



The MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology

ALMUTENS

Notes on Medieval Astrology

By Dr Bernadette Brady

Almutens

In contemporary western astrology it is considered that the planet that rules a sign has the greatest influence over a particular house or angle. However, when the full technique of the essential dignities was employed it was considered that while a planet ruled a sign, another planet could be exalted in that sign while other planets would be the triplicity, term and face rulers. Rulership was considered a shared situation with a group of planets sitting almost like a team or a council which held the power or fate of the area of life signified by the house, if the ruler failed in its role then the next in line, in terms of its influence would take over and seek to provide for the person the fulfilment of the house or situation.

This leads to great complexity in aspect theory such as that described by Ibn Ezra (1998: pp. 118 - 26) but it also gave rise to a unique feature of medieval astrology in that it provided a scoring system for finding firstly the planet that “ruled” a house and later these formula were built up to combined different houses and points to find the planet with the greatest “rulership” over a concept in the chart rather than just a simple house. Such a planet was said to be the “almuten” of that house or concept.

Omar of Tiberius referred to the idea of almuten when he considered the different rulers of a house. However, the evidence of Hand’s translation is that Omar did not allocated scores. In his *Three Books on Nativities* he defines the almuten as follows (1997: 13) :

And he also said that whichever planet has the most dignity in the Ascendant and in the [place of the] luminaries, and in the Part of Fortune, or in the degree of the conjunction or prevention which is prior to the nativity, that planet is the most worthy to rule.

But if there is a planet which has dignity in three or four of the places, or in two of the places, namely those described above, we will make that planet the Almuten, [the planet] which has rulership over the nativity, that is, which has dominion.

And later when he is discussing how the quality of a natal house should be consider he wrote of the twelfth house :

For enemies examine according to the 12th and its lord, and according to the Part of Enemies and its [lord], and also Saturn, and the planets which are in the 12th house. Examine the Almuten over these places, whether there is one or two, to wit, look at the 14 combinations and the agreements previously described. If there is any one of the 14¹ [combinations] between the Almuten over the Ascendant and the Almuten over the house of enemies, the native will have many enemies. If however the Almuten over the house of enemies aspects the Almuten over the Ascendant and impedes it, the native will encounter differences because of his enemies and destruction. And if there is any power to the Lord of the Ascendant, and the lord of the 12th impedes it, the native will die at the hands of his enemies, and especially if that planet is Mars; then his death will be in battle with his enemies at their hands. And if the Almuten over the house of enemies does not aspect the Almuten over the Ascendant, the native will have few enemies. And if the Almuten of the native is a malefic and impedes the almuten over the house of enemies, that native will have many enemies, but the native will live, and his enemies will be in peril at his hands and will perish.

Thus for Omar the examination of the power, weakness or lack of one's enemies can be summarised in the following manner:

The almuten of enemies

The almuten of the degree of the lord of the 12th house cusp

The almuten of the degree of the Part of Enemies Asc +Mars – Saturn for both day and night charts.

The almuten of the degree of the Lord of the Part of Enemies

The almuten of the degree of Saturn

The almuten of the degrees of any planets in the 12th house.

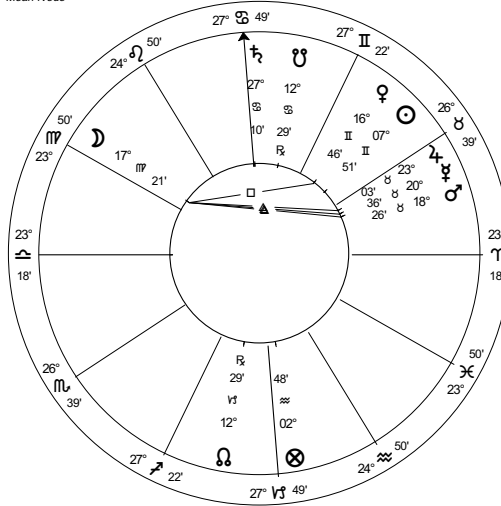
Taking a contemporary horoscope for the sake of exemplify Omar's method

¹ Omar does not list the 14 combinations but Hand suggests in a footnote on this page that they may be similar to Guido Bonatti's 16 combinations that he, Bonatti, listed as his 4th considerations in the *Anima Astrologie*.

Medieval Astrology – Almutens

Bernadette Brady

Kennedy, John F.
Natal Chart
 29 May 1917
 15:17 EST +5:00
 Brookline, Ma
 42°N20' 071°W07'
Geocentric
Tropical
Alcabitius
Mean Node



		Sun	Moon	Mercury	Venus	Mars	Jupiter	Saturn
12 House	23 F		+3	+ 5, +4, +1	+3	+3, +2		
Lord 12 th is O at	20 B		+3, +1		+5, +3	+3	+2	
Part of Enemies	14 E	+5, +3					+3, +1	+3, +2
Lord of the Part, N	7 C			+5, +3			+3, +2, +1	+3
S	27 D		+5, +3, +1		+3	+3, +2	+4	
No planets in the 12 house								
Total		8	16	18	14	13	15	8

Using the later accepted scoring method for such a table we allocate 5 points for rulership, 4 points for exaltation, 3 for each of the triplicity rulers of the point, 2 for the term ruler of the degree and 1 point for the face ruler of the degree we gain John F

Kennedy's almuten of enemies as being Mercury located in his 7th house along with Mars and Jupiter.

Omar gave such compound almutens for other houses which are as follows:

Omar 's Almutens of the Other Houses

Omar gave almuten compound formulae for all the houses which provide an insight into his thinking concerning the astrological signifiers of various features of a chart.

These were as follow:

1th House – The Almuten of Pregnancies

- The Ascendant .
- The Lord of the Ascendant
- The position of Moon
- The dispositor of the Moon
- The Fifth house cusp
- The Lord of the Fifth house
- Any planets that are in the Fifth house.
- The position of Jupiter.

3rd House – The Almuten of Siblings

- Any planets in the third house
- The Third house cusp.
- The Lord of the third house
- The Part of Siblings
(by Day Asc + Jupiter – Saturn. By Night Asc + Saturn – Jupiter)
- The Lord of the Part of Siblings
- The position of Mars
- The three lords of the triplicity of Mars

4th House – The Almuten of the Father

The fourth house cusp.

- The Lord of the fourth house.

This seems a very short compound almuten for the Almuten of Father, but in the translation Omar seems clear; and goes on to discuss the Part of Father and also the role of Sun and Saturn separately to the Almuten of the Father .

5th House – The Almuten of Children

The Fifth house cusp.

The Lord of the Fifth house

The position of Venus

The position of Jupiter

The Part of Children (by day Asc + Saturn – Jupiter. By night Asc + Jupiter – Saturn)

The Lord of the Part of Children

6th House – The Almuten of Accidents and Illnesses

Any planets in the Sixth house

The Sixth house cusp.

The Lord of the Sixth house

The position of Mercury

The Part of Infirmities and Inseparable (major) Accidents (by day Asc + Mars - Saturn. By night Asc + Saturn – Mars.)

The Lord of the Part of Infirmities.

7th House – The Almuten of Sexual Unions

Any Planets in the Seventh house

The Seventh house cusp.

The Lord of the Seventh house

The Moon

The position of Venus

The Part of Sexual Unions ²

The Lord of the Part of Sexual Unions

² There are three possible Parts of Sexual Unions but Omar is probably using Asc + Venus – Saturn by day or by night.

It would appear that Omar did not create an Almuten for the 8th house but did give two different almutens for the 9th house.

9th House – The Almuten of Faith

Any planets in the Ninth house

Any planets in the term on the cusp of the Ninth

The Ninth house cusp.

The Lord of the Ninth house

The Term ruler of the Lord of the Ninth

The dispositor of this Term Ruler

The Part of Faith

(by Day Asc + Mercury – Moon. By Night Asc + Moon - Mercury)

There are some doubts over precisely which term rulers to use, that of the Lord of the Ninth or that of the Ninth house cusp.

9th House – The Almuten of Travel and Change

Any planets in the Ninth house

The Ninth house cusp.

The Lord of the Ninth house

The position of Mars

The Part of Travel (by day and night Asc + 9th cusp – Ruler of 9th house.)

The Lord of the Part of Travel

10th House – The Almuten of Mother

The Tenth house cusp.

The Lord of the tenth house

The Part of Mother

(by day Asc + Moon – Venus. By night Asc + Venus – Moon)

The Lord of the Part of Siblings

The position of Venus

10th House – The Almuten of Work, Magistry and Kingship

The Tenth house cusp.

The Lord of the tenth house

The position of the Sun

The Part of Work

(*Bonatti gave* by day and night Asc + Moon – Saturn OR *Valens gave* Asc + MC – Sun)

The Lord of the Part of Work

11th House – The Almuten of Friends

The Eleventh house cusp.

The Lord of the Eleventh house

The Part of Friends

(by day or night Asc + Mercury – Moon.)

The Lord of the Part of Friends

The position of Venus

12th House – The Almuten of Enemies

Any planets that are in the Twelfth house

The Twelfth house cusp.

The Lord of the Twelfth house

The Part of Enemies

(by day or night Asc + Mars – Saturn.)

The Lord of the Part of Enemies

The position of Saturn

Omar's almuten rulers represents a shift in medieval astrology as this idea of compound almutens is not represented in work of Masha'allah a follower of Dorotheus of Sidon and a contemporary of Omar. When Masha 'allah delineated a house his approach, for example, for the Ascendant, was as follows (1994: 16):

Look at the lord of the Ascendant and at Mercury, which indicates the speech of the native; if this is strong and in a moveable sign, it indicates that he has good speech and that he is honourable and God-fearing; and if this is in a common sign, it indicates that he has little wisdom and is quick to anger and he believes almost no other person's council; and if he is in a fixed sign, it indicates that he will be honoured in life because of his truthfulness, his goodness and his council; and in every way his council will be most true, and he will set free judgments which have been impeded from whatever hinders them.

However the expansion of this method of almuten which is represented in the work of Omar was a growing part of medieval astrology and some two hundred and fifty years later Ibn Ezra (2008: 13-14) used the concept of an almuten which for him included the natal houses of the planets and the phasing of the superior planets in relationship to the Sun. In his book on nativities he discussed the method of considering the strongest planet in the chart as follows:

Ptolemy and Doroneus said that we should always seek the planet that rules the nativity, and this is how we shall find it. We know that the paces of [the] life[-givers] are five: the [first] two are the places of the two lights by day and by night; the third is the place of the conjunction of the lights or their oppositions whichever is the first [immediately] before the birth of the native; the fourth is the rising degree and the fifth is the Lot of Fortune as I have explained it in The Book of Reasons for the Beginning of Wisdom. We will reckon for the ruler of the domicile 5 fortitudes, for the ruler by exaltation 4, for the triplicity ruler 3, for the ruler of the bound 2 and for the ruler of the face 1. We do so for every one that has rulership in all the five places.

We will also look to see if it is [one] of the superior planets and moving away from the Sun and it is in its greatest power; [if so] we will give it [additional] 3 fortitudes, and if in its middle [power], 2 [fortitudes] and if in its minor [power], 1 [fortitudes].

We will also look [to evaluate the ruler] with regard to the houses; for the one found in the first house has 12 fortitudes, in the tenth house 11 [fortitudes] ...

... Ibn Ezra text then gives the following scores for the houses

in the first house	12
in the tenth house	11
in the seventh	10

Medieval Astrology – Almutens
Bernadette Brady

in the fourth	9
in the eleventh	8
in the fifth	7
in the second	6
in the ninth	5
in the eighth	4
in the third	3
in the twelfth	2
in the sixth	1

... and according to the nature of the ruler so is the nature of the native's body³.

³ Hand notes that there are variations from the Hebrew text (translated here) with the Latin which does not include the phases of the superior planets, while other text also add to the scoring of the almuten the planet that rulers the hour of birth (Ibn Ezar:2008: 14).

Medieval Astrology – Almutens
Bernadette Brady

		Sun	Moon	Mercury	Venus	Mars	Jupiter	Saturn
One of the lights N	7 C			+5, +3			+3, +2, +1	+3
The other light M	17 F		+3	+5,+4	+3,+1	+3	+1	
New Moonbefore birth	29B		+3,		+5, +3	+3, +2		+1
Part of Enemies	14 E	+5, +3					+3, +1	+3, +2
Degree of the Ascendant	23 G		+3		+5, +3 +2	+3	+1	+4
Part of Fortune	2 K			+3, +2	+1	+3,	+3	+5, +3
Planets in houses		+4	+8	+10	+4	+10	+10	+11 (placed in 10 th house)
Superior Planets separating from the Sun – within a sextile						+3	+3	
Total		12	17	32	27	27	28	32

Using Kennedy's horoscope as an example of IbnEzar's methodology

Thus for IbnEzar the planets that rule J.F.Kennedy's natal chart are Mercury and Saturn. If Saturn was allocated to the 9th house, rather than the 10th then Mercury would be the sole almuten ruler of his chart with Saturn only scoring 5 points for a 9th house position thus reducing its total score by six points down to 26 points.

How would this Saturn be considered? With Saturn high place and closeness to the MC would probably be considered a 10th house planet. Thus Saturn in Cancer (detriment), angular, ruled by the Virgo Moon, in the sign of Jupiter's exaltation and in a sextile aspect to that planet, in the triplicity ruled by Venus, Mars and Moon and in it is own terms and finally in the face ruled by the Moon. Bonatti would say that with Saturn in his own terms that he was surrounded by his kith and kin, indeed the power of Saturn would be based in his family. Additionally, he would suggest that he had a deep rapport with the Moon and all things signified by the Moon as it was in the Moon's face. In the Moon's relationship to Saturn being the ruler of the sign, one of the triplicity rulers of Saturn as well as the face ruler suggest that this Saturn gains power or holds power through the women in his family. However, Bonatti would have suggested an eventual fall from power as the very public and successful planet was in detriment. Whereas Omar would have pointed out that his enemies were powerful

(almuten of enemies being Mercury and Jupiter) and therefore the benefic reception with Jupiter may not prove to be as benefic as appears.

Guido Bonatti's use of Almutens

Bonatti also drew on these traditions and used the concept of an almuten in his interrogations in his Second Tractatus, Part III, chapter 14 he states (1994: 105-06):

Concerning the Finding of the Significator of the Matter Sought For.

And for this purpose so that you will not fall into error nor into ambiguity concerning the signification of those things which are signified by each, I will teach you to find the planet which is the significator of the thing that you seek. Indeed the lord of the sign is not always the significator of the thing which is signified by that house about which a [question] is asked. Indeed sometimes a planet is the lord of the house, and another planet which is not the lord of the house is stronger in that house. That planet is called the stronger which has in that place more dignities or fortitudes, and which has more fortitudes in the house of the matter, or which signifies the matter about which there is a question. And that planet is called the significator, which Alchabitius called the Almuten, that is, the *victor*. It is called the victor because it exceeds the other planets in fortitudes in the house which relates to the question.

The exemplar of which is this. A certain question was made regarding substance the Ascendant of which was the first degree of Pisces. Aries was the second house, namely, its sixth degree, which is the house of substance. It only seems that Mars which is the lord of Aries would be the lord of substance, but it is not so. Mars has only six fortitudes in that place because it has five from the house and one from the face, and so there are six fortitudes of Mars. And the sign is likewise the exaltation of the Sun which has there seven fortitudes, four from exaltation, and three from triplicity, and so the Sun has in this place seven of the aforesaid fortitudes. Whence it [the Sun] remains as the significator of substance and not Mars on account of the greater number of fortitudes the Sun has in that place

Furthermore, although the Sun is the ruler of substance in this question, Mars will be the sharer of it, but he will have less power there than the Sun. And if the Sun is impeded in such a way that he was not able to be the significator, it would next fall to Mars, and similarly to Jupiter, if Mars is so weak that he could not be significator. And the Moon will always be a participator. Moreover Jupiter has something to do there, whence he has some participation

with them. He has two fortitudes in that place on account of the term he has there. And he is also participant from another cause, because he is the natural significator of substance. And the third house in this question was 12 degrees of Taurus. Whence, if there is a question concerning brothers, or concerning anyone of those things which are signified by the third house, it is fitting that you look for the planet which is stronger in that house. And understand the same regarding the other houses and their other significations.

But he also used the almuten in natal charts. He constructed a compound almuten to create what he defines as the Almudebit which would give information about the vitality and life force of the infant and thus its ability to live.

The Almudebit

The Almudebit was the planet with the most dignity in the following places: (a) The degrees of the four angles. (b) The rulers of the four angles. (c) The triplicity rulers of the four angles. (d) The Sun. (e) The Moon. (f) Ruler of the Sun sign. (g) Ruler of the Moon sign. (h) The Part of Fortune. (i) The ruler of the Part of Fortune. (j) The ruler of the conjunction (New Moon before birth) or Prevention (Full Moon before birth) whichever lunation occurred prior to birth.

The ability of a child to be born alive, or live only to take nourishment or live only to the age of 12 years (known as its differentia ranking) was then determined by the condition of the planet which was the Almudebit in the natal chart.

References

- Abu, Mashar. (1994). *The Abbreviation of the Introduction to Astrology*. Translated by Yamamoto & Yano Burnett. New York: Brill.
- Al-Biruni. (1934). *The Book of Instruction in the Elements of the Art of Astrology*. Translated by R.Ramsay Wright. London: British Mus.
- Alexandrinus, Paulus. (1993). *Introductory Matters*. Translated by Robert Schmidt. Berkeley Springs: Golden Hind Press.
- Bonatti, Guido. (2007). *The Book of Astronomy*. Translated by Benjamin N. Dykes. II vols. Golden Valley, Minnesota: The Cazimi Press.
- . (2007). *Book of Astronomy*. Translated by Benjamin N. Dykes. Golden Valley, Minnesota: The Cazimi Press.
- . (1995). *Liber Astronomiae Part Iii*. Translated by Robert Hand. Berkeley Springs: The Golden Hind Press.
- Bonatti, Guido (1994). *Liber Astronomiae, Part Ii*. Translated by Robert Zoller. Berkeley Springs, USA Golden Hind Press. .
- de Montulmo, Antonius (1995). *On the Judgement of Nativities Part I*. Translated by Robert Hand. Berkeley Springs, USA: Golden Hind Press.
- Dorotheus, of Sidon. (1993). *Carmen Astrologicum*. Translated by David Pingree. Mansfield, UK: Ascella Publications.
- Gettings, Fred. (1985). *Dictionary of Astrology*. London, UK Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Greenbaum, Dorian. "Origins and Principles of Temperament." Review of Reviewed Item., no. (2002), <http://www.classicalastrology.org/forgottenkey.html>.
- Hermes, Trismegistus. (1998). *Liber Hermetis*. Translated by Robert Zoller. Brisbane, Australia: Spica Publications.
- Ibn Ezra, Rabbi Avraham. (1998). *The Beginning of Wisdom*. Translated by Meira B. Epstein: Arhat Publications.
- . (2008). *The Book of Nativities and Revolutions*. Translated by Meira B. Epstein: ARHAT Publications.
- Masha'Allah. (1994). *Book of Three Nativities*. Translated by Robert Hand. Berkeley Springs, USA: The Golden Hind Press.
- . (1998). *On Reception*. . Translated by Robert Hand. Berkeley Springs, USA: Arhat Publications.
- Mateus, Maria. "The Prophecy, Alcabitus and Regiomontanus House Systems Examined." Review of Reviewed Item., no. (2001), www.cycellogical.org/articles.
- Omar, of Tiberias. (1997). *Three Books on Nativities*. Translated by Robert Hand. Berkeley, Springs USA: Golden Hind Press.
- Ptolemy, Claudius. (1969). *The Tetrabiblos*. Translated by Ashmand. J. M. Mokolunne Hill, USA: Health Research.
- Rochberg-Halton, Francesca (1988). "Elements of the Babylonian Contribution to Hellenistic Astrology." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol 108, no. No. 1: 51 - 62.
- Schmidt, Robert, and Robert Hand. (1994). *Campion to the Greek Track*. Berkeley Springs, USA: The Golden Hind Press.
- Valens, Vettius (1993). *The Anthology Book I*. Translated by Robert Schmidt. Berkeley Springs, WV: The Golden Hind Press.

- . (1996). *The Anthology Book Iv*. Translated by Robert Schmidt. Berkeley Springs, WV: The Golden Hind Press.
- . (1997). *The Anthology Book V & Vi*. Translated by Robert Schmidt. Berkeley Springs, WV: The Golden Hind Press.