

Hour Agreement & Radical Questions

The conflicting opinions of Bonatus & Lilly

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This short paper demonstrates the contradiction in the definitions of 'hour agreement' as explained by the 13th century Italian astrologer, Guido Bonatti, and the 17th century horary expert, William Lilly.

In regard to planetary hour agreement, the 17th century English horary astrologer William Lilly explains:¹

“All the ancients that have wrote of questions do give warning to the astrologer, that before he deliver judgement he should consider whether the figure is radical and capable of judgement. The question then shall be taken for radical, or fit to be judged, when the lord of the hour at the time of proposing the question, and erecting the figure, and the lord of the ascendant or first house, are of one triplicity, or be one, or of the same nature.”

Lilly then offers a demonstration, using a Mars-ruled hour, to illustrate exactly what he means:

- **Hour-ruler and ascendant are of the same triplicity:**

“As for example: let the lord of the hour be Mars, let the sign of Scorpio, Cancer or Pisces ascend, this question is then radical, because Mars is lord of the hour, and of the watery triplicity, or of those signs Cancer, Scorpio or Pisces.”

According to Lilly's technique, Mars is the principle ruler of the water triplicity both by day and night. With the other triplicities, rulership changes according to whether the chart is diurnal or nocturnal. This agreement only applies when the planet is the appropriate triplicity ruler, (*ie*, for the fire triplicity: the Sun in a day-time chart, and Jupiter at night.)

	Triplicities	Humour	Day-ruler	Night-ruler
Fire	Aries, Leo, Sagittarius	Hot & dry	Sun	Jupiter
Earth	Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn	Cold & dry	Venus	Moon
Air	Gemini, Libra, Aquarius	Hot & wet	Saturn	Mercury
Water	Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces	Cold & wet	Mars	Mars

¹ *Christian Astrology*, London, 1647, p.121.

- **Hour-ruler is the ascendant ruler:**

Mars agrees with Aries and Scorpio, because it rules those signs.

- **Hour-ruler has same humoral nature as the ascendant:**

Mars agrees with Aries, Leo and Sagittarius, because Mars is hot and dry in temporal humour, as are those signs.

Planet	Humour*	Agrees with
Saturn	Cold & dry	Earth
Jupiter	Hot & wet	Air
Mars	Hot & dry	Fire
Sun	Hot & dry	Fire
Venus	Cold & wet	Water
Mercury	Cold & dry	Earth
Moon	Cold & wet	Water

* Note: these qualities are somewhat simplified for the sake of clarity of agreement. It is more correct to think of Jupiter as ‘warm and moist’ rather than ‘hot and wet’, and Venus as ‘cool and moist’ rather than ‘cold and wet’. Both Venus and the Moon, whilst generally classified as ‘cool and moist’, are temperate planets that are said to have a gentle warming capacity. Neither is the Sun as destructively hot and dry as Mars is. Mercury can be variable in its humour according to its location and relationship to other planets in the chart, but it naturally inclines towards being cool and dry.

According to Lilly’s demonstration, a question asked in the hour of Mars would show planetary hour agreement for charts which have Aries, Cancer, Leo, Scorpio, Sagittarius, or Pisces on the ascendant. It would never be possible to find planetary hour agreement in the hour of Mars when Taurus, Gemini, Virgo, Libra, Capricorn or Aquarius is on the ascendant.

Bonatti’s definition:

Many passages in *Christian Astrology* bear a close similarity to chapters of the earlier 13th century text of Guido Bonatus, whom Lilly acknowledged as one of his sources. But note what Bonatus has to say about finding planetary hour agreement:

“The 143rd Consideration is that you consider the manner of judging, and by what routes you must reach some judgement, so you can examine it and rightly analyse it, and according to how the stars show you their truth to be disclosed. The method of whose consideration is this, for you will look at this in fourteen ways.

The first way is whether the querent asks from an intention or not. For if the lord of the ascendant and the lord of the hour were the same, or the signs in which the aforesaid significators were, were of the same triplicity or the

same complexion, the question will come to be from an intention. If indeed it were not so, or the ascendant were the end of some sign, the question will not be from an intention, nor rooted.”²

To clarify, the conditions according to Bonatus, are:

- **Hour-ruler is the asc-ruler:**

That is, Mars agrees with Aries and Scorpio.

- **Hour- ruler and asc-ruler are in the same triplicity:**

Mars as the hour-ruler will provide planetary hour agreement to any sign on the ascendant, whenever it, and the ascendant-ruler, are both in signs of the same triplicity (fire, air, etc). For example, Mars can find agreement with Capricorn rising when Mars is in Scorpio and Saturn is in Pisces, as the hour-ruler and sign-ruler are both in water signs. There is no sign that is potentially unable to offer planetary agreement when rising in a Mars-ruled hour.

- **Hour-ruler and ascendant agree in complexion (humour):**

That is, Mars agrees with Aries, Leo and Sagittarius, because they are all hot and dry (as before).

With the recent translation of Bonatti’s work into English, we are able to clarify some of the principles that are used by Lilly. In this situation however, we have two important traditional sources that vary in their description of one of the three conditions by which they claim that ‘hour agreement’ is found. It is not clear whether Lilly misunderstood Bonatti’s meaning, or whether one or both of these authors were referring to other texts that explained the triplicity agreement differently. To answer that, we need to locate more evidence from the early horary texts that commented on this principle. For the time being, I personally accept hour agreement if any of the qualifications offered by Lilly or Bonatus are met. This increases the potential of finding planetary hour-agreement, but in my experience a certain relaxing of the rule as it was previously understood is necessary, to account for the many charts that are clearly sincere and radical, and yet reveal no planetary hour-agreement. If you intend to consider both as I do, the full conditions are as follows:

² *Liber Astronomiae*, ‘*The Book of Astronomy*’, Treatise 5 – The 146 Considerations; translated by Ben Dykes (due for publication: July, 2007). See www.bendykes.com for publication details.

Coley’s translation of the same passage (*Anima Astrologiae*, p.69) reads:

“The 143rd Consideration is to understand the true method of judging, and by what ways thou mayest come to some result, that thou mayst examine and rightfully discuss the same, and discover the truth of what the stars shall show thee? And herein there are 14 points to be considered and heeded:

1. Whether the Querent proposes the question really and intently or not? For if the Lord of the Ascendant and Lord of the hour be the same or the Signs wherein those Significators are placed be of the same Triplicity or complexion the Question is serious; but otherwise, if the Ascendant shall be the end of any Sign, the Question is not Radical.”

- **Hour-ruler is the ascendant ruler:**
That is, hour-ruler rules the sign on the ascendant.
- **Hour- ruler and asc-ruler are in the same triplicity:**
That is, both in air signs, or both in fire signs, etc.
- **Hour-ruler and ascendant are of the same triplicity:**
- That is, the triplicity ruler agrees with the signs it rules by day or night.
- **Hour-ruler has same humoral nature as the ascendant:**
That is, 'hot and dry' planets agree with 'hot and dry' signs, etc.

For example, the results for Mars and Venus can be tabulated as follows:

<i>Hour</i>	<i>Agrees with:</i>	<i>Why?</i>
Mars	Aries	rules the sign and agrees in humour
	Cancer	rules the triplicity
	Leo	agrees in humour
	Scorpio	rules the sign and triplicity
	Sagittarius	agrees in humour
	Pisces	rules the triplicity
	<i>Any ascendant</i> when its ruler is in the same triplicity as Mars	
Venus	Taurus	rules the sign and triplicity by day
	Cancer	agrees in humour
	Virgo by day	rules the triplicity
	Libra	rules the sign
	Scorpio	agrees in humour
	Capricorn by day	rules the triplicity
	Pisces	agrees in humour
<i>Any ascendant</i> when its ruler is in the same triplicity as Venus		