THE MEDIEVAL GRIMOIRE OF ASTRAL MAGIC

Picatrix

Planetary images & gemstones — how medieval magi made star talismans



Book II · Planets, Stars and Stones

LATIN MANUSCRIPT c. 1500 · FROM THE ARABIC, ALFONSO X, 1256

غاية الحكيم

BLUSABOOKS

BOOKS OF WISDOM

Picatrix
Book II

Planets, Stars and Stones: Celestial Figures, Planetary Images, Magic Characters and the Faces of the Signs

The second book of Picatrix — who may learn magic, the figures of heaven and the Moon, the eighth sphere, the three schools of magic and dreams, why images work, stones and planetary images with 32 characters redrawn from the manuscript, the faces of the signs according to the Indians, and the images of Hermes against ailments. Complete, translated from the Latin manuscript, with notes and commentary

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Modern English text, notes, foreword and commentary © 2026 SIA "Blusa Entertainment".

Source: the Latin «Picatrix» — the version of the Arabic «Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm» («The Goal of the Wise») translated at the command of Alfonso X the Wise in 1256, from a manuscript of c. 1500–1525 (Bibliothèque nationale de France), public domain. Translated from the manuscript; no manuscript images are reproduced; the red and brown characters are our own redrawings after the manuscript. The colour illustrations are modern.

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- **Chapter 10** — the metals and stones of the planets, the forms of the planets according to different authorities, and a long list of works done with images.
- **Chapter 11** — the images of the 36 faces of the zodiac "according to the Indian sages".
- **Chapter 12** — the Indian order of the faces, the images of Hermes Trismegistus against all ailments of the limbs, the forty-day fast of the philosophers, and the words of the sages with which the book ends.

How to read the characters. In many places the manuscript has characters drawn between the lines or in the margin — mostly in red ink, a few in brown. They are the so-called "ring characters" with small circles at the ends of their strokes, letter-like signs, planetary signs and the double crescent of the Moon. They are not letters of any known alphabet. Characters stand in 31 places — in chapters 9 and 10, beside the talismans and the forms of the planets; chapter 5 also has five dots in the shape of a constellation. We do not include the manuscript pages in this book, because using them in an edition for sale needs the library's permission. So we have redrawn all the characters ourselves from the images of the manuscript and placed them exactly where they stand in the original. The planetary signs that the scribe repeated in the margin served as bookmarks, so that the reader could quickly find the images of each planet.

Why the text has "...". Our manuscript is a late copy, and the scribe worked in haste and with a great many abbreviations. Some places he did not understand himself; in places he left out a word or left a blank — for example, the description of the image of Aquarius does not say what the man holds in his hand. The page on dreams in chapter 5 is heavily abbreviated and seems damaged, and the last lines of the book are difficult too. Where the missing words could be safely restored from the context, we have done so; where this was not possible, an ellipsis stands. The Arabic names of stones, stars and images are left as they are in the manuscript, in italics, and the notes explain what they mean where this can be known with confidence. The scribe's own mistakes — two chapters with one number, spring forgotten in the list of seasons, a heading that contradicts the text — are kept and pointed out in the commentary.

healed at once, as I have said. And I, wishing to learn and to test the cause of this secret, took a seal from his hands and gave it in a drink as he had ordered, and as soon as it was given, the cries and the pains fled, and the man became well. Then I looked at the seal, and on it was the figure of a scorpion; and I asked with what it had been sealed, and he showed me a gold ring with a bezoar stone[1] bearing the figure of a scorpion. And I asked him what this figure was, and with what secrets and suffumigations these things were done. He answered that the figure was made when the Moon stood in the second face[2] of Scorpio, and that this was the secret and the power of that ring. So that sage told me.

I myself made an image of that figure at the hour mentioned, and with it I sealed incense as well as whatever else was to be sealed, and with them I did wonders by which all were helped. Therefore you must know and understand that no one can know or understand the powers and works of heaven in this lower world unless he is instructed in the quadrivium[3], in natural science and in mathematics. Whoever is ignorant of these things will go astray in the motions of heaven, and will be unable to understand them or to reach what he wishes, because the compositions and roots of this science are drawn from them. Whoever does not know arithmetic and geometry will not be able to calculate the motions of the heavenly bodies, nor search them out within their limits, nor understand the motions themselves, since the understanding of them is founded on arithmetic and geometry. Likewise one must have music, in order to understand the proportions and the numbers of arithmetic in their various kinds, as also the heavenly bodies in love and hatred, with their revolutions, degrees and actions; and that the works of the heavenly bodies have appeared more in one revolution than in another.

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1 Bezoar (Arabic "bāzahr"): a stony ball from the stomach of animals, especially goats; Arab and medieval European medicine held it to be a remedy against poisons.

2 Face (Latin "facies", Greek "decan"): a ten-degree third of each sign of the zodiac; astrologers assigned to each face its own planet and image.

3 The quadrivium: the four "mathematical" arts of the medieval schools — arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy.

angles, or if it is in the head; for then the undertaking will not be fulfilled and will not last.

Nor should the planet from which the Moon is separating, nor the one to which the Moon is going, be anywhere but in the angles or in the houses succeeding the angles; for a Moon that is cadent from the angles or from the succeeding houses is not suited to any work. And so you will place ..., namely the ninth house[1]; the ninth house from the ascendant, when it is in the ninth house, and the twelfth house, which is cadent from the ascendant, will be as above. And if you find the lord of the Moon's house in the ascendant, in midheaven, or in the fifth or the eleventh, oriental[2] and direct, all things will be fitting and in accord with the things you have resolved to do.

An example: just as the favour of Venus is for all works that belong to the doings of young people, to merriment and pictures, and to the faces of women. And as the favour of Jupiter is proper to the works of prelates, kings and judges. And likewise the favour of the Sun is proper to kings and magnates, to their works and to kings. And the favour of the Moon too is assigned to ... and to messengers.

And so, according to what has been said, in all the works and undertakings you wish to carry out with effect, you must look to the Sun and the Moon, and to the lords of their exaltations, and also to the lords of their terms[3]; and then look to the ascendant and the midheaven. If you find them clean of misfortunes and at rest, and their lords set in good places, that work will be good, it will go well, it will be completed and take effect. And all the more so if the fortunes apply to them and to the ascendant more freely while oriental — for planets that are oriental signify victory and the completion of things without any difficulty; but when impeded and occidental, and above all in one of the four angles, they signify sluggishness, delay and postponement of things. And if you find the Moon in a good place but its lord cadent, it signifies that a man's condition in his affairs will

1 The houses of the horoscope are counted from the ascendant; the ninth and the twelfth are "cadent" houses, neither in the angles nor following them.
2 An oriental planet is one that rises before the Sun; it was held to be strong and active.
3 Terms (*termini*): unequal portions of each sign, which astrologers assigned to the five planets.

humours, sometimes from vapours rising to the brain, as the physicians[1] say and assert; and such dreams signify nothing.

And know that dreams are truly showings of simple things separated from the various bodies. And this happens when the soul withdraws from the senses and the sensitive powers and does not help itself with them, but follows the thoughts of the mind; and also the inner powers, which hold within them the powers of sensible things. And this has a true proportion, just as the remembrance of things has. Afterwards, according to this, whoever has a complete rational sense will see to a high degree: hence also what the man himself sees comes neither more nor less than it was seen at work beforehand in dreams. And if the power in which it is also formed is stronger, or rational, he will see it compared in the very likeness of the thing, grasping what is past, but not for its own sake. An example for these two ways: a man who has in himself a complete rational sense sees in dreams as though with his eyes, or yet has seen it before, and that friend will appear to him in another way, that is, in the aforesaid, whether he is a thief or a man of evil condition in his inner ways; and this is a likeness.

And if nature is strong and powerful, it will be hindered by its own, since the very strength of nature, being strong, busies itself with natural things, such as eating, drinking and clothing oneself, and dealing with women; what is natural to the body he will see in sleep, and likewise things that abound in some part. If the body were disposed to union with women, that is, full of seed, it will seem to him as though he were joined with a woman; and this because nature wishes to expel from itself the surfeit of that matter. And if the body were full of moist humours, he will see watery places in dreams. And if it is full of melancholy, he will see in sleep fearful and dreadful things and the like. And if it were full of choler, there will appear in dreams fire and burning, spear points and the like. And so auguries are confirmed, and so it is the truth that their vigour is joined by the confirming of the things perceived in the augury.

1 Physici: in the Middle Ages this meant physicians and natural philosophers.

of which we spoke in this place — their line according to the agreement of the aspects, as we said, and likewise what is said in the sciences of the quadrivium, namely about the straight line, of which it is said: a straight line lies between two points set directly opposite one another. And this saying is more complete than all others said about images, because the straight line, along which a thing so disposed goes in one passage and manner from the beginning of the first point of the line straight on, not turning aside, until it reaches the other point set directly opposite it — for this reason we say that such a thing is directly opposite such a thing.

And this happens when the thing that has travelled thus along a straight line has kept some order, namely the sextile, the square, the trine[1], point by point along the rays of the planets, which fall straight onto a point from the stars on the surface of a body prepared to receive the casting of such rays. And the reason why this is more perfect in images is the gift of the stars, which is required in the effect of images, and also the casting of the rays, which enter together into the very

metal or thing from which the image is made, to fulfil the effect for which the image itself is made and ordered, by contrary or by likeness.

Therefore it truly appears that the line going out from the planet into the form of the image must necessarily be straight, so that the gift may be whole and complete, for a line is not straight when it is oblique; on the contrary, it would be weak and diminished. And the surface of the body is the figure of the gift. And this is because the surface receives the effect of the image in place of the gift itself, which extends into the fine parts and surfaces of the body. For if for some reason the surface itself is changed and altered, it changes along with the effect, just as it is changed by heat, cold, moisture, smell, colours and other such things. And that along which the line poured down by the planets travels in images is what passes from the image itself to the place of the face of the surface. So understand and mark these things that have been said.

1 Sextile, square and trine: aspects in which planets stand 60°, 90° and 120° apart on the circle of the zodiac.