

THE PICATRIX



SELECTED TRANSLATIONS
EDITED WITH COMMENTARY BY
CHRISTOPHER WARNOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY
NIGEL JACKSON

SELECTED TRANSLATIONS & COMMENTARY

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INTRODUCTION

The *Picatrix* or *Ghayat al Hakim*, the “Aim of the Wise” is the most famous book of astrological magic of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Attributed to the Arabic author Al-Majriti, the *Picatrix* was composed, according to the Arabic translation that follows, between AD 954



and 959. It was compiled, according to the preamble, from 200 previous works of magic, astrology and philosophy. Composed in Andalusia, Islamic Spain, it was translated into Castilian and then Latin 1256 at the court of Alphonso the Wise of Castile.

The *Picatrix* differs from other medieval and Renaissance grimoires or books of magic in being much more philosophical in orientation. Typical grimoires like the Greater and Lesser Keys of Solomon are almost entirely focused on practice, while *Picatrix* spends a great deal of time delving into the philosophical background behind magic. *Picatrix* also stands apart in its heavy reliance on astrology, both as a means of timing the creation of astrological talismans and as a universal method of classification.

Our first translation from the Arabic *Picatrix* focuses on the relationship between the One and the multiplicity of existent beings. Knowledge of this relationship, says *Picatrix*, is the key to magic. Our next translations, on the forms of the planets and selected planetary talismans, introduce us to the use of the planets in talismanic magic. The next translation, that of house based talismans, takes us to another level in complexity,

requiring the full range of traditional astrological magical skill, but producing very powerful full chart talismans.

The translations of ritual preparations and planetary invocations begin our study of *Picatrix* ritual, a necessary concomitant to the physical production of talismans.

Finally the selected translations ends with two very interesting and specific rituals, that of the operation of Jupiter and of the invocation of Perfect Nature. Once again the focus is on the relationship between the One and the many, in this case the mage seeks to become a mirror of that relationship uniting himself with his Almuten Figuris, the planetary ruler of his chart, in order to replicate the unity of the Macrocosm and Microcosm with the practical purpose of doing works of magic.

FROM THE ARABIC PICATRIX BOOK I CHAPTERS 1-4

*IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE
COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL:*

Praise Allah, from whose light veils shine, whose omnipotence creates the most wonderful of destinies, who is the cause of all effects, who commands the night to change to day, who out of nothing has created all beings and provided them with the gifts of his mercy. He is the king and creator of all



that exists. He is not comixed with the beings, and nor is he separated from them; he has no attributes. He cannot be unjust. His essence is cannot be defined. He is untouched by his creation.

Allah bless the master of the prophets (he who was foretold in the holy books of the ancients), the seal of the emissaries, to whom this book is sent, in clear language; also, bless the pious and purified ones of his house, glory be to them until the day of judgement! So then, O disciple who wishes to explore the arts of the wise, to look upon their secrets and search their writings for the eternal wisdom, know that my reason for setting down this book (which was called “The Rank of the Philosopher” and is now called “The Goal of the Wise”) was what happened while I was writing this book.

I started writing on this book in the beginning of the year 343 [AD 954.]. At that time I had already written “The Rank of the Philosopher”. I finished that book in the year 348 [AD 959]. I was impelled to write it by the knowledge that so many in this time are desirous

of knowing of talismans and various kinds of magic. They know not where to turn or even what exactly they seek. Their lives are spent in searching for something that cannot be attained - because the wise have veiled it to shield the world from disaster (by the glory of this world, may God not let it happen!). Therefore they painted new images in the temples of Egypt. These new images were meant to stimulate the spirit, using secret signs and veiled forms which would only be understood among the wise. Read between the lines, and dare to compete with the wise, and thus the secrets are revealed. I have thus decided to make this area better known, to show the method of the art called "simija"; and to reveal the essential secrets of magic, just as we have previously done for the art of alchemy.

I divide this book in four parts. Each part contains several sections. The first part has seven sections, one for each of the planets. The first section deals with the rank of honor of philosophy. I also discuss here of the constellations of the Heavens, and their specific configurations which are appropriate at the time of making particular talismans. I also discuss about the fixed stars and how they shine on the planets. I mention some things which the wise, in their stinginess, have kept secret.

The second section is about the Heavenly configurations and explains their influences, both open and secret, which the wise have dimly expressed. Furthermore, it gives examples of the magic of this world (which is called the world of generation and corruption) as derived from the world of the quintessence. This section lays out the basis of Plato's concept of the unity of form and matter.

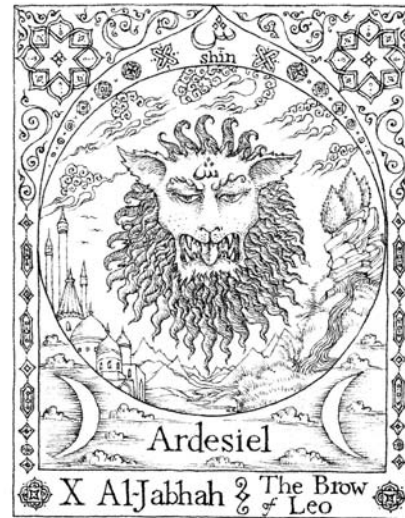
The third section discusses about the relationship of the stars to the three kingdoms of matter because only these are able to receive the influences of the heavens in the world of generation and corruption. The Elements are too changeable and elusive to receive

this influence. I also discuss about the ways they blend with each other to accomplish the desired effects for magic. This may be by the action of either elementary or physical warmth (either burning incense or putting cooked food or drink into the stomach).

The fourth section is about the magic of the Kurds, Nabataeans, and Abyssinians. It gives examples of various acts of magic - and I will fulfill this plan as it must be done, without being miserly or hiding anything. And I ask to succeed in this enterprise, because it is in his hands. And with His protection I will begin.

CHAPTER 1

Know, o my brother-- Allah enlightened your mind--: Philosophy is the noblest gift and the best remuneration. Philosophy gives the knowledge of First causes, on which the immediate causes of existent things are based. This is



accomplished by reaching a true understanding of the essence of things, by realizing what they are and how they are; that they (with all their variations) lead, one after the other, to One existence. This is the reason for all existent things, First causes as well as immediate causes.

And this One is the true beginning, and its existence is not based on the existence of any other thing. It is whole in itself and needn't win existence from anything else. It is even impossible for it to win existence from another. It is also a priori impossible that it is

in a body or is a body itself. Its existence is a different kind of existence. It has nothing in common with any other existence. Something may appear similar but this is only in name, not in essence. It can only be one and that is the true One, that which unifies all existent things. Because of this we can say that all existing things are one. It is the first reality. It gives everything else reality. And its reality is whole in itself and needn't win reality from anything else. No one can imagine a greater completeness, nor could such exist. By philosophy one can distinguish the separate ranks of existent things. Some are at the beginning, some in the middle, and some at the end. The latter ones have motive, but don't motivate things below them. The ones in the middle find motivation above and also motivate things below them. But the first only motivate things below them. They aren't motivated by anything above.

This is the essence of philosophy. What do you think now, O disciple, about a thing which is the way to itself? May Allah honor you: philosophy is big and wide. It is your title to honor, and duty, to search for it. It illuminates the intellect and the soul through the light of eternal beauty. If you search for it and grasp its essence and motivation, if you let go of the changing & perishing world, you will be filled with desire to lift yourself up to the higher world - the place of beginning and returning, from which you come, and where you always have your place - so that Allah may comfort you and let you realize the cause of the world, and what the world causes. This is the basis on which the First Cause allowed causation to appear; the search for the highest is the connection between both. They will be realized as evident.

Mighty Allah is the cause of the world and the world is caused by him. Allah wants to make men his servants, so that they realize him and declare his existence. It says in Allah's word: "I created mankind and the jinn in order that they might

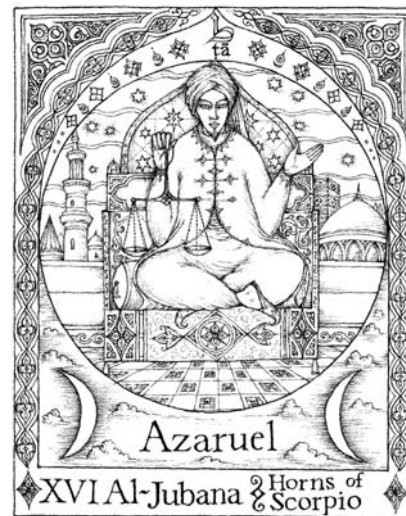
worship Me." [al-Quran, Sura 51] which means that they realize him. And he protects and nourishes them; and they should thank him and prize him. He damns who he wills. He delights who he wills. Who he favors he keeps near him in endless happiness.

Philosophy has three essential qualities. It is growing and not falling apart. It shines and never darkens. And it reveals itself to be looked at, and never goes away. It has three teaching powers: it pushes away evil, it ennobles, and it withdraws from whomever rejects it.

Know now that the Arts couldn't exist without philosophy. That justifies calling the wise conclusions. Conclusions are the final result of the logicians, the quintessence. The statutes of the two Arts were made to attract people to study the Science. None get to that except the wise, who have mastered all the levels of philosophy already. At the end all becomes equivalent. I have offered you a wonderful secret. I hope that you understand it.

CHAPTER 2

Know: here, this practice is called magic. Magic usually means all words or actions that bewitch the mind, and bring souls under their spell. This is not easy to understand, and it's hidden from the simpleminded. Magic is a divine power, affecting by original causes - which is basic to its understanding. There is also a practical magic. Its subject is the influence of spirit on spirit. We find this in the Nirendsch and the



Phantasmagoria. The subject of the talismanic art is the influence of spirit on body. And the subject of Alchemy is the influence of body on body.

I can say regarding the meaning of talismans [tilasm, tism] that it is the reverse of its name [musalat, mslt - that which has power over another]. By its substances of power and might the talisman affects and overwhelms its subject. The affect results from the relations between numbers, from the secrets of the sphere (which are manifested in certain bodies at certain times), and from incense burned for strength and to attract the pneuma that belongs to the talisman. It works like the second conclusion, called elixir, which has the ability to change the bodies themselves by overwhelming them. It is an effective leaven which changes things from their original form. It acts as powerfully as poison. It can penetrate any body similar to itself. Know that the elixir is a substance that changes into itself everything it comes in contact with which is harmonious with it. But what is not harmonious with it will not be changed in this way. It is also said that these qualities make the elixir different from all other natural bodies, which influence each other by their polarity. This is how it changes one individual into another by the power within it. Know, o brother, this leaven is an elixir which consists of earth, air, water, & fire. Whatever the leaven gets into becomes the leaven, which then changes its own form. Its quality of porousness and ability to fall apart easily make for an efficient digestion and conversion into nutrition.

The elixir of Alchemy works the same way. It quickly changes the body into itself, radically altering its nature, purifying it, giving it spirit, soul, & solidity. It won't rot or develop a patina. This is supposedly the secret of the ancients. The word, *al-iksir*, means "capable of destroying all the powers that want to change it". *Al-iksir* overwhelms them, making their substance into its own. They become alike. The animal, plant, & mineral

kingdoms must be represented in the elixir because, as the ancients say, it represents a world, and the three kingdoms united make up the world. One leads another and supports it in its growth. The plant can't exist by itself; the same for the animal, it needs the plant and other things. And the mineral needs cooking and fieriness, and the moistness of quicksilver, to be completed. This is a secret that doesn't appear in "The Rank of the Philosopher".

But I come back to our subject and say: magic is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part deals with the position of the fixed stars. Their locations, the way their rays fall upon the planets and the constellations in the sky, are important in determining their effect. In this context we must regard all ancient elections and talismans. Know further: the nature of an election is such that one uses a talisman. The best method of theoretical magic is speech. This is noted in the phrase of the Prophet, "Truly, some speech is magic." And the great Plato means the same when he says in his book of Aphorisms, "The same way bad words can turn a friend into an enemy, an enemy can become a friend by good words." Is that not magic?

Practical magic involves knowledge of the three kingdoms, and the planetary powers which permeate them. These powers are called virtues. This name is given them by people who realize that they exist, but don't understand their cause or their true nature. It is not necessary here to reveal the ancient secret. Further, the operation of practical magic involves the mixing of one kingdom with another. The warmth of the elements may be attained this way. This balances the incomplete powers with complete powers. A natural warmth may be attained as well. For both of these, both the animal & the human soul are needed.

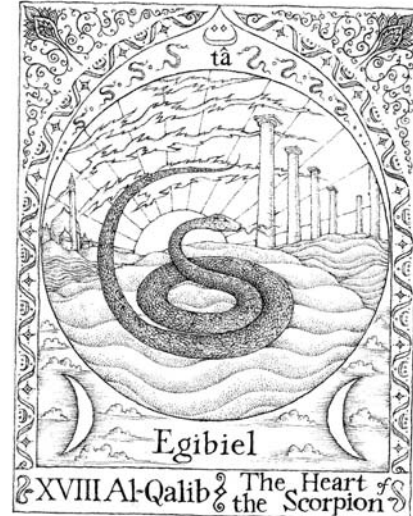
The art which is called Nirendsch is the most beautiful of magic. And know my brother, some magic is useful, some is just an artistic performance. In the category of useful magic we find what is described by the sages of the eon of the Moon, and hinted at in the word of Allah, “Take four birds...”. Therefore this magic is useful. Under the category of magic as art performance we find the practices done in the eon of Saturn and in the eon of Venus. The ancient Greeks gave Nirendsch and the transformation of tangible things the title, *targih*, literally “to make overweight”. Talismans they gave the title, syllogism, i.e., “pulling down the upper spirits”. All together they are called magic. The sages developed this science only through knowledge of the orb of the Heavens. The most necessary things to know about it are: understanding of the sphere of Allah's seat (called his throne) and of the surrounding spheres; the zodiac signs, their locations in the sky, and their other attributes; how the special characteristics of the twelve signs reflect the things of this world; the dignities of the planets in the Zodiac, and similarly connected things; understanding of the natures of the seven planets, the two nodes, their locations in the sky, and how their characteristic indices result in the world; also, understanding of the planets and their interrelationships; the basic characteristics of the stargazer's art; and the dominant rulerships among the seven planets; the levels of rank among the seven planets; the calculation of the omens and their location in the Zodiac.

The summary above shows what knowledge is most necessary in the science of the orb of the Heavens. This science is to be found in books by specialists. The first sage is referring to this knowledge when he says: “I am the one who was lifted above the seven spheres.” The expression, “lifted above the seven spheres”, means gaining a scientific

understanding by the power of the mind. The same is taught in the word of Allah: "We lifted him to a high place." [al-Quran, Sura 19.]

CHAPTER 3

Know, o reader, the sky is spherical. Its body is completely round; and every thing in the sky is also round, under every circumstance and at all times. Some people have said that sometime circumstances in the sky will change its form; but such is impossible because the form of the sky follows the form of its cause.



The soul, also, has a spherical form; it has this form because it is the first thing, sufficient to itself. No evil existed yet; thus, the soul has perfect form. And the perfect form is the circle. It consists of one line because it is the One First Cause, and this is a mysterious thing. The Heaven itself is an actual creature. The degrees of it are only set through convention. We begin with the conventional grades; we then continue to the essential part. Usually the way of learning this goes the opposite direction. Learning about the degrees leads to learning about the movements of the Heavens. It is not possible for something of the world of generation and corruption to be in any place in the Heavens, or vice versa, without recourse to violent action. As said before, the sphere of Heaven is perfectly regular in all directions. The circle is made of one curved line. In its center is a point. All lines radiating from this point to the circumference have the same length. These

lines are the paths of the rays of the stars to the world of the center. The operation of talismans is based on this effect. That is the description or definition upon which people have agreed. The Heavens are a sphere encompassing the whole world. Beyond the sphere it is neither full nor empty - there is no space. But the ether is at rest - we are pointed at it. Inside of it is the sphere of the fixed stars, except for its center. The center of the sphere of fixed stars is next to the center of the Earth (as it is explained in the teaching of learning).

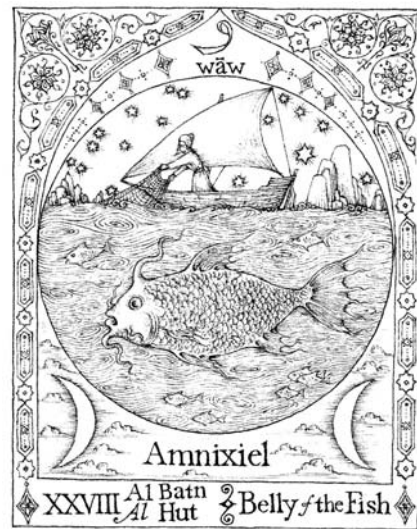
The nature of the Heavens is unity. And the movements of all things that have natures follow that of the Heavens and its warmth. These things are the accidental result of the Heavens (which motivate the generation of this world). The first division of the sky is into 360 degrees. 360 is also the number of the symbols of the degrees. The inner essence of the judgements of omens is based on them because the judgements are determined by the constellations. But some disagreed with that and said the sky doesn't have any importance at all; all importance lies in the ether in the upper world (the world of stars and warmth). They go on to say that the symbols of the degrees are nothing but pictures formed by the constellations (groups of stars). But other people say that the essence of the science of the stars (that is, the reason for the creation of things) is based on the symbols of the degrees.

To determine the effect of a degree one must know the character of the planetary influence upon earthly things. This must be known, for example, whenever a planet reaches any degree with a fixed star in it. Saturn moves the cold and dry existences; Jupiter, the hot and moist; Mars, the hot and dry. Venus moves existences of low heat and strong moistness; Mercury, low heat and strong dryness. The Moon moves the cold and moist existences. The same principle holds for the fixed stars. If a degree is ruled by a star that is

strong in the quality of heat, but weak in the qualities of dryness and moistness, and if the Sun stands by itself in this specific degree, then the judgement is one of growth and waxing. Further, if the star's energy combines with the Sun's energy the growth will be exalted. This point is difficult and full of obscurity, according to the ancient wise men. The obscurity of their speech is such that they camouflage the outside and cover the inside. This is called “igmad” (from “agmada” which means ‘obscure talking’); this you should know.

CHAPTER 4

Ever since talismans were first needed it has been necessary to know of the constellations, on which the art and effect of talismans are based. And here I will give you basic rules about these constellations, and this astronomical foundation of talismans, on which you can build.



One who makes a talisman has to know how to use the Ephemeris. And further, one must believe strongly that what one is doing is right. There can be no doubts or uncertainties in one's operation so that the effect of one's “rational soul” may be strong and the will of the World's “rational soul” may reach this world of generation and corruption and cause the desired result.

And I will give you a firm rule for the planet closest to our Earth: you should not perform any operation unless the Moon is in a fortunate position for it. The Moon

has obvious effects, about which I will tell you later. Now I will tell you of the Moon's effect in each of her mansions (or stations), especially what the Indians have taught.

1ST The mansion al-Saratan (from 0d 0m 0s to 12d 51m 26s Aries). The Indians say: when the Moon is in this mansion you may travel or drink laxatives. As a rule, now is when talismans are made to divide couples or friends, creating distance and enmity between them. Further, talismans may be made to aid a slave in escaping to wherever he wishes, and to destroy the unity of groups of people. This mansion is destructive and fiery. And remember the following rule: for constructive operations the Moon should not be making hard aspects to the malefics or combust; and in destructive operations let the Moon be afflicted and combust. This you should know.

2ND The mansion al-Butain (from 12d 51m 26s up to & including 25d 42m 52s Aries). In this mansion one may make talismans to successfully dig wells & canals, and to find treasures & things sought. Also talismans may be made for fertile crops, or to prevent marriages; further, all inciting talismans are made here because they bring luck and are fiery. This mansion is also good for talismans to help slaves escape, and to tighten the bonds of prisoners so as to torture them.

3RD The mansion al-Turaiya (from 25d 42m 52s Aries to 8d 34m 18s Taurus). In this mansion talismans are made to help sailors in danger. Also talismans to destroy groups, and to break the bonds of prisoners. And talismans for success in alchemical works; also for using fire, for good hunting, for love between marriage

partners, for damaging sheep, cows, & slaves so that they may be lost to their owner. This mansion brings luck and also has its part in bad luck. This you should know.

4TH The mansion al-Dabaran (from 8d 34m 18s to 21d 25m 44s Taurus). In this mansion talismans are made: to damage a city, to disappoint the hope of preserving buildings and keeping them in good condition, to damage crops, to keep slaves with their owners, to divide a married couple, to bring damage to people who search for lost items or dig wells, and to banish snakes & scorpions.

5TH The mansion al-Haqa (from 21d 25m 44s Taurus to 4d 17m 10s Gemini). Talismans are made during this mansion for boys to progress in learning Islam & writing, and so that they become practical and turn out right. Further, talismans are made here for safe, comfortable, & quick travel, to stabilize buildings, and also to destroy groups (because this mansion is partly unlucky). Talismans may be made here to achieve harmony and unity between marriage partners if the Moon and Ascendant are in Zodiac signs that have a human form and if the malefics are in harmonious aspects and not combust. The Zodiac signs with human form are Gemini, Virgo, Libra, Sagittarius, & Aquarius.

6TH The mansion al-Han'a (from 4d 17m 10s to 17d 8m 36s Gemini). Here talismans are made to destroy & occupy cities, to control kings,

and to put dire curses on enemies; also to destroy seeds, deposits, & goods which have been entrusted. Also to establish a good relationship between companions; and for good hunting, and for obstructing the normal effect of a medicine that has been taken.

7TH The mansion al-Dira (from 17d 8m 36s to the end of Gemini). Here talismans are made to further and bless trading & the growing of seeds; also talismans to provide safety and comfort for people traveling on the sea, and to further the good relationship of friends & companions. Also talismans to keep flies out of specific areas. Alchemical operations which are done during this mansion won't succeed and will have to be repeated. Also talismans are made here to get something from a ruler or great man with whom one deals; also talismans to help a fleeing slave, that he may be comforted, and talismans to take land, goods, houses, & such away from their owners.

8TH The mansion al-Natra (from 0d 0m 0s to 12d 51m 26s Cancer). In this mansion talismans are made to create friendship and love between people who hate each other, talismans for the comfort of travelers and for good relations between companions. Also talismans to bind prisoners for a long time, to make slaves corrupt, and to keep mice and bugs away.

9TH The mansion al-Tarf(a) (from 12d 51m 26s to 25d 41m 52s Cancer). Talismans are made during this mansion to injure crops, to expose people (including overland travelers), to divide companions, and to land one's legal opponent in prison.

10TH The mansion al-Gabha (from 25d 41m 52s Cancer to 8d 34m 18s Leo). Talismans are made here for good relations between marriage partners, or to put travelers & enemies in awful, disgusting situations. Also talismans to tighten the bonds of prisoners, to stabilize buildings, and to have companions harmonize with & help each other.

11TH The mansion al-Tsubra (from 8d 34m 18s to 21d 25m 44s Leo). Talismans may be made during this mansion to free prisoners, to occupy cities, for successful trading and the well-being of travelers, to stabilize buildings, and to create good relations between companions.

12TH The mansion al-Sarfa (from 21d 25m 44s Leo to 4d 17m 10s Virgo). Here may be made talismans to aid the growing of seeds & crops, or to damage someone by destroying their belongings; also talismans to sink ships, and to create good relations between companions. Alchemical operations are successful during this mansion, and talismans can be made to improve & maintain the condition of slaves to and at a desired level.

13TH The mansion al-Auwa (from 4d 17m 10s to 17d 8m 36s Virgo). Here talismans are made for success in trading and for successful crops, for the well-being of a traveler, and for initiating marriage between two people. Also to free prisoners, and to gain connections to kings & great people.

14TH The mansion al-Simak (from 17d 8m 36s until the end of Virgo). In this mansion talismans are made to achieve good understanding between marriage partners, or to achieve complete healing by a medical treatment; also talismans to injure seeds & crops and destroy deposits, to injure travelers, for the well-being of kings & seamen, and for good understanding between companions.

15TH The mansion al-Gafr (from 0d 0m 0s to 12d 51m 26s Libra). Talismans may be made during this mansion for success in digging wells, to find & recover treasures, to prevent someone from traveling, to divide married couples, and to destroy the good relationship between companions. Also, to chase away enemies and to estrange them from their home countries. In this mansion talismans to destroy housing may also be made.

16TH The mansion al-Zubana (from 12d 51m 26s to 25d 42m 52s Libra). Here talismans are made to destroy trade, seeds, & crops, to divide friends & married couples; further, if a husband desires, a talisman may be made to mildly chastize his wife. Also talismans to curse one's enemies during their travels, to divide companions, and to free a prisoner from his bondage.

17TH The mansion al-Iklil (from 25d 42m 52s Libra to 8d 34m 18s Scorpio). In this mansion talismans are made to promote the well-being of domestic animals, to conquer cities, and to stabilize buildings; also, to make for

secure traveling at sea. Everybody agrees that a friendship made when the Moon is in this mansion will not fall apart. Therefore this mansion is chosen for making talismans concerning friendship.

18TH The mansion al-Qalb (from 8d 34m 18s to 21d 25m 44s Scorpio). Talismans are made here to hoist kings' standards, that they may triumph over their enemies; also talismans to stabilize buildings. If one marries a woman while the Moon & Mars are in this mansion then that woman will lose her husband (this is also true for the last mansion, al-Iklil). Also talismans may be made to aid slaves in flight, to promote plant growth, for safe sea travel, and to divide companions.

19TH The mansion al-Saula (from 21d 25m 44s Scorpio to 4d 17m 10s Sagittarius). Talismans are made in this mansion to conquer cities, for victory over enemies & to obtain what you desire from them; also, to destroy someone's property, and to separate & estrange. Also talismans may be made for the comfort of travelers, and for good growth of seeds & crops, for a slave to successfully flee from his owner, to cause ships to sink, to divide companions, and to free prisoners.

20TH The mansion al-Na'aim (from 4d 17m 10s to 17d 8m 36s Sagittarius). Here talismans are made to tame hard-to-discipline animals for riding or carrying, to speed up journeys, to attract a specific person's friendship, to make it more difficult for prisoners, and to destroy good relations between companions.

21TH The mansion al-Balda (from 17d 8m 36s to a full 30d Sagittarius). Talismans are made here to stabilize buildings, for good growth of seeds, to keep goods, riding animals, & draught animals in the permanent possession of their owner; also talismans for safe traveling, and for a woman to obtain a divorce from her husband & never to marry again.

22TH The mansion Sa'd al-Dabih (from 0d 0m 0s to 12d 51m 26s Capricorn). Talismans are made in this mansion to treat the ill & cure diseases, to divide lovers & married couples, for a husband to commit adultery with the woman of his desire, to free slaves and help them flee from their homeland; further, to divide companions, and to free prisoners.

23RD The mansion Sa'd Bula (from 12d 51m 26s to 25d 42m 52s Capricorn). Talismans are made in this mansion to cure illness, to destroy goods, to divide married couples, and to free prisoners.

24TH The mansion Sa'd al-Su'ud (from 25d 42m 52s Capricorn to 8d 34m 18s Aquarius). Here talismans are made to further the growth of commerce in trade, for harmony within marriages, for victory in battle; and on the other hand, to divide companions or to free people that are in bondage. Anyone who begins an alchemical operation at this time will not succeed.

25TH The mansion Sa'd al-Ahbiya (from 8d 34m 18s to 21d 25m 44s Aquarius). Talismans are made at this time to occupy cities, to damage enemies, and to victor over them & cause bad, disgusting things to happen to them; also talismans for success in sending messengers & spies, to divide married couples, to destroy crops, and to bind the genitals & all other appendages. Also talismans to bind prisoners, and to increase the safety & stability of a building's foundations.

26TH The mansion al-Farg al-Muqaddam (from 21d 25m 44s Aquarius to 4d 17m 10s Pisces). Every kind of talisman of good influence can be made in this mansion; also talismans for the following: to make a connection of love between two souls, that travelers' wishes might be fulfilled, for safe travel on land & sea, to divide companions, and to bind prisoners.

27TH The mansion al-Farg al-Mu'ahhar (from 4d 17m 10s to 17d 8m 36s Pisces). Here talismans are made to further the growth of trade, to make seeds bring forth bountiful harvests, to cure illness, to destroy someone's property, to create division within a marriage, to keep prisoners in prison longer, and to corrupt slaves.

28TH The mansion al-Risa (from 17d 8m 36s to 30d 0m 0s Pisces). Here talismans can be made for successful trading, for the

growing of seed, to cure illness, to cause someone to lose deposits, for safe traveling, and to restore harmony in a marriage. Also talismans to bind prisoners, and to damage sailors in some way. This you should know.

The Indians based their operations & elections on these 28 Mansions which is what we found in the books about this art that we have read. Remember that using the Mansions for magic that the Moon should be free of the influence of unlucky planets and not combust. If operations for good ends are being undertaken the Moon should be in aspect to fortunate planets. At the beginning of every work of magic for benefic purposes the Moon should be aspected by benefics, and vice versa for malefic magic. This you must know.

As we said before, if a person makes a talisman he must be certain that it is correctly made. This means it must have the proper nature to be capable of receiving these powerful effects in order to achieve the desired ends. This kind of active receptiveness is best found in humans. The disposition of other substances shows the nature of matter to be passive like wax receiving the impression of a seal or as in wrestling, the loser acts passively toward the winner. This is the behavior of a loser, as he is too weak to resist. This action manifests if strength and weakness are in confrontation with each other. This action, or nature, is necessary when creating a talisman because not every material takes every influence. This is a basic rule agreed by the wise. If the nature is appropriate and therefore the material is able to receive, then it will receive, and then union will occur which results in the desired effect. This union is the act in which the form receives impression, so that matter and form become one. This happens in the same way that the image of a person is reflected in water or a mirror. This is also the same as the way human and God are united in the

teachings of the Christians, or the way the soul is united with the body. Know this, and understand it clearly. It is my hope, as I write this, to discover what our predecessors kept secret. Allah, the Sublime, will only allow those he favors to have access to these secrets.

COMMENTARY

This translation from the Arabic Picatrix begins with a discussion of the One, in the Christian and Islamic traditions equated with God and/or Allah

respectively. We can see this as the Arabic text switches from discussing the One to discussing Allah in Book I, Chapter 1 and attributes desires and even personality to Allah. However, as the Picatrix makes clear the One is

not a being, but rather that which underlies being. In discussing the attributes of the One, the Picatrix is not merely spinning superlatives, saying that God, and of course, our tribal or person god, is very, very large and very powerful, but rather attempting to point the reader to a philosophical and in fact, experiential breakthrough. The One is not a person or a personality, it is probably better conceptualized as the Tao. Picatrix then emphasizes the reliance of all things on the One and the value of the search for knowledge. This philosophical approach, rooted in this view of reality as dependent on the One and thus despite the appearance of multiplicity and an seeming infinity of disconnected things is, in fact, unified and in the end, united in the One. The search for connections and the return of the many to the One will be the basis of the astrology and magic propounded in Picatrix.



In Book I, chapter 2 Picatrix discusses three kinds of magic, magic or illusionary magic, which Picatrix says is the “the influence of spirit on spirit.” Then astrological talismans which Picatrix says involve the action of “spirit on body.” And finally alchemy, which Picatrix says is the, “the influence of body on body.” This is a very interesting and useful classification of magic. First of all, magic or the creation of illusion operates by the action of the spirit of the magician on the spirits of his subjects. This means that stage magic or even card tricks are properly considered as real magic since they involve the production of illusions nevertheless the subjects see and experience as real events. This also takes in what I refer to as mass media magic, which is exemplified in the Renaissance by Giordano Bruno. Coulianu, in his *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*, says of this form of magic that,

we would tend to say that the two other practitioners of Bruno’s magic, the actual magician and prophet have now vanished. More probably, however, they have simply camouflaged in sober and legal guises...Nowadays the magician busies himself with public relations, propaganda, market research, sociological studies, publicity, information, counterinformation and misinformation, censorship, espionage and even cryptology...¹

Secondly Picatrix discusses talismanic magic and says that it is the action of spirit on body. This is also a very incisive way to explain astrological magic because the creation of talismans involves searching throughout the material world for disparate, but spiritually connected items, making use of the spiritual unity of all things. This is one way that spirit exists in body, through the reliance of material things on their souls or spiritual essences, themselves dependent on the Platonic Ideas or Archetypes, often seen in the Middle Ages and Renaissance as angels or archangels. In addition to this pre-existence of

¹ Ioan Coulianu, *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance* (Chicago 1987) at 104.

spirit in the talisman, it is the task of the astrological magician to invoke the appropriate spirit and cause them to ensoul the talisman, imbuing the talisman with its spiritual essence and power. Finally, Picatrix says that alchemy is the action of body on body. The Philosophical Elixir, the Philosopher's Stone acts by transmuting impure matter to the quintessence, matter purified. These systematic classification of esoteric arts in an almost syllogistic manner is typical of Picatrix's approach and extremely useful both in understanding and applying these various esoteric arts.

In chapter three Picatrix takes what might be termed a “scientific” approach, though a science that encompasses the spiritual. He discusses the nature of the Heavens, which proceeding from the perfect one, must themselves be perfect and thus circular or spherical in shape. Talismans, says Picatrix, work through this unity within the spherical perfection of the Cosmos through straight lines, similar to the spiritual rays described by the medieval Islamic philosopher Al-Kindi in his *On the Stellar Rays*. Picatrix then discusses the various elemental influences of the planets, those that are fiery, Mars & the Sun, producing heat and dryness, those that are airy, Jupiter, producing heat and moisture, those that are wet, the Moon & Venus, producing cold and moisture and those that are earthy, Saturn and Mercury, producing cold and dryness. This medieval and Renaissance “scientific” astrology was never materialistic, in the sense of excluding the spiritual, but its emphasis was also on impersonal forces. It coexisted with and supplemented the more esoteric view of the spiritual and spirits as personalities. Picatrix, in the sophistication of its philosophical approach, takes in both “scientific” astrology and the more overt emphasis on spirits. These approaches are not really contradictory, and the “scientific” approach cannot be seen, without significant distortion, as some sort of forerunner to modern materialistic science. Rather they are two

different perspectives that shared a common philosophical basis, that of the spiritual unity of the Cosmos, based on the One.

Finally in chapter 4, Picatrix proceeds to actual practical astrological magic, setting forth the elections and talismans suitable to each of the 28 Mansions of the Moon.

The Lunar Mansions are, in fact, a lunar Zodiac, measuring as they do the monthly orbit of the Moon relative to the fixed stars. Early on the measurement of the Mansions through observation of particular fixed stars was replaced with a Tropical set of Mansions, oriented to the Tropical Zodiac of the seasons. This more perfect and regular arrangement was chosen because it was a more accurate representation of the perfection inherent in the One, preferable to the irregular, imperfect arrangement of the material stars.

THE FORMS OF THE PLANETS

BOOK III, CHAPTER 3

The true forms of the planets [as given by] the second Mercurius in his book to King Alexander, which is called by him the Book of the Seven Planets. And there are conjoined [with them] the many things which are necessary in this art.

The form of Saturn is the form of a black man, wrapped in a green mantle and having the head of a dog, holding a falcon in his hand.

The form of Jupiter is the form of a man wrapped in fine cloth and seated on a throne.



The form of Mars is the form of a man riding on a lion, holding in his hand a great lance or spear.

The form of the Sun is the form of a man without a beard, beautiful of face, having on his head a crown and in his hand a lance or spear, and before him one having the head and hands of a man and the remainder of the body that of a horse, having four feet, being turned around, so that its hands and feet are elevated.

The form of Venus is the form of a beautiful youth having in one hand a comb and in the other hand an apple, and with his hair spread out.

The form of Mercury is the form of a naked man, writing [on parchment] and riding an eagle.

The form of the Moon is the form of a man riding a hare.

*SELECTED PLANETARY
TALISMAN TRANSLATIONS*
BOOK II, CHAPTER 10

SATURN

Image of Saturn for much drinking. For the operations of Saturn make the form of a man elevated in a high throne, on his head a yellow linen cloth, having in his hand a sickle, in the hour of Saturn, when he is in the Ascendant in the stone feyrizech [sapphire or turquoise] the virtue of this image is that whoever carries it himself will be able to drink heavily and [only die from old age]

JUPITER

For the operations of Jupiter make the figure of a crowned man sitting on a throne with four feet carried by four winged men and the man who is sitting on the throne is raising his hands in prayer/worship. Make it in the hour of Jupiter when Jupiter is rising in his exaltation and make it in a clear and white stone. Those who carry this image will have increase riches and honor and lead a good life and have many sons and be able to perform good things and not be injured by enemies.

MARS

The form of Mars according to the opinion of Mercury [Hermes Trismegistus] is the form of a nude man standing erect on his feet and before him on the right is a beautiful maiden standing on her feet, which is the form of Venus; and her hair is fastened in the back; and Mars is placing his right hand over her neck and his left hand is stretched out above her breast and they are looking at each other. The wise say that this figure has great power and strongly [accomplishes] great works and only God can speak of what comes after. And this is its form.

THE SUN

The figure of the Sun is the image of a woman sitting in a chariot drawn by four horses, holding in her right hand a mirror and in her left hand a scepter with a

seven branched candelabra over her head, made in [diamond or white sapphire] when the Sun is in his exaltation. Whoever carries this image will seem good to everyone and not be afraid.

VENUS

From the form of Venus make the image of a seated woman with wings with her hair braided behind [her back] with two braids with two boys in her lap, in the hour of Venus, when she is exalted, in the stone almehe [quartz?], and he who carries this stone will not suffer loss or injury.

Of the images of Venus make, in the stone carnelian, the head of a wild ass and above [it] the smaller head of a fly joined to it, in the hour of Venus, when Venus is rising, and if you seal this image in wax it is powerful against infirmities of the stomach.

MERCURY

From the operations of Mercury make the figure of a single frog on the hour of Mercury, with Mercury rising, in an emerald stone, and who ever carries it will offend no one, to the contrary, everyone you meet will speak well of you and say good things about your works.

THE MOON

From the images of the Moon make the form of a man with the head of a bird holding up a [staff or scepter] and in his hand holding a branch in bloom, in the hour of the Moon with the Moon rising in her exaltation [Taurus], and whoever carries this image on a journey will not be tired no matter where they go.

ADOCENTYN, THE TALISMANIC CITY BOOK IV, CHAPTER 3

There are among the Chaldeans most perfect masters in this art and they tell us that Hermes was the first who constructed images by means of which he was able to regulate the Nile against the motion of the Moon. Hermes also built a temple to the Sun, and he knew how to hide himself within it so that no one could see him.

It was he who in the east of Egypt made a City twelve miles long in which he constructed a fortress

which had four gates in each of its four parts. On the eastern gate he placed the form of an Eagle; on the western gate, the form of a Bull; on the southern gate, the form of a Lion, and on the northern gate, the form of a Dog. Into these images he put spirits that spoke with voices, and no one could enter the gates of the City except by their permission.



There he planted trees in the middle of which was a great tree which bore the fruit of all generation. On the summit of the Castle he built a tower 30 cubits high on the top of which he ordered to be placed a round house whose color changed every 7th day...Around the edge of the City he placed engraved images and ordered them in such a way that by their power the inhabitants were made virtuous and withdrawn from all evil and harm. And the name of the City was Adocentyn.

COMMENTARY

When we consider the hundreds of planetary talismans set forth in Picatrix, we note that they have a very characteristic form. First an image for the talisman is given and then often the materials to be used and finally the astrological conditions under which the talisman must be created or the image inscribed or engraved. We have already noted the dependence of all material things on the One, mediated through the rays or spirits of the stars, which themselves depend on the Platonic Ideas or Archetypes, perfect exemplars of every thing and every relationship. Thus using materials ruled by a particular planet, in other words materials that contain the energy of the planet, now scattered throughout the material world, makes sense as a method of concentrating that energy. Alternatively we can consider the things ruled by the planet as things that it loves and is attracted to. The concentration of these things impels the spirit of the planet to manifest itself within them.

The proper selection of astrological conditions is also a key part of astrological magic. To charge a talisman with the energy of a planet, that planet must itself be strong

and well placed. Typically in Picatrix we are advised that the planet should be rising and that it should be in either its sign or exaltation. Also typical of planetary elections is the frequent admonition to make the talisman in the hour of the planet. This just scratches the surface of the astrological knowledge necessary to elect, that is, to pick an astrological auspicious time for a particular talisman. Mastery of traditional (pre-1700) electional astrology is a prerequisite to the proper application of the instructions given in Picatrix. If you do not know what modern astrology is or are not aware of the differences between traditional and modern, then ipso facto you are a modern astrologer. Be cautious for modern astrology, for all its virtues, will lead you astray. Find a teacher and learn the traditional method, without modern inclusions.

The third factor in the creation of planetary talismans are the images prescribed by our sources. Originally these talismans were often made as statuettes, so statuette would be made in the form of the image. However, inscribing or engraving the images on pendants or rings, currently the most popular method, was also widespread in medieval and Renaissance practice. On one hand, there is a tendency for moderns to become obsessed with the material form and appearance of talismans to the exclusion of astrological timing. “Talismans” available on the Internet are generally nothing more than factory mass produced base metal jewelry with various designs. While the design alone is not sufficient for much magical charge, it would also be a mistake to ignore the importance of these forms, though our emphasis must change from a material to a spiritual perspective.

When we consider the Renaissance view of the Cosmos as being composed of three worlds, the World of Divine Ideas & Archetypes, often seen as Archangels, the Celestial World and the Material World, it is important to realize that the Celestial World is not necessarily that

of the material planets and stars. In Renaissance and medieval thought the planets and stars were made of a different matter than things in the sub-lunary sphere. Modern science is certainly correct in disputing this and maintaining that the matter of stars is the same as matter on Earth. However, we should remember that these ideas of stellar matter came from the traditional “scientific” viewpoint, which existed along with a more esoteric, spiritual approach whose focus had always been on the Archangels or Souls of the planets and stars, rather than their material bodies. This approach is not as affected by the modern scientific view of stellar matter. For this esoteric approach, the Celestial World is perhaps better understood as the *Alam al-Mithal*, the Imaginal World. Not imaginary, and not created by the individual ego, but rather the intermediate world of dreams and visions, where the archetypes and spirits take on form and material things lose their weight and spatial qualities.

The images that Picatrix describes to us are therefore the products of this Celestial World and presumably perceived by sages in dream, vision and direct transmission from spirits in ritual and invocation. In reading the image descriptions, some are very odd, some strangely familiar and all have that otherworldly quality of Celestial visions.

We are privileged to have Nigel Jackson’s renditions of these images. As a mage and artist Nigel works daily with the Imaginal World. He sees himself, not in the modern artistic mold as the rebel genius, individually creating “art” through his ego self, but rather in the more traditional model of the vessel of manifestation for forms and images that pre-exist him and have their origin and subsistence outside of him. For us these images are windows into the realms of the various spirits they depict and doorways for the manifestation of these spirits.

Our final translation in this section describes the great city of Adocentyn, said to be built by Hermes Trismegistus in Egypt. Here we see a very broad application of the principles of astrological magic. As we have seen talismans could consist of statues and statuettes as well as pendants and rings. But here Picatrix describes an entire city constructed on astrological talismanic principles. From the four gates of the city corresponding to the fixed signs of the Zodiac; Scorpio, whose higher qualities are sometimes depicted as an eagle, Leo, the Lion, Taurus, the Bull and Aquarius, here depicted as a dog; to the temple of the Sun and the 7 changing colors on the tower at the center of the city, astrological planning and magical power pervade the city of Hermes. This point us to a larger interior and exterior design through astrological principles, to magical landscaping, architecture and even city planning. The principles that allow us to create small personal talismans are equally applicable to the creation of sacred space on a very large scale. The pervasive modern condition of detachment and meaninglessness, as well as the mass destruction of the environment all potentially have their antidote in recognizing the spiritual ordering of the Cosmos. We take a small, but key step towards this recognition whenever we make a talisman or contemplate the traditional philosophy of unity in the One.

HOUSE BASED TALISMANS

BOOK I, CHAPTER 5

When you to make images to place love between two people, and that love and delight be made strong and firm between them, make images of the two in their likenesses. And let this be done in the hour of Jupiter or Venus, the North Node rising, and with the Moon making a good aspect to Venus, and let the lord of the 7th house



aspect the lord of the Ascendant with a trine or sextile aspect. And afterwards join the images as if they were embracing, and bury them in the place of the other person, namely the person whom the mage wishes to bind to the other. And it shall be as you wish.

An image to generate peace and love between two people. Make two images under the Ascendant of the [horary] question, and make fortunate the Ascendant and 10th house, and remove malefics from the Ascendant, and make fortunate the lord of the 10th house and aspecting the lord of the Ascendant by a trine or sextile aspect.

But here I will make clear what is necessary with regard to aspects. I say that the trine is an aspect of perfect love, and the reason for this is that each sign of a fiery nature aspects one another with a trine aspect and signs of earthy nature aspect one another with a trine aspect, and understand similarly the aerial and aquatic signs; and this aspect causes perfect amity. And the sextile is an aspect of moderate amity, because the signs that

aspect each other by this aspect agree in their active but not passive nature [with regard to heat, but not moisture), and this is why this aspect is said to be of moderate amity. And the square aspect is of medium enmity, because they aspect each other from contrary natures. And the opposition is an aspect of perfect hatred, because the signs that so aspect each other are contrary in all four natural qualities. But now let us return to our topic.

And now to speak of how to make a second image: if it is made for two friends, make the 11th house of the first image the Ascendant [of the second image]; and if you wish to generate friendship between man and wife, make the Ascendant of the second image the 7th house of the first image. And make it so the lord of the Ascendant of the one who will return the friendship makes a good aspect with reception to the lord of the Ascendant of the other image. Then join the images and bury them in the place of the one who is to have friendship and they will be friends as before.

Image to place love between two [people] Make two images with Venus rising in the first face of Cancer and the Moon in the first face of Taurus in the eleventh house. And when the images are made attach them so they are embracing each other and bury them in the place of the other [person]. And there will be affection and durable love between the two of them. And these are called figures of alteration and Ptolemy speaks of them in aphorism 33 of his Centiloquim. And we will speak further of this in the fourth book of our work in that place we will explain further if God wills.

An image for enduring love. Make two images, and put one of the Fortunes at the Ascendant and the Moon in Taurus [aspecting] Venus. Write on one image a number -- that is, a figure of al-Khwarismi, the sort that begin with 0 -- for 220 in the proper place, and on the other image write the same kind of figure for 284 in the proper place. Join

the two figures together in an embrace, and then there will be perfect and lasting love between the two.

Image for kings and nobles to like whomever you wish. Make an image in the form and in the name of the person in this way. Make fortunate the Ascendant with a fortune that is strong and not cadent, retrograde or combust, and make the lord of the Ascendant strong and in good condition, and direct in his exaltation, and make the lord of the 10th house aspect the lord of the Ascendant with a trine or sextile aspect with strong reception; and place the lord of the Ascendant in a commanding sign and the lord of the 10th in an obedient sign. [And as long as he shall have the aforesaid image with him, he shall be loved and honored and whatever he requests of the king shall be given to him.

Image for a lord to be loved and for his men to always be obedient to him. Make two images, the first of which in the hour of Jupiter, and the Moon aspecting the Sun with a good aspect and separating from the malefics, and place the Head of the Dragon in the Ascendant. Then make the other image when its Ascendant is the fifth house from the Ascendant of the first image, and in the hour of Venus and the Head of the Dragon is in Ascendant or aspecting the Ascendant with a good aspect, the hour of the Moon; and the Moon is free from the malefics. And bury the images under the Ascendant of one of the fixed signs in the hour of Saturn. And as soon as this is done all of your subordinates will be obedient to you.

An image that slaves might love their master. Let there be two images, of which one should be made in the hour of any of the superior planets and with the Moon waxing, with the North Node in the 1st, 4th, 7th or 10th house. And fashion the second image in the hour of any of the inferior planets, and the second image make in the hour of an

inferior planet and make the 10th house of the first image the Ascendant of the second image, and place the Tail of the Dragon in the 1st, 4th, 7th or 10th house. And when the images are made in this way, join them together embracing and bury them in the place of the person whose love you wish to have.

Image to have dignity from a lord. Make an image and make fortunate the Ascendant and 10th house and [do] similarly with the lord of the Ascendant, and remove malefics from the Ascendant and its lord, and place benefics in the 11th house aspecting the Ascendant and its lord with good and laudable aspects, and make the lord of the 10th house and the lord of the Ascendant aspecting each other with a good aspect and mutual reception. And when the image is complete keep it secret and don't let anyone see it and when you go into the presence of the lord you will have the office or dignity you ask for.

Image to increase business and trade. Make an image, and make fortunate the Ascendant and the 10th and their lords and the lord of the house of the lord of the Ascendant and the lord of the house of the lord of the 10th, [make fortunate] the Moon and the lord of the house of the Moon, and [make fortunate] the 2nd house and its lord; and [make] the lord of the 2nd house in reception with the lord of the Ascendant by trine or sextile aspect, and place a fortune in the 2nd house, and place the Part of Fortune in the Ascendant or 10th, and with the lord of the Part of Fortune making a good aspect to it. Make fortunate the 11th house and its lord. And when this image is made, guard it and keep it in secret so that no one sees it, and you will have great profits and good in all your undertakings.

Image for the growth of cities and for them to go well. Make an image, and make fortunate the Ascendant and the 10th and their lords, and make fortunes aspect them,

and make fortunate the lord of the 2nd house and the lord of the 8th house, and fortunate the lord of the Ascendant and make him aspecting a fortune, and make fortunate the lord of the house of the lord of the Ascendant, and the Moon and the lord of the house of the Moon. And when the image is made according to what is said, bury it in the middle of the city and it so it shall be.

Image to gain the love another. Make two images, make the first in the hour of Jupiter with Virgo rising and the Moon waxing and in the Ascendant, 4th, 7th or 10th houses. Make the second image in the hour of Venus when Venus is aspecting Jupiter; and [when] the malefics are cadent from the Ascendant, and make the Ascendant of the second image the 7th [house cusp] of the first image, and make the lord of the Ascendant of the first image aspect the lord of the Ascendant of the second image with a trine or sextile aspect. And when they have been made in this manner, bind them together embracing each other, and bury them in the place where you wish to gain love and delight.

Image for the destruction of an enemy. Make an image in the form and likeness of the one whom you wish to cause evil to in the hour of Mars with the Moon in Scorpio; and make unfortunate the Ascendant, and place a malefic in the Ascendant or making a bad aspect to the Ascendant, and make the malefic aspect the lord of the Ascendant; and make unfortunate the lord of the Ascendant and the lord of the 4th house and make them aspect each other, or make unfortunate the lord of the Ascendant in the 4th house, or received by a malefic in the 4th house or the Ascendant. And when it is made, bury it head downwards outside the city in which your enemy lives, and so it shall be.

Image for the destruction of a city. Make an image under the hour of Saturn with a malefic [rising] in the Ascendant of the city; and make unfortunate the Ascendant and

the lord of the Ascendant and the lord of the house of the lord of the Ascendant, and remove benefics from the Ascendant, [and do not let a benefic be the] lord of the Ascendant or [the lord] of the triplicity of the Ascendant, or the lord of the 4th, 7th or 10th houses. And when the image is made, bury it in the middle of the city and you will see miracles.

Image to impede buildings so that they are not built. Make two images, one in the hour of the Sun, with Leo rising and the other in the hour of the Moon with Cancer rising; when the Moon is waxing and safe from the malefics and swift in course. And when they are made, bury them in the hour of Venus, and they will impede buildings.

Image for the escape of those held in prison. Make an image in the likeness of the one whom you wish to be released in the hour of the Moon, when [the Moon] is waning, swift in motion and separated from the malefics. Bury the image near the prison when the Ascendant is placed as the Tenth house of the city where the prisoner is held.

Image for the destruction of an enemy. Make two images, the first in the hour of the Sun, with Leo rising and the Moon cadent from the Ascendant, and the other make in the hour of the Mars with Cancer rising and Mars cadent from the Moon, and make them in the form of one striking another. And bury them in the hour of Mars with the first face of Aries rising. And when [these images] are made, they will work and have power over your enemy in this way.

An image to chase a man from his place. Make an image with a tortuous sign ascending, and with the lord [of the Ascendant] cadent from the Ascendant, 4th, 7th and 10th houses, and the Moon similarly cadent. And bury the image at a crossroad under the Via Combusta, and make the face of the image look away from his place, and you will see miracles.

An image to separate two friends from each other. Make an image under the Ascendant of whichever [friend] you wish, place a strong malefic in the Ascendant and 10th house, and make infortunate the lords of the Ascendant and 10th house, and make a malefic aspect them with a square or opposition, and make the benefics cadent from the Ascendant and the 10th house and their lords. Make the other image the same in all respects as we have said above. And bury it in the place of the other image when a fixed and malefic sign and the Cauda Draconis or other malefic rises. And when this is done, they will hate each other and never love each other.

An image for the anger of the king to fall on whomever you wish. Make two images according to the principles of talismans that we have already set forth; and make the lord of the Ascendant cadent from the lord of the 10th house or afflicted by him, and make the lord of the 4th house aspect [the lord of the Ascendant] by a square or opposition. And bury the image with a fixed and malefic sign rising. And when this is done, the king will hate the person.

Image to catch many fish. Make an image in the form of the fish in the river [where you wish to catch the fish], and make the image with Jupiter rising in Pisces; in the hour of Venus. And make it in this way; first make the head and the body and then the tail, and join them together [at the elected time] as we have said. And make spine of pure silver and place the image on the head of the spine, and make a jug or vase with a tightened mouth made of lead, and in the middle of the jug place the spine standing straight up with the image of the fish at the top of the spine. Then take the aforementioned vase and fill it with water and seal the mouth with wax so that no water leaks out. And all the fish will congregate there.

Image to catch fish. Alhanemi says in his book that he tried this and found it to be true. And he says: make an image in the form of a fish, and cast it with the second face of Pisces rising; and the Moon and Mercury rising, and make it in the hour of the Moon. And when this image is made, throw it in the river where you wish to have fish, and you will see miracles because many fish will come to this place.

Image to chase away scorpions. Make an image of a scorpion in very pure gold in the hour of the Sun, with the Moon in the Ascendant, 4th, 7th or 10th, in Taurus, Aquarius or Leo, because Leo is of the nature contrary to a scorpion; and the Sun is in Leo; Saturn is retrograde. And first make the tail, then the feet, then the legs [literally hands], and last the head. And there are many things to consider and you should understand them well because they will assist you in all of your works. And when the parts are made, place the left foot in the place of the right foot and the right foot in the place of the left foot, place the head up in the proper position and the tail similarly. After this make a backbone and place it inverted above the [belly?] and place the head of the backbone in the proper place; and stinging himself with his own tail. And when the image is made in this way, bury it in the hole in a stone, then bury it in an important part of the city; and they will flee from this place and they will not approach the place of the image or within 45 miles of the place.

Image to heal the bite of a scorpion. Make the image of a scorpion in a bezoar stone in the hour of the Moon, with the Moon in the 2nd face of Scorpio and Leo, Taurus or Aquarius rising. And fasten the stone in a gold ring and stamp the image in soft incense under the celestial conditions [literally constellation] we have previously spoken of. And give the person who was bitten a drink made from the incense stamped with the seal and they will be cured immediately and their pain relieved.

Image for men to be loved by their wives. Make the image of a boy[?] in a cold and dry metal, and make it with Mercury rising in Virgo and the apogee of its epicycle [fastest direct speed?] or when it is the almuten figuris, and do this work in the hour of Mercury.

And thus make it up till the time when the image is completed. Make another image in the form of a youth and make it when Mercury is in Virgo or Gemini and return to the place of the first image and beware of a diversity of ascendants, namely when Mercury is in Virgo do not place the sign Gemini rising or when Mercury is in Gemini do not place the sign Virgo rising, and whichever you have rising, place Mercury there. And when the two images have been made in this way, attach to each other embracing, and place the hands of whichever one you please around the sides of the other, and do all of the work in the hour of Mercury with Virgo or Gemini rising. And make a band around the images with a band of the same cast metal [as used for the images] and bury them in a village or more populated city. And when you have done this men will embrace their wives and have good love for each other. Similarly when someone [wishes] love from another bury [the images] in the place where you wish them to unite.

Image for the destruction of cities, house and the like. Make an image under the ascendant of the city, if it is known, or under the ascendant of a [horary] question; And make unfortunate the Ascendant and 4th and the lord of the Ascendant and the Moon and the lord of the house of the lord of the Moon and the lord of the house of the lord of the Ascendant and the 10th and its lord. When the image is made as has been said above bury it in the middle of the city and so it will be.

An image for the profit of a physician. Make in tin the image of a man seated on a throne, doing the work of a physician. Make another image of a man standing on

his feet holding a chamberpot before him making a judgment on it. Make both of these images with Taurus or Libra rising, Mars rising and the Dragon's Head at the Midheaven. And when they are made, put the plate of the image in the place where you wish people to come and you will see miracles as people are drawn to this place.

Image for the growth of harvests and crops. Make the image of a seated man surrounded by harvests, trees and crops, on a silver plate; and make it when Taurus rises, when the Moon is in Taurus and the Sun is going towards Saturn. And bury it in the place you wish and all seeds and crops will grow well and quickly without damage from beasts or birds or storms or anything else that is a nuisance at harvest time.

Image to heal [kidney] stones. Make the image of a lion in the purest gold holding a stone in its paw as if dancing and make it in the hour of the Sun with the second face of Leo rising. And whoever carries this image will be free from their illness immediately. And this has been shown frequently.

Image for the removal of illness, melancholy and spells. If you wish to remove mechanical [?] infirmities, to strengthen health and to return evil spells to their makers make an image in the purest silver in the hour of Venus, the Moon in the Ascendant, 4th, 7th or 10th houses and aspecting Venus with a good aspect and the lord of the 6th house aspecting a benefic with trine or opposition [?] and the lord of the 8th squaring Mercury. And beware that Mercury is not retrograde, combust or aspecting the malefics. And make this image in the final hour of Sunday, and the lord of the hour is in the 10th or the Ascendant. And when it is made in this way the aforesaid infirmities will be removed.

COMMENTARY

In this section we reach the height of both power and complexity in astrological magic, the house based talisman. This level of sophistication was attained by the Harranian Sabians, pagan followers of Hermes Trismegistus who survived into the medieval period and transmitted much of their esoteric knowledge to the advanced Islamic civilization of the Middle East. We have seen that in making planetary talismans we seek to elect a time when the particular planet is strong, to get the basic energy of the planet. House based talismans are much more complex and mysterious. A planet and thus a planetary talisman always has the same basic effect for everyone. Houses, however, are divisions of local space and vary depending on the time of day and location. These house rulers are like cast members of a play with various roles to play which they change among themselves depending on the time, date and location. A planet when acting as a house ruler is often very different from its basic nature. Jupiter, for example, the Greater Benefic, when he is the ruler of the 8th house, the house of death, kills just as effectively as the Malefics, Saturn and Mars. Still, his basic nature still comes into play because Jupiter ruling the 8th house gives a death by natural causes, rather than by violent means².

A house talisman very emphatically reminds us, as Picatrix states in Book I, Chapter 2, that the creation of a talisman involves the action of spirit on body. The Renaissance mage Cornelius Agrippa says,

But know this that such images work nothing, unless they be so vivified that either a naturall or Celestiall, or Heroicall, or animasticall, or demoniacal, or angelicall vertue be in them, or assistant to them. But who can give a soul to an image, or make a stone to live, or mettall, or wood, or wax? and who can raise

² John Gadbury, *Doctrine of Nativities* (London, 1658) at 144.

out of stones children unto Abraham? Certainly this Arcanum doth not enter into an Artist of a stiffe neck; neither can he give those things which hath them not. No body hath them but he who doth (the Elements being restrained, nature being overcome, the Heavens being over-powered) transcend the progress of Angels, and comes to the very Archetype it self, of which being then made a cooperator may do all things, as we shall speak afterwards³.

The house talisman election, therefore, is the natal chart of a being. Its body being what we consider the talisman, a pendant, ring or statuette, and its soul being infused into it through the appropriate planetary house rulers.

In terms of electional instructions Picatrix gives us many specific and interesting examples of magical technique. One is to make two talismans for a particular purpose and to connect the talismans by making the Ascendant of the talisman for the person to be affected same sign or even degree of sign of the appropriate house cusp of the other talisman. To make a talisman for love, the 7th house of the 1st talisman becomes the 1st of the 2nd talisman; they are connected by love. To make a talisman for friendship, the 11th house of the 1st talisman becomes the Ascendant of the 2nd talisman; they are connected by friendship. Another way to connect the talisman to the person the mage seeks to affect is to make the Ascendant of the talisman the same as the Ascendant of the person to be affected. Picatrix also advises us to make the talisman in the form and image of the person to be affected, in other words to use their picture on a flat talisman or to make a statuette that looks like them. Finally Picatrix also advises that dual talismans be bound together. All of these are what moderns call sympathetic magic, but philosophically they are understandable when we consider the unity of the Cosmos and everything within it remembering that everything is not equally or as powerfully connected to everything else. Instead, things of a similar form, since form descends from the Archetypes, the Divine Ideas or Archangelic

³ Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, Book II, Chapter 50.

Realm, into the Celestial World and from thence to material things. All things with the same or similar form are spiritually connected and an act done to the form of a thing is done to the thing itself. We see this clearly in the anti-scorpion talisman which the mage is instructed to put the head where the tail is and tail where the head is and otherwise mutilate the image, thus causing destruction to the material scorpions through damage to their magical image. The mage seeks out the myriad of spiritual connections, learns their patterns and thus through this esoteric knowledge, is able to cause change in the material through the spiritual forces that underlie matter.

RITUAL PREPARATIONS BOOK III, CHAPTER 7

SATURN

And when Saturn is dignified and in a good place, and you wish to speak and pray to him, wrap yourself in black clothing, namely the clothing which is used for a corpse, and also a black cloak of a doctor, and wear black shoes. Then go to a place that is appropriate for the work, like a place that is remote and humble, if you wish you can go to a place of the Jews,



because Saturn rules them (literally is the lord of their conjunction).

On your hand have an iron ring, and carry an iron censer [incense burner] with you, with burning charcoal placed in it, throw into it the mixture for suffumigation, the form of whose composition is this: Take opium, saffron, actarag (this is an herb) the seed of laurel, carui, wormwood, dry wool, coloquintide, and the head of a black cat in equal parts. Combine everything completely and mix in the urine of black she-goat; and make it into portions (literally threads). And when you wish to do the work put some on the burning charcoal in the censer and save some, and turn towards Saturn, and while the smoke rises from the censer say your invocation.

JUPITER

When you wish to speak to Jupiter. When you wish to speak to Jupiter, place him in a good state as we have said with Saturn. Then wear yellow and white clothing, then go to a place for the work that is remote and safe that resembles the place of a hermit or is a place of Christians, [be] girded with a belt with a ring of crystal in the [shape of a] cross on your finger and wearing a white cloak. And take a censer made of a Jovial metal and place burning fire in it. And in this way you make the suffumigation: namely take classe, storax, the feet of a dove, peony, aromatic calamus, resin, pine and the seeds of hellebore in equal parts. Mix thoroughly and add pure old wine (namely of many years) and make out of it pills. And when you wish to work as we have said throw the pills into the fire in the censer. And turn around in the direction of the heavens where Jupiter is and say [the invocation of Jupiter].

MARS

When you wish to pray to Mars. When you wish to make a request of Mars and to speak and honor him, place him in a good state as we have said before about Saturn. And wear red clothing, and on your head [wear] red linen or silk or place a red hat on your head. And strengthen yourself with all kinds of weapons, and equip yourself as a fighter or soldier, and place a bronze ring on your finger. And take a bronze censer and burn charcoal and place your suffumigation in it. Take absinthe, aloe, [lemon grass?] euphorbium, allspice, lesser cress, in equal parts. Mix everything with the blood of a

man. Make pills from this and put it aside to use. And when you wish to begin working, place the [pills of incense] in the censer, and carry it to a remote place that it is appropriate [to Mars]. And when you have reached [the place of the working] stand on your feet and secretly audacious and without fear turn to the south toward Mars who should be fortunate and in a good state as we have said before, always looking upon him. And as the smoke rises say [the invocation].

THE SUN

When you wish to pray to the Sun. When you wish to pray to the Sun and to ask for thing like the grace of a king or the love of lords, and to acquire power, make the Sun fortunate and place him in the Ascendant in his day and hour.

And wear royal clothing, silk with yellow and gold mixed, and place a gold crown on your head, and wear a gold ring on your finger, in the form of a great man of the Chaldeans, because the Sun is ruler of the Chaldeans (literally, the lord of their Ascendant). And go to a house that is separate and set aside for your work, and place your right hand over your left and look modestly at the Sun, and your appearance should be modest and bashful. Then take your gold censer and have a beautiful rooster by the neck, above the neck place a small wax candle, and on the head place the branch of a large palm tree, and in the fire of the censer place the suffumigation. And raise the rooster towards the Sun and as the fumes from the censer rise say [the invocation] [Note, Picatrix goes on to say that the suffumigation of the Sun is policarie, bdellium, myrrh, laudanum, enule, old siseleos, Celtice, Indian poli, old clean pine, cardomelle, cardamon, aromatic calamus, incense, husk of muscate nut, dried roses,

saffron, the spice nard, caper root, pentafilon, aromatic hoof (?) balsam seeds, epithimi, squinati, gourd seeds, eastern spice plant, terebinth, pulverised dates, raisin wine, and honey mixed with wine.]

VENUS

When you wish to pray to Venus. When you wish to pray to Venus and ask for the things that pertain to her, look to see that she is far from the malefics, direct and not retrograde and fortunate. Put on the first or second styles and the best one is the robe and trappings of a noble Arab man. Wear white clothes and white cotton on your head because this is his [signature or seal]. Another style is that of woman. Wear long clothes of silk and gold mixed, precious and beautiful and on your head place a crown richly adorned with precious stones and pearls and on your hand a gold ring with pearls and on your arms wear bracelets of gold; in your right hand hold a mirror and in your left hand a comb. Put before you a jug of wine and in your clothing place crushed aromatics and odoriferous [incense or scent] in the way that women do. Then take a censer made of gold and silver mixed and place burning charcoal in it, throw the suffumigation into it. And as the fumes rise say the invocation. [Picatrix goes on to say that the suffumigation of Venus is lignum aloes, a rooster, costi, saffron, laudanum, mastic, poppy seed husks, willow leaves and lily root in equal parts. Mix thoroughly with rose water and make pills of incense.]

MERCURY

When you wish to pray to Mercury. When you wish to pray to Mercury and you wish to ask for things appropriate to him which are petitions to scribes and kings and regarding rulership. Dress as if you were a notary or scribe, the Moon conjoining Mercury, and in every way act as if you were a scribe and wear a ring of Mercury mortified [?] that is a ring with an [image] of Hermes [Trismegistus] for the work. And sit on a throne similar to the throne of a judge, and turn your face towards it [?], with a [book or paper] in your hand looking like you wish to write. And have incense appropriate to Mercury and place the suffumigation in the fire. And as the fumes rise, say the invocation. [Picatrix goes on to say that the incense of Mercury is composed of oak, cumin, dried gariofilate, myrtle branches, bitter almond husks, gum arabic, tamarind seed, grape vine, squinanti, in equal parts. Mix with pure and delicate wine and make into pills.]

THE MOON

When you wish to pray to the Moon. When you wish to pray to the Moon and ask for that which pertains to her, dress yourself in the fashion of a young man and wear something that smells good and in your hand have a ring of silver and your movement and work should be smooth and elegant and your speech distinguished, in a good style and to the point. And have in front of you a censer of silver. And on the 14 day of the lunar month, so long as the Moon is above the earth and making a good aspect with the Benefics,

wash your face and turn towards [the Moon] and say the invocation. [Picatrix goes on to say that the suffumigation of the Moon is mastic, cardamon, savin, storax, cardelli pepper, enule, myrrh, dar sessahal, lily root, Celtice, Indian poli, pine cones, laudanum, dried roses, ayrob, raisin wine, grape mixed with very subtle wine, make pills about the size of a chickpea.]

COMMENTARY

The next and very vital ingredient in the creation of planetary talismans is ritual and invocation. We have already alluded to the process of ensoulment which proceeds by enticing the spirit of the desired astrological factor to infuse the talisman with its energy or in an alternative formulation to inhabit the talisman. Consecration proceeds best the more factors that contain the energy of the planet, or contain the Divine Idea or Archetype manifested through the planet, are assembled. This includes the materials used in making the talisman and its design as well as appropriate clothing, incense and even the attitude and actions appropriate to the planet. The Renaissance philosopher and astrological mage Marsilio Ficino says,

...let no man wonder that [the World] Soul can be allured as it were by material forms, since she herself has created baits of this kind suitable to herself, to be allured thereby, and she always and willingly dwells in them. There is nothing to be found in this whole living world so deformed that Soul does not attend it, that a gift of the Soul is not in it.⁴

Thus the astrological mage collects materials and things that are ruled by the planet or other astrological factor. To be ruled by the planet, fixed star, Mansion of the Moon or other

astrological factors means that the Divine Archetype or Platonic Idea that is manifested in a purer state in the planet or other astrological factor, is also manifested in the material thing that the planet, etc., is said to have rulership over. To concentrate material things ruled by the planet, etc., is to concentrate and focus the power of the embodied Divine Idea or Angelic Archetype. Then in ritual and invocation the Spirit of the planet, fixed star, Mansion of the Moon or other astrological factor is called upon and communicated with, further increasing the connection to the Divine Idea or Archetype. Thus the incense and other materials listed in the ritual preparation translation section are key to the success of the creation of the talisman. Even the actions and dress of the mage contribute to the process of attracting the appropriate spirit and ensouling the talisman, infusing the talisman with the spiritual power of the desired Angelic Archetype.

⁴ Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, Bk. III, ch 1, Kaske & Clarke trans (MRTS, 1998) at 245.

PLANETARY INVOCATIONS
FROM THE ARABIC PICATRIX
BOOK III, CHAPTER 8

SATURN

O you Lord, whose name is mighty, whose appearance great and whose pneuma elevated, O you, Lord Saturn, you, cold, dry, dark, doer of good and ill, upright in love, oath-keeper, friend, unique, incomparable, rich in understanding, impenetrable, keeper of promises, tired, indolent, who keep to yourself in trouble and sorrow, you who remove yourself from friends and gaiety, old in years, rich in cunning, experienced, wily, deceitful, clever, understanding, you who bring increase and who destroy, whose disfavor brings misery and whose favor happiness: I beg you, primal father, by your great good deeds and noble attributes, do such and such for me.

In the name of God, in the name of the angel Isbil, who is set over Saturn in all cold and ice, the Lord of the Seventh Sphere, I invoke you by all your names: in Arabic, O Zuhal, in Persian, O Kewan, in Romaic Kronos, in Greek, O Kronos, in Hindi, O Sanasara! By the Lord of the Highest Edifice, may you grant my request listen to my call, and obey in obedience to God and his rulership and do such and such for me.

JUPITER

Hail unto you, O Lord; you blessed one, happy and serene, Lord of Right, Justice, Fairness and Conscientiousness, you who are wise in religion, ascetic, mighty, high-minded, bringer of good fortune, noble, elevated, powerful, subjugator, granting honor, you who keep treaties, who are upright in love and of noble nature! I ask you, O father, by your noble, beautiful attributes and your choice deeds, may you do such and such for me, O source of good deeds, fulfiller of wishes. O Rufija'il, you angel who are set over Jupiter, joyful and serene, complete, consummate, pious, lord of beautiful garb, of dignity and of insight, far from all that is filthy, far from common speech! I invoke you by all your names: in Arabic, O Mustari, in Persian, O Birgis, in Iranian, O Hurmuz, in Greek, O Zeus, in Hindi, O Wihasfatil! By the Lord of the Highest Edifice, of good deeds and mercy, may you do such and such for me. Hail unto you, you exalted, magnificent great star. good natured, you who take care of the concerns of the wise and who prepare a way for the spirits of the pure and who help those drowning in the depths of the sea and calling for help! From your light, from your spirit, from your pneuma, overflow on us, that thereby our concern may be furthered, that the completion of our affairs be good and the impurity of our nature washed from us.

Hail unto you, O fortunate Star of exalted nature, of great power, of high rank, you Lord, blessed, warm, damp, airy, moderate, beautiful, .knowing, upright in love, learned in religion, Lord of Truth and of certainty, of revealed happiness, of trustworthiness and religion, of justice, of fairness, of conscientiousness, you wise one, high, shining, full of piety, kind, high-minded, bringer of good fortune, exalted, noble, subjugator,

provider of honor, you who keep agreements and are honest in promises, complete, accomplished, good, pure, god-fearing, pious, clear, Lord of good counsel, far from all that is filthy and vulgar speech, Lord of counsel, religion, rest, dignity, acuity, understanding, wisdom, interpretation of dreams, honesty, service to god, of obedience to the lords of the worlds, of decision between biased men, of Piety and the fear of God, Lord of beautiful encomia, of patience, of respect, of reconciliation, of overcoming, of regard, of accomplishment, of victory, of rulership, of the force of government, of kings, of the noble and the great, of the desire for money and its gain, of alms, of generosity, of gifts,

Of support to men for the good, of love for lands of culture and inhabited cities, of mercy to men, of honor in agreements, of the establishment of entrusted goods, of jest, of gaiety, of pomp, of form, of joy, of laughter, of much speech and chatter, of love of coition and the good, of aversion from the bad, who commands that which is right and forbid that which is not right. Hail unto you, O star, ,who help with kindness and good deed the one who cares for the concerns of the knowledgeable, you who guide the spirits of the pure, who free from terrors and who help the ones sinking in the depths of the sea and calling for help. Let flow upon us and our children and those who belong to us your peace and the light of your noble pneuma, which is bound to the higher powers, that thereby you may watch over our affairs, increase our goods and take away from us all care for our earthly sustenance, that our life be blessed, comfortable, pleasant and overflow with fullness.

Keeep our bodies healthy with the powers of your pneuma, lengthen the span of our years, keep away from us all illness and pain and all sorrows great and small. Throw over us the power of your nobly, lordly and excellent pneuma, that we might gain dignity,

honor, reputation and respect thereby, and make us well-liked among men and ward off from us harm from all creatures, speaking and mute, and through them bless us with your love. Wrap us beautifully in the powers of your pneuma, fence us safely about, keep the tongues of all men from us, let fall over their eyes a pneumatic veil to ward off their evil glances and wounding tongues, their grasping hands, their feet and their ill wishes, so that they be attracted to our souls by the powers of your noble, excellent pneuma, which holds us.

MARS

O Lord, excellent, hot, dry, brave hearted, spiller of blood, arouser of the masses, powerful and virile, you who force, who overcome, inconstant, violent, lord of ill, of punishment, of blows, of captivity, of lies, of calumny and unseemly speech, merciless, killer. unique, alien, bearer of weaponry, you make love much, powerful in planning attack and domination, you who beget war, who spring to the side of the weak, strong, you who make good the ills and recompense the doers of ill. I ask you by the ways taken by you and the paths into your sphere, by your force and your accountability, by him who distinguished you and made you an avenger, very evil, of violent power and stormy attack that you hear and obey and grant my request and listen to my praying; and look, I desire of you that you do such and such for me. Hail unto him who grants protection and holds back the ill.

O Rubija'il, you angel set over Mars, you violent, hard-headed, fiery, burning, of courageous heart, bloodspiller, arouser of civil war and the masses, powerful and virile, you who force, who overcome, inconstant. violent, lord of ill, of punishment, of

blows, of captivity, of lies, calumny and unseemly speech, ruthless, you killer, unique, alien, weapon bearer, making love often and much. I invoke you by all your names: in Arabic, O Mirrih, in Persian, O Bahram, in Romaic, O Ares, in Greek, O Ares, in Hindi, O Angara and I ask you by the Lord of the Highest Edifice, may you hear me, obey and grant my request and hear my praying, for look: I desire of you that you do such and such for me, by Rubija'il, the angel set over your realm.

THE SUN

O Cause of Causes, you who are sanctified and made holy with unending rule from eternity, I ask you that you listen to me and grant to me recognition, kind reception, and love from such and such a king or from all kings of the earth. Welcome, you who bring forth the light and life of the world, may you listen to me and grant me recognition and kind reception. I call you by all your names: in Arabic O Sams, in Persian O Mihr, in Romaic O Helios, in Hindi O Aras, O Bara, O light and shine of the world, you at the center of all, who give life to the world of coming forth and of passing away and who takes care of its growth, O you, who stand on exalted places, O you who hold the highest position: I ask you, that you support me as regards such and such a king, or all kings of the earth, that I may achieve a high rank, a regency, recognition and kind reception for you are master and king of the planets, they who receive and let shine their light and shining from you. I ask you, O guide of the all, take pity on me and my prayer and humble request.

Hail unto you, O Sun, you happy lord, hot, dry, shining, spending
light, sending rays, bright, understanding, exalted, noble, you king,
who gather all beauty unto yourself, pure, wise, you who gather together goods, you who
hold the reins of the six, the noble planets, so that they let themselves be guided by you, you
who rule over them, that they submit to you; when they are far from you they return to you,
when they are near you they are burned up by your rays and go down, and they, receive
from you light and power and from your shining they shine. Thus you are above them all,
you are the king and they the servants, you bring good fortune when you form aspects, and
you bring misfortune when you stand in conjunction; no one can recognize your excellence
completely, nor completely understand your nobility.

Source of power, foundation of strength, joy of life, pillar of exaltation, origin of good
deeds, I take my refuge with you in my weakness and in the passing of my shining
rule, threatened by enemy encroachment. By him who moves you while remaining himself,
and who strengthens you by his power, and by your duty to grant beautiful obedience to him
who gives you his keys and brings you his upright offering, and by the reins of the planets
which are given to you, may you free me and take away my pain, bring back my shining
rulership and give over to me a part of that which one desires in this world and grant me
somewhat of your majesty and your beauty.

By the predestined good fortune and by the hidden good and by the image by which
one permits oneself to be guided and according to whose judgment one moves, and
by your mediation on the path of generation and your kind-heartedness towards small
children and the good deeds which you reveal to adults, and by your quality of establishing
firmly those you wish to preserve in their high rank and by your heavenly books against

which nothing on earth arises, listen to my prayer. and heed my call. Hail unto those who accomplish your praise, who humble themselves before you and God with sincerity.

VENUS

Hail unto you, O Venus Anahid, you happy mistress, cold, damp, constant, clean, beautiful, sweet smelling, generous, joyful, you mistress of ornament, of gold, of gaiety, of dance, of joyful arousal, of finery, of song and of listening to songs, of flute playing, of the beautiful melody of the movement of strings, of play, of jest, of companionship and leisure, you who are friendly and receptive, awaker of affection, just, you who love wines, comforts, joys and physical union.

Thus you are: I call you by all your names, in Arabic O Zuhara, in Persian O Anahid, in Romaic O Aphrodite, in Greek, O Tijanija, in Hindi, O Surfa, O Astarte: by the Lord of the Highest Edifice, may you listen to me and obey with the obedience to God and his rulership and do such and such for me, by Bitail, the angel who is set over your realm. Inform us with all the joys of your wandering dance. Hail unto you, O Venus Anahid, happy mistress, cool, moist, constant, clean, beautiful, sweet-smelling, generous, joyful, mistress of ornament, of gold, of gaiety, of dance, of joyful arousal, of finery, of song and of listening to songs, of flute playing, of beautiful melody from the movement of strings, of play, of jest, of companionship and leisure, you who are friendly and receptive, awaker of affection, just, you who love wine, comfort, joy and physical union. Thus you are; I call on you by all your names: O Zuhara, O Anahid, O Aphrodite, O Tijanija, O Surfa, O Astarte By the Lord of the Highest Edifice, may you listen to me and inform us with all the love and joy of your

wandering dance. By Bitail, the angel who is set over your realm, come fill us for ever and ever again with the sweet breath of your life.

MERCURY

Hail unto you, O Mercury, O Lord, excellent, trustworthy, full of understanding, speaker, understandable, you who dispute, you who know every science, you calculator, writer, of beautiful custom, who know what happens on heaven and on earth, you lord, noble, you who have little joy, who are useful to goods and trade, lord of cunning, of perjury and of cleverness, you helper, patient, smart, of skillful hand, lord of revelation and of prophets, of the proof of divinity, of belief, of understanding, of speech, of messages, of good teaching, of various sciences, of discernment, of insight, of good education, of philosophy,

Of prognostics, of the mathematics of heavenly and earthly bodies, of surveying, of the science of the stars, of augury, of the art of casting lots, of rhetoric, of verisifying, of the book, of the divans, of eloquence, of sweet, quick and fine speech, of impenetrability, of quickness in trade, of much self-wandering, of lies, of elegance, of firmness, of helpfulness, of adaptability, of patience, of well-wishing, of goodness, of mercy, of quiet, of dignity, of self-control, of proper veneration of divinity, of consideration of rights and of beautiful voice.

You are hidden, so that no nature knows of you, and fine, so that you can be defined by no description; thus you are a bringer of fortune with the: fortunate stars, masculine with the masculine, feminine with the feminine, daily with the day stars, nightly

with the night stars, you make yourself like unto their nature and approximate them in all their circumstances. Thus you are, I call you by all your names: in Arabic, O Utarid, in Persian. O Tir, in Romaic, O Harus, in Greek. O Hermes, in Hindi, O Buddha, I ask you by the Lord of the Highest Edifice and the most powerful rulership, may you hear me and obey me in that for which I ask you.

So send the power of your pneuma to me, that my arm may thereby be strengthened, that I may be properly guided and granted success in the study of all sciences, that I achieve thereby a high and certain position from the kings, that I may be listened to and become indispensable as regards all sciences and questions, in service and in movement and in philosophy and in service to the divans, finance records and household management, and that by all these means I might win great and beautiful property, rank, reputation and position from kings and all men. By Haril (and by Marqil), the angel who is set over your realm, may you hear my prayer and listen to my call, grant my desire, stand by me, bring me close to kings by your guidance, guide me with your wisdom, support me with your power, teach me to understand that which I do not understand, to know what I do not know, to see what I do not see, and to ward off from me the harms enclosed in ignorance, forgetfulness, crudity and weakness. so that you permit me to reach the rungs of the earlier wise men. in whose hearts wisdom, intelligence, wakefulness, discernment and understanding dwell.

Also let dwell in my heart a power of your noble pneuma which never leaves me, and a light which I may be properly guided in all my affairs, Favor me with service with kings, counselors and rulers and with the winning of much property in this manner, and let this quickly come to be mine. By the Lord of the Highest Edifice and of the most powerful rulership, may you listen to me and obey me in all for which I have prayed to you.

THE MOON

Hail unto you, O Moon, O fortunate Lady, blessed, cool, moist, constant, beautiful, you key and head of the stars; moving easily, wanderer, you possessor of the far reaching light, of the brilliant shining, of joy, of praise and reward, you fortunate queen, learned in religion, who think much about things, knowing, governing with subtlety you who love music, jest and play, lord of messengers, of messages, and of the giving away of secrets, generous, noble, mild, forceful! You it is whose sphere among the planets is closest to us and who can most powerfully among them bring weal or woe, you it is who establish bonds between the planets, who transmit their light and turn to good that which is unfavorable to us; through your good disposition every thing becomes good, and through your bad disposition every thing becomes bad, you are the first and last of every thing, and to you belongs nobility and preeminence before all other planets. Thus you are; I ask you by Silija'il, the angel who is set over your realm, may you take pity on my humble request and my prayer to you, and obey with obedience to God and his rulership and grant to me that which I ask of you and that which I desire of you. Behold, I call you by all your names: in Arabic, O Qamar, in Persian, O Mah, in Greek. O Sama'il, in Romaic, O Selene and in Hindi, O Soma, listen to me!

COMMENTARY

In this set of translations from *Picatrix* we finally reach the actual invocation of the spirits of the planets, the climax of the ritual process and a key part of the proper creation of astrological talismans. Having chosen the proper time and materials we now call upon the appropriate spirit to infuse and ensoul the talisman. We have already discussed how the spirit is enticed to dwell in the talisman by the choice of appropriate materials ruled by it, containing the same Divine Archetype or Platonic Idea that it contains. Invocation, however, can also be seen as a dual process in which the spirit is called upon to dwell in the material realm and the mage raises themselves up into the realm of the spirit.

While traditional astrologers did think of the geocentric “Earth centered” astronomy as a accurate model of physical astronomy, our current views of the heliocentric structure of the Solar System do not alter the geocentric model of the spiritual Cosmos. We are not, of course, invoking the physical body, the material aspect of the planets, but their spirits or souls, often seen in traditional sources as angels and archangels or intelligences. To bring ourselves into their spheres is not to physical go into outer space, but a journey into the imaginal realm. This middle realm, known in Islamic mysticism as the *Alam al Mithal*, was the intermediate between the Divine World of Archetypes and the Material World, where the Divine Ideas took on form and the material things lost their materiality and became only form. This is the world of visions, dreams and of magic which we are never out of contact with on a deep level, but usually are unconscious of. Thus the process of ritual is a way to open up a window or doorway between us and the invoked spirit, drawing them down to us

and to the talisman we are creating and raising us up to their sphere, which is truly existent in the intermediate, the Celestial Realm.

One of the interesting things about the ritual set forth in *Picatrix* is how different it is from the ritual of the Lemegeton, the Goetia or the typical medieval grimoire.

We have no magic circle for protection from the raging spirit, no protective Seal of Solomon, no sword, no lengthy commands, threats or bindings of the spirits. Instead the ritual is in a very devotional form in which the spirit is described, usually in praise, but the ritual does not shrink from accurately setting forth the less admirable qualities of the planets. There are not infrequent allusions to the Lord of the Highest Edifice and to a divinity at a level higher than and more powerful than the planets and requests and even commands are made in the name of this entity, but nevertheless the whole tone of the *Picatrix* invocations is very different from most grimoires. For the most part this is due to the type of entities that are being invoked since the astrological spirits are of a higher and purer sphere. Whatever their negative qualities and the malefic magic that can be done through their power, these are not in essence, evil or malignant spirits. The protective circle is not necessary so long as the proper respect is paid. A formal contract of X for Y typical of Goetic magic is not used with the astrological spirits. Instead, paying respect particularly through candles, incense and offerings are rewarded by the spirits. My sense of the astrological spirits is of very powerful beings who can be approached and who will bestow their blessings on those who are faithful and respectful.

OPERATION OF JUPITER
PICATRIX BOOK III, CHAPTER 9
THE JOVIAL FEAST

When you wish to work through Jupiter, work in the day of Jupiter [Thursday], with the Sun in Sagittarius or Pisces and the Moon in the head of Aries (because this is the exaltation of the Sun). And prepare a clean and bright house, a cauldron and a good and rich cloth and the house should be suitable to the work. Hold in your hand a dish with a mixture of honey, butter, nut oil, sugar [and make the mixture] smooth and liquid and make a pastry of flour, butter, milk, sugar and the most delicate saffron and make more than you are able to eat.

And in your house at the head of a large table place above [the table] a strong tripod and put before it a censor composed of the metal of Jupiter [traditionally tin]. And on the table place musk, camphor, lignum aloes and other good smelling things and civet and similar things. And mix one [measure?] of mastic with the pie and bring about a mixture of the wet and dry. And in the middle of the table place a large lit candle and behind the candle place a pomegranate and cook and broil the flesh of a ram, a chicken and a pigeon and fill the dish full and at the head [of the table] pour a jug full of wine and place a clear vessel.

And above the table place a branch of myrtle and as we have said before, suffumigate mastic and lignum aloes at the head of the table and suffumigate mastic in the other parts of the house and no one should be in the house besides yourself. And say, “Demuez, Armez, Ceylez, Mahaz, Erdaz, Tamyz, Feruz, Dyndez, Afrayuz, Tayhaciedez.” These are the

all of the names of the spirits of Jupiter in six parts of Heaven. The interpretation of the name Afriduz and the others following is, “Come and enter all of you spirits of Jupiter and smell the perfumes and eat from this dish and do as you wish” and say the preceding 7 times. Afterwards go out of your house and stand quiet for [a time, literally an hour].

Then enter your house and make the previous prayer again and after doing the work 5 times on the 6th time after you have made the aforementioned prayer then spirits will come in beautiful forms wearing ornate garments and they will receive your petition and the desire that you have waited for will be recorded and your knowledge and understanding will be assisted and the power of the spirits will defend and protect you. When this order is complete, call together friends and associates and prepare food and eat and drink together and perfume with perfumes and suffumigate with suffumigations. This is the true prayer of the planets that the Roman wise men were accustomed to make during the year, specifically for Jupiter.

COMMENTARY

Many of the *Picatrix* rituals follow traditional pagan practice and involve animal sacrifice, so this Jupiter ritual is an interesting variation, more conducive to modern sensibilities. This Jovial feast ritual is attributed to the Roman wise men which is appropriate given the prominence of Jupiter in Roman religion. The election itself is also interesting, using the planetary day of Jupiter, Thursday, but then placing the Sun in the signs of Jupiter, which makes this an annual ritual tied to the seasons, rather than something happening over a longer period every 12 years or so, as Jupiter passes through his signs.

The selection of incense is typical Jovial as is the use of tin, the metal of Jupiter for the incense burner. But it is the preparation of the Jovial feast that is particularly interesting. Marsilio Ficino, in his *Three Books on Life* notes that foods with palpable and subtle sweet tastes belong to Jupiter,

In this class belong the essential nature of sweet almond, the pine nut, the hazelnut, the pistachio-nut, of starch, licorice, raisins, yolk of egg, of the meat of the barnyard chicken, of pheasants, peacocks, of partridges and of similar animals...likewise that of fragrant, sparkling wine, somewhat sweet and astringent, or of the most glistening white sugar and the whitest wheat flour...This is in truth the substance and sweetness peculiar to Jupiter, which is above all truly useful for creating and restoring the spirit.⁵

The use of these Jovial foods along with repeated invocations of Jupiter substitute very nicely for animal sacrifice. The completion of the ritual with a feast of friends is similarly Jovial in nature and seems a perfect example of a Jupiter ruled event.

Despite the prevalence of animal sacrifice, and there can be no doubt that the death of a living and sentient being is a source of power, this is one area in which modern sensibilities do seem to be more advanced than many traditional ones. I cannot feel that it is appropriate for me to benefit from inflicting pain and death on another living being. And indeed given the Hermetic/Neoplatonic view of the connection of all things through their creation by the One and the transmigration of souls we have a traditional philosophical basis for valuing and indeed treasuring the existence of all living beings. In hurting and killing another I am, in a very real sense, inflicting pain upon myself. Thus while animal sacrifice is a part of traditional practice, it is not integral and its purposes, to contact and honor the gods and spirits can be accomplished through other means while staying within the framework of traditional philosophy. This is an excellent example of the synthesis of the modern Zeitgeist,

⁵ Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, Bk III, ch. 11, Kaske & Clarke (MRTS, 1998) at 295.

in which *ahimsa*, non-violence, has become a significant and important principle, with traditional philosophy and practice, combining and staying true to both views without distorting either.

INVOCATION OF PERFECT NATURE
BOOK III CHAPTER 6
TRANSLATED BY NIGEL JACKSON

None could be accomplished in this science if they were not naturally inclined, by the power and the disposition of the planets; it is what Aristotle says in the book ‘Aztimehec’ where he affirms: “The Perfect Nature strengthens he who is sage, affirming his mind and his sagacity, allowing him to succeed more easily in all his operations.” All the wise ones in this science, according to their degree, have hidden this science amongst themselves, as much as they were able, and they did not wish to reveal that which was of the wise. The same showed their disciples all the science and the philosophical subtilities on the outside of the operations concerning the spirits of the Perfect Nature. They indeed called the spirits of this Perfect Nature by the four following names: Meegius, Betzahuech, Vacdez, Nufeneguediz, four elements which are the names of this spirit of the above-mentioned Perfect Nature.

And when these sages had need of this Perfect Nature, they called upon these four names, names which signify the puissance of the Perfect Nature.

Hermes in addition said “When I wanted to understand and draw the arcana of the work of the world and of its qualities, I placed myself above a cave-mouth very deep and obscure, whence was released a violent wind; I could not see there because of the darkness. And when I carried a flaming candle into it, at once the wind extinguished it. Then a beautiful man, of imperious authority, appeared to me in dream: he spoke to me as follows: “Take the lit candle and place it in a glass lantern so that the violence of the wind does not extinguish it. Lower it in the cave-mouth in the middle of which you must dig.

Draw forth a talisman: at once withdraw, this talisman will make the wind from the cavern subside, and thus you will be able to keep light there. Dig then to the four angles of the cavern, to draw from it the secrets of the world, the Perfect Nature, its qualities and also the origin of all things.' I asked of him who he was, 'I am the Perfect Nature', he replied to me, 'and when you want to speak with me, call me by my proper name and I will answer you'. I asked him by which name one called him. And he: 'I am called and named', he replied to me 'by the four aforesaid names, and, when you call me by them, I will answer you.'

I again asked him at which moment to call him and what to do to invoke. And he said: 'When the Moon is in the first degree of the Ram, of day like night, all the times that you wish, enter into a beautiful and splendid house, and place at one of its angles a raised table in the east. Take four vessels (each of the capacity of a pound) filled - one with cow's butter, another with oil of walnuts, a third with oil of almonds and the fourth with oil of sesame. Take then four other vessels of the same size as the first, and fill them with wine. Make then a mixture of sugar and honey, butter and walnut oil. Take the eight jugs, the mixture which you have made and a vessel of glass; there first of all, put it at the midst of the table, and pour the mixture which you have made.

Then, place the four vessels filled with wine at the four corners of the table, the following way: the first vessel in the east, the second in the west, the third in the south and the fourth in the north; then, take the four other vessels: place first of all the one filled with almond oil in the east, close by a pitcher of wine. Place the one full of walnut oil to the west, that full of butter to the south and that full of the oil of the mixture to go toward the north. After that, take a taper of flaming wax and place it in the middle of the

table. Then take two censers filled with burning coals: on one of them places incense and mastic, and on the other the wood of aloes. Once this is fulfilled, stand on your feet turned to the east and pronounce seven times the aforesaid four names. After these seven invocations, you will pronounce these words: 'I invoke you, strong, powerful and exalted spirits (because it is from you that the sciences of sages proceed and the intellect of those who understand, and it is by your virtue that the requests of the wise are realised) so that you answer me, so that you are with me, so that you share with me your powers and your virtues, that you strengthen me by your sciences, so that I comprehend that which I do not understand, so that I grasp (?) that of which I am ignorant, that I see what I do not see; remove from me all blindness, indignity, forgetfulness and weakness; make me go up to the degree of the Sages of yore (those who had hearts filled with science, with wisdom of intellect, and knowledge.) Bind that in my heart so that my heart is returned to the likeness of the heart of the Sages of old'. He says then 'When you have realise the aforesaid operation in the manner preceding, you will see me'"

This operation is revealed in the book called 'Astimiquem'. And the sages of ancient times usually performed this operation once each year with their spirits, to settle up with their Perfect Natures. After which, they ate, their friends joining them, all this which was placed on the table.

CONTINUATION OF TRANSLATION FROM LATIN PICATRIX

Aristotle said that every wise man has his power infused into him from on high by spirits and through this power imagination and intellect are revealed and knowledge is made known. And when this power is united with the power of the planet ruling in the

radix of his nativity together they strengthen him and give him understanding...And Socrates said that Perfect Nature is the Sun of the wise man and the root of his light. And they questioned the wise Hermes asking: With what is knowledge and philosophy joined? He answered: Perfect Nature. And they asked again: What is the root of knowledge and philosophy? He answered: Perfect Nature. In addition they asked him more strictly: What is the key which opens knowledge and philosophy? He answered: Perfect Nature. Then they asked, what is Perfect Nature? He answered: Perfect Nature is the spirit of the philosopher or wise man bound together with his ruling planet. And it is this which opens the secrets of knowledge and by which are understood those things which are little able to be understood otherwise and from which the operations of nature proceed directly both in dreams and while waking.

COMMENTARY

In this set of translations from the French & Latin versions of the *Picatrix*, we encounter another invocation similar to the Jovial feast. But rather than being an invocation of a particular planet, this is an invocation of the Perfect Nature of the mage. Perfect Nature is referred to as the Sun of the wise man and the key to knowledge, philosophy and indeed to magic itself, yet remains



somewhat mysterious. The ceremony of invocation indicates that if successfully performed the Perfect Nature of the mage appears to them in a personified form. But what is this Perfect Nature? Our first clue comes from the Latin term itself, *natura completa*, which can be translated as Perfect or perfected nature or as completed, filled or complete nature. *Picatrix* says that Perfect Nature consists first of the power of understanding of a wise man which is not innate but is infused into him through a process of descent from what *Picatrix* calls spirits on high. This is reminiscent of the Platonic Ideas which were often personified as archangels or Intelligences. Perfect Nature, however, also has an ascending phase which consists of the spirit of understanding of the mage bound together with the spirit of the planet ruling in his natal chart. What this process appears to entail, therefore, is a unity of descent and ascent and a mirroring both of the unity of the One. Perfect Nature appears as a classic process of embodying within the mage the unity of Macrocosm and the Microcosm. This unification brings first and foremost wisdom, but also knowledge and the ability to do magical works. Agrippa also speaks of this process and refers to it as the dignification,

...but now we will declare a mysticall and secret matter, necessary for every one who desireth to practize this art, which is both the beginning, perfection and key of all Magicall operations, and it is the dignifying of men to this so sublime vertue and power...Therefore it is meet that we who endeavor to attain to so great a height should especially meditate of two things; first how we should leave carnall affections, fraile sense, and materiall passions. Secondly, by what way and means we may ascend to an intellect pure & conjoynd with the powers of the gods, without which we shall never happily ascend to the scrutiny of secret things, and to the power of wonderfull workings, or miracles.⁶

What is particularly interesting about *Picatrix's* discussion of Perfect Nature is that the ascent to the One is not performed through the same route for everyone, but differs depending on the ruler of the natal chart, in traditional astrological terminology referred to as the Almuten

or Almutem Figuris. Thus there are seven basic paths to the One for each of the seven traditional planets.

The medieval astrologer Abraham Ibn Ezra gives a method for determining the Almuten Figuris. First the four Hylegical places are found in the chart. These are the degree of the Sun, the Moon, the Ascendant, the Part of Fortune and the Prenatal Syzygy, the Full or New Moon immediately previous to birth. Usually the normal essential dignity almuten calculation the dignity points for all planets over these five Hylegical places are added up. Then the planetary day ruler is given 7 points and the planetary hour ruler is given 6 points. Each planet in the chart is then given points for the house it occupies, with 12 points for the 1st house, 11 for the 10th, 10 for the 7th, 9 for the 4th, 8 for the 11th, 7 for the 5th, 6 for the 2nd, 5 for the 9th, 4 for the 8th, 3 for the 3rd, 2 for the 12th and 1 for the 6th. All of these points, for the five Hylegical places, the planetary day and hour and the houses are added and the planet with the highest point score is the Almuten Figuris. It is this planet that the mage must seek to unite with in order to achieve their Perfect Nature. Thus through finding the Almuten Figuris and through the invocation set forth in *Picatrix* which is part of the dignification which Agrippa explains, the mage becomes a mirror of the ascending and descending motion of the Cosmos and a mirror of the One, capable of works of magic.

⁶ Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, Bk III, ch 3.

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