IV – 22° Pisces Saturn 29° Pisces	House X – 22° Virgo
House V – 15° Aries	House XI – 15° Libra Spica 15° Libra Pars Fortune 28° Libra
House VI – 08° Taurus	House XII – 08° Scorpio

The younger brother of Jean II de Bourbon and of Charles, archbishop of Lyon. He was initially a member of the League of Public Weal, but later he decided to change sides and in 1473 married Anne de Beaujeu, the daughter of Louis XI. In 1488, when his older brother John died without legitimate heirs, Pierre used his considerable political influence to overcome the claims of his other brother, Charles, to seize the title.

Belle seems to have had much interest in the exact birthtime of the duke:

Estimated chart of the native, the most illustrious prince Lord Peter of Burgundy, Duke of Auvergne and Bourbon, which was in the year current of 1439, day 10th of December complete, hour 17, minutes 30 after noon, and the Moon was the lady of the night, and Mars ruler of the hour, and the following day of Venus and the dominical letter D, golden number 15.⁵⁶¹

He tries to confirm this data by *animodar*:

The present figure was verified by *animodar*, by making the Ascendant degree [move] to the degree of Jupiter, which was closest to the angle of the Ascendant and was *almutem* over the conjunction of the Moon preceding [the birth].⁵⁶²

Yet, in the top right margin he presents slightly different data:

Day of Venus 11 of December 1439, about 2 hours before day, it was born Pierre de Bourbon [*Crossed out*: and it was about 4 hours, and Ascendant Scorpio 19°. Dominical letter D].⁵⁶³

The reference '11 December, two hours before day' is in fact another notation for '10 December complete, 17 hours and 30 minutes after noon'. The difference lies solely in the birthtime, which is now 4 am, that is, one and a half hours earlier. This corresponds to an Ascendant at 19° Scorpio, but the horoscope has the rectified Ascendant at 29° Scorpio. Belle pays much attention to this horoscope. He includes the diurnal and nocturnal versions for the Lot of Fortune, although he errs by thirty degrees (that is, one sign) in both cases.⁵⁶⁴ He also calculates the Lot of Children, a considerable number of fixed stars (Antares, Vega, Altair, Aldebaran, Regulus, and Spica), and the *hyleg*:

The Moon in this nativity is the *hyleg* and Jupiter, the ruler of the place of the Moon, aspecting it by a sextile, was the *alcocodem*. The major years of Jupiter are 79, the intermediate years 45 and a half, and the lesser years 12. Jupiter, which is the

⁵⁶¹ Figura existimationis nati illustris principis domini Petri de Borgondia Arviernorum et Borbonensium ducis, que fuit anno gracie currente 1439 diei 10 Decembris completa horis 17 minutis 30 post meridiem et fuit Luna domina nocti et Mars domini hore et sequebatur dies 4 et lictera dominicalis D aureus numerus 15, MS 1711, 91r.

⁵⁶² Verificata est presens figura per *animodar* faciendu gradus ascendentis ad instar gradus Jovis que fuit propior angulo ascendentis et fuit *almutem* super coniunctionem luminarum precedentem, MS 1711 f. 91r.

⁵⁶³ Die Veneris 11 Decembris 1439 per duas horas ante diem natus fuit Petrus de Borbono [*Crossed out*: et fuit circa horas 4 et ascendens Scorpius 19° lictera dominicalis D], MS 1711 f. 91r.

⁵⁶⁴ The part calculated by the diurnal formula is at 30° Sagittarius but should be in the beginning of Aquarius (about 2°); the one by the nocturnal formula is at 28° Libra but should be at 27° Virgo.

alcocodem, aspected by Mercury by a sextile and in an angle, must add its lesser years [~~crossed out: 20~~], which are 20.⁵⁶⁵

Belle crossed out this comment probably because the Moon is not in sextile to Jupiter; he ignored the dissociated trine between the Moon and Mars and concluded that the Moon was not aspected by any of her rulers and therefore unsuitable for *hyleg*. But in a comment below he returns to the Moon as *hyleg*, this time taking into account the Moon and Mars trine in spite of its being dissociated and separative.

The Moon in this nativity is the *hyleg*, and Mars, aspecting the Moon by a sextile [sic for a trine], is the *alcocodem*, because it is in the triplicity of the Moon and the nativity is nocturnal, and it gives the years between intermediate and major, because it is retrograde and between an angular and a succedent house. Dominical letter D.⁵⁶⁶

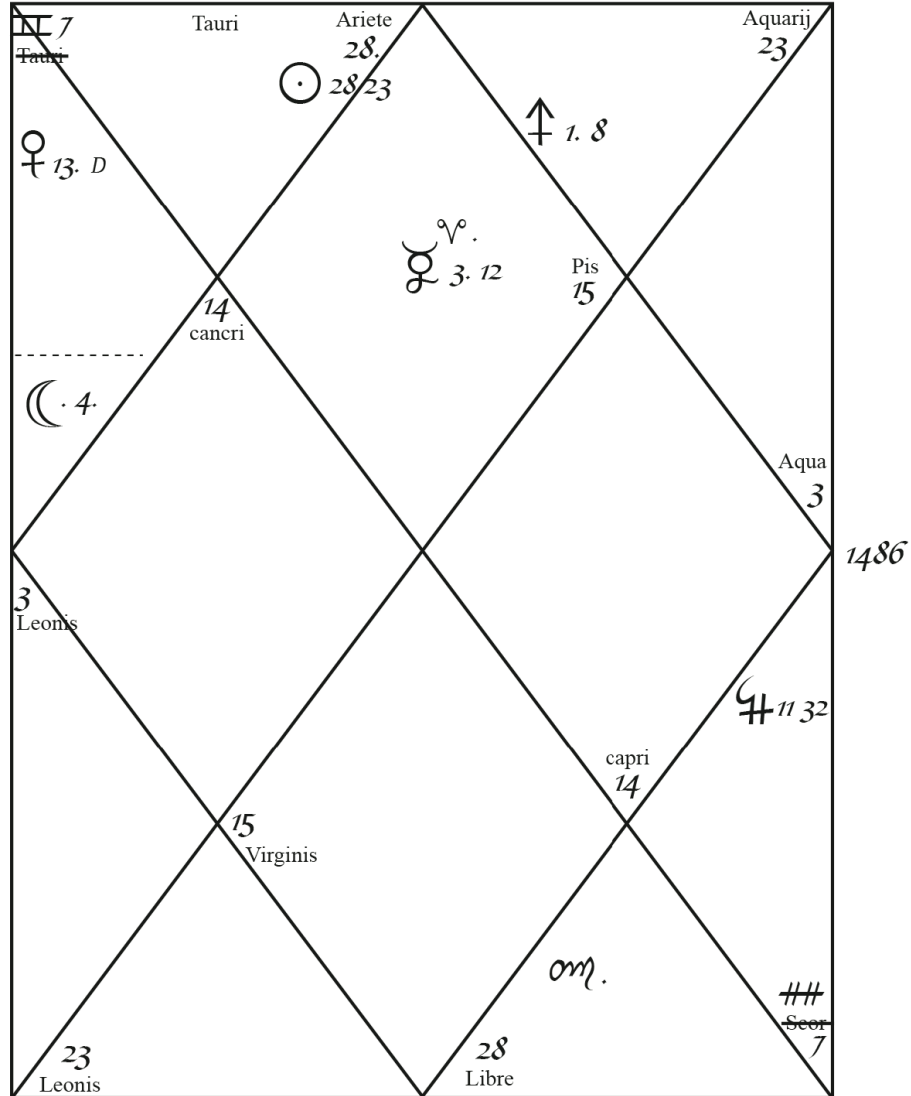
According to Belle, Mars as *alcocodem* should give more than its minor years, forty years and a half, and less than its major years, sixty-six. Again, this is a true prediction not an exercise, since Pierre was alive when Belle made this calculation. He died on 10 October 1503, two months before his sixty-fourth birthday.

As with this wife Anne, Belle adds a detailed table with the dignities of the planets in the five *hylegical* places.

⁵⁶⁵ Luna in hac nativitate est *hyleg* et ♃ dominus domus ♃ aspiciens eam de ♆ [sextili] erit *alcocodem*. Anni Jovis magnis sunt 79 medii 45 et dimidiam parvi 12. Jupiter qui est *alcocodem* aspicitur a Mercurio de ♆ [sextili] et est in angulo. ♃ qui est *alcocodem* aspicitur a ♀ de ♆ [sextili] et est in angulo debet addere annos suos minores [20 erased] qui sunt 20, MS 1711 f. 91r.

⁵⁶⁶ Luna in hac nativitate est *hyleg* et Mars aspiciens Lunam de ♄ [trigono] erit *alcocodem* quia est in triplicitate Lune et nativitas nocturna Et dabit annos inter medios et maiores, quia est retrogradus et inter angulum et succedentem 19 litera dominicalis D, MS 1711 f. 91r.

Coronation of Maximilian as king of the Romans
MS 1711 f. 91v: 09 April 1486, Aachen (50°46N, 06°05E)



House I – 14° Cancer	House VII – 14° Capricorn
House II – 03° Leo	House VIII – 03° Aquarius
House III – 23° Leo	House IX – 23° Aquarius
House IV – 15° Virgo	Mars 07°08 Pisces
House V – 28° Libra	House X – 15° Pisces
House VI – 07° Sagittarius	Mercury 03°12 Aries
Jupiter 11°32 Capricorn	House XI – 28° Aries
	Sun 28°23 Aries
	House XII – 07° Gemini
	Venus 13° Gemini direct
	Moon 04° Cancer

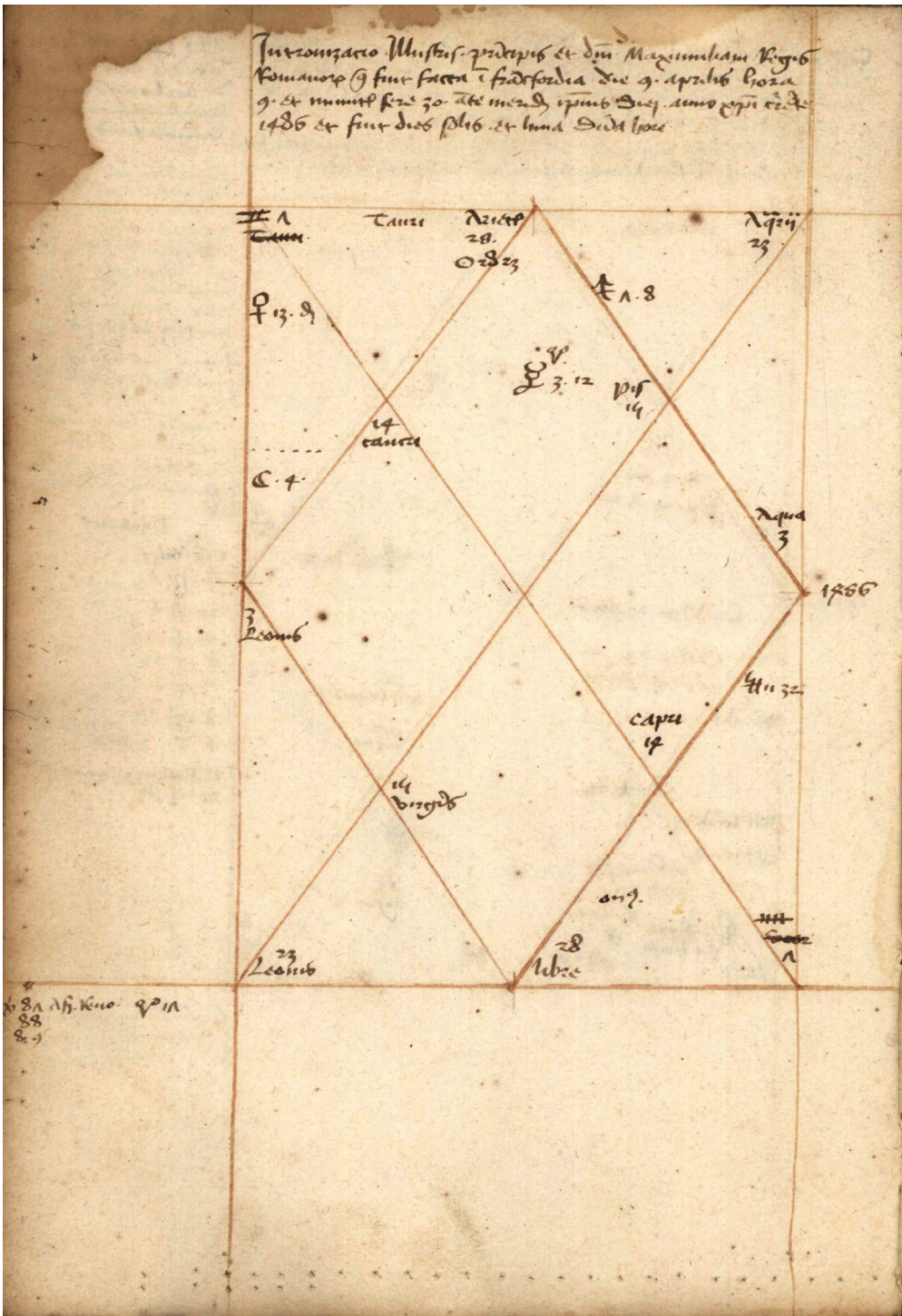


Figure 41 – MS 1711, folio 91v

Maximilian was elected king of the Romans on 16 February 1486 in Frankfurt-am-Main and crowned on the 9 April 1486 in Aachen. He was acclaimed as Holy Roman Emperor seven years later, in 1493, upon the death of his father.

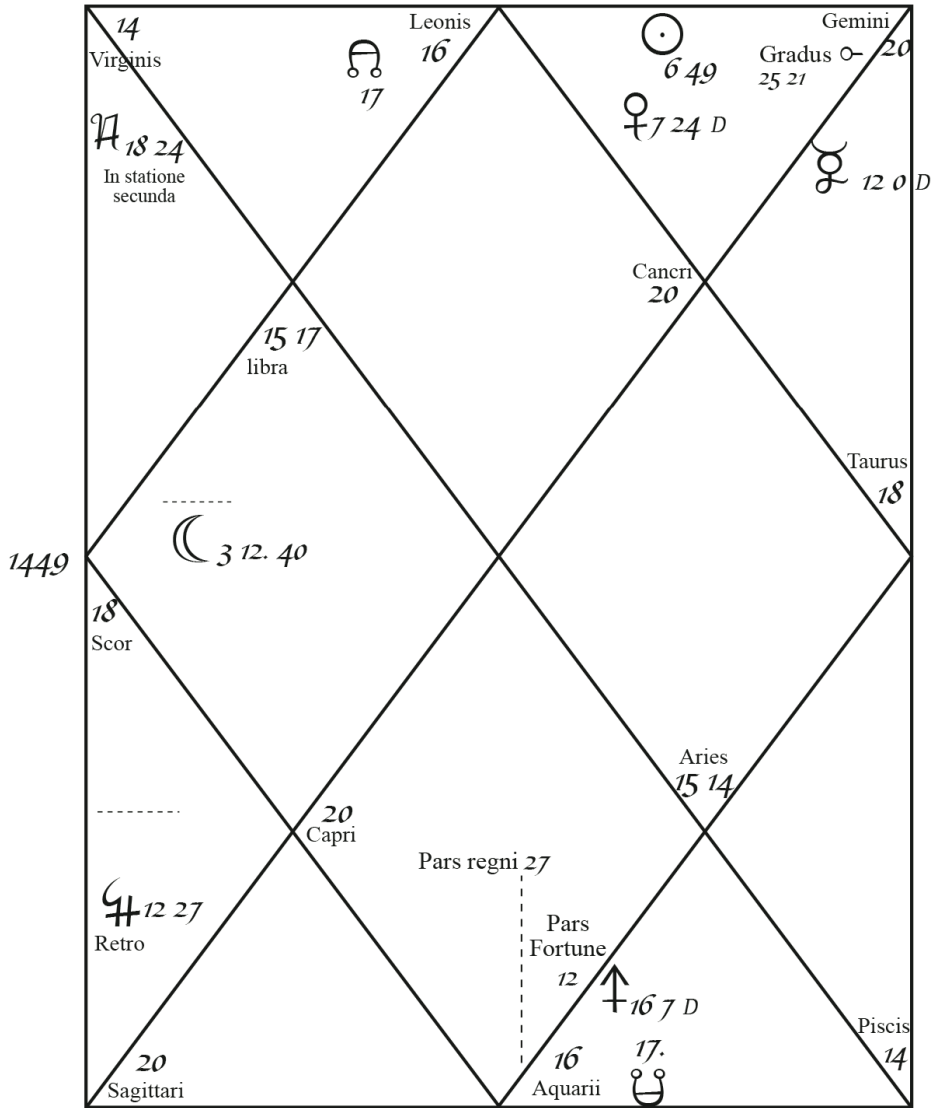
Coronation of the most illustrious prince and lord, Lord Maximilian, King of the Romans, which was made in Frankfurt in the 9th day of April, 9 hours and about 30 minutes before noon of the same day, in the current year of Christ 1486, and it was the day of the Sun, and the Moon [was] the lady of the hour.⁵⁶⁷

This chart has several unusual features: the signs are represented by their Latin names, not by symbols, and Saturn, which should be at 11° Sagittarius, is missing. Also, the Lot of Fortune is at 15° Aries, which would be the correct position if the horoscope were nocturnal, but being diurnal, it should be at 19° Virgo. In the left margin, a comment reads: Year of Christ 87, Ascendant of the revolution 17° Aries (*Anno Christi 87 Ascendens Revolutio Aries 17*). Followed by the number eighty-eight and eighty-nine two lines below. Apparently, Belle intended to calculate Maximilian's revolutions of the year for 1487, 1488, and 1489.

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⁵⁶⁷ Intronizatio illustrissimi principis et dominus dominus Maximilliani regis Romanorum que fuit facta in Francfordia dia 9 Aprilis hora 9 et minutis fere 30 ante meridiem ipsius diei anno Christi currente 1486 et fuit dies Solis et Luna domina hora, MS 1711 f. 91v.

'D. d'Albret' (unidentified)
MS 1711 f. 92v: 19 June 1450, 13:17, unknown city in Brittany, France



House I – 15°17' Libra	House VII – 15°17' Aries
Moon 03°12'40" Scorpio	
House II – 18° Scorpio	House VIII – 18° Taurus
Jupiter 12°27' Sagittarius retrograde	Mercury 12°00' Gemini direct
House III – 20° Sagittarius	House IX – 20° Gemini
	Gradus conjunctionis 25°21' Gemini
	Sun 05°19' Cancer
	Venus 07°24' Cancer direct
House IV – 20° Capricorn	House X – 20° Cancer
Pars Regni 27° Capricorn	
Pars Fortune 12° Aquarius	
House V – 16° Aquarius	House XI – 16° Leo
[Missing: North Node 17° Aquarius]	South Node 17° Leo
House VI – 14° Pisces	House XII – 14° Virgo
	Saturn 18°24' Virgo in first station

The native's identity is not clearly revealed in this horoscope and there are several other uncertainties: the planetary positions do not correspond to the date mentioned in the title, 19 June 1449, but to the following year, 1450. This could be a simple error in the notation of the year: Belle may have written 1449 *currente* indicating that the year was still incomplete, when he intended to write 1449 *perfecto* stating that it was complete. The exact place of birth is not mentioned. As with the previous horoscope, the signs are represented by their Latin names, not by glyphs; this suggests that both were copied from the same source.

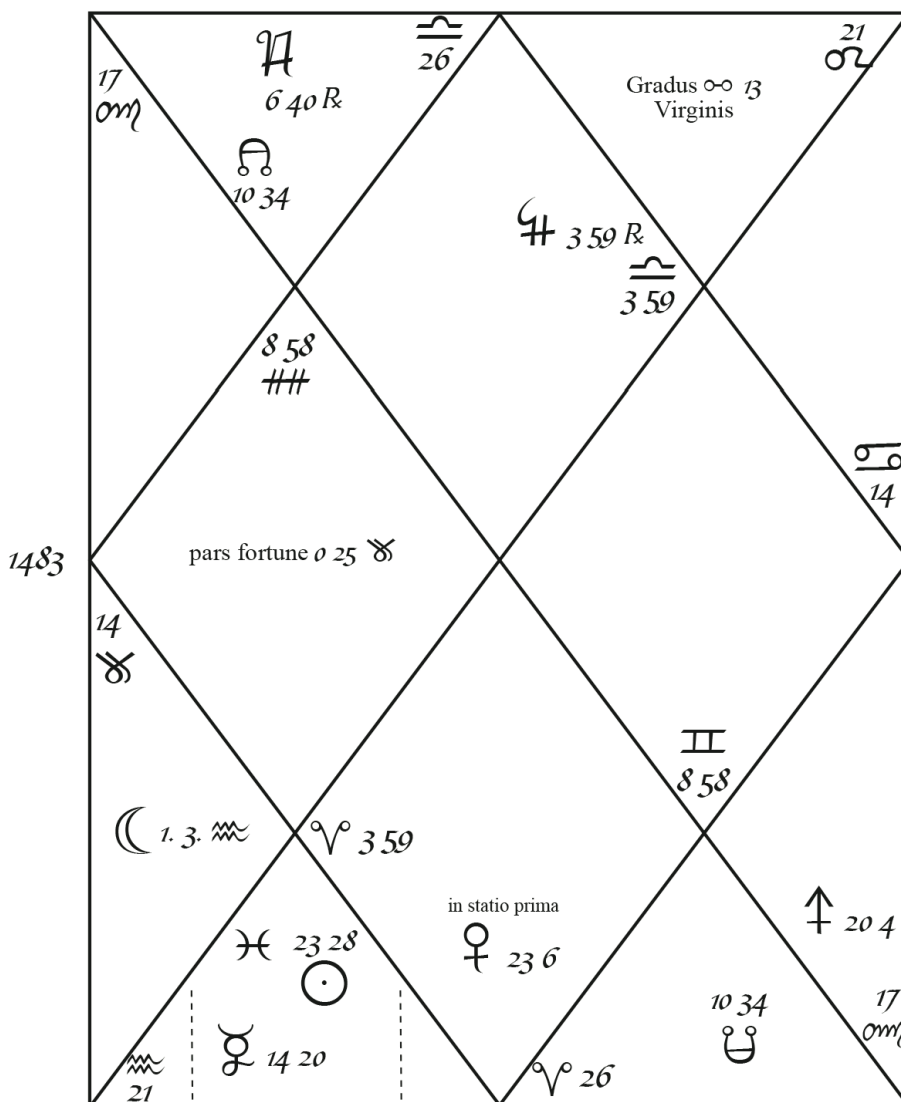
Nativity chart of the most illustrious prince and lord, D [Domini?] d'Albret, which was in the year of the Lord 1449 current, 19th day of the month of June, first hour with 17 minutes, after noon of the same day in Britania Minor, at the polar latitude of 50 degrees, and it was the day of Jupiter and hour of Jupiter, dominical letter E, golden number 6.⁵⁶⁸

Belle includes the Lot of the Kingdom (*Pars Regni*) in this chart suggesting this individual had some power, but although he computes the lot according to the usual formula (Mars to the Moon, from the Ascendant), oddly, he uses the inverse nocturnal computation despite this being a diurnal chart.

⁵⁶⁸ Figura nativitatis Illustrissimi principis et domini, domini D. d'Albret que fuit anno domini 1449 currente die 19^a mensis Junii hora prima cum minutis 17 post meridiem eiusdem diei in Britania Minori ad latitudinem pole 50 graduum et fuit dies Jovis et hora Jovis, lictera dominicalis E, numerus aureus 6, MS 1711, f. 92v.

Antoine Belle

MS 1711 f. 93r: 5 March 1483, 01:30, latitude 45° 30' Châlus (45°39'N, 00°58'E)



House I – 08°58 Sagittarius Pars Fortune 00°25 Capricorn	House VII – 08°58 Gemini
House II – 14° Capricorn Moon 01°03 Aquarius	House VIII – 14° Cancer
House III – 21° Aquarius Mercury 14°20 Pisces Sun 23°28	House IX – 21° Leo
House IV – 03°59 Aries Venus 23°06 Aries in first station	House X – 03°59 Virgo Jupiter 03°59 Libra retrograde
House V – 26° Aries North Node 10°34 Taurus	House XI – 26° Libra Saturn 06°40 Scorpio retrograde South Node 10°34 Scorpio
House VI – 17° Taurus Mars 20° Taurus	House XII – 17° Scorpio

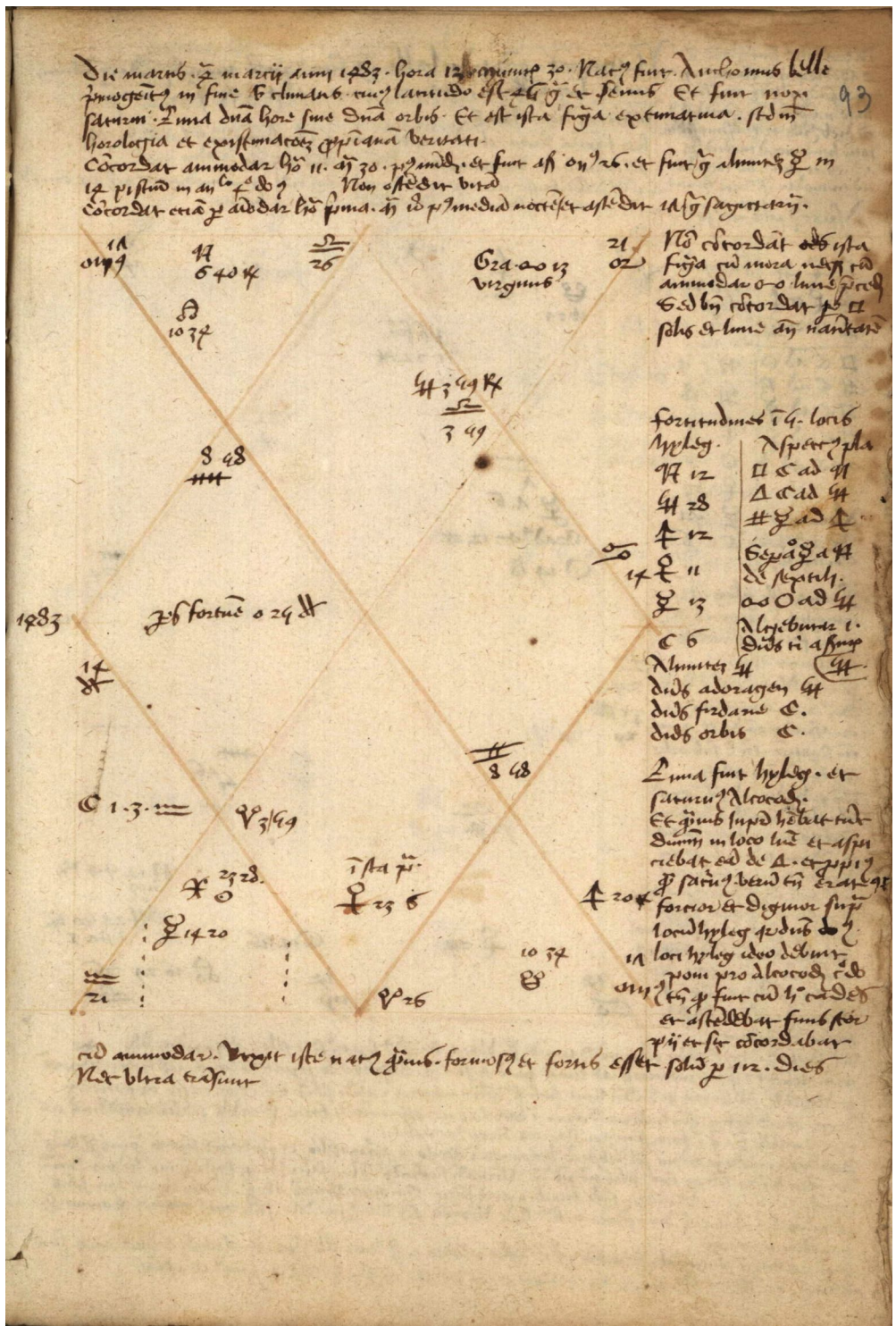


Figure 43 – MS 1711, folio 93r

This is likely to be Belle's firstborn son. The margins are covered with calculations, thus revealing much interest in this horoscope:

On the day of Mars [Tuesday], 4th day of March, year 1483, 13 hours, 30 minutes, was born Antoine Belle, firstborn, in the end of the sixth climate, which latitude is 45 degrees and a half, and it was the night of Saturn, Moon lady of the hour or the 'lady of the orb'. And this is an estimate chart, according to the astrolabe and estimation close to the truth.⁵⁶⁹

This birthplace is not identified, but Belle mentions 'the end of the sixth climate' and the latitude of '45° and a half', which may correspond to the city of Châlus (45°39'N, 00°58'E), where he possibly lived at the time.⁵⁷⁰ The birthtime was calculated with an astrolabe perhaps by Belle himself.⁵⁷¹ Although Belle considers it 'close to the truth', he still attempts to rectify the horoscope since rectifications were customary – almost compulsory – even when the birth time was well-known.⁵⁷²

The *animodar* agrees [with] the 11th hour, 30 minutes after noon, and the Ascendant was Scorpio 26 [degrees] and the degree of the *almutem* was Mercury in 14 of Pisces in the angle of the 4th house.⁵⁷³

The lunation previous to birth was a Full Moon at 13° Virgo, so he takes Mercury as its *almutem*. As Mercury is at 14°20' Pisces, he conjectures that the Lower Angle, which is the closest angle to Mercury, would be either at 14° Pisces or 14° Aries, and thus recalculates the chart obtaining 26° Scorpio Ascendant for the first possibility and 17° Sagittarius Ascendant for the second.

It agrees therefore by *animodar*, first hour, 18 minutes by midnight, and it ascended the 17th degree of Sagittarius.⁵⁷⁴

But he does not seem satisfied with this result:

⁵⁶⁹ Diei Martis quatuor Marcii anni 1483 hora 13 minutis 30 natus fuit Anthonius Belle primogenitus in fine 6 climatis cuius latitudo est 45 gradus et semis et fuit nox Saturni Luna domina hore sive domina orbis et est ista figura extimativa secundum horologia et existimationem propinquam veritati, MS 1711 f. 93r.

⁵⁷⁰ In MS 1711 f. 72v, on the folio of the almanac for the month of February 1480, Belle writes a brief note on the margin mentioning this city.

⁵⁷¹ For the use of an astrolabe, see North, *Stars, Mind and Fate*, pp. 221-222; North, *Horoscopes and History*, pp. 1-69, at pp. 56-60, 67-69, and Préaud, *Les astrologues*, p. 146. The Ascendant at 8°58' Scorpio corresponds to 12:30, not 13:30, probably an error of notation.

⁵⁷² As noted before, Regiomontanus also rectifies the nativity of Maximilian even though he had a direct account of the birthtime.

⁵⁷³ Concordat *animodar* hora 11 minutis 30 post meridiem et fuit ascendentis ♏ [Scorpius] 26 et fuit gradus *almutem* ☿ in 14 Piscium in ângulo 4 domus. [blank space], MS 1711 f. 93r.

⁵⁷⁴ Concordat etiam per *animodar* hora prima minuta 18 post mediam noctem et ascendit 17 gradus Sagittarii, MS 1711 f. 93r.

This figure agrees neither with the *mora* [time of gestation] nor the *animodar*, nor with the preceding lunation, but it does agree by the square of the Sun and the Moon previous to birth.⁵⁷⁵

This supposed disagreement may result from the fact that the horoscope was correct in the first place making unnecessary any correction. As the standard referentials of the New and Full Moon seem to fail, Belle resorts to the waning quarter of the Moon to calculate the *animodar*. It is an uncommon choice, and it seems somewhat forced, yet it is the only one that agrees with the horoscope. The waning square occurred at 20° Sagittarius, therefore Jupiter is its *almutem*. The Midheaven, which in this horoscope is the angle closest to the degree of Jupiter, is thus relocated to the same degree as the planet at 3°59' within the sign of Libra, thus placing the Ascendant at 8°58' Sagittarius. These are the positions in this horoscope. In the middle of this calculation Belle interpolates, possibly sometime later, a brief and sad comment: 'It does not display life' (*Non ostendit vitam*).

He also lists additional data including items he had never used before:

- *Algebutar*, that is the ruler of the term of the Ascendant, Jupiter (*Algebutar id est dominus termini ascendentis ♃*).⁵⁷⁶
- Lord in the Ascendant, Jupiter (*Dominus in ascendente ♃*).
- *Almutem*, Jupiter (*Almutem ♃*), as calculated above.
- Ruler of the *adoragen*, Jupiter (*Dominus adragen ♃*).
- Ruler of the *firdarie*, the Moon (*Dominus firdarie ☾*).
- Lady of the orb, the Moon (*Domina orbis ☾*).

This is the only horoscope of the collection where Belle mentions the *adoragen*, the Indian system of decanates, an alternative to the more common system of faces.⁵⁷⁷ This choice may have personal reasons. If he had adopted the faces the ruler would have been Mercury, which in this horoscope is cadent and in Pisces – therefore debilitated; he may have opted for the less common alternative of the *adoragen* because this way the ruler is Jupiter, a much stronger planet in this chart. This inconsistency, and the unorthodox options regarding the rectification of the chart, suggest that in this case his personal feelings may have overcome his impartiality as an astrologer (this topic is addressed further on).⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁵ Non concordat [*crossed word*: omnes] ista figura cum *mora* neque cum *animodar* ☉ [oppositi] Lune procedentis sed bene concordat per □ [quarto] Solis et Lune ante nativitatem, MS 1711 f. 93r.

⁵⁷⁶ Again, using Egyptian terms. All the terms in this list are explained in Appendix I.

⁵⁷⁷ Which he adopts in his table of planetary dignities and in several horoscopes.

⁵⁷⁸ Another example of personal feelings obliterating astrological impartiality can be found in Greenbaum, 'Kepler's Personal Astrology: Two Letters to Michael Maestlin', *From Masha'allah to Kepler*, pp. 177-200: Kepler is lucid, almost ruthless, when describing the personality of his son

Sagittarius

Faces		
♀	♁	♃
Adoragen		
♂	♃	♄

He calculates the native's length of life:

Moon was *hyleg* and Saturn *alcocodem*, and although Jupiter had then dominium over the place of the Moon and aspected it by trine, and was closer than Saturn, nevertheless Saturn was stronger and more dignified over the place of the *hyleg* than the ruler of the place of the *hyleg*. For that reason it had to be placed as *alcocodem*. I believe nevertheless, that it was cadent and the end of Scorpio ascended, and so it agreed with the *animodar*.⁵⁷⁹

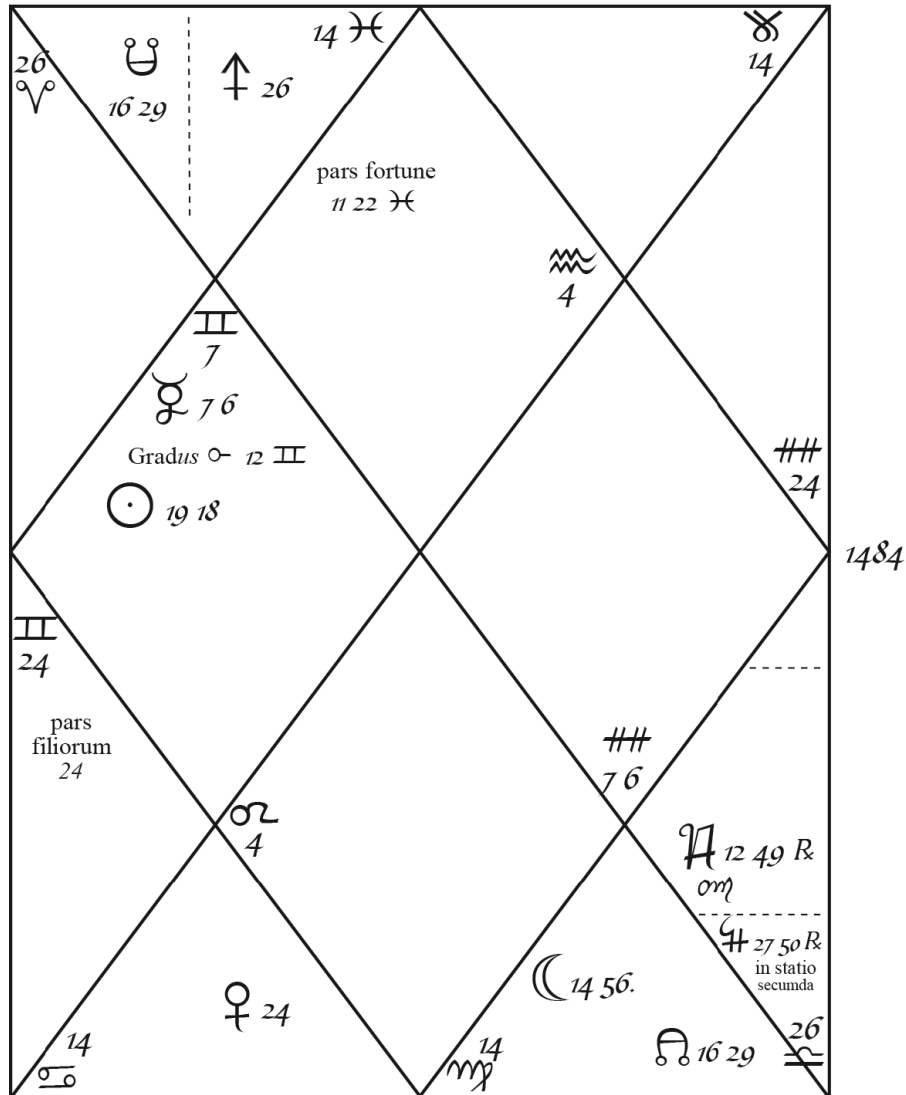
But none of these calculations managed to extend the child's life. Below the horoscope Belle wrote 'The native, although being beautiful and strong, lived for only 112 days and did not surpass this' (*Vixit iste natus, quamvis formosus et fortis esset, solum per 112 dies nec ultra transiet*). The comment 'beautiful and strong' reiterates the personal connection between him and his child. According to this account, Antoine Belle died on 25 June 1483.

Heinrich, born in 1598, but he does not predict, nor can he accept, the child's early death. In this matter, his professional objectivity 'gives way to pure emotion of loss', p. 194.

⁵⁷⁹ Luna fuit *hyleg* et Saturnus *alcocodem* et quamvis Jupiter habeat tunc dominium in loco Lune et aspeciebat eam de Δ [trigono] et proprias quod Saturnus, verum tamen erat ♃ fortior et dignior supra locum *hyleg* quam dominus domus loci *hyleg* ideo debuit poni pro *alcocodem*. Credo tamen quod fuit cum hoc cadens et ascendebat finis Scorpii et sic concordabat cum *animodar*, MS 1711 f. 93r.

Conrad Belle

MS 1711 f. 93v: 1 June 1484, 03:12, Moulins (46°33N, 03°20E)



House I – 07° Gemini Mercury 07°06 Gemini Gradus coniunctionis 12° Gemini Sun 19°18 Gemini	House VII – 07° Sagittarius
House II – 24° Gemini	House VIII – 24° Sagittarius
House III – 14° Cancer Venus 24° Cancer	House IX – 14° Capricorn
House IV – 04° Leo	House X – 04° Aquarius Pars Fortune 11°22 Pisces
House V – 14° Virgo Moon 14°46 Virgo South Node 16°29 Libra	House XI – 14° Pisces Mars 26° Pisces North Node 16°29 Aries
House VI – 26° Aries Jupiter 27°50 Libra retrograde in first station Saturn 12°49 Scorpio retrograde	House XII – 26° Libra

This horoscope, the most annotated of all the collection, may be of Belle's second son, possibly named after Conrad Heingarter.

Nativity of Conrad Belle, which was in the afternoon of the last day of May, 15 hours, 12 minutes, year 1484. And it was the night of Venus and the hour of Jupiter. This figure was made at the horizon of Moulins, in Bourbon, which latitude is 46 degrees and [crossed out: 29] 35 minutes. The Lord of the orb was Jupiter.⁵⁸⁰

He was born more than fourteen months after Antoine Belle, a perfectly possible interval for two brothers. The place of birth is Moulins, the capital of Bourbon, by then still under the dominion of Duke Jean II. In smaller characters there is a comment about the moment of conception suggesting the use of the *trutina* of Hermes:

His conception must have been between the 24th and the 25th August, in the year 1483, around midnight, 24 of the same August, which was Sunday, and was the length of the pregnancy was of [crossed out – 279] 281 days and 4 hours.⁵⁸¹

He expands about this in the left margin:

The length of this [pregnancy] was precisely 273 days, which is the terminus of the complete nine months, although the place of the Moon in the nativity does not agree with the day predicted, because it transited by seven days and more, but in the place of the median delay, it agrees with the *animodar* according to the hermetic art.⁵⁸²

Below, he adds the aspects of the planets and the calculation for the *almutem*:

Almutem Mercury, it has 53 dignities.⁵⁸³ The Moon is the *hyleg*, because in the nativity it is nocturnal and in a feminine sign, succedent, and it aspects the Ascendant. Mercury was the *alcocodem*, because it is the ruler of the hour and [also the ruler] of the exaltation of the place of the Moon, and it aspects it by square, although with separation under its orb, and their years are 75.⁵⁸⁴

Having determined that Mercury is the *alcocodem*, Belle estimates that the child will live for seventy-five years. His optimistic calculation is somewhat diminished by further considerations about the condition of Mercury, although not to the point of making him fear for the child's life:

But because it moves towards the Sun and to combustion, it is feared that this causes the complete damage of its major years. Because in its house, triplicity and in its

⁵⁸⁰ Nativitas Conrardi Belle que fuit post meridiem diei ultimi Maii hora 15 minutis 12 anni 1484 et fuit nox Veneris hora Jovis. Hec figura facta est ad orizontem Molinis in Borbonio cuius latitudo est 46 gradus Et [crossed out: 29] 35 minuta dominus orbis Jupiter, MS 1711 f. 93v.

⁵⁸¹ Conceptio huius deberet fuisse inter 24 et 25 Augusti anni 1483 circa mediam noctem 24 eiusdem Augusti que erat dies Dominica et esset mora [crossed out – 279] 281 diem et 4 horis, MS 1711 f. 93v.

⁵⁸² Mora istius fuit precise 273 dierum qui est termini 9 mensium completorum tamen locus Lune nativitatis non concordat cum diebus predictis quia transivit sed in locum moram mediam per 7 dies et amplius bene concordat cum *animodar* secundum artem Hermetis, MS 1711 f. 93v.

⁵⁸³ In the table of essential dignities Mercury scores forty-one points, but the comment mentions fifty-three points; the extra 12 points probably come from Mercury's placement in the first house, which usually adds twelve points to the score. This method is stated in Avenezra, *Nativities*, p. 102.

⁵⁸⁴ *Almutem* ♀ habens fortitudines 53. Luna est yleg quia nativitas est nocturna et in signo feminino in succedenti et aspiciat ascendens. ♀ erit *alcocodem* quia est dominus domus et exaltationis loci Lune et aspiciat eam de □ [quarto] quamvis cum separacione tunc est sub orbe eius et sunt anni eius 75 [according to most authors, 76], MS 1711 f. 93v.

accidental joy, and also in an angle, and because the same Mercury is the most fortunate in that position (although Haly says that Mercury gives its complete years, as long as it is direct and not approaching the Sun by less than seven degrees and himself is elongated from the Sun 12 degrees), therefore, he should live.⁵⁸⁵

Belle's main concern is that Mercury, which is moving towards the Sun, may already be combust. Though combustion only starts at 7° from the Sun (as Belle states) and Mercury is at 12°12' from the Sun, he is already taking this in account:

This is doubtful because the Sun's rays do not damage Mercury beyond seven degrees [when] separating from the Sun or approaching it. Also the aspects of Mercury to the Moon, almost seven degrees elongated and separated from the Moon, do not have strength to [be] *alcocodem*. But because the rays of the Moon are more or less [the same] as the rays of the Sun, and in this case it would be convenient to seek for another *hyleg*, since [the Sun, although] having dominium in the place of the Moon, does not aspect it. Perhaps Venus. But let there be nine degrees between them. Mercury prevails, which is very strong and between them [there is] a marvelous reception.⁵⁸⁶

He considers the possibility of recalculating the *hyleg*, but returns to Mercury and to its initial estimation:

This way, by going in order, the Sun must be the *hyleg* because it is in an angle and in a masculine sign, and by the reasons [above] written, although Mercury is the ruler of the place of the Sun, it goes towards the conjunction with the Sun [so] it cannot be a good enough *alcocodem*, neither Saturn nor Jupiter, although they have power over the triplicity, but they are retrograde and cadent, neither their triplicity there, [which] does little. And the opposition to Venus, lady of the term of the Sun's place, which is cadent or to Mars, ruler of the face, and according to this *alcocodem* the native [had] a short life, that is, between the minor years of Venus and the intermediate years of Mars [which are eight and forty and a half, respectively]. Likewise, because the nativity is conjunctional, the degree of the Ascendant can be the *hyleg* after some [authorities], and Mercury, ruler of those places, be the *alcocodem*, and give its major years [which are 75].⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁵ Tamen quia vadit ad Solem et ad combustionem timendum est de damno completo annorum suorum maiorum, quia in domo sua, triplicitate, et in gaudio suo accidentali, et in angulo et quod idem ♀ fortunatus magis quod posit esse quamquam Haly dicat quod ♀ dat suos annos completos dummodo fuerit directus et non fuit aporpinquandus a Sole minus 7 gradibus et ipse est elongatus a Sole 12 gradibus quare debet vivere, MS 1711 f. 93v.

⁵⁸⁶ Sed dubitandum est ex quo radii Solis non dampnunt ♀ ultra 7 gradus separando se a Sole aut apporpinquando. Etiam aspectus ipse Mercurii ad Lunam aut qui est 7 fere gradus elongatus et separatus a Luna non haberet vigorem per *alcocodem*. Cum sed ita quo radii Lune sint secundum plures minores radiis Solis et in hoc casu oporteret querere aliud *hyleg* quoniam habentes dominium in loco Lune non aspiciunt ipsis forte ♀ [Venus] cadens sed sint 9 gradus inter eos nec prevalet ♀ qui est fortissimus et inter eos receptio mirabilis, MS 1711 f. 93v.

⁵⁸⁷ Post modum eundem per ordinem Sol deberet esse *hyleg* quia in angulo et signo masculino et propter rationes scriptas quamvis ♀ dominis loci Solis vadit ad ♂ [coniunctio] ipsas Solis non potest esse *alcocodem* sufficiens nec Saturnus neque Jupiter quamvis habeant dominium in triplicitate sed retrogradus et cadens Nec triplicitate eorum ibi pavum facit. Et oppositione recurrente ad ♀ dominam termini loci Solis que est cadens vel ad Martem dominis facie et secundum hunc *alcocodem* esset natus parve vite scilicet inter minores [♀ *crossed out*] annos ♀ et mediocres annos Martis. Item quia nativitas est conjunctionalis gradis ascendentis potest esse *hyleg* post alios et ♀ dominus illius locis esset *alcocodem* et daret annos suos maiores, MS 1711 f. 93v.

‘By going in order’ is a reference to the traditional sequence for finding the planets fit to be the *alcocodem* in a given horoscope.⁵⁸⁸

After all these considerations Belle adds a reference to the Lot of Substance, a calculation that would make sense only if the child survived up to adulthood.

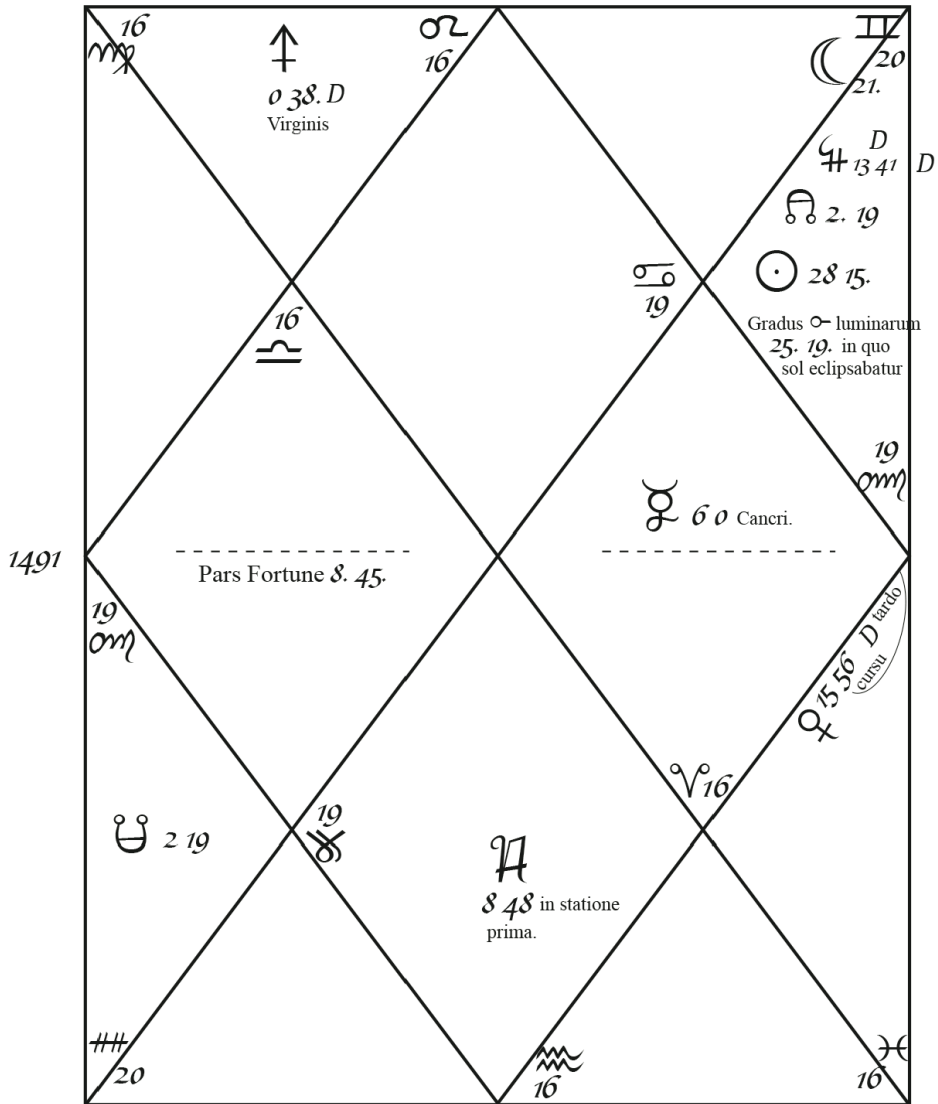
The Lot of Substance was taken by day or by night to the ruler of the house of substance [the second house] and cast from the Ascendant.⁵⁸⁹

Belle makes no mention of death in these notes as he did with the other children, so it can be assumed that Conrad Belle survived to adulthood.

⁵⁸⁸ See ‘Hyleg’ in Appendix I.

⁵⁸⁹ Pars substantie accipitur die et nocte a dominus domus substantie et proicitur ab ascendente, MS 1711 f. 93v. ‘By day or by night’ means that, regardless of the charts being diurnal or nocturnal, the Lot of Substance was calculated by the same method.

Susanne de Bourbon
MS 1711 f. 94r: 10 March 1491, 15:40, Moulins (46°33'N, 03°20'E)



House I – 16° Libra Pars Fortune 08°45 Scorpio	House VII – 16° Aries Mercury 06°00 Taurus
House II – 19° Scorpio North Node 02°19 Sagittarius	House VIII – 19° Taurus Gradus coniunctionis 25°19 Taurus (the Sun was eclipsed) Sun 28°15 Taurus South Node 02°19 Gemini Jupiter 13°41 Gemini direct
House III – 20° Sagittarius	House IX – 20° Gemini Moon 21° Gemini
House IV – 19° Capricorn Saturn 08°40 Aquarius in stationem prima	House X – 19° Cancer
House V – 16° Aquarius Venus 15° 46 directus tardus cursus	House XI – 16° Leo Mars 00°38 Virgo direct
House VI – 16° Pisces	House XII – 16° Virgo



Figure 45 – MS 1711, folio 94r

Susanne de Bourbon, daughter of Anne de France and Pierre II de Bourbon. She married her cousin Charles, Count of Montpensier (1499-1527); they had no children:

Estimated chart of the dispositions of the orb the nativity of Susanne, firstborn daughter of the most illustrious duke of the people of Auvergne and Bourbon, which was in the year of grace 1491, day of Mars the 10th, month of May, hour complete of three, 40 minutes after noon of the same day, in the city of Moulins, whose latitude is about 46 degrees and 35 minutes. And the ruler of the day was Mars and the ruler of the hour was the Sun.⁵⁹⁰

In the margin, the customary considerations about length of life:

The Sun, although the Lord of the nativity, is not *hyleg*, because it is in a feminine sign and in a feminine quadrant, nor the Moon, because it is in a masculine sign and in a cadent [house]. The degree of the Ascendant is suited to [be] *hyleg* because the nativity is conjunctual and has Venus as lady of the house, aspecting the Ascendant with an opposition. Also Saturn, the ruler by exaltation, aspects [it] with a trine. The degree of Venus is *alcocodem* because it is closer to the aspect, and because it is in an angle in the opposing house, and direct, exiting from a retrogradation, [so] it can give intermediate and major years.⁵⁹¹

Belle concludes that Venus is the *alcocodem* and by taking into account its conditions in the chart he was led to conclude that it would give its intermediate or major years – this will be 45 and 82 years, respectively. His calculations turned out to be far too optimistic as Susanne lived only 29 years.

⁵⁹⁰ Figura estimativa dispositionis orbis in nativitate Susanne illustrissimi ducis Arvenorum et Borbonensium filie primogenite que fuit anno gracie 1491 die Martis 10 mensis Maii completa horis tribus minutis 40 post meridiem ipsius diei in Molinensi opido cuius latitudo est circa 46 gradus et minuta 35 et fuit dominus diei Mars, dominus hore Sol, MS 1711 f. 94r.

⁵⁹¹ Sol quamquam nativitas domini fuit non est yleg quia in signo et ♀ quarta femina neque Luna quia in signo masculino et in cadenti. Gradus ascendentis ere convenit ad yleg quia nativitas fuit conjunctualis et habet ♀ dominam domus aspicientem de ascendenti etiam ♃ ad dominum exaltationis aspicientem de Δ [trigono] ♀ gradus erit *alcocodem* quia propius aspici et quia est in angulo in oppositione domus et directa exiens a retrogradatione potest dare annos intermedios et maiores, MS 1711 f. 94r.

Charles Orland, Dauphin of France

Charles Orland, the son of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany, who died in 1495. There are two entries for this nativity, but no horoscope was calculated.

MS 1711 94v:

Nativity of the dauphin of Viennese firstborn son of Charles VIII, the most Christian King of the Franks, which was in Amboise at the 10th day of October, year 1492, fifth hour of dawn.⁵⁹²

MS 1711 97v:

Estimated chart for the nativity of the Viennese dauphin, son of Charles King of France and Anne, duchess of the British, Queen of France, which was in the 10th of October 1492, around the 4th hour of the dawn, a little before.⁵⁹³

In the margin, he mentions the source of the information:

By the professor Jean de Barra, treasurer of the people of Anjou. Tenth of October 1492 at dawn, around the 5th hour, a little before, Charles was born.⁵⁹⁴

Apparently, Belle decided that Jean de Barra could offer a more precise birthtime for the Dauphin than the other sources.⁵⁹⁵

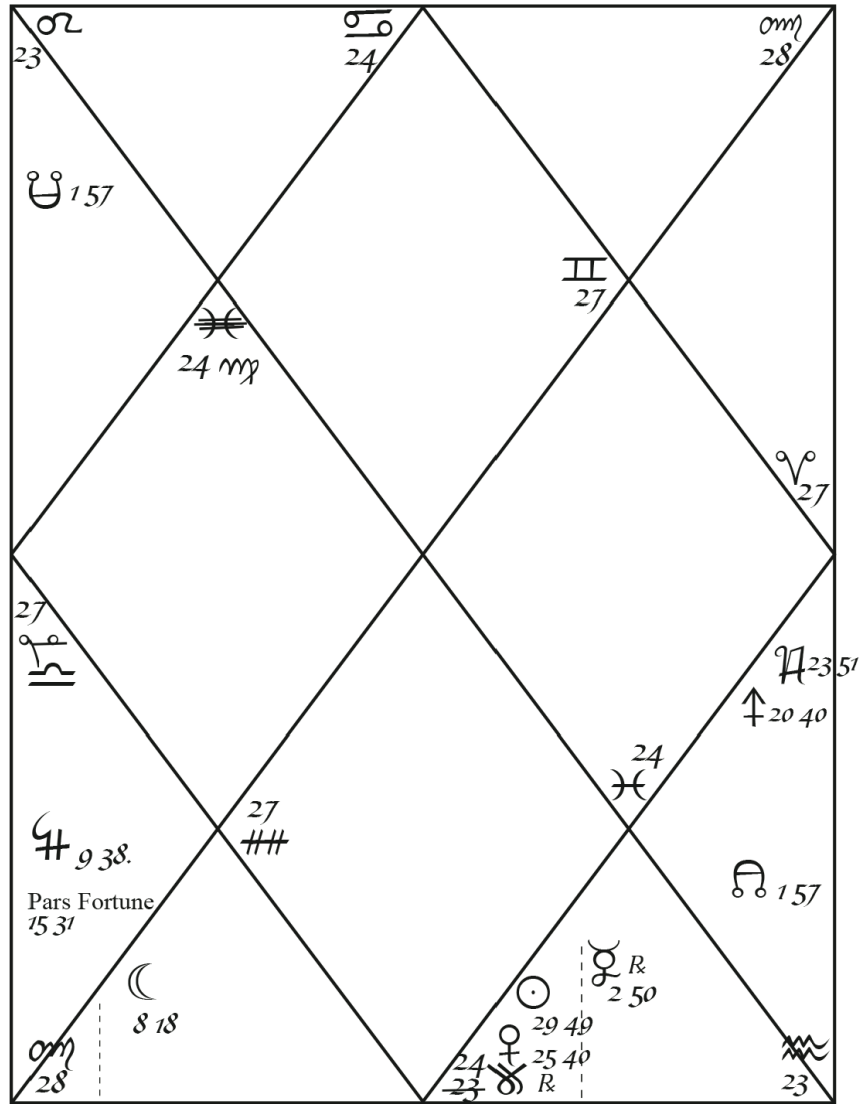
⁵⁹² Nativitas delphini viennensi primogeniti Francorum regis christianissimi filii Karoli octavi que fuit in Ambasia die decima Octobris anni 1492 hora fere quinta de mane, MS 1711 f. 94v.

⁵⁹³ Figura existimationis nativitatis delphini Viennensis filii Kaboli [sic for Karoli] regis Francie et Anne ducisse Britannorum regine Francie que fuit 10^a Octobris 1492 circa quartam horam de mane parum ante, MS 1711, 97v.

⁵⁹⁴ A magistro Jo de Barra tesarario Andeganensis. 10^a Octobris 1492 in mane circa quintam horam nascitur Karolus parum ante, MS 1711 f. 97v.

⁵⁹⁵ This could be Jean de Barra, prior of Saint Nicholas de la Chesnaye in 1497 (Saint Nicholas de la Grave). See M. Béziers, *Mémoires pour servir à l'état historique et géographique du diocèse de Bayeux*, III, Paris, 1894, p. 512.

'Daughter of Gon'
MS 1711 f. 95r: 10 January 1496, 21:20, unknown location



House I – 24° Virgo	House VII – 24° Pisces
House II – 27° Libra Jupiter 09°38 Scorpio Pars Fortune 15°31 Scorpio	House VIII – 27° Aries
House III – 28° Scorpio Moon 08°18	House IX – 28° Taurus
House IV – 27° Sagittarius	House X – 27° Gemini
House V – 24° Capricorn Venus 25°40 Capricorn retrograde Sun 29°49 Capricorn Mercury 02°50 Aquarius	House XI – 24° Cancer
House VI – 23° Aquarius South Node 01°47 Pisces Mars 19°32 Pisces Saturn 23°06 Pisces	House XII – 23° Leo North Node 01°47 Virgo

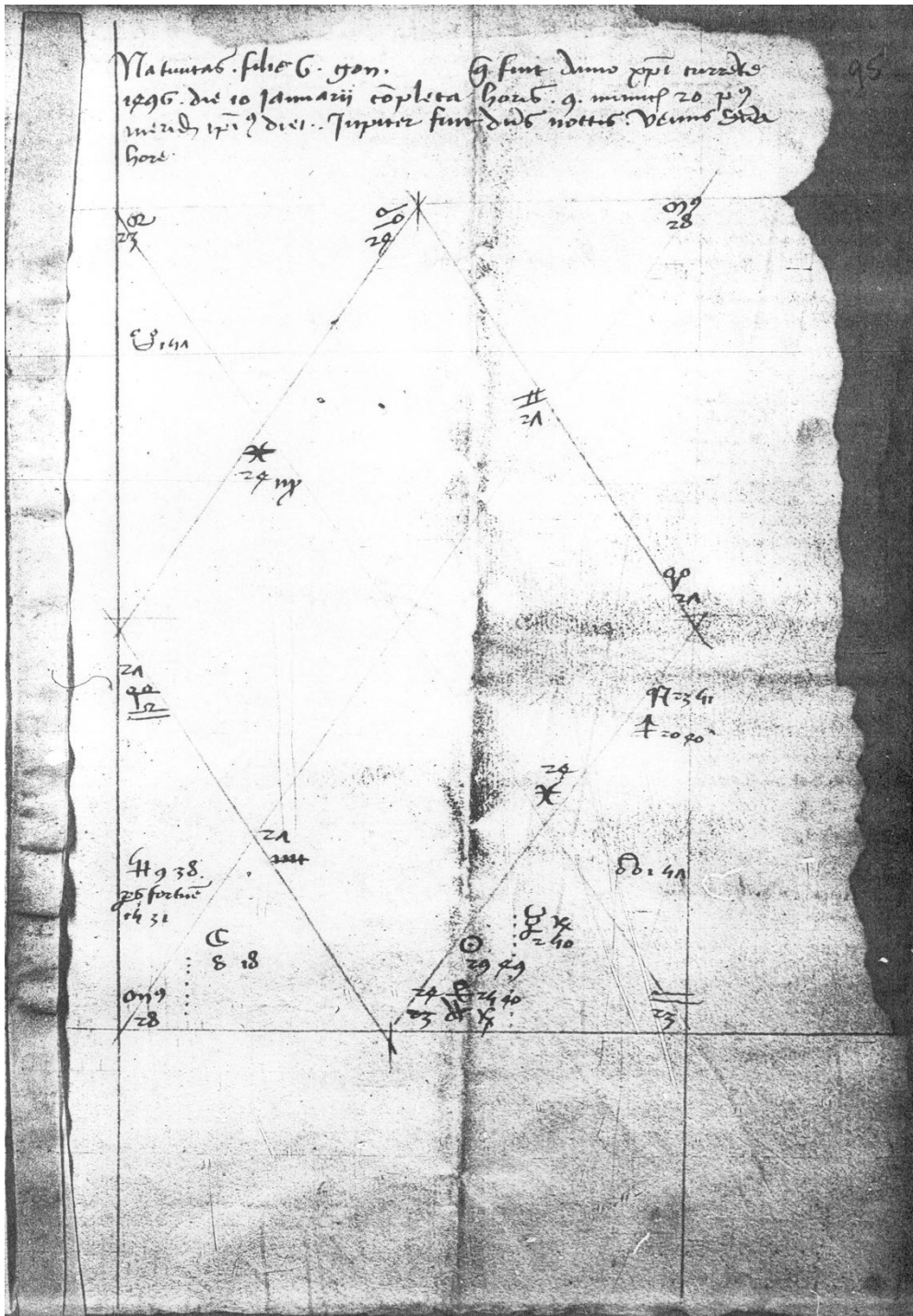


Figure 46 – MS 1711, folio 95r

This may be a daughter or grand-daughter of Jean de Gon who was the counsellor in the *Chambre des Comptes* in Moulins between 1459 and 1478.

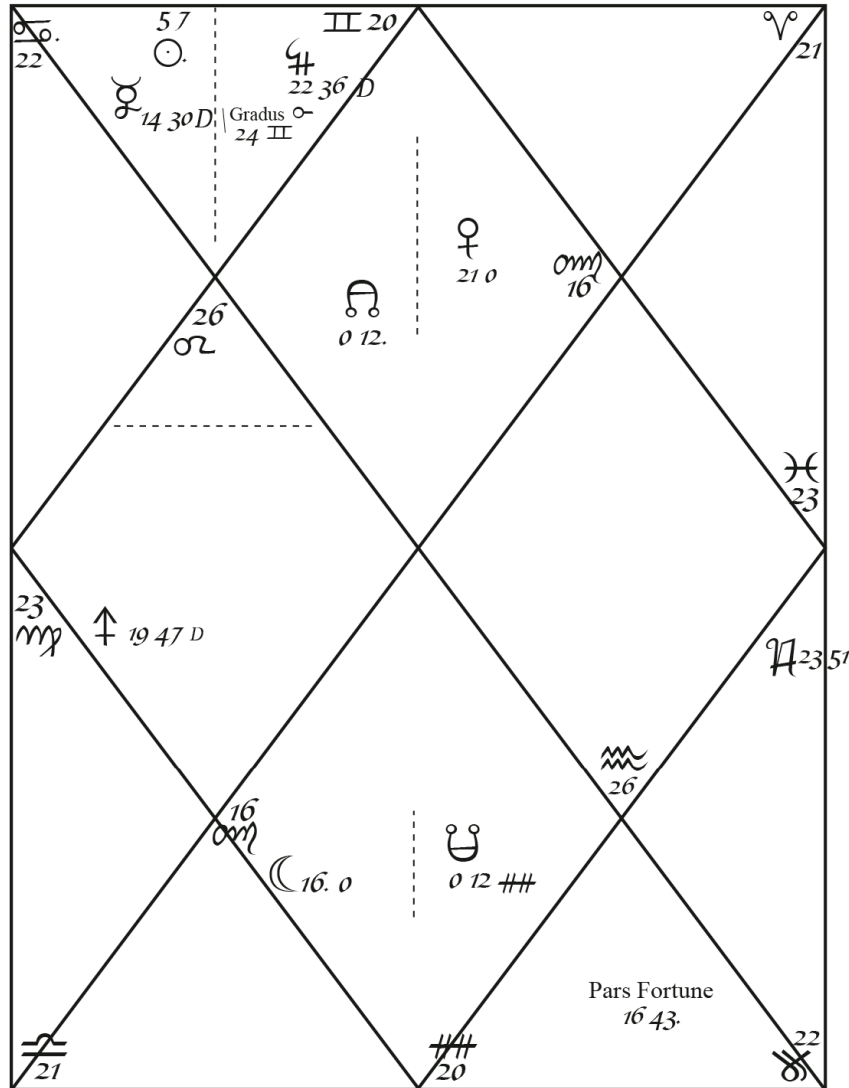
Nativity of the daughter of g. Gon [blank space] which was in the year of Christ current 1496, day 10 of January, 9 hours complete, 20 minutes after noon, of that day, Jupiter was the ruler of the night, Venus lady of the hour.⁵⁹⁶

The position of Mercury is noticeably miscalculated, it should be at 21°54' Capricorn, not 2°50' Aquarius – possibly an error in the tables he consulted.

⁵⁹⁶ Nativitas filie ... Gon [blank space, possibly for the first name] que fuit anno Christi currente 1496 die 10 Januarii completa horis 9 minutis 20 post meridiem ipsius diei Jupiter fuit dominus noctis Venus domina hore, MS 1711 f. 95r.

Nicolas Gon

MS 1711 f. 95v: 18 June 1491, 08:36, 'in the end of the sixth climate' (possibly Paris)



House I – 26° Leo	House VII – 26° Aquarius
Mars 19°47 Virgo direct	
House II – 23° Virgo	House VIII – 23° Pisces
House III – 21° Libra	House IX – 21° Aries
House IV – 16° Scorpio	House X – 16° Taurus
Moon 16°00 Scorpio	Venus 21°00 Taurus
North Node 00°12 Sagittarius	South Node 00°12
House V – 20° Sagittarius	House XI - 20° Gemini
Pars Fortune 13°12 Capricorn	Jupiter 22°36 direct
	Gradus conjunctionis 24° Gemini
	Sun 05°07 Cancer
	Mercury 14°30 direct
House VI – 22° Capricorn	House XII – 22° Cancer
Saturn 07°23 Aquarius retrograde	

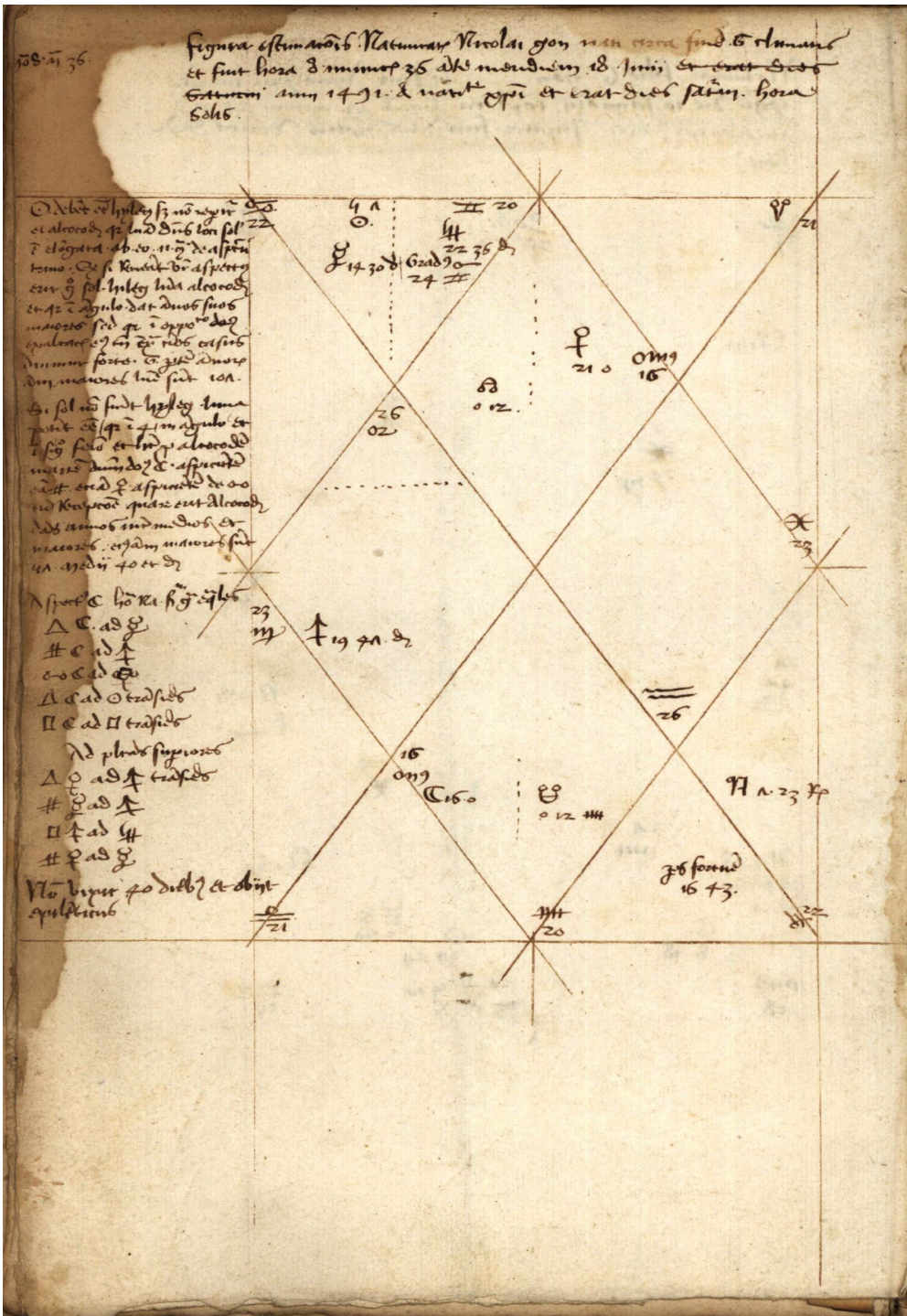


Figure 47 – MS 1711, folio 95v

Another child of the Gon family, possibly a brother of the former considering that their age difference is only five years.

Estimated nativity chart of Nicolai Gon, born near the end of the 6th climate. And it was 8 hours and 36 minutes before noon, 18 June [and it was the day of Saturn], year 1491 of the nativity of Christ, and it was the day of Saturn and the hour of the Sun.⁵⁹⁷

In the margin, the calculation of length of life:

The Sun must be the *hyleg* but an *alcocodem* is not found, because the Moon, lord [sic] of the place of the Sun, is distant by eleven degrees from the trine aspect, but if it returns it, the aspect is seen, therefore the Sun will be *hyleg* and the Moon *alcocodem*. And because it [the Moon] is in an angle, it gives its major years, but because it is opposing its exaltation, although outside the terms of its fall, strongly diminishes the distribution of the years. The major years of the Moon are 107.⁵⁹⁸ If the Sun is not the *hyleg*, the Moon can be, because it is in the 4th angle [4th house] and in a feminine sign, and has as *alcocodem*: Mars, ruler of the house of the Moon⁵⁹⁹ and aspecting it by a sextile; also Venus aspects it by opposition and receives it. If it were the *alcocodem* it gives its intermediate and major years. Its major years are 57⁶⁰⁰, intermediate 40 years and a half.⁶⁰¹

The comment ‘if it returns it’ possibly means that the Moon, being ruler of the sign where the Sun is positioned, Cancer, becomes its dispositor, thus receiving the Sun.⁶⁰² The expression ‘outside the terms of its fall’ may signify that the Moon is sufficiently separated from the third degree of Scorpio, the exact degree of the Moon’s fall.⁶⁰³ Both comments seem to intend to improve the Moon’s debilitated state. Again, Belle’s calculations proved to be far too optimistic. At the bottom of the page, he commented: Did not live 40 days and died epileptic (*Non vixit 40 diebus et obiit epilepticus*).

⁵⁹⁷ Figura estimationis nativitatis Nicolai Gon nati circa finem 6 climatis. Et fuit hora 8 minutis 36 ante meridiem 18 Junii [et erat dies Saturni] anni 1491 a nativitate Christi Et erat dies Saturni hora Solis, MS 1711 f. 95v.

⁵⁹⁸ The generally accepted duration for the major years of the Moon is 108. See for instance Alcabitus, *Introduction*, II.38, p. 83.

⁵⁹⁹ Mars is the ruler of Scorpio, the sign where the Moon is placed. In this context ‘house’ means sign and not an astrological house.

⁶⁰⁰ The generally accepted major years of Mars are 66. The duration of 57 corresponds to the major years of Saturn. See Alcabitus, *Introduction*, II. 2-5, p. 65 (for Saturn) and II.15, p. 71 (Mars).

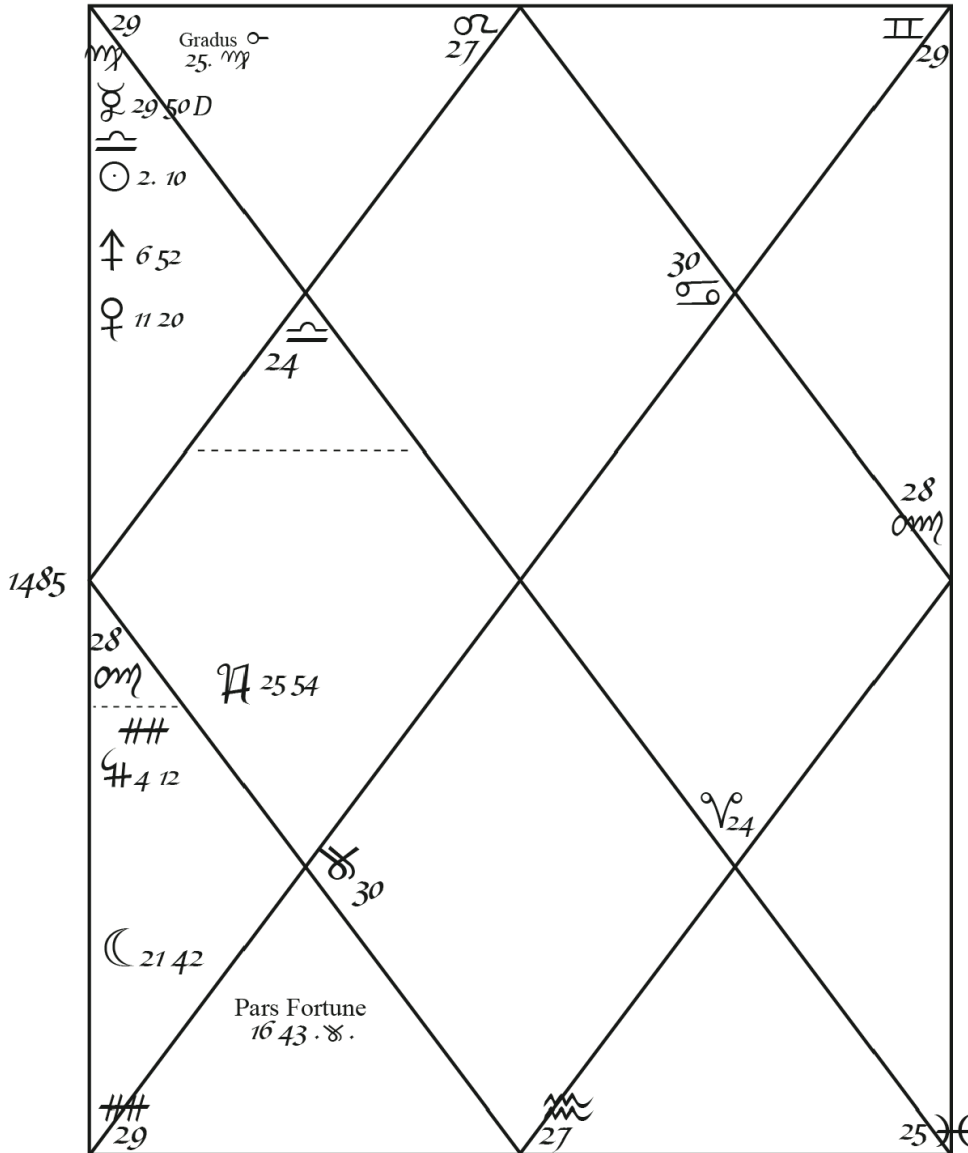
⁶⁰¹ Solis deberet esse *hyleg* sed non reperitur et *alcocodem* quia Luna dominus loci Solis est elongata ab eo 11 gradibus de aspectu trino quod si reveniat videtur aspectus erit ergo Sol *hyleg* Luna *alcocodem* et quia in angulo dat annos suos maiores sed quia in opposito [domus] exaltationis eius tamen extra terminos casus diminuit forte. Ergo partim annorum anni maiores Lune sunt 107. Si Sol non fuerit *hyleg* Luna poterit esse quia in 4^{um} angulo et in signo feminino et habet pro *alcocodem* Martis dominum domus ♃ [Lune] aspicientem ea ✕ [sextili] etiam ♀ [Venus] aspicientem de ♂ [oppositi] ad receptionem. Quare erit *alcocodem* dans annos intermedios et maiores eius anni maiores sunt 57 medii 40 et dimidium, MS 1711 f. 95v.

⁶⁰² See Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, III.14, p. 227. See also ‘Reception’ in Appendix I.

⁶⁰³ As the Moon is exalted in Taurus, particularly in the third degree of the sign, it is assumed that the opposite degree, the third of Scorpio, is the degree of its fall. See ‘Exaltation’ in Appendix I.

Nicolas Belle

MS 1711 f. 96r: 16 September 1485, 08:00, probably Moulins (46°33N 3°20E)



House I – 24° Libra	House VII – 24° Aries
Saturn 25°54 Scorpio	
House II – 28° Scorpio	House VIII – 28° Taurus
Jupiter 04°12 Sagittarius	
Moon 21°42	
House III – 29° Sagittarius	House IX – 20° Gemini
Pars Fortune 13°12 Capricorn	
House IV – 30° Capricorn	House X – 30° Cancer
House V – 27° Aquarius	House XI – 27° Leo
[Missing: North Node 21°31 Pisces]	[Missing: South Node 21°31 Virgo]
House VI – 25° Pisces	House XII – 29° (sic for 25°) Virgo
	Mercury 29°50 Virgo
	Sun 02°10 Libra
	Mars 06°52 Libra
	Venus 11°20 Libra

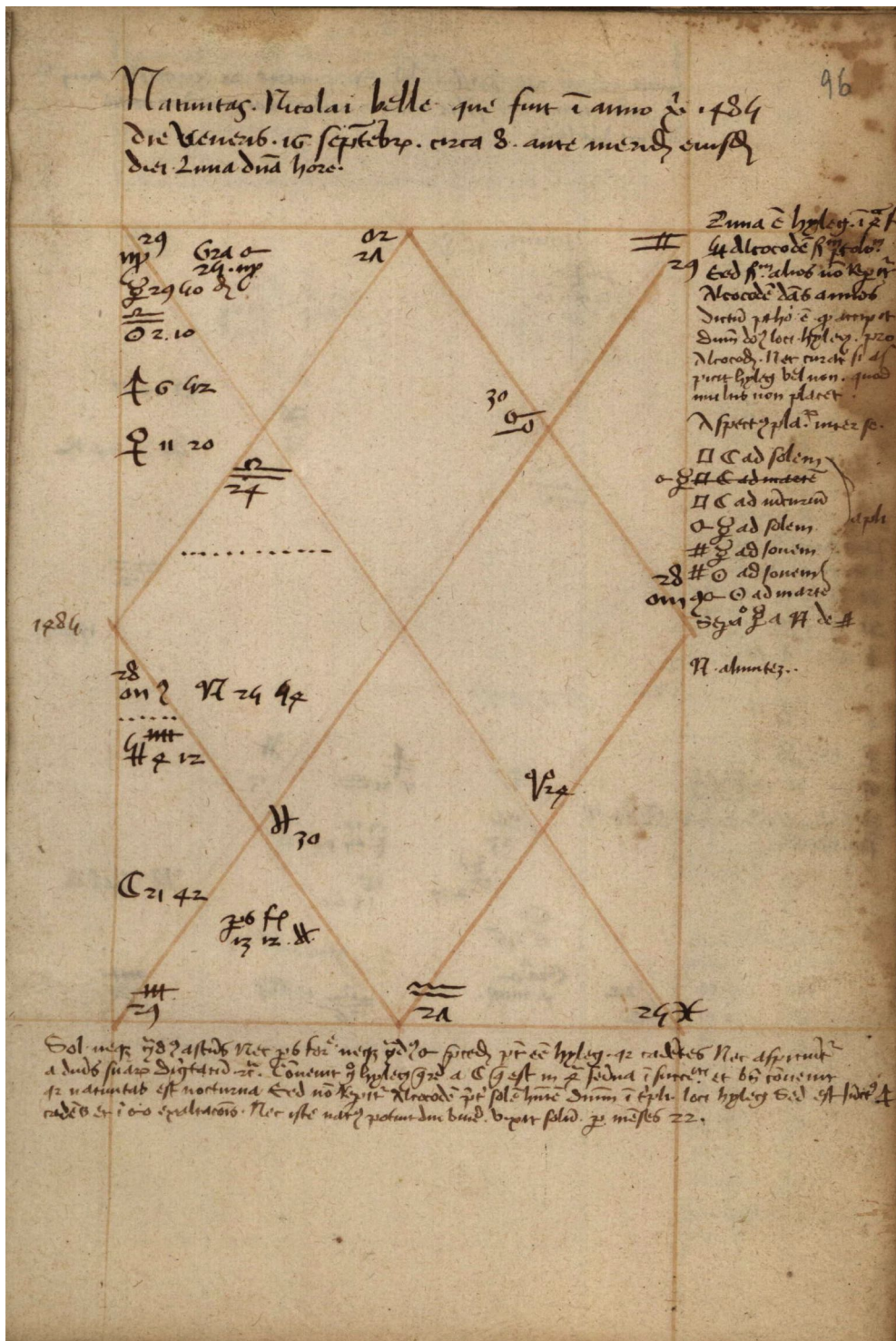


Figure 48 – MS 1711, folio 96r

This is likely to have been the younger brother of the other two Belle children. He was born fifteen months after Conrad Belle – again a viable interval for two brothers.

Nativity of Nicolas Belle, which was in the year of Christ 1485, day of Venus 16th of September, around 8 before noon of the same day, Moon was the lady of the hour.⁶⁰⁴

The notes include a list of aspects, but not the calculation of the *almutem*, which he declares to be Saturn. As with the previous horoscope, Belle adds several considerations regarding the length of life. In his search for the *alcocodem* he compares the teachings of Ptolemy with those of other authors:

The Moon in a feminine quarter is the *hyleg*, Jupiter [is] *alcocodem* according to Ptolemy, but according to others, no *alcocodem* is found to give the years. According to Ptolemy, one should not take the ruler of the house of the place of the *hyleg* for the *alcocodem*, neither should one care if it aspects the *hyleg* or not. Many are unhappy with this.⁶⁰⁵

This comment reveals the main issue with the determination of the length of life: the diverging opinions on how to ascertain the *alcocodem*. As the Moon is in Sagittarius, Jupiter, ruler of the sign, would be the natural choice for *alcocodem*, but according to some there must be an aspect between Jupiter and the Moon, which is not the case. Ptolemy, on the other hand, does not require this aspect to consider Jupiter as the *alcocodem*, but as he does not favour the choice of the sign ruler for this task, Jupiter is again excluded. Belle notes that many authors disagree with this opinion and continues to express difficulty in determining the *hyleg* and *alcocodem* in this horoscope:

Neither the Sun, nor the degree of the Ascendant, nor the Lot of Fortune, nor the degree of the precedent conjunction can be *hyleg*, because they are cadent and do not aspect the rulers of their dignities. It is therefore convenient to seek the *hyleg* from the Moon which is a feminine quarter, and it is even more convenient because the nativity is nocturnal, but the *alcocodem* is not found apart from the Sun, having dominion of the triplicity of the *hyleg*, but it is conjunct to Mars, cadent and in opposition to [its] exaltation.⁶⁰⁶

The only suitable *alcocodem* found by Belle is the Sun (which has triplicity in the sign of Sagittarius), but it is in a very weakened state (in the sign of its fall and cadent in the

⁶⁰⁴ Nativitas Nicolai Belle que fuit in anno Christi 1485 die Veneris 16 Septembris circa 8 ante meridiem eiusdem diei Luna domina hore, MS 1711 f. 96r.

⁶⁰⁵ Luna est *hyleg* in 4^a femina ♃ *alcocodem* secundum Ptolomeum sed secundum alios non reperitur *alcocodem* dans annos dictum Ptolomei est quo accipiet dominum domus loci *hyleg* pro *alcocodem* nec curat si aspiciat *hyleg* vel non. Quod multis non placent, MS 1711 f. 96r.

⁶⁰⁶ Sol neque gradus ascendentis nec pars fortune neque gradus ☿ [oppositi] precedentis potest esse *hyleg* quia cadentes nec aspiciantur a dominis suarum dignitatum. Convenit ergo *hyleg* querere a ♃, que est in 4^a [quadrant] femina succedente et bene convenit quia nativitas est nocturna sed non reperitur *alcocodem* preter Solem habens dominium triplicitatis loci *hyleg* sed est junctus ☿ cadens et in ☿ [oppositi] exaltacionis, MS 1711 f. 96r.

twelfth house) and afflicted by the conjunction of Mars. The difficulty of finding a suitable *hyleg* and *alcocodem* suggests complications and a short life as Belle admits:

Nor could this native live long. He lived only for 22 months.⁶⁰⁷

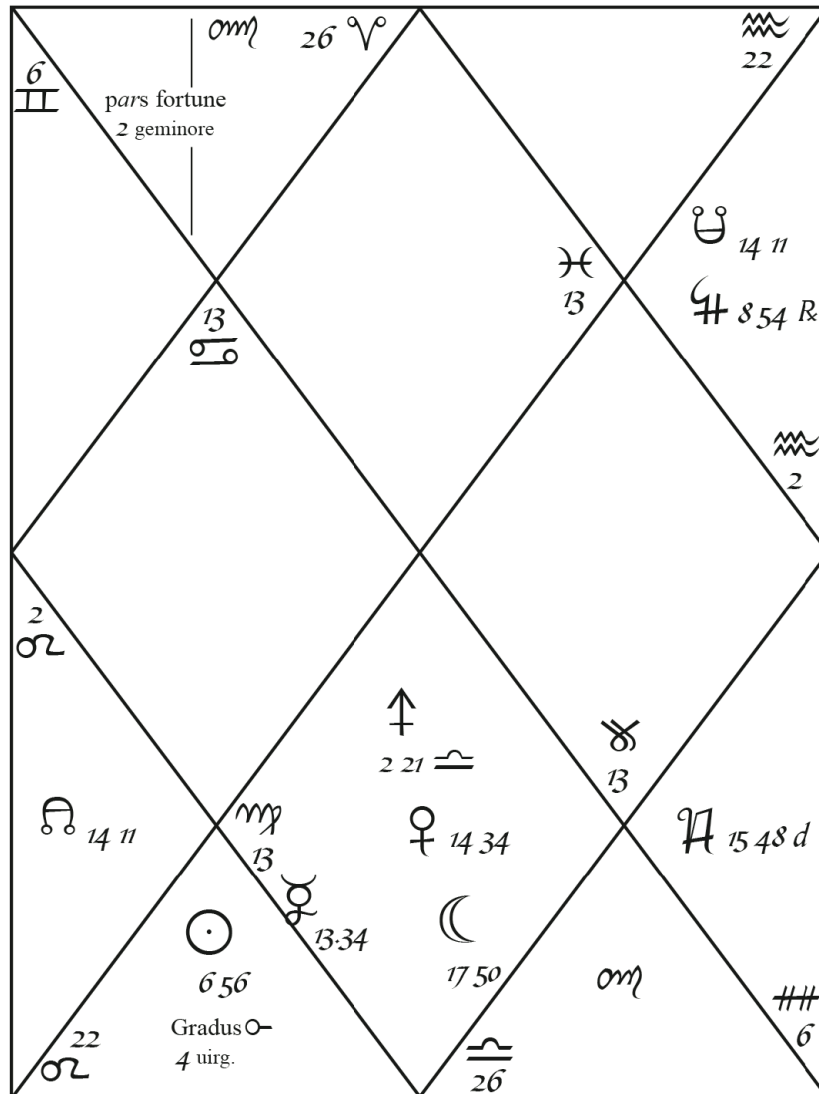
According to Belle's account Nicolas Belle died in July 1487. The convoluted way he goes about this calculation suggests that, once again, his personal connection to this child hindered his objectivity.

In a wider sense, it can be argued that all judgements are to some extent conditioned by the astrologer's context, which comprises personal, educational, religious and socio-political factors. This is especially evident in nativities, mainly in those where the astrologer has personal interest (such as the horoscopes of his children), but also happens in other types of judgements, as seen above in the lunations and the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction. In truth, this applies not only to astrology, but to all considerations pertaining to human affairs; the astrological framework is sufficiently flexible to allow some measure of variation without breaking the rules. In the case of Belle, these rules are never broken, not even when he adopts less conventional approaches. His willingness to try unorthodox methods seems to be directly related to his proximity to his subject of study. In political and mundane affairs, as well as his judgement of Jo. d.c.l.'s nativity he maintains his conclusions well within the expected corpus of rules; it is only with his own children that he extends the flexibility of the astrological framework as much as possible, resorting to less common astrological parameters.

⁶⁰⁷ Nec iste natus potuit diu vivere. Vixit solem per menses 22, Ms 1711 f. 96r.

Martha Belle

MS 1711 f. 96v: 21 August 1487, 00:24, probably Paris (48°51'N, 02°21'E)



House I – 13° Cancer	House VII – 13° Capricorn
House II – 02° Leo	House VIII – 02° Aquarius
South Node 14°11	North Node 14°11
House III – 22° Leo	Jupiter 08°54 Aquarius retrograde
Gradus coniunctionis 4° Virgo	House IX – 22° Aquarius
Sun 06°56 Virgo	
House IV – 13° Virgo	House X – 13° Pisces
Mercury 13°34 Virgo	
Mars 02°21 Libra	
Venus 15°39 Libra (corrected to 14°)	
Moon 17°50 Libra	
House V – 26° Libra	House XI – 26° Aries
	Pars Fortune 02° Gemini
House VI – 06° Sagittarius	House XII – 06° Gemini
Saturn 15°48 Sagittarius direct	

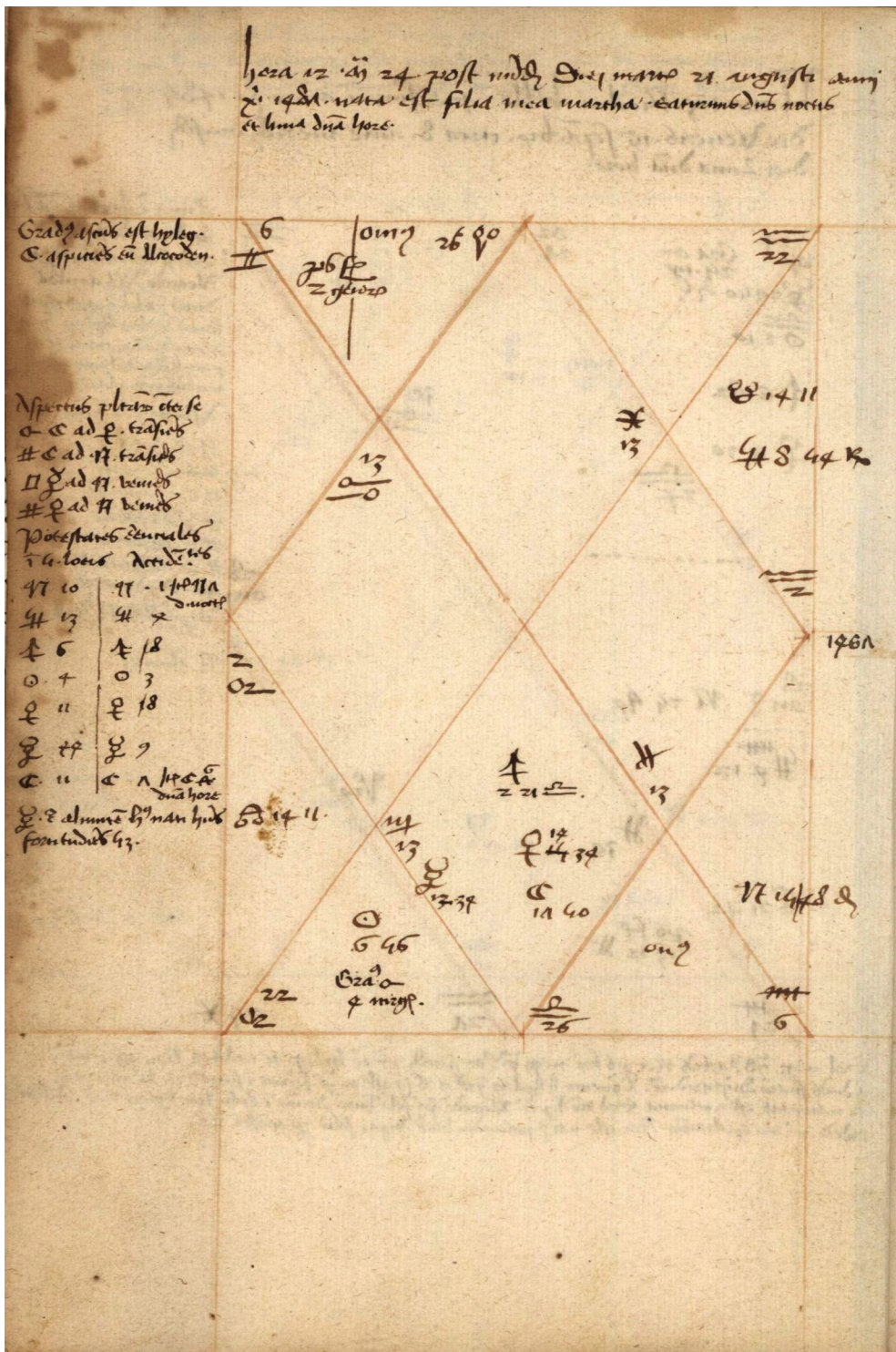


Figure 49 – MS 1711, folio 96v

Martha, Belle's daughter, is the youngest of his children. She was probably born in Paris and may have lived into adulthood since there is no reference to an early death.⁶⁰⁸

[At] 12 hours, 24 minutes after noon, day of Mars 21 of August, year of Christ 1481, my daughter Martha was born. Saturn was the ruler of the night and the Moon the lady of the hour.⁶⁰⁹

After determining that 'the Ascendant degree is the *hyleg*, and the Moon, which aspects it, is the *alcocodem*' (*gradus ascendentis est hyleg, Luna aspiciens eum, alcocodem*), Belle adds a table with the aspects and includes a calculation for the *almutem*, which he concludes to be Mercury.⁶¹⁰ He makes a curious choice when attributing the accidental score of the planets: Mercury, Mars, Venus, and the Moon are all in the fourth house, so they should all have nine dignities.⁶¹¹ However, Belle gives nine to Mercury, eight to both Mars and Venus, and seven to the Moon. This is probably because he is taking into account the differences of strength of these planets in this house. Mercury receives the full score, nine, because it is in the same sign as the house cusp, Virgo. Mars, and Venus receive a little less because they are in the next sign of Libra. The Moon receives even a little less, seven, because it is also in the next sign and its orb touches the cusp of the next house, the fifth; coincidentally, seven is the number of the dignities attributed to a planet in the fifth house. However, Belle does not apply a similar system in the comparable case of the third house, which begins in Leo and contains the Sun in Virgo close to the cusp of the fourth. In this example, Belle is following the rules but instead of making a strict mathematical accounting of the dignities, he adapts the rules to accommodate the particularities of the chart.

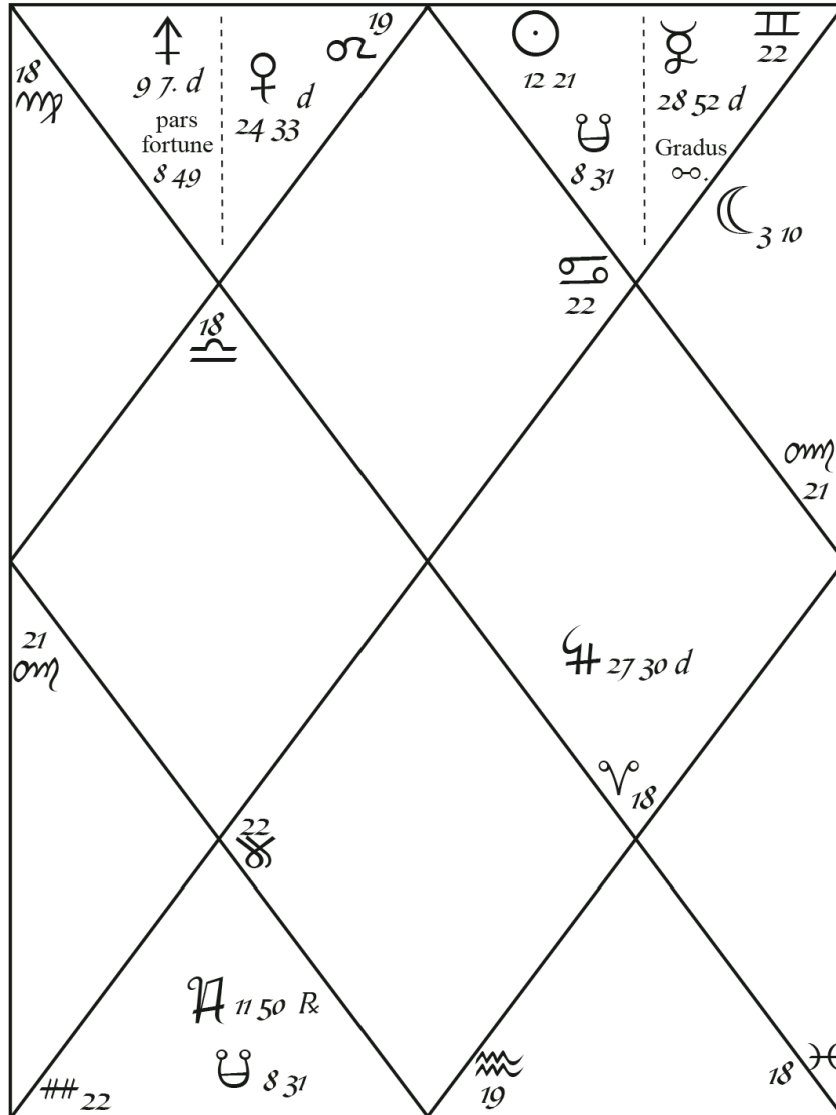
⁶⁰⁸ The horoscope calculated for Paris seems to be closer to the one calculated by Belle.

⁶⁰⁹ Hora 12 m 24 post meridiem diei Martis 21 Augusti anni Christi 1487 nata est filia mea Martha Saturnus dominus noctis et Luna domina hore, MS 1711 f. 96v.

⁶¹⁰ MS 1711 f. 96v.

⁶¹¹ See 'Almutem' in Appendix I.

Renaud Petit De
MS 1711 f. 97r: 25 June 1489, 12.45, Moulins



House I – 18° Libra	House VII – 18° Aries Jupiter 27°30 Aries direct
House II – 21° Scorpio	House VIII – 21° Taurus Moon 03°10
House III – 22° Sagittarius North Node 08°31 Capricorn Saturn 11°50 Capricorn	House IX – 22° Gemini Mercury 28°52 Gemini direct Gradus oppositionis 29 Gemini South Node 08°31 Cancer Sun 12°21 Cancer
House IV – 22° Capricorn	House X – 22° Cancer
House V – 19° Aquarius	House XI – 19° Leo Venus 24°33 Leo direct Pars Fortune 08°49 Virgo Mars 09°07 Virgo direct
House VI – 18° Pisces	House XII – 18° Virgo

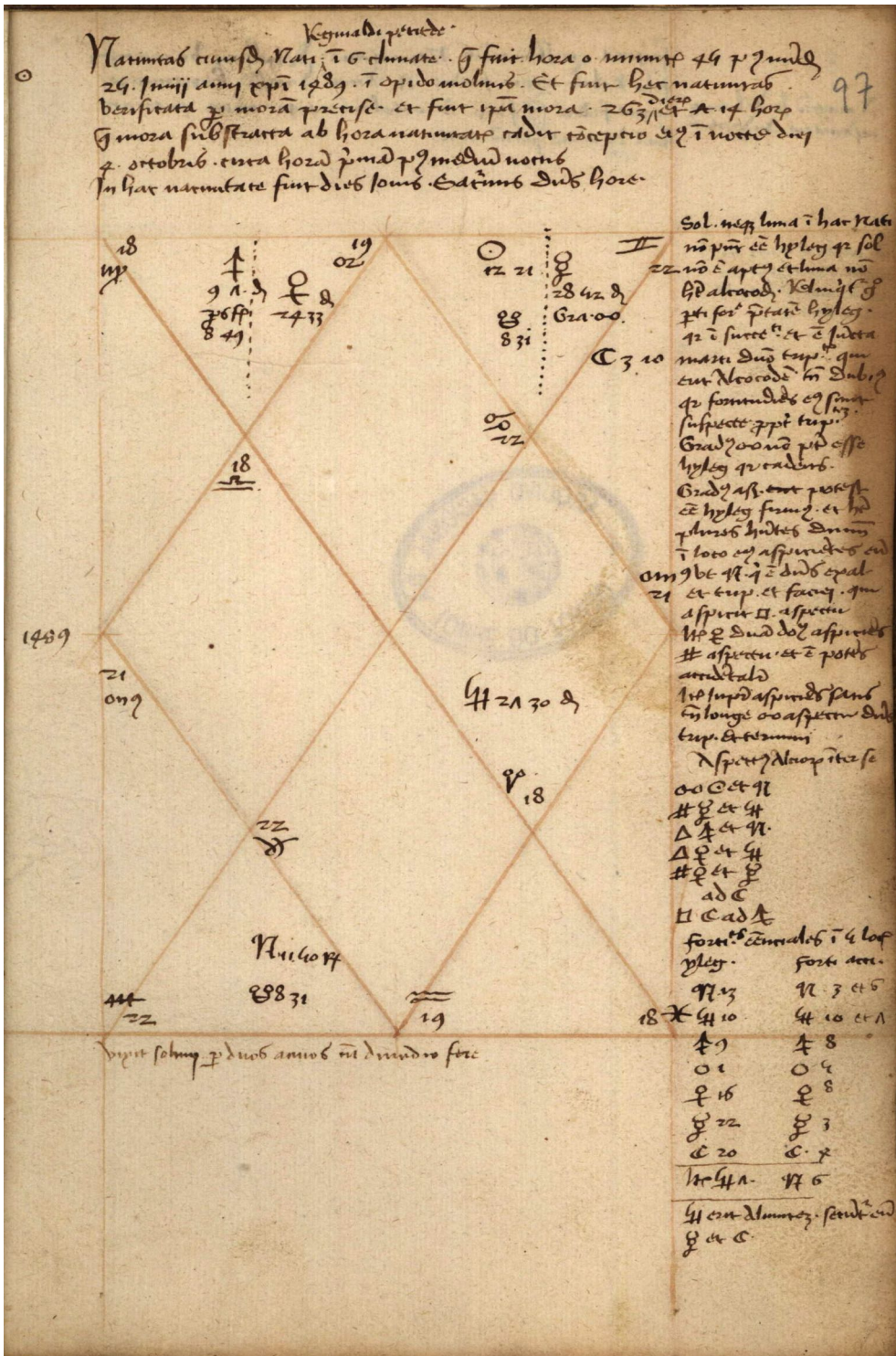


Figure 50 – MS 1711, folio 97r

Another horoscope of a child who died at the very young age of two and a half years. He is probably related to Jean Petit De, bishop of Mende (from 1474 to 1478) and Nicolas Petit De, main finance governor for Jean II de Bourbon (ca. 1485).

Nativity of a certain child [superscript: Reginaldi Petit De]. Born in the 6th climate, which was at 0 hours, 45 minutes after noon, 25 June, year of Christ 1489 in the city of Moulins. And this nativity was verified by precise duration period which was 263 days and [7] 14 hours, which delay was subtracted from the hour of the nativity, befalls the conception on the 4th day of October, around the first hour after midnight. In this nativity it was the day of Jupiter, and Saturn was ruler of the hour.⁶¹²

On the top right, the symbol of the Sun (☉), possibly the result of Belle's considerations for the *hyleg*. In the margin below, this first assumption is disputed, following Belle's detailed account of the condition of the planets:

Neither the Sun nor the Moon in this nativity can be *hyleg*, because the Sun is not apt and the Moon does not have *alcocodem*. Therefore, the power to be *hyleg* remains for the Lot of Fortune, because it is succedent and it is conjunct to Mars, ruler of the triplicity, which will be *alcocodem*. However, it is doubtful, because its fortitudes are suspect, due to the triplicity. The degree of the opposition cannot be *hyleg* because it is cadent. The degree of the Ascendant can be a strong *hyleg* and has many [planets] having rulership of the place and aspecting it: Saturn, which is the ruler of the exaltation and triplicity and face, which it aspects it with a square aspect; also Venus, lady of the house, aspects it with a sextile aspect and is accidentally strong; also Jupiter aspecting [the Ascendant] by opposition, nevertheless sufficiently distant, is ruler of the triplicity and term.⁶¹³

At the bottom of the page he adds: 'He lived only for two years and a half, approximately' (*Vixit solum per duos annos cum dimidio fere*). Belle adds the aspects and the calculation of the *almutem*; in the latter, he makes no differentiation between planets in different signs but in the same house, attributing them the same score.

⁶¹² Nativitas cuiusdem Nati /Reginaldi Petite/ in 6 climate que fuit hora 0 minutis 45 post meridiem 25 Junii anni Christi 1489 in oppido Molinis. Et fuit hec nativitas verificata per moram precise et fui ipsa mora 263 [dierum – superscript] et [7 – corrected] 14 horarum que mora subtracta ab hora nativitas cadit conceptio eius in noctem diei ♀ Octobris circa hora prima post medium noctis. In hac nativitate fuit dies Jovis, Saturnus dominus hore, MS 1711 f. 97r.

⁶¹³ Sol neque Luna in hac nativitate non possit esse *hyleg* quia Sol non est aptus et Luna non habet *alcocodem*. Relinquitur ergo parti fortune potestas *hyleg* quia in succedenti et est juncta Marti domino triplicitatis qui erit *alcocodem*. Tamen dubium quia fortitudines eius sunt suspecte propter triplicitatem. Gradus ♄ [oppositi] non potest esse *hyleg* quia cadens. Gradus ascendentis potest esse *hyleg* firmus et habet plures [potestates], habentes dominium in loco eius aspicientes eum, ut ♃ qui est dominus exaltationis et triplicitatis et faciei qui aspicit ☐ [quarto] aspectu. Item ♀ domina domus aspiciens ✕ [sextili] aspectu et est potens accidentaliter. Item Jupiter aspiciens satis tamen longe ♄ [oppositi] aspectu dominus triplicitatis et termini, MS 1711 f. 97r.

Charles Orlando, dauphin de France (MS 1711 f. 97v) Blank chart

This is another attempt to calculate the dauphin's horoscope; Belle had already attempted it on folio 94v.

Blank page (MS 1711 f. 98r)

Jacques de Château Morand

MS 1711 f. 98v

Jacques de Lévis, lord of Château Morand (1447-1521), the son of Bermond de Lévis, lord of la Voute and Agnès de Château Morand, lady of Châlus.⁶¹⁴

Nativity of the most noble man, Lord Jacques of Château Morand, which was in the year of grace 1447, fifth day of the month of November, 6 hours of dawn or around it and it was the day of the Sun.⁶¹⁵

Jacques married Louise de Tournon in 14 August 1485. He is related to Gilles d'Albret (c. 1424-1479) the fifth son of Charles II d'Albret and Anne d'Armagnac, brother of Charles d'Albret and Marie d'Albret. Belle does not calculate this horoscope.

Jean de Château Morand

MS 1711 f. 99r

The son of Jaques de Lévis; born in 1492, who married Gilberte d'Estampes.

In the year of the Lord 1492, day 22nd of August current, almost 6 hours after noon, Jean de Château Morand was born, son of the Lord Jacques de Château Morand, and it was the day of Venus. So it was written in the *breviculum* but it was not the day of Venus, rather the 22 August was the day of Mercury. Therefore, beware.⁶¹⁶

Belle expresses doubts about the accuracy of the date registered in the *breviculum*, the book whence Belle obtained these dates. According to him, the day in question, 22 August, was not Friday (day of Venus), but Wednesday (day of Mercury) and so he advises caution.⁶¹⁷ These doubts are probably the reason why he did not calculate these two horoscopes.

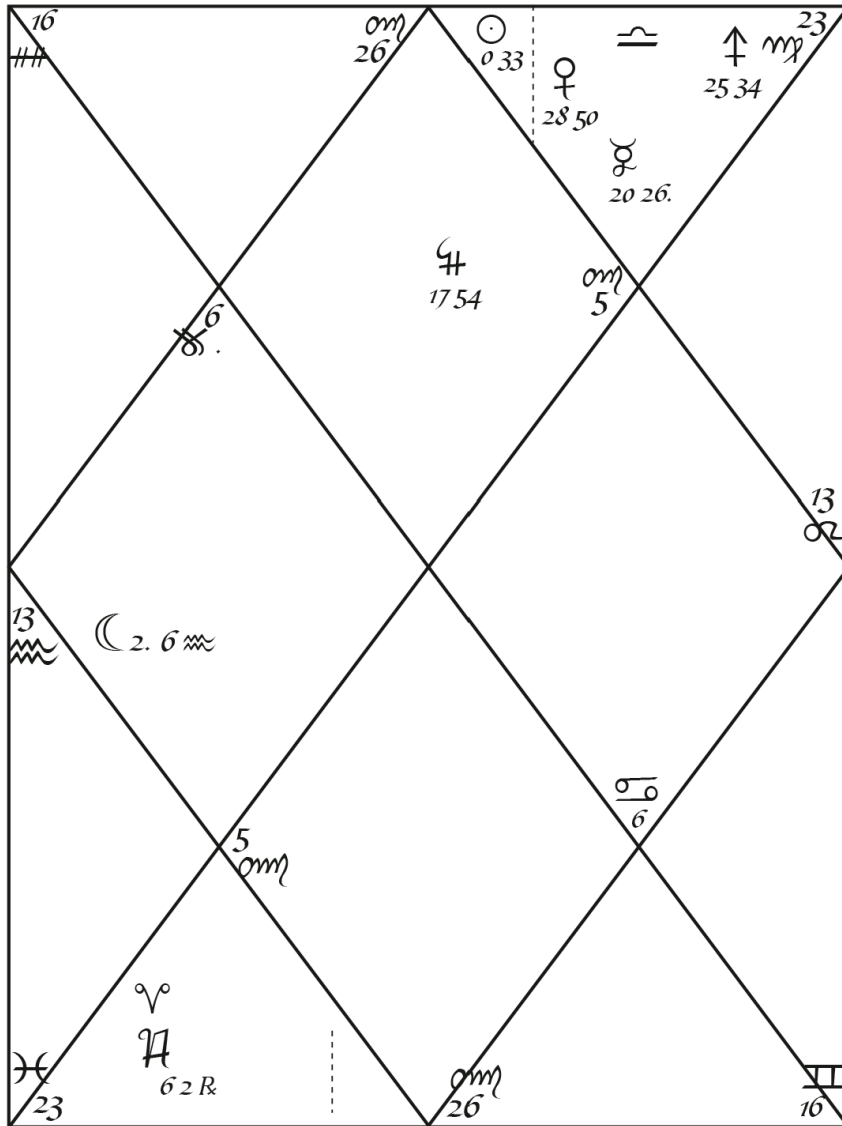
⁶¹⁴ See Betencourt, *Noms féodaux, ou noms de ceux qui ont tenu fiefs en France, depuis le XIIe siècle jusque vers le milieu du XVIII, extraits des archives du royaume (etc.)*, I, Paris, 1826, pp. 259 (Châtel Morand), 265 (Château Morand).

⁶¹⁵ Nativitas prenobilis viri domini Jacobi de Castromorandi que fuit anno graciae 1447 die quinta mensis Novembris hora 6 de mane vel circa et erat dies Solis, MS 1711 f. 98v.

⁶¹⁶ Anno domini 1492^o die 22 Augusti currente hora quasi 6^a post meridiem natus fuit Johannes de Castromorandis filius domini Jacobi Castromorandis et erat dies Veneris. Sic erat scriptum in breviculo sed non erat dies Veneris immo 22 Augusti fuit dies Mercurii. Adverte ergo, MS 1711 f. 99r.

⁶¹⁷ The 22 August 1492 was actually a Thursday; Belle's doubts may derive from the differences in time notation as explained in the section 'Days and Hours' in Appendix I.

'Daughter of my uncle from Amboise'
 MS 1711 f. 99v – NAL 398 f. 101: 14 October 1496, 12:24, Amboise (47°24'N; 00°58'E)



House I – 06° Capricorn	House VII – 06° Cancer
Moon 02°06 Aquarius	
House II – 13° Aquarius	House VIII – 13° Leo
House III – 23° Pisces	House IX – 23° Virgo
Saturn 06°02 Aries retrograde	Mars 25°34 Virgo
	Mercury 20°26 Libra
	Venus 28°50 Libra
	Sun 00°33 Scorpio
House IV – 05° Taurus	House X – 05° Scorpio
	Jupiter 17°54 Scorpio
House V – 26° Taurus	House XI – 26° Scorpio
House VI – 16° Gemini	House XII – 16° Sagittarius

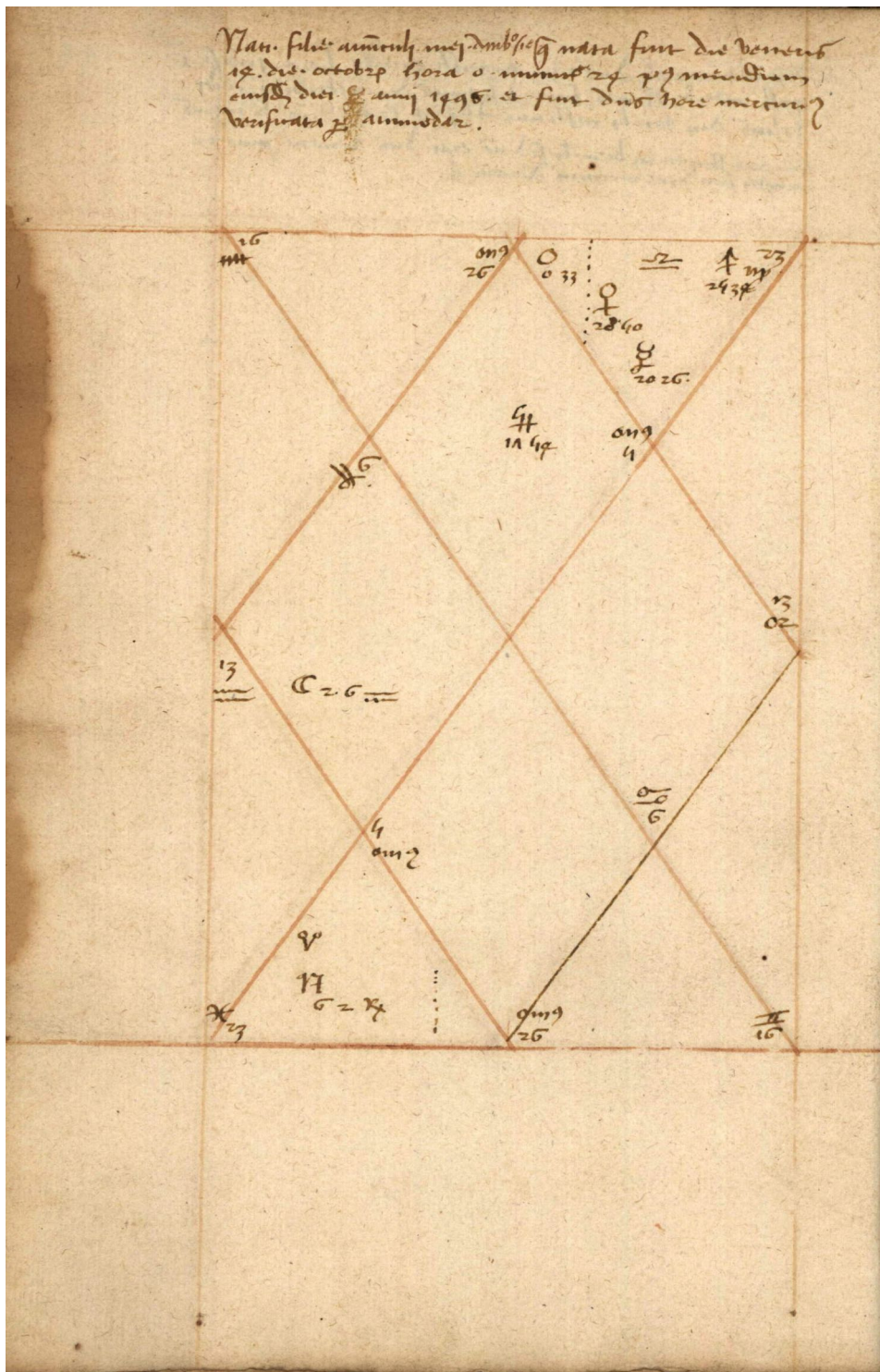


Figure 51 – MS 1711, folio 99v

Another member of the author's family, a cousin.

Nativity of the daughter of my uncle from Amboise, who was born on the day of Venus, fourteenth day of October, 0 hours, 24 minutes of the same day, year 1496, and Mercury was the ruler of the hour. Verified by *animodar*.⁶¹⁸

A reference to this chart also appears in NAL 398 f. 101, the last folio of the volume. Belle mentions a different day – October 12, Wednesday (day of Mercury) – which raises doubts about the accuracy of the data. He does not calculate the horoscope in NAL 398. In MS 1711, he neglects to place the Lunar Nodes and the Lot of Fortune in the chart; the nodes should be at 17° Leo and 17° Aquarius, and the lot in Aries.

Blank pages (MS 1711 f. 100r – f. 103)

⁶¹⁸ Nativitas filie avunculi mei Ambosii que nata fuit die Veneris 14 die Octobris hora 0 minutis 24 post meridiem eiusdem diei [*erased: 3*] anni 1496 et fuit dominus hore Mercurius. Verificata per *animodar*, MS 1711 f. 99v.

Lord of Bressolles, Louis, Johannes, and Francissa de Fosseragin

This is the last folio of MS 1711. It is prepared to display four horoscopes, but none was calculated:

1: Nativity of the lord of Bressole, day 22 of Mars, by one or two hours before day, year 1454, and it was the day of Venus.⁶¹⁹

2: Year 1486, day 6 of November, Louis of Fossegarin was born, at the 9th hour of the morning of the same day.⁶²⁰

3: Year 1491, day 30 of July, Jean de Fossegarin was born, between 4 and 5 of the evening.⁶²¹

4: Year 1492 Francissa was born, their sister, 19th day of October, around the 6th hour of the morning.⁶²²

The ‘lord of Bressolles’, born in 1454, is old enough to be the father of the other three. The location mentioned is probably the village of Bressolles (46°31’N; 3°19’E), not far from Moulins.⁶²³ It belonged to the barons of Brécharde (Breschard), but after the marriage of Catherine de Bressolles and Goussant de Thoury in the fourteenth century it became part of the house of Thoury.⁶²⁴

⁶¹⁹ Nativitatis domini de Bressolles die 22 Marcii per unam vel duas horarum ante diem anni 1454 et fuit dies 4, MS 1711 f. 103.

⁶²⁰ Anno 1489 die 6 Novembris natus est Ludovicus de Fosse Garin hora 9 de mane eiusdem diei, MS 1711 f. 103. For Fossegarin see Betencourt, *Noms feodaux*, p. 425.

⁶²¹ Anno 1491 die 30 Julii natus est Iohannes de Fossegarin inter 4 et 5 de sero, MS 1711 f. 103.

⁶²² Anno 1492 nata fuit Francissa eorum soror die 19 Octobris circa 6 de mane, MS 1711 f. 103.

⁶²³ There is another village named Bressoles in the department of Ain, southeast France (45°52’N; 05°06’E), but it is less likely to be the one mentioned by Belle.

⁶²⁴ See *Noms feodaux*, I, pp. 32, 54, 101, 199 (Bressole), pp. 78, 89, 155, 177, 274, 518, 528 (Bressolles).

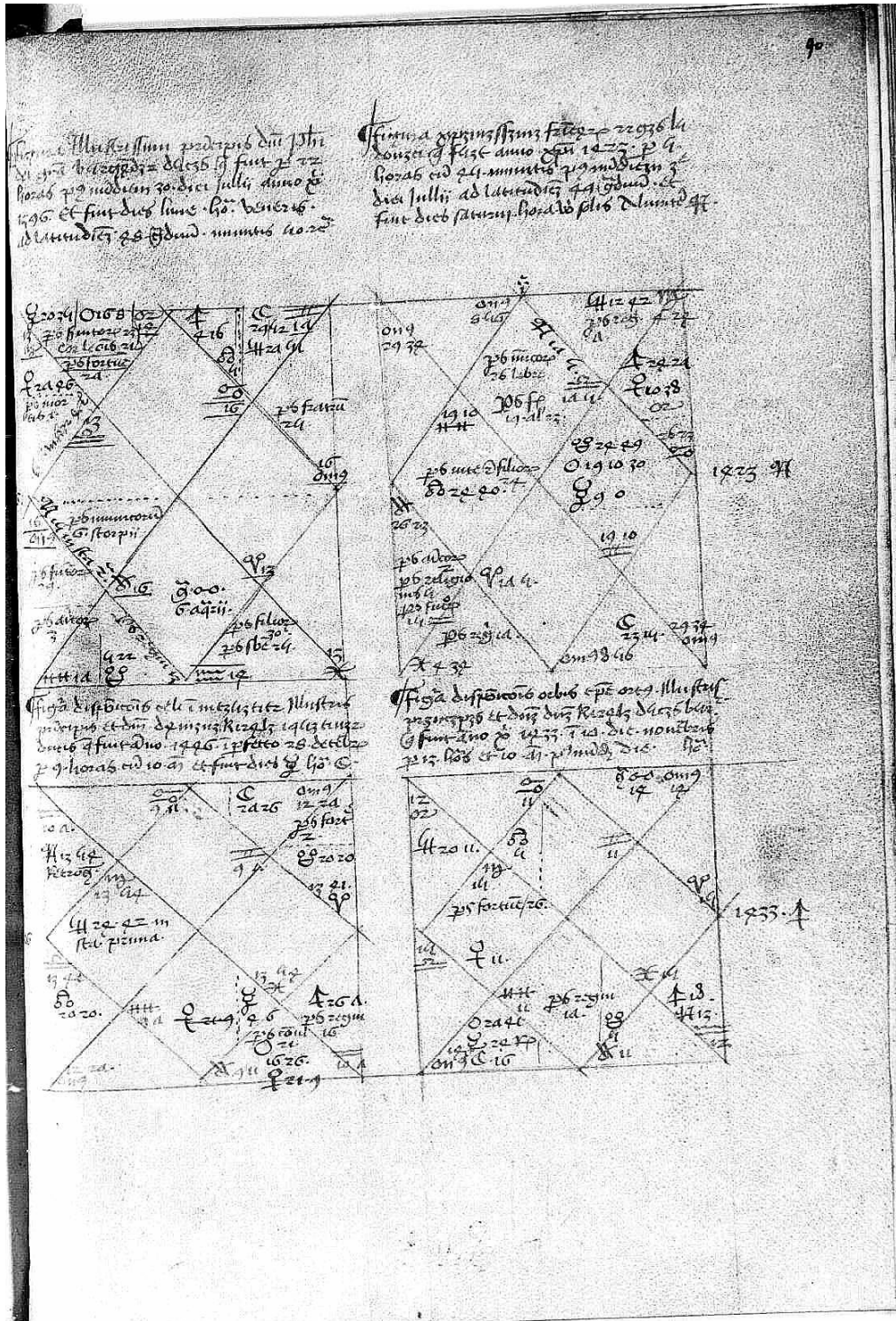


Figure 52 – NAL 398, folio 90r

Philip of Burgundy (top left); Louis XI (bottom left); Charles de Berry (top right); Charles the Bold (bottom right)

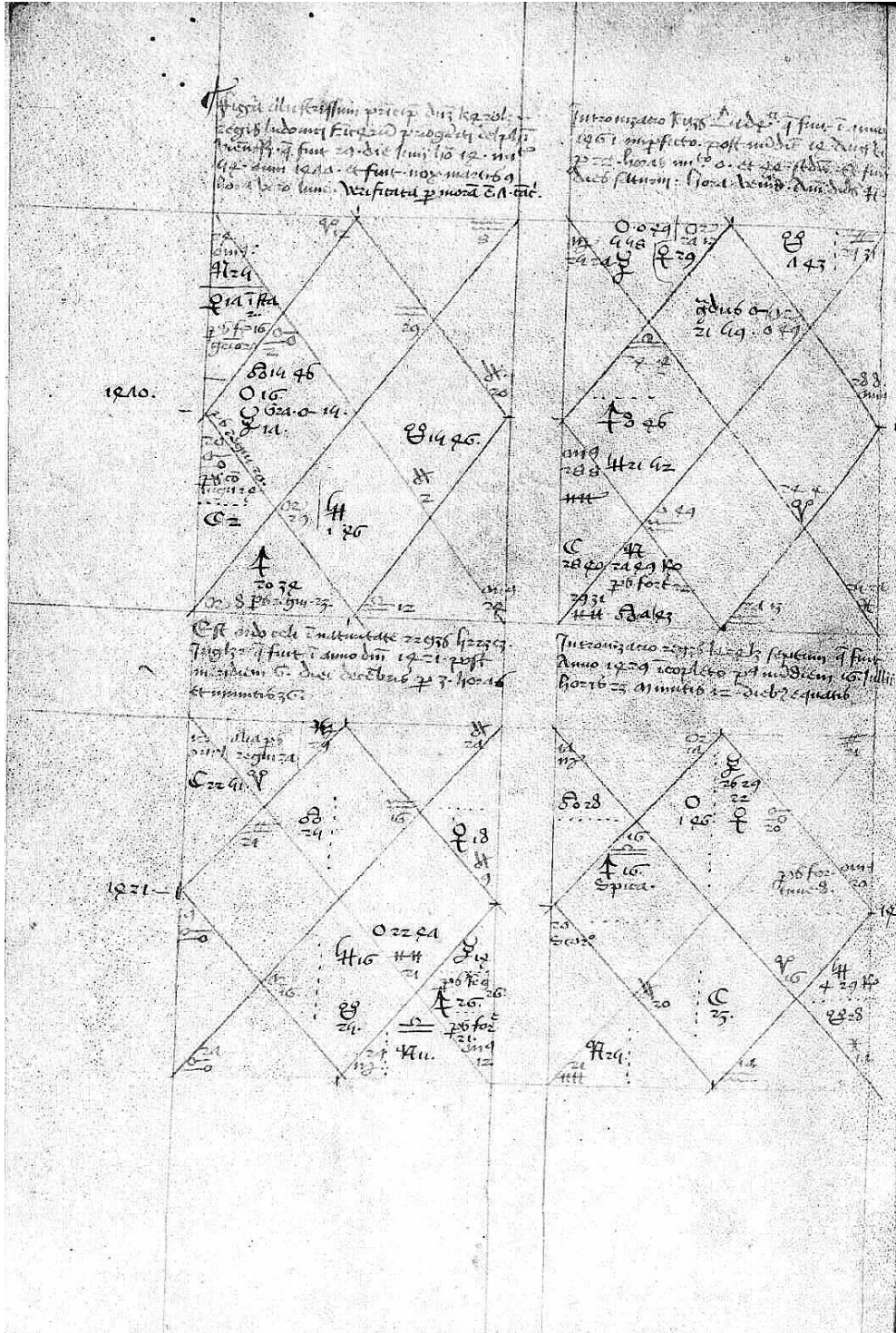


Figure 53 – NAL 398, folio 90v

Charles VIII, Ascendant at 2° Cancer (top left); Coronation of Louis XI (bottom left); Henry VI (top right); Coronation of Charles VIII (bottom right)

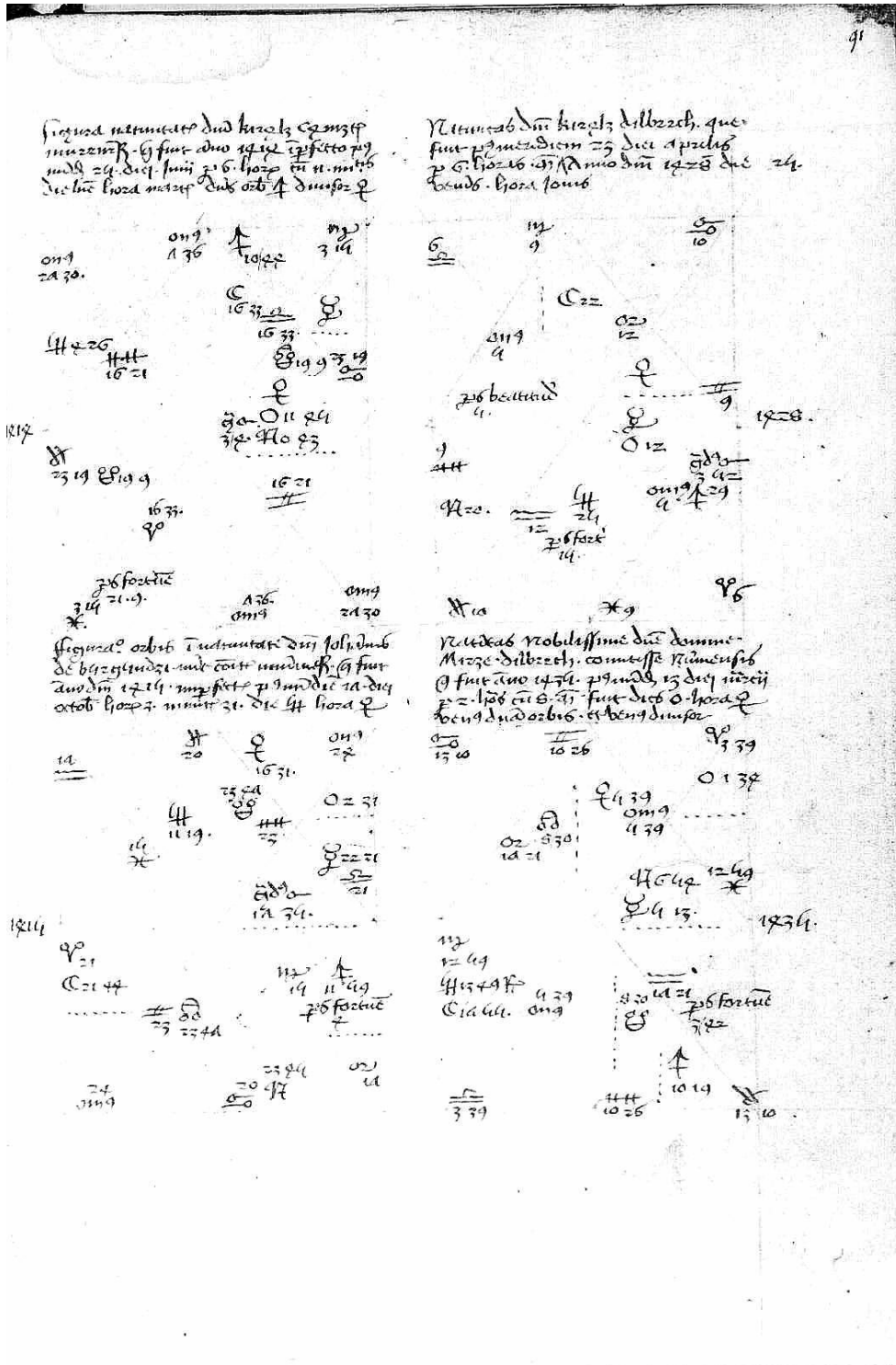


Figure 54 – NAL 398, folio 91r

Charles of Burgundy, count of Nevers (top left); Charles d'Albret (bottom left);
John of Burgundy/Jean de Clamecy (top right); Marie d'Albret (bottom right)

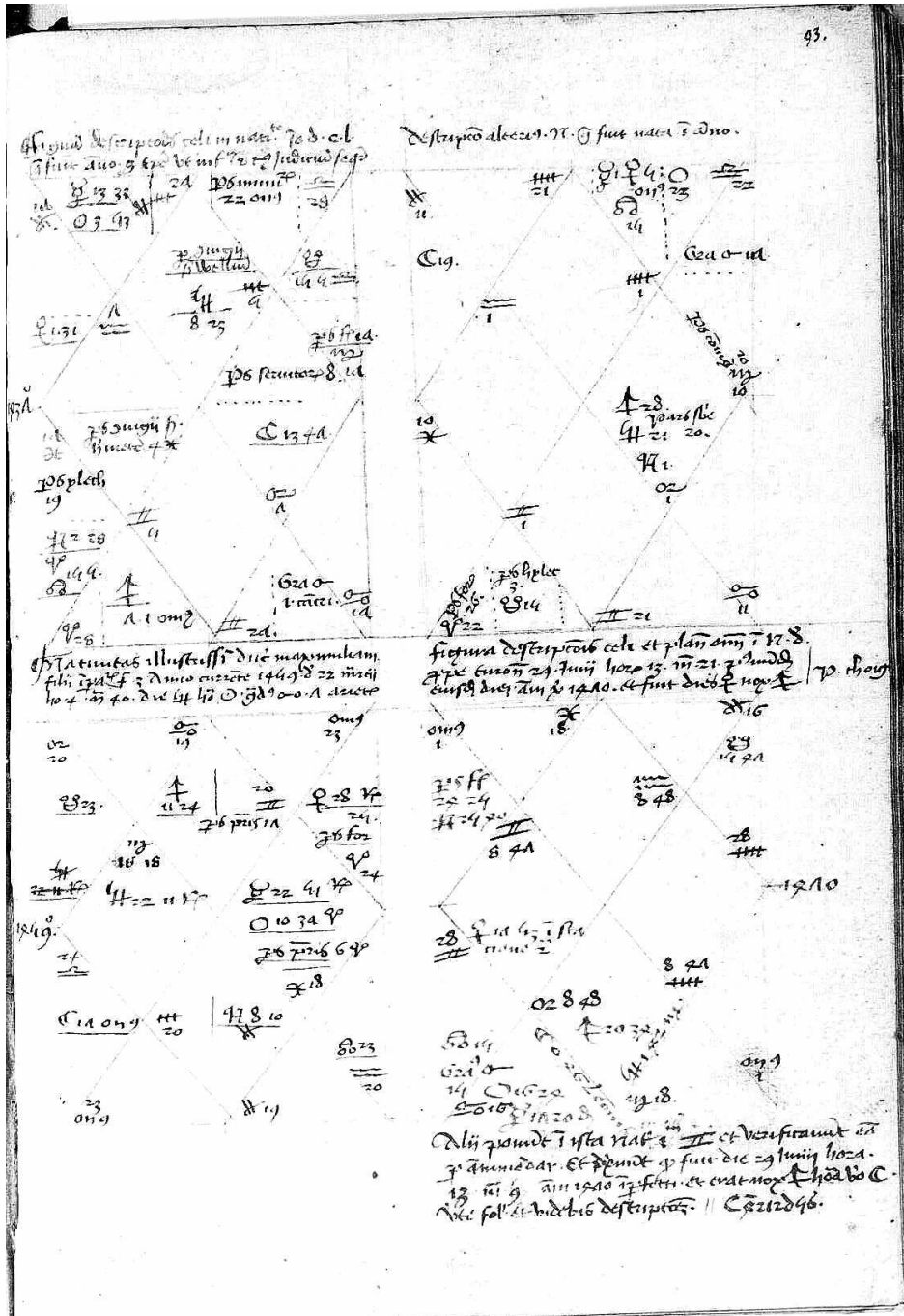


Figure 55 – NAL 398, folio 93r (complete)

J. d. c. l. (top left); Maximilian I (bottom left); unidentified woman discussed below (top right); Charles VIII, Ascendant at 8°47 Gemini (bottom right)

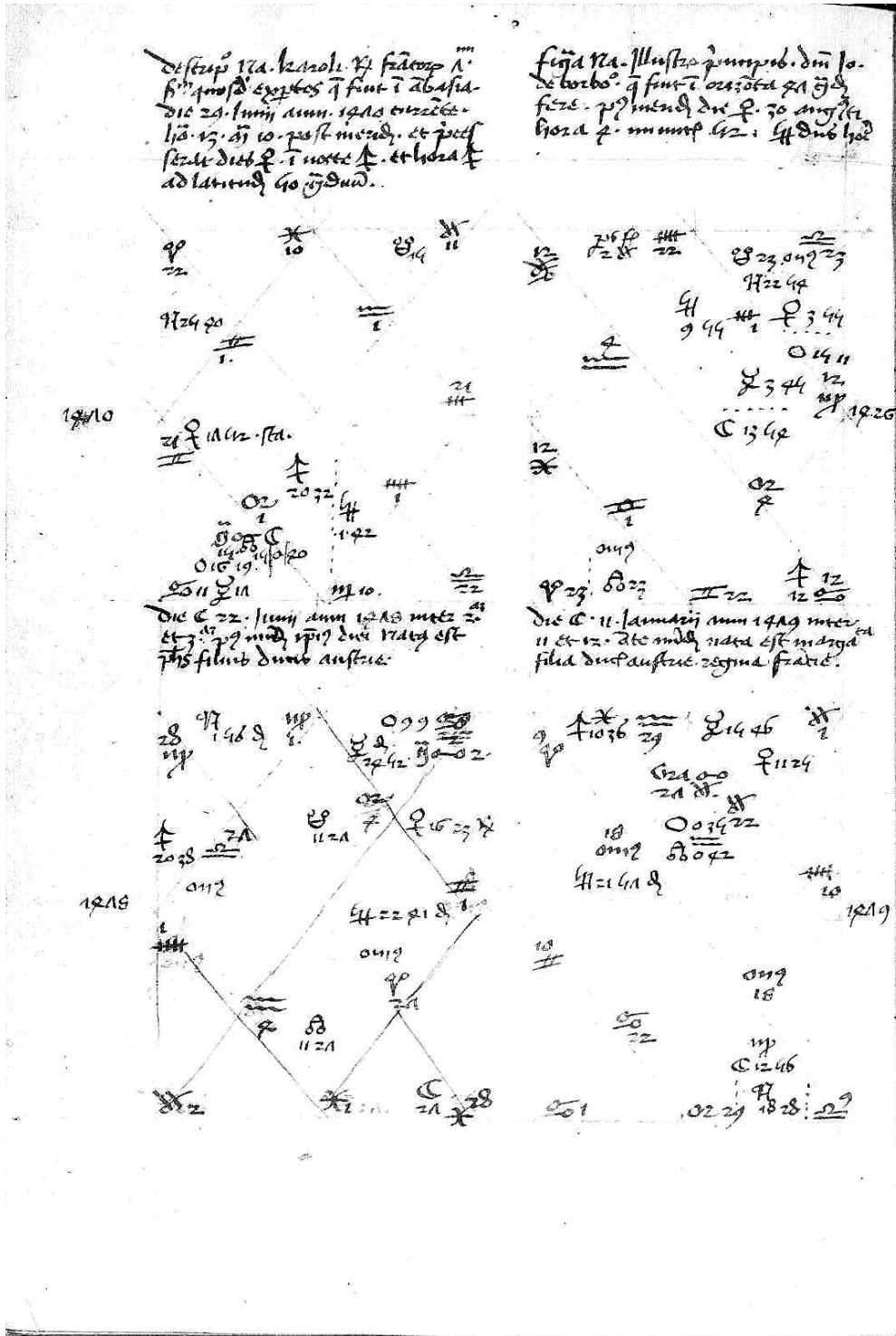


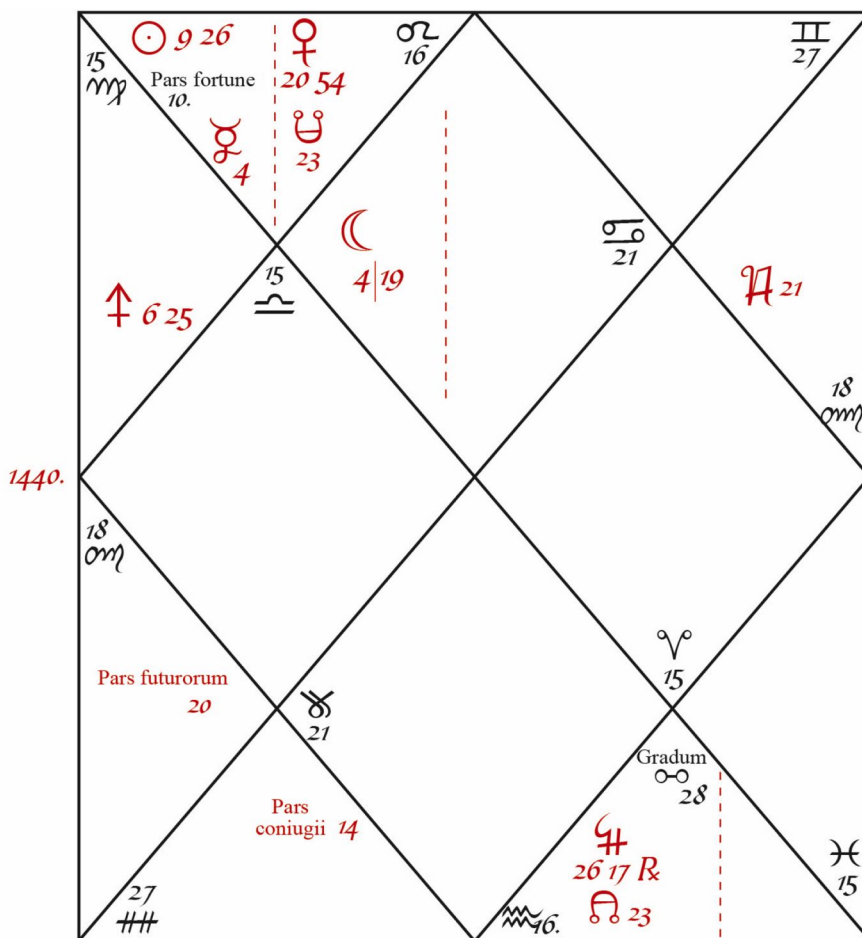
Figure 56 – NAL 398, folio 93v

Charles VIII, Ascendant at 1° Gemini (top left); Jean de Bourbon (bottom left); Philip the Handsome (top right); Margaret of Austria (bottom right)

2. The horoscopes in NAL 398

These five nativities have no correspondence in MS 1711 and their identities are yet to be determined. In some cases, the name of the native was deliberately omitted, while in others it was hinted at with some initials, an honorary title, or other references. Some possible identifications were presented for such cases based on the premise that these are noblemen and noblewoman of well-known families. The horoscopes whose names are omitted may be Belle's personal friends or clients, or in some cases political figures opposing his patrons. Nevertheless, a clear identification is yet to be established.

C. dCHAS (unidentified)
NAL 398 f. 91va1: 24 August 1440, 08:46 am, unknown location



House I – 15° Libra	House VII – 15° Aries
House II – 18° Scorpio	House VIII – 18° Taurus
Pars Futurorum 20	Saturn 21° Taurus
House III – 20° Sagittarius	House IX – 20° Gemini
Pars coniugii 14° Capricorn	House X – 21° Cancer
House IV – 21° Capricorn	Moon 04°19' Leo
House V – 16° Aquarius	House XI – 16° Leo
South Node 23° Aquarius	Venus 20° Leo
Jupiter 26°17' Aquarius retrograde	North Node 23° Leo
Gradus oppositionis 28°	Mercury 04° Virgo
House VI – 15° Pisces	Sun 09°36' Virgo
	Pars Fortune 10° Virgo
	House XII – 15° Virgo
	Mars 06° Libra

Horoscope of an unidentified individual; the code at the end can be a name or a title.

Ordination of the skies and the stars in the nativity of a certain native in the year of the Lord 1440 incomplete, and it was the 23rd day of August, 20 hours and 46 minutes, *almutem* Mercury [*superscript*: 24] and Saturn with it. [*Intercalated*: 22]. CdCHAS.⁶²⁵

This may be the horoscope of Alain the Great d'Albret, born in 1440, the son of Catherine de Rohan and Jean I d'Albret.⁶²⁶ Alain was born in 1440, the same year as this horoscope, and in Saint-Brieuc in Brittany (48°30'N, 02°45'W); the house cusps used by Belle are close enough to suggest this location. He became the head of the house of Albret in 1471 when his grandfather died (his father had died in 1468).

If this is Alan's chart, the other three horoscopes on the same folio may all be of Alan's younger brothers and sisters: the native called Ludo on f. 91va2 may be Louis d'Albret; the *domicella* on f. 91vb1 may be Marie d'Albret, and *soror* on 91vb2, the younger sister, Louise d'Albret.⁶²⁷ More details about these natives are given on their respective pages. The interval between the first three horoscopes is of approximately thirteen months making it possible to all be brothers born in sequence: 'CdCHAS' was born in August 1440, '*domicella*' in September 1441, Louis in October 1442; the last horoscope, 'sister', born in 1448, could be a younger sister. Furthermore, this group of horoscopes is preceded by those of two other of members of the same family: their father, Charles d'Albret, lord of Saint-Bazaille, and their aunt, Marie d'Albret. (91rb1 and 91rb2, respectively), supporting this possibility.

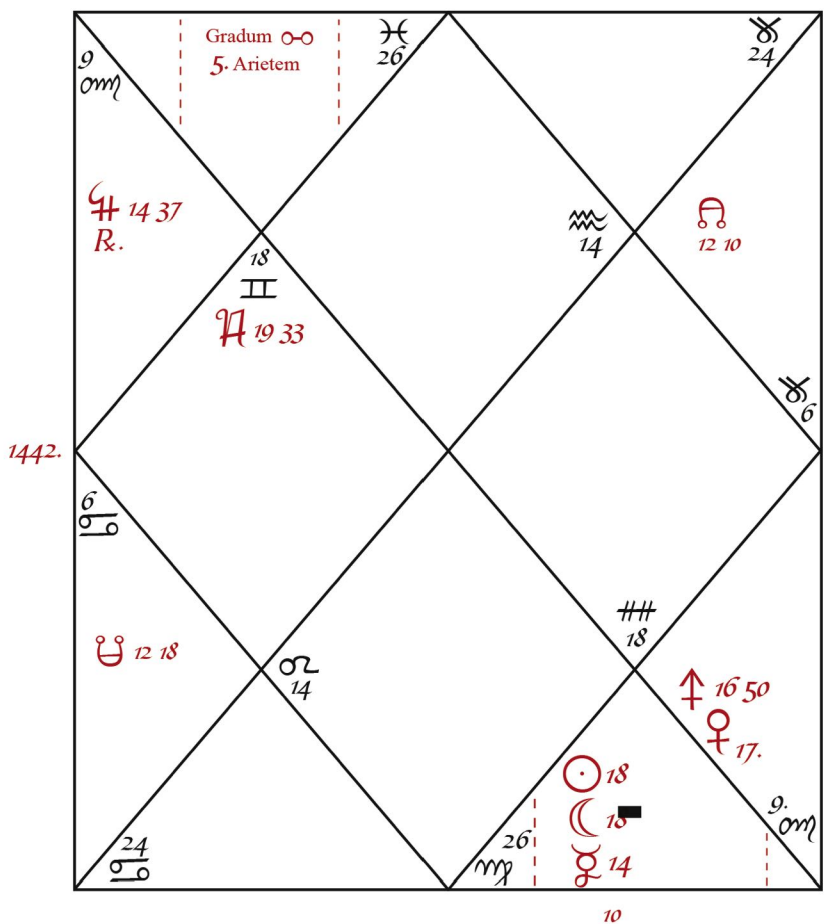
Alternatively, there is the possibility that the horoscopes of this page pertain to some of the illegitimate sons of Jean II de Bourbon.

⁶²⁵ Ordinatione celi et stellarum hora nativitatibus cuiusdam nati in anno domini 1440 imperfectum et fuit die 23 Augustii horam 20 minutis 46 *almutem* Mercurius et 7 cum eo 22. C d C H A S, NAL 398 f. 91va1. The reference to 24 and 22 may be the sum of all the planetary dignities for Mercury and Saturn, respectively.

⁶²⁶ The firstborn son of Charles II d'Albret and Anne d'Armagnac.

⁶²⁷ For the d'Albret family, see Chesnaye des Bois, *Dictionnaire de la noblesse*, I, 2nd ed, Paris, 1771.

Louis, 'brother of the former' (unidentified)
 NAL 398 f. 91va2: 3 October 1442, 7:55 pm, unknown location



House I – 18° Gemini Saturn 19°33	House VII – 18° Sagittarius
House II – 06° Cancer North Node 12°18 Cancer	House VIII – 05° Capricorn South Node 12°18 Capricorn
House III – 24° Cancer	House IX – 24° Capricorn
House IV – 14° Leo	House X – 14° Aquarius
House V – 26° Virgo Mercury 14° Libra Moon 18° Libra Sun 18° Libra	House XI – 26° Pisces Gradus oppositionis 4° Aries
House VI – 90° Scorpio Mars 16°50 Scorpio Venus 17° Scorpio	House XII – 09° Taurus Jupiter 14°37 retrograde

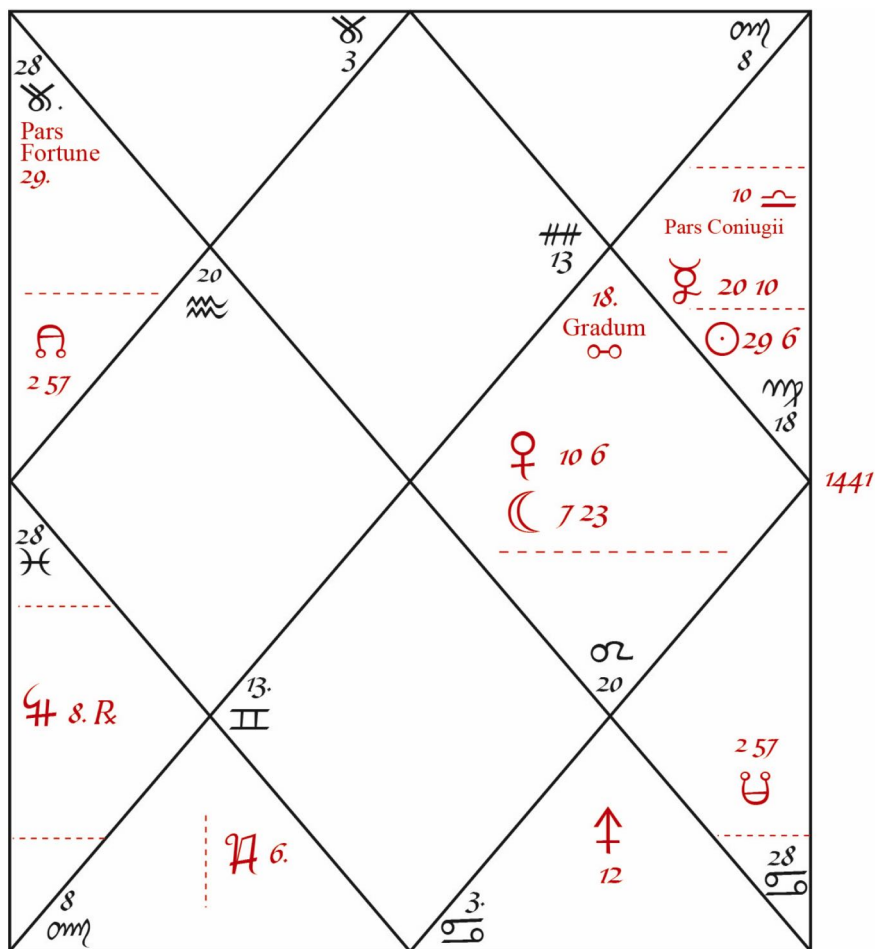
Horoscope of Louis 'his brother' (*eius frater*), referring to the previous native.

Another description of a nativity which was in the year of the Lord 1442 incomplete, 3rd day of October, by 7 hours and 55 minutes afternoon of the same day, day of [blank] hour of [blank]. Ludo, his brother.⁶²⁸

If the previous nativity is that of Alain d'Albret, this could be the horoscope of his younger brother, Cardinal Louis d'Albret. It could also be one of the illegitimate sons of Jean II de Bourbon.

⁶²⁸ Alia descriptio nativitatis que fuit in anno domini 1442^o imperfecto die 3tia Octobre per 7 horas et 55 minuta post meridiem eiusdem diei die [blank] hora [blank]. *Lud4* eius frater, NAL 398 f. 91va2.

'Domicella' (unidentified)
NAL 398 f. 91vb1: 13 September 1441, 4:50 pm, unknown location



House I – 20° Aquarius	House VII – 20° Leo Moon 07°23 Virgo [should be 09°] Venus 10°06 Virgo [should be 04°] Gradus oppositionis 18° Virgo
House II – 28° Pisces Jupiter 08° Aries retrograde [should be 04°]	House VIII – 28° Virgo Sun 29°06 Virgo Pars Coniugii 10° Libra Mercury 20°10 Virgo
House III – 08° Taurus Saturn 06° Gemini (03°)	House IX – 08° Scorpio
House IV – 13° Gemini	House X – 13° Sagittarius
House V – 03° Cancer Mars 12° Cancer (14°)	House XI – 03° Capricorn
House VI – 28° Cancer North Node 02°57 Leo	House XII – 28° Capricorn Pars Fortune 29° Capricorn South Node 02°57 Aquarius

In this horoscope Belle encoded the name of the native, damsel (*domicella*)⁶²⁹ *Vi Agnetis de Oas* and describes her as famous (*famosa*). This is the only time he uses this epithet instead of more customary designations, such as *nobilissima* or *illustrissima*. The term ‘Vi’ may be a name, such as Victoire or Violette, or a noble title, such as *vicomtesse* (although the standard abbreviation is *V^{tesse}*).

Another nativity of a certain famous damsel ‘*vi Agnetis de Oas*’, which was in the 13th of September around 4:50 after noon, year 1441, and it was the day of Mercury, hour of Jupiter, *almutem* Mercury.⁶³⁰

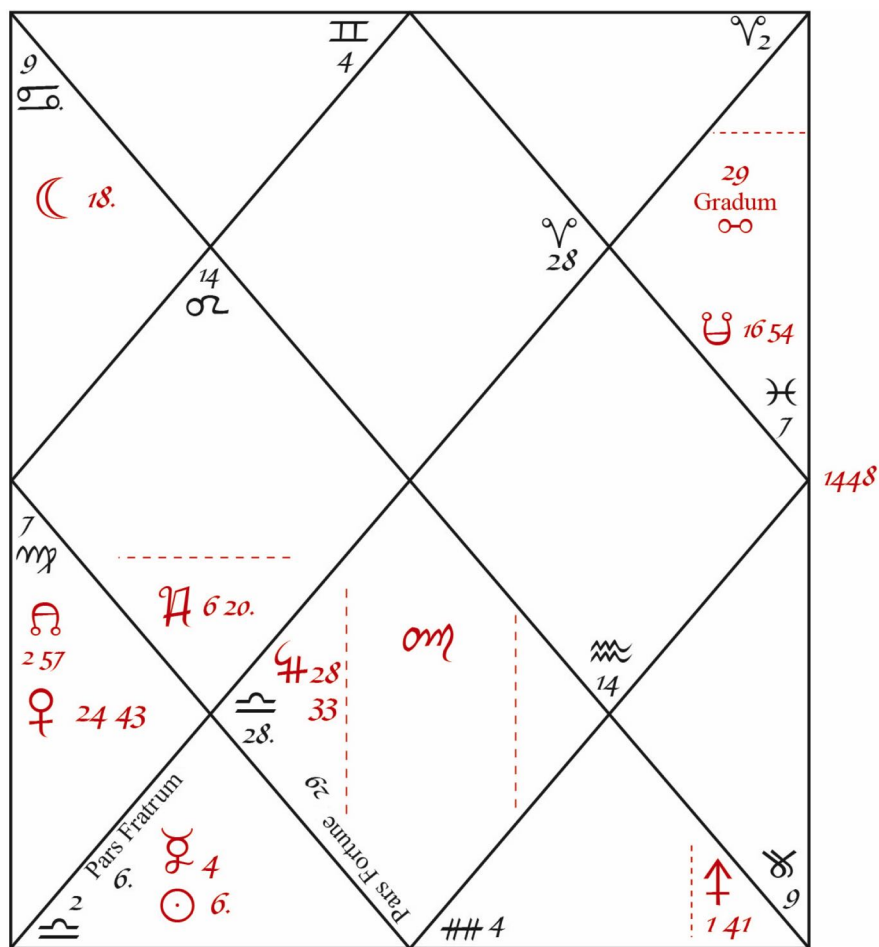
This may be the horoscope of Marie d’Albret, who married in 1480 Bonfile del Giudice, count of Castres. In this horoscope, the Lot of Marriage (*pars coniugii*) is calculated according to the formula for women: the distance from Venus to Saturn, in the order of the signs, projected from the Ascendant, also in the order of the signs, thus confirming that this is a woman’s horoscope; the equivalent formula for men (the distance from Saturn to Venus projected from the Ascendant) would place the lot at 27° Taurus.⁶³¹ The presence of this lot also suggests that marriage was one of the main concerns for this nativity.

⁶²⁹ Domicella: damsel (*demoiselle*), the young head of the house.

⁶³⁰ Alia nativitas cuiusdam famose *d4m3r2lle v3 Agn2t3s de Oas* que fuit decima tertia Septembris per 4 horam et 50 minuta post meridiem anni 1441 et fuit dies 3 hora 6 *almutem* 3, NAL 398 f. 91vb1.

⁶³¹ On f. 93rb1, also the horoscope of a woman he uses a different formula (which is explained in the corresponding page).

'Sister of the former' (unidentified)
NAL 398 f. 91vb2: 20 September 1448, 13:18 pm, unknown location



House I – 14° Leo Saturn 06°20 Virgo	House VII – 14° Aquarius
House II – 07° Virgo South Node 16°52 Virgo Venus 24° Virgo	House VIII – 07° Pisces Gradus oppositionis 29° Pisces North Node 16°52 Pisces
House III – 02° Libra Mercury 04° Libra (00° Scorpio) Sun 06° Libra Part of Brothers (Pars Fratrum) 06° Libra	House IX – 02° Aries
House IV – 28° Libra Jupiter 28°33 Libra Pars Fortune 29°	House X – 28° Aries
House V – 04° Sagittarius Mars 01°41 Capricorn	House XI – 04° Gemini
House VI – 09° Capricorn	House XII – 09° Cancer Moon 18° Cancer

Horoscope of the sister (*soror*) of the former native born in 1448. The date corresponds to 21 September, 1:18 am.

Nativity of the sister of the one above; verified by *animodar*, which was in the year of Christ 1448, 20th day of September, 13 hours, 18 minutes after noon of the same day, day of the Moon, hour [blank], *almutem* Saturn 21, Jupiter 20, Venus 20.⁶³²

This may be Jeanne Louise d'Albret, younger sister of Alain, Louis and Marie; she married Jacques, lord of d'Estouteville and Vallemont in 1480, and died in 8 September 1494.⁶³³ It may also be the horoscope of another illegitimate daughter of Jean II de Bourbon, Marie, who married Jacques de Sainte-Colombe in February 1450 and died in 22 July 1482. However, the absence of the Lot of Marriage (*Pars Coniugii*) in this horoscope suggests that this was not a main concern of this native (or of Belle), thus casting some doubts on these hypotheses.

Nativity of Jo. d.c.l.

This nativity is part of Belle's collection, in NAL 398, f. 93ra1. The corresponding judgement was addressed in a previous section.

⁶³² Nativitas *s4r4r3s* alius suprascripto verificata per *animodar* que fuit anno christi 1448 die 20 Septembri hora 13 minutem 18 post meridiem eiusdem diei dies Lune hora [blank] *almutem* ♄ 21 ♃ 20 ♀ 20, NAL 398 f. 91vb2.

⁶³³ Some sources state that Louise was born *c.*1440, which is unlikely, because that is the year of birth of her older brother, Alain.

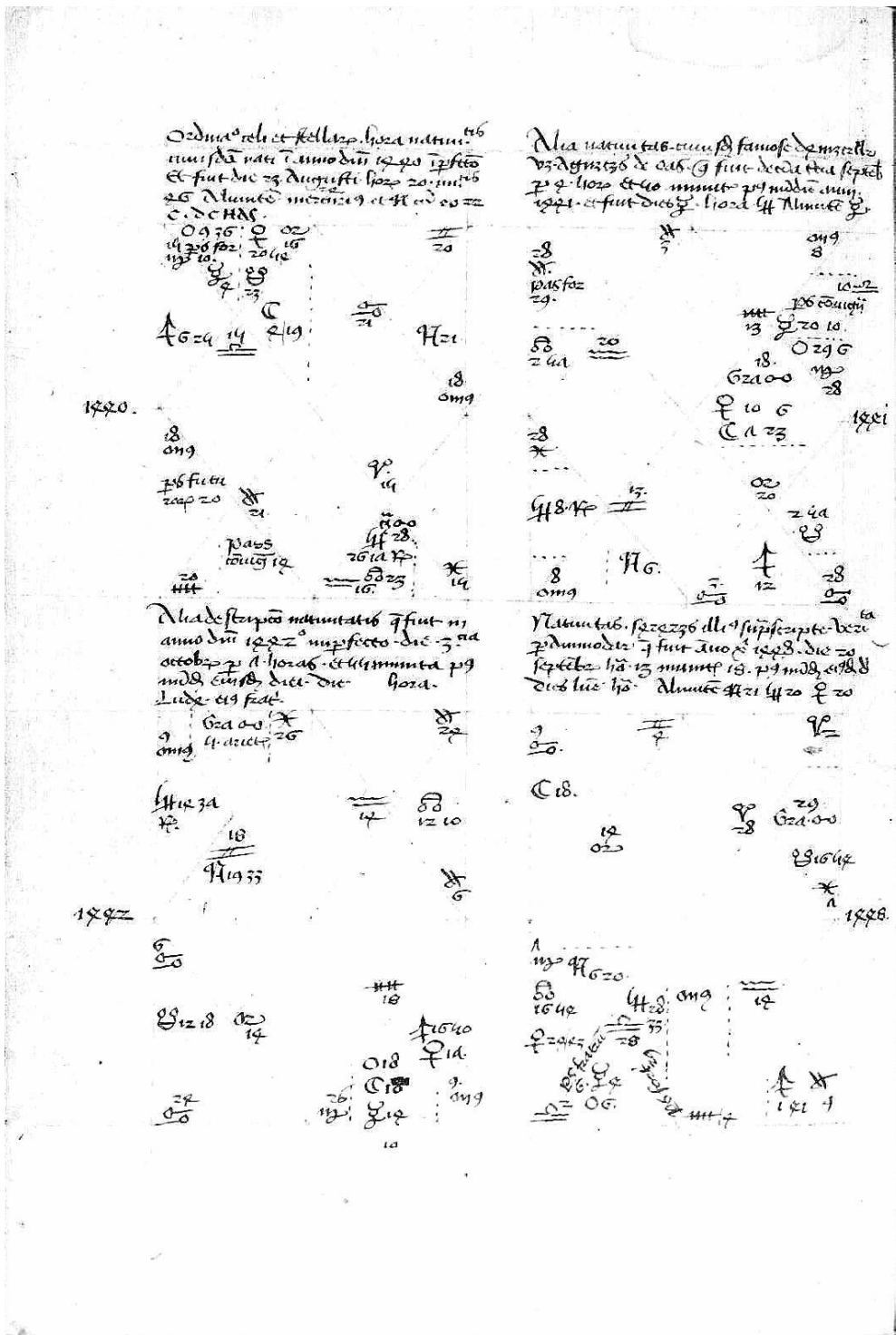
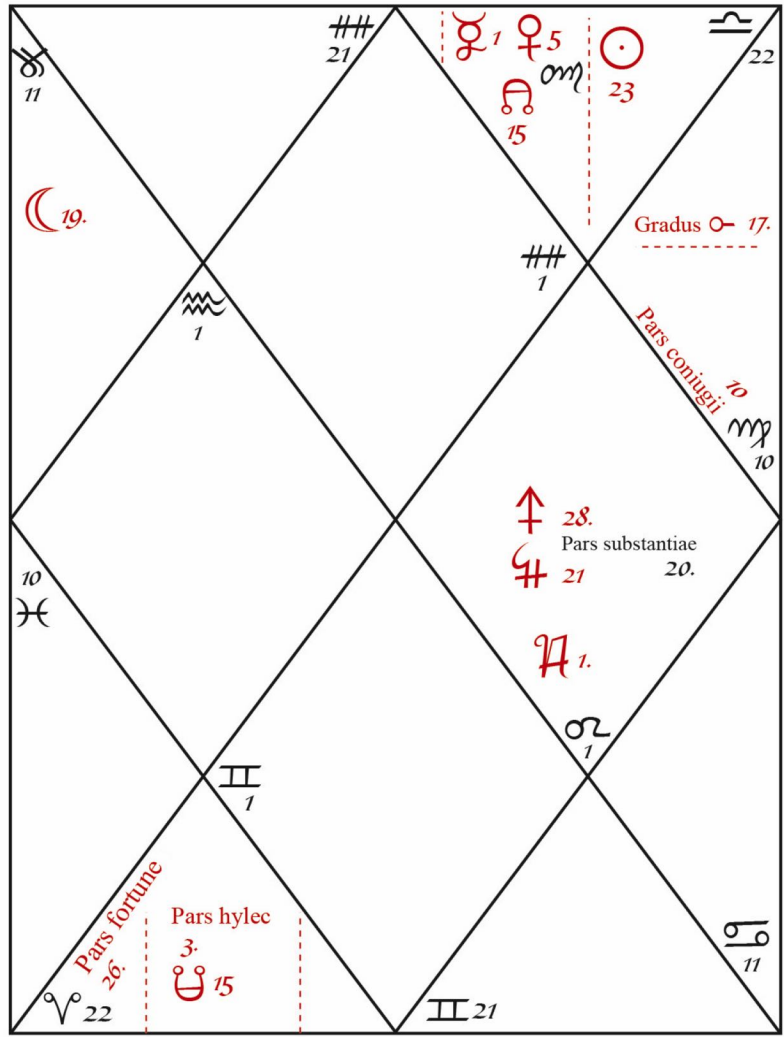


Figure 57 – NAL 398, folio 91v
 C. dCHAS (top left); Louis, 'brother of the former' (bottom left); 'Domicella' (top right); 'Sister of the former' (bottom right)

Unidentified woman
NAL 398 f. 93rb1: [7 October 1445, 14:30, unknown location]



House I – 1° Aquarius	House VII – 1° Leo Saturn 01° Leo (29° Cancer) Pars Substantiae 20° Leo Jupiter 21° Leo Mars 28° Leo
House II – 10° Pisces	House VIII – 10° Virgo Pars Coniugii 10° Virgo Gradus coniunctionis 17° Virgo
House III – 22° Aries Pars Fortune 26° Aries Pars Hyleg 03° Taurus North Node 15° Taurus	House IX – 22° Libra Sun 23° Libra Mercury 01° Scorpio Venus 05° Scorpio South Node 15° Scorpio
House IV – 1° Gemini	House X – 1° Sagittarius
House V – 21° Gemini	House XI – 21° Sagittarius
House VI – 11° Cancer	House XII – 11° Capricorn Moon 19° Capricorn

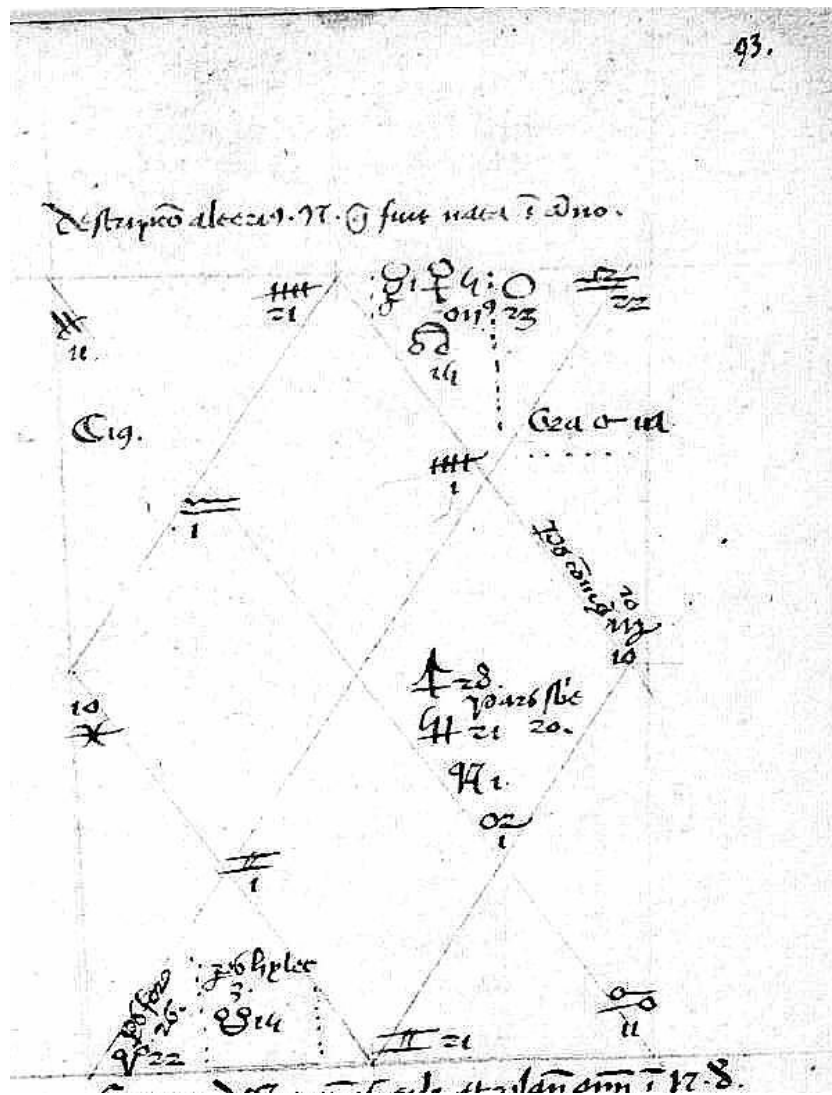


Figure 58 – NAL 398, folio 93r (detail)

Corresponds to 7 October 1445 at 14:05 and it is the horoscope of a woman.

Description of another N. [native] that was born in the year [year not given].⁶³⁴

Considering the date of birth and the general context, there are two possible identities for this native:

- Marguerite, the illegitimate daughter of Jean II de Bourbon, born in 1445 and legitimized in 1464; she married Jean de Ferrières in Moulins in 1462 and died in 1482;
- one the sisters of Alain d'Albret, in which case the identity the nativities on f. 91vb1 (Marie d'Albret) and f. 91vb2 (Louise d'Albret) have to be reconsidered.

In any case the Lot of Marriage (*Pars Coniugii*) is calculated according to the formula for women, but in this case Belle applies a different formula: he takes the distance from the Moon to Mars and projects it from the Ascendant. This places the lot at 10° Virgo,⁶³⁵ thus confirming that this is the horoscope of a woman (the equivalent formula for men – the distance from the Sun to Venus projected from the Ascendant – would put the lot at 13° Aquarius). This apparent discrepancy may result from Belle's own experiences with the lots.⁶³⁶

⁶³⁴ Descriptio alterius N. que fuit nata in anno, NAL 398 f. 93rb1.

⁶³⁵ If the lot were taken from Venus to Saturn, as in 91vb1, it would be in the beginning of Scorpio.

⁶³⁶ Al-Bīrūnī states that according to Hermes this lot is taken from Saturn to Venus and projected from the Ascendant, and that according to the Hellenistic astrologer Vettius Valens (120-175) is taken from the Sun to Venus projected from the Ascendant. Albiruni, *Instruction*, 476, p. 285 (n. 34-35 in the table); Haly Abenragel switches the authors, by stating that the Lot of Marriage for Man according to Hermes is taken from the Sun to Venus, and according to Valens, from Saturn to Venus; see Haly Abenragel, *El Libro Conplido*, V, 6, p. 232, and also 'Lots' in Appendix I.

Highlights

As stated before, Belle's collection of horoscopes is remarkably diverse both in number and in scope and may well be the earliest significant collection of this kind. Other fifteenth-century collections, such as Latin 7443, were put together for the purpose of analyzing specific political events and are not as comprehensive or as wide-ranging. In this regard, Belle's manuscripts resemble more the diversity and number of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century collections.⁶³⁷ They attest to the circulation of notable nativities between astrologers in the late medieval period, a glimpse of the 'astrological communications network'.⁶³⁸

Although Belle's collection reveals a clear political focus, it is not limited to the 'notable nativities', nor is it organized around a single political event, as is the case of other, smaller, collections.⁶³⁹ Apart from the political agents of his time, it also includes horoscopes connected to Belle's private life, namely children, relatives, and possibly friends or clients. These personal horoscopes precede by several decades a tendency that would become common in the Renaissance, when the compilations of famous nativities and astrological doctrine began gradually to give way to a mixture of personal horoscopes and autobiographical astrological studies. Such is the case with later authors who present large collections of charts of notable people, medical cases, 'monsters' and other examples.⁶⁴⁰

Calculations

Belle does not address all horoscopes of his collection in the same detail: some are intensely scrutinized, while others receive much less attention. The table below summarizes the calculations of the *almutem*, the length of life, and the aspects in the horoscopes in MS 1711.

⁶³⁷ See for instance Lat. 7395 and Lat. 7448, for the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, respectively.

⁶³⁸ Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos*, p. 71.

⁶³⁹ Such as Lat. 7443, which assembles a small collection of nativities, revolutions of the year, and events regarding the main political protagonists of early fifteenth-century France. It is addressed in several works for instance Boudet, *Lire dans le ciel*, pp. 113-151.

⁶⁴⁰ See for example the works of Luca Gaurico (1475-1558), Georg Hartmann (1489-1564), Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576), Georg Joachim Rheticus (1514-1574), Simon Titius (1521-1576), Johannes Garcaeus (1530-1574), or Johannes Kepler (1571-1630). On horoscope collections see also Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan England*; von Stuckrad 'The Function of Horoscopes in Biographical Narrative: Cardano and after', Vanden Broecke, 'Evidence and Conjecture in Cardano's Horoscope Collections', and Rutkin, 'Various Uses of Horoscopes: Astrological Practices in Early Modern Europe', all in Oestmann, Rutkin, and von Stuckrad (eds), *Horoscopes and Public Spheres*.

Table 29 – Different calculations for different horoscopes

Horoscope	<i>Almutem</i>	Length of life	Aspects
Louis XI (f. 79r)	X	X	
Charles the Bold (f. 81v, f. 83v)			X
Lord of Craon (f. 83r)	X		
Coronation of Louis XI (f. 86v)			X?
Coronation of Charles VIII (f. 87r)			X
Charles VIII (f. 87v)	X	X	X
Charles VIII's entry into Paris (89r)			X
Anne de Beaujeu (f. 90v)	X	X	X
Pierre II de Bourbon (f. 91r)	X	X	
Antoine Belle (f. 93r)	X	X	X
Conrad Belle (f. 93v)	X	X	X
Susanne de Bourbon (f. 94r)		X	X
Nicolas Gon (f. 95v)		X	X
Nicolas Belle (f. 96r)	X	X	X
Martha Belle (f.96v)	X		X
Renaud Petit De (f. 97r)	X	X	X

Belle pays a great deal of attention to the horoscopes related to the dukes of Bourbon, Pierre II and Anne of France, who may have been his patrons, as well as to Anne's father, King Louis XI, her daughter, Susanne de Bourbon, and her son-in-law, Charles VIII. This interest is matched only by the attention he gives to the horoscopes of his own children: Antoine, Conrad and Nicolas Belle, and two other young boys, Nicolas Gon and Renaud Petit De, possibly sons of clients or of friends.

Almutem

The calculation of the *almutem* is also present in most of the nativities of these two groups. Belle uses what seems to be the standard calculation in the medieval period, that is, the strongest planet in the five *hylegical* places, as explained before.⁶⁴¹ There are several minor inconsistencies in his account of essential dignities, namely errors in the sums or inconsistencies caused by the use of different tables; regardless of that, while the scoring of accidental dignities remains largely consistent throughout the collection, he reveals some experimentation regarding the use of either the Egyptian or Ptolemaic table of terms (as is addressed further in this section).

Length of life

The focus on Anne's family is again evident in the calculation of the length of life. It is included in the horoscopes that directly relate to her, namely the horoscope of her

⁶⁴¹ During the sixteenth century the concept of '*almutem* of the nativity' underwent several changes, becoming the planet that gathered the most essential and accidental dignities in the context of the entire horoscope, that is, the strongest planet in the figure, instead of the most powerful planet in the five *hylegical* places. There is no evidence of this change in Belle's work.

husband, Pierre, her daughter, Susanne, her father, Louis XI, and her brother, Charles VIII. The calculation for the length of life appears only in five other horoscopes, all of children.

Planetary aspects

Belle's manuscripts offer several practical examples of the computation of the aspects, particularly his use of the orb, that is, the planet's sphere of influence. These topics are often unclear in astrological texts since most authors present the theoretical rules without much explanation or practical examples. The possible differences in practice, according to authors and periods, are yet to be identified, as this topic remains largely unexplored. This has generated debate among historians of astrology as to how the aspects are measured: by sign, by the planets's spheres of influence (orbs), or by an overall orb of about five degrees. Belle's texts bring some interesting contributions to this debate. All of the aspects listed in his collection fall within the range of the planet with the largest orb, suggesting that he based his measurements on the orbs.⁶⁴² The aspects with the most degrees of separation include either the Moon or the Sun, the largest aspect having almost twelve degrees of separation, which is well within the Moon's orb. Belle also considers dissociate aspects, that is, those formed outside the expected signs, but still within the range of the planet's orb, thus confirming that for him the aspect is not bound by the signs but by the angular relation between the planets.

Fixed stars

Belle included fixed stars only in some of the horoscopes of his collection and selected different stars for different horoscopes. Typically, the fixed stars are taken into consideration in a judgement when they are conjunct to a planet or an angle of the horoscope (the first, fourth, seventh or tenth houses), but Belle does not always follow this general rule, in some cases including several stars that are not conjunct to any planet or angle. In NAL 398 there is only one fixed star in the whole collection: that of Spica which is in the horoscope of the coronation of Charles VII (f. 90vb2). In MS 1711 there are six horoscopes with fixed stars noted, all in their correct placement for the fifteenth century (apart from small discrepancies). This selective use of the fixed stars is revealing of Belle's special interest in certain figures. The horoscope of Philip the Good of Burgundy is the one that includes most stars, a total of twenty-three, suggesting that much attention was given to it. It is unlikely that Belle ever met the duke, so it was

⁶⁴² The spheres or orbs of the planets are: Sun 15°, Moon 12°, Saturn and Jupiter 9°, Mars 8°, Venus and Mercury 7°. See for instance Alcabitius *Introduction*, pp. 61-83.

presumably copied from another source, now lost. The manuscripts Lat. 7443 and Lat. 7439, which Belle had probably consulted in other instances, could not be the sources, since neither of them includes fixed stars in their horoscopes. It is, however, possible that he copied some horoscopes from one of these manuscripts, and added the stars at a later time, learning their position from a table or an astrolabe. The other horoscopes with fixed stars are those for Louis XI with five stars, Jean II de Bourbon, with only one, Charles VIII, with five, Anne de Beaujeu, three, and Pierre II de Bourbon, six. The stars are summarized in the table below.

Table 30 – The fixed stars in MS 1711

Name	Star name (current designation)		
Philip of Burgundy	Spica	Alferaz	Betelgeuse
	Alphecca	Baten Kaitos	Canopus
	Antares	Nebulosa Persei	Castor
	Cavilla (Zeta bootis)	Algol	Pollux
	Vega	Aldebaran	Nebulosa (M 44?)
	Altair	Hyrcus	Regulus
	Fomalhaut	Nebulosa (M 42?)	Denebola
	Scheat (?)	Rigel	
Louis XI	Antares	Altair	Spica
	Vega	Stella Lucida (?)	
Jean II de Bourbon	Aldebaran		
Charles VIII	Aldebaran	Orion (?)	Regulus
	Rigel	Procyon	
Anne de Beaujeu	Algol	Aldebaran	Altair
Pierre II de Bourbon	Antares	Altair	Regulus
	Vega	Aldebaran	Spica

The Lots

The presence of lots also differs significantly from one manuscript to the other. They appear in sixteen horoscopes in NAL 398 and in eleven horoscopes in MS 1711. Belle calculated the Lot of Fortune in almost every horoscope, which is no surprise, since this is one of the five *hylegical* points, being therefore indispensable for many calculations. As to the other lots, Belle again decided to include them only in certain horoscopes and selected different lots for different horoscopes. The reasons for these choices were most likely determined by the native's circumstances. For instance, the Lot of the Kingdom (*Pars regni*) was only calculated in the horoscopes of those whose status would allow them to ascend to a position of power, such as kings and dukes. The horoscope of Philip the Good is again the one that receives more attention than most. It is the one that has more lots in both manuscripts: ten in NAL 398 and seven in MS 1711. This chart and that for Louis XI are the only ones that include the Lot of Death, possibly because when Belle made his calculations, they had died several years earlier. The other horoscope that rivals these in the number of lots is that for Jean of Bourbon, in MS 1711, which

again suggests that the duke might have been Belle's patron at some point. In the charts of the dukes of Bourbon, Anne, and Pierre, the only lot calculated other than the commonly-used Lot of Fortune is the Lot of Children (*Pars Filiorum*), possibly because of the couple's problem of barrenness. In Pierre's horoscope, the Lot of Fortune is even calculated twice: by the 'Arabic' computation, which inverts the lot's formula in nocturnal horoscopes, and by the formula given by Ptolemy, which does not do this.⁶⁴³ This was possibly an attempt to ascertain which formula better described the conditions of the native with regard to fertility. In this horoscope, the Lot of Fortune was also calculated twice, again by the 'Arabic' and Ptolemaic formulas. In most instances he applies the traditional inverted formula for nocturnal horoscopes, thus showing preference for the traditional computation, both for the Lot of Fortune and other lots. He also tries different formulas in other horoscopes, such as the nativity of Henry VI, where he calculates the Lot of the Kingdom twice, using different formulas, and in the nativity of Jo. d.c.l., where the Lot of Marriage is calculated both according to Hermes and Vettius Valens. The Lot of Marriage offers valuable insights into the native's social status. It appears in four other horoscopes: two of unidentified women (NAL 398, f. 91vb1 and f. 93vb1), and two men, one designated as Cd.CHAS (NAL 398, f. 91va1), and Charles de Berry (NAL 398, f. 90ra2). In the latter, the inclusion of the lot could be related either to his plan to marry Marry of Burgundy (daughter of Charles, the Bold, his brother's main opponent), or to the fact that he never married. This lot also confirms the gender of the native in the unidentified horoscopes since there are two different calculations, one for men and another for women. The table below summarizes the lots represented in both manuscripts; the Lot of Fortune was omitted, since it is included in almost all horoscopes of the collection.

⁶⁴³ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, III. 10, pp. 275-277.

Table 31 – The Lots in NAL 398 and MS 1711

Name	Lots in NAL 398		Lots in MS 1711	
Philip of Burgundy	Enemies Future Friends Kingdom Kingdom (other)	Substance Children Brothers Servants Death	Enemies Future Friends Kingdom	Substance Servants Death
Louis XI	Life and Children Friends Religion Future	Kingdom King Enemies	Religion Kingdom and King Death (Hermes)	
Jean II de Bourbon	no lots calculated		Travels by land Friends Charity ⁶⁴⁴ Kingdom	Infirmities Faith Servants and messengers Children
Henry VI	Kingdom		Kingdom	Kingdom (other)
Charles de Berry	Kingdom	Marriage	Future or Heaven ⁶⁴⁵	Regni
Charles the Bold	Kingdom		Regni	
Maximilian I	Father	Father (other)	Father	Father (other)
Charles d'Albret	Happiness ⁶⁴⁶		Happiness	
Anne de Beaujeu	no horoscope		Children	
Pierre II de Bourbon	no horoscope		Children	Children (other)
D. d'Albret	no horoscope		Kingdom	
Conrad Belle	no horoscope		Children	
C d. CHAS	Future	Marriage		
'Domicelle'	Marriage			
'Sister of the former'	Brothers			
Unidentified woman	Hyleg Substance	Marriage		

The use of the calculations of the fixed stars and the lots hint at the social importance of each horoscope in the collection. Belle uses them copiously in the horoscopes of kings and noblemen, and scarcely, if at all, in the horoscopes of less prominent people; they are not even included in the charts of his own children.

Questioning essential dignities

Belle's notes and judgements present some variety regarding the use of some essential dignities, namely the terms, and to a lesser extent, the faces, and the triplicities.

The discussion about the terms, which begins long before Belle's time, is addressed by Ptolemy in *Tetrabiblos*:⁶⁴⁷ He states that the Egyptian system 'does not at all preserve the consistency either of the order or of the individual quantity'; he then turns to the Chaldean sequence, which he considers simple and plausible, 'though not so self-sufficient with respect to the government of the triangles and the disposition of quantity'.⁶⁴⁸ Finally, he offers a sequence found 'in an ancient manuscript', containing 'a natural and consistent explanation of their order and number'; this is the sequence

⁶⁴⁴ *Pars Caritatis*.

⁶⁴⁵ *Pars Celati*.

⁶⁴⁶ *Pars Beatitudinis*.

⁶⁴⁷ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I, 20-21, pp. 91-107.

⁶⁴⁸ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I, 21, pp. 91-97, 99, respectively.

that came to be known as ‘Ptolemaic terms’.⁶⁴⁹ As few authors shared Ptolemy’s preference, its reception turned out to be mainly theoretical; in practice, the Egyptian terms were widely adopted until the Renaissance.⁶⁵⁰ The table below shows the differences between the Egyptian and Ptolemaic sequences; they are most evident in the signs of Leo, Capricorn and Aquarius.⁶⁵¹

Figure 59 – Comparative table of Egyptian and Ptolemaic terms
 The Zodiac is divided into two rows (top: Aries to Virgo; bottom: Libra to Pisces);
 each has two sequences of terms, the Egyptian on top and the Ptolemaic on the bottom.

Belle experiments with the terms: he applies both the Ptolemaic and the Egyptian sequences in his judgements; also, he favours the Ptolemaic terms in the planetary table of MS 1711, f. 19r, but he opts for the Egyptian sequence to calculate the *almutem* of each sign degree. Belle seems to consider the Ptolemaic system worthy of consideration, but in practice he still favours the Egyptian method. Historical evidence shows this also to be the preference of most medieval authors, who frequently present this system in their books without mentioning, much less discussing, any alternative.⁶⁵² However, the practical use of the Ptolemaic system gradually increased throughout the sixteenth century, eventually leading to doubts by some early modern authors about the efficacy of the Egyptian terms. In time, this discussion extended to other planetary

⁶⁴⁹ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I, 21, pp. 103-107.

⁶⁵⁰ As demonstrated in S. Heilen, ‘Ptolemy’s Doctrine of the Terms and Its Reception’, *Ptolemy in Perspective*, pp. 45-93. See also Houlding, ‘The Transmission of Ptolemy’s Terms: An Historical Overview, Comparison and Interpretation’, C. Burnett and D. Greenbaum (eds), *Culture and Cosmos (The Winding Courses of the Stars: Essays in Ancient Astrology)*, 11, 1–2, 2007, pp. 261–307, and S. J. Tester, *A History of Western Astrology*, Woodbridge, 1996, pp. 74-79.

⁶⁵¹ The Ptolemaic table of terms has several variants, transmitted throughout late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The version here presented is that of Robbins edition of the *Tetrabiblos*. On the variants, see Heilen ‘Ptolemy’s Doctrine of the Terms and its Reception’. These differences may seem negligible in the table, but in practice the favouring of one over the other sequences alters, sometimes significantly, the results of certain calculations, such as the weighing of essential dignities when assessing the *almutem* of the horoscope, or the sequence of the divisor in directions.

⁶⁵² See for instance Alcabitius, *Introduction*, I, 19, pp. 27-29. For a comprehensive discussion of the matter see Heilen, ‘Ptolemy’s Doctrine of the Terms’.

dignities, mainly triplicities and faces (rulerships and exaltations were questioned only rarely, if at all); some authors, such as Morin de Villefranche (1591-1659), went as far as dispensing with the terms entirely.⁶⁵³ Belle is still far from these extremes but his experimentation with the terms using both the Egyptian and the Ptolemaic versions reveals the incipient signs of this change.

When it comes to the use of faces, he hints at similar doubts, experimenting both with the standard arrangement and the Hindu system of decanates (*adoragen*). As this happens only once, in MS 1711 f. 93r, as an attempt to improve the calculation for his firstborn's life span, it can be considered to be more an exception than an example. Nonetheless, it reveals Belle's awareness of alternative systems and, more importantly, his consideration of them.

When it comes to triplicities, Belle follows the traditional setting originated in the Greek practice and accepted almost unanimously by later authors, Ptolemy being one of the few divergent voices.⁶⁵⁴ For example, in Jo. d.c.l.'s judgement he offers an overview of the native's life using the sequence of triplicities of the ascending sign, as mentioned in Dorotheus, whom he quotes. As the Ascendant is in Aquarius, an airy sign, he attributes Saturn, the diurnal ruler of the airy triplicity, to the first third of life, Mercury, the nocturnal ruler, to the second, and Jupiter, the participant, to the last third. Also, in the horoscope of Jo. Dap the same sequence is presented in the table for the triplicities of each house cusp.⁶⁵⁵ These agree with the tables of dignities in MS 1711, f. 19r.⁶⁵⁶ However, a short note below these tables, written in a different ink, thus possibly later, presents a different sequence for these rulers (discussed below).

Generally speaking, Belle's use of essential dignities seems to be solidly rooted in the medieval Arabic tradition, yet occasionally shifting experimentally towards the rising Ptolemaic doctrine. Most historians recognize this uncertainty regarding the use of some essential dignities in the sixteenth century, but Belle's manuscripts reveal earlier signs of this development in astrological practice, confirming that it had begun sometime in mid-fifteenth century, as suggested by some scholars.⁶⁵⁷ His notes draw attention to the earlier impact of this debate in the learning and practice of fifteenth-century astrologers and suggested the need for further research on this matter.

⁶⁵³ *The Morinus System of Horoscope Interpretation*, R. Baldwin (tr.), Washington, 2003, 'Preface'.

⁶⁵⁴ See Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I.18, pp. 83-87.

⁶⁵⁵ NAL 398, f. 85va.

⁶⁵⁶ See Essential Dignities in Appendix I.

⁶⁵⁷ See for instance O. Faracovi, 'The Return to Ptolemy', *A Companion to Astrology*, pp. 87-98.

Theoretical problems, practical solutions

All these practical examples in Belle's notes reveal an important aspect of astrology: the distinction between the practical application of the doctrine and its theoretical foundation. In other words, the practice required the astrologer to handle a much larger number of astrological configurations than any handbook could discuss or exemplify. Thus, the astrologer had to be able to extrapolate the meanings by applying the general principles of the doctrine to a specific context, in much the same manner as a mathematician would do for different equations, or a physician for a diagnosis. Most of the books containing the fundamentals of astrological doctrine (in particular the mainstream sources pre-dating the sixteenth century) are lacking in practical examples and demonstrations that fill the gaps that naturally occur between theoretical explanation and practical application. It can be assumed that these would have been filled by the oral tradition, tuition from a master, and a range of manuscript notes and examples, such as Belle's, most of which are now lost. Thus testimonies, such as the present notebooks and other examples of judgements, personal notations, and horoscope collections are vital for a truly comprehensive perception of the application of astrology. In other words, they complement the more commonly available tradition of astrological doctrine and provide its more creative and human expression conveyed by its practitioners. These private sources reveal how they dealt with the individual challenges posed by their clients's questions and needs, and with the interpretation of the infinite number of celestial configurations sometimes only very subtly different. It is in these notes that the doubts, hesitations, technical preferences, and interpretative decisions of the astrologer come to light; they uncover the experimental facet of astrology.⁶⁵⁸

In Belle's notes, testing and experimentation are intended to enhance the practical application of the astrological rules in order to improve results. They do not question, and even less dismiss, the doctrine itself. His attitude towards the sources is respectful but, again, experimental. He learns and applies their doctrines, but he does not follow any of them rigidly, rather taking their knowledge as a starting point for his own experimentation. The interpretative nature of astrology, though founded on established rules, always allows some latitude for its practitioner. For example, in regard, for example, to Conrad Heingarter and John of Ashenden, though clearly

⁶⁵⁸ 'Roger Bacon on Astronomy-Astrology: the Sources of the 'Scientia Experimentalis'', J. Hackett (ed.), *Roger Bacon and the Sciences*, pp. 175-199.

respectful of their teachings, Belle does not follow them blindly, sometimes adopting divergent views. In fact, Heingarter himself has a comparable attitude towards his own sources, for instance when discussing whether or not to prefer the lunations in the judgement for Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions.⁶⁵⁹ Thus, by questioning his teachers and sources, Belle is, in a way, following their tradition of questioning earlier authors, reserving to himself the right to arrive at different conclusions. Another example is his calculation for the horoscope of Maximilian I, which differs from the ‘official’ version given by his contemporary Regiomontanus (1436-1476). As discussed before, Regiomontanus decided to rectify Maximilian’s horoscope, even though he had a first-hand account of his precise time of birth; Belle favoured a different birth time, thus disregarding this rectification and implicitly criticizing its author.⁶⁶⁰ However, the shift between tradition and innovation is seldom clear and may not even have been perceived as such by Belle and his contemporaries. For them, it could be only a matter of practical choices with no deeper implications.

A web of allegiances

Another important facet revealed by these notes is the astrologer’s character, his social context, and his allegiances. As previously discussed, much of Belle’s attention is focused on the dukes of Bourbon, Jean II and later Pierre II and Anne, who may have been his patrons. Similar attention is given to the horoscopes of Anne’s father, King Louis XI, of her daughter, Susanne de Bourbon, and of her son-in-law, Charles VIII, who was the reigning sovereign by the time the manuscripts were completed. But Belle’s collection of horoscopes was not limited to the French royal family; it also extended to their political adversaries. It included, for instance, some members of the d’Albret family, as well as Duke Philip of Burgundy, his son, Charles the Bold, and Philip’s stepsons, Charles and Jean de Clamecy; all of them, except the latter, sworn enemies of Louis XI.

This heterogeneous assemblage may result from simple curiosity and opportunity since Belle seems to have contacted astrologers from several political quarters, but it could also have been a deliberate political purpose. In the ever-changing web of political allegiances of this period, the study of the horoscopes of the main political figures could represent a form of tactical device, since knowledge of one’s traits and tendencies, as well as their possible outcome, would have brought some

⁶⁵⁹ For instance in Paris, BnF Lat. 7450, f. 5r.

⁶⁶⁰ See the horoscope of Maximilian in the collection of horoscopes.

advantages. While serving Duke Jean II de Bourbon, a well-known opponent of the king, Belle may have used these horoscopes to provide the duke with astrological information about enemies and allies alike. For the former, he could have calculated the longevity and possible periods of weakness, and for the latter, their interest in forming alliances and their intention to honour them. After the death of Louis XI in 1483, Belle may have studied the horoscopes of the regent, Anne, and the new king, Charles VIII, for the same purpose of providing information to Jean II. It is significant that he calculates the longevity for Louis XI and Anne but not for the duke himself. And while it can be argued that the king's longevity may have been calculated *post factum*, the same cannot be said in Anne's case, since she lived until 1522. Although there is not direct proof of Belle using the horoscopes for these purposes, astrological services of this kind were common within courts and noble houses as part of the period's intelligence services.⁶⁶¹ The information provided by a nativity could be used against the person, not only by their enemies but also by some ally trying to gain the upper hand; thus, an astrologer who served powerful men, could be in possession of very sensitive information. Heingarter, for example, worked for both Louis XI and Jean II de Bourbon, in a period when the duke was married to the king's sister, Jeanne de France, and the two were thus; he provided medical reports for both, thus having knowledge of their temperaments, their weaknesses, and of the periods of increased tendency to illness.⁶⁶² This information could be used by one against the other, when their alliance became unstable.

The possession of certain horoscopes could pose serious problems for the astrologer in the event of a political reversal. Belle may have found himself in a delicate situation in 1488 upon the death of Jean II and the rise to power of the new duke, Pierre II, who was married to Anne, the king's daughter. In other words, the rulership of Jean II, the ally-turned-enemy to the crown, was replaced by the governance of Pierre II, the king's son-in-law, at the time regent of France. In this new political context Belle's circumstances changed drastically: the enemies of the former duke were now allies, and the possession of their horoscopes would have become somewhat problematic.

Encoded names

This complex web of political powers, and the problems it implies, may be one of the reasons why Belle decided to conceal certain names in some parts of the manuscripts.

⁶⁶¹ Many examples of the use of horoscopes as a political tool were presented in this work.

⁶⁶² For Heingarter's professional assignments see Préaud, *Les astrologues*, pp. 71-75.

The code is easy to decipher, hardly fulfilling any real function of concealment, and Belle does not seem to be overly worried about secrecy. His decision to use a code could have been dictated by tradition, or at least by habit. The encryption of certain names in astrological documents was a common practice and can be found in the writings of astrologers such as Joannes Laet (d. 1487), Regiomontanus (1436-1476), and later Kepler (1571-1630). Belle's encryptions follow an irregular pattern, changing significantly from NAL 398 to MS 1711, possibly revealing the aforementioned changes of allegiance. In NAL 398 there are eighteen horoscopes with concealed identities. Six of them have an abbreviated name, an acronym or an adjective: C. dCHAS (in 91va1); Louis (f. 91va2); 'domicella' (91vb1), 'sister' (91vb2); Jo. d.c.l (93ra1), and 'N' (93rb1). The other twelve have their names or titles encoded: 'grand duke of Burgundy', that is, Philip the Good (90ra1); Charles de Berry, duke of Aquitaine (90ra2); Louis XI of France, (90rb1); Charles the Bold (90rb2); Charles VIII (90va1); Henry VI of England (90va2); coronation of Louis XI (90vb1); coronation of Charles VII (90vb2); Charles of Burgundy, count of Nevers (91ra1); John of Burgundy (Jean de Clamecy) count of Nevers (91ra2); Charles d'Albret, lord de Saint-Brazeille (91rb1); and Marie d'Albret (91rb2). In MS 1711 the identity of these twelve horoscopes is fully disclosed. The only encryption in this manuscript occurs in the horoscope of Catherine d'Armagnac (f. 80r), who is not included in NAL 398. In MS 1711 Belle used acronyms or abbreviations in the horoscopes of 'lord of Craon' (f. 83r); 'D. d'Albret' (92v); 'daughter of G. Gon' (95r); and 'lord of Bressolles' (99v). These differences suggest that Belle wrote the manuscripts in distinct circumstances: either in a different place, or in a different time. When NAL 398 was written, he preferred to keep the identity of some horoscopes a secret, while in MS 1711 this caution seems to have disappeared, perhaps because those whose names are encrypted in NAL 398 were deceased by the time the collection was completed. These apparently random choices hint at the insecure position of an astrologer (or of any counsellor) in the face of the ever-changing political powers. In this volatile *milieu*, the astrologer's duty of delivering accurate judgements had to be tempered by several non-astrological considerations, namely the need to keep the patron's trust, and to avoid antagonizing other powerful people, including the patron's opponents.

Teachers, colleagues, and sources

Belle is likely to have obtained his horoscopes from many different sources, some of which are hinted at in references and comments. The interrogations and the horoscope

of Hubert were obviously copied from earlier sources, while others were collected directly from other practitioners. This explains why some horoscopes have several versions; usually having slight variations in the native's birth time. Such is the case of Charles VIII, for whom Belle presents four horoscopes with different Ascendants (three in Gemini and one in the beginning of Cancer), and mentions two sources, '*C4r1rdus*' (*sic* for Conrad), probably Heingarter, and also '*P. Cho9*', possibly Pierre Choisnet, physician and astrologer to Louis XI. A similar case is the horoscope of the dauphin, Charles Orland, for whom Belle gives two different birth times: one stating that the birth occurred at the fourth hour of the night, the other at the fifth hour of the night. He then adds a third version, obtained from a certain 'master Jean de Barra, treasurer of the people of Anjou' (*magistro Jo. de Barra tesaurario Andeganenis*): 'in the morning, around the 5th hour, was born Charles, a little before (*in mane circa quintam horam nascitur Karolus parum ante*). Belle seems to find this intermediate birth time more reliable than the others, perhaps because it was given by a member of the court, but still he does not calculate the horoscope.

This variety of sources reveals a complex web of professional connections accessible to Belle: first of all, other students, with whom he exchanges notes; additionally reputed astrologers such as Heingarter, who may have been his teacher; finally, several individuals not directly related to astrology, possibly courtiers, such as Jean de Barra, whose direct connections to the court allowed them to provide first-hand information about some noble nativities. Also, in this instance, Belle is cautious not to reveal too much about his contacts, possibly to avoid being associated with one specific teacher or group. He again resorts to encryption to conceal his sources: in NAL 389, f. 93r he encodes the name of Heingarter and abbreviates Choisnet's name, as mentioned before, while in MS 1711, f.72r, in the almanac, he again uses the code to conceal his brief comments on Heingarter and Jean II de Bourbon.

With all of these convolutions, Belle's collection of horoscopes reveals an astrologer's wide network of social connections, particularly when it comes to obtaining the birth data of kings. It also hints at the extensive use of astrology among noblemen and rich merchants, and the discreet yet powerful role of the court astrologer.

Manuscript network

As seen before, there are several correspondences between Belle's manuscripts and other fourteenth- and fifteenth-century astrological codices. Some of the horoscopes in his collection can also be found in several other manuscripts, particularly those in

Bibliothèque Nationale de France.⁶⁶³ Such is the case of Lat. 7443, a collection of astrological texts and horoscopes owned by Simon de Phares, which Belle seems to have consulted.⁶⁶⁴ There are also many parallels between Lat. 7314, 7432, 7446, 7447, 7450 and 11232, all written by (or on the order of) Conrad Heingarter, as seen before. Equally relevant, although less evident, are the correspondences to several manuscripts in British collections, such as Cambridge, Emmanuel College 70; London, British Library Harley 637, Royal 12 F. XVII; Sloane 1713; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 345, Ashmole 393, Ashmole 192, I, Ashmole 1471; and Digby 176 and Digby 57. These parallels are not limited to the horoscopes, but also extend to other content, such as extracts from texts and tables. Belle never copies the contents integrally, rather he adapts them, either copying only parts or interpolating with his own comments. All of these connections emphasize the wide circulation of astrological data, either in the form of text or horoscope, occurring among practitioners and students in Europe. Belle is, quite obviously, an active participant in this network, benefiting from it both in his learning process and in his practice. He acted also as a contributor, if not in his lifetime, at least later, as attested to by the circulation of his own notes that ended up in the collections of two different countries, France and Portugal.

⁶⁶³ All manuscripts mentioned in the table are thoroughly described in Juste, *CCAL II*, pp. 57 (Lat. 3520); 76-77 (Lat. 7272); 101-102 (Lat. 7321); 111 (Lat. 7331); 119 (Lat. 7342); 136-139 (Lat. 7395); 145-146 (Lat. 7416); 151-152 (Lat. 7427); 152-153 (Lat. 7432); 158-159 (Lat. 7439); 162-167 (Lat. 7443); 170-171 (Lat. 7446); 171 (Lat. 7447); 172 (Lat. 7450); 178 (Lat. 7482); 197-198 (Lat. 11232).

⁶⁶⁴ For Lat. 7443 see Boudet, 'Une consultation', p. 262, n. 26 and Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, New York, 1923-1958, III-IV, pp. 99-140. For a comparison between Lat. 7443 and NAL 398, see Boudet, *Lire dans le ciel*, pp. 140-141 and 'Simon de Phares et les rapports', pp. 617-648, and D. Nebbiai, 'Les livres de Jean Durand (t. 1416), physicien et astrologue', *Médiévales*, t. 68, 2015, p. 93-118.

V – THE ALMANAC (1468-1480)

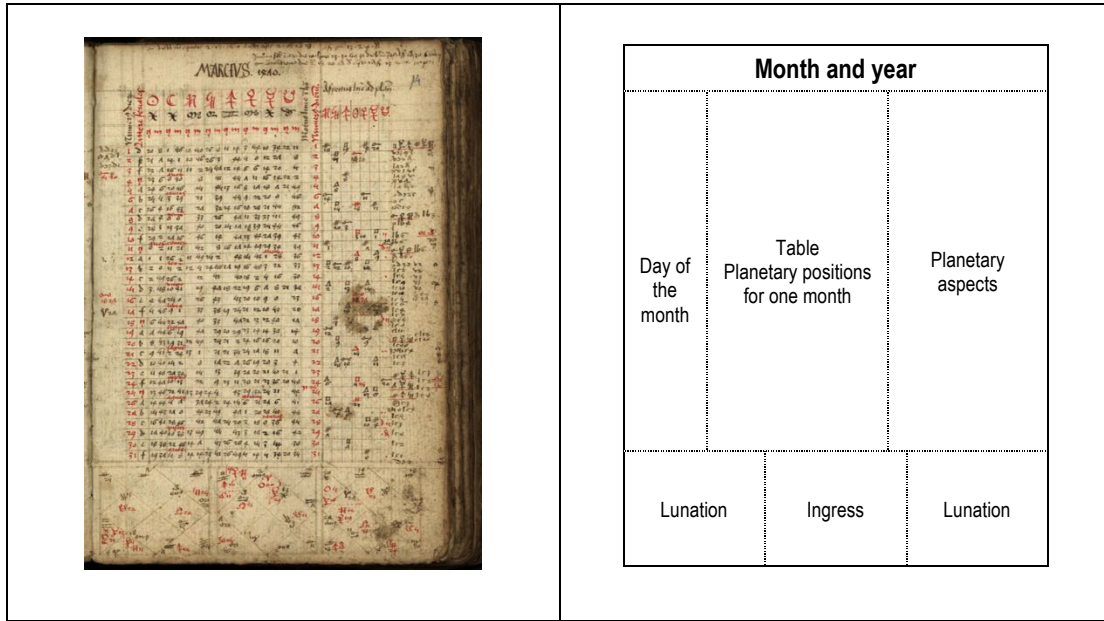
The first part of MS 1711 (ff. 1r-77v) is an almanac, a set of 152 tables of astronomical data, one for each month, encompassing a period of thirteen years, from January 1468 to December 1480. Almanacs were essential tools for astrologers and circulated widely in manuscript form during the early fifteenth century, and their popularity increased even more with the advent of printing. The first printed almanac was published by Gutenberg in 1457 in Mainz shortly before the earliest tables in Belle's manuscripts, and Regiomontanus edited his well-known almanac in Nuremberg in 1472, at the peak of Belle's activity.

The contents of the almanacs changed over time: the simpler versions combined with ecclesiastical calendars, gradually gave way to the more complex editions, providing astrological and meteorological predictions. Late medieval almanacs in France fell into two main categories: the *petit almanach*, containing only the phases of the Moon and its position in the Zodiac for a given year, and the *grant almanach*, which incorporated the positions of the planets as well. Most reputed astrologers produced both *petit* and *grant almanachs* to serve different users; such is the case of Johann Vesale, working for Philip of Burgundy, and Jean Coleman, for Louis XI.⁶⁶⁵

Generally speaking, Belle's almanac fits into the category of *grant almanach*, since it includes the positions of the Sun and the Moon as well as all the visible planets and the Lunar Nodes by degree and minute, for not only one year but for thirteen years (1468-1480); however, it lacks any obvious medical data, which was a common feature of the *grant almanach*. These tables were probably intended for private use, not to be offered to a patron or circulated, as is attested to by the many personal comments in their pages. Most of these comments refer to the weather and astrological configurations, but there are also some references to political and personal events. The table below displays a typical folio; occasional variations are discussed at the end of this section.

⁶⁶⁵ For Vesalius see Vanden Broecke, *The Limits of Influence*, p. 31; for Coleman see Boudet, 'Les astrologues et le pouvoir', p. 21. See also, Jacquard, D. (ed.), 'Everyday practice and three fifteenth-century physicians', *Osiris*, 6, 1990, pp. 140-160, at p. 149, and Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press*, pp. 23-104

Table 32 – Typical page of the almanac – f. 14r



As previously mentioned, the tables encompass the thirteen years between January 1468 and December 1480. However, there is a total of 152 monthly tables, not 156 as would be expected, because the tables for January, February, March, and April 1473 were omitted.

The centre of the page is occupied by the zodiacal position of the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the North Node for every day of each month. On the right there is a column showing the aspects of the Moon to the planets and, in the margin, there are notations representing the inter-planetary aspects.

The lower section of most pages includes the horoscopes of the two lunations, New Moon and Full Moon. In the months of March, June, September, and December there is a third horoscope, corresponding to the Sun's ingress at the beginning of a season (respectively: the ingress into Aries for the Spring Equinox, into Cancer for the Summer Solstice, into Libra, the Autumn Equinox, and into Capricorn, the Winter Solstice). This shows that Belle diligently studied the main astrological events of each month suggesting a regular practice of astrology.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁶ There are clear parallels between the tables in MS 1711 and those in other French manuscripts, such as Paris BnF Lat. 7427. For instance, MS 1711 f. 14 and Lat. 7427 ff. 136r display similar horoscopes for the Sun's ingress into Aries for the year 1470.

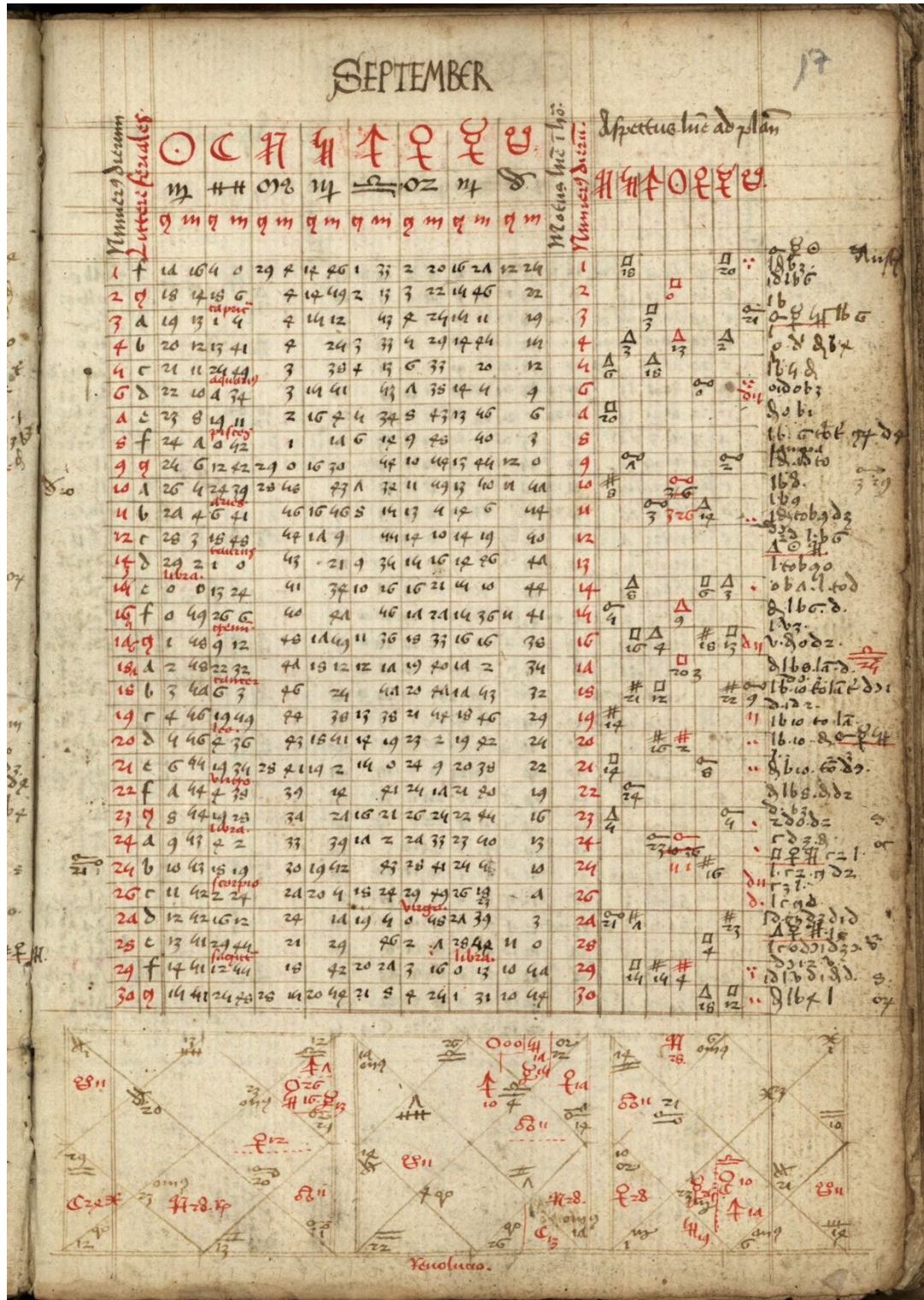


Figure 60 – MS 1711, folio 17r, September 1470
 Specimen of almanac page with ingress (Libra ingress, bottom centre) and lunations (Full Moon, left, and New Moon, right).

The tables's contents

These tables summarize the main information for each year of the almanac, highlighting the most important events of the year. Additional comments are shown in Figure 60 (see below) and discussed at the end of this section.

Year 1468 (ff. 1r-6v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 1r: January		f. 4r: July	
f. 1v: February	Leap year	f. 4v: August	Moon: ' <i>eclipsis maxima</i> '
f. 2r: March		f. 5r: September	Square Jupiter-Saturn
f. 2v: April	Pascha – Easter	f. 5v: October	reference to a comet
f. 3r: May		f. 6r: November	
f. 3v: June	Ingress: Sun in Cancer	f. 6v: December	
Comments			
f. 2v	Reference to a decumbiture on 14 April		
f. 4r	Total eclipse of the Moon ⁶⁶⁷		
f. 5v	Here a comet appeared between dawn and eight o'clock. ⁶⁶⁸		

Year 1469 (ff. 7r-12v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 7r: January		f. 10r: July	Solar eclipse; 2 charts
f. 7v: February		f. 10v: August	2 charts
f. 8r: March	Charts: ingress and lunations	f. 11r: September	3 charts
f. 8v: April	1: Pascha – Easter; 2 charts	f. 11v: October	2 charts
f. 9r: May	2 charts	f. 12r: November	2 charts
f. 9v: June	3 charts	f. 12v: December	2 charts

Year 1470 (ff. 13r-18v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 13r: January	3 charts	f. 16r: July	2 charts
f. 13v: February	2 charts (the square)	f. 16v: August	2 charts
f. 14r: March	3 charts, Aries Ingress	f. 17r: September	3 charts
f. 14v: April	Pascha – Easter; 3 charts	f. 17v: October	2 charts (square)
f. 15r: May	2 charts	f. 18r: November	2 charts
f. 15v: June	2 charts	f. 18v: December	Solar eclipse; 3 charts

Year 1471 (ff. 20r-25v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 20r: January	2 charts, no planets	f. 23r: July	3 charts, no planets
f. 20v: February	2 charts, no planets	f. 23v: August	2 charts, no planets
f. 21r: March	3 charts, no planets; Aries i.	f. 24r: September	3 charts; Libra ingress
f. 21v: April	Easter; 2 charts, no planets	f. 24v: October	2 charts, no planets
f. 22r: May	2 charts, no planets	f. 25r: November	2 charts, no planets
f. 22v: June	3 charts, no planets	f. 25v: December	3 charts, no planets

⁶⁶⁷ *Eclipsis maxima*.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibi cometa apparuit obscura inter [illegible] et 8 horas. This is C/1468 S1, referenced in Kronk, *Cometography: Volume I, Ancient-1799: A Catalog of Comets*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 282-284.

Year 1472 (ff. 26r- 31v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 26r: January	Comet	f. 29r: July	2 charts
f. 26v: February	2 charts; 29 days – leap year	f. 29v: August	2 charts
f. 27r: March	3 charts; Aries ingress	f. 30r: September	3 charts; Libra ingress
f. 27v: April	No Easter; 2 charts	f. 30v: October	3 charts
f. 28r: May	2 charts	f. 31r: November	2 charts; Lunar eclipse
f. 28v: June	2 charts	f. 31v: December	2 charts; Capricorn ingress
Comments			
f. 26r	At the beginning of January up to 8 February a comet appeared... ⁶⁶⁹		

Year 1473 (ff. 32r-35v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
January	Folia missing	f. 33r: July	
February		f. 33v: August	Mars, Node: also irregular
Mars		f. 34r: September	Jupiter, Venus: also irregular
April		f. 34v: October	The Moon: also irregular
f. 32r: May	Mercury: irregular	f. 35r: November	
f. 32v: June		f. 35v: December	The Sun: also irregular

Year 1474 (ff. 36r-41v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 36r: January	2 charts	f. 39r: July	2 charts
f. 36v: February	2 charts	f. 39v: August	2 charts
f. 37r: March	3 charts; Aries ingress; title	f. 40r: September	3 charts; title
f. 37v: April	2 charts, no ref. to Easter	f. 40v: October	2 charts
f. 38r: May	3 charts	f. 41r: November	2 charts
f. 38v: June	2 charts; title	f. 41v: December	2 charts

Year 1475 (ff. 42r-47v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 42r: January	2 charts	f. 45r: July	3 charts
f. 42v: February	2 charts	f. 45v: August	3 charts
f. 43r: March	Lunar eclipse; 3 charts, title	f. 46r: September	Lunar eclipse; 3
f. 43v: April	2 charts, no Easter	f. 46v: October	2 charts
f. 44r: May	2 charts	f. 47r: November	2 charts
f. 44v: June	3 charts	f. 47v: December	2 charts
Comments			
f. 44v	Around the second [hour] after noon, 21 June, the Burgundians fell in Munensi near Mont Zullon ⁶⁷⁰		

⁶⁶⁹ A principio Ianuarii usque ad 8 Februarium apparuit cometa...

⁶⁷⁰ Circa 2^a post meridiem 21 Junii Bur[gundii] oc[ciderunt] in Munnensi proper Mont Zullon. For the location mentioned in the almanac, see map in Appendix V.

Year 1476 (ff. 48r-53v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 48r: January	2 charts	f. 51r: July	2 charts
f. 48v: February	2 charts; 29 days – leap year	f. 51v: August	2 charts
f. 49r: March	Mistake: 1467	f. 52r: September	Lunar eclipse; 3
f. 49v: April	2 charts	f. 52v: October	2 chart
f. 50r: May	2 charts	f. 53r: November	3 charts
f. 50v: June	3 charts	f. 53v: December	3 charts
Comments			
f. 49r	On this day around nine the Burgundians fell near Grandson. ⁶⁷¹		
f. 50v	Thus, on the 22 nd of June, outside the city of Morat, the Burgundians were defeated by the Teutons. ⁶⁷²		

Year 1477 (ff. 54r-59v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 54r: January	3 charts; ingress in Aquarius; death	f. 57r: July	3 charts with title
f. 54v: February	3 charts; ingress in Pisces	f. 57v: August	3 charts with title
f. 55r: March	3 charts; ingress in Aries ‘rev. anno’	f. 58r: September	3 charts with title
f. 55v: April	Pasha – Easter	f. 58v: October	3 charts with title
f. 56r: May	3 charts	f. 59r: November	3 charts with title
f. 56v: June	3 charts with title: Earthquake	f. 59v: December	3 charts with title
Comments			
f. 54 r	Death of the duke near Nancy ⁶⁷³		
f. 56v	At 29 June there was an astounding and violent earthquake, between six and seven in the morning. ⁶⁷⁴		
f. 57v	Coded reference to the execution of Jacques d’Armagnac, duke of Nemours. ⁶⁷⁵		

Year 1478 (ff. 60-65v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 60r: January	2 charts, proverb	f. 63r: July	2 charts, proverb; 2 ecl.
f. 60v: February	2 charts, proverb; ‘1488’	f. 63v: August	2 charts, proverb
f. 61r: March	Easter; 3 charts, proverb	f. 64r: September	3 charts, proverb
f. 61v: April	2 charts, proverb	f. 64v: October	2 charts, proverb
f. 62r: May	3 charts, proverb	f. 65r: November	2 charts, proverb
f. 62v: June	3 charts, proverb	f. 65v: December	3 charts, proverb

⁶⁷¹ Hac die circa 9 Bur[gundii] oc[ciderunt] prope Gransson.

⁶⁷² [*Crossed through*] Hac die 22^a Junii ante opidum Morat Bur[gundii] a Teutoniis sunt debellati circa 11 ante meridiem eiusdem diei.

⁶⁷³ M4rs D5 circa N1nc2 (Mors Du[cis] circa Nance).

⁶⁷⁴ 29 Junii fuit terremotus mirabilis et violentus inter 6 et 7 de mane.

⁶⁷⁵ 5d... 4. v2c. D. This event is also mentioned in BnF Lat. 7427, f. 204r, also in a comment in the margin, corresponding to the same day, 4 August 1477: ‘At the Halles of Paris, this day, the Duke of Nemours was decapitated’ (*Aux haies de Paris, se jour, fuit decapité le duc de Nemours*).

Year 1479 (ff. 66r-71v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 66r: January	2 charts	f. 69r: July	2 charts
f. 66v: February	2 charts, few planetary aspects	f. 69v: August	3 charts
f. 67r: March	3 charts	f. 70r: September	3 chart, title; comment
f. 67v: April	Pascha – Easter; 2 charts	f. 70v: October	2 charts
f. 68r: May	2 charts	f. 71r: November	2 charts
f. 68v: June	3 charts	f. 71v: December	Solar, Lunar eclipse; 3 charts
Comments			
f. 67v	For the wife, question [about] the kingdom (?), 21° Gemini. ⁶⁷⁶		

Year 1480 (ff. 72r-77v)

Month	Events	Month	Events
f. 72r: January	2 charts	f. 75r: July	2 charts
f. 72v: February	2 charts; 29 days (leap year)	f. 75v: August	2 charts
f. 73r: March	3 charts, Aries ingress; title	f. 76r: September	3 charts; Libra ingress
f. 73v: April	2 charts	f. 76v: October	2 charts
f. 74r: May	2 charts	f. 77r: November	2 charts
f. 74v: June	2 charts	f. 77v: December	3 charts; Capricorn ingress
Comments			
72v	At hour 9, day 15, near Châlus. ⁶⁷⁷ Between three and four hours I joined (?) the lord, Duke John de Molins. ⁶⁷⁸ Also between four and five [hours] I saw Master Conrad. ⁶⁷⁹		
74v	Here the water flooded excessively, so that in many places there had not been seen the like for twenty or thirty years. ⁶⁸⁰		
75r	From 29 June until 6 August ... the water flooded. ⁶⁸¹		
77v	Near sunset of the 23 rd December appeared a horrible comet. ⁶⁸²		

⁶⁷⁶ Pro uxore q[uestio] Regnum Asc. 21 Gemini.

⁶⁷⁷ Ex hora 9 die 15 circa Castro Lucio.

⁶⁷⁸ Inter 3 et 4 applicavi (?) ad dominum ducem Jo[hannem] Molinis.

⁶⁷⁹ Item inter 4 et 5 vidi magistrum Conrardum.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibi excreverent aque extra modum ita quod in pluribus locis vise non fuerunt similes a 20 aut 30 annis citra.

⁶⁸¹ A 29 Junii usque ad ... 6 Augusti ... diem et excreverunt aque.

⁶⁸² Circa occasum 23 Decembri apparuit cometa horribilis.

<p>f. 2v: April 1468, decumbitures</p>	<p>f. 5v: October 1468, comet</p>	<p>f. 44v: 21 June 1475, Siege of Neuss</p>
<p>f. 26r: January 1472, comet</p>		
<p>f. 49r: 2 March 1476, Battle of Granson</p>	<p>f. 50v: 22 June 1476, Battle of Morat</p>	<p>f. 72v: February 1480, personal references</p>
<p>f. 54r: 5 Jan 1477, Death of Charles the Bold</p>	<p>f. 56v: 29 June 1477, earthquake</p>	
<p>f. 57v: 4 August 1477, Death of Jacques d'Armagnac</p>	<p>f. 67v: 8 April 1479, interrogation</p>	
<p>f. 74v: June 1480, floods</p>		
<p>f. 75r: July 1480, floods</p>	<p>f. 77v: 23 December 1480, comet</p>	

Figure 61 – Comments in Belle’s almanac

Variations in the tables

All the tables contain the same type of information, but small variations can be detected, both in content and in presentation. In most months, the signs are represented by their astrological symbols, but in some tables these are occasionally replaced by their names. The Easter Sunday appears only in the tables for the years 1468, 69, 70, 71, 77, 78 and 79. The calculation of the moveable feasts, called *computus*, was an important part of the astrologer's work, so it should be expected to appear in every table.⁶⁸³

The almanac includes horoscopes for the New and Full Moon for each month, and the ingresses of the Sun in the beginning of each season. The only exception is the year 1477 (ff.54r-59v) which not only has the ingresses for each of the four seasons, but also includes the ingresses in the signs of Leo, Virgo, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Aquarius and Pisces. None of these horoscopes include the corresponding judgement.

The number of lunations included on each folio also varies. The first fourteen tables, from January 1468 to February 1469, do not include them; they are also absent in the tables for January and February 1472. The year 1473 has no tables for the months of January, February, March, and April, as mentioned previously. Between May and December 1473, the lunation charts are again omitted, and the planetary positions also become progressively sparse. The first to be omitted are those for Mercury, which disappears from May 1473 onwards, followed by the Lunar Node, from August onwards, Mars disappears in September, Jupiter and Venus in October, the Moon in November and finally the Sun in December; Saturn is the only planet present in all tables, probably because its slow movement simplified its calculation. The final trimester of 1473 consists of three almost-blank tables. This suggests that an event occurred in Belle's life – perhaps a journey, an increase in professional duties, or an illness – that disrupted his routine for the better part of the year. It is interesting to notice that this is the year mentioned in his autographs, in pp. 30ra and 84va. By January 1474, the calculations for all planets are resumed, and in 1477 the ingresses of the Sun are calculated, not only for the cardinal signs (the seasons), but also for all signs; this may indicate an increased interest in astrometeorology.

⁶⁸³ See North, *Chaucer's Universe*, New York, 1988, p. 88, n. 2, 3 and 4 and Nothaft 'Me Pudet Audire Iudeum Talia Scire: A Late Medieval Latin School Text on the Jewish Calendar', *Time, Astronomy, and Calendars in the Jewish Tradition*, Leiden-Boston, S. Stern and C. Burnett (eds), 2014, pp. 329-330; Nothaft, *Medieval Latin Christian Texts on the Jewish Calendar (Time, Astronomy and Calendars)*, Leiden, New York and Cologne, 2014, pp. 34-43.

In the pages for the year 1478 Belle added an agricultural proverb to each month. The twelve proverbs together form a popular rhyme that was later included in many sixteenth-century printed editions of the *Compost and Calendrier des Bergiers*.⁶⁸⁴ The first known edition was printed only in 1491, still well within Belle's lifetime.⁶⁸⁵

Table 33 – Proverbs for the year 1478		
Folio	Month	Proverb
f. 60r	January 1478:	January loves drinks <i>Pocula Januarius amat</i>
f. 60v	February 1478:	February cries: 'I freeze!' <i>Februarius algeo clamat</i>
f. 61r	March 1 m, 1478:	March digs the fields <i>Marcus arva fodit</i>
f. 61v	April 1478:	And April produces flowering <i>Et Aprilis florida prodit</i>
f. 62r	May 1478:	Dew and blossom of the glades / Kindles love in May <i>Ros et flos nemorum / Mayo sunt fomes amori</i>
f. 62v	June 1478:	June produces hay <i>Junius dat fena</i>
f. 63r	July 1478:	In July the oats are cut <i>Julio resecatur avena</i>
f. 63v	August 1478:	August, the ears of corn <i>Augustus spicas</i>
f. 64r	September 1478: ⁶⁸⁶	September harvests grapes <i>September colligit uvas</i>
f. 64v	October 1478:	October sows <i>Seminat October</i>
f. 65r	November 1478:	November prunes the twigs <i>Spoliat virgulta November</i>
f. 65v	December 1478	[December] seeks to have a meal by killing pigs <i>Querit habere cibum porcos mattando</i>

⁶⁸⁴ This poem can be found in many publications. See for instance *Catalogue Descriptif et raisonné des manuscrits de la bibliothèque des Valenciennes*, Jacques Mangeart, Paris, 1860, p. 81.

⁶⁸⁵ For the role of the *Calendrier* in the popularization of annual astrological predictions, see Rivest, *Printing and Astrology in Early Modern France*, pp. 28-37.

⁶⁸⁶ The names of the last four months are not in Latin form.

Tables of planetary dignities and degrees

In MS 1711 f. 19r, between the planetary positions for December 1470 and January 1471, Belle enclosed three tables with planetary dignities, zodiacal degrees and exaltations. These tables are reproduced in Appendix I. The attributions in these tables are consistent with those adopted by most medieval authors.⁶⁸⁷ However, there is an inconsistency in the terms: the table follows the Ptolemaic sequence but there is a set of calculations for the *almutem* written in the margin, possibly later, which follows the Egyptian order. The terms in the table display the same corrections as those in Lat. 7432, a manuscript signed by Conrad Heingarter and possibly consulted by Belle.⁶⁸⁸

The second table displays the standard zodiacal degrees for each sign.⁶⁸⁹ It mentions the shadowy (*fumosi*), light (*lucidi*), dark (*tenebrosi*), void (*vacui*), black (*nigri*), and indifferent (*indifferentes*) degrees. On the right side, a smaller table displays the pitted (*putei*), fortunate (*augmentantes fortunam*) and weak (*azemene*) degrees.⁶⁹⁰ Below on the same page there is a third table, showing the degrees of exaltation and augmentation of fortune for each sign. In some of the signs, there is a second notation, in smaller characters and with different ink, possibly copied from a different table.

At the bottom of the page Belle wrote a comment explaining the practical application of the triplicity sequence:

Of the lords of the triplicities. [The rule goes that] by day we must take the one [planet] which by day is in charge of the sign of that triplicity as first lord, and the planet participant in the triplicity as second lord and the one [planet] in charge of the night as the third lord. By night [we must take] first the one who is in charge of the night, secondly the participant and thirdly the one in charge of the day.⁶⁹¹

By taking the participant planet as the ruler of the second triplicity, both in diurnal and nocturnal sequences, Belle makes an unconventional choice, since most authors agree that the participant always rules the last triplicity, whether in diurnal or nocturnal horoscopes.⁶⁹² The sequence with the participant at the end is the one that he uses in his judgement for Jo. d.c.l. There is no evidence that he used the alternative sequence,

⁶⁸⁷ See for instance Alcabitius, *Introduction*, p. 23-47.

⁶⁸⁸ Paris, BnF Lat. 7432, ff. 259v-263v: 'Stars verified at the time of the Duke Jean de Bourbon and at Belleperche' (*Stelle verificate ad etatem Iohannis Borboni ducis et ad orizontem Belleperce*) This may have been the model for Belle's table.

⁶⁸⁹ See Alcabitius, *Introduction*, p. 43.

⁶⁹⁰ Azemene: degrees indicating chronic illnesses.

⁶⁹¹ De dominis triplicitatum. Quod de die debemus accipere illum qui preest de die signo illius triplicitatis pro primo domino et planetam participantem illi triplicitati pro secundo domino: et planetam qui preest nocti pro tertio domino. Et de nocte primum qui preest nocti 2^m qui participat 3^m qui preest diei, f. 19v.

⁶⁹² See for instance Alcabitius *Introduction*, p. 206.

but its presence in the notebook shows that, at some point, he came in contact with some non-canonical source and took it into consideration. This suggests the existence of a debate about the sequencing of the triplicity rulers long before their revision in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By then, the differences between Ptolemy's rulers of the triplicities and the traditional Greek-Arabic version led the astrologers to question and then to change the rules in favour of the Ptolemaic version.⁶⁹³

Texts attributed to Seneca

After the table of planetary dignities, Belle copied several moral aphorisms collected from three sources – *De Moribus*, *De Virtutibus*, and *De Clementia* – which he attributes to Seneca.⁶⁹⁴ It is not clear why they were included in this workbook, but their presence suggests some attention to ethical issues; by this time, Seneca's texts were very popular. As they are not related to astrology, they are not included in this analysis.

⁶⁹³ In *Tetrabiblos*, I. 18, 11 83-87, Ptolemy does not state clearly his position in the matter, nor does he present any practical examples of their application. This generated divergent interpretations which gradually became more distant from the original sources. See for instance the different tables of triplicities proposed by Johannes Schoener, *Opusculum Astrologicum*, Nuremberg, 1539, II, 4; Morin de Villefranche, *Astrologia Gallica*, Paris, 1661, XV, 6-7, pp. 340-343, and William Lilly, *Christian Astrology*, London, 1647, pp. 101-105.

⁶⁹⁴ *De Moribus*, a collection of works by Seneca, Publilius Syrus, Ausonius, and Lactantius sometimes mistakenly attributed to Martin of Braga; *De quattuor virtutibus*, also called *Formula honestae vitae*, a moral compendium by Martin of Braga, adapted from Seneca's work; *De Clementia*, written by Seneca. These works were widely circulated in the medieval period, and passages of *De Moribus* can be found in other French manuscripts, such as Lat. 7329, ff. 89vb-90vb.

Highlights

Many pages include notations in the margins, written in a code yet to be deciphered, different from that used by Belle to encrypt names.⁶⁹⁵ Most of the other notes and comments are on the left side of the page, near the column of the days, and related either by proximity or by a glyph to a particular day. Most of these comments indicate the lunations of each month specifying the exact moment in which they occurred and the sign that was ascending at that moment; others are about the weather; yet others are about political events. On the whole, these comments constitute a diary of sorts revealing Belle's main concerns during this period.

Astrometeorology

Most of the comments in the tables are about the weather. Belle documents the occurrence of heavy rain, snow, strong winds, or storms. Each entry is relative to a given day of the month, hinting at a connection between the event and the planetary configurations of that day. These accounts were common among the astrologers of this period; Regiomontanus, for instance, mentions 'strong winds' and 'frost' in his report for 5 December 1457.⁶⁹⁶

Eclipses

Belle mentions several solar and lunar eclipses in almost every year, but he does not add the corresponding judgement. He omits any eclipses that may have occurred between January and April 1473 because his almanac has no tables for that four-month period. As to the lunar eclipse of 10 March 1476, which was particularly noticeable because it coincided with the lunation preceding the ingress in Aries; he treats it as an ordinary lunation, never acknowledging it as an eclipse.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹⁵ Similar notations can be found in Lat. 7281; f. 96v has annotations by a certain Jo. B. who may be the 'professor Jean de Barra' mentioned by Belle in MS 1711, 97v.

⁶⁹⁶ Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, p. 35. For astrometeorology, see Ducos, *Le temps qui fait au Moyen-Âge. Phénomènes atmosphériques dans la littérature, la pensée scientifique et religieuse*, J. Ducos, C. Thomasset (eds), Paris, 1999; 'Astrométéorologie et vulgarisation: le livre VI de Li compilacions de le science des estoilles de Léopold d'Autriche', *Par les mots et par les textes. Mélanges de langue, de littérature et d'histoire des sciences offerts à Claude Thomasset*, Paris, 2005, pp. 239-256, and Martin, *Renaissance Meteorology. Pomponazzi to Descartes*, Baltimore, 2011. There are also several collections of astrometeorology, such as Lat. 7432, ff. 149r-150v, written by Heingarter, which could have been consulted by Belle.

⁶⁹⁷ The lunar eclipse of 1476 is mentioned in Latin 7450, f. 5v, written by Heingarter to Jean II de Bourbon. For eclipses, see Steele, *Observations and Prediction of Eclipse Times by Early Astronomers*, Dordrecht-Boston-London, 2000, pp. 125-158.

Comets and other events

Belle mentions the appearance of comets in the years 1468, 1472, and 1480, but again does not judge their effects.⁶⁹⁸ The comet of 1468 (C/1468 S1) was visible between 18 September and 8 December in the sign of Gemini.⁶⁹⁹ Belle signals its appearance on 8 October, ‘between sunset and 8 am’, in the left margin of the folio and adds a drawing of the comet.⁷⁰⁰

The Great Comet of 1472 (C/1471 Y1),⁷⁰¹ which appeared in January in the sign of Virgo, received much more attention from Belle, who describes its route, as well as its variations in size and movement:

At the beginning of January up to 8 February a comet of astonishing size and longitude appeared for several nights, when it first rises it begins in the north, then slowly dragged its tail and body to the east, and afterwards to the south, and finally to the west. In the beginning it was at its maximum [size], in the middle, of middle [size], and at the end, smaller. Its colour was dark, tending to pale and, I believe, of the nature of Saturn and Jupiter. Its length, by the estimation of the common people, was around 40 feet; the thickness of its body [was] twelve sixths of a cauldron.⁷⁰²

The use of a cauldron for measuring the apparent diameters of the Sun and planets (or, in this case, a comet) is discussed by Roger Bacon in *Opus Maius*.⁷⁰³ Belle’s description of the comet is consistent, although more concise, with the treatise *De Cometis*, attributed to Regiomontanus:

On the ides of January 147[2], a comet was seen under Libra with the stars of Virgo. Its head moved slowly while in the vicinity of Spica [sic for Arcturus],⁷⁰⁴ then speeded up its pace through the legs of Bootes, toward his left hand; setting from there, in one natural day, it described a 40° portion of a great circle. When it was in the middle of Cancer, it reached its greatest distance from the ecliptic, 77°; then, between the two poles of the Zodiac and the equator, it passed between the feet of Cepheus. Whence, through the breasts of Cassiopea, over Andromeda’s belly, after going through the length of the northern Pisces, where again its motion strongly slackened, it approached

⁶⁹⁸ For the comets of 1468 and 1472, see Thorndike, *HMES*, IV, pp. 413-437.

⁶⁹⁹ This comet was discussed by several astrologers. For instance, in Paris, BnF, Lat. 7336, ff. 373r-379v, there is a prognosis for this comet, addressed to Pope Paul II. See also Thorndike, *HMES*, IV, pp. 413-422 and E. Douet, ‘Historiographie, astrologie, littérature au XV^e siècle: le passage des comètes chez les Grands Rhetoriciens bourguignons’, *Ordre et désordre du Monde. Enquête sur les météores de la Renaissance à l’âge moderne*, T. Belleguic, A. Vasak (eds), Paris, 2013, pp. 69-95.

⁷⁰⁰ See G. Kronk, *Cometography*: I, 1999, pp. 282-284.

⁷⁰¹ Kronk, *Cometography*, pp. 285-287.

⁷⁰² A principio Ianuarii usque ad 8 Februarium apparuit cometa per singulas noctes mire magnitudinis et longitudinis que a principio ortus sui apparere incipit circa septemprionem deinde paulatim traxit caudam et corpus ad orientem, postea ad meridiem et ultimo ad occidentem. Et in principio fuit maxima, in medio media, et in fine minor. Color eius obscurus subpalidus et credo de natura Saturni et Jovis. Longitudo eius quantum ad extimationem vulgarem fuit circa pedes quadraginta grossitas sui corporis ut caldarium 12 sextarum, f. 26r.

⁷⁰³ Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus*, IV, p. 231.

⁷⁰⁴ Spica and Arcturus had the same zodiacal longitude, which may have originated this mistake. See Jervis, *Cometary Theory*, p. 115-116.

the Zodiac, crossing it near the middle of Aries; then, with the stars of Cetus, the setting Sun hid it from us in the last days of February.⁷⁰⁵

The significance of this comet was also widely commented upon by other astrologers.⁷⁰⁶ Jean Vesale, physician and astrologer to Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy, saw it as a sign of defeat for Louis XI, the duke's most powerful enemy. The demise of the king was deduced from the conjunction between the comet and two important features in his nativity: the Lot of the Kingdom (*Pars Regni*) and Jupiter.⁷⁰⁷ Some considered that its first appearance was in Libra, others in Scorpio, thus offering different judgements.⁷⁰⁸

In 23 December 1480 Belle signals another comet, visible 'at dawn', but this is not referred to in any other Western source; the only comet observed in 1480 is mentioned in a Japanese source, and it is probably not the same, since it appeared in March, nine months before Belle's observation.⁷⁰⁹ Belle may have observed some other natural phenomena, such as a shooting star, and mistakenly took it for a comet.

Belle also mentions a double rainbow, observed on 16 August 1469, and offers a detailed description of the phenomenon:

Between the sixth and seventh [hours] there appeared a double rainbow, between the south and the east, of astounding colours: green, yellow, white, red.⁷¹⁰

On 29 June 1477, he reports the occurrence of an earthquake. This well-documented event devastated the region of Auvergne and is estimated to have reached 7.5 degrees on the MSK scale.⁷¹¹

29 June there was an astounding and violent earthquake, between six and seven [hours] in the morning, and the Ascendant was 14 degrees Leo 18 [minutes].⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁵ Translation in Jervis, *Cometary Theory*, pp. 118-119. For the authorship of this treatise, see Zinner, *Regiomontanus: His Life and Work*, E. Brown (tr.), Amsterdam, 1990, p. 99 (and others) and Jervis, *Cometary Theory in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, Dordrecht, 1985, pp. 114-117.

⁷⁰⁶ See Thorndike, *HMES*, IV, pp. 422-433. The comet was also discussed by non-astrologers, such as the chronicler Georges Chastellain and the poet Jean Mollinet.

⁷⁰⁷ See Veenstra, *Magic and Divination*, pp. 133-134. See also Abel and Martens, 'Le role de Jean de Vesale, médecin de la ville de Bruxelles, dans la propagande de Charles de Temeraire', *Cahiers Bruxellois*, 1956, pp. 41-86, at pp. 60, 67

⁷⁰⁸ See Boudet, 'Les Astrologues et le pouvoir', pp. 25-33; *La recueil*, II, pp. 287-289; Thorndike, 'Some Tracts on Comets 1456-1500', *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences*, XI (1958), pp. 233-234, Douet, 'Historiographie, astrologie, littérature au XV^e siècle', p. 12.

⁷⁰⁹ Kronk, *Cometography*, p. 289.

⁷¹⁰ inter 6 et 7 apparuit yris duplex inter meridiem et orientem mirabiliter coloris viridi croceo jacinto subrubeo.

⁷¹¹ MS 1711, f. 56v. For this earthquake see for instance A. Janku, G. Schenk, F. Mauelshagen (eds), *Historical Disasters in Context: Science, Religion and Politics*, London, 2012, p. 96, and Leguay, *Les catastrophes au Moyen Age*, Paris, 2005, pp. 50 and 125-127.

⁷¹² 29 Junii fuit terremotus mirabilis et violentus inter 6 et 7 de mane et fuit 14 gradus in Ascendente ♌18, MS 1711, f.56v.

The Ascendant at 14°18' Leo corresponds to 6:47 am for Lyon, Auvergne, in LAT (Local Apparent Time). Belle may have calculated the horoscope for this event somewhere else, and he may have done the same for other events. Belle also mentions the occurrence of floods in the months of June and July 1480.⁷¹³

The Burgundian Wars

Belle reveals much interest in some battles of the Burgundian Wars, particularly those where Charles the Bold was defeated.⁷¹⁴ In the table for June 1475, he writes:

Around the second [hour] after noon of 21 June, the Burgundians fell [were defeated] in Munnensi, near Mont Zullon.⁷¹⁵

This seems to be a reference to the siege of Neuss (*Novaesium*), in which the army of Charles the Bold besieged the city, which was under the dominion of Emperor Fredrick III. The siege began on 29 July 1474 and was only lifted on 27 June 1475, when Pope Sixtus IV threatened both contenders with excommunication; the threat gave both sides a pretext for retreat without engaging in battle and without losing face. The day mentioned by Belle, 21 June, preceded the historically accepted date by almost one week, yet it is not wholly inaccurate, because Charles the Bold began demobilizing his troops a few days before the official end of the siege.⁷¹⁶ The comment is crossed out with red ink as if Belle intended to erase it. The imprecision of the date would have been easily corrected by changing '21 June' to '27 June', so this attempt to eliminate the entire comment must have had other motives.

In the tables for 1476 Belle mentions two confrontations between Charles the Bold and the Swiss Confederate Army. In the comment corresponding to the 2 March, he states that 'the Burgundians fell near Gransson [Grandson]'.⁷¹⁷ On the entry for 22 June, he mentions that 'outside the city of Morat, the Burgundians were defeated by the Teutons'.⁷¹⁸ The death of Charles the Bold, on 5 January 1477, is also signalled in the

⁷¹³ MS 1711, f74v, 75r.

⁷¹⁴ Other astrologers also followed these wars closely. For instance Lat. 7427 f. 131r has two entries referring to the Battle of Montlhéry, in July 1465. Near day 8: 'arrival of the Burgundians with an army' (*adventus Burgundiorum cum armis*), and near day 21: 'war between the King and the Charolais [Charles the Bold]' (*de bello inter dominum Regem et Charoloys*).

⁷¹⁵ Circa 2^a post meridiem 21 Junie Bur[gundii] oc[ciderunt] in Munnensi proper Mont Zullon, MS 1711, f. 44v. The topographic designations are not clear, but the entry corresponds to the siege of Neuss.

⁷¹⁶ See also Johannes Lichtenberger's prognostications about this siege in W. Deimann, 'Astrology in an Age of Transition', *Astrologers and their Clients*, pp. 83-104, p. 90, and Thorndike, *HMES*, IV, pp. 246-247.

⁷¹⁷ Hac [die] domino Bur[gundii] circa 9 oc[ciderunt] proper Gransson, MS 1711, f. 49r.

⁷¹⁸ Hac die 22^a Junii ante opidum Morat Bur[gundi] a Teutonias sunt debellati, circa 11 ante meridiem eiusdem diei, MS 1711, f. 50v.

corresponding table. A brief encoded comment in the margin, near to day 5, states ‘*M4rs D5 cc NInc2*’. As explained before, this is the code he had used several times in both manuscripts: each vowel was replaced by a number, following their order in the alphabet (1 for ‘a’, 2 for ‘e’, and so on). By replacing the number with the corresponding vowels and extending the abbreviations, it reads: *Mors Du[cis] circa Nance*’, that is, ‘Death of the duke [Charles the Bold], near Nancy’. On an entry corresponding to 4 August 1477, Belle writes a note, yet to be deciphered, that may be related to the execution of Jacques d’Armagnac that happened on that day.⁷¹⁹

These events were attentively studied and discussed by several astrologers.⁷²⁰ For instance, Angelo Cato de Supino foretold the defeat of Charles the Bold in the battles of Grandson and Morat (Murten) and is also credited with having predicted the duke’s death in the Battle of Nancy.⁷²¹

Medical practice

In the folio corresponding to April 1468, near day 14, Belle writes an entry for what seems to be a decumbiture, that is, a horoscope calculated for the moment the patient fell ill. The text reads: hour 9th concerning an ill man, Venus Cancer 16°. ⁷²² The time indicated is probably the moment when the illness was declared. This is confirmed by the other two references, Venus and 16° Cancer, which correspond to the planetary hour and to the Ascendant degree at 9 am on that day (they do not indicate the planetary position of Venus, since on that day Venus was at 24°). This report shows that Belle was acquainted with the technique of *decumbitures* and adds support to the idea that he was a physician. He refers to the patient only as ‘a man’, suggesting no personal connection.⁷²³

Personal events

In the folio corresponding to April 1479, near day 8, Belle writes ‘for the wife, question [about] the Kingdom [?], Ascendant 21° Gemini (*Pro uxore q[uestio] Regnum Asc. 21 Gemini*). This ascending degree corresponds to 7:30 am, approximately. This may be a

⁷¹⁹ MS 1711, f. 57v – untranslated code.

⁷²⁰ Veenstra, *Magic and Divination*, p. 133, and R. J. Walsh, *Charles the Bold in Italy*, pp. 320, 338, n 148.

⁷²¹ Philippe de Comynnes, *Les memoires de Philippe de Commines chevalier seigneur d’Argenton sur les principaux faits et gestes de Loys XI et Charles VIII, son fils, Rois de France*, Paris, 1616, p. 746.

⁷²² Hora 9 de homine infirmo ♀♁ 16, MS 1711, f. 2v.

⁷²³ In the same folio, in the entry for day 12, there is another possible decumbiture: an almost illegible reference with the words ‘mulieri’ and ‘infirm...’.

question posed to Belle by Jeanne de Valois (1435-1488), the first wife of Duke Jean II de Bourbon and sister of Louis XI, about the condition of the kingdom of France. One possible motive for this question was the War of the Burgundian Succession: by this time Louis XI was negotiating the incorporation of part of the Duchy of Burgundy (now ruled by Mary of Burgundy and her spouse, Maximilian I) into the kingdom of France.⁷²⁴ Another possibility was the weak health of the king, who had been suffering from a grave illness since the preceding winter.⁷²⁵

There are three personal references in the folio corresponding to February 1480: on 14 February, the mention ‘at hour 9, day 15, round about Châlus’ (*ex hora 9 die 15 circa Castrolucio*); on 22 February, a reference to ‘the lord, Duke Johannes of Moulins’, that is, Jean II de Bourbon, and on 28 February, the remark ‘I saw master Conrad’ (*vidi magistrum Conrardum*), most likely Heingarter.⁷²⁶

An attentive study of Belle’s almanac reveals the importance of these texts in the daily practice of an astrologer. Apart from their obvious utility to calculate horoscopes, they could also serve as a diary, thus offering an inner view of his practice of astrology, his interests and main concerns. They also confirm some of Belle’s social connections, hinted at in the collection of horoscopes.

⁷²⁴ Described by Philippe de Commynes, *Mémoires*, Paris, 2007, VI.V, T. II, pp. 355-358.

⁷²⁵ For a biography of Louis XI see P. Kendall, *Louis XI: The Universal Spider*, London, 2014.

⁷²⁶ MS 1711, f. 72v.

BEYOND ASTROLOGICAL TECHNIQUES

Learning astrology in an age of change

Belle's manuscripts reveal both the characteristics of a student and those of an accomplished astrologer. These traits were not mutually exclusive: it was common for practitioners to continue their studies even after achieving a well-established reputation. Continuous study confirmed the complexity and depth of astrology and, far from diminishing the status of the astrologer, it increased it. Study and practice were crucial for astrology, as most of its developmental aspects related to perfecting the application of techniques and achieving the greatest precision possible in interpretation. Learning was a process, and thus never truly ended. In Belle's manuscripts this concept is implied in several ways: his experimentation with different techniques, the charts for events and people from earlier periods, the judgements copied or adapted from other authors. The texts of astrological doctrine taken from reputed sources also add to the learning process. These texts were then weighed against the astrologer's own practical experience, as attested by the sentences such as '*et ego confirmo istud*', that Belle interpolates in the text. In NAL 398 this alternation is very clear: the first part of the manuscript consists of a selection of texts of astrological doctrine by several authors; the second comprises horoscopes and their respective judgements. MS 1711 is divided into two sections: the almanac with planetary tables for the years 1468 to 1480 (ff. 1r-77v); and the collection of horoscopes (ff. 78r-103v). In the tables, the many comments in the margins, connecting specific dates to meteorological and personal events, attest to its frequent use. Also, many of the horoscopes in the collection show evidence of practical use, with detailed calculations of longevity, the *almutem*, the *animodar*, and the aspects. The collection of texts in NAL 398 and the collection of horoscopes in MS 1711 complement each other. Both workbooks are practical in nature and reveal how Belle learned astrology.

The learning curve

The sequence between horoscopes and texts in NAL 398 is in itself an example of progress in learning. Belle begins by copying the two interrogations from John of Saxony's *Commentary* with their respective judgements. In this first copy he is faithful to the original; the only alteration (if it can be called that) is the omission of the last sentence in the second judgement, possibly for lack of space on the folio. These two

examples were perhaps used by him to guide his judgement of other interrogations. This is further emphasized by the fact that many manuscripts containing this text omit the examples. Further on, Belle moves on to another application of astrology, the revolutions of the year, and copies some horoscopes for the years 1293, 1294 and 1295 from Saint-Cloud's planetary tables. Apart from the lunations preceding the Aries ingress, which are the only ones included in Saint-Cloud's tables, Belle also calculates horoscopes for the lunations preceding the other ingresses for these years using the data provided by the tables. He completes this section with the judgements of all the ingresses; if these are his own work, as they seem to be, they represent an important advancement in his astrological abilities. The following section shows even more progress: he adapts John of Ashenden's text on the 1365 Jupiter-Saturn conjunction, in Scorpio, in order to produce his own judgement for the 1425 conjunction, also in Scorpio. This is one of the most advanced judgements of the manuscript, requiring a thorough understanding of astrological doctrine, as gained by an experienced practitioner. It entails the ability to recognize the similarities between the horoscopes of the two events and the skill to incorporate them in the proper context of the second judgement while adding entirely new segments for the parts that differ.

The last part of the manuscript is dedicated to the judgement of nativities, arguably the most complex of all astrological applications. Belle copies two judgements of nativities written by other authors: one for a certain Hubert, born in Florence in the thirteenth century, and another for an individual named Jo. Dap, born in France and his contemporary. As there are no other known copies of these judgements it is not possible to ascertain if Belle copied them integrally, or if he made adaptations of his own. In any case, they provide two valuable examples of different methodologies for chart judgement. Only after this rigorous exercise does Belle venture to write a complete judgement of a nativity of his own authorship: the final folia on NAL 398 are dedicated to the judgement of a certain Jo. d.c.l., born in France in 1437, who might have been a client or a friend. The meticulous analysis reveals both a solid knowledge of astrological rules and the capacity to apply them to the specific context of the chart – the mark of an experienced astrologer. Belle had already revealed this ability in the judgement of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction, although still incipient and supported by Ashenden's text, and displayed it again, this time fully developed and independent, in the judgement of this nativity.

In MS 1711 he uses both the almanac and the collection of horoscopes as case studies. The almanac seems to have had a double function: on one hand, it was used for several calculations, namely the ingresses and the lunations; on the other, it also served as a diary, specifically for the study of astrometeorology but also including worldly events such as battles and the deaths of important people. Apart from the nativities, five other horoscopes are included in the collection: four of coronations and one of a king's entry into a city. These five could be either elections or, more likely, charts of events calculated after the fact; whatever may be the case, they served as examples of astrological practice and could be used for political analysis. Regarding the nativities, Belle applies the two standard methods of rectification of the horoscope, *animodar* and the *trutina* of Hermes, as well as the calculation of the length of life. The latter can be either a forecast or a test of the method. The first occurs in the cases where the native was alive on the last date mentioned in the manuscript, 1496, as are the examples of Anne de Beaujeu and Pierre II de Bourbon; and the second, where the native was already deceased by the time the horoscope was studied, as seems to have been the case with Louis XI. In the same context, he also hints at the use of revolutions in connection to some nativities as a means of forecasting events in the native's life. This seems to be the case with Maximilian I's nativity where he mentions in a side note the revolution of 1486, corresponding to the year of his coronation as King of the Romans.

Interestingly, he does not write a complete judgement for any of these horoscopes, although in several cases he calculates the *animodar* and the length of life. This suggests that complete judgements, which were complex and time consuming, were written only for professional consultations, and again supports the hypothesis that these horoscopes were case studies for practicing his skills. The only exceptions are the calculations of his own children's length of life, where he stretches the rules as much as possible in a desperate attempt to achieve positive results where there were none. These efforts – and most of all their failure – reveal the dilemmas faced by an astrologer dealing with situations involving personal feelings. They are poignant testimonies to the astrologer's humanity, and powerful reminders that astrology deals with the very tangible facts of life: birth and death, success and failure, gain and loss.

Even more significant than knowing what Belle studied, is understanding how he studied. By experimenting with events whose outcome he already knew and with people whose lives he was well aware of, he could test the practical application of astrological doctrine in order to obtain greater accuracy in his deductions. These tests

are systematic and the results are often presented as probabilities not as pre-determined occurrences. Indeed, this appears to be Belle's stand on the matter of determinism and free will, and in this regard he shares the same views as many practitioners of his time. He has a flexible concept of astrological interpretation: predictions are seen as possibilities and the degree of determination varies according to the subject under scrutiny, such as a lunation or a nativity. In the latter, he distinguishes different degrees of freedom, which vary according to the individual's own agency in a given area of life.

Continuity, innovation, or something else?

Nearing the close of this study, the question arises about Belle's position in the continuing developments in the sciences, and specifically in astrology, that occurred during his lifetime. He was obviously aware of the discussion surrounding the Arabic and the Ptolemaic/Greek traditions as is abundantly clear in his manuscripts. But any attempt to judge Belle's work based on contemporary categories, such as traditionalist or innovative, would be difficult, not to say futile. His work contains threads of both innovation and continuity, but so intertwined that they cannot be clearly separated. Granted that he includes in his notes certain methods that would become mainstream in the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, namely his experimental use of horoscopes to test astrological techniques, as well as the inclusion of personal cases in the collection of notable naticities. He was certainly aware of the significance of Ptolemaic techniques, as is clear for instance, in his table of dignities; by his time, increasingly being considered as an example of classical purity, and gradually becoming mainstream. Yet, he does not fully integrate these ideas into his practice but maintains the tried-and-tested methods as his standard reference. In fact, Belle shows few, if any, signs of rejection of the Arabic sources. His interest in new ideas seems largely motivated by the potential improvements they might bring to his practice, but for all that, he remains true to the time-honoured methods and does not reveal any intention of reforming them. All the innovations he experiments with represent only peripheral developments, which do not impinge on the core of the doctrine. This conservative inclination was not in any way unusual for the time, or detrimental to him. In this period, the mark of a good astrologer was not the discovery or invention of new techniques, nor the reformation of the system, but the capacity to master the rules to perfection, thus achieving excellence in each and every judgement. Belle's work should not be judged by any supposed innovative quality, but as an example of the practice of an educated and open-minded astrologer seeking to expand his knowledge. Thus, more

important than forcing contemporary classifications onto Belle's work, is understanding his perspective. Would he see this experimentation with different rules as a change? Or it as a natural development, an extension, of an age-old tradition of knowledge and technique resulting from the interaction of hard study and practice? As any other living knowledge, astrology was constantly evolving, remaining the same in essence, but adapting to the mentalities and demands of each period and culture. Throughout its history, astrology maintained a core sufficiently strong enough to allow some flexibility. Although astrological interpretation was adapted to the social, political, and religious contexts of each period, its rationale and rules remained the same in their essence. This continuity is not a sign of obsolescence or intractability, but a testimony to the long-lasting authority, endurance and resilience of astrology. As its fundamental operations remain the same, most of the apparent contradictions faced by Belle are peripheral, leaving the foundation unaffected.

Belle lived at the dawn of a major shift in the sciences, and particularly in astrology. A significant part of these changes was mentioned by Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) in his *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, published in Bologna in 1496, thus within Belle's lifetime. But this publication was disseminated at a later date and Belle's notes do not seem to acknowledge it. In fact, he does not seem to react to any of the critiques of astrology written by his contemporaries, such as those of Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498), Giovanni Pontano (1429-1503), and Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499). He also does not adopt any of the arguments of coeval defenders of astrology who rejected several aspects of the doctrine, namely prognostications for nativities. His position aligns with the defence of astrology authored by Ptolemy, Roger Bacon, Albumasar, and John of Saxony, where human free will coexists with complex predictive techniques with no conflict whatsoever.

In sum, Belle is aware of, and open to, contemporary thought, and experiments with the methods and rules arising from it. The very process of learning prompts him to make choices, and his doubts are those of a practitioner, not of a theoretician. This questioning is not in itself damaging to the body of astrology. On the contrary, it often made it stronger, by discarding the marginal differences and enhancing the continuity. An educated man, although perhaps not a scholar, Belle is undoubtedly competent in Latin, in mathematics, and in astrological judgement, and furthermore, appears to have had good social connections. But regardless of his obvious abilities, he also reveals doubts, hesitations, subjectivity, and personal preferences. He is not exceptional but is,

in many ways, an average practitioner, which makes the study of his work a vivid testimony to the rich and diverse astrological practice in late fifteenth-century Europe. This study reveals the true face of the astrologer, the human being beyond the stereotype. He has a voice in the multi-faceted and ever-evolving dialogue of astrological knowledge – a voice that becomes stronger as we get to know his work. However, Belle's contributions do not end there. Many of the topics addressed require further study, most importantly in three main areas: the similarity between the education in astrology and that of other disciplines (such as medicine which, like astrology, requires the ability to make a judgement from a set of testimonies); the transmission of knowledge and working materials between astrologers of different generations – what is favoured and what is adapted or discarded; the criticism, or lack thereof, of practitioners in the face of different methods and techniques, the practical implications of their choices, and, more importantly, the reasons behind them.



It has been clear for some decades that astrological documents are valid and valuable sources. However, only when their technical content is addressed can they become integral to the history of astrology. For these topics to be developed in full, a detailed textual exegesis is imperative. It is time for historians to address astrological texts with the same methodological attention that they devote to documents in any other area of knowledge, thereby attaining the full wealth of information they convey. This approach complements the studies that emphasize the philosophical, symbolical, and social aspects of astrology by addressing its very practice and methodology which is their tangible counterpart. Documents such as Belle's notebooks offer a first-hand addition to the study of actual astrological practice beyond anything a study of standard doctrine can offer. They allow glimpses into the practice of astrology, bringing new perspectives into the historiographical debate and filling some of the lacunae in this area of research.



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VOLUME II
APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Astrological Practice

This appendix comprises a brief explanation of the principles of astrology, its practice, and techniques as they are portrayed in Belle's manuscripts, Paris, BnF, NAL 398 and Lisbon, ANTT, MS 1711. Its purpose is to explain the basis of the astrological doctrine expressed in these manuscripts, thus providing context for their discussion in the thesis. The topics are addressed in a simplified manner, supplemented by schemes or tables to summarize some concepts. The contents focus on Belle's technical and methodological options and is not intended as an anthology of astrology, however, it may include other variations, where relevant, for comparison. References, discussions, sources or extra information are mentioned in the footnotes.

To consult this appendix:

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PART I – BASIC PRINCIPLES

I. 1. Introduction

I. 1. 1. Correlation and deduction

Astrology is the study of the correlation between celestial phenomena and terrestrial events. Medieval astrologers calculated the position of the planets in the heavens and, by applying specific principles, related these configurations to certain events on Earth. By combining direct observation and deduction according to the rules of astrology, they produce an astrological judgement.

I. 1. 2. The astrological system

The astrological system relies on four basic concepts, which must be addressed before any further explanation: light, geocentricity, movement and contrasting qualities.¹ It can be described as ‘a geocentric universe filled with contrasts of light and dark’.²

Light and visibility are the very basis of the system and many other factors in astrology depend upon them. The light of the stars and the planets is the vehicle for the transmission of their natures and much of the rationale behind the planetary configurations, or their interchanges, is related to their visibility. Likewise, the Sun, the source of light, is the power behind the astrological system, and the origin of the main astrological referential – the Zodiac – which is derived from its apparent revolution around Earth. The phases of the Moon are also qualified according to its relationship to the Sun: when conjunct the Sun it is a new moon; opposite to the Sun, a full moon.

The astrological cosmos is geocentric: the Earth is at the centre of the astrological universe, and all horoscopes are calculated for a given place on Earth. Thus, the other celestial bodies move around the Earth within concentric spheres (or, more precisely, shells), each at its own regular velocity. The Moon is the fastest body and the one closest to the Earth; it is followed by Mercury, then Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and, finally, Saturn, the slowest and

¹ Many ancient and medieval astrologers used the narrative of Creation to explain the structure of the astrological universe. For a complete explanation see S. Ward, *Das Fundament der Astrologie: Wie die alten Herrscher und die neuen Planeten zu ihrer Bedeutung kamen*, R. Stiehle (tr.) Berlin, 2011, pp. 10-49. See also J. R. Arribas, *El cielo de sefarad, Los judios y los astros (Siglos XII y XIV)*, Córdoba, 2011, pp. 59-60.

² Ward, *Das Fundament der Astrologie*, p. 6.

most distant planet.³ Beyond the sphere of Saturn lies the sphere of the fixed stars, the Zodiac, and lastly, outside the manifested world, the *Empyrium* or the Kingdom of Heaven.⁴ The Earth – called the sublunary world because of its position below the Moon’s sphere – is a place of change and impermanence, and everything born in it is bound to grow, decay, and die. In contrast, all that is above the sphere of the Moon is eternal, immutable, perfect. The shooting stars, comets and similar phenomena are considered manifestations of the sublunary world because of their unpredictable nature.⁵

The celestial bodies move in a circular motion in uninterrupted and predictable movements.⁶ This regularity makes it possible to know their position at any given moment in time – past, present, or future – thus allowing the astrologer to calculate any horoscope and to predict the possibility of future events.

Table 1 - The celestial spheres

Zodiac – the twelve signs – ninth spheres		
Fixed Stars – the firmament – eighth sphere		
Saturn	♄	28/29-year cycle
Jupiter	♃	12-year cycle
Mars	♂	2-year cycle
Sun	☉	1-year cycle
Venus	♀	1-year cycle
Mercury	♁	1-year cycle
Moon	☾	28-day cycle
Sublunary world – the world of the elements		
Earth	Fire	Generation and corruption
	Air	
	Water	
	Earth	

Both the celestial spheres and the sublunary world display an almost perfect symmetry of polarities. The chief of these are the masculine-feminine polarity, which classifies the nature of the sign or planet as being predominately active (masculine) or receptive (feminine), and the diurnal-nocturnal, signifying visibility or invisibility. Furthermore, the planets and stars are also categorized according to their affinity with the elementary qualities of hot and cold, and

³ This is the model adopted by most astrologers, including by Belle. There are alternative models, which interchange the spheres of Venus and Mercury, or place them within the sphere of the Sun or above the Sun according to the Platonic order.

⁴ Some authors insert an extra sphere, the crystalline.

⁵ This conception of the Cosmos is presented in Aristotle, *De Caelo*.

⁶ The idea of circular movement (instead of elliptical) made the astronomers compensate for the obvious discrepancies by creating several devices, such as the epicycles, deferent, and equant, which are included in the Ptolemaic geocentric models, but are still regarded as taking place within the planets’ respective spheres.

those of moist and dry. These qualities give rise to the four elements and humours: the hot and dry beget the element of fire and its corresponding humour, choleric; the hot and moist generate air and the sanguine; the cold and dry, earth and melancholy; and cold and moist, water and phlegm, connecting each planet and sign to a specific element and humour.⁷

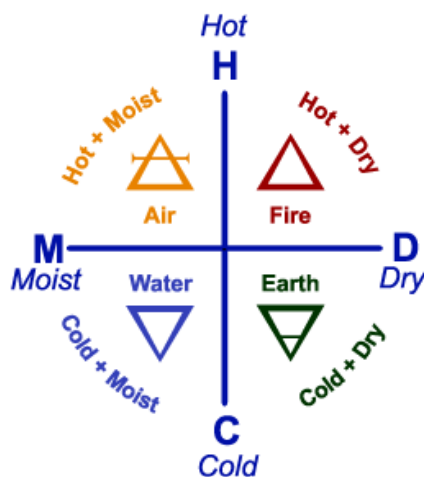


Figure 1 – The four elements and the four qualities

I. 1. 3. The horoscope (also called astrological figure, scheme or chart)

The common medieval and early modern term is figure, but in this thesis the preferred term is horoscope (in some sources this term refers to the Ascendant). The horoscope is a map of the planetary positions at a given moment viewed from a particular place. It is a rectangular or square figure divided into twelve equal parts representing the twelve astrological houses. Each house begins at a certain calculated degree of a zodiacal sign and is called the cusp of the house. Once the positions are calculated, planets are positioned in their respective places and are represented by their glyphs or their names along with the zodiacal degree in which they are positioned. In some cases there is a square space in the centre of the chart containing its title, and the date and time for which the chart was calculated.

As would be expected, between sunrise and sunset, the horoscope is diurnal, seen on the horoscope as the Sun above the horizon; between sunset and sunrise, it is a nocturnal horoscope with the Sun shown below the horizon.

⁷ See the ‘Temperaments’ and ‘Humours’ in this appendix.

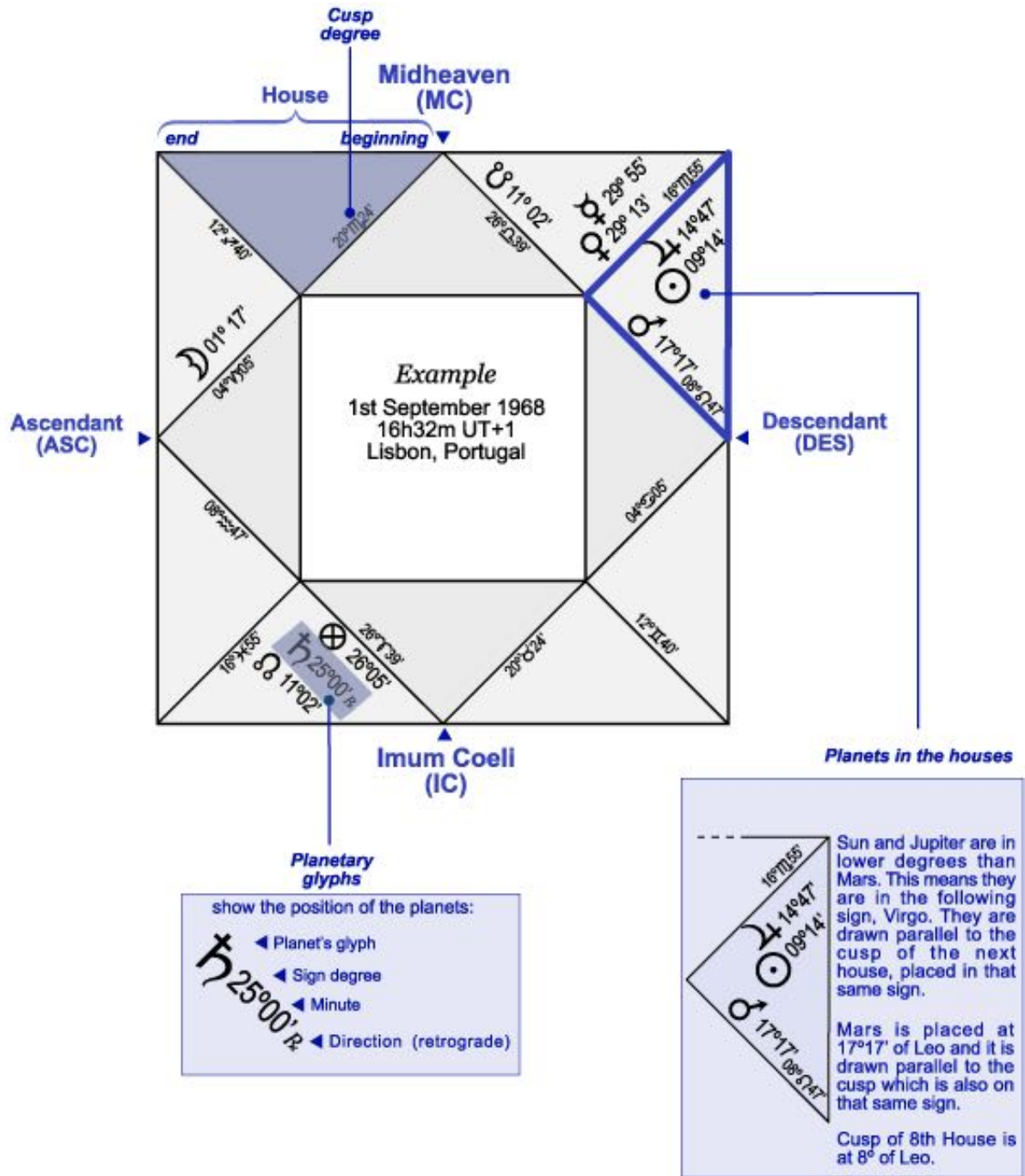


Figure 2 – Diagram of a traditional square chart

(from H. Avelar and L. Ribeiro, *On the Heavenly Spheres*, Tempe, 2010)

I. 1. 4. The astrological symbols

The components of the horoscope are usually represented by symbols. The shape of some symbols varied much throughout the centuries, while others have remained the same; some astrologers replaced the symbols with the planet’s names, as Belle sometimes does.

Table 2 - Astrological symbols used by Belle

Signs		Planets		Aspects	
Aries	♈	Saturn	♄	Conjunction	♋♌
Taurus	♉	Jupiter	♃	Sextile	♈♌
Gemini	♊	Mars	♂	Square	♈♌
Cancer	♋	Sun	♁	Trine	♈♌
Leo	♌	Venus	♀	Opposition	♈♌
Virgo	♍	Mercury	♁		
Libra	♎	Moon	♁	Other	
Scorpio	♏			North Node	♁
Sagittarius	♐			South Node	♁
Capricornus	♑			<i>Pars Fortune</i>	♁
Aquarius	♒			<i>Syzygy</i> (conjunction)	♁
Pisces	♓			<i>Syzygy</i> (opposition)	♁

I. 1. 5. The Ascendant and the Midheaven (MC)

The Ascendant is the most important point of the horoscope. It is the sign, or more precisely, a degree of the sign, that was rising, or ascending, at the moment and location for which the horoscope was calculated; it forms the cusp of the first house. In nativities, it represents the native; when combined with other factors of the horoscopes, it describes the native’s physical, mental, and emotional traits; in interrogations, it signifies the person who is asking the question, the querent. The *medium caeli* or Midheaven is shown by the cusp of the tenth house and it describes the culmination of goals.

I. 2. The applications of astrology

Astrology is organized into four main applications defined by their objects of study. The rules for judging charts for each of these applications are summarized below and addressed in more detail on Part II – Astrological Judgement.

I. 2. 1. Revolutions

These provide information regarding the changes of the seasons during the year: the political, social and religious changes, as well as the weather and its effects on crops and the economy. The terms ‘revolutions of the year’ or ‘revolution of the world’ refer to the Sun’s entry into the zodiacal sign of Aries after having completed its one-year turn, or revolution, around the Zodiac.⁸ In other words, it is the horoscope for the spring equinox.⁹ This horoscope, called the Aries ingress or spring ingress, determines the quality of the entire year (from spring to spring), but some astrologers also calculated the Sun’s entry into the other seasons (Cancer for summer, Libra for autumn and Capricorn for winter), or even into every sign. These horoscopes are combined and analysed together for a more detailed forecast: the revolution of the year, the Aries ingress, determines the overall conditions, while other subsidiary horoscopes offer additional details for their respective periods.

In NAL 398 Belle includes the horoscope for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425 (NAL 398 f. 80r), which includes a study of the preceding lunation, and seven horoscopes for the lunations preceding the solar ingresses for the years 1293 to 1295 inclusive (NAL 398 ff. 73r-76r). There is an exception to this with the Aries ingress for 1294 (ff. 73vb-74rb), which had occurred twelve days after the preceding lunation. In this case, the author had chosen to judge the subsequent lunation, presumably because it occurred only one day following the ingress.

In MS 1711, in a section of the almanac (ff. 1r-77v), he calculates the Aries ingress for the years 1471 (f. 21r), 1472 (f. 27r), 1474 (f. 37r), 1477 (f. 55r), 1479 (f. 67r) and 1480 (f. 73r); the Cancer ingress (summer solstice) for 1470 (f. 15r) and 1477 (f. 56v); the Libra ingress (autumn equinox) for 1471 (f. 24r), 1472 (f. 30r), 1476 (f. 52r has only a reference), 1477 (f. 58r) and 1479 (f. 68v); and the Capricorn ingress (winter solstice) for 1472 (f. 31v), 1476 (f. 53v), 1477 (f. 59v), 1478 (f. 65v), 1479 (f. 71v) and 1480 (f. 77v). For 1477 Belle also calculates the ingresses for Leo and Virgo (MS 1711, f. 57r and 57v, respectively). None of these horoscopes has a judgement. In this manuscript he also calculates the lunations before and after the ingresses for each season, as well as the new moon and full moon for every month (with a few exceptions).

I. 2. 2. Nativities (or genitures)

Here the birth charts of individuals are studied for their characters, vocations, relationships, and development. The judgement of each horoscope includes a general assessment of the native’s temperament, which has physical, mental, and emotional implications, the description

⁸ Not to be confused with the ‘revolution of the year of the native’, also explained in this Appendix.

⁹ The moment when days and nights are of equal length.

of their lifetime conditions, largely interpreted through the houses, and a general overview of the main events of the native's life. The latter are addressed by applying certain calculations to the natal chart to form the basis of predictive techniques (see below).

This is the application that is most extensively represented in Belle's manuscripts; NAL 398 includes twenty-five horoscopes in NAL 398 (plus a lunation prior to birth); MS 1711 includes forty-one, of which ten are noted but not calculated; of the thirty-one horoscopes calculated, eighteen are repeated in, and possibly copied from, NAL 398.

I. 2. 3. Interrogations (or questions)¹⁰

This application offers direct answers to questions by interpreting the planetary configurations for the moment the question was asked of the astrologer. These questions may address important matters, such as the outcome of a war, or more trivial ones, such as the whereabouts of a lost dog.

Belle includes three interrogations in his manuscripts: NAL 398 ff. 54va, 54vb and 101r.

I. 2. 4. Elections

These study future planetary configurations in order to choose the best moment for a given action, such as a coronation, the signing of a treaty, or the beginning of a battle. It was frequently applied to medicine to assist in the selection of the most effective moment to take a medicine, to perform surgery, or to let blood. It was also used in many important events, both personal and political, and in casting talismans.

Belle includes an election horoscope in the last page of NAL 398.













¹⁰ See S. Sela (ed.), *Abraham in Ezra on Elections, Interrogations, and Medical Astrology*, Leiden-Boston, 2011.

I. 3. Fundamental concepts

I. 3. 1. The zodiacal signs

The signs are the twelve equal divisions of the zodiacal circle of thirty degrees each. They may be classified in various ways: according to the season; according to the phase of their season (beginning, middle, or end), that is, according to their mode; according to their primary qualities, that is, element and temperament; according to their gender, masculine or feminine; according to their sect, whether nocturnal or diurnal; and according to the planet by which they are governed, referred to as the ruling planet or dispositor. The multi-layered nature of the sign includes, but is not limited to, behaviour, objects, places and regions, spatial directions, and the parts of the body.

Table 3 - The twelve signs of the Zodiac

Sign	Season	Gender	Element	Sect	Mode	Ruler
Aries 	Spring	Masculine	Fire	Diurnal	Moveable	Mars
Taurus 		Feminine	Earth	Nocturnal	Fixed	Venus
Gemini 		Masculine	Air	Diurnal	Double	Mercury
Cancer 	Summer	Feminine	Water	Nocturnal	Moveable	Moon
Leo 		Masculine	Fire	Diurnal	Fixed	Sun
Virgo 		Feminine	Earth	Nocturnal	Double	Mercury
Libra 	Autumn	Masculine	Air	Diurnal	Moveable	Venus
Scorpio 		Feminine	Water	Nocturnal	Fixed	Mars
Sagittarius 		Masculine	Fire	Diurnal	Double	Jupiter
Capricorn 	Winter	Feminine	Earth	Nocturnal	Moveable	Saturn
Aquarius 		Masculine	Air	Diurnal	Fixed	Saturn
Pisces 		Feminine	Water	Nocturnal	Double	Jupiter

I. 3. 1. 1. Attributes of the signs

There are many attributes of the signs defined by the season of the year to which each sign belongs, as well as its position in the zodiacal sequence. In his judgements, Belle focuses mainly on the sign's element and mode.

The elements of fire, air, earth, and water define the sign's temperament, that is, its general expression. The grouping of three signs related to each element is known as a triplicity.¹¹ The fire signs, Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius, are associated with the choleric temperament, which is dominant, impetuous, and sometimes aggressive. The air signs, Gemini, Libra and Aquarius, carry the sanguine temperament, which is sociable, intellectual, and inconstant. The earth signs, which are Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn, are associated with the melancholic temperament, which is organized, cautious, and sometimes reserved. The water

¹¹ See 'Triplicity' in this Appendix.

signs of Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces have the phlegmatic temperament, sensitive, reserved, and indecisive. The elements also bestow the signs' two other attributes: gender and sect. Regarding gender, the fire and air signs, both hot, are masculine while the earth and water signs are feminine. Sect associates each sign with a diurnal (visible, open) or nocturnal (private, inconspicuous) nature. In the case of the signs, the masculine are also diurnal, and the feminine are nocturnal. Thus, Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius, signs of fire, and Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius, signs of air, are all masculine and diurnal; Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn, signs of earth, and Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces, signs of water, are all feminine and nocturnal.

There are three modes: moveable, fixed, and double, which describe the movement of the sign according to its position in the sequence of the seasons. The moveable (or cardinal) signs mark the beginning of the seasons and they are Aries, the first sign of spring, Cancer for summer, Libra for autumn, and Capricorn for winter. They represent rapid and direct movement, which ends as quickly as it began. The fixed (also called solid) signs signal the middle of the season. They are Taurus, for the middle of spring, Leo for summer, Scorpio for autumn, and Aquarius for winter. They represent long-term and consistent actions. The double (also called common, mutable or bicorporeal) signs mark the end of the season. They are Gemini for the end of spring, Virgo for summer, Sagittarius for autumn, and Pisces for winter.¹² They contain features of both the passing fixed sign and the impending moveable sign. Thus, they oscillate between rapid impulses and the tendency towards inertia, being therefore characterized by variety of action and diversity of responses.

Belle also mentions other qualities. The human or rational signs are those represented by human figures: Gemini (the twins), Virgo (a woman holding an ear of corn), Libra (a woman holding scales), Aquarius (a young man holding a water cup), and the first half of Sagittarius (the human part). The bestial signs are those represented by animals, such as Aries, Taurus, the second half of Sagittarius (the equine part), and Capricorn; the other three animals in the Zodiac of Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces, fall within the sub-category of aquatic or mute animals. Leo is the only feral animal in the Zodiac.¹³ When applied to a nativity, these designations describe behaviour: human signs suggest good-manners and civilized conduct, bestial signs point to a less polite attitude, although more discreet in the case of aquatic signs, and the feral sign suggests violent behaviour if provoked.

¹² They are called double because they represent both the nature of the preceding season and that of the following season; they are also called bicorporeal because their symbol is made of two parts: Gemini the twins, Pisces two fish swimming together, Sagittarius a centaur, half-man, half-horse. Virgo is included in this group because in some ancient Zodiacs the sign was represented by a mermaid (half-woman, half-fish).

¹³ See for example Al-Bīrūnī, *The Book of Instruction on the Elements of the Art of Astrology (Tafhim)*, R. R. Wright, (tr.) London, 1934, 347-356, pp. 212-214.

I. 3. 2. The planets

The planets are crucial to astrological interpretations. The nature of each planet derives from various astronomical characteristics, which were determined by direct observation. These observations include movement, appearance, luminosity and, most importantly, their distance from Earth. Although the substance of a planet is generally considered to be its immutable quintessence, its position in the celestial scheme associated it with certain other qualities.¹⁴ The Sun is hot and dry and it defines the seasons; the Moon, its counterpart, is cold and moist.¹⁵ Saturn, the most distant visible planet has an excessively cold and dry quality; its excessive nature makes it barren and inimical to life and therefore it is considered to be malefic. Mars has an excessively hot and dry quality due to its proximity to the sphere of the Sun; it is also extreme in nature and barren and therefore also malefic. Jupiter, positioned in between these two extremes (the coldness of Saturn and the heat of Mars), is hot and moist; it has a temperate and fertile nature, thus it is benefic. Venus has the same temperate and moderating nature as Jupiter, thus it is also benefic.¹⁶ Mercury is predominantly dry because it is never far from the Sun, but its qualities tend to change according to its circumstances.

As with the signs, also the planets are associated to a sect according to the affinities of their nature. The Moon and Venus are of the nocturnal sect because their nature is mainly moist, thus they produce better effects in a nocturnal position, which shares these qualities. The Sun and Jupiter are diurnal, as being mainly hot, and produce more beneficial effects in a diurnal placement.¹⁷ The malefics, however, are assigned to a sect opposite to their natures to moderate their excesses. Thus, Saturn, an excessively cold planet, is attributed to the diurnal

¹⁴ Although each planet is related to one element through the qualities, the planets are not considered to be made of elements; the common Aristotelian view was that the heavens and the celestial bodies were composed of a 'fifth element'.

¹⁵ The nature of the luminaries is constant, but their expression varies according to the time. The Sun varies according to the seasons: hot and moist in spring, hot and dry in summer, cold and dry in autumn, and cold and moist in winter; the Moon's nature varies according to its phases: hot and moist in the first quarter, hot and dry in the second quarter, cold and dry in the third quarter, and cold and moist in the fourth quarter.

¹⁶ The qualities of Venus are the subject of some discussion; some authors consider it hot because of its closeness to the Sun's sphere, while others, particularly those of Arabic origin, attribute it a cold quality because of its feminine, nocturnal nature. For instance, Al-Bīrūnī states that 'Venus is moderately cold and moist, especially the latter', Albiruni, *Instruction*, 396, p. 240. Abū Ma'sar agrees: 'Venus is a benefic. Its nature is cold and moist, phlegmatic and moderate', Abū Ma'sar, *The Abreviation of the Introduction to Astrology*, C. Burnett, K. Yamamoto and M. Yano (eds), Leiden, 1994, p. 65. Ptolemy disagrees: 'Venus has the same powers and temperate nature as Jupiter but acts in the opposite way; for she warms moderately because of the nearness to the Sun, but chiefly humidifies, like the Moon', Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, F. E. Robbins (tr.), London, 1998), p. 37. In any case, the moist quality is the more important, and the temperature, whether hot or cold, is always moderate. Belle quotes several authorities stating the two opinions, in NAL 398 f.56r.

¹⁷ A planet is in a diurnal placement when it is in the same hemisphere as the Sun in a given horoscope, and in a nocturnal placement when in the hemisphere opposite to the Sun. In other words: a planet is diurnal when above the horizon in a diurnal horoscope and below the horizon in a nocturnal one; a planet is nocturnal when below the horizon in a diurnal chart or above the horizon in a nocturnal one.

sect to moderate its coldness; likewise, Mars, excessively hot, is attributed to the nocturnal sect to cool its heat. Mercury can belong to both sects, due to its common nature.

Table 4 - The qualities of the planets

Name	Qualities	Comment	Sect
Saturn ♄	cold and dry, excessive	the farthest planet from the Sun	Diurnal
Jupiter ♃	hot and moist, moderate	between the two extremes	Diurnal
Mars ♂	hot and dry, excessive	very close to the Sun	Nocturnal
Sun ☉	hot and dry	varies with the seasons	Diurnal
Venus ♀	warm and moist, moderate	between the Sun and the Earth	Nocturnal
Mercury ☿	cold and dry, variable	common to both and fast	Neutral
Moon ☾	cold and moist	varies with the phases	Nocturnal

All of these qualities are the basis of the calculation of temperament and complexion, both of which will be addressed later, which are crucial to the judgement of nativities and medical practice.

I. 3. 2. 1. Aspects

The astrological aspects are angular relationships between the planets and between the planets and other points of the horoscope. There are five aspects: conjunction, sextile, square, trine, and opposition.

Table 5 - The aspects

Aspect	Degrees	Meaning
Conjunction ☿	0°	Combination; the result depends on the nature of the planets involved
Sextile ✎	60°	Facilitating aspect, cooperation between the planets
Square ☐	90°	Obstructive aspect, strife, friction between the planets
Trine △	120°	Facilitating aspect, mutual support, collaboration between the planets
Opposition ♂	180°	Obstructive aspect, conflict, confrontation, impasse, separation

No aspect can be formed between planets in adjacent signs (for instance, between Aries and Taurus, or Scorpio and Sagittarius) or in signs adjacent to their opposition (for instance between Gemini and Capricorn, or Libra and Pisces), because they cannot ‘see’ each other. Signs that do not aspect each other are called inconjunct.¹⁸

¹⁸ In the calculation of directions some later authors, such as William Lilly, take these aspects into account. They are called semi-sextile (between adjacent signs) and quincunx (between planets five signs apart).

I. 3. 2. 1. 1. Orb (sphere of influence): The aspectual relationship does not have to be exact to the degree for it to be considered; there is an allowance before and after exactitude, defined by the planets involved. This margin, referred to as the orb of the planets, is associated with the power (represented by the light) of each planet; it surrounds the planet, extending a certain number of degrees around it. There are minor variants to the extent of each orb, but most authors agreed with the values presented in the following table:

Table 6 - The orbs of the planets

Planet		Radius of the orb
Saturn	♄	9° (diameter 18°)
Jupiter	♃	9° (diameter 18°)
Mars	♂	8° (diameter 16°)
Sun	☉	15° (diameter 30°)
Venus	♀	7° (diameter 14°)
Mercury	☿	7° (diameter 14°)
Moon	☾	12° (diameter 24°)

Some astrologers did not take the orbs as a reference but considered the aspects from one sign to another. For instance, if one planet is at 1° Cancer and another at 29° Capricorn, signs opposite to one another, they are still considered to be in opposition even though their orbs do not overlap. This allowed the formation of more aspects because their angles are wider. In practice, the two referentials can be combined in a judgement: the aspects within orbs are taken as more precise and therefore more pronounced, those by sign as less so.

Belle uses both aspects by orb and aspects by sign, which widely surpass the orbs of the planets; he also combines both referentials for more precision. For instance, in NAL 398 f. 75va he mentions that Jupiter does not aspect the Ascendant *'either by degrees nor by house'*, meaning that the planet is neither within the orb of the Ascendant nor is it placed in a 'house' (the term in this context means sign, domicile) that could aspect it.

I. 3. 3. The astrological houses (or ‘places’)

The horoscope is divided into twelve unequal houses, each related to one or more subjects so that the houses between them encompass all circumstances of life. The following table assembles the main significations found in Belle’s manuscripts.¹⁹

Table 7 - The twelve astrological houses according to Belle

House	Meanings (abridged)
First	Interrogations: the person or party asking the question (the querent) Revolutions: the kingdom or territory Nativities: the native, his or her complexion, beginning of life Elections: the event or person initiating the matter
Second	Wealth, moveable property
Third	Short journeys, brothers and cousins, religious practices
Fourth	Parents (especially the father), ancestry, immoveable property
Fifth	Children, entertainment, gifts, messengers, embassies
Sixth	Illnesses, servants, small animals
Seventh	Marriage, partnerships, adversaries
Eighth	Death, losses, fears, inheritances
Ninth	Religion, education, mores, long journeys
Tenth	Social position, honours, figures of authority (in revolutions: the king or the ruler)
Eleventh	Friends, allies, hope
Twelfth	Enemies, imprisonment, treason, large animals

To each house are also related specific associations such as the colours used mainly in horary astrology and medical astrology.

Table 8 - The twelve astrological houses

House	Colours	Parts of the body
First	White	Head
Second	Green	Neck
Third	Yellow	Arms and shoulders
Fourth	Red	Chest
Fifth	Honey-coloured	Heart and back
Sixth	Black	Lower abdomen
Seventh	White	Lower back
Eighth	Black	Genitals
Ninth	Honey-coloured	Thighs
Tenth	Red	Knees and legs
Eleventh	Yellow	Ankles
Twelfth	Green	Feet

¹⁹ See also Bezza, ‘Representation of the Skies and the Astrological Chart’, in *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance*, B. Dooley (ed.), Leiden, 2014, pp. 59–86; Casulleras, ‘Methods for Determining the Houses of the Horoscopes in Medieval Arabic Astrology’, *Al-Qantara*, XXX 1, 2009, pp. 41–67.

Houses are organized into:

Angular – those that have their cusps in an angle: the first, with the Ascendant for its cusp; the tenth, with the Midheaven as its cusp, the seventh and the Descendant, and the fourth with the Lower Angle.

Succedent – those that follow the angles: the second, which is succedent to the Ascendant, the eleventh to the Midheaven, the eighth to the Descendant, and the fifth to the Lower Angle.

Cadent – those that ‘fall’ from the angles: the twelfth, which falls from the Ascendant, the ninth falling from the Midheaven, the sixth, from the Descendant, and the third, from the Lower Angle.

The second, the sixth, the eighth, and the twelfth houses are considered weak and malefic, because theoretically they do not aspect the Ascendant. The diagram below shows the colours of the houses (used as descriptors), and the houses that do not aspect the Ascendant (in grey).

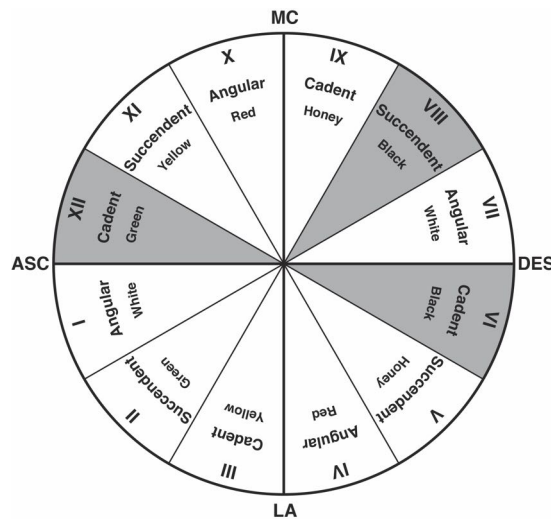


Figure 3 – The twelve houses: angularity and colours

I. 3. 3. 1. The house cusp: The exact point where a house begins is called its cusp. The cusps formed by the beginning of the Ascendant, Descendant, Midheaven and Lower-Angle are called the angles of the horoscope. The cusps of the other houses are called intermediate cusps.

I. 3. 3. 2. The ruler of the house: The planet that rules the sign on the cusp of a house is called the ruler or lord/lady of that house; it signifies the matters associated with that house.²⁰ It may be placed in any house of the chart, thus connecting the topics signified by the house it rules with other areas of life connected with its location.

²⁰ If for example, the 11th house of a horoscope has 20° Gemini on its cusp, Mercury, the planet that rules Gemini, is the ruler of the 11th house.

I. 3. 3. 3. The five-degree rule: When a planet is placed within five degrees or less of the cusp of the next house, it is judged as if it were in the next house; its effects in the preceding house are not considered.²¹ Belle mentions the five-degree rule when explaining the calculation of the *hyleg*: ‘Any planet that is before the Ascendant or before the beginning of other houses by five degrees or less, its strength will be that of the following house.’²²

In the example below Mercury is in the tenth house at seven degrees of Gemini and the cusp of the eleventh house is at twelve degrees of the same sign; Mercury is considered to be acting in the eleventh house; the possible effects in tenth house are totally discarded, although the planet is placed in there.

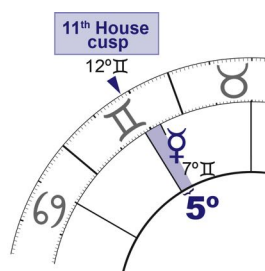


Figure 4 – Example of the five-degree rule.

Mercury is at 7° Gemini, therefore within five degrees of the cusp of the next house (the 11th), which is at 12° Gemini.

This rule applies only to the subsequent house, not to the previous one.²³ Likewise, the rule does not apply to the signs as they have different points of reference and follow distinct rules.

²¹ See Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, III.10, p. 273, where the rule is mentioned in the context of the calculation of the length of life and only in respect to the first house: '[we must consider those places prerogative], namely the twelfth part of the Zodiac surrounding the horoscope, from 5° above the actual horizon up to the 25° that remains, which is rising in succession to the horizon'. Zael also mentions it implicitly: 'The planet does not fall from the angles (is not cadent) except after 5 degrees; for example, if the angle is at 10° Aries, any planet that is in less than five degrees [from the angle] is cadent and it is not considered as being angular' (Et non cadit planeta ab angulis nisi post 5 gradus; verbi gratia, si fuerit angulus 10 gradus Arietis omnis planeta que fuerit in minus 5 gradibus est cadens et non putat[ur esse] in angulo). Zael, *Opera Zahelica (Introductorium, Quinquaginta precepta, de interrogationibus, de electionibus, Liber temporum [or] de significatione temporis ad judicia)*, Venice, 1509, Introductorium, 44. In Alcabitius there is also an indirect reference, applicable to the Ascendant only, in the calculation of the *hyleg*: 'If it [the Moon] is before the Ascendant by five degrees or less', Alcabitius, *Introduction*, p. 111.

²² 'Omnis planeta qui fuerit ante Ascendens vel ante principium alterius domos per 5 gradus et infra erit fortitudo eius valida in domo que succedit', NAL 398, f. 63va.

²³ For instance, if the cusp of the 11th house is at 10° Aquarius and a planet is at 12° Aquarius, this planet is clearly in the 11th; it is not considered to be in the 10th, although it is less than five degrees away from that cusp.

Belle states this rule clearly in NAL 398 f. 63va, in his compilation of texts on nativities, and applies it in the judgements of nativities. In the image, Mars is at $20^{\circ}20'$ Libra, and the Ascendant at 21° of the same sign. Although Mars is in the twelfth house, Belle interprets it as if it were in the first. This occurs to all planets that are less than five degrees before the house cusp.

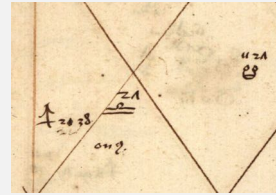


Figure 5 – MS 1711 f. 88v

Mars at $20^{\circ}38'$ Libra is within five degrees of the cusp of the first house, at 21° Libra

Depicting the five-degree rule: Belle sometimes depicts the planet within five degrees of the cusp in the next house. For instance, in the horoscope of Anne de France, the Sun is at $7^{\circ}55'$ Taurus and the Ascendant at 8° of the same sign; Belle draws it in the twelfth house, but then he erases it and re-draws it in the first. He does not re-draw Mercury, which is at $7^{\circ}59'$, although in the judgement he considers it in the first.

In some horoscopes Belle draws the planet in the following house whilst indicating the correct degree for both the house and the cusp.

This can be found in NAL 398 ff. 54va (an interrogation copied from John of Saxony) 73vb, 75ra, 76ra (three revolutions of the years, possibly copied from William of Saint-Cloud), 79va (a nativity for 1260, also copied from a previous source), 93ra2 (emperor Maximilian I of Austria) and 93va2 (Philip *the Handsome* of Austria). In MS 1711, it occurs in ff. 88v (Philip *the Handsome*) and 90v (Anne of France).

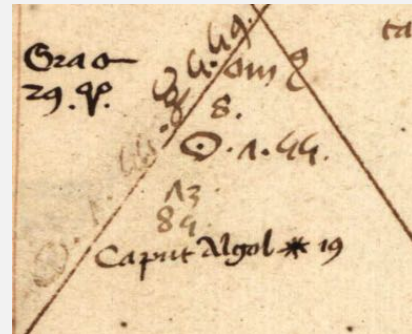


Figure 6 – Depiction of the five-degree rule (example: Anne de France - MS 1711, f. 90v)

This may seem an error for those who are unaware of the rule, but it is a pictorial depiction of this astrological rule.

I. 3. 4. Essential and accidental dignities

Each planet has a positive and a negative expression according to its particular qualities and are accrued from its zodiacal position and always attach to that planet. Such expressions can be defined by its level of essential dignity or essential debility respectively. Accidental dignities and debilities depend on position according to the time of the chart's calculation.

I. 3. 4. 1. Essential dignities²⁴

The dignities are domicile, or rulership, and exaltation; their corresponding debilities are exile, also called detriment, and fall, respectively.

I. 3. 4. 1. 1. Domicile, rulership, or throne: Each of the five planets rules two signs of the Zodiac; the luminaries rule one sign each. When a planet is placed in the sign that it rules it is said to be in its house or domicile; its effects are positive and stable.

Table 9 - The rulerships of the planets

Planet	Sign	Ruler
Sun	☉	Leo ♌
Moon	☾	Cancer ♋
Mercury	☿	Gemini ♊ Virgo ♍
Venus	♀	Taurus ♉ Libra ♎
Mars	♂	Aries ♈ Scorpio ♏
Jupiter	♃	Sagittarius ♏ Pisces ♓
Saturn	♄	Capricorn ♐ Aquarius ♒

The corresponding debility is detriment, also called exile. It occurs when it is placed in the sign opposite to its rulership. For instance, as Mars rules Aries and Scorpio, its detriment is in the opposite signs of Libra and Taurus, respectively.

²⁴ For this section, see for instance *Al-Qabisi (Alcabitius): The Introduction to Astrology*, C. Burnett; K. Yamamoto; M. Yano, (eds), London, 2004, I.13-23, pp. 23-33.

Table 10 - The detriments of the planets

Planet	Sign	Ruler
Sun	☉	Aquarius ♒
Moon	☾	Capricorn ♑
Mercury	☿	Sagittarius ♐ Pisces ♓
Venus	♀	Aries ♈ Scorpio ♏
Mars	♂	Taurus ♉ Libra ♎
Jupiter	♃	Gemini ♊ Virgo ♍
Saturn	♄	Cancer ♋ Leo ♌

Note: The signs were sometimes called the houses or domiciles and these terms may be used interchangeably. For instance, Cancer is ‘the house of the Moon’, and Capricorn and Aquarius are ‘houses of Saturn’. Not to be confused with the twelve astrological houses.²⁵

I. 3. 4. 1. 2. Exaltation: The essential dignity of exaltation is also a dignified condition, but somewhat less positive than rulership. The exaltations of the planets follow the order of the spheres: Saturn in Libra, Jupiter in Cancer, Mars in Capricorn, the Sun in Aries, Venus in Pisces, Mercury in Virgo (where it also has rulership), and the Moon in Taurus. Some authors considered that the North Node is exalted in Sagittarius, and the South Node in Gemini.²⁶ No planet is exalted in the signs of Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius.

Table 11 - The exaltations of the planets

Planet	Sign	Exaltation
Sun	☉	Aries ♈
Moon	☾	Taurus ♉
Mercury	☿	Virgo ♍
Venus	♀	Pisces ♓
Mars	♂	Capricorn ♑
Jupiter	♃	Cancer ♋
Saturn	♄	Libra ♎
North Node	♊	Gemini ♊
South Node	♏	Sagittarius ♐

²⁵ See for instance Alcabitus, *Introduction*, I.14, p. 23.

²⁶ See Albiruni, *Instruction*, 443-444, pp. 258.

Most tables indicate a specific exaltation degree for each planet: Sun at 19° Aries, Moon at 3° Taurus, Mercury at 15° Virgo, Venus at 27° Pisces, Mars at 28° Capricorn, Jupiter at 15° Cancer, Saturn at 21° Libra, North Node at 3° Gemini, South Node at 3° Sagittarius. It is not always clear if the astrologers confined the exaltation of the planet to this degree or considered it as occurring in the whole sign, the latter appears to be the prevalent choice among medieval authors.²⁷

The opposite of exaltation is fall. The planets have their falls in the opposite signs of their exaltation (or degree of their exaltation). In the signs of Taurus, Leo, and Aquarius, no planet is in its fall.

Table 12 - The falls of the planets

Sign		Fall	
Sun	☉	Libra	♎
Moon	☾	Scorpio	♏
Mercury	☿	Pisces	♓
Venus	♀	Virgo	♍
Mars	♂	Cancer	♋
Jupiter	♃	Capricorn	♑
Saturn	♄	Aries	♈
North Node	♊	Sagittarius	♐
South Node	♋	Gemini	♊

I. 3. 4. 1. 3 Triplicity:²⁸ The triplicities are planetary rulers assigned to the signs according to their element; there is no corresponding debility. There are three signs for each element, and each element has three rulers: one diurnal, one nocturnal, and a third called participant or common. In a diurnal chart (that is, with the Sun above the horizon) the diurnal ruler is attributed to the first third of life, the nocturnal to the second and the participant the third; in a nocturnal chart, the nocturnal ruler is attributed to the first third, the diurnal to the second and the participant to the third. The quality of each period is determined by the condition of the ruler in the horoscope.

Belle includes a variation of this sequence in his table of dignities on MS 1711 f. 19r: for diurnal horoscopes, diurnal ruler, participant and nocturnal ruler; for nocturnal ones, nocturnal ruler, participant and diurnal ruler.

²⁷ Al-Bīrūnī summarizes this discussion stating that ‘there are many differences of opinion in this matter, some saying that it extends to some degrees in front of or behind the degree in question, while others hold that it extends from the first point of the sign to that degree, and again others that it is present in the whole sign without any special degree.’ Albiruni, *Instruction*, 442, p. 258.

²⁸ These are the triplicities that were used throughout the medieval period. During the Renaissance, they were gradually replaced by versions based upon Ptolemy’s work. See Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I.18, pp. 83-87.

Table 13 - Rulers of the triplicity

Element			Diurnal		Nocturnal		Participant	
Fire	Aries	♈	Sun	☉	Jupiter	♃	Saturn	♄
	Leo	♌						
	Sagittarius	♐						
Earth	Taurus	♉	Venus	♀	Moon	☾	Mars	♂
	Virgo	♍						
	Capricorn	♑						
Air	Gemini	♊	Saturn	♄	Mercury	♁	Jupiter	♃
	Libra	♎						
	Aquarius	♒						
Water	Cancer	♋	Venus	♀	Mars	♂	Moon	☾
	Scorpio	♏						
	Pisces	♓						

The triplicities of the Ascendant may also be used to predict the native's general conditions of life, especially regarding health. The duration of life (previously calculated) is divided into three equal parts, each attributed to one of the rulers. Again, the sequence is different for diurnal and nocturnal horoscopes.

Belle mentions this technique in f. 94vb: [The] rulers of the triplicity of the Ascendant signify the complexion of the native according to his life divided in three (*les 3 seigneurs de la triplicite de l'ascendant signifient la complexion du ney selon sa vie partie en trois*).

I. 3. 4. 1. 4 Term: The terms are the five unequal divisions of the signs, sometimes also referred to as limits or boundaries; there is no corresponding debility. Each term is ruled by one of the five planets: Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Mars and Saturn. Each sign is divided differently and the sequence also varies from sign to sign.²⁹ There are two principal variants: the Egyptian terms, which were widely used, and the Ptolemaic terms, which came into common use by the end of the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance.

Belle uses the Egyptian terms (for instance in NAL 398 f. 73r, copied from William of Saint-Cloud), but includes a variant of the Ptolemaic terms in the table on MS 1711 f. 19r.

²⁹ Ptolemy suggests that the distribution depends upon the degree of dignity that each planet has in a sign, giving priority sometimes to rulership, sometimes to exaltation, sometimes to triplicity. Mars and Saturn, because they are malefics, are usually given rulership over the last two terms, while the benefics, Jupiter and Venus, are preferentially attributed to the initial terms; Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I. 20-21, pp. 91-107. See also Rutkin, 'The Use and Abuse of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* in Renaissance and Early Modern Europe: Two Case Studies (Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola and Filippo Fantoni)', *Ptolemy in Perspective. Use and criticism of his work from Antiquity to the nineteenth century*, A. Jones (ed.), Dordrecht, 2010, pp. 135-149. Heilen, 'Ptolemy's Doctrine of the Terms and Its Reception', *Ptolemy in Perspective*, pp. 45-93. See also Houlding, 'The Transmission of Ptolemy's Terms: An Historical Overview, Comparison and Interpretation', C. Burnett e D. Greenbaum (eds), *Culture and Cosmos (The Winding Courses of the Stars: Essays in Ancient Astrology)*, 11, 1-2, 2007, pp. 261-307, and Tester, *A History of Western Astrology*, Woodbridge, 1996, pp. 74-79.

Table 14 - The terms according to Belle (a version of the Ptolemaic terms)

		1	5	10	15	20	25
Aries	♈	♃		♀		♀	♂
Taurus	♉		♀		♃		♂
Gemini	♊	♀		♃		♂	♃
Cancer	♋	♂		♃		♀	♃
Leo	♌	♃		♀	♂		♃
Virgo	♍		♀		♃		♂
Libra	♎	♃		♀		♃	♂
Scorpio	♏	♂		♀		♃	♀
Sagittarius	♐		♃		♀		♂
Capricorn	♑	♀		♀	♂		♃
Aquarius	♒	♃		♀		♃	♂
Pisces	♓		♀		♃		♂

Table 15 - The Egyptian terms

		1	5	10	15	20	25
Aries	♈	♃		♀		♂	♃
Taurus	♉		♀		♃		♂
Gemini	♊	♀		♃		♂	♃
Cancer	♋	♂		♀		♃	♃
Leo	♌	♃		♀	♃		♂
Virgo	♍		♀		♃		♂
Libra	♎	♃		♀		♀	♂
Scorpio	♏	♂		♀		♃	♃
Sagittarius	♐		♃		♀		♂
Capricorn	♑	♀		♃		♀	♂
Aquarius	♒	♀		♀		♂	♃
Pisces	♓		♀		♃		♂

I. 3. 4. 1. 5 Face: A system that divides the signs into equal thirds, known as faces, assigning to each face a ruling planet according to the order of the celestial spheres; there is no corresponding debility. Mars, the planet that rules Aries, is assigned to the first face of Aries; there follows in this sign the face of the Sun and of Venus. The following planet in the order of the spheres is Mercury, it is assigned to the first face of Taurus followed by the Moon and Saturn. Jupiter, the following planet in the sequence, is assigned to the first face of Gemini, followed by Mars and the Sun. The sequence continues throughout the Zodiac until the final face of Pisces, which is again ruled by Mars.

Table 16 - The faces

Aries			Taurus			Gemini			Cancer			Leo			Virgo		
♂	☉	♀	♀	♃	♅	♃	♂	☉	♀	♀	♃	♅	♃	♂	☉	♀	♀
Libra			Scorpio			Sagittarius			Capricorn			Aquarius			Pisces		
♃	♅	♃	♂	☉	♀	♀	♃	♅	♃	♂	☉	♀	♀	♃	♅	♃	♂

I. 3. 4. 1. 6. Adoragen (or decanate): This topic seems to be surrounded by confusion: some authors offer cryptic or inconclusive explanations leaving ample room for misinterpretation.³⁰ Belle explains it in NAL 398, f. 69ra. The system derives from that used by Hindu astrologers and is based on the triplicities of the signs (that is, the order of the elements), not on the celestial spheres. The first decanate of a sign is given to the ruler of that sign, the second to the ruler of the subsequent sign of the same element, and the third to the last sign of the same element. For instance, in Capricorn the first decanate is ruled by Saturn because it rules Capricorn, the second by Venus because it rules the next Earth sign of Taurus, the third by Mercury because it is the ruler of Virgo, the remaining Earth sign.

Table 17 - The *adoragen* (or decanate)

Aries			Taurus			Gemini			Cancer			Leo			Virgo		
♂	☉	♃	♀	♀	♅	♀	♀	♅	♃	♂	♃	☉	♃	♂	♀	♅	♀
Libra			Scorpio			Sagittarius			Capricorn			Aquarius			Pisces		
♀	♅	♀	♂	♃	♃	♃	♂	☉	♅	♀	♀	♅	♀	♀	♃	♃	♂

Belle seems to adopt the faces, except for the horoscope of his first-born son, Anthonius Belle (MS 1711 f. 93r), which is the only instance where he mentions the *adoragen*

³⁰ Such is the case of Avenezra, who not only attributes to the Indians the sequence of the faces, but also explains it in a way that could be misleading: ‘The Indians began the division of the *decan* with Mars, the lord of the house [sign]. They assigned the second *decan* to the Sun because its orb is second to Mars, and by the same method all the *decans* until the end of Pisces, which is again assigned to Mars’, Sela (ed.), *Abraham Ibn Ezra, The Book of Reasons. A Parallel Hebrew-English Critical Edition of the Two Versions of the Text* ed. and trans. Leiden, 2007, p. 47. It is also the case with Haly Abenragel, who states: ‘*Adurugen* is when you divide the sign from the Ascendant in three parts and give the first to the lord of the same [sign?] and the second to the planet that follows and likewise with the others, in order.’ (Adurugen es que partas el signo del ascendente en tres partes e da la primera al sennor d’esta misma casa e la II^a a la planeta quell sigue e assi de los otros por orden), Haly Abenragel, *El libro conplido en los iudicios de las estrellas*, G. Hilty (ed), Madrid, 1954, p. 80. See also the explanation given in Albiruni, *Instruction*, 451, p. 263.

I. 3. 4. 1. 7. Degrees:³¹ The individual degrees of each sign have particular qualities that add complementary information to the judgement. They are used in certain judgements such as in the native’s physical appearance and health, or in interrogations for determining the gender of an unborn baby.

In MS 1711 f. 19r Belle includes three tables with the following degrees in separate tables:

- shadowy (*umbrosi*),³² light (*lucidi*), dark (*tenebrosi*), void (*vacui*), black (*nigri*) and indifferent (*indifferentes*)
- pitted (*putei*)
- fortunate (*augmentantes fortunam*)
- weak or of chronic illnesses (*azemene*)

Figure 7 – Tables of degrees (MS 1711, f. 19r)

I. 3. 4. 1. 8. Dispositor: The planet that has one or more dignities in the degree where another planet, a lot, or a node is placed. The term dispositor (in the sense of regulator) is often used for the planet ruling the domicile of that degree, but it may also apply to the exaltation. For instance, if a planet is placed at 15° Taurus, Venus is its dispositor because it is the ruler of the sign. However, some authors also say that the Moon disposes the said planet by exaltation.

³¹ A description of the degrees can be found in several authors, for instance Alcabitus, *Introduction*, I.50, p. 43.

³² Some authors call these degrees smoky (*fumosi*), others call them shadowy (*umbrosi*).

Note: although the terms ‘dispositor’ and ‘ruler’ seem similar, there is a difference: if in a given horoscope the cusp of the second house is in Cancer and Venus is placed therein also in Cancer, it is said that the Moon is the *ruler* of the house but is the *dispositor* of Venus.

I. 3. 4. 1. 9. *Almutem*: The planet that accumulates most dignities at a given point (or house) of the horoscope is called the *almutem*, meaning ‘the victor’ or ‘the winner’. The *almutem* of a given degree is usually that of the ruler or the exaltation of the respective sign.³³ It is calculated by adding the number of dignities that a planet has in a given degree of the Zodiac. Belle summarizes the method in NAL 398, ff. 65rb-65va. There are two ways of computing the *almutem*: by adding the value of each dignity of the planet (five dignities for rulership, four for exaltation, three for triplicity, two for term, and one for face), or by simply counting the number of dignities the planet has at that point of the Zodiac (for example a planet with rulership, triplicity, and term has three dignities). For instance, at 15 degrees Libra Saturn is the *almutem* because it accumulates exaltation, triplicity and face, while Venus, the ruler of the sign, has only one dignity (rulership).

In some cases, the astrologer may calculate the *almutem* for a specific matter, which is the planet that accumulates more dignities in the sections of the horoscope related to that matter.³⁴ There can also be an *almutem* for the entire horoscope, called the *almutem figure*, which is the planet that gathers most dignities in the five *hylegical* places, which are the degrees of the Ascendant, Sun, Moon, Lot of Fortune, and of the degree of the lunation preceding birth. Belle calculates the *almutem figure* according the method used by Abraham Avenezra.³⁵ The first step is to ascertain the essential dignities of each of the seven planets in the five *hylegical* places (using the tables such as those presented below). Then the accidental dignities of each of the seven planets are calculated according to their position by house. The dignity score for each house is the following:

First house:	12	Seventh house:	10
Second house:	6	Eighth house:	4
Third house:	3	Ninth house:	5
Fourth house:	9	Tenth house:	11
Fifth house:	7	Eleventh house:	8
Sixth house:	1	Twelfth house:	2

³³ ‘When you want to know the ruling planet for a topic, you look at the planet having the most shares in the place of the topic’ (i.e. *almutem* of the whole house). Alcabitius, *Introduction*, I.77, pp. 59-61. See also S. Sela (ed.), *Abraham ibn Ezra. The Book of Nativities and continuous horoscopy*, Leiden, 2014, p. 101.

³⁴ Which are usually the degree of the house cusp, its ruler, any planets within the house and the natural significator (if applicable), and any parts related to the matter. See ‘The concept of significator’ in this appendix.

³⁵ Ezra, *Nativities*, Leiden, 2014, p. 102

I. 3. 4. 1. 10. Peregrine: A planet with no essential dignities in the degree where it is posited is therefore peregrine; it is considered to be debilitated.

I. 3. 4. 1. 11. Reception: Reception occurs when, in an aspect between two planets, one of them is located in a sign over which the other has some essential dignity. The planet that rules the sign is said to receive the other, giving the latter its strength and power. For instance, in a square aspect between Mercury at 20° Scorpio and Mars at 20° Leo, Mercury is in the domicile of Mars; Mercury is therefore received by Mars, ruler of Scorpio, which assists it and gives it support. Reception is said to be perfect when it involves rulership or exaltation, and imperfect when it involves triplicity, term or face. For some authors reception by the minor dignities is only considered when the planet received is in a degree over which two simultaneous minor dignities are held by the dignifying planet.³⁶

Belle mentions reception in several passages, such as f. 77ra, the nativity of Hubert.

I. 3. 4. 1. 12. Mutual reception: Mutual reception occurs when two planets receive each other, that is, when one of them is in a sign where the other has some dignity, and vice-versa. In this condition the planets support each other. For instance, Venus in Cancer and the Moon in Libra: Venus is in the sign ruled by the Moon and the Moon in the sign ruled by Venus.

Reception may also involve different dignities. For instance, the Sun in Sagittarius and Jupiter in Aries; the Sun is in Jupiter's rulership (domicile) and Jupiter is in the sign of the Sun's exaltation. Although an aspect is implied, later authors consider that mutual reception can occur without an aspect between the two disposing planets.³⁷

Belle mentions a mixed mutual reception in f. 98ra, the judgement of Jo d.c.l.; Sun in Capricorn, a sign ruled by Saturn, squaring Saturn in Aries, where the Sun is exalted.

I. 3. 4. 2. Accidental dignities

Accidental dignities originate from the particular conditions in which a planet finds itself in a given horoscope.³⁸ While the essential dignities refer to the conditions intrinsic to the planet's essential nature, the accidental dignities are states or conditions particular to the chart and that modify the expression of that nature, irrespective of essential dignities.

³⁶ For example, Zael, *Opera Zahelica*, Interrogationibus, 24.

³⁷ See for instance Lilly, *Christian Astrology*, London, 1647, p. 112.

³⁸ In astrological context, the term 'accidental' means 'by chance'; it designates a condition that changes from chart to chart, such as the placement of a planet in a particular house. See Haly Abenragel, *El libro conplido en los iudicios de las estrellas*, G. Hilty (ed.), Madrid, 1954, p. 166.

I. 3. 4. 2. 1. Position by house: the planet's position in a house determines its visibility and impact: in the angular houses, also called cardines (the first, the fourth, the seventh, and the tenth) it is strong and prominent; in the succedent houses (the second, the fifth, the eighth, and the eleventh) it has middling strength and it is not very prominent; in the cadent houses (the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the twelfth) it is hidden.³⁹

I. 3. 4. 2. 2. Free from rays, under the rays, combust, and *cazimi*:⁴⁰ These conditions derive from a planet's zodiacal distance from the Sun. This distance may vary slightly between authorities depending on the nature of the planet and its movement towards or away from the Sun.

- **Free from rays:** A dignity. When a planet is more than sixteen degrees from the Sun, it is dignified, strong because it is not overwhelmed by the Sun's brightness.
- **Under the Sun's rays:** A debility. A planet that is less than sixteen degrees from the Sun is under its rays, thus partially obscured by its brightness.
- **Combust:** A strong debility. A planet less than eight degrees from the Sun is considered to be combust, that is, burned by its proximity to the Sun; its light is obscured by the Sun's brightness and therefore is unable to express its nature.
- ***Cazimi*:** A dignity. When a planet is exactly conjunct the Sun (or within seventeen minutes of arc of the exact aspect), it is said to be *cazimi*, that is, in the heart of the Sun. Some authors consider it to be strongly dignified.⁴¹

I. 3. 4. 2. 3. Orientality or occidentality of the Sun:⁴² A condition that derives from the planet's relationship to the Sun. A planet is oriental of the Sun when it rises before sunrise, being therefore visible in the east (the orient) in the hours before dawn. The active, masculine principle is enhanced in the east, so this condition favours the masculine planets: Saturn, Jupiter and Mars.

A planet is occidental when it sets after the Sun, becoming visible in the west at dusk, immediately after sunset. The feminine, receptive qualities associated with the west favor the feminine planets, Venus and the Moon. Mercury is also favoured by occidentality, because its sphere is below that of the Sun as are those of Venus and the Moon.⁴³ Apart from the dignities of the planets, this condition also allows the astrologer to determine during which part of life the events signified by the planets will take place: oriental planets signify events happening in

³⁹ Some astrologers consider that any planet in the eighth house is weak, because the eighth, although succedent, is the house of death, fear, and losses. In contrast, a planet in the third or ninth houses, is not as weak as if it were in the sixth or twelfth; although all four are cadent, the latter two are considered more harmful.

⁴⁰ See for instance Albiruni, *Instruction*, 53, p. 64 for combust; 481, p. 295-296 for *cazimi*, oriental and occidental.

⁴¹ See Guido Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, Dykes (tr.), Golden Valley, Minesotta, 2007, pp. 207-211.

⁴² Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, pp. 207-209.

⁴³ This matter is addressed in Albiruni, *Instruction*, 486-488, p. 298-302.

youth because they are related to sunrise, the beginning of the day, and, in the same way, occidental planets relate to later life as sunset relates to the end of the day.

Table 18 - Orientality and occidentality

Designation	Description	Affinity		
Oriental to the Sun	Rises before the Sun; active, masculine	Planets superior to the Sun's sphere	Saturn Jupiter Mars	♄ ♃ ♂
Occidental to the Sun	Sets after the Sun; receptive, feminine	Planets inferior to the Sun's sphere:	Venus Mercury Moon	♀ ☿ ♁

Variants of this condition:

- oriental or occidental of the Moon: when the planet's position is taken in relation to the Moon rather than the Sun;
- oriental or occidental *in mundo*; this depends upon the placement of the planets in the hemispheres and quadrants of the chart and not on their relationship with the Sun; a planet is oriental *in mundo* when it is in an oriental quadrant (houses twelve, eleven, ten, and six, five, four) and occidental when in a western quadrant (houses nine, eight, seven and three, two, one).

Belle mentions orientality in its several varieties in NAL 398 f. 73va (the lunation previous to the Sun's ingress in Aries for 1293) and f. 74v (the lunation previous to the ingress in Cancer for 1294) and also in f. 87ra (the nativity of Io. Dap).

I. 3. 4. 2. 4. Direct or retrograde motion: Due to the Earth's movement and position in the solar system, occasionally the planets appear to move backwards when observed from the Earth; this is called retrograde movement. A planet in direct movement, that is, moving in the order of the signs, is considered to be strong; when in retrograde movement, against the order of the signs, is considered weaker. A planet about to change from direct to retrograde movement is said to be in its first station, thus becoming weaker; when it is changing from retrograde to direct, it is said to be in its second station, thus regaining its strength.

I. 3. 4. 2. 5. Fast or slow movement: A planet's speed changes as it moves through the Zodiac. When the planet is moving faster than its average speed it is said to be fast (*in celero cursu*) and therefore stronger; when moving slower than average, it is considered slow (*in tardo cursu*) and therefore is weaker.

I. 3. 4. 2. 6. *Hayz*:⁴⁴ A positive composite condition, which occurs when there is compatibility between the gender of the planet and the position it occupies in a given horoscope. A planet is in *hayz* when it is placed in the appropriate hemisphere (diurnal hemisphere for diurnal planets and nocturnal hemisphere for nocturnal planets) while also being in a sign of its own gender. When hemisphere and gender combine, the planet is considered to be in a strong condition.

Belle mentions *hayz* in NAL 398 f. 81ra, 82ra and 95ra.

I. 3. 4. 3. Special conditions of the planets

I. 3. 4. 3. 1. Affliction: A condition where the planet is harmed by one of the following conditions: square and opposition aspects from the malefics, Mars and Saturn, combustion, or placed in unfortunate houses, which are the sixth, the eighth, and the twelfth.

I. 3. 4. 3. 2. Besiegement and assistance:⁴⁵ Extreme conditions related to the aspects of a planet. They are exact opposites representing respectively great difficulty and strong support.

Besiegement: An extreme affliction. A planet is besieged when it moves away from a conjunction, square, or opposition aspect of one of the malefic planets and immediately moves into a similar aspect with the other malefic.

Table 19 - Besiegement

The planet separates from	of	and applies to	of
a conjunction, square or opposition	Mars or Saturn	a conjunction, square or opposition	Mars or Saturn

Assistance: A planet is assisted when it moves away from a conjunction, sextile, or trine aspect of one of the benefic planets and immediately moves into a similar aspect with the other benefic.

Table 20 - Assistance

The planet separates from	of	and applies to	of
a conjunction, sextile or trine	Venus or Jupiter	a conjunction, sextile or trine	Venus or Jupiter

Note: The condition only occurs when no aspects from other planets interfere with the sequence. The conjunction appears in both cases, although with different values: it is considered inimical if it involves the malefics and friendly if with the benefics.

⁴⁴ See for instance Albiruni, *Instruction*, 496, p. 308.

⁴⁵ See for instance Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, pp. 244-245.

I. 3. 4. 3. 3 Joys of the planets

Placement of the planets in a sign or house that is favourable to its nature.

Joy by house, accidental joy:⁴⁶ Certain houses are considered to be particularly beneficial for certain planets due to the affinity between the subjects encompassed by the house and the planet's nature.⁴⁷ A planet in such a position is said to be in its joy (see diagram below). Its effects are understood as being more stable and positive when in these houses, even if it is debilitated by its sign position.

Mercury, symbolic of the mind, has its joy in the first house, which symbolizes the head. The Moon, fast and mutable, has its joy in the third house since this is the house of movement, of short trips, and other communications. Venus, planet of love and pleasure, in the fifth house of enjoyment. Mars, planet of war and of fighting, joys in the sixth house of illnesses and servitude. The Sun, source of light and life, has its joy in the ninth house of faith, religion, and foresight. Jupiter, the greater benefic, is in joy in the eleventh house of allies, friends and hopes. Saturn, the greater malefic, joys in the twelfth house of tribulations, slavery, and imprisonment. The joys seem to be disposed in the Zodiac on axes: the luminaries fall in opposed houses, and likewise for the benefics and the malefics; Mercury is again the exception. Their distribution is also related to the Ascendant: the luminaries and the benefics aspect the Ascendant favorably, while the malefics are placed in houses where they cannot aspect it (see image below).

Joy by sign:⁴⁸ Except for the luminaries, which rule only one sign each, the planets have two domiciles, one diurnal and one nocturnal. A planet is in joy in the sign where it has other dignities as well as that of rulership. Ptolemy gives the name 'chariot' to this condition.⁴⁹

The signs in which the planets have their joys seem to coincide with their sect: diurnal planets (Saturn and Jupiter) rejoice in diurnal signs, and nocturnal planets (Mars and Venus) in nocturnal signs. Mercury's joy is the exception: its joy by sign may derive from the accumulation of domicile and exaltation.

Table 21 - Joys of the planets by sign

⁴⁶ See for instance Albiruni, *Instruction*, 469, p. 277.

⁴⁷ See Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, p. 140.

⁴⁸ See for instance Albiruni, *Instruction*, 441, p. 257.

⁴⁹ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I.23, p. 111.

	Rules over		Joy
Saturn	Capricorn	Aquarius	Aquarius where it also has triplicity
Jupiter	Sagittarius	Pisces	Sagittarius where it also has triplicity
Mars	Aries	Scorpio	Scorpio where it also has triplicity
Venus	Taurus	Libra	Taurus where it also has triplicity
Mercury	Gemini	Virgo	Virgo where it also has exaltation

Belle mentions joy by house (accidental joy) on NAL 398 f. 74rb, in a judgement possibly copied from John of Saxony, and in MS 1777 f. 93v, in the nativity of Conrad Belle.

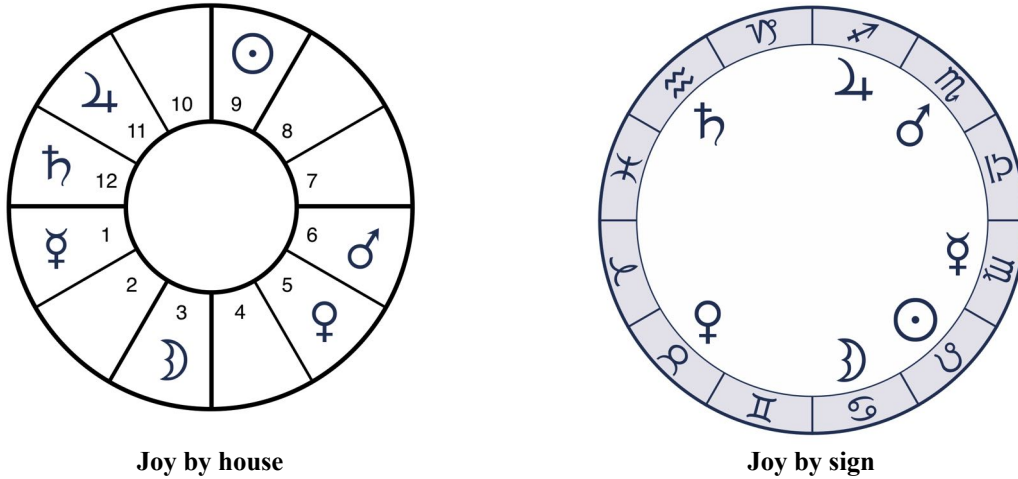


Figure 9 – Joys by house and by sign

I. 3. 4. 4. Combining essential and accidental dignities in a judgement

The essential dignities refer to the planet’s state, while the accidental dignities affect the planet’s power to express that state. The combination of the two reveals both the planet’s inherent quality (essential dignity or debility), and its visibility in the horoscope (accidental dignity or debility). A planet that is both essentially and accidentally dignified is very strong combining power and prominence, and whatever it signifies in the horoscope is beneficial; while a planet that is both essentially and accidentally debilitated, is very weak.

I. 3. 4. 5. List of main essential and accidental dignities and debilities

Table 22 - Main conditions of the planets

Type	Dignity	Debility	
Essential conditions	rulership or domicile	exile	
	exaltation	fall	
	triplicity	–	
	term	–	
	face	–	
	–	peregrine	
Accidental conditions	House position	in an angular house	in a cadent house
		in a succedent house	–
		in the house of its joy	–
	Relation to the Sun	free from the sun's beams	under the Sun's beams
		–	combustion
		cazimi	–
		increasing in light	decreasing in light
		- oriental to the Sun for masculine planets (♃, ♄, ♀); - occidental to the Sun for feminine planets (♁, ♃) and ♀	- occidental to the Sun for masculine planets (♃, ♄, ♀) - oriental to the Sun for feminine planets (♁, ♃) and ♀
	Movement	direct in motion	retrograde in motion
		fast in motion	slow in motion
	Aspects	in good aspect with benefics	in hard aspect to the malefics
		assisted	besieged
		–	void of course
		–	feral
	Other	<i>hayz</i>	opposite of <i>hayz</i>
	Conditions of the Moon	–	in <i>via combusta</i>
		–	in the last 3° of a sign

I. 4. Additional concepts

I. 4. 1. The Lunar Nodes (Head and Tail of the Dragon)

Abstract points generated by the intersection of the path of the Moon and the path of the Sun throughout the Zodiac (the ecliptic).⁵⁰ The point where the Moon crosses the ecliptic moving towards the north is called the North Node or Head of the Dragon (*Caput Draconis*); a planet at this point is said to be reinforced. The opposite point, where the Moon crosses the ecliptic towards the south is called the South Node or Tail of the Dragon (*Cauda Draconis*); it has a weakening effect on any nearby planet. When there is a lunation (whether a New Moon or a Full Moon) close to these points, an eclipse occurs.

I. 4. 2. Syzygy or lunation

The term is used for either the New Moon (conjunction of the luminaries) or the Full Moon (their opposition). The term was commonly used to designate the lunation preceding the entry of the Sun into a sign (*introitus*), or to the lunation prior to the birth of an individual.

I. 4. 3. The Lots or parts

Abstract points generated by the distance in degrees and minutes of arc between two planets, or between a planet and a house cusp. This distance is then projected from a third point, usually the Ascendant, but sometimes a house cusp or a planet. Most lots have a formula for diurnal horoscopes and an ‘inverse’ formula for nocturnal horoscopes. For instance, if the diurnal formula takes the distance from planet A to planet B, following the order of the signs, and projects it from the Ascendant, the nocturnal version takes the distance from planet B to planet A, again in the order of the signs, and projects it from the Ascendant. This generates a mirror image, as the two lots stand at the same distance either side of the Ascendant. Some lots have the same formula for both nocturnal and diurnal horoscopes.

In the horoscope for Jo. d.c.l. Belle (NAL 398 f. 93ra1) Belle presents two different formulas to calculate *Pars Coniugii* (Lot of Marriage) – *Pars Coniugii secundum Hermetem* and *Pars Coniugii secundum Wellium* – and he makes a mistake. He calculates the lot *secundum Hermetem* by taking the distance from Saturn to Venus and projecting it from the Ascendant, following the order of the signs. This should place it at 3° Sagittarius, but instead it is at 4° Pisces. As to the lot *secundum Wellium*, he could have calculated it according to two formulas: by taking the distance from Jupiter to Venus and projecting it from the Ascendant, which would place the Lot at 28°42' Pisces; or by taking the distance from the Sun to Venus and projecting it from the Ascendant, which would place the lot at 01°58' Pisces. The latter is sufficiently close to Belle’s calculation for the *Pars Coniugii secundum Hermetem*, at 4° Pisces. In sum, he calculated both lots correctly, but changed their names by mistake.

⁵⁰ Called the ‘ecliptic’ because that is where eclipses occur.

The table below includes all the lots used by Belle in both manuscripts. Most of them can be found in Alcabitius, and some in Haly Abenragel.⁵¹ The diurnal formulas are signalled in the table by a ‘D’; the nocturnal by ‘reverse for N’.

Table 23 - The Lots in nativities – NAL 398 and MS 1711

Lot	Formula
Pars Fortune	Sun to Moon from the Ascendant (D); reverse for N
Pars Fortune secundum Ptolomeus	Diurnal formula used for both
Pars Futurorum	Moon to Sun from the Ascendant (D); reverse for N ⁵²
Pars Substantie	Lord of 2 nd house to 2 nd house cusp from the Ascendant (D or N)
Pars Regni	Mars to the Moon from the Ascendant (D); reverse for N
Pars Regni secundum Wellium (Vettius Valens)	Sun to MC from the Ascendant
Pars Regnis vel Regni	<i>unknown part</i>
Pars Religionis	Moon to Mercury from the Ascendant (reverse for N)
Pars Patris	Sun to Saturn from the Ascendant (D); reverse for N ⁵³
Pars Itineris per Terram	Lord of the 9 th house to the 9 th house cusp from Ascendant (D or N)
Pars Infirmittatis or Pars Lesionis	Saturn to Mars from the Ascendant (D); reverse for N
Pars Fiducie (Lot of Confidence or of Hope) ⁵⁴	Saturn to Venus from Ascendant (D); reverse for N
Pars Servorum et Nuntiorum ⁵⁵ (same formula)	Mercury to Moon from the Ascendant (D); reverse by N
Pars Filiorum	Jupiter to Saturn from the Ascendant (D); reverse for N
Pars Filiorum secundum Ptholomeum	Same as above with no inversion in nocturnal nativities
Pars Beatitudinis ⁵⁶	Saturn to Jupiter from Ascendant; reverse by N
Pars Religionis	Moon to Mercury from the Ascendant (D); reverse for N
Pars Fratrum	Saturn to Jupiter from the Ascendant (D or N)
Pars Amicorum	Moon to Mercury from the Ascendant (D); reverse for N
Pars Inimicorum secundum Hermetem	Lord of 12 th house to 12 th house cusp from the Ascendant (D or N)
Pars Mortis	Moon to 8 th house from Saturn
Pars Mortis secundum Hermetem	<i>unknown part</i>
Pars Matrum	Moon to Venus from the Ascendant (D); reverse for N
Pars Hyleg	Lunation before birth to Moon, from Ascendant D or N)
Pars Coniugii secundum Hermetem / Wellium (men)	Sun to Venus from the Ascendant (D or N) ⁵⁷
Pars Coniugii (for women)	Moon to Mars from the Ascendant (D or N) ⁵⁸
Pars Guerre	Mars to Moon from the Ascendant (D or N)

⁵¹ For the Lots see Alcabitius, *Introduction*, V.5-18, pp. 141-153; the others are referenced in the table.

⁵² The formulas for the Lot of Fortune and the Lot of the Future (*Pars Futurorum*) are exact opposites. The latter is also called the Lot of the Absent, Lot of the Daimon, or Lot of the Hidden (*Pars Caelati*).

⁵³ In nocturnal charts with Saturn under the Sun’s beams: from Jupiter to the Sun from the Ascendant.

⁵⁴ Found in *El libro conplido* p. 514.

⁵⁵ Found in *El libro conplido*, p. 70.

⁵⁶ Found in Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, VIII.2.5, p. 1059. Lot of Beatitude or Lot of Happiness.

⁵⁷ Alcabitius omits the source for the *Pars Coniugii* in the horoscope of a man (Lot of Marriage for Man). See Alcabitius, *Introduction*, V.10, pp. 145-146. Al-Bīrūnī states that according to Hermes this lot is taken from Saturn to Venus and projected from the Ascendant both in diurnal or nocturnal horoscopes, and that according to Vettius Valens it is taken from the Sun to Venus projected from the Ascendant (diurnal or nocturnal). Albiruni, *Instruction*, 476, p. 285, n° 34, 35 in the table. Haly Abenragel switches the authors, by stating that the Lot of Marriage for Man according to Hermes is taken from the Sun to Venus, and according to Vettius Valens, from Saturn to Venus, *El libro conplido*, p. 232. (In Valens’s formula the lot can only fall in the first, second, eleventh, or twelfth houses; it can never be more than 48 degrees away from the Ascendant, because the maximum distance possible between the Sun and Venus is 48 degrees. This suggests that the formula is a theoretical construct, deriving from the correlation of Sun and Venus to the male and female principles.)

⁵⁸ The *Pars Coniugii* for women is the distance from Venus to Saturn projected from the Ascendant (its masculine counterpart is the distance from Saturn to Venus projected from the Ascendant).

The revolutions include a different set of lots, mostly related to food, water and fabrics. Most of the lots used in Belle’s copy of Saint Cloud where copied from Alcabitus.⁵⁹

Table 24 - The lots in Belle’s revolutions of the years

Pars Aque (water)	Pars Olivarum (olives)
Pars Bladi (grain)	Pars Ordei (barley)
Pars Bombati et Lane (cotton and wool)	Pars Orobi (vetch)
Pars Fabarum (fava beans)	Pars Panum (bread)
Pars Fortune ⁶⁰	Pars Pisorum (peas)
Pars Lane (wool)	Pars Rerum dulcium (sweet things)
Pars Lentis (lentils)	Pars Tritici (wheat) ⁶¹
Pars Olei (oil) ⁶²	Pars Vini (wine)

I. 4. 4 The fixed stars⁶³

The fixed stars are included in the judgement only when conjunct a planet, a lot or a house cusp. They add other qualities, often of a grandiose nature, to the point or any planet they conjoin. Each star has its own qualities or nature dependent upon its brightness and colour, as well as the constellation or asterism it belongs to. The stars are often associated with one or two planets the natures of which summarized their essence. As the fixed stars belong to the eighth sphere, it is said that they affect the planets, but are not affected by them.

Table 25 - Fixed Stars in Belle’s manuscripts

Alferaz 06° Aries	Nocea Capitis 14°17 Cancer
Venter Ceti 13°37	Nebulosa 29° Cancer
Nebulosa Persei 16° Aries	Cor Leonis 21° Leo
Caput Algol 18° Taurus	Alhamech [Simak] Spica 16° Libra
Aldebaran 01° Gemini	Alpheca 03° Scorpio
Hyracus 04° Gemini	Cor Scorpionis (Antares) 01° Sagittarius
Nebulosa (Orion) 16° Gemini	Cavilla 14° (Zeta Bootis) Sagittarius
Rigel 18° Gemini	Vultur Cadens (Vega) 07° Capricorn
Orion 21° Gemini	Vultur Volans (Altair) 22° Capricorn
Canis 06°17 Cancer (Sirius)	Arios 28° Capricorn
Canopus 06° Cancer	Os Piscium (Fomalhaut) 19° Aquarius

⁵⁹ Alcabitus, *Introduction*, V, pp. 140-155. See also Albiruni, *Instruction*, 479, pp. 290-295.

⁶⁰ This is the diurnal formula; the nocturnal formula is Moon to Sun from Ascendant.

⁶¹ Albiruni, *Instruction*, 479, p. 292: Lot of Wheat: Sun to Jupiter from Ascendant.

⁶² Albiruni, *Instruction*, 479, p. 293.

⁶³ They are fixed in contrast to the planets, the wandering stars. See Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, I.9, pp. 46-59.

I. 4. 5 Precession of Equinoxes; tropical and sidereal zodiacs (8th and 9th spheres)

The precession of the equinoxes causes an ever-growing gap between the ninth sphere, the tropical Zodiac, and the eighth sphere, the sidereal zodiac of the constellations and asterisms.

In his judgement for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction Belle mentions the difference between the ninth sphere of the signs and the eighth sphere of the constellations. According to him this difference – which he calculates to be of nineteen degrees – causes some planets and the Ascendant of the conjunction to change signs because the referential changes from the ninth to the eighth sphere. These changes are incorporated in the judgement (NAL f. 81vb).

PART II – ASTROLOGICAL JUDGEMENT

This section presents the fundamental rules for any astrological judgement and the main techniques for each application of astrology.

II. 1. Basic Concepts

II. 1. 1. The houses⁶⁴

The houses signify the subject – person, event or territory – under scrutiny. The judgement of the first house, the most complex of all, provides the ground for everything else in the horoscope. The remaining houses provide the contexts surrounding the topic or person under examination. Their meanings encompass all possible aspects of life and structure the judgement by topics, people and locations.

II. 1. 2. The significator

The concept of the significator is an essential key to astrological judgement. The significators are components of the horoscope that are used for a particular judgement. They represent the subject under examination.

A planet can be a significator of a given subject for different reasons:

- its **natural** meaning, which is the same in every horoscope (i.e., Mercury for the mind, Jupiter for wealth, Venus for love, Saturn for obstacles, and so on);
- its **placement** by house in a specific horoscope (i.e., planets in the second house represent wealth, in the fifth, children, in the tenth, honours, and so on);
- its accidental **rulership**, that is, over certain houses in a specific horoscope (i.e, a planet ruling over the sign on the cusp of the fourth house is related to family, in the eleventh to friends and allies, in the twelfth to enemies, and so on);⁶⁵
- its **dispositorship** over a lot in a specific horoscope (i.e. the planet dispossiting the Lot of Substance itself becomes a significator of wealth).

⁶⁴ See for instance Alcabitius, *Introduction*, I.56-70, pp. 49-55.

⁶⁵ The other rulers of the sign on the cusp may also be included in the judgement. For example, the rulers of the triplicity may be used as significators of a specific matter within the house. Alcabitius, for instance, relating to the fifth house and quoting Al-Andarzagar, states: ‘the first lord of the triplicity of the place of children indicates children and life, the second pleasure, the third messengers’, Alcabitius, *Introduction*, I.61, p. 53. Additionally, the rulers of the triplicity of the houses may be used as timing indicators to determine the three main parts of life. Alcabitius, again quoting Al-Andarzagar, states about the second house: ‘the first lord of the triplicity gives property in the beginning of life, the second in the middle of it and the third at its end’, Alcabitius, *Introduction*, I. 57, p. 51. Belle also uses this technique in the judgement of Jo d.c.l. (ff. 100rb-100vb).

The houses and the lots also act as significators. The houses, as explained above, signify the main topics for a horoscope and are partially responsible for the significations of the planets, that is, their accidental rulerships. The lots are a secondary type of signifier and add extra information to complex judgements, being used for very precise topics.

Belle uses multiple significators – mainly planets, but also lots and houses in the judgement of cereals, grains and vegetables in the revolutions of the year for 1293, 1294 and 1295 (NAL 398 ff. 73r-76v).

These significators are often called witnesses and their contributions are the testimonies, in a manner similar to that in a court of law.⁶⁶ The astrologer, taking the role of the judge, ponders the condition of every witness, according to the decrees of the stars, to decide how much weight should be attributed to each testimony. Different significators, with both positive and negative meanings, can coexist in the same judgement. A single planet can be a signifier for different matters in the same horoscope. For instance, a planet ruling the seventh house, placed in the ninth and disposing the Lot of Children, is simultaneously signifier of relationships and partnerships (seventh house), of religion, travels, and learning (ninth house), and of children and fertility (Lot of Children). Additionally, there is the natural signification of the planet (Mars for boldness and aggression, Mercury for cunning and intelligence, and so on) to be taken into account. The method can also be compared to a medical diagnosis: the physician ponders each symptom, evaluates their relative importance in the general setting of symptoms, and after taking into account all the possible modifying factors, arrives at a conclusion – a diagnosis. In any case, the answer is achieved by deduction, following the rules, and always taken from the whole context.

Belle follows these fundamental steps in the judgement of every house, though in some cases he adds minor variants according to the subjects they represent.

1 – He begins by choosing the house related to the matter in question. For instance, a question about the native's wealth is related to the second house, fertility to the fifth, religious matters to the ninth and so on.

2 – He then identifies the main significators for this matter: the ruler of the sign in which the house begins, any planets that might be placed in that house; the natural ruler of the matter (for instance, Venus for love), and the related lot or lots. He combines these significators according to the context of each topic, ponders their condition in the horoscope, includes the contributions of the aspects of other planets, and finally delivers the judgement.

For example, the main subjects of the ninth house are religion, travel and knowledge. The judgements of these subjects share the same basic rules, but include different significators for each topic. In any judgement involving this house there are three factors that are always considered: the sign on the cusp of the house, the ruler of that sign and any planet placed in that house. But if the judgement is for travel, the signification includes the Lot of Journeys by Water, and the Moon, the natural signifier of movement and change. If it is for religion, to the three aforementioned basic factors is added the Lot of Religion (among others) and Jupiter, the natural signifier of religion and piety. For knowledge and education, the Lot of Knowledge and Mercury, the natural signifier of the mind, are also used.

⁶⁶ See for instance Ezra. *Nativities*, p. 103: 'Be careful not to pronounce any judgement unless you have two valid witnesses. I shall now explain to you the testimonies, when they are valid and when invalid.'

Note: the significators may vary under certain circumstances. For instance, the natural significators of the parents are the Sun for the father and the Moon for the mother. However, in diurnal horoscopes Venus takes precedence over the Moon or the judgement of the mother, and in nocturnal ones, Saturn takes precedence over the Sun. In addition there are also two other significators to take into account in any horoscope, whether diurnal or nocturnal, and that is the ruler of the fourth house for the father and the ruler of the tenth for the mother. The rule is summarized in the following table:

Table 26 - Natural significators for the parents in a nativity

	Mother	Father
Diurnal	Venus	Sun
Nocturnal	Moon	Saturn
Both	Ruler of 10 th	Ruler of 4 th

Another example: in the judgement of marriage, the Moon is taken as significator of the wife, or wives, in the horoscope of a man, and the Sun as significator of the husband, or husbands, in the horoscope of a woman. The aspects formed by the other planets to the luminary described the type of relationships that the native is predisposed to.

Belle uses these significators several times in the judgements in NAL 398: Hubert (ff. 76vb-80ra), Jo Dap. (ff. 85ra-89rb) and Jo d.c.l. (ff. 94ra-100vb).

II. 1. 3. The implicit question

As can be inferred from the preceding explanation, judgement of a horoscope is organized in the form of questions. These are explicit in interrogations, and implicit in revolutions and nativities. These questions give focus to the practitioner and offer a method for processing the information. For example, in a revolution, if the astrologer wants to evaluate the state of a kingdom, the implicit question would be ‘What will be the condition of the kingdom this year?’, if there were concerns about famine, “How will the crops be?”, and so on. In a nativity, the questions may range from ‘How does this person deal with money?’ to ‘Will this person have children?’. To each question corresponds one or more significators, as explained before.

II. 2. Revolutions of the year of the World

The revolutions of the year, or revolution of the world, is the study of the conditions of a kingdom or territory. They are based on the ingresses, lunations, eclipses and conjunctions of the superior planets (mainly Jupiter-Saturn, but also Saturn-Mars and Jupiter-Mars). The judgement of the year may also include the horoscopes of eclipses, comets, and the conjunctions of the slowest planets, Jupiter and Saturn. As nations and kingdoms were associated with zodiacal signs and planets, the astrologer is able to draw analogies between the celestial configurations and the possible changes in politics and society.

II. 2. 1. Ingresses and lunations

The study of the horoscopes of the Sun's entry into Aries or of the lunation that precedes it, to determine the conditions of a given country or region for a year (from spring to spring).⁶⁷ The number of horoscopes required to make predictions for each year is defined by the mode of the ascending sign in the horoscope for the Aries ingress. The Ascendant in one of the moveable signs, Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn, announces a year full of changes, thus it is necessary to calculate horoscopes for all four seasons: in one of the fixed signs, Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius, a stable year is predicted with little change, so only the horoscope of the Aries ingress is required; the Ascendant in one of the double signs, Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, and Pisces, suggests two distinct periods in the year, so the horoscopes for the Aries and Libra ingresses are necessary.⁶⁸ The table below summarizes the rule:

Table 27 - Number of horoscopes necessary to judge a given year

Mode of the ascending sign	Effects throughout the year	Number of horoscopes to calculate
Moveable: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn	Many changes	Four: one for each season Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn
Fixed: Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius	Little or no change	One: the spring horoscope Aries
Double: Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces	One major change	Two: spring and autumn Aries and Libra

⁶⁷ For this section see for instance Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, II.1-3, pp. 117-161.

⁶⁸ 'If the Ascendant of the year were a moveable sign, revolutions of the quarters [seasons] in the year will be necessary, and more so if the Lord of the Year were in a moveable sign. And if it were a common [double] sign, there will be exactly two revolutions necessary in the year – that is, at the beginning of Aries and Libra – and more so if the Lord of the Year were in a common [double] sign: therefore do even with the entrance [of the Sun] into the first minute of Libra as with the beginning of the year. And with the moveable [signs], do likewise through all the quarters of the year. But if the Ascendant were a fixed sign, the revolution of the year will be conquering all the quarters of the year, and more strongly so if the Lord of the Year were in a fixed sign.', B. Dykes (ed. and tr.), *Works of Sahl and Masha'allah*, Golden Valley, Minnesota, 2008, p. 328.

In practice, not all medieval / early modern astrologers followed this rule to the letter: some calculated only the spring ingress regardless of the sign ascending in the Aries *introitus*, while some others preferred to always calculate horoscopes for all four seasons.

Belle tends to be overzealous with his calculations. In his almanac (MS 1711 f. 1r to 77v) he often calculates the four horoscopes, one for each season, regardless of the mode of the ascending sign in the spring ingress. The year 1477 is particularly unconventional in that he calculates not only the four traditional ingress but also those for Leo and Virgo; he also draws incomplete horoscopes for the ingress in other signs: a grid with the houses for those in Aquarius and Pisces (with no planets), and a draft with only the degree of the Ascendant for Taurus, Gemini, Scorpio and Sagittarius. The table below summarizes his choices in this matter:

Table 28 - Calculation of the Sun's ingresses in MS 1711 Almanac (f. 1r to 77v)

Year	Ascendant's mode in Aries ingress	Horoscopes required of that year	Horoscopes calculated by Belle
1468	No horoscopes	-	No ingresses
1469	Double (Pisces)	Two: Aries and Libra	Two: Aries and Libra
1470	Moveable (Cancer)	Four: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn	Four: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn
1471	Double (Virgo)	Two: Aries and Libra	Two: no horoscopes, only mentioned
1472	Fixed (Scorpio)	One: Aries	One: Aries, but mentions the other three
1473	Pages missing	-	No ingresses
1474	Moveable (Cancer)	Four: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn	Two: Aries, Libra; space left for the other two
1475	Double (Virgo)	Two: Aries and Libra	Four: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn
1476	Fixed (Scorpio)	One: Aries	Four: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn
1477	Fixed (Aquarius)	One: Aries	Six: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn, Leo, Virgo [others]
1478	Moveable (Cancer)	Four: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn	Four: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn
1479	Double (Virgo)	Two: Aries and Libra	Four: Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn
1480	Fixed (Scorpio)	One: Aries	One: Aries; mentions Libra (no planets) and Capricorn

Some astrologers prefer to calculate the lunation, that is either the New Moon (*coniunctio*) or the Full Moon (*oppositio*) that precedes the ingress, considering it a more effective predictive tool.⁶⁹ But if the lunation preceded the ingress by almost two weeks, some chose to judge the subsequent lunation because it occurred almost immediately.

Lord of the year: The planet that gathers more dignities, both accidental and essential, in the ingress or lunation chart and thus characterizes the general conditions of the year.

II. 2. 2. Judgement of eclipses⁷⁰

An eclipse occurs whenever there is a lunation close to a lunar node; that is, when the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth are aligned. For the eclipse to occur the lunation has to be less than twelve degrees and thirty minutes away from the node; the closer it is to the node, the more complete

⁶⁹ Such is the case of the ingresses that Belle calculates (or copies) for the years 1293-95.

⁷⁰ See Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, II.5-9, pp. 163-195, M. Préaud, *Les astrologues à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Paris, 1984, pp. 144-146; L. Thorndike, 'Prediction of eclipses in the fourteenth century', *Isis*, 42, 4 (1951), pp. 301-302; P. Contamine, 'Les prédictions annuelles astrologiques à la fin du Moyen Âge: genre littéraire et témoin de leur temps' in *Histoire sociale, sensibilités collectives et mentalités, Mélanges Robert Mandrou*, Paris, 1985, pp. 191-204.

the eclipse. If it is a Full Moon, it forms a lunar eclipse, if a New Moon, a solar eclipse. An eclipse always entails the concealment of light of one of the luminaries, and for this reason its judgement is typically negative. The judgement takes into account the sign where the eclipsed luminary is positioned, particularly the face.⁷¹ In a solar eclipse, it is also crucial to determine the countries or territories in which it is visible; for a lunar eclipse, it is necessary to ascertain if it occurs above the Earth and is, therefore, visible and more powerful, or below it and less powerful because it cannot be seen.

Also relevant are the houses where the eclipse occurs, how much of the luminary is obscured and for how long. The latter determines the extent of the effects. In the case of solar eclipses, each hour of obscuration represents one year of its effects, while in lunar eclipses each hour is equivalent to one month during which the effects will take place.⁷² In both solar and lunar eclipses the time when the effects began to be noticeable is deduced from the eclipse's position in the horoscope. If the eclipsed luminary is positioned between the Ascendant and the Midheaven, the effects are felt soon after the eclipse. If it is placed between the Midheaven and the Descendant, they are felt later, near to the end of the period.⁷³ A more precise calculation can be achieved by dividing the period of duration of the eclipse into six parts, equating to the number of houses above the horizon, and determining in which house it occurs. The rule is summarized in the table below.

Table 29 - The effects of eclipses

Type of eclipse	Duration		Peak effects according to house position ⁷⁴		
	Measure	Adjustments	12 th or 11 th houses	10 th or 9 th houses	8 th or 7 th houses
Lunar	one hour = one month	add or deduct months	first third of total time	second third of total time	last third of total time
Solar	one hour = one year	add or deduct weeks	(immediately if conjunct Ascendant)		(at the end if in Descendant)

The judgement of the Cancer ingress 1295, in NAL 398 f. 76a, exemplifies this rule. As this lunar eclipse lasted for three hours, its effects extended for three months. The Moon was eclipsed in the ninth house, so the stronger effects were expected immediately after the second half of this period, in about six weeks' time.

⁷¹ The faces have different meanings, whether it is a solar or a lunar eclipse. See for instance *Pierio Valeriano, De eclipsis ex Proclo, in Compendium in sphaeram per perium Valerianum Bellunensem, Rome, 1537.*

⁷² As the eclipses seldom last for exact hours, adjustments are often required; in the case of solar eclipses, the adjustment is in months, for lunar eclipses it is in weeks.

⁷³ This particular judgement only takes into account the parts of the horoscope above the horizon; an eclipse occurring below the horizon is not taken into account.

⁷⁴ Ptolemy presents a slightly different method for timing the eclipse; see Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, II.6, p. 165-169.

II. 2. 3. Jupiter-Saturn Conjunctions⁷⁵

The conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn occur about every twenty years and were one of the main tools used by astrologers for collective predictions (kingdoms, nations, people). As the two outermost and slowest of the visible planets are involved, their conjunctions signify major changes as well as natural catastrophes.

The conjunctions occur sequentially in signs of the same element for a period of about 240 years. They move throughout the elements in sequence (Fire, Earth, Air, and Water), completing the cycle in 794 years.⁷⁶ The conjunctions that occur every twenty years are called *minor*; the first conjunction in a new element is called *media*, and the first conjunction of the entire cycle, which must occur in the Fire element, is called *maxima*.

Belle includes in NAL 398 the judgement of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425. It is a *media* conjunction, the first to occur in a sign of the new triplicity – that is, the first of a sequence in a new element (in this case Water in the sign of Scorpio), after several conjunctions in signs of Air. He could have chosen the 1444 conjunction in Cancer, or the 1464 conjunction in Pisces, closer to his time, but these are *minor* conjunctions and therefore less significant. Belle also mentions the Mars-Saturn conjunction and the Mars-Jupiter conjunction, which occur approximately every two years because of the relatively short cycle of Mars. These were judged alongside the lunations and the revolution of the year of the world that precede them.

In theory, the transition of the conjunctions from one element to the other is simple:

- 1 – a sequence of ten or twelve conjunctions in element A
- 2 – the first conjunction in element B
- 3 – the last conjunction in element A
- 4 – a sequence of ten or twelve conjunctions in element B

In practice, the transition is more irregular: there may occur more conjunctions in element A in the beginning or the middle of the new cycle.

⁷⁵ See for instance Bezza, ‘Saturn-Jupiter conjunctions and general Astrology: Ptolemy, Abū Ma‘šār and their commentators’, in Burnett and Greenbaum (eds), *From Masha’Allah to Kepler: theory and practice in Medieval and Renaissance astrology*, Ceredigion, Wales, 2015, pp. 5-48. See also Sela, *Abraham ibn Ezra and the rise of medieval science*, Leiden-Boston, 2003, Sela Sela (ed.), *Abraham ibn Ezra, The Book of the World. A parallel Hebrew-English critical edition of the two versions of the text*, Leiden, 201, p.8, n. 36, and Rodriguez-Arribas, *El cielo de sefarad*, pp. 94-120.

⁷⁶ For the exact length of this cycle, see D. Hasse, *Success and Suppression. Arabic Sciences and Philosophy in the Renaissance*, London, 2016, pp. 248-292, at p. 282.

Table 30 - Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions transiting from the Air element to the Water element in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries

<i>Sequence of conjunctions in signs of Air beginning in 1186</i>		
1365	07°00' Scorpio	Mentioned by Ashenden ⁷⁷
1385	25°53' Gemini	
1405	23°46' Aquarius	
1425	17°18' Scorpio, 16°33' Scorpio, 12°40' Scorpio	Triple conjunction
1444	08°57' Cancer	
1464	04°35' Pisces	
1484	23°10' Scorpio	
1504	16°25' Cancer	
1524	09°13' Pisces (with Mars and a solar eclipse)	
<i>The sequence continues in the Water signs until 1583. In 1603 it occurs at 08°18' Sagittarius, the first conjunction in a sign of Fire</i>		

Note: the other conjunctions of the superior planets – Saturn-Mars and Jupiter-Mars – were also taken into account by most astrologers.

⁷⁷ John of Ashenden, *Judgement of the Great Conjunctions of 1357 and 1365*, copied by Simon de Boesmare, Paris, BnF, Latin 7443, ff. 221r.

II. 3. Nativities

This is the study of astrology as it pertains to an individual (the native), that is, from a chart calculated for the time, date and place of birth. The study of the nativity, also called the radix, includes an evaluation of the native's temperament, circumstances and the main events that will occur during his or her life using methods of prediction as described below.

II. 3. 1 Rectification

Before judging a nativity it is sometimes necessary to rectify it, that is, to ensure that the time of the birth is correct.⁷⁸ The correct time of birth allowed the astrologer to obtain the precise degree of the Ascendant, which is crucial to several calculations, including the parts and the timing of primary directions. Note: these methods can only rectify those horoscopes with an estimated time of birth; in the cases where the time of birth is totally unknown, they cannot be applied.

Belle relies on two main techniques to rectify the nativities: the *animodar* and the *trutina of Hermes*. In MS 1711 Belle mentions rectification by these techniques in MS 1711 ff. 80r, 83r, 87v, 88r, 93r, 93v, 97r, 99v, but he does not include any calculations. Of the three horoscopes with judgements on NAL 398 only one, that of Hubert, offers a complete description of the *animodar*.⁷⁹ The other two were contemporaries of Belle and so their exact time of birth was probably known.

Some astrologers rectified all nativities even when the birth time was accurately recorded to demonstrate their proficiency in the rectification techniques.

II. 3. 1. 1 *Animodar*

A method of confirming the exact time of birth based on the lunation (New Moon or Full Moon) prior to the nativity, explained by Belle in NAL 398 f. 62ra-62va.⁸⁰ It established a correlation between the degree of the Ascendant and the degree of one of the planetary rulers of the lunation before birth. The planet chosen as *animodar* is usually the *almutem* of the lunation degree, but according to Ptolemy the choice may fall in one of the other dignities: the ruler of domicile, exaltation, triplicity, term or face. Thus, the degree of the chosen planet –

⁷⁸ See *Ezra Nativities*, pp. 41-45, 89-97, Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, III.2, pp. 229-235. See also North, *Horoscopes and History*, London, 1986, pp. 1-71.

⁷⁹ Jupiter is chosen as *animodar* because it is the planet closer to an angle (the fourth house) and with triplicity and term in the degree of the lunation prior to birth (20° Libra). It is preferred over the *almutem*, Saturn, which has exaltation and triplicity, suggesting that the author followed Ptolemy's rule, described in *Tetrabiblos*, III.2, pp. 229-235. The degree of Jupiter, 16°10' Sagittarius, is taken as the degree of the lower angle and this adjustment places the Ascendant at 18°15' Virgo. Incidentally, Jupiter also has face, which is not mentioned in this calculation, perhaps because the author was not following the terms, but the Indian decanates, which have a different sequence of planets.

⁸⁰ For more details, see North, *Horoscopes and History*, pp. 51-52, 142-145, North, *Chaucer's Universe*, pp. 213-214, and Poulle, *Horoscopes Princiers*, p. 69.

regardless of the sign it is in – is the same as, or at least close to, the degree of the Ascendant (or of the Midheaven depending on which is closer to the *almutem* degree).

Belle applies this method in NAL 398 f. 76vb (Hubert); f. 85rb (Jo Dap.); f. 90va1 (Charles VIII); f. 91vb2 ('sister') and f. 93rb2 (Charles VIII); and in MS 1711 f. 80r (unidentified native); f. 82v (Louis de Culant); f. 87v (Charles VIII); f. 91r (Peter II of Bourbon); f. 93r (Antoine Belle); f. 93v (Conrad Belle) and f. 99v ('daughter of my uncle from Amboise').

II. 3. 1. 2 *Trutina of Hermes, Enoch's Balance*

A method for confirming the exact time of birth based on the moment of conception, explained by Belle in NAL 398 f. 62va-63ra. It assumes that there is a connection between the position of the Ascendant at birth and the position of the Moon at the moment of conception, that is, the Moon's position at the conception should be very close to the Ascendant degree in the natal chart; likewise its position at birth should be very close to the Ascendant degree at the moment of conception.

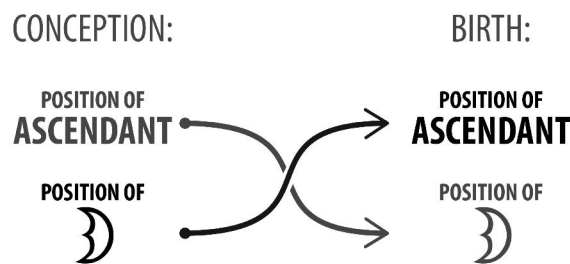


Figure 10 – Concept of *Trutina of Hermes*

In this method, if the Moon is below the horizon and close to the Ascendant, it points to a gestation of exactly nine months (273 days). As the Moon moves further away toward the Ascendant, but still below the horizon, it lengthens the gestation: one day for each thirteen degrees the Moon is distant from the Ascendant. When it is conjunct to the Descendant (still below the horizon), it correspond to nine and a half months (280 days). If the Moon is above the horizon and close to the Ascendant, the gestation is again nine months, but as it moves towards the Descendant, always above the horizon, the period decreases by one day for each thirteen degrees. When the Moon, still above the horizon, conjoins the Descendant, it corresponds to a pregnancy of 258 days (eight months and a half). The concept is summarized as follows:

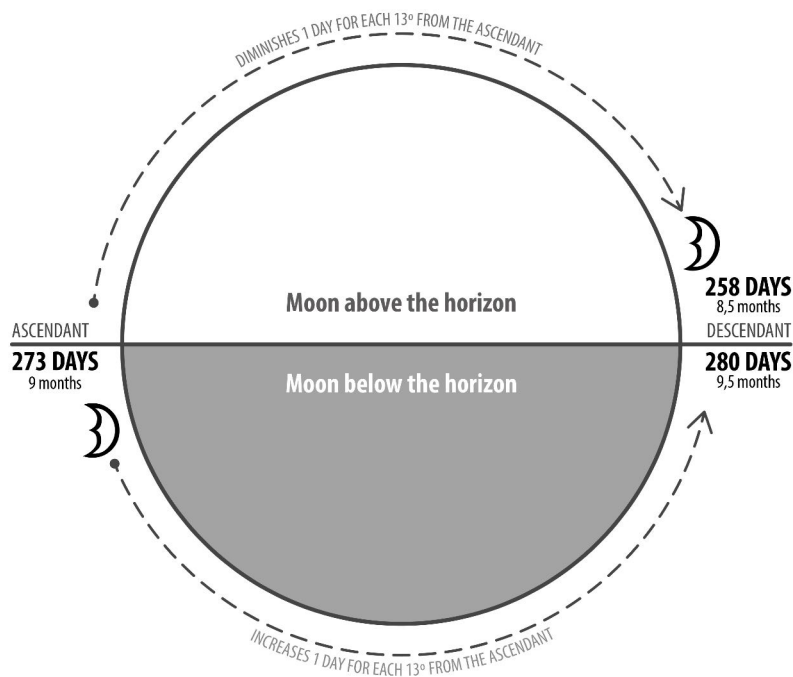


Figure 11 – Gestation length in the *Trutina of Hermes*

By knowing the position of the Moon at the time of conception, the astrologer deduces the position of the Ascendant at the time of birth.

This method is applied to the horoscope of Hubert: *Because the place of the Moon should be the Ascendant of the hour of the conception, and therefore the place of the Moon in the conception should be the place of the Ascendant in this nativity, and indeed they are.*⁸¹

Because the Moon is below the horizon and $70^{\circ}09'$ away from the Ascendant, it is concluded that the gestation lasted for 278 days, that is, nine complete months and five days.⁸² This places the conception on the 4th January, at 'fourteen hours after noon' (that is, fourteen hours after midday), which corresponds to the 5 January at 2 am.⁸³ The Moon is at 20° Virgo, close to Ascendant in the nativity ($18^{\circ}15'$ Virgo), and the Ascendant was at 9° Scorpio, in the same sign as the Moon in the nativity ($28^{\circ}24'$ Scorpio).

Mora: A term used by Belle to refer to the period of gestation; it is related, but not equivalent, to the *Trutina*.

⁸¹ Quia locus Lune debet est ascendens horae conceptionis et ergo locus Lune horae conceptionis debet esse gradus ascendens hoc nativitati, et ita sunt, NAL 398 f. 76vb. The method is explained in ff. 79va-79vb.

⁸² natus fuit in ventre matris 278 dies et 14 horas, f. 76vb. The 70 degrees between the Moon and the Ascendant account for the extra five days. For a complete explanation of the method see Appendix I, II. 5. 1. 2.

⁸³ in 4^a dia Januarii partem et 14 horam post meridiem, f. 76vb.

II. 3. 2. The astrological judgement of nativities⁸⁴

II. 3. 2. 1. The first house and the native

The judgement of the first house is the most important of the whole horoscope. It describes the appearance, vitality, temperament, character, manners, mind, and expected length of life of the native. The remaining houses represent the circumstances in the native's life as explained further on.

II. 3. 2. 1. 1. Temperament⁸⁵

The temperament is considered to be the manifestation of the four classical elements of Fire, Air, Earth, and Water. Like the elements, the temperaments are composed of the four qualities of Hot, Cold, Moist and Dry. The choleric temperament thus corresponds to Fire, which is hot and dry; the sanguine to Air, which is hot and moist; the melancholic to Earth, which is cold and dry; the phlegmatic to Water, which is cold and moist.⁸⁶ This correlation is summarized in the following table.

Table 31 - Qualities, elements, temperaments, humours

Air – Hot and Moist Humour: Sanguine	Fire – Hot and Dry Humour: Choleric
Water – Cold and Moist Humour: Phlegmatic	Earth – Cold and Dry Humour: Melancholic

Discovering the native's temperament is a fundamental step in medical astrology. It is calculated by a formula applied to the horoscope. Each temperament has its own strengths and weaknesses, and each can be prone to certain illnesses. The physician can advise their patients to balance their humours by eating the foods and pursuing the activities more appropriate for each temperament. The goal is to keep the humours well balanced to preserve health and prolong life.

To weigh each humour and thereby identify any in excess, the astrologer considers several points of the horoscope, including the Ascendant sign, its ruler, the Moon's sign and phase and planets placed in the first house. As the four qualities coexist in every person, there are no single-temperament types, but in each person the different proportions constitute a unique

⁸⁴ See for instance Ezra, *Nativities*, pp. 85-181.

⁸⁵ For this section see for instance Ezra, *Nativities*, pp. 99-101, which calculates the temperament, which he calls 'nature'; see also Alcabitius, *Introduction*, II.1-41, pp. 67-83, for the temperament bestowed by the planets.

⁸⁶ See for example C. Burnett (ed. and tr.), *Pseudo-Bede: De mundi celestis terrestrisque constitutione – A Treatise on the Universe and the Soul*, London, 1985, p. 18.

mixture. Most often the results are a mixture of two temperaments, sometimes three; less common are the mixtures of the four temperaments in almost equal parts, and even less those with a clear predominance of one temperament.

Complexion:⁸⁷ This multifaceted concept encompasses the native's temperament, physical type, attitude towards life and, at least partially, character. Complexion includes, but is not limited to, the concept of *commixtio*, the mixture of the qualities of heat, cold, moisture, and dryness constituting the temperament. It also includes vitality, the general condition of health, and the possible susceptibility to certain illnesses, thus making it a crucial instrument for medieval physicians. Based on complexion, the astrologer can offer advice not only on health, but also on what may now be referred to as psychological matters, such as behaviour, relationships, piety, and attitudes towards adversity.⁸⁸

II. 3. 2. 1. 2. Length of life

An approximate calculation of the native's life span. It is not rigidly fixed and it can be extended, within reasonable limits, by a good, pious, temperate lifestyle, or reduced through distempered, undisciplined, and hedonistic behaviour. Apart from these factors, which depend upon the native's free will, there are also external events, the so-called accidents, such as wars, plagues, or murder, which can interfere with the natural course of life. Foreknowledge of the approximate length of life offers the native the possibility to plan and prepare for a good death.

The calculation of the length of life in a nativity entails three main steps: 1) the identification of the *hyleg*; 2) the subsequent determination of the *alcocodem*; and 3) the evaluation of its condition, in order to determine how many years it could provide.

Hyleg and Alcocodem⁸⁹ The two crucial factors for the calculation of length of life: the *hyleg*, the planet that is the giver of life, and the *alcocodem*, the planet that determines life span.

⁸⁷ A definition of complexion is found in Paris, BnF, Latin 7042 f. 04r: complexion is that which is made up of the mixture of the elements (*complexionem dicimus esse quod ex elementorum comixtione conficitur*). Quoted in Jacquard, 'De *crasis* à complexion: Note sur le vocabulaire du temperament en latin medieval', in *La science médicale occidentale entre deux renaissances (XII^e-XV^es)*, Aldershot, 1997, Article VI, pp. 71-76 (p. 72).

⁸⁸ For the correlation between character and health see for instance Chapman, 'Astrological medicine', in *Health, medicine and mortality in the sixteenth century*, C. Webster (ed.), Cambridge, 1979, pp. 275-230.

⁸⁹ See Ezra, *Nativities*, pp. 257-258, 259, 263-264 for *hyleg* and pp. 112-115, 259-260, 263-264 for *alcocodem*. See also Alcabitius, *Introduction*, IV.4-5, pp. 111-115; Boudet, *Lire dans le ciel. La bibliothèque de Simon de Phares, astrologue du XV^e siècle*, Bruxelles, 1994, p. 131; and North, *Chaucer's Universe*, Oxford, 1988, p. 214-217.

Calculation of the *hyleg*

The first and most difficult step in the calculation of the length of life is the identification of the *hyleg*. Belle offers a detailed explanation of the method in NAL 398, ff. 63ra-65rb, summarizing the opinion of several authors.

The tables below summarize the method, which consists of the evaluation of the possible candidates for *hyleg*, following a certain sequence and that are different in diurnal and nocturnal horoscopes. The process for diurnal charts is explained below in Diagram 1: it begins with the Sun, the first candidate for *hyleg*; if the Sun is in good conditions (as explained in the table), it is chosen and no additional calculations are necessary. If, however, it is not suitable to be *hyleg*, the evaluation moves on to the next possible candidate in the list, the Moon. If the Moon is not in a condition to be *hyleg*, the astrologer determined whether the horoscope was conjunctional or preventional before taking the next step. In a conjunctional horoscope the preceding lunation is a New Moon; the process is explained in Diagram A: the next candidate to be *hyleg* is the Ascendant, then the Lot of Fortune and finally the lunation preceding birth (in this case the New Moon). Diagram B explains the sequence for preventional horoscopes: first the Lot of Fortune, then the Ascendant and finally the lunation preceding birth (the Full Moon). In either case, if none of these have the required conditions, the nativity is considered to have no *hyleg*, being therefore weak. Diagram 2 shows the sequence for nocturnal horoscopes: first the Moon, then the Sun; if none of them is in good condition, the sequence follows either Diagram A if the horoscope is conjunctional or Diagram B if preventional.

Diagram 1 – General rules for determining the *hyleg* in a diurnal chart

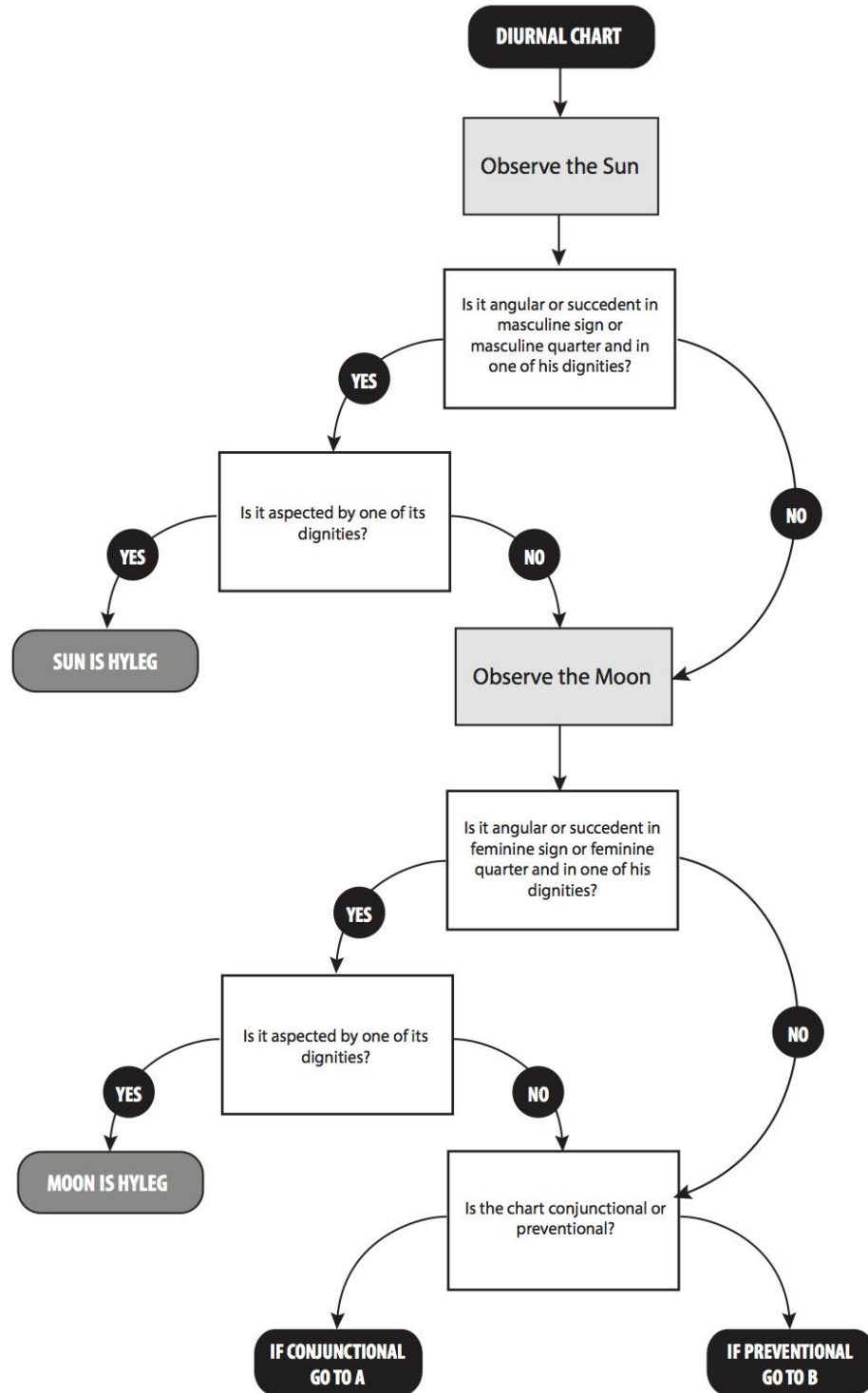


Diagram 2 – General rules for determining the *hyleg* in a nocturnal chart

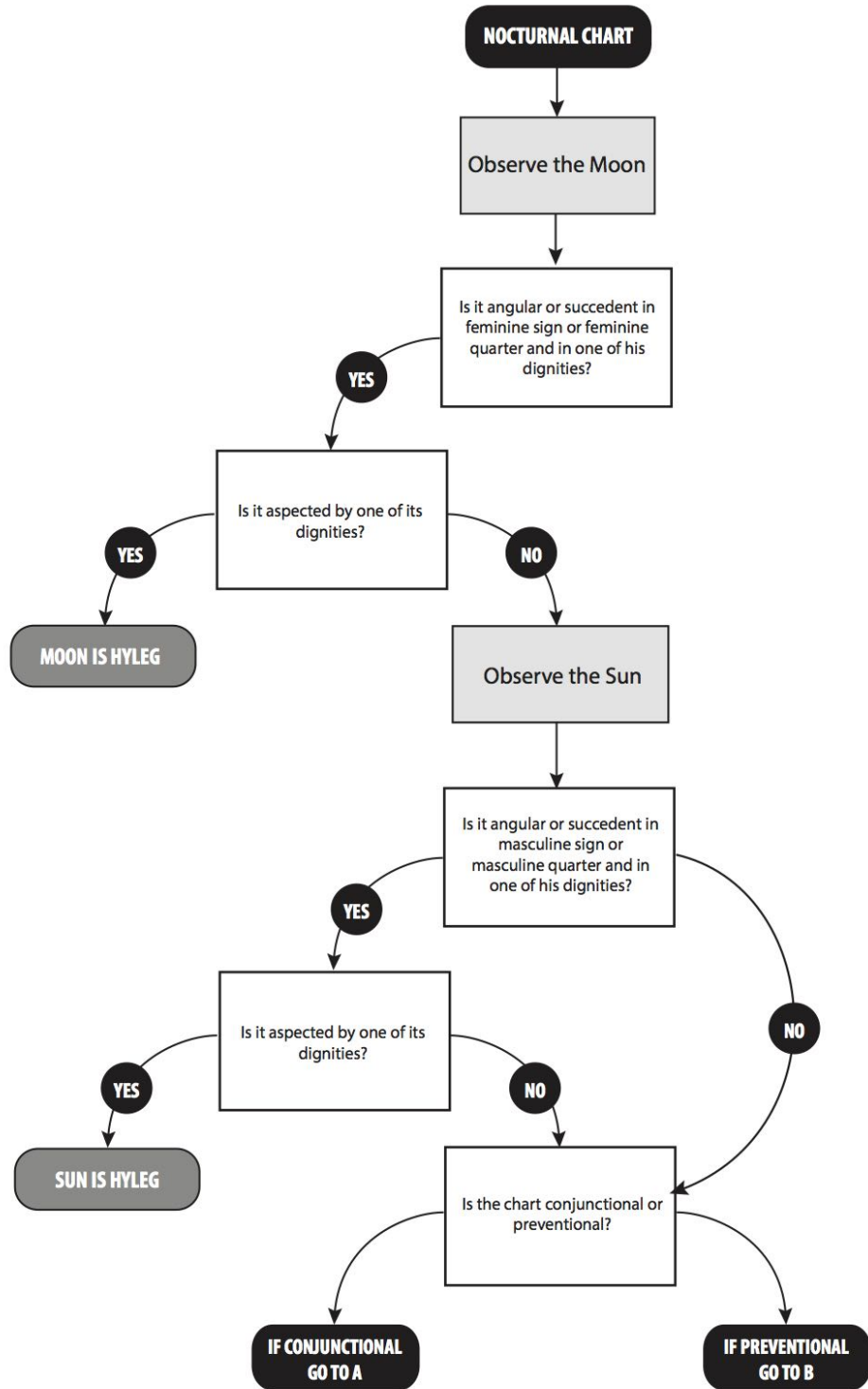


Diagram A – Determining the *hyleg* (options for a conjunctional chart)

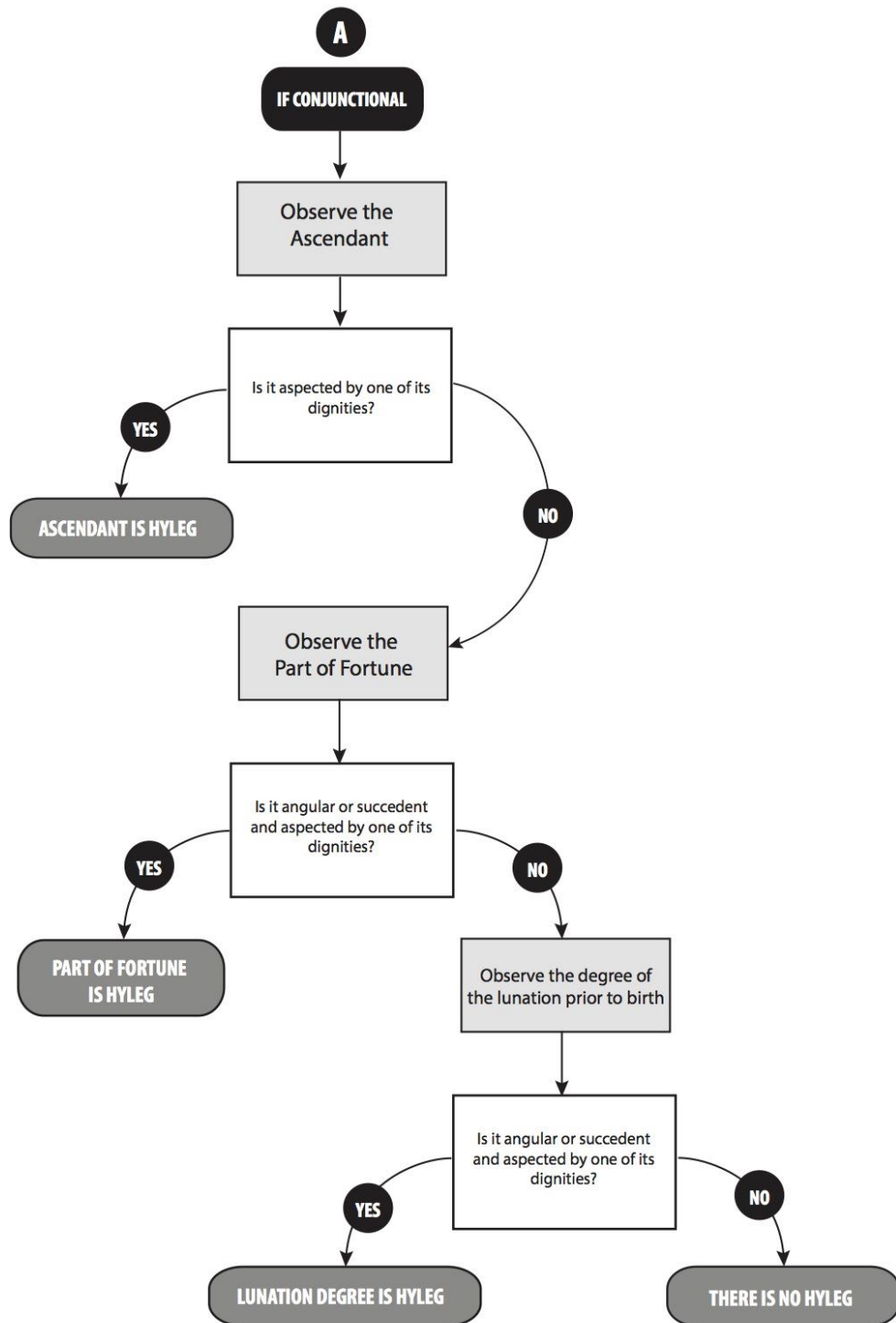
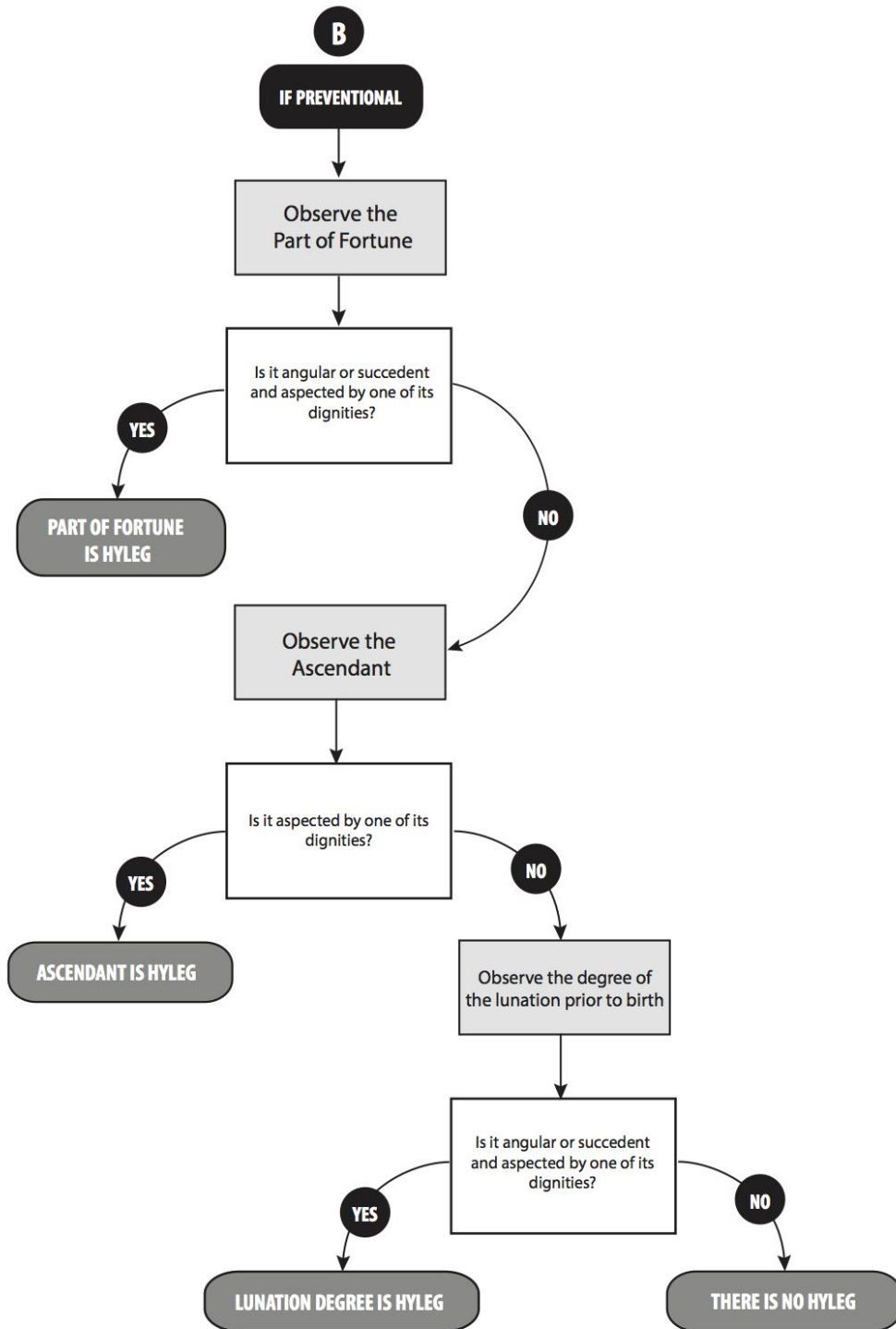


Diagram B – Determining the *hyleg* (options for a preventional chart)



Ptolemy's variant for calculation the *hyleg*⁹⁰

Like most authors, Ptolemy prioritizes the luminaries as *hyleg*, which he refers to as prorogator: in diurnal horoscopes, the Sun, and if it is not suitable, the Moon; in nocturnal horoscopes, the Moon, and if it is not suitable, the Sun. However, the luminaries are only accepted if they are in, what he calls, the 'prorogative places': the first, eleventh, tenth, ninth, and seventh houses. If the luminaries are not in these houses, he replaces them with certain planets as *hyleg* instead of following the usual alternatives, as explained above. In diurnal nativities he chooses as *hyleg* the planet that has more dignities in the places of the Sun, of the preceding conjunction, and of the Ascendant; in nocturnal ones, the planet that has more dignities in the places of the Moon, of the preceding Full Moon, and of the Lot of Fortune. These planets also have to be in prorogative places to be considered as *hyleg*. Should they not be in these conditions, the Ascendant is chosen in diurnal nativities. In nocturnal nativities, the Ascendant is also chosen, but only if the lunation prior to birth was a New Moon, if it were a Full Moon the Lot of Fortune is chosen as *hyleg*.

These methods are summarized below, in Diagrams 3 and 4.

The judgement of Hubert presents an example of this alternative method, as the author chooses Saturn as *hyleg* (f. 76vb). Following Ptolemy's method, this chart, being nocturnal, has both the Moon and the Sun are unsuitable to be the prorogator (*hyleg*) because they are both below the horizon. Saturn is the planet that has most dignities in the places of the Moon, of the preceding Full Moon and of the Lot of Fortune. As it is placed in the seventh house – one of the prorogative places – it is suitable to be *hyleg* and is thus selected. On another note, Belle also includes an example of a subsidiary *hyleg* in the judgement of Hubert, in his case, the *hyleg* of the native's mother (f.78rb).

⁹⁰ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, III.10, pp. 271-279.

Diagram 3 – Ptolemy’s rules for determining the *hyleg* in a diurnal chart

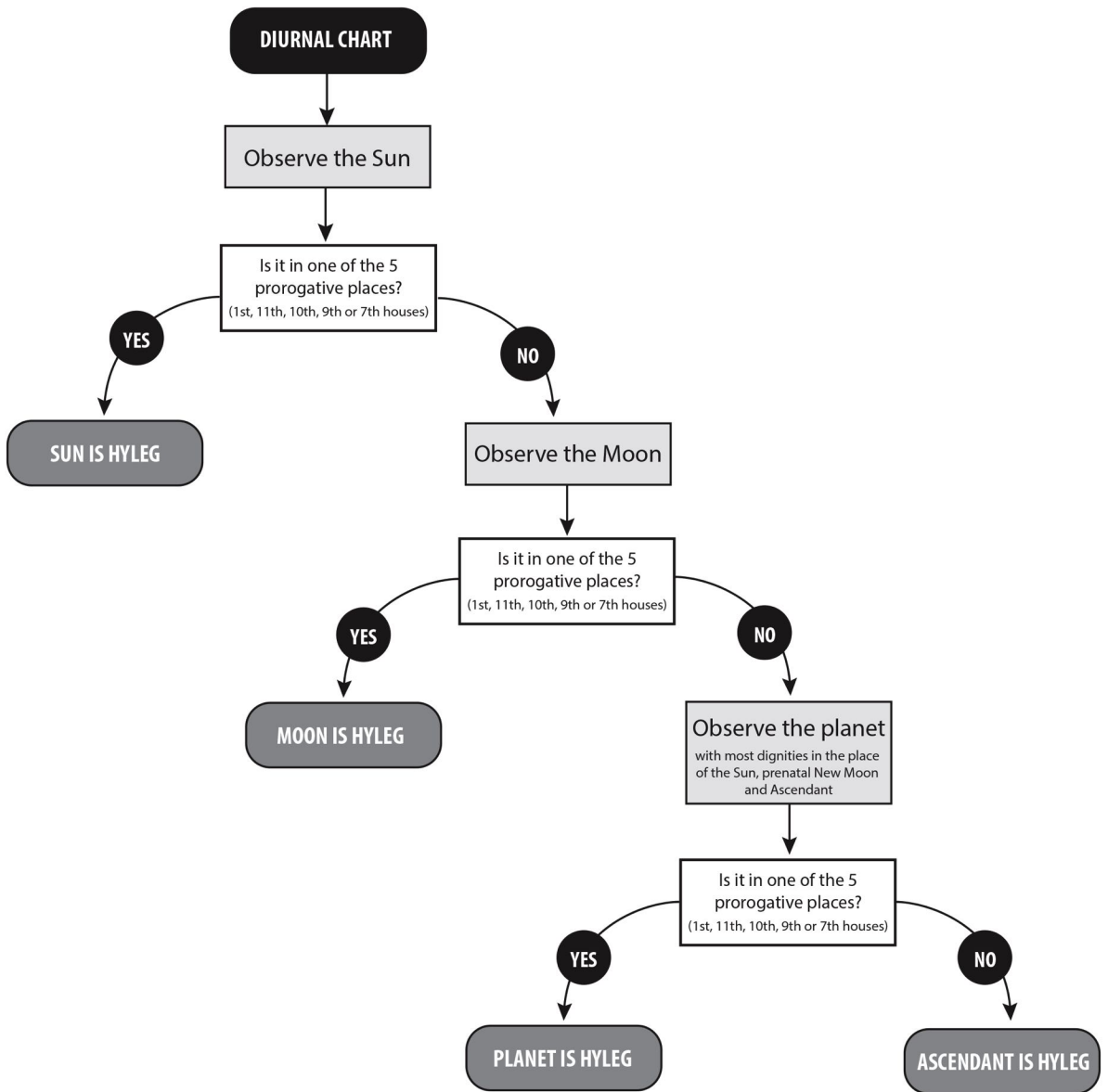
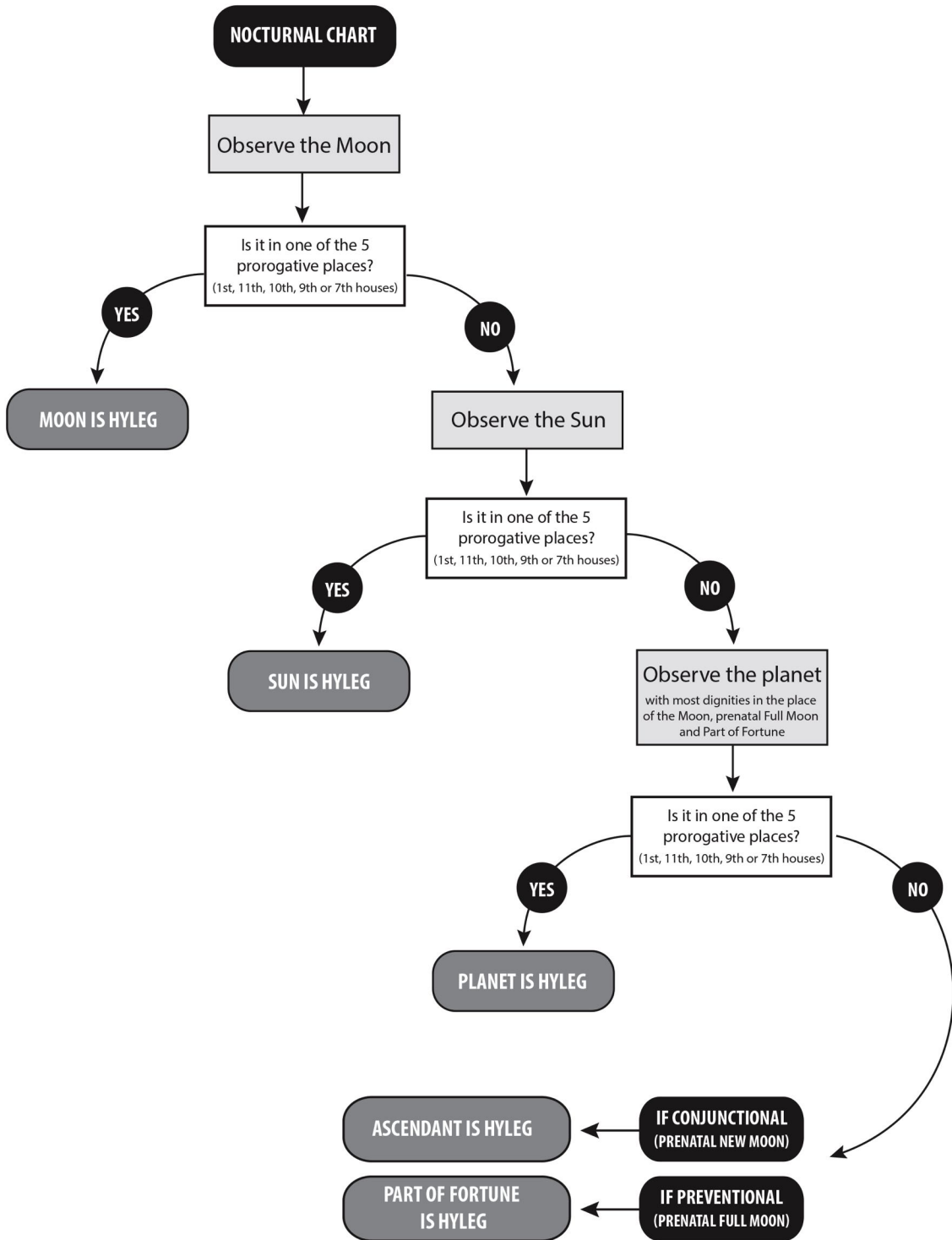


Diagram 4 – Ptolemy’s rules for determining the *hyleg* in a nocturnal chart



The *alcocodem*

Once the *hyleg* is defined it is possible to take the next step, that is, to determine the *alcocodem*, the planet that measures the length of life. For a planet to be selected as *alcocodem*, it must both aspect the *hyleg* by any aspect and have some dignity in the degree of the *hyleg*. In other words, it has to be related to the *hyleg* by aspect and by disposition. The third step is the evaluation of the *alcocodem*'s condition in order to ascertain how many years is it able to give: when in very good condition, the *alcocodem* is able to give its greater years, in median condition, its median years, in weak condition, its lesser years (see table 'Years of the Planets'). The calculation is then refined by the inclusion of the aspects to the *alcocodem*: conjunctions sextiles, and trines from the benefics add years or months, while squares, oppositions and again conjunctions from the malefics, subtract years or months from the number determined by the condition of the *alcocodem*. Still, the number obtained is not yet the length of life of the native, but only the natural duration of his vital force. These conclusions are seen as possibilities and has to be confirmed by other predictive methods.⁹¹ If there are no difficult directions afflicting the *hyleg* around that time, life can be prolonged considerably by a moderated and pious lifestyle.

Years of the planets:

Each planet is associated with a certain number of years: greater, median, or lesser, as explained in the table below. The fourth category, called *maxima*, is used only in revolutions of the year. All these periods are related to the geocentric astronomical cycles of the planets.

Table 32 - Years of the planets

Years	Saturn	Jupiter	Mars	Sun	Venus	Mercury	Moon
Greater	57	79	66	120	82	76	108
Median	43.5	45.5	40.5	69.5	45	48	66.5
Lesser	30	12	15	19	8	20	25
Maxima	256	426	284	1461	1151	461	520

⁹¹ The complete method is explained by several authors, such as Dorotheus, Alcabitus, Haly Abenragel and Guido Bonatti. Despite minor variations, it remained essentially the same throughout the centuries.

II. 3. 2. 2. Judging the houses

The circumstances of the native's life – wealth (or lack thereof), brothers, parents, children, health, marriage, death and fears, religion and travel, achievement and honours, friends, and finally enemies – are represented by the other astrological houses. Belle's method of judging nativities follows the same rules, with some adaptations, as the one he uses in revolutions.

II. 3. 3. Prediction

The concept of prediction is based on the assumption that if it is possible to interpret celestial motion to describe the present, it is also possible, knowing future celestial movements, to describe the future. The events predicted by the astrologer are not personally directed at particular individuals, but rather the natural result of planetary movements, and impersonal in essence. Some contingencies affecting human life, such as race, gender, age, social condition, and geographical location are also taken into account because they interact with the horoscope and reinforce some of its qualities while moderating others.⁹²

Belle's attitude towards prediction is mainly preventive: while clearly stating that the events will happen, he offers suggestions to diminish their effects or even to escape them altogether. For instance, in NAL 398 f. 93ra1, he predicts the kind of illnesses the native was prone to and identifies the periods when these illnesses were most likely to manifest, thus allowing the native to take the necessary steps to avoid, or at least ameliorate, these undesirable events.

II. 3. 3. 1. Directions (also called *tasyir*)⁹³

Belle describes this technique as the years in which 'the signifier of his life will come by direction to the bodies of malefic planets or to their rays'.⁹⁴ It is based on the rising of the five *hylegical* points, which are the Ascendant degree, the Sun, the Moon, the Lot of Fortune, and the degree of the Midheaven.⁹⁵ As they move they interact with the original positions of the chart, generating new configurations to be interpreted by the astrologer.

The nature of the directed planet determines the general nature of that period. Benefic planets when forming connections with the horoscope by direction signify good periods, while the malefics are considered to do the opposite. In addition, the ruler's good or bad condition in the horoscope is also considered as to whether it moderated or reinforced its own nature: dignified benefics clearly indicate good periods, while weak ones mean mediocre periods;

⁹² For the interaction between astrology and other factors, see Ezra, *Nativities*, pp. 29-38.

⁹³ The term *tasyir* is sometimes used indifferently to define any type of movement in the horoscope, whether it be directions, divisor, or profections. See for instance Alcabitus, *Introduction*, IV.11-14, pp. 121-129.

⁹⁴ 'le sinificateur de sa vie perviendra per direction aux corps des mauvaix planètes ou a leurs rays', f. 94ra.

⁹⁵ In some cases, the Midheaven is replaced by the lunation previous to birth.

dignified malefics signify hard work leading to success, while weak ones mean difficulties and strife.

The directions indicated general tendencies that are active for extended periods, like months or years. In order to obtain more accurate results, the astrologer combines them with other predictive methods.

II. 3. 3. 2. Divisor or *algebutar*⁹⁶

This is a distinct form of direction, based on the movement of the Ascendant through the terms of the signs. Belle uses it to determine ‘the rulership of the planets over the native over the course of his life by the direction of the terms of the planets’.⁹⁷ The good or bad condition of the period is determined mainly by the nature of the ruler, as explained before. The aspects formed by the Ascendant degree directed to the natal planets during its passage through each term also contribute to the interpretation. Finally, the interaction of other predictive cycles may also contribute to the ruler’s condition, and so two periods ruled by the same planet can produce somewhat different results.

II. 3. 3. 3. Profections or advancements⁹⁸

Belle calls this technique ‘the years in which the several signifiers will come by profection to the good places or bad’.⁹⁹ He explains it in NAL 398 ff. 68vb-69rb. Profection, or advancement, is a technique based on the circular movement of all the constituents of the horoscope by moving thirty degrees (that is, a complete sign) each year, whilst keeping their relative positions. The aim is to determine ‘the convenient and profitable or inconvenient and damaging years’.¹⁰⁰ The chart takes twelve years to return to its original position. In this circular motion, the interaction of these movements with the original positions of the planets in the birth horoscope allowed the astrologer to make predictions. This cyclical movement takes into consideration the five *hylegical* points explained above.

⁹⁶ Alcabitus calls *garbuhtar* to ‘the tasyir of the degree of the Ascendant’; Alcabitus, *Introduction*, IV.14, p. 129. Also references by Boudet, *Lire dans le ciel*, p. 123, n. 87.

⁹⁷ ‘le régime des planètes sur le ney selon le cors de sa vie per la direction des termes das planetes’, f. 94ra.

⁹⁸ Al-Bīrūnī calls the profection *intiha’at*, in Albiruni, *Instruction*, 521, p. 323. Avenezra calls this technique the ‘terminal sign’; Ezra, *Nativities*, pp. 375-377. See also Alcabitus, *Introduction*, IV.8-10, pp. 117-121.

⁹⁹ ‘les annees esquelles les sinificateurs divers viendront per [d, crossed through] profection aux lieux bons ou mauvais’, f. 94ra.

¹⁰⁰ ‘les annees convenantes et proffitables ou disconvenientes et domagables’, f. 94ra.

Table 33 - Profections

Age of native								Advancement of the <i>hylegical</i> points in each sign													
1	13	25	37	49	61	73	85	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉
2	14	26	38	50	62	74	86	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊
3	15	27	39	51	63	75	87	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋
4	16	28	40	52	64	76	88	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌
5	17	29	41	53	65	77	89	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍
6	18	30	42	54	66	78	90	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎
7	19	31	43	55	67	79	91	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏
8	20	32	44	56	68	80	92	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐
9	21	33	45	57	69	81	93	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑
10	22	34	46	58	70	82	94	♑	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒
11	23	35	47	59	71	83	95	♒	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓
12	24	36	48	60	72	84	96	♓	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎	♏	♐	♑	♒	♓	♈

To use this table:

- select one of the *hylegical* points in the horoscope and take note of the sign it is in;
- on the right of the table choose the column with that sign at the top;
- on the left of the table take the year corresponding to the native's age;
- follow the column down until it reaches the row corresponding to the native's age;
- this is the position of the profection for the *hylegical* point mentioned in that year.

For instance: consider a fifty-year-old native, whose Ascendant is twelve degrees of Virgo. Select the column on the right starting with Virgo, and the row with the number fifty-eight on the left; follow the column down until it reaches the row. This marks the position of the profected Ascendant for that year, in this case, Gemini.

II. 3. 3. 4. Revolutions of the years of the native (anniversary horoscopes)¹⁰¹

A technique based on the exact moment of the annual return of the Sun to its position at the birth in a given horoscope, which occurs around the date of the native's birthday. The astrologer determines the precise moment of the return and calculates the respective horoscope. Though the Sun is in same position as it was at the native's birth, all the other planets are not because each has a different cycle. This secondary horoscope is active for a year, from one birthday to the next, and it is subordinate to the determinations of the birth horoscope (the *radix*).

¹⁰¹ For a complete explanation on this section, see Ezra, *Nativities*, pp. 373-389.

II. 3. 3. 5. *Firdaria*¹⁰²

These are periods of rulership attributed to the planets. Belle explains the method in NAL 398 ff. 69vb-70ra. To each planet is attributed a different number of years according to certain astronomical cycles; the condition of the planet in the horoscope defined the good or bad quality of the period it rules.

The diurnal sequence begins with the Sun: ten years for the Sun (from 0 to 10 years of age), eight for Venus (from 10 to 18), thirteen to Mercury (18 to 31), nine for the Moon (31 to 40), eleven to Saturn (31 to 51), twelve to Jupiter (51 to 63), seven to Mars (63 to 70), three for the North Node (70 to 73) and two for the South Node (73 to 75); the sequence then resumes with the Sun. The nocturnal sequence is nine years for the Moon (from 0 to 9 years of age), eleven to Saturn (from 9 to 20), twelve to Jupiter (20 to 32), seven to Mars (32 to 39), ten years for the Sun (39 to 49 years), eight for Venus (49 to 57), thirteen to Mercury (57 to 70), three for the North Node (70 to 73) and two for the South Node (73 to 75); the sequence begins again with the Moon. The periods are usually divided into seven sub-periods, also ruled by the planets, beginning with the ruler of the period and following the sequence, as shown in the table below.

Table 34 - *Firdaria* for natiuities

Sequence for diurnal horoscopes			Sequence for nocturnal horoscopes		
Period	Age	Sub-periods	Period	Age	Sub-periods
Sun ☉ 10 years	0 – 10	☉ ♀ ☽ ♃ ♄ ☽	Moon ☾ 9 years	0 – 9	☽ ♃ ♄ ☽ ☉ ♀ ☽
Venus ♀ 8 years	10 – 18	♀ ☽ ♃ ♄ ☽ ☉	Saturn ♄ 11 years	9 – 20	♄ ♄ ☽ ☉ ♀ ☽ ☽
Mercury ☿ 13 years	18 – 31	☿ ☽ ♃ ♄ ☽ ☉ ♀	Jupiter ♃ 12 years	20 – 32	♃ ☽ ☉ ♀ ☽ ♃ ♄
Moon ☾ 9 years	31 – 40	☽ ♃ ♄ ☽ ☉ ♀ ☽	Mars ♂ 7 years	32 – 39	♂ ☉ ♀ ☽ ♃ ♄
Saturn ♄ 11 years	40 – 51	♄ ♄ ☽ ☉ ♀ ☽ ☽	Sun ☉ 10 years	39 – 49	☉ ♀ ☽ ♃ ♄ ☽
Jupiter ♃ 12 years	51 – 63	♃ ☽ ☉ ♀ ☽ ☽ ♃	Venus ♀ 8 years	49 – 57	♀ ☽ ♃ ♄ ☽ ☽ ☉
Mars ♂ 7 years	63 – 70	♂ ☉ ♀ ☽ ☽ ♃ ♄	Mercury ☿ 13 years	57 – 70	☿ ☽ ♃ ♄ ☽ ☽ ☽
N Node ♁ 3 years	70 – 73	none	N Node ♁ 3 years	70 – 73	none
S Node ♁ 2 years	73 – 75	none	S Node ♁ 2 years	73 – 75	none

There are also *firdaria* for collective events, such as Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions, lunations, or solar ingresses.¹⁰³ The same number of years is attributed to each planet, but they follow the sequence of the exaltations of the planets. The sub-periods, however, follow the Ptolemaic sequence for diurnal horoscopes, that is, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars.

¹⁰² See for instance Ezra, *Natiuities*, p. 190-195 and Alcabitus, *Introduction*, IV.20, pp. 133-135.

¹⁰³ For more details, see Sela (ed.), Ezra, *World*, pp. 21-22, 30 and 67-69. See also *On Historical Astrology: The Book of Religions and Dynasties (On the Great Conjunctions)*, I, Burnett, Yamamoto (eds), Leiden, 2000, pp. 592-592.

Table 35 - Firdaria for collective events

Diurnal sequence			
Period		Sub-periods	
Sun	☉ 10 years	☉ ♀ ☽ ☿ ♃ ☿	
Moon	☾ 9 years	☽ ☿ ♃ ☉ ♀ ♀	
N Node	♊ 3 years	none	
Jupiter	♃ 12 years	♃ ☿ ☉ ♀ ☽ ☿	
Mercury	☿ 13 years	☽ ☿ ♃ ☿ ☉ ♀	
Saturn	♄ 11 years	♄ ♃ ☿ ☉ ♀ ☽ ☿	
S Node	♋ 2 years	none	
Mars	♂ 7 years	♂ ☉ ♀ ☽ ☿ ♃	
Venus	♀ 8 years	♀ ♀ ☽ ☿ ♃ ☉	

II. 3. 3. 6. Ages of the planets (ages of Man)¹⁰⁴

The ages of the planets is another sequence of rulership attributed to the planets from birth up to the age of ninety-eight. The sequence is similar for diurnal and nocturnal horoscopes. It begins with the Moon, signifying the first years of the infant, and follows the ascending order of the spheres: Mercury, the school years; Venus, the teen years; Sun, youth; Mars, maturity and struggle; Jupiter, the age of wisdom; Saturn, old age. The condition of the planet in a given horoscope determines the quality of the period it rules.

Table 36 - The ages of the planets

Moon	4 years	from birth to 4 years old
Mercury	10 years	from 4 to 14
Venus	8 years	from 14 to 22
Sun	19 years	from 22 to 41
Mars	15 years	from 41 to 56
Jupiter	12 years	from 56 to 68
Saturn	30 years	from 68 to 98

This technique is included in the judgement for Hubert, on NAL 398 f. 85rb.

II. 3. 3. 7. Lord of the orb (*dominus orbis*)¹⁰⁵

A technique based on the planetary rulers of the hours. Belle explains it in NAL 398, ff. 69va-69vb. The first year of life is ruled by the planet presiding over the hour at the moment of birth, the second year to the planet governing the next hour, and so on, following the sequence of the orbs.¹⁰⁶ Some variants also add the houses to the judgement, combining them with the planetary

¹⁰⁴ A common method of periodization; see for instance Haly Abenragel, *El libro conplido*, pp. 3.5.

¹⁰⁵ See C. O. de Santiago, *‘El pronóstico en astrología. Edición crítica y comentario astrologico de la parte VI del ‘Libro conplido en los iudizios de las estrelas de Abenragel’*, Ph D. thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2006, pp. 247-248. See also Alcabitius, *Introduction*, IV.19, p. 133.

¹⁰⁶ That is: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon.

rulers: the first year is signified not only by the planetary ruler of the hour of birth, but also by the first house, and so on. It is not clear, when referring to this technique, which version is being used.

II. 3. 3. 8. Transits¹⁰⁷

It is the study of the passage of the planets, in their natural movement, over key points of the horoscope by conjunction or by aspect. It is a minor technique, used in combination with other, more robust, methods of prediction, such as directions, profections, and revolutions.

II. 3. 3. 9. Combining predictive techniques¹⁰⁸

All the aforementioned techniques work independently and offer objective information by themselves, but in practice they are applied in combination in order to obtain more accurate results. The long-term techniques, such as directions (*tasyr*), divisor (*algebutar*) and *firdaria* determine the general conditions in long-term periods of the native's life, while the profections and the *revolutions of the years of the native* offer the annual prognosis.¹⁰⁹

To predict an event with certainty, the astrologer has to combine several methods. If the event predicted by one technique is not confirmed by at least one other, preferably more, its impact is diluted considerably. For instance, if one of the techniques suggests the possibility of a fatal illness at a given date and this is not confirmed by others, the illness can be reduced to a serious, though not fatal, ailment. This is also valid for beneficial predictions: the possibility of monetary gain, for instance, can vary between substantial, if confirmed by more than one technique, and modest, if not confirmed.

¹⁰⁷ See for instance Alcabitus, *Introduction*, IV.21, pp. 135-137.

¹⁰⁸ See for instance Ezra, *Nativities*, pp. 55-56.

¹⁰⁹ Examples of directions and profections can be found in BnF Lat. 7443, ff. 58 and 61 (see also ff. 53-54); they are mentioned by Boudet, *La recueil des plus célèbres astrologues de Simon de Phares*, Paris, 1999, II, p. 35. For an explanation of these techniques, see for instance Albiruni, *Instruction*, 521-523, pp. 322-327.

II. 4. Interrogations¹¹⁰

The judgement of interrogations follows the same rules as all the other astrological applications, although there are a few differences particular to the narrower focus of the questions.¹¹¹ The four steps for judging an interrogation:

- 1) **Asking the right question.** The querent, or questioner, is expected to formulate the question in a manner that truly reflects what he or she wants to know. Under certain circumstances, the astrologer may decide that the question cannot be answered.
- 2) **Identifying the significators.** The querent is usually represented by the Ascendant and its ruler, and the Moon; and the quesited, the matter or person asked about, by the ruler of the house related to it and any planets placed in that house. Additionally, a planet in an angle is considered, even if not directly related to the question, because it represents a natural context to the question. Only those parts of the horoscope relevant to the question are considered in the judgement, the rest of the chart is largely disregarded.
- 3) **Evaluating the significators.** They are evaluated in terms of their essential and accidental dignities and debilities, their positions in the houses, and the aspects they formed. The movements of the Moon are also considered: the last aspect it formed represented an event, situation or action that had happened very recently, and its next aspect indicated future events, situations, or actions.
- 4) **Answering the question.** After carefully evaluating all the relevant factors, the astrologer arrives at the judgement by deduction according to the astrological rules.

Belle includes three interrogations in NAL 398: ff. 54va, 54vb and 101r– include judgement. In both he begins judgement by determining the significators. The first, ‘Is this person alive?’ (f. 54va) he states: ‘I looked into this question and I gave the ascendant and its lord and the Moon to the absent person, since the question was made for him (f. 54va).’ In the second, ‘Will the messenger come back? Will he bring money?’ (f. 54vb): ‘I looked at this question and gave the Ascendant and its lord to the querent, the fifth house and its lord to the messenger, and I made the Moon a participant with the significator of the messenger.’

¹¹⁰ For this section, see for instance Ezra, *Elections*, pp. 14-16, 214-443.

¹¹¹ This is a simplified version. See for example Dykes, *The Book of the Nine Judges*, pp. 20-57.

Timing the event in interrogations:

This is the most difficult part of the judgement. To determine when the event will take place, the astrologer has to take into account the general context of the horoscope and also the mode of the sign where the faster of the significators is placed. If it is in a moveable sign, the event will take place soon (minutes, hours, or days); in a fixed sign, it will take a long time (weeks, months, years); in a double sign, an intermediate time.¹¹²

Belle mentions timing in 54vb: “And seven degrees and four minutes existing between the significators of the messenger and the querent signified that the time of his arrival would be seven hours from the time of the question, with a few parts of the hour, and if he does not come back then, it will be in seven days, with some hours.”¹¹³

II. 5. Elections¹¹⁴

This application of astrology is used to choose the best moment for a given action and follows a particular set of rules. The main factors are the condition of the Ascendant, its ruler, and the planets located therein. Other pertinent factors are the condition of the Moon and the aspects it forms, and the house representing the matter under examination (the seventh for marriage, the eleventh for alliances, and so on). This method was frequently used in medicine to choose the best time to perform medical procedures.

¹¹² See for instance Bonatti, *Book of Astronomy*, p. 879.

¹¹³ Et 7 gradus et 4 minutis existentia inter significatores nuntii et querentis, significabat quod tempus sui adventus ab hora questionis essent 7 hore cum aliquibus fractionibus et si tunc non rediret essent 7 dies cum aliquibus horis, NAL 398 f. 54vb.

¹¹⁴ See for instance Ezra, *Elections*, pp. 47-89.

II. 6. Astrology and medicine¹¹⁵

The key to health and long life resides in the balance of the humours; a well-balanced, moderate, well-tempered person is healthy both in body and in spirit, and that an imbalance in one negatively affected the other. This balance, however, is not the same for every person and it varies according to the different configurations of each horoscope. The study of the temperament enabled the physician to determine the patient's natural propensity to contract diseases and offered clues for their treatment.

The four applications of astrology were crucial for medical practice. The natal chart describes the native's temperament, their prospective length of life and vitality, as well as their predisposition to certain medical conditions. If such predisposition were detected, the physician would prescribe treatments to counteract the problem. These would be applied at moments elected by the physician according to astrological rules. In the case of acute health problems, the astrologer would cast a chart for the moment when the patient fell ill in order to calculate the duration and gravity of the illness. The patient can also address direct questions to the astrologer, for instance, if he were going to survive, if he had been poisoned, or if there would be any after-effects. Occasionally, the revolutions of the year can also assist medical practice in the case of plague, famine, water poisoning, or natural disasters. In such cases, the astrologer can cast a chart for the beginning of each season as described earlier to detect turning points whether for good or ill.

One of the main tasks of the physician was to help patients to keep their own balance of humours, to maintain health and to extend life, which required regular attention from the physician and also the active participation of the native. Medieval physicians focused mainly on maintaining health and on preventing illness, and they expected their patients to assume a degree of responsibility for their health.

¹¹⁵ See for instance Charmasson, 'Roland l'Ecrivain, médecin des ducs de Bourgogne', *Actes du 101^e Congrès national des sociétés savants, Lille, 1976*, p. 21-23, and Boudet and Charmasson, 'Une consultation astrologique princière em 1427', in *Comprendre et maîtriser la nature au moyen âge. Mélanges d'histoire des sciences offerts à Guy Beaujouan*, Genève, 1994, pp. 255-78; Jacquard, *La Médecine médiévale dans le cadre parisien*, Paris, 1998; 'Everyday practice and three fifteenth-century physicians', *Osiris*, 6, 1990, pp. 140-160; Page in 'Richard Trewythian and the uses of astrology in late medieval England', in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 64, 2001, pp. 193-228; *Astro-medicine*, especially pp. 33-35, 75-98, and 119-141. Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan England: Simon Forman, astrologer, alchemist and physician*, Oxford, 2005, and L. Kassell, 'The astrologer's tables', *History Today*, 61, 9, September 2011; A. Fidora (ed), *Die mantischen kunste und die epistemologie prognostischer wissenschaften in mittelalter*, Wien, 2013, especially pp. 101-129; B. Dooley (ed.), *A companion to Astrology*, and W. Deimann and D. Juste (eds), *Astrologers and their clients in medieval and early modern Europe*, Wien, 2015, pp. 83-104, 139-204.

II. 7. Timing events

In certain judgements, such as interrogations and revolutions, the astrologer may apply several methods to estimate the time when the events will occur. The most simple and straightforward one is to consider either the ascension or culmination time of the significators, or the number of degrees between two significators, or transited by a phenomenon (such as a comet). Some of these calculations give a number, but not the unit of time itself. It allows for instance to know that three units of time will pass, but not exactly which one; it can be days, months or years. The unit is usually deduced by considering the sign and house position of the significator. If placed in moveable signs and/or angular houses, it means brevity, therefore minutes, hour or days; fixed signs and/or cadent houses mean delay, so months, years or even decades; double signs and/or succedent houses mean an intermediate period, so weeks or months, always depending of what makes sense in the context of the judgement. Usually it is required to combine divergent timings, such as a significator placed in a fixed sign and in an angular house, which implies delay combined with brevity, thus resulting in an intermediate time. The table below summarises this concept.

Table 37 - Timing the events

Position of the significator	Unit of time (depending on the context)
Moveable signs – ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒	Brevity, velocity
Angular houses – I IV VII X	Minutes, hours, days
Double signs – ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎	Intermediate periods
Succedent houses – I II V VIII XI	Weeks, months
Fixed signs – ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋	Delay,
Cadent houses – II VI IX XII	Months, years, decades

Belle uses this method when judging the effects of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425, in NAL 398, f. 81rb.

PART III – CALENDARS AND GEOGRAPHY

III. 1. Time notation¹¹⁶

III. 1. 1. Years

In the titles of the charts, the reference to the year is often accompanied by terms such as *perfecto*, *imperfecto* or *currente*. This indicates that the year mentioned is yet to be completed (*imperfecto*, *currente*), or has already finished (*completo*, *perfecto*).

Belle uses the term *currente* in his own writings but uses different notations when he copies from other authors. For instance, in NAL 398 f. 79v he states that Hubert was born in the ‘year of the Lord 1259 *perfecto*, with seven months from Mars, and eight days of October’ (*‘anno domine 1259 perfecto cum a 7 mensibus a martio et 8 diebus octobrem’*). This is not his usual notation. At first glance, the date seems to be 8 October 1259, but the planetary positions in the horoscope correspond to 9 October 1260. The notation *perfecto* indicates that the year 1259 was already completed, so the year was in fact 1260. The reference to ‘seven months from March’ points to October. In case of doubt, the date can be confirmed by comparing the horoscope with the planetary positions given by a good computer program.

III. 1. 2. Days and hours

By the end of the fifteenth century astrologers used two different referentials to count the hours: they could begin the counting at midnight, which is usually referred to as the pre-Alphonsine method, or they could begin at midday, a method that was introduced by the Alphonsine tables. If the astrologer were to take midday, that is, the moment of the Sun’s culmination, as the beginning of the astronomical day, only the events occurring after midday – *post meridiem* – had the date of the current day; the events occurring before noon – *ante meridiem* – would have the date of the previous day. The two systems co-existed; and even though some astrologers favoured one or the other, they could occasionally use both.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ For this section see Poulle, *Astronomie planétaire au Moyen Âge latin*, Aldershot 1996, Part VII ‘Astrologie et tables astronomiques’, n.1, p. 801, Part VIII ‘Horoscopes princiers des XIVe et XVe siècles’, pp. 67-68, and Part IX ‘L’astronomie et la datation des manuscrits du Moyen Âge’, p. 232. Préaud, *Les astrologues*, pp. 145-146. Boudet, *Lire dans le ciel*, p. 122, n. 85. Jones (ed.), *A handbook of dates: for students of British History*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 1-17. Nothaft, *Medieval Latin Christian Texts on the Jewish Calendar (Time, Astronomy and Calendars)*, Leiden-Boston, 2014, 5, p. 39. H. Chisholm (ed.), ‘Calendar s.v. Ecclesiastical Calendar’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 4 (11th ed.) Cambridge, 1911, p. 992. Neugebauer, *Astronomy and History. Selected essays*, New-York, 1983, Appendix C, ‘Astronomical and calendrical data in the *Trés Riches Heures*. Note by Neugebauer’, pp. 507-520, and by the same author *A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*, New York, 1975, p. 1063, and ‘Astronomical and calendrical data’, pp. 510-514.

¹¹⁷ Boudet states: ‘*Au XV^e siècle, les deux usages continuent effectivement à coexister. Conrad Heingarter, dans ses horoscopes semble opter indifféremment pour les deux systèmes.*’ *La recueil*, II, p. 49.

Belle seems to favour the *post-meridie*m notation, using it in almost all of his horoscopes. In the previous example (NAL 398 f. 79v), Belle uses the notation *8 diebus octobrem 14 hora 9 minutis*, which in fact corresponds to 9 October at 2.09 am. This twelve-hour difference occurs because he counts fourteen hours from the midday of 8 October.¹¹⁸ Another example is the coronation of King Louis XI of France (MS 1711 f. 86v and NAL 398 f. 90vb1), which occurred in the morning of 15 August 1461, he notes '*post meridiem 14 Augusti per 22 horas minutis 0 et 44 secundis*', that is, twenty-two hours after midday of 14 August 1461 – that is, at 10 am on 15 August 1461.

Occasionally, Belle uses other methods of notation. Of the thirty-seven complete charts of MS 1711, fifteen have alternative notations:

- f. 87r – coronation of Charles VII: *ante meridiem*
- f. 88r – Margaret of Austria: *ante meridiem*
- f. 88v – Philip *the Handsome* of Austria: *post meridiem eiusdem diei*
- f. 89v – Cardinal-Duke Charles of Bourbon: *inter 11 et 12 ante meridiem*
- f. 90r – Louis XII: *post mediam noctem*
- f. 90v – Anne de Beaujeu, 'Madame la Grande': *ante meridiem*
- f. 91v – coronation of Maximilian as emperor of the Romans: *ante meridiem*
- f. 95v – Nicolai Gon: *ante meridiem*
- f. 96r – Nicolai Belle: *ante meridiem*
- f. 97v – Charles Orlando: *circa quartam horam de mane parum ante*
- f. 98v – Jacques de Lévis: *hora 6 de mane vel circa*
- f. 103v – four titles (though no horoscope was calculated):
 - Domine de Bressolles: *hora ante diem*
 - Ludovicus de Fosse Garin: *hora 9 de mane eiusdem diei*
 - Johannes de Fosse Garin: *inter 4 et 5 de sero*
 - Francissa: *circa 6 de mane*

As to the thirty-seven horoscopes in NAL 398, Belle uses the *post meridiem* notation in eighteen, *ante meridiem* in only one horoscope (f. 93vb2) and no specific notation in the remaining eighteen. Some charts in both manuscripts have the notation *dies equalis* or *dies inequalis*, referring respectively to the mean solar day and the true solar day. Likewise, the *hora inequalis* or *hora temporalis* corresponds to the twenty-fourth part of the day, which varies according to the season, while the *hora equalis* is the median duration corresponding to 15 degrees per hour, that is, the 360 degrees of the Zodiac divided by twenty-four hours.

III. 1. 3. Planetary days and hours – equal and unequal hours

The astrological day begins at sunrise and ends at sunset; the night begins at sunset and lasts until sunrise.¹¹⁹ This results in longer days and shorter nights in summer, and the reverse in winter; only at the equinoxes is the duration of day and night equal. Each day and each night is divided into twelve parts producing the astrological hours. As their duration varies with the seasons, they are called 'unequal hours', as opposed to the hours of the clock, the 'equal hours'. To each astrological hour is attributed a planetary ruler: the first hour of each day is ruled by the planet that rules that day. For instance: the first hour on a Sunday, day of the Sun, is ruled by the Sun; on a Monday, day of the Moon, the first hour of the day is ruled by the Moon. Likewise, the planetary ruler of the first hour of the night is the ruler of that night, as shown in the table below.

¹¹⁸ In most cases the time notation requires minor adjustments, mostly due to differences between the calculations made by the computer and the tables used in the fifteenth century.

¹¹⁹ This notation differs from the tables of al-Khwarizmi, the Toledan Tables and al-Qabisi, where the day begins from sunset of the previous day. Thus, Tuesday night precedes Tuesday, Wednesday night precedes Wednesday, and so on. Belle makes no mention to this system.

Table 38 - The planetary rulers of the hours

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Day	Sun ☉	Moon ☾	Mars ♂	Mercury ☿	Jupiter ♃	Venus ♀	Saturn ♄
Night	Jupiter ♃	Venus ♀	Saturn ♄	Sun ☉	Moon ☾	Mars ♂	Mercury ☿

The rulers of the days always follow the same order: Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn, in an uninterrupted cycle that restarts every week. The table below shows the sequence of the planetary hours in a week.

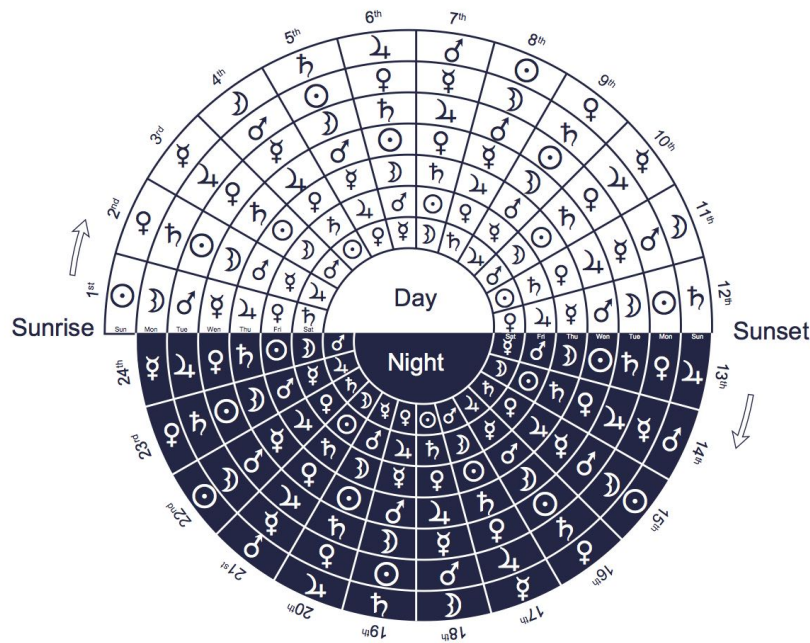


Figure 12 – Complete sequence of planetary hours (one week)

III. 1. 4. Dominical letters¹²⁰

The letter attributed to the Sundays of each year. The A is always attributed to the first day of the year, the letter B to the second, and so on for seven days, until G, after which the cycle repeats. As each year begins on a different day of the week, every year Sundays are attributed a different letter. For instance, in a year beginning on a Saturday, the Dominical Letter would be B; on a Friday, it would be C, and so on. Extra letters are added in leap years.

¹²⁰ See for instance Neugebauer, ‘Astronomical and calendrical data in the *Trés Riches Heures*, pp. 507-520, and Neugebauer, ‘Astronomical and calendrical data’, pp. 510-514.

III. 1. 5. Golden number (*numerus aureus*)¹²¹

The Golden Number (called golden because it was usually written in gold ink in the calendars) is a notation system created to determine the date for the moveable feast of Easter each year. It refers to the nineteen-year cycle by which the phases of the Moon recur on the same date.¹²² In the first year of the cycle, the New Moon occurs on 1 January and its Golden Number is one. The numbers follow in order up to nineteen and in the twentieth year the cycle recommences with another New Moon on 1 January.

Belle mentions the Dominical Letter and the Golden Number in four horoscopes in MS 1711:

- f. 89v: Charles of Bourbon – letter B (no mention to the Golden Number)
- f. 90v: Anne of Beaujeau – letter D, number 18
- f. 91r: Peter of Bourbon – letter D, number 15
- f. 92v: D. d'Albret – letter E, number 6

III. 1. 6. LAT – Local Apparent Time (Apparent Solar Time or Sundial Time)

A system for calculating the time based on the Sun's position in the sky as measured by a sundial. It is based on the interval between two successive returns of the Sun to the local meridian from midday to midday and was the usual method for measuring time in the fifteenth century. It differs from Local Mean Time, which was adopted only at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

III. 2. Geography¹²³

There are three main astrological attributions in geography: the connection of the elements, signs, planets, and houses to the four directions of space; the rulerships of the seven planets over the seven climates; the rulerships of certain signs over cities, kingdoms and regions.

III. 2. 1. The directions of space and the horoscope

The directions of space are represented in the horoscope in several ways. Some authors relate them to the planets, others to the houses, others to the four elements, others yet to the signs where the significators are placed.¹²⁴ The table below presents the most common correlations:

¹²¹ *Ibidem*.

¹²² This cycle of nineteen years consisting of 235 lunations is the Metonic cycle.

¹²³ For a comprehensive study of medieval and early modern maps, see C. Burnett, Z. Shalev (eds), *Ptolemy's Geography in the Renaissance*, London, 2011.

¹²⁴ See for instance Alcabitus, *Introduction*, I.16, pp. 25-27, for the elements, Albiruni, *Instruction*, 357, p. 215 for the correlation of the directions to the signs, Haly Abenragel, *El Libro conplido*, II, pp. 88-89 for signs and houses, and Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, pp. 129-133 for the planets, signs and elements.

Table 39 - Directions of space according to the elements, planets, signs and houses

Elements			Signs ¹²⁵			Houses ¹²⁶	
Fire	△	East	Aries	♈	East	1 st	East
Earth	△	South	Taurus	♉	South by East	2 nd	Northeast-East
Air	▽	West	Gemini	♊	West by North	3 rd	North-Northeast
Water	▽	North	Cancer	♋	North	4 th	North
Planets ¹²⁷			Leo	♌	East by North	5 th	Northwest-North
Sun	☉	None	Virgo	♍	South by West	6 th	West-Northwest
Venus	♀	South	Libra	♎	West	7 th	West
Mercury	☿	None	Scorpio	♏	North by West	8 th	Southwest-South
Moon	☾	None	Sagittarius	♐	East by South	9 th	South-Southwest
Saturn	♄	East	Capricorn	♑	South	10 th	South
Jupiter	♃	North	Aquarius	♒	West by South	11 th	Southeast-South
Mars	♂	West	Pisces	♓	North by East	12 th	East-Southeast

Most authors agree that the native should not travel towards the directions related to the signs in which the malefics (Saturn, Mars, and the South Node) are placed in the nativity. Contrarily, the signs in which the benefics (Jupiter, Venus, and the North Node) are placed, are considered beneficial and profitable.

On the judgement of the ninth house for the horoscope of Jo. d.c.l., in f. 98ra, Belle correlates the signs with the directions of space, to offer counsel about travel.

¹²⁵ These derive from the natural connection of the elements to the cardinal points: Aries, corresponding to the spring equinox, is attributed to the east; Cancer, the summer solstice, to the north; Libra, the autumn equinox, to west, and Capricorn, the winter solstice, to south; the intermediate directions are assigned to the other two signs of the same elements. Some authors connect the four directions to the first four signs according to their elements (Aries to east, Taurus to south, Gemini to west, and Cancer to north) and the intermediate directions to the other signs of that element; see for instance Albiruni, *Instruction*, 389, pp. 236-237. The topic remained under discussion throughout the early modern period. Seventeenth-century astrologer William Lilly presents two different tables of correlations in W. Lilly, *Christian Astrology*, London, 1647, p. 365.

¹²⁶ The main angles – first, fourth, seventh, and tenth – are assigned to the cardinal points; the intermediate houses indicate ‘intermediate’ directions; these correlations were common knowledge to astronomy students.

¹²⁷ Ptolemy associates the planets to the directions concerning the winds; see Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, pp. 129-133. Al-Bīrūnī attributes this correlation to a certain Nayrizi, author of the *Book of Nativities* (Kitab al-Mawalid); Albiruni, *Instruction*, 389, p. 236, 1-2.

III. 2. 2. Climates (also *clima*; plural *climata*)¹²⁸

The term means inclination and refers to the several latitudinal bands parallel to the equator that divide the inhabited world; it is a synonym for latitude. The climates mentioned by Ptolemy were later adapted for the Arabic world and again for the Christian, for that reason, the latitude of the climates differs according to the period and the author.

Table 40 - Climate latitudes according to Al-Bīrūnī

Latitude	Climate	Planet
45°N47'	<i>Seventh climate</i> (ends at 50°N25')	Moon
43°N23'	<i>Sixth climate</i>	Mercury
38°N54'	<i>Fifth climate</i>	Venus
33°N37'	<i>Fourth climate</i>	Sun
27°N28'	<i>Third climate</i>	Mars
20°N27'	<i>Second climate</i>	Jupiter
12°N49'	<i>First climate</i>	Saturn

The following is another version of the climates, by a Christian author, Pierre d'Ailly.

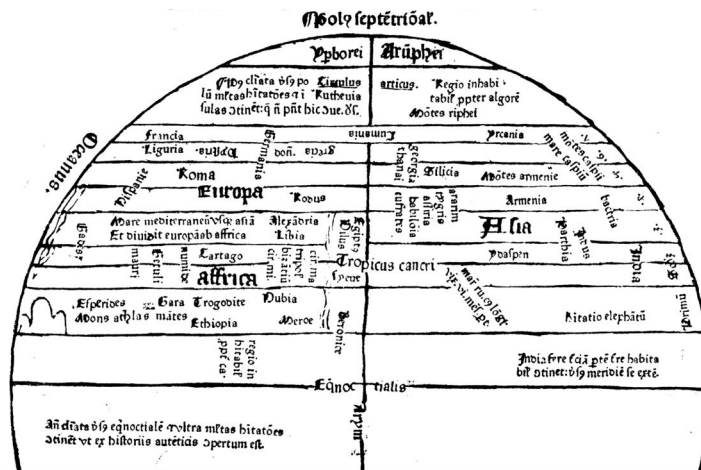


Figure 13 – Climate latitudes according to Pierre d'Ailly (*Ymago Mundi*, fig. 7)

¹²⁸ The size of the climates according to medieval authors is discussed in Buron (ed.), *Ymago Mundi, de Pierre d'Ailly, cardinal de Cambrai et chancelier de l'Université de Paris (1350-1420)*, Paris, 1930, 49, pp. 226-227. For the Islamic perspective see Olsson, 'The world in Arab eyes: a reassessment of the climes in medieval Islamic scholarship', in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, V. 77, 2014, pp. 487-508, and Albiruni, *Instruction*, 23, p. 138. See also King 'Astronomical instruments between East and West' in *Medium aevum quotidianum*, 27, 1992, pp. 125-130, and King, 'Bringing astronomical instruments back to Earth – The geographical data on medieval astrolabes (to ca 1100)', in L. Nauta and A. Vanderjagt (eds), *Between Demonstration and Imagination. Essays in the History of Science as Philosophy presented to John D. North*, Leiden-Boston-Koln, 1999, pp. 3-20.

In NAL 398 Belle copies the reference to the climate in the horoscope of Hubert, born ‘in the fifth climate’, in the city of Florence (f. 79va). He mentions climates three times in MS 1711:

f. 93r – Antoine Belle, ‘the end of the sixth climate, which latitude is forty-five degrees and a half’; he is possibly referring to Châlus;

f. 95v – Nicolai Gon, ‘near the end of the sixth climate’, possibly Paris;

f. 97r – Renaud Petit De, ‘in the sixth climate’.

He also mentions the latitude of 50° in MS 1711 f. 81v, in one of the horoscopes of Charles the Bold.

III. 2. 3 Rulership of the signs over certain regions¹²⁹

Astrological tradition attributes to certain areas of the world the rulership of a sign and sometimes a planet. For example, this theory of the association of a sign to a territory can be found in Manilius *Astronomica* (which is not mentioned by Belle).¹³⁰ The image below shows the attributions given in *Astronomica*.

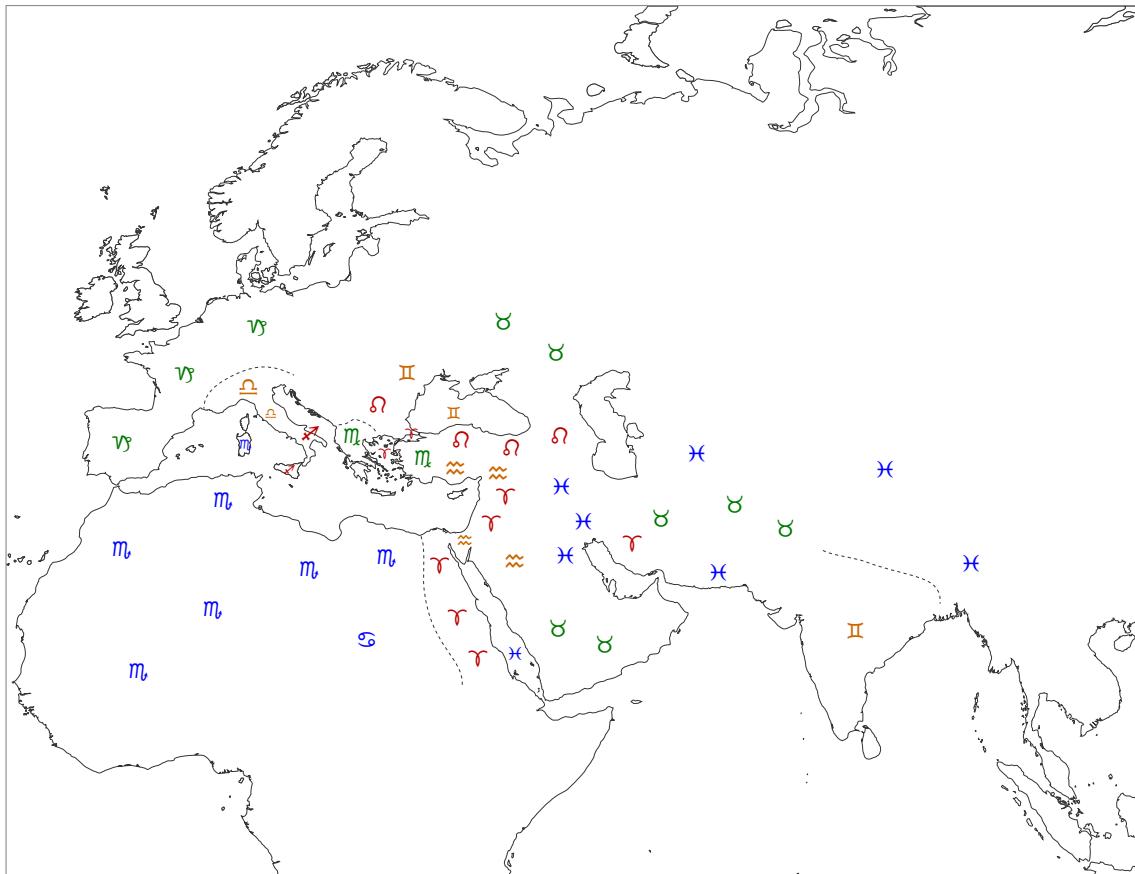


Figure 14 – Zodiacal attributions of regions according to Manilius

¹²⁹ See for instance Alcabitius, *Introduction*, I.25-36, pp. 35-37. For comparison, see also North, *Horoscopes and History*, Appendix 2, ‘Two fifteenth-Century Geographical Lists’ pp. 187-195.

¹³⁰ Manilius, *Astronomica*, G. P. Goold (tr.), London Cambridge, 1977, Book VI, 585, pp. 269-289.

However, the attributions that became a common feature in medieval astrological texts were not these, but those given by Ptolemy in *Tetrabiblos*.¹³¹ Ptolemy divides the known world into four quadrants, which are ruled by signs of each of the four elements as shown in the following map. The north-west quadrant, covering most of Europe, contains regions ruled by the Fire signs (Aries γ , Leo δ , and Sagittarius ♐); the north-east quadrant, containing part of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, are ruled by Air signs (Gemini ♊ , Libra ♎ , and Aquarius ♒); the south-east quadrant, including Arabia and Southern Asia, is ruled by the Earth signs (Taurus ♉ , Virgo ♍ , and Capricorn ♑); and the south-west quadrant, encompassing Africa, is the domain of the signs of the Water element (Cancer ♋ , Scorpio ♏ , and Pisces ♓). In the central area of the world the elements switch with their opposites: the regions of the Fire quadrant nearer the centre are ruled by earthy signs, the central regions of the Air quadrant by watery signs, those in the Earth quadrant by Fire signs and the equivalent region of the Water quadrant, by Air signs.

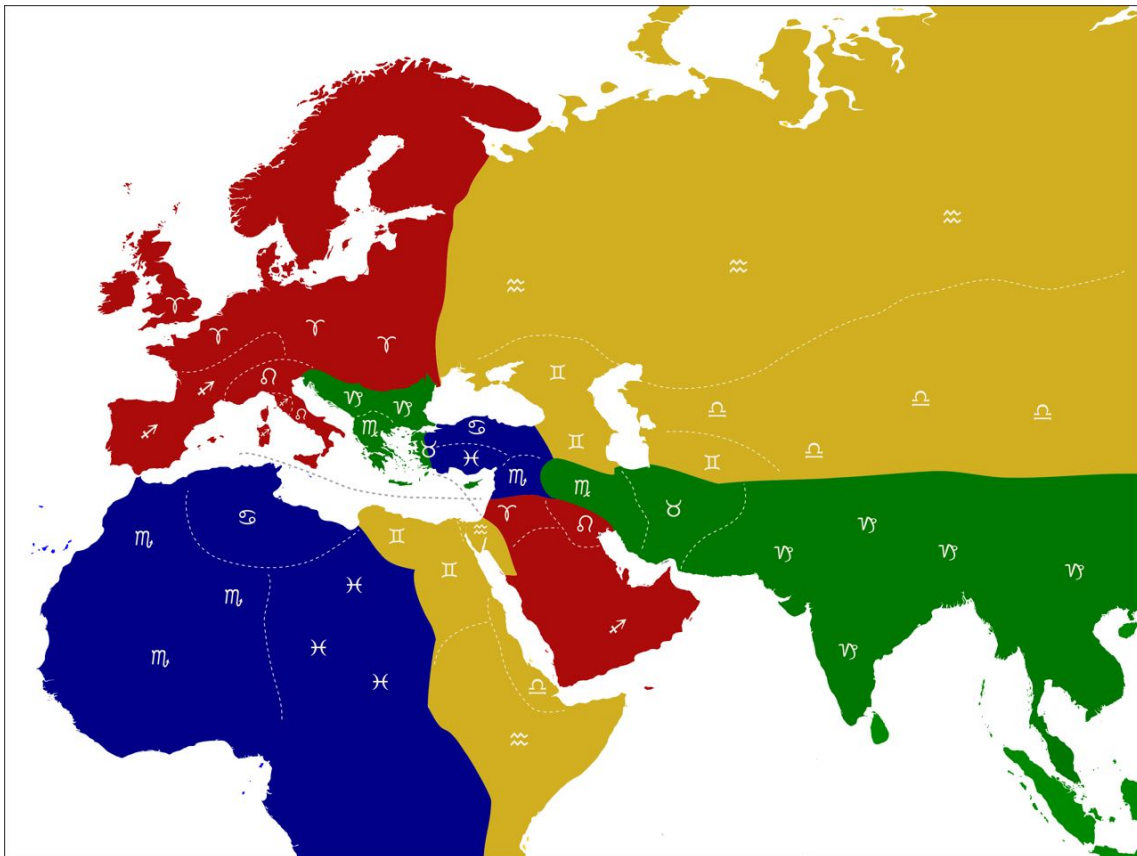


Figure 15 – Zodiacal attributions of regions according to Ptolemy

The regions connected to the Fire signs are in red, Air signs in yellow, Earth signs in green, and Water signs in blue.

¹³¹ Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, II.3, pp. 129-161.

As with many other points of astrological doctrine, Ptolemy's theory was expanded by later authors in order to adapt it to the new territorial divisions. By Belle's time, these region-to-sign correspondences were much more detailed; some kingdoms and cities were given specific sign rulerships much beyond the larger regional attributions of Ptolemy.

In his judgement for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425 Belle correlates Scorpio, where the conjunction took place, to several regions (ff. 81ra-81rb). He quotes several authors:

- Ptolemy: connects Scorpio and Mars to 'the Land of Black People,'¹³² the Maurus, Syria, Getulia, Commogene and Capadocia;
- Abū Ma'šar: Mars to the third climate, namely Egypt; Scorpio to Germany and Arabia;
- Haly: Mars to Arabia, Turkey and the Promised Land;
- the 'Indi' (Indian authorities): Mars to Alexandria and the Promised Land;
- Avenezra: Mars to the third climate, Syria and the Promised Land; Scorpio to 'the land of the Scots'.

Belle also includes the regions ruled by the Air signs (Libra, Gemini and Aquarius), namely Rome and 'the land of the Turks', because the Ascendant of the horoscope is Libra

III. 2. 4 Altitude from the pole

A synonym for latitude, and a complement to the angle measured from the horizon to the Pole Star, that is, the altitude of the pole star. For example, the latitude/altitude of the pole for London is 52 degrees because the height or altitude of the Pole Star is 38 degrees.

III. 2. 5 Latitude¹³³

The distance of a given location on Earth from the equator. Latitude ranges from zero degrees at the equator to nineteen degrees at the Poles. Fifteenth-century astrologers, like Belle, often combined latitude and climate to define the location of the horoscopes.

¹³² Possibly Nubia, corresponding to present-day Sudan.

¹³³ See North, *Horoscopes and History*, pp. 17-20, 52-56.

Belle mentions latitude three times in NAL 398:

- f. 73r, the horoscope for the lunation preceding the 1293 spring ingress: ‘this judgement falls closer over the land which latitude is forty-eight degrees and fifty minutes’; this is the latitude of Paris (48°51’N 2°21’E);
- f. 93va1, one of the horoscopes for King Charles VIII of France: ‘at the latitude of fifty degrees; he was born in Amboise (47°24’N, 00°59’E);
- f. 93vb1, the horoscope of John of Bourbon: ‘in the horizon [latitude] of 47 degrees, approximately’; he was born in Moulins (46°33’55’N, 03°20’00’E).

And nine times in MS 1711:

- f. 79r, in the horoscope of Louis XI: ‘at the latitude of 49 degrees’; he was born in Bourges, France (47°05’N, 02°23’E);
- f. 81r, in the horoscope of Charles Duke de Berry: ‘at the latitude of 47 degrees’; he was born in Tours (47°23’N, 00°41’E);
- f. 81v, one of the horoscopes for Charles *the Bold* of Burgundy: ‘at the latitude of 50 degrees’; he was born in Dijon (47°17’N, 05°02’E);
- f. 82r, in the horoscope of Emperor Maximilian: ‘at the latitude of [blank]’; he was born in Wiener, Neustadt, Austria (47°49’N, 16°15’E);
- f. 88v, in the horoscope of Philip the Handsome: ‘at the latitude of 51 degrees; he was born in Bruges, Belgium (51°13’N, 03°14’E);
- f. 90v, in the horoscope of Anne de Beaujeu: ‘in Brabant, whose latitude is about 50 degrees’; she was born in Nivelles, Belgium (50°35’N, 04°19’E);
- f. 93r, the horoscope of Antoine Belle: ‘in the end of the sixth climate, which latitude is 45 degrees and a half’; he was born possibly in Châlus (45°39’N, 00°58’E);
- f. 93v, in the horoscope of Conrad Belle: ‘at the horizon of Moulins, in Bourbon, which latitude is 46 degrees and 35 minutes’; Moulins, France (46°33’N, 03°20’E);
- f. 94r, in the horoscope of Susanne de Bourbon: ‘in the city of Moulins, which latitude is about 46 degrees and 35 minutes’.

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APPENDIX II

Codicological data

1. MS 1711

Watermarks

Most of the watermarks in the folia of MS 1711 are partially concealed by the binding, the few visible are recognizable as those used in the northeast of France. The Almanac folios present a greater diversity of watermarks, such as Pickard 1406 (Bruxells 1407), Briquet 7229 (Neuville, 1446), Briquet 1680 (Paris, 1451) and Briquet 3624 (Maastricht, 1476). The collection folia only present two different watermarks Briquet 13433 (Le Mans, 1475) and a similar variant which reveal that they were made at a different time, or perhaps location, from the almanac using a different source of paper. Even with the differences the dates are close in both sections, both pointing towards the mid to late decades of the fifteenth century and corroborating the dates on the manuscript.

Binding

The interior face of the MS 1711 is reinforced by a parchment upon which is written some text in French.¹³⁴ It is the testament of a certain Jehan Vigier, who lived in the early fifteenth century, placed upside-down in relation to the manuscript. It is the remainder of a legal document dated from the first of January 1424, a lawsuit involving the heirs of a certain Bienvenue Fayete. From her first marriage to Guillaume Terris she had a daughter, Lucie (married to André Conteur, who represented her in the court of law), and from her second marriage to Jehan Vigier she had two children: a boy, Michelet and a girl, Anthoine. A direct connection with Belle and the Vigier family has not yet been established. The Portuguese archives have no known register of any of these names, and in France, the research is difficult, since the surname Vigier is relatively common both in the medieval and modern periods.¹³⁵ Likewise, it is not yet

¹³⁴ My gratitude to Professor Jacques Paviot, who generously offered his expertise to decipher parts of the document and to Isabelle Draelants, for helping to identify its previous owner, Denis de Sallo.

¹³⁵ There is a certain Jean Vigier, bishop of Saint-Alain de Lavaur (1469-1497), a contemporary to Belle, mentioned in Bernier, *Journal des états généraux de France tenus a Tours en 1484 sous le règne de Charles VIII*, Paris, 1835. There is another reference to a Jehan Vigier participating in 1561 in a counsel at the village of Nismes, present-day Belgium, in Ménard, *Histoire civile, ecclésiastique, et littéraire dela ville de Nismes*, 4 (1482-1565), Paris, 1753, p. 183.

clear how (and when) this manuscript ended up in the Portuguese National Archive. Nonetheless, its presence there is not entirely surprising, given the intense cultural and commercial exchanges between Portugal and France throughout the modern period.

Transcription

1st page

..... ung molin sur ladite riviere
..... plus ??? croix.

..... entendre la presente matere qu'il est vray que le onzieme
...[m]ariage d'icellui deffendeur et de la dite feue Bienvenue Fayete.

.....*d qu'il s'en repporte ad ce qu'il en est.*

.....mancre (?) en faisant ledit mariage que au cas que ladite Beinvenue
.....[e]spoux survivant en icellui cas ledit Jehan Vigier deffendeur
.....[le cour]s de sa vie lesdis hostel, grange, molin, préz et appartenances
.....[te]neur dudit mariage faire et acomplir.

..... *comme au prochain precedent article.*

.....t convenance une autre convenance et en faveur dudit mariage
..... vie a trespassement, delaissant enffans descendens dudit
.....t avoir <en> avantaige lesdis hostel, grange, molin avec les pré[z]
..... de feu Jehan Chanter, jadis oncle d'icelle Bienvenue, et sans ce
.....[ice]lle Bienvenue y peust ou deust rien prendre en avoir.

.....*d comme au prochain precedent article.*

.....r x ans ou entour, est alé de vie a trespassement, delaissé
..... Michelet et Anthoine Vigiers ses enffens et enffens dudit
..... [s]a fille, a present femme dudit André Conteur, demandeur et procureur
[d'icelle]

.....*que ladite Bienvenue trespassa il y a entour x ans*
..... *laissee ladite Lucie sa fille eu du residu audit article. Il s'en repporte ad ce qu'il*
en e[st].

.....isse eut succédé a ladite Bienvenue leur mere en tous et
.....stuer (?) du pais, c'est assavoir lesdis Michelet et Anthoine sa seur
..... Jehan Vigier deffendeur, Michelet et Anthoine Vigiers ses
[enffans] ... d'icellui en avantaige par raison de la convenance don[nee]
..... le cours de sa vie et esdis Michelet et Anthoine ses enff[ans]

.....*d qu'il ne croit pas ledit article en la maniere.*

..... *[i]l est escript*

..... Jehan Vigier

2nd page

- IIIJ** Item, dit et propose ledit deffendeur esdis noms po.....
jour de janvier l'an mil iiiij^C xxiiij fust trait e.....
- V** Item, et entre autres choses et convenances fut
Fayet yroit de vie a trespasement, ledit Jehan
avoit et devoit avoir en mariage seulement
dudit molin, dont dessus est fecte mancion
- VJ** Item, et aussi en faisant ledit mariage y fut
acomplir, c'est assavoir que au cas que ladite Bienvenue
mariage en icellui cas lesdis enffans auront
et appartenances d'icellui molin, lesquelx heritaiges
que Lucie sa fille et fille de feu Guillaume Terris
- VIJ** Item, et si est vray que ladite Bienvenue jap...
en vie ledit Jehan Vigier son mary et aussi del[aisser]
Jehan Vigier et aussi delaisser en vie ladite Lucie
- VIIIJ** Item, et lesquelx Michelet et Anthoine Vigiers
quelxconques ses biens meubles, imeubles de raison
par moitié et ladite Lucie par l'autre moitié excès (?)
enffans sont advenus lesdis hostel, grange, molin, p[réz et appartenances]
dessus a esté fecte mencion, c'est assavoir audit Jehan
la propriété d'iceulx appartenences.
- IX** Item, et que desdis heritaiges dessus confinéz
de ceps d'icelle Bienvenue, que par la coustume g.....

There is a possible link between the Jehan Vigier mentioned in the parchment and the seventeenth-century pharmacist with a similar name, Jean Vigier born in Espondeilhan, in the duchy of Bourbon, France, on 14 April 1662.¹³⁶ He came to Lisbon in 1682 with his uncle, Pierre Donnadiou, a pharmacist at the service of the Portuguese queen Maria Francisca Isabel of France (1646-1683), the youngest daughter of Charles Amedée, Duke of Nemours, and Élisabeth de Bourbon.¹³⁷ The connection to the manuscript, if any, could have come through the queen's family since Belle lived in Bourbon and had connections to the Nevers family, although there is a gap of 170 years.

¹³⁶ J. Dias, 'L'influence de la pharmacie et de la chimie françaises au Portugal au XVIIIe siècle: Nicolas Lémery', *Revue d'Histoire de la Pharmacie*, 1994, pp. 84-90, p. 86. See also Dias, 'João Vigier e a Introdução da Química Farmacêutica em Portugal', *Farmácia Portuguesa*, 43, pp.31-35, and D. Calainho, 'João Vigier: um droguista no Portugal setecentista', *Usos do Passado. XII Encontro Regional de História*, SNUH, Rio de Janeiro, 2006.

¹³⁷ Marie Françoise Élisabeth de Savoy (1646-1683). She married king Afonso VI (1643-1683) and later, given the incapacity of her first husband, annulled the union and married the king's younger brother, who came to be king Pedro II (1648-1706).

2. NAL 398

It was not possible to make a study of this manuscript's watermarks in order to make any connection to MS 1711. As to its provenance, it belonged to the French writer and lawyer Denis de Sallo (1626-1669), *Sieur de la Coudraye de Luçon*, founder of *Journal des sçavans*, the first French literary and scientific journal.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Details on his life and work in The Galileo Project:
<http://galileo.rice.edu/Catalog/NewFiles/sallo.html> (last consulted: August 2018).

APPENDIX III

Comparative Tables

Tables 1 and 2 show the correlations between horoscopes in Belle's manuscripts. The comparison suggests that Belle began by writing NAL 398, and that some time later he copied some of the horoscopes into MS 1711, adding more details, such as calculations, fixed stars and lots.

Table 1 – Horoscopes in NAL 398 and correspondences in MS 1711

Folia	Chart title and comments	Data on manuscript	Calculated for Paris and LAT
f. 54va	Interrogation: Is this person alive?	18.5.1330, 10:10	18.5.1330, 10:10 am
f. 54vb	Interrogation: Will the messenger return? Will he bring money?	2.10.1330, 12:10	2.10.1330, 2: 01 pm
f. 73r	New Moon preceding Aries ingress – see ff. 73ra-73vb	9.3.1293, 4:28	9.3.1293, 4:28 pm
f. 73v	Full Moon following Aries ingress – see ff. 73vb-74rb	12.3.1294, 21:14	13.3.1294, 9:14 am
f. 74r	Lunar eclipse preceding Cancer ingress – see ff. 74rb-74vb	9.6.1294, 00:30 pm	9.6.1294, 12:30 pm
f. 74v	Full Moon preceding Libra ingress – see ff. 74vb-75ra	9.9.1294, 17:44	6.9.1294, 5:44 am
f. 75r	Lunar eclipse preceding Capricorn ingress – see ff. 75ra-75vb	3.12.1294, 23:40	4.12.1294, 11:40 am
f. 75v	Full Moon preceding Aries ingress – see ff. 75vb-76ra	1.3.1295, 14:12	3.3.1295, 2:05 am
f. 76r	Lunar eclipse preceding Cancer ingress – see ff. 76ra-76va	30.5.1295, 01:18	30.5.1295, 00:35 am
f. 79v	Hubert, Florence, 09.10.1259 – Judgement on ff. 76v-80r	8.10.1259, 14:09	9.10.1260, 3:32 am
f. 80r	Jupiter-Saturn conjunction 1425 – Judgement on ff. 80r-84r	Blank data, 1425	28.9.1425, 5:35 am
f. 85v	Jo Dap. – Blank horoscope – Judgement on ff. 85ra-89vb	Blank chart, 3.11.1442	3.11.1442, 1:20
f. 90ra1	Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy	30.7.1396, 22:00 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 78r
f. 90ra2	Charles, Duke of Berry	28.12.1446, 09:10	Like MS 1711 f. 81r
f. 90rb1	Louis XI	3.7.1423, 05:45 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 79r
f. 90rb2	Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy	10.11.1433, 13:10 pm	Like MS 1711 ff. 81v, 83v
f. 90va1	Charles VIII (Asc. Cancer 2°)	29.7.1470, 14:54	Like MS 1711 f. 87v
f. 90va2	Henry VI of England	6.12.1421, 03:36 pm	Like Like MS 1711 f. 80v
f. 90vb1	Coronation of Louis XI	14.8.1461, 22:00:44 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 86v
f. 90vb2	Coronation of Charles VII	16.7.1429, 23:12 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 87r
f. 91ra1	Charles of Burgundy, count of Nevers	26.6.1414, 06:11 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 84v
f. 91ra2	Jean de Bourgogne (Jean de Clamecy)	17.10.1415, 03:31 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 85r
f. 91rb1	Charles d'Albret, Lord of Saint-Bazaille	23.4.1428, 06:07 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 85v
f. 91rb2	Marie d'Albret	13.3.1435, 02:08 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 84r
f. 91va1	Nativity – C. d CHAS – unknown native	24.8.1440, 08:46 am	24.8.1440, 08:46 am
f. 91va2	Nativity – <i>Lud4 eius frater</i> (brother of the former)	03.10.1442, 07:55 pm	3.10.1442, 07:55 pm
f. 91vb1	Nativity – <i>Domicelle vi Agnetis de Oas</i>	13.9.1441, 04:50 pm	13.9.1441, 04:50 pm
f. 91vb2	Nativity – <i>S4r4r3s</i> – unknown native, <i>sororis</i> – sister	20.9.1448, 01:18 pm	21.9.1448, 01:18 am
f. 92r	Lunation for nativity Jo d.c.l. – Judgement on ff. 92ra-92vb	'ut supra'	12.12.1437, 08:30 pm
f. 93ra2	Nativity – Jo d.c.l. – see f. 92r and f. 94ra-100vb	16.12.1437, 09:45 am	16.12.1437, 09:47 am
f. 93ra1	Maximilian of Austria	22.3.1459, 04:40 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 82r
f. 93rb1	Nativity – unknown woman	7.10.1445, 02:30 pm	7.10.1445, 02:30 pm
f. 93rb2	Charles VIII (Asc. Gemini 8°47')	29.6.1470, 13:21 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 87v
f. 93va1	Charles VIII (Asc. Gemini 1°)	29 June 1470, 13:10 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 87v
f. 93va2	Philip the Handsome of Austria	22 June 1478, 2:00 – 3:00 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 88v
f. 93vb1	John II of Bourbon; repeated on f. 101r	30 August 1426, 04:22 pm	Like MS 1711 f. 79v
f. 93vb2	Margaret of Austria	11 January 1479, 11:00/12:00 am	Like MS 1711 f. 88r
f. 101r	Belle's cousin ' <i>filia avunculi mei</i> '	October 1496 (title, blank chart)	Like MS 1711 f. 99v
f. 101r	Interrogation – <i>Universali questio</i> (to John II of Bourbon)	13 August 1477, 17:17, Paris	13 August 1477, 17:17, Paris

Table 2 – Horoscopes in MS 1711 and correspondences in NAL 398

Folia	Chart title	Notes	Dates	Correspondence in Paris, NAL 398
f. 78r	Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy	none	31.7.1396 † 1467	f. 90ra1
f. 78v	Charles VII of France	blank	1403 † 1461	
f. 79r	Louis XI of France	brief	3.7.1423 † 1461	f. 90rb1
f. 79v	Jean II de Bourbon	none	30.8.1426 † 1488	f. 93vb1; f. 101
f. 80r	Encoded name	none	22.11.1465 † 1487	
f. 80v	Henry VI of England	none	6. 12. 1421 † 1471	f. 90va2
f. 81r	Charles de Berry	none	28.12.1446 † 1472	f. 90ra2
f. 81v	Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy	none	10.11.1433 † 1477	f. 90rb2
f. 82r	Duke Maximilian	none	22.3.1459	f. 93ra2
f. 82v	Louis de Culant	none	11.11.1453	
f. 83r	'Domini de Craon', Georges de la Trémoille II	brief	22.10.1436	
f. 83v	Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy	brief	10.11.1433	f. 90rb2
f. 84r	Marie d'Albret	none	13.3.1435 † 1486	f. 91rb2
f. 84v	Charles de Bourgogne, Count of Nevers	none	25.6.1414 † 1464	f. 91ra1
f. 85r	Jean de Bourgogne (Jean de Clamecy)	none	17.10.1415 † 1491	f. 91ra2
f. 85v	Charles II d'Albret; Lord of Sainte-Bazeille	brief	23.4.1428 † 1473	f. 91rb1
f. 86r	Coronation of Charles VII of France	none	16.7.1429	f. 90vb2
f. 86v	Coronation of Louis XI of France	none	14.8.1461	f. 90vb1
f. 87r	Coronation of Charles VIII of France	none	30.5.1484	
f. 87v	Charles VIII of France, son of Louis XI	brief	29.6.1470 † 1498	f. 90va; 93rb2; 93va
f. 88r	Margaret of Austria	brief	10.1.1480 † 1530	f. 93vb2
f. 88v	Philip the Handsome of Austria	none	22.6.1478 † 1506	f. 93va2
f. 89r	Entry in Paris: Charles VIII of France	none	5.6.1484	
f. 89v	Charles de Bourbon, Cardinal Primaz	blank	24.9.1435 † 1488	
f. 90r	Louis XII of France	none	27.6.1462 † 1498	
f. 90v	Anne de Beaujeu, daughter of Louis XI	long	19.4.1461 † 1521	
f. 91r	Pierre II Duke of Bourbon	long	10.12.1439 † 1503	
f. 91v	Coronation of Maximilian	none	9.4.1486	
f. 92v	D. d'Albret	none	9.6.1449	
f. 93r	Antoine Belle	long	4.3.1483 † 1483	
f. 93v	Conrad Belle	long	31.5.1484 †	
f. 94r	Susanne de Bourbon	long	10.5.1491 † 1421	
f. 94v	Charles Orlando, <i>Dauphin</i> of France	blank	10.10.1492 † 1495	
f. 95r	Daughter of G. Gon	none	10.1.1496	
f. 95v	Nicolas Gon	long	18.6.1491 † 1491	
f. 96r	Nicolas Belle	long	16.9.1485 † 1486	
f. 96v	Daughter Marta (<i>filia mea Marta</i>)	long	21.8.1487	
f. 97r	Renaud Petit Dé	long	25.6.1489 † 1489	
f. 97v	Charles Orlando, <i>Dauphin</i> de France	blank	10.10.1492 † 1495	
f. 98v	Jacques de Lévis, Lord of Château Morand	blank	5.11.1447	
f. 99r	Jean de Château Morand, son o Jacques	blank	22.8.1492	
f. 99 v	Cousin (<i>fillia avunculi mei</i>)	none	4.10.1496	f. 101r (upside-down)
f. 103v	Domine of Bressolles (d'Allier)	blank	22.3.1454	
	Ludovicus de Fossegarin	blank	6.11.1489	
	Johannes de Fossegarin	blank	30.7.1491	
	Francissa, their sister (<i>eorum soror</i>)	blank	9.10.1492	

Table 3 shows the main correspondences between the nativities in Belle’s notebooks and nativities in other manuscripts extant in French collections.

Table 3 – Comparative Table III

Horoscopes in NAL 398 corresponding to other manuscripts in Paris, BnF, Latin

Name	Also mentioned in:
Phillip the Good Duke of Burgundy	<p>Lat. 7439 (15th century) – copied in 1411 by Nicholas de la Horbe, physician of John the Fearless and Philip the Good. Contents (summary): Masha’allah, <i>De revolutionibus annorum mundi</i>; Abumashar, <i>De revolutionibus annorum mundi</i>; Alubater, <i>De revolutionibus nativitatium</i>, <i>Capitula Almansorius</i>.</p> <p>Lat. 7443, ff. 84r, 84v, 117r, 128r, 129r (15th century) – copied between 1405 and 1440 partly by Simon de Boesmare, and perhaps also by Jean Halbout de Troyes and Roland of Lisbon; owner: Simon de Phares</p> <p>Contents (summary): Bonatti, <i>Liber introductorius ad iudicia stellarum</i>; Grosseteste, <i>De impressionibus aeris</i>, Haly, astrometeorology; Jean de Murs, judgements for the conjunctions of 1357 (Saturn-Mars) and 1365 (Jupiter-Saturn); Simon de Boesmare, horoscopes for Charles VII, Henry VI, Jean d’Aleçon, Philip the Good, Charles VII (coronation), the twelve houses; Roland of Lisbon: dossier for 1426-1427; nativities of Arthur III of Brittany, Philip the Good, Jean V of Brittany, Henry VI, John of Lancaster Duke of Bedford, Charles VII, Jean de Montaigu Count of Salisbury, Jean de la Trémoille, John Falstoff, John V of Brittany. Jupiter-Saturn conjunction 1425, Leopold of Austria, <i>De astrorum scientia</i>. John of Ashenden, conjunctions of 1357 and 1365.</p>
Louis XI of France	<p>Lat. 7395, f. 329r (16th century) – personal manual of Nicolaus Gugler (1521-1577). Contents (summary): Horoscopes of Louis XI and Maximilian I (ff. 323r-330v).</p> <p>Lat. 7416 (15th century) – copied by Arnaud de la Palu, astrologer of Louis XI. Contents (summary): Alcabitius, <i>Introductorius</i>.</p> <p>Lat. 7450, f. 3r-21v (15th century) – copied by order of Conrad Heingarter around 1475-1476. Contents: prognostication for the year 1476, for Louis XI.</p>
John II Duke of Bourbon	<p>Lat. 7314 (15th century) – possibly written by Conrad Heingarter. Reference to John II of Bourbon in a marginal note (f. 67v). Contents (summary): Alubasar, <i>Introductionis maior</i>, translated y John of Seville.</p> <p>Lat. 7432 (15th century) – copied by order of Conrad Heingarter in 1477-1480 for John II of Bourbon. Contents (summary): <i>Vir sapiens dominabitur astris</i>, (ff. 157r-159r); Alcabitius, <i>Introductorius</i>; Dixit divus Albertus Magnus (259r), Table of dignities (259v-263v)</p> <p>Lat. 7446 (15th century) – copied by order of Conrad Heingarter around 1469 for Jehan de la Goutte. Contents (summary): nativity and medical advice for Jehan de la Goutte, gouverneur of John II of Bourbon.</p> <p>Lat. 7447, ff. 1r-19v (15th century) – possibly written by Conrad Heingarter</p> <p>Contents (summary): judgement for the revolution of John II of Bourbon for the year 1480.</p> <p>Lat. 11232 (15th century) – medical texts, copied by order of Conrad Heingarter. Contents (summary): judgement for John II of Bourbon.</p>
Henry VI of England	<p>Lat. 7443, ff. 80v-81r, 85r-86r, 123r (15th century) – see above</p>
Charles the Bold Duke of Burgundy	<p>Lat. 7427, f. 134 (15th century) – almanacs. Owner: Simon de Phares. Contents (summary): planetary positions for the years 1402, 1413, 1454-1457, 1460-1461, 1463-1465, 1470-1472, 1475-1485; horoscopes of Charles the Bold and Mary of Burgundy; horoscope for 1471.</p>
Emperor Maximilian I	<p>Lat. 7395, f. 328r (15th century) – see above</p> <p>Lat. 7443C, ff. 333v-335r (15th century) – Nicolaus Gauger, owner: Mazarin</p> <p>Contents (summary): Johannes de Glogau, <i>Summa astrologiae</i>; Martin Bylica de Olkusz, <i>tractatus de scientia nativitatium</i>; horoscopes of Frederick III, Maximilian I, Landislas I of Bohemia.</p>
Charles VIII of France	<p>Lat. 7272 (14th century) – Robert d’Anjou, part of the library of the Aragonese kings. Contents (summary): several works by Andalo Negro, Masha’allah, Prophatius Judeaus and Hermes.</p> <p>Lat. 7331 (15th century) – offered by Regnaud le Queueux to Charles VIII; owner: Simon de Phares. Contents (summary): Georgius Fendulus, <i>Liber astrologiae</i>, Albert the Great, <i>Speculum astronomiae</i>.</p> <p>Lat. 7482 (15th century) – given by Charles VIII to Johannes Michel, who gave it to Maître Gervais. Contents (summary): Alkindi, <i>De mutatione temporum</i>, Firminus de Bellavalle, <i>De mutatione aeris</i>.</p>
Louis XII of France	<p>Lat. 3520 (13th and 14th century). Contents (summary): astrometeorology.</p> <p>Lat. 7321A (15th century, between 1472-1492) – volume repared by Louis de Bruges. Contents (summary): Alcabitius, <i>Introductorius</i>.</p> <p>Lat. 7342 (15th century) – library of the duke sof Milan in Pavia</p> <p>Contents (summary): <i>Liber geneseon et horoscoporum</i>; <i>De proprietatibus duodecim signorum</i>.</p>

Table 4 summarizes the references to several Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions and to the Mars-Saturn conjunction of 1457 in French manuscripts, particularly Lat. 7443; some of these texts may have been consulted by Belle.

Table 4 – The Jupiter-Saturn and the Mars-Saturn conjunction

References to the Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions in Lat. 7443¹³⁹
ff. 33r-34r: Mars-Saturn (1357), Jupiter-Saturn (1365); by Jean des Murs
ff. 70r-70v: list of fifteen Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions, from 1166 to 1444 (<i>Medie # 7 et 6 pro annis inferius annotatis</i>), by Simon de Boesmare ¹⁴⁰
f. 73r: horoscope for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1425 (<i>Anno Christi 1245, die 2^m Septembris, 15 horis, 50 minutis</i>), at 12°02' Scorpio, Ascendant 28°24' Leo, Sun 17°54' Virgo, Moon 17°41' Taurus, by Boesmare
f. 125ra: horoscope for the lunation preceding the ingress (<i>Figura celi per coniunctionem Solis et Lune die 18 Februarii 4 hora 2 minutis anno Christi currenti 1425</i>), Ascendant 25° Leo, New Moon 9°16' Pisces, Jupiter 16° Scorpio, Saturn 17° Scorpio; possibly by Roland of Lisbon
f. 125rb: horoscope for the solar ingress in Aries in 1425, (<i>Figura celi per introitum Solis in Arietem</i> [page cut] <i>in Ariete 1 hora, 33 minutis, 59 secundis, anno Christi 1425</i>), Ascendant 12° Leo, Sun 00°00' Aries, Moon 20°33' Sagittarius; possibly by Roland of Lisbon
f. 126r: a calendar for the 1425 conjunction (<i>Calendarium per coniunctionem Saturni et Jovis anno domini currenti 1425</i>), possibly by Roland of Lisbon (also notes for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1464)
Related Latin manuscripts in Bibliothèque nationale de France:
Paris, BnF Lat. 2599, ff. 267v-270r: judgement of the conjunction of 1365 by John of Legnano ¹⁴¹
Paris, BnF Lat. 7329, f. 39: horoscope for 22 October 1365; Ascendant at 29° Virgo; correlations between signs and cities; 89ra-91rb. ¹⁴²
Related manuscripts in the British Library: London, British Library, Sloane 1713, ff. 1r-14v; London British Library, Arundel MS 88, ff. 1r-14v (ff. 3v-7v, a list of Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions from 1306-1468; mentions the conjunctions of 1365 and 1425 on ff. 4v and 6ra, respectively)

¹³⁹ For Lat. 7443, see Juste, *CCAL II*, pp. 164-165. See also P. Duhem, *Le système du monde. Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic*, Paris, 1916, IV, pp. 35-37; L. Thorndike, *HMES*, New York, 1923-1958, III, pp. 319-321; L. Thorndike and P. Kirbe, *A Catalogue of Incipits of Medieval Scientific Writings in Latins*, Cambridge, 1963 (2nd edition), p. 1372; Boudet, 'Simon de Phares et les rapports', pp. 617-648, at p. 635 n. 65; 'La papauté d'Avignon et astrologie', pp. 281-284, *La recueil*, I, p. 510 n. 87.

¹⁴⁰ See Poulle, 'Horoscopes princiers', p. 72 n. 2; Boudet, 'Les astrologues et le pouvoir', p. 12 n. 2 and *La recueil*, II, p. 272 n. 149.

¹⁴¹ Mentioned by Boudet, 'Simon de Phares et les rapports', pp. 617-648 (pp. 636-637); Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, p. 319 n. 113; L. Smoller, 'Astrology and the Sibyls: John of Legnano's *De Adventu Christi* and the Natural Theology of the Later Middle Ages', *Science in Context*, 20, 2007, pp. 423-450 (ed. Boudet 2004, pp. 359-365). See also Juste, *CCAL II*, pp. 52-53.

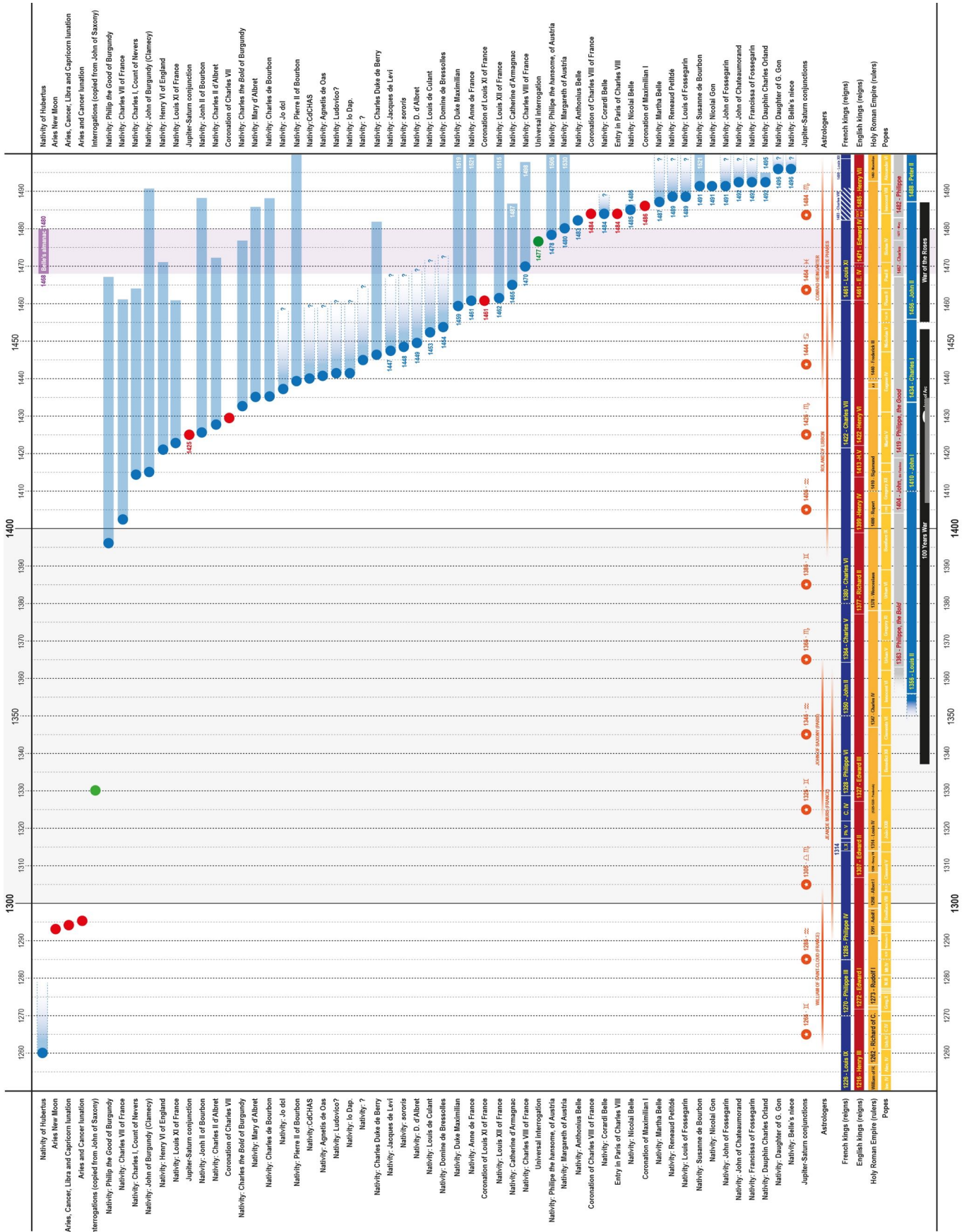
¹⁴² Details in Juste, *CCAL II*, pp. 109-110. The manuscript includes fragments of the text *De Moribus*, attributed to Seneca, a book partially reproduced by Belle in MS 1711, f. 19r (see Appendix II).

APPENDIX IV

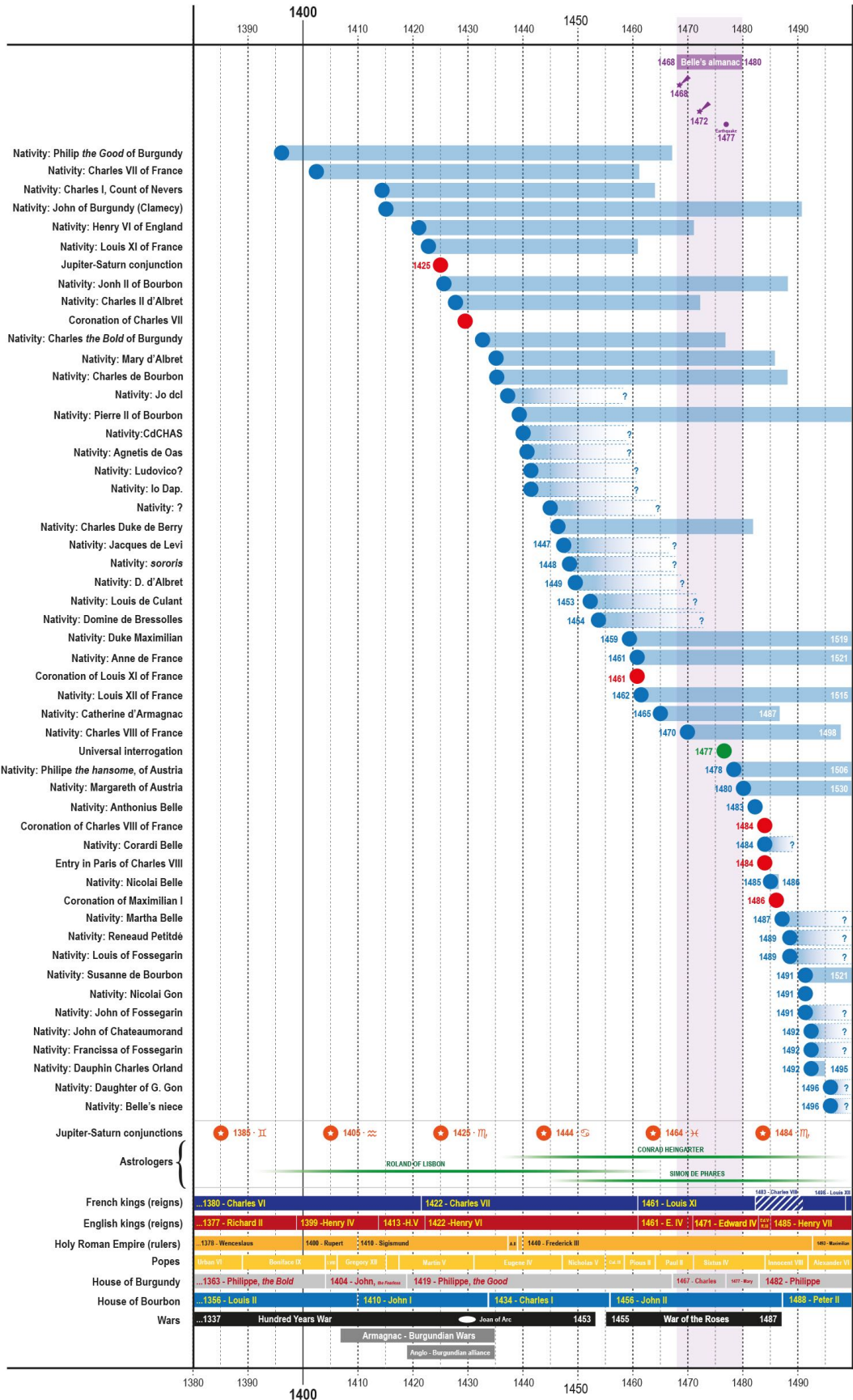
Timeline of events

The two timelines below show all the horoscopes in Belle's workbooks, from the earliest nativity, in 1359 to the latest, in 1396. They also include the kings and popes of that period, the lives of some astrologers quoted by Belle, the Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions occurring in those years and some of the wars affecting France and England. Timeline 1 shows an overview of the period; Timeline 2 focus on the nativities contemporary to Belle.

Timeline 1 – Historical context and events related to Belle’s workbooks



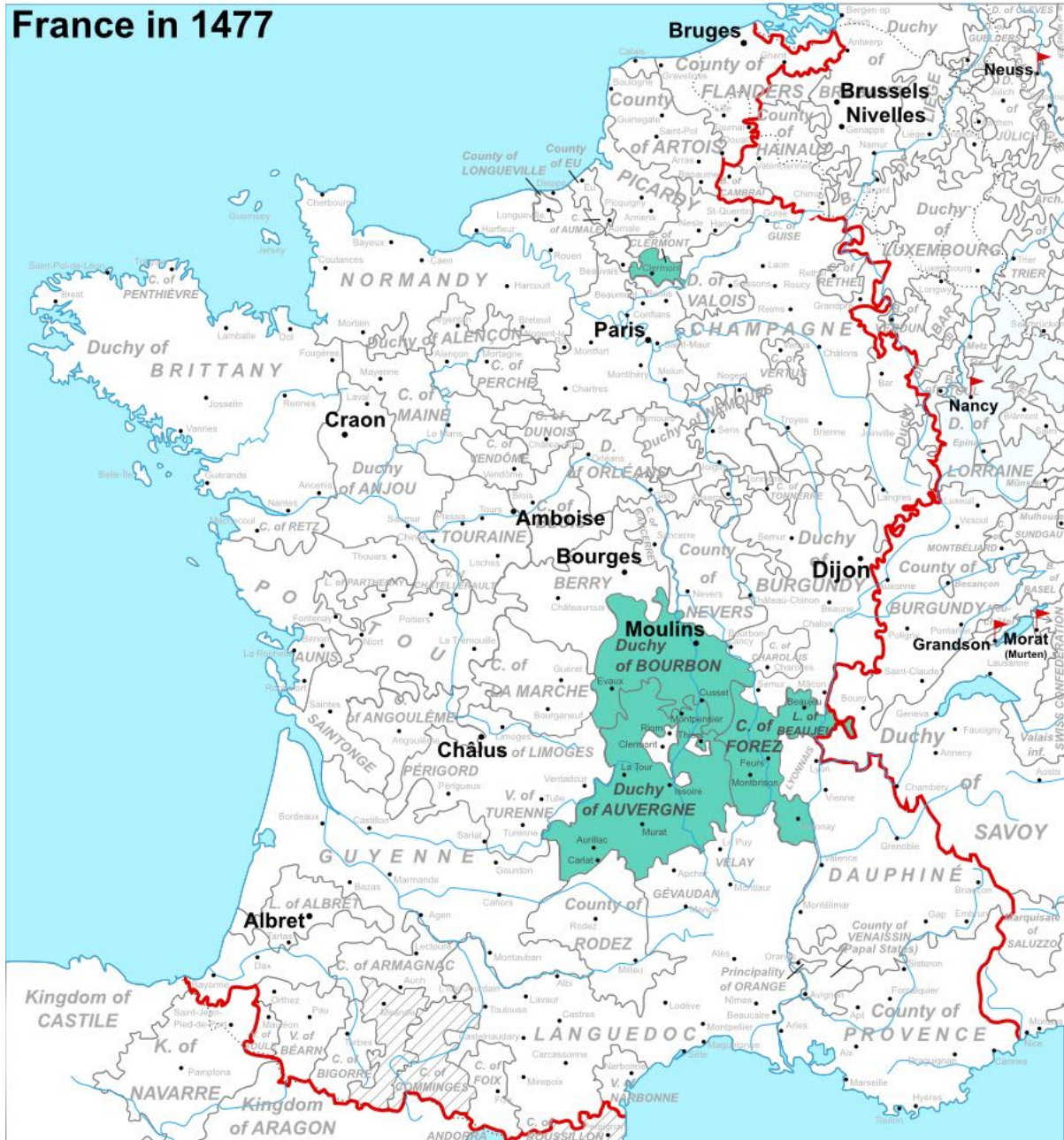
Timeline 2 – Historical context and events (detail)



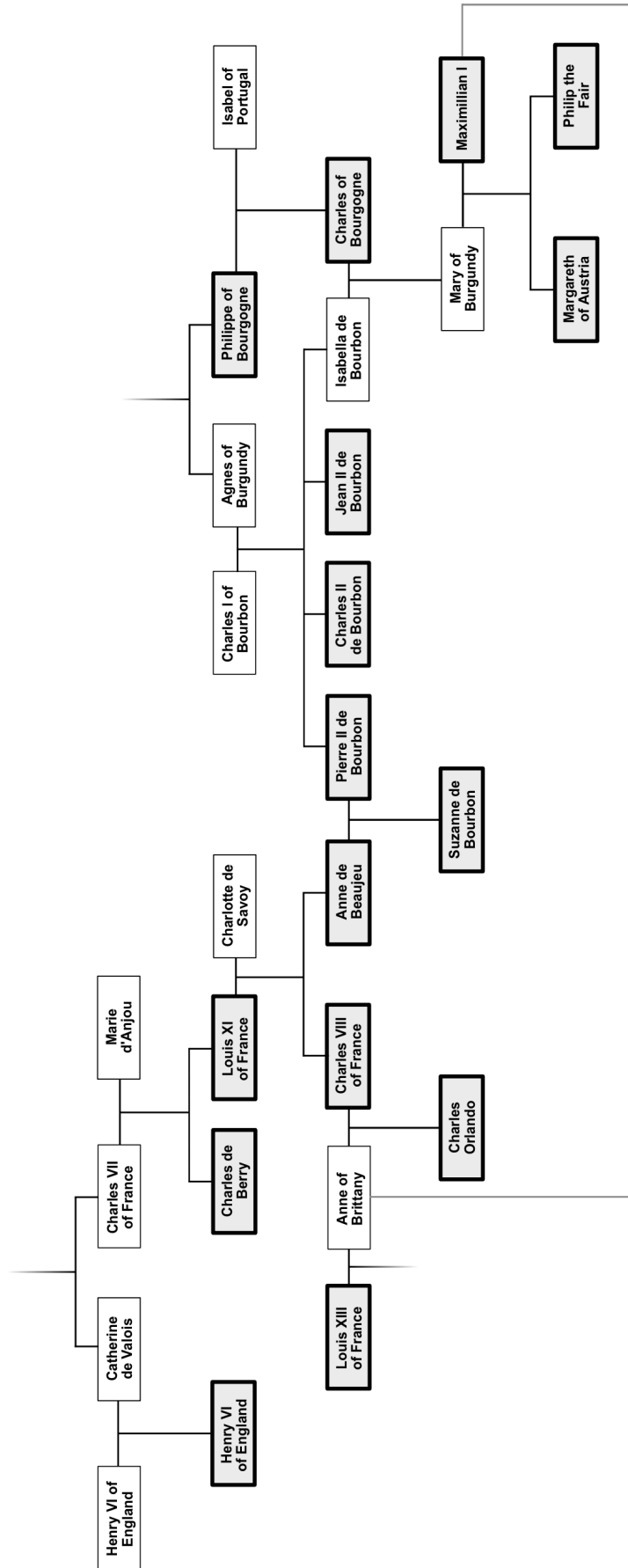
APPENDIX V
Maps and Genealogy



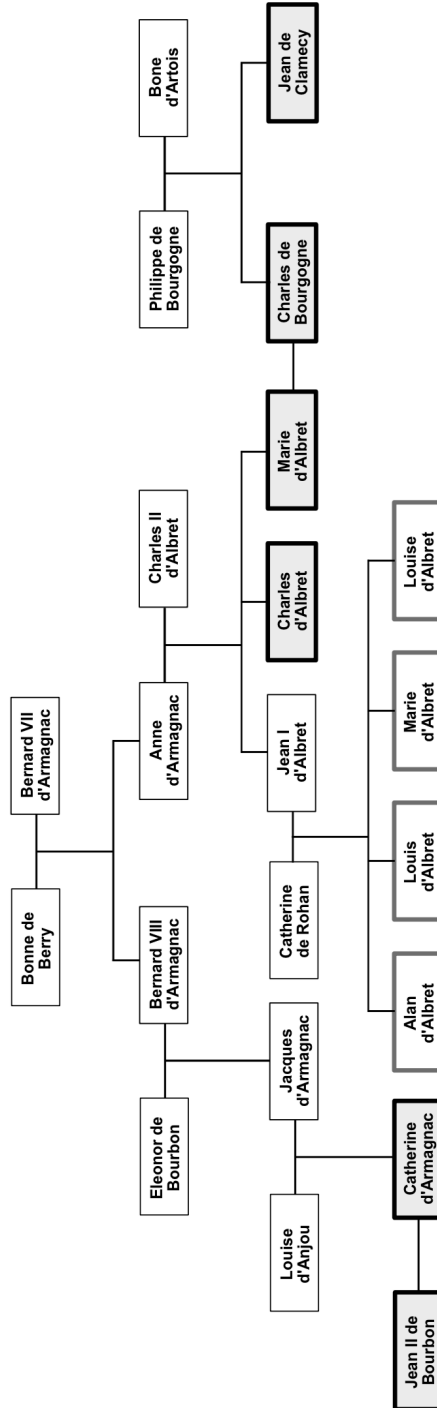
Map by Zigeuner, translated by Kaiser Torikka, based on map from “France in the late 15th century”, from *Muir's Historical Atlas: Medieval and Modern*, London, 1911, and *Grand Atlas Historique*, Paris, 1968, distributed under a CC BY-SA 3.0 license.



Main places mentioned by Belle (battles signaled by a flag; Duchy of Bourbon shaded)
 Adapted from Zigeuner (translated by Kaiser Torikka), based on map from “France in the late 15th century”, from *Muir’s Historical Atlas: Medieval and Modern*, London, 1911, and *Grand Atlas Historique*, Paris, 1968.



Genealogy of the main figures mentioned by Belle – part 1
 (the figures whose chart is in the collection are highlighted with a black frame)



Genealogy of the main figures mentioned by Belle – part 2

(the figures whose chart is in the collection are highlighted with a black frame; cases in doubt have a gray frame)