

**TRANSLATOR'S
INTRODUCTION TO:**

THE

BOOK OF ASTRONOMY

BY

GUIDO BONATTI

Translated by Benjamin N. Dykes, Ph.D.
From the 1491 and 1550 Latin Editions

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A NOTE TO THE PURCHASER

JANUARY, 2011

After receiving many requests from customers, I am happy to release my Introduction to Bonatti's *Book of Astronomy* as a PDF download. It can be used alongside any of my *Book of Astronomy* paperback reprints (2010), which also retain the original pagination of the 1st Edition.

In 2007 there was little medieval astrological material available in English translation. That situation has changed greatly in the past few years, and our understanding of traditional astrology has improved remarkably. The present Introduction is unchanged from the 1st Edition (apart from a few updated sentences), and represents the state of my thought at that time: it should not be taken as my final word on every particular point. As I complete further installments of my *Essential Medieval Astrology (EMA)* series, I will continue to publish additional articles and Introductions, sharing my current thoughts about astrological history and the meaning and use of techniques.

For more information on the *EMA* series, and to read excerpts from my own translations and other writings, please visit: www.bendykes.com.

Sincerely,

Dr. Benjamin Dykes
The Cazimi Press

INTRODUCTION

§1: The *Book of Astronomy*

We live in an exciting time for traditional astrology. After a pretty universal hiatus that has lasted several centuries, we are in the midst of what could be counted as the third world-historical translation wave of traditional astrological learning. The first major wave took place in and after the 8th Century AD, after the Arab Muslims conquered the Near and Middle East, when primarily Greek-language astrological and other materials were translated into Arabic. The second major wave took place primarily in the 11th and 12th Centuries AD, as primarily Arabic writings were translated into Latin by the medieval Europeans. Such writings were instrumental in the success of the new European universities.

Currently, this Greek, Arabic, Hebrew and Latin material is now being translated again into modern languages (primarily English), but with one key difference: many of the translations are now coming directly from the source languages and not just the intermediary ones (or in some cases from both, for purposes of comparison). With this translation, the *Book of Astronomy* takes its place alongside translations by Project Hindsight of the Hellenistic Greeks, and those of Burnett, Pingree, and many others of important medieval Persian, Jewish, and Arab writers like Māshā'allāh, Abū Ma'shar, al-Kindī, Abu 'Ali al-Khayyat, and so on. The number of translations that still have to be made far exceeds those already completed, but over the next ten years we will see quite an outpouring of new materials for use by contemporary astrologers. The *Book of Astronomy* is an important addition to the current wave.

This is the first complete translation of the *Book of Astronomy* (*Liber Astronomiae*) into any modern language, and the first complete printed edition in about 450 years. Compiled by the famous medieval Italian astrologer Guido Bonatti¹ over 700 years ago, it is one of the most well-known and influential astrological compendia in the West. Among medieval works it is matched in length only perhaps by *On the Judgments of the Stars* by 'Ali ibn al-Rijāl,² and perhaps later by the post-medieval reformer Jean-Baptiste Morin de Villefranche. This internally-consistent, complete translation is based on the edition of 1550, with certain corrections based on the 1491 edition (see below).

¹ Lat. *Guido Bonatus*.

² Also known as Haly Abenragel.

But the value of this translation goes beyond its completeness. Among its other benefits are:

- Citations and commentary for much of Bonatti’s source material.
- Accurate transliterations of Bonatti’s Latinized Arabic (with Arabic script in footnotes), both for some proper names and all technical concepts.
- A single, internally-consistent rendering of Bonatti’s Latin, with footnotes and indexing that cross-reference the entire text.
- English-based semantic fields that avoid technical jargon (such as the use of “transfer of light” for “translation of light,” “restraining” for “refraction,” “bound” for “term,” and “likeness” for “similitude”).
- Comparisons and corrections based on the original Hellenistic material on which the medieval Arabic texts were based, using the latest translations of the Greek from Project Hindsight.
- Citations of all currently identifiable source texts throughout the book.
- New light shed on technical concepts, such as whole-sign houses and aspects, the *al-mubtaz̃z̃* (also known as the *almuten*), sect, and others.
- A comprehensive, research-oriented index that includes concepts, predictive techniques, source text citations, and much more.

Although many astrologers since the 13th Century have read and drawn from the *Book of Astronomy*, only small portions have ever been translated or reprinted. Of these portions, the most well-known is Henry Coley’s selective paraphrase of Treatise 5 (on the “146 Considerations”) from 1676, entitled *Anima Astrologiae* or “Soul of Astrology.” Those familiar with Coley’s edition will be pleased by the fullness and fluidity of Bonatti’s own version, and surprised with respect to portions he left out or attributed to his teacher William Lilly. Other published portions include Robert Hand’s and Robert Zoller’s joint translation of Trs. 1-3, and Hand’s own partial translation of Tr. 6. Zoller has issued some of the 7th House material from Tr. 6 as *Bonatti on War*, as well as excerpts of several Treatises for his New Medieval Astrology Correspondence Course.

Totally new for this translation are Trs. 4, the latter half of 6, all of 7, most of 8 and 9, and all of 10. If we add in the accurate, word-for-word translation of Tr. 5, then about seventy-five percent of this *Book of Astronomy* will be new for modern readers. With its extensive footnoting, commentary, updated charts,

comprehensive index, decoded Arabic, and many other features, it supersedes all existing partial versions.

Why have translations been so rare? For one thing, few people can read the older texts any more due to the gradual decline of Latin instruction. For another, fewer people have cared to read it, since there has been a regrettable loss of interest in medieval thought and astrology due to modern prejudices and fantasies about the meaning of freedom, evolution, and human nature. Fortunately, we are in a period of rediscovery which will revolutionize our current practice and understanding of astrology. I hope the *Book of Astronomy* will play its proper role in realizing this transformation.

The *Book of Astronomy* was a popular one in the medieval and Renaissance period, and not solely as a single volume. Its individual Treatises were often copied and distributed under their own titles. For this reason, some bibliographies of Bonatti's work list more writings than he actually made. So far as we know, it is the only book he ever wrote.

The first printed edition was by Ratdolt in Augusta (1491). It is 422 pages in a gothic-style typeface, and this edition states that it has been "corrected" by an astrologer named Johannes Angelus. It does not, however, state what corrections were made. In the future perhaps, this question will be cleared up by a critical edition using the earlier manuscript editions. I have used this edition as the source for correcting some of the word endings pertaining to astrological houses (see below), but Angelus himself may be responsible for altering even some of the material from his manuscript sources.

The second printed edition was by Sessa in Venice (1506), printed on 181 pages in double columns. I myself do not have a copy of this edition. However, the 1550 edition is obviously based on the earlier 1491 edition (including some problems with pages printed in the wrong order, see below), so unless the 1506 edition is based wholly on manuscripts, this translation represents all three editions as a whole.

The last edition was printed in Basel (1550), in 212 pages of double columns. It includes the *Centiloquy* of pseudo-Ptolemy, with accompanying commentary by Georgius Trapezuntius (Giorgio de Trabisona). This edition forms the basis for my translation, in part due to its more modern and readable typeface.

There have also been some private, partial, and even imaginary copies. They include a private copy said to be made for Henry VII of England, and an abbreviated edition in German (1572, Basel). According to Boncompagni, it is also said by L'Hendrich that there were two other Basel editions (1530, 1536)

and another from Augusta (1581), but to my knowledge these have never been discovered. In Boncompagni it is suggested that L'Hendrich invented these editions because he wanted to make his own collection appear bigger than it was. But perhaps his claim is due partly to error: in these spurious editions, the title and publishing information reads so as to make Johannes Engel (the "corrector" of the 1491 edition) the nephew to whom Bonatti dedicates the book itself! Perhaps L'Hendrich had bad information that conflated the earlier editor with the dedicatee, but that does not explain the imaginary dates.

§2: Bonatti's Life

Bonatti's life spanned most of the 13th Century, a volatile and critical time in Italian politics. All of his employers were Ghibellines (working against the Papal authority and armies), combating the Guelphs (pro-Papal forces). All of his employers seem to have been excommunicated at one time or another. We do not have his year of birth or death, but he was probably born around 1207 and died sometime before 1296, which would have made him in his eighties when he died (see below). Dante has immortalized Bonatti by placing him in Hell: the eighth Circle, fourth Ring, the Fortune Tellers and Diviners. There, the damned souls who have tried to divine the future are placed with their heads turned completely around (facing the past, as it were), their eyes blinded with tears.

What we do know (or think we know) about his life comes from three types of sources: first, statements made by Bonatti himself; second, the records and annals of Florence and Forlì; third, a handful of questionable stories told about him and repeated by later writers. In what follows I will rely mostly on Boncompagni's 1851 work *On the Life and Works of Guido Bonatti, Astrologer and Astronomer of the Thirteenth Century*. Boncompagni conveniently includes Latin, Italian, and French citations from many sources, including the important 14th Century work of Filippo Villani, and the names below largely reflect the material in his book. First I will describe something about Bonatti's personality and stories about him, then I will describe his employers, and finally I will construct a timeline of rather certain events in his life up until his death.

Bonatti is said to have been a hot-tempered man, and somewhat self-aggrandizing (as is also confirmed by statements in the *Book of Astronomy*). He is said to have owned property called the Campo della Quercia (perhaps near Forlì). A painting of him hangs in Florence, although Boncompagni (p. 90) does not state its location. He was also said to be a trickster, especially playing

unspecified tricks on women, although this comment is made on the “back of a page” of a codex in Florence and Boncompagni (p. 135) is not clear on who wrote it or how it appears. Bonatti mentions his family only a couple of times: his father claimed to be 107 years old (see below for his father’s profession), an uncle 120 years old; his mother claimed that a contemporary of hers had given birth to a cat; and he had at least one nephew, whose nativity is given in Tr. 9 (see Table of Figures). We learn nothing about his siblings.

There are also a number of stories about him, some undoubtedly invented. For example, a contemporary of Bonatti’s, a Franciscan named Salimbene of Parma, claims that when a Franciscan named Hugo came into the town where Bonatti was at the time, Bonatti was so intimidated by Hugo’s learning and preaching that he went into hiding. The excerpt from Salimbene in Boncompagni does not say what city this was in or even the year, but it is not very believable. Salimbene relates the story with some sense of triumph, noting that in normal circumstances Bonatti had disdain for the Franciscans—so the story seems to have a merely polemical origin. Besides, Bonatti himself enjoyed the patronage of counts, tyrants, and perhaps even the Emperor, and stood up to charlatans and bullies—what would he have to fear from a preacher passing through town?

Villani relates another story reported by a Dante scholar named Rambaldo in 1391. Rambaldo is describing what sort of physiognomy Scorpio signifies, and cites as evidence a trip allegedly made by Bonatti to Arabia! There, he says, Bonatti had seen an astrolabe of miraculous size, on which all the zodiacal signs were configured. In the sign of Scorpio was carved or placed the figure of an Ethiopian holding manure to his nose, to indicate that one born with Scorpio ascending will enjoy the smell of dung.³ This story too seems false. If Bonatti had been to Arabia, he not only would have mentioned it, but would have had access to astrological manuscripts which he would have used in writing the *Book of Astronomy*. But Bonatti never mentions it, and there is no evidence in the *Book of Astronomy* that *any* of its source material relies on manuscripts not already translated into Latin and available in Italy. Also, it would likely have had to take place before about 1276, the date of the last event mentioned in the book. By that time Bonatti would have been in his sixties, an unlikely age at which to have taken such a trip (especially with the scene of the faltering Crusades having become so dangerous).

³ Bonatti does mention that those with Ascendants ruled by malefics may enjoy odors like this (Tr. 5, the 127th Consideration).

Another unlikely and unclear story deriving from Salimbene is that while both Bonatti and his later employer Count Guido da Montefeltro were in Forlì, Bonatti worked as a roofer or roof repairman. One authority, Trotti, says this is just a legend, and that it was begun by a man named Recanati. Recanati, who was writing about Villani, mentions the story as a way of describing how Bonatti could have met Piero della Vigna in Bologna (see below). Since Piero had grown up poor, Recanati's story tries to connect Bonatti, Bologna, Piero, and their obscure backgrounds. But Bonatti never actually says he knew Piero, and it would seem that the original story not only leaves out Montefeltro but takes place in another city.

Finally, another story of Rambaldo's but related by Boncompagni (pp. 130-33) describes an encounter designed to make Bonatti look bad. On a very clear day Montefeltro was on a plain outside Forlì, when a peasant approached and offered him some pears. Then the peasant said he wanted to hurry home before it rained, because there was sure to be great rainfall that day. Montefeltro called Bonatti to him (apparently Bonatti was there with him) to ask him for the forecast, and Bonatti said it would only rain moderately. But, going back to his study, he took out his astrolabe, made some calculations, and decided it would not rain at all. The peasant insisted it would rain. "How do you know?" asked Bonatti. The peasant explained that his donkey was shaking and pricking up its ears more than usual—which in his experience was always a sign of rain. And it would be a great rainfall, because the donkey's ears were turning around and rotating more than usual. Then the peasant left. Soon it began to rain so hard there was practically a flood. Distraught, Bonatti shouted out, "Who has deluded me? Who has confounded me?" The Latin text suggests that the Count created a new position for the peasant, that of Groom to the Great Master Astrologer (*Agaso magno Magistro Astrologo*), obviously so that the donkey could be used for weather prediction. The moral of the story is that even a jackass is better than an astrologer.

From these fanciful and polemical stories we move into the realm of pretty certain fact. Bonatti had three main employers, all powerful men, and he perhaps also was in the employ of Frederick II. In chronological order of employment, they are:

Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor. Frederick (b. December 26, 1194, d. December 13, 1250) was a towering figure in medieval history. A Hohenstaufen, he was the son of Emperor Henry VI and Constance, Queen of Sicily. Both of his parents died early and Pope Innocent III assumed responsibility for his

guardianship. He was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in Rome in 1220. Frederick spent much of his time in Sicily or on Crusade, during which time his assets and kingdoms flourished: he was said to be a wise and intelligent ruler, a speaker of many languages, and his court was famous for encouraging the arts and sciences (including astrology). The famous astrologer Michael Scot was attached to his court, and is found next to Bonatti in Dante's Hell. Two episodes in Frederick's later life are mentioned by Bonatti: first, his betrayal in 1249 by his friend Pietro (or Piero) della Vigna, who either committed suicide or was executed after he was discovered embezzling and possibly plotting against the Emperor; second, the plot against him by close associates (encouraged by Pope Innocent IV) in 1245. Bonatti's description of this latter situation⁴ seems to be the only reason for historians to assume Bonatti actually worked for Frederick in some capacity, but it rests on shaky foundations. First of all, although Bonatti claims to have foreseen the plot, he never actually says he warned Frederick or was even in a position to do so. He never describes situations in which he aided the Emperor. And, even though he mentions Michael Scot as a contemporary of his, he never expressly shows knowledge of Michael's works. For instance, Michael wrote a famous commentary on the *Sphere* of Sacrobosco, but Bonatti's knowledge of the same topics seems to come from an earlier translation of al-Farghānī, whom he recommends to the reader. There is no evidence for his being in Frederick's employ, even though at least one authority (Gavinet) says that Bonatti was receiving an annual stipend from Frederick. Surely Bonatti, who loves relating the details of his consultations with local lords like Guido Novello, would have openly boasted about being hired by an Emperor.

Ezzelino da Romano III (April 25, 1194–October 7, 1259). Ezzelino was of German origin, an ally of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II against the Guelphs, and in 1236 became Frederick's son-in-law. He was the ruler of Verona several times over (as cities passed from one political party to another), and by 1238 ruled over many territories from the Mark of Treviso in eastern Italy up into northern Italian territory, either as the civil authority or as a commander on Frederick's behalf. He was excommunicated in 1254 by Pope Innocent IV, who launched a crusade against him (Ezzelino prevailed). In 1258–1259 he launched a series of battles against a number of opponents, and was captured near Bergamo. He died in prison on October 7, 1259. He is mentioned several times in the *Book of Astronomy* as a man of great cruelty, and

⁴ See Tr. 5, the 58th Consideration.

Bonatti notes⁵ that Ezzelino held the brother of one of his own astrologers (Salio) in prison, perhaps as leverage against Salio. Bonatti suggests that Ezzelino was an amateur astrologer, or at least disagreed with Salio about the latter's understanding of particular astrological concepts: perhaps Salio had been predicting failure but, like most tyrants, Ezzelino did not countenance disagreement (see the story about Ezzelino below).⁶ Ezzelino is featured in Dante's Hell: the seventh Circle, first Ring, the Violent against Neighbors.

Count Guido Novello. Novello was a chief Ghibelline in Florence, but seems to have been thrown out twice. In 1260 Bonatti aided Novello and the Siense against the Florentine Guelphs, who lost at the battle of Montaperti. Many of the Guelphs fled to Lucca, where Bonatti again helped Novello in two campaigns against them in 1261 (see below). In 1266 Novello returned to Florence in victory after the Ghibellines were reconstituted there, but was then ejected after a month. In 1283 Novello allied with Guido da Montefeltro, either during or after the siege of Forlì (see below).

Count Guido da Montefeltro. Montefeltro (c.1220–1298) led a successful Ghibelline battle in 1275 to become the captain of Forlì (where he worked with Bonatti). In 1281 he led a Ghibelline revolt against King Charles and Pope Martin IV, also attacking and defeating the Papal governor of Romagna (John of Eppe) at Forlì. The Papal forces proceeded to besiege Forlì in 1282–83, and while they did not take the city, they successfully suppressed the revolt. In 1286 Montefeltro accepted the Pope's authority, only to be excommunicated in 1288 for engaging in further Ghibelline activity and battles. Finally, apparently repenting of his former ways, he became a mendicant Franciscan monk in 1296—but could not help remaining involved in politics. He died in late 1298, and is found deep in Dante's Hell: the eighth Circle, eighth Ring, the Evil Counselors.

From here we can proceed to the details of Bonatti's life. His birth year is unknown, but definitely in the early 1200s. Although Bonatti said he was “from” or “of” the town of Forlì near Ravenna, there is some dispute over his city of origin. Some authorities have said he was really from Florence, and Boncompagni finally sides with those who insist he was really from a tiny town called Cascia, a little village about 35 KM southeast of Florence in the Val d'Arno.⁷ Modern Reggello, a nearby and larger town, is known for its olive oil,

⁵ See Tr. 3, Part 2, Ch. 14, and the Index.

⁶ See also Tr. 7, Part 2, the 9th House, Ch. 2.

⁷ Cascia is small enough that it does not appear on standard astrological software. But it is a tiny distance from Reggello, a slightly bigger town (43°N41', 11°E32').

and the immediate area was later the home of the 15th Century painter Masaccio, who influenced Michelangelo.

What could explain the differing accounts of his birthplace? According to a number of medieval accounts and later writers, while Bonatti was from the Florence area, he was later mistreated by the Florentines and exiled, and became so angry that he claimed he was from Forlì. Indeed, as we shall see below, in 1260-61 he helped Novello in several battles against the Florentines, both in Florence and in their refuges in and near Lucca. Indirect support for his being from the area of Florence is found in the fact that his father was a notary for the Archbishops of Florence: we know this because we have log books with his father's entries, recording land sales and such, including from the years of 1217 to 1221. Of course, it is possible that while still a child in Forlì, his father left for Florence for extended periods. But the Bonatti family was said to be very old and established: would it have been so difficult to get a job in Forlì, that his father would have had to travel so far to find notary work?

Another possibility is that while he was from Cascia, the family moved from Florence after 1221 to Forlì, since in 1223 we find Bonatti in Ravenna (near Forlì), where he says he saw a man named Richard, who passed himself off as a roughly 400-year-old man who had been born in the time of Charlemagne. At this time Bonatti must have been young but old enough to remember the event—say, fifteen?

Bonatti is said to have studied in Bologna, and indeed he must have been either studying there, or teaching, or perhaps involved in politics, as he says he met the famous John of Vicenza in Bologna. John was a leader of a peace movement seeking to reduce violence, and he entered Bologna in May of 1233. On May 14, there was a great procession featuring him, and on May 16 there was claimed a miracle in which a cross appeared on his forehead. On May 23, John and some other figures reburied a local saint in a decorated tomb, and on May 28 he had left. Although John had only been in Bologna a few weeks, his presence was electrifying to the people—but not to Bonatti. In his own version of events, Bonatti says he himself was criticized for being the only person to think John was a charlatan: John claimed to have raised people from the dead, to heal miraculously and to speak to Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary whenever he wanted. Moreover, John went around with armed thugs as protection, who beat anyone getting too close (without healing their wounds afterwards).

It was perhaps at this time that Bonatti was a professor of judicial astrology, although the details of this are not clear. Bonatti does claim that John of

Vicenza criticized astrology: if then Bonatti was someone of note, then perhaps there was a personal confrontation between them.

In 1245, Bonatti was in Forlì, and claims that while Frederick II was in Grosseto (in southern Tuscany), he alone among the astrologers foresaw a conspiracy against the Emperor. In fact the conspiracy existed, and was found out (see above). But Bonatti does not actually say he informed the Emperor. If Frederick had a number of astrologers on stipend, then perhaps there was a peer review process in which Bonatti's interpretation was rejected by the other astrologers. Or perhaps he was not in Frederick's employ at all, and simply foresaw the conspiracy independently.

In 1257, we again find Bonatti in Forlì, engaged with a local tyrant. According to Bonatti, a man named Simon Mestaguerra had taken over the city. While the populace lived in fear of him, only Bonatti saw the truth about him and resisted him. Bonatti does not say how he resisted such a tyrant, but in any event Mestaguerra was expelled after about three years, in 1257.

Boncompagni believes that it was most likely in 1258 that Bonatti was forced to leave Florence, because people from the countryside (who had been winning in the latest Guelph-Ghibelline struggles) treated him badly. It was also at this time that a Ghibelline conspiracy headed by the Uberti family was discovered by the Florentine Guelphs, so the Ghibellines were ejected from the city. If true, then it is possible that Bonatti's alleged anger at the Florentines (or the Florentine Guelphs) arose from these events, prompting him to renounce his Florentine or Cascian origins and claim to be from Forlì. We have seen that Bonatti had already been in Forlì, so he already had connections there. Boncompagni does not explain why Bonatti was even in Florence, but perhaps (since Bonatti does not say otherwise) he felt he had to leave Forlì during the tyranny of Simon Mestaguerra. If so, then he might have gone to Florence, only to be rejected again.

At any rate, in 1259 Bonatti was in a new city, Brescia, working (along with other astrologers) for Ezzelino da Romano, then the governor of Padua. According to Iacopo Malvezzi, a Brescian writer of the 15th Century, Ezzelino had a bad dream in February, whose meaning he sought by consulting several astrologers and magicians living there at the time: Bonatti, Salio the Canon of Padua (also an astrologer), Riprandinus of Verona, and Paul the Saracen of Brescia (said to have had a wild and flowing beard), who originated from "Baldach." When they arrived at Ezzelino's palace, he related the dream and asked what it portended. A day later they returned, telling Ezzelino he had a

bright future and would soon be given all of Lombardy. But not long afterwards the interpretation proved to be false, and Malvezzi suggests that either fear or hatred of Ezzelino had led Bonatti and the others to avoid telling him the truth. There is support for this version of events in the *Book of Astronomy*, when Bonatti mentions that Salio used to give Ezzelino more flattering responses out of fear (see above). Bonatti omits to say whether he himself might have done likewise, but he does make a coy allusion to the event in Tr. 5, the 141st Consideration: there, Bonatti says Ezzelino was captured “when it seemed impossible that he could be oppressed.” Whatever the truth of the astrologers’ behavior on that day, Ezzelino died only months after the consultation, defeated and in prison, on September 27, 1259.

Less than a year after Ezzelino’s death, Bonatti took up work with Guido Novello, who was heavily involved in Ghibelline politics in Florence. This was a particularly active time in Bonatti’s career, and several statements and charts given in the *Book of Astronomy* show how closely he followed Novello’s own moves. In 1260, Novello, Bonatti, and a number of other Ghibellines were thrown out of Florence by the dominant Guelphs. Novello, retreating to nearby Siena, decided to take up arms with the Sienese against the Florentines (or to defend himself as they pursued him). The battle took place on September 4, 1260, on the hill of Montaperti near Siena on the Arbia river. Although the Sienese were greatly outnumbered,⁸ they massacred the Florentine Guelphs. Bonatti claims to have cast (or helped cast) both the horary chart showing they would win, and the election for the battle itself.

The victory at Montaperti led many Guelph families in Florence to flee to other friendly cities, and Novello was promptly chosen as the new authority in Florence. Bonatti’s fortune rose suddenly as well: in a Florentine record of high-level negotiations on November 22, Bonatti is listed both as a witness (and is set apart from the names of the local participants) and as the astrologer of Florence.

A problem arises from the fact that Bonatti is listed as being from Forlì in the above document. For if Bonatti had originally been from Florence or Cascia, and especially if his father had worked for years for the Archbishop and had been from the area, *and* if he had only changed the story of his origins a couple of years before, then how could anyone present be fooled by his new Forlì story? Again we have the problem of reconciling Bonatti’s own story with that of contemporaries’. Perhaps Bonatti was in fact from Forlì, and his father’s job

⁸ Bonatti describes the army in Tr. 7, Part 1, Ch. 5.

in Florence took him away from the family for long periods of time. Another possibility is that Bonatti was from Cascia and, being embarrassed by his humble origins, decided to claim Forlì as his birthplace (since local Florentines would have known he was not from Florence itself). Yet another possibility (however more remote) is that he had been granted citizenship in Forlì some time before, perhaps as a condition of his being politically involved. We may never know.

Many of the Florentine Guelphs fleeing the city after Montaperti went westward to the city of Lucca. Novello, now made the civil authority or *podestà* in Florence for two years, began to pursue them. Bonatti presents us with two horary charts he cast as part of the actions against the Guelphs in and around Lucca:⁹

The first chart¹⁰ is of a question by Novello as to whether he would win a battle against the city of Lucca. Readers may see Bonatti's version of the chart in the text, along with his prediction. After deciding it was not worth continuing the attack, Novello turned his attention to another castle occupied by Luccans, which he had begun to besiege at that time.

The second chart¹¹ is cast for a month after the first one, and concerns the besieged castle. Bonatti does not name the castle and only says it was the "castle of a company of Luccans," but Tiraboschi¹² believes it was the castle of Fucecchio, a strategically-placed fortress in Fucecchio about 44 KM from Florence.¹³ Comparing charts for each location shows no decisive difference between them, so there is no way to tell where Novello and Bonatti were at the time. The reader will see Bonatti's own version of the chart and his prediction in the text. After consulting Bonatti, Novello decided to halt the siege.

In 1261, Bonatti reports seeing a comet around the time of Pope Alexander IV's death. Bonatti does not tell us whether he predicted the death, but he believes that the comet heralded the death of a number of key players in the

⁹ I note that in Bonatti's sections on predicting the length of someone's reign, he describes how to track the querent's status from year to year. It is possible that he learned or devised these techniques while working for Ezzelino or Novello.

¹⁰ Tr. 6, Part 2, the 7th House, Ch. 28. Using Bonatti's data, the chart must have been cast at 11:51 AMLAT, on September 12, 1261 JC. The coordinates for Lucca are 10°E29', 43°N50. All positions in my own recast chart are very close to Bonatti's, except for the cadent houses, which are off by about a degree.

¹¹ Described in the same Treatise as the first, but in Ch. 29.

¹² See Boncompagni, p. 36.

¹³ The coordinates for Fucecchio are 10°E48, 43°N44. I have calculated the chart to be cast with a few minutes of 9:52 AM LAT, on October 11, 1261 JC.

Italian struggles of the time.¹⁴ At this time I do not know the identity of the comet.

In 1264 Bonatti was back in Forlì, assisting in an agreement between Philip the Archbishop of Ravenna on the one side, and some men from Forlì on the other. Boncompagni's excerpt of this story by Rossi does not explain what was decided or why.

In 1267 Bonatti reports that a man passing himself off as John Buttadaeus (a legendary figure who had lived from the time of Christ), had passed through Forlì.¹⁵

Around this time Bonatti must have changed employers from Novello to Montefeltro, as Novello no longer appears in the records but we hear more about Montefeltro. Although we do not have much information on their relationship, Villani reports that when Montefeltro was preparing military actions he had Bonatti elect the times for performing the stages of preparation. Bonatti used to ascend the bell tower of the San Mercuriale in Forlì, and ring the bell for Montefeltro to do such things as put on his armor, get on his horse, raise flags, and so on. I note that Bonatti speaks of electing times for doing just such things in Tr. 7, so he was definitely practicing what he preached.

It seems that in 1276 or 1277 Bonatti helped either Novello (or more likely Montefeltro) in the battle of Valbona.¹⁶ The Chronicles of Forlì mention a Lucius de Valbona, and that a *Burgum Castrì Civitellae* was occupied; then apparently the defenders and attackers moved to Valbona on November 9th. Bonatti gives no details apart from the fact that "the Ascendant [of the electoral figure] was Taurus, and Mars was in the Ascendant." I take this to mean that Mars was in Taurus, which would place the battle in March or April, 1276. This is the last confirmable date from the *Book of Astronomy*, which means the final touches must have been put on the book sometime afterwards.

According to Boncompagni's report of a Leone Cobelli, a battle took place in Forlì between Montefeltro and a general of Pope Martin IV (Giovanni d'Appia). Bonatti was consulted, and he said that while Montefeltro would win, he would be injured in battle. Apparently Montefeltro's confidence in Bonatti was so great that he published reports of his victory *before* the battle took place. It is claimed Bonatti himself wrote about this later (and allegedly is recorded in the *Archivio Storico Italiano*), but Bonatti never mentions it.

¹⁴ See Tr. 8, Ch. 104.

¹⁵ See Tr. 5, the 141st Consideration.

¹⁶ Mentioned briefly in Tr. 6, Part 2, the 7th House, Ch. 21.

At this point the record breaks off except for a spurious story about Bonatti's last years, and an account of his death. A traditional story claims that in his old age, Bonatti repented of his past use of astrology and became a mendicant Franciscan; some accounts also combine this story with another one about Montefeltro likewise repenting of his opposition to the Pope and becoming a mendicant. But it seems Bonatti's inclusion in the story is a mistake, due in part to the fact that Villani's account mentions a "Guido" several times, but the text is not clear on which Guido was meant. According to Tiraboschi, only Montefeltro entered the Order, and the inclusion of Bonatti originates only two centuries *later*—when it is promptly repeated by subsequent writers. According to Landino and other sources, Bonatti died before Montefeltro, and *then* Montefeltro, despairing of being able to hold on to his power, accepted the Pope's authority and became a monk.

It seems, then, that Bonatti died after 1281 (if he was at the siege of Forlì) but before late 1296. But how did he die? According to Muratori, upon returning from a study trip to Paris and other Italian cities, he was beset by robbers in or near Casena and murdered on the road, his body left there. Although being robbed and killed is not implausible, this story must be accepted with caution, as it includes the statement that Bonatti went to Paris. Muratori claims that according the Annals of Forlì Bonatti went to Paris and taught astrology there, gaining an international reputation. Bonatti never mentions this, so the only other alternative is that he taught in Paris after 1276 (the last date in the book), when he was in his seventies. So far as I know, no one has corroborated this story using Parisian sources.

From all of this information I think we can establish that Bonatti was in his eighties when he died. If we assume he was a young teenager (say, 15) in 1223 when he saw Richard in Ravenna, then he would have been born about 1207. If we assume he died just before Montefeltro became a mendicant (1296), then Bonatti was approximately 89 at his death.

§3: The Translation Wave and Our Worldview

Astrological translations have always been accompanied by a renewed interest in both astrology and traditional learning; but the world has changed much in the last three centuries. While more people are studying classical languages like Latin today than there were fifty years ago (due in part to the influence of home schooling), the cosmology of traditional astrology is not intuitively

obvious to our modern minds. It is true that one can assume a purely geocentric point of view temporarily for the sake of simplicity, but one has to start taking it more seriously when doing traditional astrology. Modern astrologers have been so engaged in adopting modern physical concepts like gravitation, forces, or waves, that it can be hard to slip back into the earlier mindset. For at least one thousand years, astrologers took it for granted that, if pressed, we ought to be able to speak about fate, God, angels, and celestial or planetary Intelligences; but many modern astrologers who do at least speak of a kind of fuzzy spirituality (or perhaps spiritual “energy” in the universe) are more comfortable looking for childhood traumas in the chart, exaggerating personal freedom, trying to escape their childhood religion, and indulging in self-flattery using Jungian or other psychological concepts.

These social and mental barriers mean that we cannot count on this third wave of translations to revolutionize learning overall in the current period. But it will at least renew interest in our authentic astrological heritage, stimulate astrologers to practice better astrology using the tested methods of the traditional sages, and encourage more students to study Greek, Arabic, and Latin. As some of these translations are being done in universities under the rubric of the history of science, we can expect more people to come to astrology from history, philosophy, the history of science; and for astrologers and the astrologically-inclined to invest more in such departments in turn.

There are three types of discoveries that one can make by engaging with traditional astrology. The first has to do with learning more about our own history. As Robert Zoller has pointed out, if the history of Europe (or the Near and Middle East, India, *etc.*) could be rewritten to include the astrologers who influenced political and military decisions, historical events would look a lot different. We have already seen how Guido Novello pursued the Florentine and Luccan Guelphs in two battles, only to disengage after consulting Bonatti: what would the impact on Italian history have been if he had engaged and lost—or engaged and won?

The second discovery has to do with fleshing out the astrological concepts we encounter, because therein lie many of the keys to understanding why astrologers do what they do. For instance, the Hellenistic astrologers used many nautical metaphors and concepts in their descriptions of basic ideas in astrology and its techniques.¹⁷ But the early medieval Arabs, Persians, and Latins, who were often not seafarers, seem to have converted these concepts into ones of

¹⁷ Robert Schmidt of Project Hindsight has done much to illuminate these paradigms.

kingship, land ownership, and vassalage. A wholesale change in the paradigm that makes sense of astrological phenomena carries the danger that important elements of the original worldview will be lost and distorted. We are just now able to begin asking the right questions in these areas.

The third discovery has to do with the relation between the worldview of the astrologers and those described by philosophers and theologians educated in the schools. Since ancient and medieval astrologers needed to be literate and educated in some mathematics, it is unlikely that any could have wholly escaped the influence of the mainstream philosophical schools—and indeed the attempt was sometimes made to couch astrological concepts in philosophical jargon. But based on our current knowledge and recent discoveries, it seems that the worldview of the astrologers cannot be reconciled easily with the philosophical ones. Outlooks on fate, the use of nautical and legal concepts when explaining key points about a chart, the eclectic use of philosophical jargon, perhaps an association with magical and mystical ideas—the presence of all of these in ancient and medieval astrology make its underlying metaphysics and outlook *sui generis*.¹⁸

But in order to make sense of these concepts, worldviews, and changes, we need at least three things: first, we need more people generally (and especially astrologers) studying Greek, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Sanskrit, and Latin; second, we need cooperation between these linguists so that the changes between languages and time-periods dominated by them can be understood; third, we need more cooperation between such people in the astrological world and those in the mystical, magical, and philosophical disciplines. Only when all three of these needs are met will we be able to understand, explain, and in a real sense inhabit, the cosmologies and worldviews that are necessary in order to practice traditional astrology and make use of its wisdom.

Another benefit I hope for is a richer sense of Western spirituality. There is much Western spirituality that harmonizes with an astrological outlook, and it was not invented by astrologers in the 19th or 20th Centuries; nor did it come from the Theosophists or contemporary India. Rather, it is based in the cosmology of the Platonists, Neoplatonists, mystics of many types, Catholic theologians, and magical and alchemical thought—all the way back to the Hellenistic era. Unfortunately, not all astrologers (Bonatti included) speak very explicitly about these matters. In some cases it may have been out of prudence;

¹⁸ Again, Robert Schmidt has emphasized this in his current and forthcoming works on Hellenistic astrology.

in others, because they were writing practical manuals for everyday work. In yet other cases, cosmological questions which pertained to spirituality were often studied in the non-astrological faculties in the Universities, or were more suited to university work in general. For example, Bonatti's own attempts to engage in formal argumentation show someone who is educated and has access to a wide array of books; but his arguments do not have the sharpness and clarity (or even structural validity) of someone who has practiced the standard disputational method of the *quaestio* at a medieval university.

§4: Bonatti's Sources

The *Book of Astronomy* is interesting and valuable for several reasons: as a stand-alone text, as a snapshot of a historical and conceptual moment in astrological history, as a presentation of charts from Bonatti's own career as well as his valuable explanations. But it contains little truly original material. Like al-Rijāl's *On the Judgments of the Stars*, it is an encyclopediac work that seeks not to innovate but to preserve and relate as much of the tradition as possible. The *Book of Astronomy* presents the views and techniques of all of the major Persian and Arab astrologers, much material from Ptolemy, and scattered bits of information from medieval Latins whose identities are often unknown to us. Following is a brief listing of the central authorities without whom the *Book of Astronomy* would not exist, the Latin source texts for which I have personally examined:

Tr. 1: Defense of Astrology	Abū Ma'shar
Tr. 2: Signs and Houses	Al-Qabīsī
Tr. 3: Planets	Abū Ma'shar, al-Qabīsī
Tr. 4: Revolutions	[Uncertain]
Tr. 5: The 146 Considerations	Sahl
Tr. 6: Questions	Sahl, Māshā'allāh
Tr. 7: Elections	Al-Rijāl
Tr. 8: Revolutions, Parts	Abū Ma'shar, Māshā'allāh
Tr. 9: Nativities	Al-Tabarī, al-Khayyat, Ptolemy, al-Qabīsī
Tr. 10: Weather	Jafar, Ptolemy

Bonatti's central source material comes down to at least sixteen (but probably not more than eighteen) works, if we exclude the few minor sources I cannot identify and allow for Bonatti's own rearrangements and commentary and expansions. This is not a small or eclectic list. In fact it suggests he had

access to pretty much the entirety of the contemporary Latin corpus of ancient and medieval astrological material, including a number of works never typeset in later centuries and hitherto practically unknown to astrologers. For instance, just before the publication of this book I was able to confirm that a major source of material for Tr. 8 is a 12th or 13th Century translation of work by Abū Ma’shar on mundane ingresses, which has never been printed or translated, and to my knowledge has only been known to a few scholars.¹⁹ So, while his work was instrumental in defining the tradition for many later astrologers, at the same time his writing accurately reflected almost all of what was known at the time (though his access to al-Kindī is still in question).

Below is a list of all authorities mentioned or used by Bonatti (along with brief biographical information), so far as I have been able to identify them. Some names are absolutely clear, such as Māshā’allāh for *Messabala*; others are more speculative, such as ad-Dawla for *Adila*; still others are unknown and labeled as such. The reader should note that Bonatti does not know the difference between three astrologers named ‘Ali (Lat. *Haly*): ibn Ridwān (Lat. *Haly Abenrudian*, the commentator on Ptolemy), al-Rijāl (or Haly Abenragel), and al-‘Imrānī (or Haly Embrany). In my footnotes I have identified as many of his references to *Haly* as I could, using ‘Ali and providing a citation when I know the source, but letting “‘Ali” stand and offering a suggestion when I am unsure.

The following list of sources is organized by the first letter of the portion of the name that is most common in English—for example, Claudius *Ptolemy* is listed under *P*, while Ya’qub ibn Ishaq *al-Kindī* is found under *A*.

1. **‘Ali** (Lat. *Haly*). There are several references in the *Book of Astronomy* to an ‘Ali, which I cannot trace back to al-Rijāl but must denote either ibn Ridwān or al-‘Imrānī (see below). Bonatti did not know these three were different men. In the Index these references are found under *‘Alī, unknown ‘Alī*.
2. **Aaydimon** (sometimes spelled *Abaydimon*). Unknown astrologer cited by Bonatti, based on John of Seville’s translation of Abū Ma’shar’s *Gr. Intr.*

¹⁹ The National Library in Paris, lat. 16204, FF. 302-333, Inc.: *Dixit Albumasar, scito horam introitus Solis*. I am currently preparing a translation of this and another work on the revolutions of nativities (also by Abū Ma’shar) for publication.

3. **Abu Bakr, al-Hasan ibn al-Khasib** (Lat. *Albubeter, Albubater*). Abu Bakr was active in the late 9th Century, and wrote several well-known works. His most famous one is his *On Nativities*, which was translated in 1218 by Salio (see below). I have not been able to find Bonatti's citation from Abu Bakr in *On Nativities*, so Bonatti may also have had a manuscript edition of his introduction to astrology. See Holden 1996.
4. **Abū Ma'shar**, or Ja'far ibn Muhammad Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhi (Lat. *Albumasar*). Abū Ma'shar (August 10, 787–March 9, 886) was a Persian born in Balkh (modern Afghanistan), and died in al-Wasit, Iraq. Legend has it he was a critic of astrology until the philosopher and astrologer al-Kindī challenged him to study it first. Abū Ma'shar became a celebrated astrologer, indeed one of the most authoritative for his own and later centuries. Many of his works were translated into Latin and used by Bonatti, including the *Flowers* (a compilation of other material), *On the Great Conjunctions*, the *Great Introduction to Astrology*, the *Abbreviation* (perhaps used by Bonatti), and a work on mundane revolutions (existing in manuscript only), used heavily in Tr. 8. Bonatti does not use, and perhaps did not know about, his book on nativities.
5. **ad-Dawla, Sayf** (Lat. *Adila*), the Emir of Aleppo from 945-67. Ad-Dawla was the patron of al-Qabīsī (see above), who dedicated many works to him. Bonatti quotes ad-Dawla in many places, but all concerning basic concepts in astrology. Perhaps, like the propositions of al-Mansur (see above), statements were attributed to ad-Dawla when he was really only the dedicatee of books containing them.
6. **Afla**. This could be Jabir ibn Aflah (d. ca. 1145), who wrote a technical geometrical treatise on Ptolemy's *Almagest* (see Carmody, 1956). But Bonatti's only reference to him is in a brief discussion of the significations of Saturn, which one would not expect to be in a technical geometrical treatise. Perhaps "Afla" is a variant on Bonatti's *Adila* (ad-Dawla) or Argafalan (al-Qalandar); see below.
7. **Al-ʿImrānī, ʿAli** (Lat. *Haly Embrani*). A resident of Mosul, Iraq, al-ʿImrānī (d. 955 or 956) wrote a well-known book on elections and was a teacher of al-Qabīsī (see below). Bonatti does not mention him specifically by last name, but he is probably the source behind some of the unknown ʿAli references in Tr. 7. Holden (1996, p. 124) claims that Abraham ibn Ezra translated al-ʿImrānī's book of elections, and

- implies that it was mistaken for one of ibn Ezra's own works. Ibn Ezra's book on elections is readily available in Latin, but until his works and al-ʿImrānī's are translated we will not know if ibn Ezra's book on elections really is al-ʿImrānī's.
8. **Al-Andarzagar** (Lat. *Alendezgoz*). See al-Qabīsī (p. 9) for a little about him and a footnote about his work. Bonatti's source for al-Andarzagar is al-Qabīsī (who cites him repeatedly); according to Carmody (1956), fragments of his writings appear likewise in other sources, in the same form they are found in al-Qabīsī, on the triplicity rulers of each house. According to Pingree (1989), "al-Andarzagar" is Persian for "the advisor," and his true name was Zādānfarrūkh. He is said to have admired a 10-book version of Valens, and a surviving 12th-century compilation of his work is devoted to "continuous" astrological techniques like chronocrators and solar revolutions.
 9. **Alanus**. Unknown, but perhaps the same as Annuz (below)?
 10. **Al-Battani** (Lat. *Albategni*). Al-Battani (9th Cent.) was a Harranian Sabian, and although he was said not to believe in the Sabian religion, this could certainly be simply a story to legitimize him in the eyes of pious Muslims. He was best known in the medieval period for *On the Motion of the Stars*, translated by Plato of Tivoli in 1115.
 11. **Albenait**. See al-Khayyat, Abu ʿAlī.
 12. **Albert the Great** (Albert the Teuton). St. Albert the Great (1193–1280) was a famous Dominican monk and teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas. A prolific writer, especially on scientific topics, St. Albert's works include treatises on the qualities of precious stones and astronomy.
 13. **Albuaz** (*Albuam*, *Albuas*). Unknown.
 14. **Al-Fārābī** (Lat. *Alpharabius*). Al-Fārābī (d. ca. 950) was an important Arab philosopher with a strong Neoplatonic influence. His overarching goal was the rehabilitation of neo-Aristotelianism as he took it to be practiced in ancient Alexandria. A well-known Latin translation of one of his works, the *On the Rise [or Origin] of the Sciences*, briefly mentions the importance of astronomy and its dependence on arithmetic and geometry.
 15. **Al-Farghānī**, Abu'l-ʿAbbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Kathir (Lat. *Alfraganus*). Al-Farghānī (d. after 861) was an astronomer and astrologer working for Caliph al-Ma'mun (r.813-833). Bonatti mentions

him briefly three times, and was undoubtedly working from John of Spain's translation of his *Elements* (or *Rudiments*), a work on geocentric astronomy.

16. **Al-Khayyat, Abu 'Ali** (Lat. *Aboaly, Abobali*). Abu 'Ali (c. 770-c.835) was an Arab student of Māshā'allāh. He preserves much of the Hellenistic material inherited in and through Māshā'allāh (especially that of Dorotheus), and was best known for his *On the Judgments of Nativities*, translated into Latin twice (including by John of Spain). He is said to have written many other works, including a horary work which exists in Arabic.
17. **Al-Kindī, Ya'qub ibn Ishaq** (Lat. *Alkindus*). A Muslim Arab (c. 801–c. 873) well known for his many philosophical and scientific works. He was the author of the important astrological works *On the Stellar Rays* and *The Forty Chapters*, and was responsible for inspiring Abū Ma'shar's interest in astrology. Bonatti knows al-Kindī primarily from citations in other sources.
18. **Al-Mansur, Caliph Abu Ja'far Abdallah ibn Muhammad** (r. 754–775 CE). An Abbasid Caliph, he founded the famous House of Wisdom in Baghdad for the study, translation, and appreciation for Persian and other writings. He bade a group of astrologers to produce an election chart for the founding of Baghdad. The group included Māshā'allāh (see below) and 'Umar al-Tabarī (see below). Astrologically he is known for the *Propositions*, a set of brief aphorisms pertaining to astrological judgment; but the *Propositions* was undoubtedly only addressed to him, not written by him.
19. **Almetus**. Unknown.
20. **Al-Qabīsī, Abu al-Saqr 'Abd al-Aziz ibn 'Uthman ibn 'Ali** (Lat. *Alchabitius*). According to Pingree's biography, al-Qabīsī was from either an area near Mosul or Samarra, Iraq. He flourished ca. 950 in Aleppo, Syria, was a student of al-'Imrānī (see above), and was in the employ of Sayf ad-Dawla. He is best known in the West as the author of a very popular introductory work to astrology, the *Introduction to Astrology*. It was translated into Latin by John of Spain in 1144, and Bonatti relies heavily on al-Qabīsī in portions of Trs. 2, 3, and 9, often following him paragraph by paragraph. The medieval understanding of sect-related rejoicing conditions (i.e., the concepts of *halb* and *hayyiz*) was adversely affected by a scribal error in an Ara-

- bic edition of al-Qabīsī, which was then commented upon (engendering further confusion) by its various Latin copyists and editors.
21. **Al-Qalandar** (Lat. *Archaphalan, Argafalan, Argaphalon*), according to Carmody (1956, p. 75), his identity and biography is unknown (and several people might be denoted by the name). Carmody lists several apparently minor works he believes were written by al-Qalandar. Bonatti only mentions al-Qalandar a few times, citing his opinion on very general matters such as that the 7th house signifies weddings and contentions.
 22. **Al-Tabarī**, ‘Umar ibn al-Farrakhun (Lat. *Omar Tiberiades, Aomar, Atabar*). Al-Tabarī (*fl.* in Baghdad, 762-812) was a Persian from Tabaristan, a colleague of Māshā’allāh’s, and a member of the early group of astrologers around the court of al-Mansur (with Māshā’allāh and others) who cast an election chart for the founding of Baghdad in 762. He translated Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos* into Arabic, as well as an edition of Dorotheus (which, according to Pingree [1989, p. 229], was not used by Māshā’allāh), and other works. But he is best known to the medievals as the author of a book on nativities, on which Bonatti draws extensively. According to Pingree’s biography, ‘Umar’s primary sources are Ptolemy, Dorotheus, and Māshā’allāh.
 23. **Annuz**. Unknown, but perhaps the same as Alanus (above)?
 24. **Arastellus**. Unknown.
 25. **Arestali**. Unknown.
 26. **Aristotle** (384 BC–322 BC). One of the most celebrated of ancient Greek philosophers, enormously influential in the medieval period. Among many other topics he wrote on cosmology (especially in the *De Caelo*), and included several passages on planetary movements in his *Metaphysics*, but he is not known to have written any astrological works. Still, he was credited from time to time with many astrological opinions, and some medieval works cite unknown authors with names like his (see Asthoatol below). For the most part Bonatti cites genuine Aristotelian writings.
 27. **Arthephius**. Unknown.
 28. **Astaphan / Astaphaz**. Unknown.
 29. **Asthoatol**. Probably a pseudo-Aristotle. This name appears often in John of Spain’s edition of Abū Ma’shar’s *Gr. Intr.* (while the variants

Arisotue and *Aristotua* are found in the version of Hermann of Carinthia).

30. **Baruch** (or Baruth). Unknown, but the name Baruch is Hebrew, so it perhaps indicates a Jewish astrologer.
31. **Bellonus Pisanus**. Unknown.
32. **Ben**. Unknown, probably a partial name or abbreviation.
33. **Benduardinus Davidbam**. Unknown.
34. **Bernardus**. Unknown, but perhaps Bernardus (or Bernardinus) Silvestris, a writer on astrological topics: see Burnett 1996 (index). But I do note that the text of the paragraph in which Bonatti cites him (Tr. 9, Part 3, 9th House, Ch. 3), is so close to a paragraph in ‘Umar al-Tabarī, the name *Bernardus* could be a mistaken reference to *Tiberiades*.
35. **Cancaph** (Caucaph, Camcaph). Unknown, but undoubtedly the Indian astrologer Kankah, whose period in Baghdad overlapped with Māshā’allāh’s and ‘Umar al-Tabarī’s.
36. **Christianus**. Unknown.
37. **Dominicus Hispanus**. Unknown.
38. **Dorotheus of Sidon**. Dorotheus (active ca. 75) was a practicing astrologer in the mainstream of Hellenistic astrology (like Vettius Valens), and was very influential for the later transmission of Hellenistic concepts and techniques. His Greek work the *Pentateuch* passed into Persian (Pahlavi) centuries before the Muslim invasions of Persia, and after several stages it was translated (with interpolations) into Arabic, most notably by ‘Umar al-Tabarī. He was better known by the Persians and Arabs than Vettius Valens was, and therefore became better represented than Valens in medieval Latin works.
39. **Ebrianus**. Unknown, but the name sounds like it might be a variant on *Hebrianus*, which would denote a Jewish astrologer.
40. **Gerard of Cremona** (Lat. *Girardus de Sabloneto Cremonensis*). There were two Gerards of Cremona, and Bonatti seems to have used both of their works. The earlier Gerard (c. 1141-1187) was an Italian from Cremona who went to Toledo and Castile to translate scientific and other works from Arabic into Italian. Abraham ibn Ezra was a contemporary of his at Toledo. Gerard translated Ptolemy’s *Almagest* into Latin, as well as the influential *Toledan Tables* (used to calculate planetary positions). He also translated the Latin edition of al-Farghānī’s *Elements* (or *Rudiments*), which Bonatti recommends in Tr.

Elements (or *Rudiments*), which Bonatti recommends in Tr. 3. The second Gerard, called Gerard de Sabloneta but who often had his name doubled with *Cremonensis*, lived in Bonatti's time. He also worked in Toledo, but translated chiefly medical works, including Ibn Sina's *Canon of Medicine*. Bonatti seems to know this latter work as well.

41. **Grandeus**, son of "Benduardinus Davidbam" above. Unknown.
42. **Hugo Abalugant**. Unknown.
43. **Ibn Ridwān, 'Ali**. Ibn Ridwan (988-1061/1067), known to the Latins as Haly Abenrudian, wrote works on solar revolutions and comets. He was mainly known for a commentary on Pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquy*, but as Bonatti did not know the difference between him and al-Rijāl or al-'Imrānī, like them he is referred to only as Haly.
44. **Ibn Sina**. Ibn Sina (980-1037), known to the West as Avicenna, was a Persian Muslim philosopher combining Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism, and was highly influential in the medieval West. One of his most influential works was the *Canon*, a huge book of medieval medicine that remained important even up to the Enlightenment.
45. **Jafar Indus** (lit. "Jafar the Indian" or "Jafar the Hindu"). Because the name Jafar appears in Abū Ma'shar's full name, some authorities have identified the two. But he could also be Abu Ja'far al-Khazin (b. ca. 900, d. 961-971), a mathematician and astronomer born in Khorasan who wrote a commentary on Ptolemy. Jafar Indus is the author of a well-known and very crabbed treatise on weather prediction, which (along with *Tet. II*) forms the basis of Bonatti's exposition in Tr. 10.
46. **Jirjis** (Lat. Yergis, Iergis). According to Carmody (1956), unknown, but perhaps Georgius Antiochenus or Jirjis ibn al-'Amid.
47. **Joannes Papiensis**. Unknown.
48. **John of Seville** (late 11th–mid 12th Century), also known as John of Spain. One of the most prolific translators from Arabic to Latin of Astrological material, from works of Māshā'allāh to Abū Ma'shar to Abu 'Ali al-Khayyat, pseudo-Ptolemy, and many others. In fact most of Bonatti's source material ultimately comes from works translated by John. His Latin is simple and unpretentious. He translated the *Gr.*

- Intr.* in 1133, the *Elements* of al-Farghānī in 1135, and his own epitome of astrology in 1142.
49. **Māshā'allāh** ibn Athari (d. ca. 810). A Persian Jew and one of the most important figures in medieval astrology, Māshā'allāh was a prolific writer and one of those responsible for introducing the Sassanian blend of Hellenistic and Persian astrological concepts to the Arabs. He was a teacher of Abu 'Ali al-Khayyat (see above), and one of the astrologers called by al-Mansur to cast an election chart for the founding of Baghdad. In Bonatti's text he is sometimes called "he whom God willed to be a Master," based on a similar phrase in al-Qabīsī. Bonatti draws heavily on Māshā'allāh's book on questions (OR) in the first part of Tr. 6, and his book on mundane revolutions in Tr. 8.
 50. **Messala** the Indian. Unknown, but probably a conflation of Māshā'allāh and an Indian astrologer.
 51. **Michael Scot**. A generalist in the sciences and other disciplines, as well as being one of Frederick II's two key astrologers, Michael Scot (late 1100s–c.1236) was born in Scotland but after many years in Bologna, Palermo, and Toledo, he came to work in Frederick's court between 1220 and 1227, dying in 1236. He is well-known for key translations and influential works, including the Latin translation of al-Bitrūjī's work on the motion of the spheres (*De Motibus Caelorum*), a commentary on Sacrobosco, and a work on physiognomy (*De Physiognomia*). Bonatti mentions him as a contemporary, but there is no evidence they knew each other (note that Scot died right around the time Bonatti's career was becoming rather active).
 52. **Ptolemy**, Claudius. Ptolemy (c.90–c.168) lived in Roman Egypt (Alexandria) and was a famous writer on topics of geography, astronomy, astrology, and many others. He was a contemporary of Vettius Valens, who also lived in Alexandria, but there is no evidence he knew Valens. His *Almagest* (on astronomy) and *Tetrabiblos* (on astrology) were extremely important in the medieval period (although for the Arabs and Persians his *Almagest* seems to have been more important than the *Tetrabiblos*). The so-called "Ptolemaic universe" was the dominant model of the cosmos for over 1,200 years. A self-proclaimed reformer and rationalizer of astrological concepts, he expounded what he felt was useful about the Hellenistic tradition,

- leaving out many other techniques used by astrologers such as Dorotheus and Vettius Valens. We do not know if Ptolemy himself ever practiced astrology.
53. **Remigius.** Unknown.
 54. **Sacerdos.** Unknown.
 55. **Sahl ibn Bishr** (Lat. *Zael, Zabel*). A famous Persian Jewish astrologer (c. 785–c.845) and in the employ of an al-Hasan, the vizier to Caliph al-Ma'mun. He is best known for a set of five books which were often cited in Arabic and Latin astrological works: the *Introduction*, the *Fifty Judgments*, *On Elections*, *On Questions*, and *On Times*. Bonatti himself draws on them extensively.
 56. **Salio of Padua** (Lat. *Salionus*). In the early 13th Century Salio was a translator of Arabic into Latin at Toledo, including Abu Bakr's book on nativities around 1218–1225, and a work on fixed stars in 1218, recently put into a critical edition by Kunitsch (2001). But by 1259 he was in Brescia, working along with Bonatti as an astrologer to Ezzelino da Romano III, an Italian tyrant and ally of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. Bonatti describes Salio as being bullied by Ezzelino. Bonatti must have known of Salio's translation of Abu Bakr, although I have not been able to find the citation Bonatti gives from it. See also Thorndike (1957), Pingree (1989, p. 233), Burnett (2001), and Boncompagni.
 57. **Sarcinator**, lit. "tailor." Unknown. Bonatti mentions a book by him called the *Pentadeca*, which sounds Greek and similar to words for "fifteen" or "fifty," but (to my knowledge) it is unknown. Perhaps his Latinized name is a misread for "Saracen" (i.e., a Muslim), or itself a confusion of Sahl ibn Bishr (who wrote the *Fifty Judgments*)?
 58. **Stephanus Francigena.** Unknown, but perhaps Stephanus the Philosopher, a Byzantine translator of Arabic works into Greek.
 59. **Thābit ibn Qurra.** A Harranian by birth, ibn Qurra (826–901) was a member of the Harranian Sabians, an ancient sect of star worshippers and Hermeticists. His writings are primarily astronomical (with some astro-magical materials as well), including works on Ptolemy, Euclid, geometry, Archimedes, the use of talismans, and so on.
 60. **Tilcinus.** Unknown, but perhaps a misprint for *tillemus* from Jafar's text, or from *cilcinus*, or both.

61. **Toz the Greek** (Lat. *Toz Graecus*). Apparently a variation on Hermes (i.e., Thoth), to whom many magical works were attributed in the Middle Ages.
62. **Trutanus** (var. *Trutannus*), lit. “vagabond.” Unknown.
63. **Valens, Vettius** (Lat. *Guellius*). Valens (120–175) was a practicing astrologer in Alexandria at the time of Ptolemy. His major work is the *Anthology*, a nine-book treatment of Hellenistic astrology that includes many predictive techniques and concepts never used (so far as we know) by later astrologers in the Persian and Arab period. As a representative of Hellenistic astrology he is a major figure, but it seems that the medievals only had access to certain books, and often only knew of him through quotations and citations from other authors.
64. **Zodial** (or Zodyal). Unknown.

§5: Issues in Interpretation and Translation

The *Book of Astronomy* has several interpretive layers that make understanding and translating it problematic. Apart from the plain meaning of his words, following are several interpretive layers that we must confront in order to evaluate Bonatti’s work.

Inferences about techniques. There are a number of places in which we cannot be sure of Bonatti’s own procedures. For instance, we cannot be absolutely sure in every instance how he personally handled the issue of whole-sign houses and whole-sign aspects. Some of his source texts explicitly use them, some of his language implies them, but yet other statements and examples from his own practice suggest he did not use them. In another place, Bonatti describes in too-great detail how to calculate the individual profections of his nephew’s natal chart, but then declines to show us how to delineate it because it would take too much time. The same could be said for other issues, like orientality, *haym*, and so on.

Understanding his sources. Bonatti is in some sense twice removed from his Greek, Persian, and Arab sources. Not only is he reading their work in translation, but he himself is trying to understand what is being communicated. In some cases it seems the translators are responsible for some confusions; in others he seems confused; in yet others there seems to be a combination of factors. For example, on the issue of *haym* (see below), early copyists’ errors and

subsequent translators' comments in the al-Qabīrī text led Bonatti to make some reasoned (if ultimately incorrect) judgments about sect-related rejoicing conditions. Nor does he seem to notice a difference between the techniques of someone like Ptolemy, and those of Māshā'allāh. This is in some ways understandable, as his conception of history seems shaky: in several places Bonatti states his belief that Abū Ma'shar was a medieval Latin who studied astrology in Athens! And in plenty of instances Bonatti's awareness or motivation is unclear, as for instance in the case of the weighted-point *al-mubtazz* (see below).

Changing doctrines. Of course, it is important to understand what role Bonatti played in a tradition that was changing: how did he and his contemporaries flesh out, add to, and subtract from, the ideas of their predecessors? Much of the rest of this Introduction will be devoted to this topic.

None of this should be understood as showing that Bonatti is a bad writer or astrologer. In some cases, his reading of texts is more reliable than that of later printed editions (his reading of the *Flowers* falls into this category). He can be a sensitive interpreter, and employs the principle of charity in developing interpretations that will reconcile contrasting views in the literature. In two places he suggests that perhaps the Latin translation of the Arabic is flawed. Our long-term evaluation of Bonatti and the role of the *Book of Astronomy* in the history of astrology must take all of these factors into account.

§6: Key Topics

A. Domiciles, Houses, and Places

In our current state of understanding the ancient and medieval astrological traditions, the use of whole-sign houses and quadrant houses is one of the most important topics of note in the *Book of Astronomy*, and it could have radical and far-reaching implications in our understanding. In fact, throughout the entire work it is often uncertain as to whether Bonatti is using whole-sign or quadrant houses, and also the extent to which he appreciates the difference. There are four factors to consider: (a) what the whole-sign house system is, (b) when the quadrant house system was adopted, (c) linguistic reasons for the ambiguity, and (d) editorial interference between the 1491 and 1550 editions.

(a) The original Hellenistic system used primarily a “whole-sign” house system, in which each sign as a whole was called the “house” (or “domicile”) of the planet ruling it. For example, Aries is the “house” (or “domicile”) of Mars,

because Mars rules Aries. Mars is like the master of the house. (In fact there were a number of household management metaphors that became important in Hellenistic astrology.) Since the sign itself was known as the “house” of a planet, the whole sign itself was used as the basis for the areas of life in a chart. For instance, if the degree of the Ascendant is in Aries, then *all* of Aries is the “first house” (or “first domicile”), and signifies the native’s life, personality, health, *etc.* It does not matter that some of Aries is above the degree the Ascendant and some below—*all* of Aries *is* the first house. Likewise, all of Taurus is the second house or domicile, and signifies wealth and movable goods. According to this system, then, the tenth *sign* is the tenth house or domicile, the sixth *sign* the sixth house or domicile, and so on. The only cusps that really matter for delineation purposes are the degrees of the angles: that of the Ascendant, the Midheaven, the Descendant, and the *Imum Coeli*. But in the whole-sign system, these angles are used as points of concentrated power—they do not mark the beginning of topical houses, because the *signs* are the topical houses. So for instance, when delineating a native’s profession, we look primarily at the tenth *sign*, even if the degree of the Midheaven is on the ninth or eleventh sign.

(b) Over time, the quadrants marked out by the degrees of the angles were subdivided to yield twelve “quadrant” houses, that is, the houses we use today (Alchabitus, Placidus, Porphyry, Regiomontanus, *etc.*). In this system of houses, the degree of the Midheaven marks the beginning of the 10th house and signifies the profession and reputation; the other cusps between the degrees of the angles mark the beginning of houses like the 2nd, *etc.* But this is a change that took place at some point between late antiquity and the High Middle Ages when Bonatti wrote. At first these divisions did not designate topics or areas of life. Instead, they designated areas in which the planets were more and less powerful—thus Robert Schmidt calls them the “dynamical houses.” For instance, a planet in the tenth quadrant or dynamical area (what is nowadays called the “10th house”) is very strong, but such a planet does not necessarily have anything to do with profession, fame, and reputation: it would have to be in the tenth whole-sign house to indicate that. The dynamical divisions did not pertain to areas of life.

But over time, these dynamical divisions came to take on characteristics of areas of life, the first dynamical area now being called the “1st house” and indicating life, the second dynamical area now being called the “2nd house” and indicating wealth, possessions, *etc.* We do not know yet exactly when or why this

transfer of topical responsibility began to pass from the whole-sign houses to the quadrant or dynamical houses, but two things are absolutely clear: (1) by Bonatti's time the transfer was well underway, and he describes both sorts of charts. As an example, in Tr. 8, Ch. 116, Bonatti appropriates Abū Ma'shar's text describing a mundane revolution, and Abū Ma'shar uses exclusively whole-sign houses. On the other hand, when Bonatti gives the natal figure of his own nephew, he uses all of the intermediary house cusps. Moreover, (2) editorial interference over time accelerated the changes by "correcting" the earlier texts to support quadrant houses (see below). Still, it is generally difficult to understand how Bonatti viewed quadrant houses, in part due to linguistic ambiguities in translating Greek and Arabic works into Latin (see below). Now, the medievals may have been *right* to use dynamical or quadrant houses for topics. But we must understand how this change came about, how it was handed down to Bonatti, and what he did with it. Once we have more critical editions of the famous astrological works written in Arabic, and can compare them with their Greek antecedents and the Latin translations made from them, we will be able to answer the "why" more fully. For now, we have to take Bonatti's text as it is, and compare it to the Latin editions of earlier authors to figure out how to understand his book. If this transition to quadrant houses was in fact badly motivated and gives worse results, one can hardly underestimate its impact on later astrology and the importance of understanding the original system.

(c) When comparing the 1491 and 1550 editions, it is clear that editorial interference is responsible for changing key word endings that can often make all of the difference between a sentence referring to quadrant houses or to whole-signs. To put it bluntly, it seems that editors tried to "correct" the earlier edition. In so doing, they also inadvertently "corrected" Bonatti's reports of his own predecessors. The result is that later astrologers have had a mistaken impression of the house systems used *both* by Bonatti *and* his medieval (especially Arab, Persian, and Jewish) predecessors. Since I assume the earlier edition is the more accurate one (for reasons I suggest below), I have translated the book using the 1550 edition but have adopted *all* of the house designations as they appear in 1491. I believe this policy will help us understand both the astrological practice as Bonatti found it, as well as how he himself adapted it.

In Bonatti's text, we face two central problems when trying to understand his use of houses. First, there are differences of word endings, each of which indicates one or more meanings but does not necessarily tell us which of the two meanings is the right one: in certain cases, masculine and neuter endings are

identical. Second, there is the fundamental ambiguity in the Latin word *domus*, which is a feminine word meaning “house” or “domicile.” Since the Greeks (and later those writing in Arabic) spoke of the signs as “houses,” and then later spoke of the dynamical divisions as “houses,” we can rarely be sure in each case whether whole-sign houses or quadrant houses are meant.

There are three central terms at use when Bonatti speaks about topical houses, and the following shows how the Latin and the English overlaps and makes them ambiguous:

Function:	Sign	Whole-Sign House	Quadrant House
Latin word:	<i>Signum</i>	<i>Domus</i>	<i>Domus</i>
English:	“Sign”	“Domicile”	“House”

In this table, the Whole-Sign House column in the middle represents the original, central meaning of houses: a whole-sign is the “domicile” of a planet and indicates a topic by its placement in the chart; it is described using the word *domus*. To the left we see an alternate way of speaking of whole-sign houses, in which the whole-signs are simply called what they are: signs, using the Latin *signum*. The Latin words for each are *different* (*domus*, *signum*), but the practical meaning is the *same*. This reflects the older usage. To the right, under the Quadrant House column, we see the later use of quadrant houses for topics, here called “houses” as a translation of *domus*. Note that the Latin word for both quadrant houses and whole-sign houses is the *same*, but the practical meaning is *different*. So, from center-left we have different terms but an overlapping meaning, and from center-right identical or overlapping terms but a different meaning.

To give the reader a sense of what this means in practice, look at the following sentences, which illustrate how Bonatti must be approached:

Mars est in decima. “Mars is in the 10th.”

In the first sentence, the feminine ending *-a* on *decima* (“10th”) shows that Bonatti has the feminine *domus* in mind; but there is no way to tell whether this means the 10th quadrant house or the 10th domicile (whole-sign house).

Mars est in decimo. “Mars is in the tenth.”

In this sentence, the ending *-o* indicates either a neuter or masculine word. Now, *signum* is neuter, so one might expect this sentence to mean “Mars is in

the tenth [sign].” However, there is a complication: sometimes the Latin texts do not speak of houses/domiciles or signs, but of “places”—for instance, the “tenth place.” Now, the Hellenistic astrologers did speak of the whole-sign houses as “places,” but in Latin there are two words for “place,” and Bonatti uses both. The first word is *locus*, which is masculine; the second word is *locum*, which is neuter, and means “a region connected to other regions.” He does not differentiate between these types of places in any systematic way, or tell us whether one is supposed to be a whole sign, the other a quadrant house, or what. He may simply be relying on whatever his source texts use.

For these reasons, the second sentence could mean any one of the following: “Mars is in the tenth [sign],” “Mars is in the tenth [place],” or “Mars is in the tenth [‘region’].” We cannot be sure whether Bonatti understood this to mean whole-sign or quadrant houses.

Lastly, we frequently encounter the following:

Mars est in 10. “Mars is in the 10th.”

In this case, Bonatti or his later typesetters used Arabic numerals to save space, and it is impossible to say whether the house, whole-sign, place, or region is meant. In *all* cases when I have found numerals like *10*, I have used the surrounding context to decide what to do, using “10th” or “tenth” as seems appropriate. If the context is missing or uncertain, I use “10th” and generally offer a footnote.

Following are the standards I have followed in the *Book of Astronomy*. From these forms, the reader will understand what the original Latin was and why I have translated it as I have. In some cases I have added footnotes to help the reader understand my decision. My basic principles are as follows: whenever we are dealing with the feminine word *domus*, I use the Arabic numerals for the ordinal number; whenever we are dealing with masculine or neuter words like *locus*, *locum*, or ordinal numbers like *decimo*, I will spell out the ordinal number:²⁰

- **10th, or 10th house.** Indicates a quadrant house, or else is a default choice in ambiguous situations. Either the original reads feminine for *domus*, or explicitly uses the word *domus*, or else it was an Arabic numeral whose context seemed most likely to indicate quadrant houses.

²⁰ In addition, when Bonatti quotes his sources at length, I will frequently follow the sources’ lead, adding a footnote to alert the reader.

- **10th domicile.** Indicates whole-sign houses. The text uses *domus*, so I employ “10th” as above; but since it is clear from the context or Bonatti’s source that whole-sign houses are meant, I use “domicile.”
- **10th house [domicile?].** The text uses *domus* so I assume quadrant houses and use “10th”; but there is enough context to think that whole-sign houses may be meant, so I use “house [domicile?].”
- **Tenth.** Indicates an ambiguous neuter/masculine ending, meaning “sign,” “place,” or “region/connected place,” so I spell out the word “tenth.” It should probably be read as whole-sign houses.
- **Tenth [sign].** Indicates whole-sign houses, because the Latin ending is unambiguous and could only refer to whole-signs: therefore I write “tenth” for the non-feminine ending but add “[sign]” because the meaning is certain.

These conventions should help the reader understand what is going on in certain paragraphs, in which the text sometimes switches back and forth between unambiguous references to quadrant houses, ambiguous references to whole-sign houses, and unambiguous references to whole-sign houses.

Unfortunately, while this will help *us* read *Bonatti’s* text, by itself it will not help us understand what *Bonatti* thought when he was reading his predecessors. Often he recognizes their use of whole-signs, but did he tend to ignore this in practice? Or did he use it often but not tell us? The use of whole signs is especially strong in Tr. 7 on elections—did Bonatti himself therefore use them much in elections but not in horary questions? We may never have complete answers to these questions, but in the future we should be able to reconstruct more of his role in the historical shift away from whole-sign to quadrant houses.

B. Removal

Bonatti uses the concept of “removal” (*remotio*, lit. “being moved back”) in several related ways, and in some cases it pertains to the issue of whole-sign and quadrant houses. The word implies distance from something, and the general principle behind removal is that planets or signs that are removed or remote (*remotus*) have effects that are weaker or take longer to happen. But this can sometimes be a good thing, depending on circumstances. Until we translate more texts, we will not know with precision the extent to which Bonatti’s uses of removal are idiosyncratic or mainstream. Following are the all of the ways in which Bonatti uses the term “removal.”

First, as the distance between two planets, being simply equivalent to “far away.” The effect of this may be that a planetary signification will be delayed in time,²¹ or that it will be more dangerous or intensified if the planets are not removed enough (like if the malefics are not removed enough from the Moon).²² Or, in the case of the Sun, one wants planets to be either far enough away that they are not harmed by the beams (in the case of the inferiors) or close enough that they are still strongly oriental (in the case of the superiors).²³

Second, as the removal of planets from any cusp. Here, removal again means being “far away,” on either side of the cusp. The effect here is that planets are weakened in their signification in that house,²⁴ or that they will not be as strong in that house as planets that are closer to the cusp,²⁵ or that being close to the cusp can show an affinity to the ruler of a house if that ruler is further removed from the cusp than the other planet is.²⁶ In one case Bonatti says that when the Sun sets, he is removed, at which time the night begins, and the Moon becomes the luminary whose authority it is—showing that the Sun’s removal takes away his authority.

Third, as the removal of planets from the *angular* cusps. Again, this shows the weakness of an effect,²⁷ but that is not necessarily a bad thing. For example, the removal of malefics from the angles can weaken their tendency to ruin things,²⁸ and when the Moon is removed from the angle of the 10th or the 7th, she can show that the native likes to travel (presumably because the Moon’s natural instability and changeability is emphasized by the weakness).²⁹

Fourth, the removal of Arabic Parts from an angle can show a delayed effect.³⁰

Fifth, the removal of *signs* seems to mean moving them off the angles in situations in which we do not want a given type of sign to be there.³¹ Bonatti also gives an interesting example where the desired type of sign is not on the angle but the effect is still salvaged.³² In this latter case, Bonatti wants a fixed

²¹ Tr. 4, Ch. 3.

²² Tr. 5, the 129th Consideration.

²³ Tr. 9, Part 3, the 10th House, Ch. 1.

²⁴ Tr. 5, Considerations. 96, 124; Tr. 9, Part 3, the 2nd house, Ch. 1.

²⁵ Tr. 9, Part 3, the 4th House, Ch. 1.

²⁶ Tr. 6, Part 2, the 7th House, Ch. 14.

²⁷ Tr. 7, Part 2, the 2nd House, Ch. 2; Tr. 9, Part 3, the 9th House, Ch. 3.

²⁸ Tr. 7, Part 1, Ch. 14.

²⁹ Tr. 7, Part 1, Ch. 11.

³⁰ Tr. 8, Part 2, Ch. 19.

³¹ Tr. 7, Part 1, Ch. 11.

³² Tr. 7, Part 1, Ch. 10.

sign to be rising. But instead, the degree of the Ascendant is in the last few degrees of Pisces, and Aries is totally intercepted in the 1st. Bonatti says that if the Lord of Pisces and the Lord of intercepted Aries aspect each other, this will produce the effect even though the fixed signs are “removed.”

Sixth, the degrees of the angles can be removed, to better or worse effect. In this case, removal means that a single sign shares two cusps. (a) For example, “removal toward the angles” occurs when the same sign has both an angular and succedent cusp on it (as when the degree of the Midheaven shares the same sign as that of the 11th): this is a good thing.³³ But (b) “removal toward the cadents” takes place when the same sign has both an angular and a *cadent* cusp on it (as when the degree of the Midheaven shares that same sign as that of the 9th): this is a bad thing.³⁴ This second form of removal seems to be close to that described by al-Rijāl,³⁵ who says that (c) when “the angles are the cadents,” it is when the sign that is angular by whole sign, falls into a succedent quadrant house—as when the tenth sign (the Midheaven by whole signs) falls into the 11th quadrant house. Al-Rijāl’s idea seems to be that in such a case, the ninth sign (which is a cadent whole sign) would be on the degree of the Midheaven (which would be bad). Bonatti does not say much about the precise effect of this, but he does say that the angles should be removed (among other things) in elections for events in which we would like matters to be repeated.³⁶ The general sense of the statements seems to be that it is best for the angular houses to be either on their natural whole-sign houses, or else to share a sign with the succedent houses.

Seventh, there is removal of any cusp so that it shares the same sign as the cusps of houses not aspecting the Ascendant (the 2nd, the 12th, the 6th, and the 8th): this removal is bad.³⁷ Presumably this would include the cusp of the 3rd removed to the sign of the 2nd, the 11th to that of the 12th, the 5th to that of the 8th, and the 9th to that of the 8th.

C. *Sect*–haym–dastūrīya

The issue of planetary sect is key in Hellenistic astrology, but it declined in importance during the whole medieval period. From our translations of

³³ Tr. 9, Part 3, the 10th House, Ch. 2; Tr. 7, Part 1, Ch. 11.

³⁴ Tr. 7, Part 1, Ch. 11.

³⁵ Al-Rijāl, p. 302.

³⁶ Tr. 7, Part II, 2nd House, Ch. 2.

³⁷ Tr. 9, Part III, 10th House, Ch. 2.

Māshā'allāh, Abū Ma'shar and others we can see that it was still considered important at least by those writing in Persian and Arabic (although the extent of its use and understanding is less well known). But in Bonatti sect distinctions appear mainly in quotations of his predecessors and in a few sect-related concepts which were already being garbled and confused during the Persian/Arabic period. Following the High Middle Ages, sect distinctions faded into relative insignificance until they finally disappeared altogether. In this Introduction I can only indicate a few sect concepts in Bonatti, but I will treat of them, and their dissemination and changes, more thoroughly in a later article.

Hellenistic astrologers divided the planets into sects, rather like political parties. The Sun is the luminary in charge of the diurnal sect, whose other members are Jupiter and Saturn. The Moon is the luminary in charge of the nocturnal sect, whose other members are Venus and Mars. Mercury's sect changes depending on what his current situation in a chart is. In Hellenistic astrology, whether a chart is diurnal (the Sun being above the horizon) or nocturnal (the Sun being below the horizon) determines which sect's planets get to be in charge. This gives rise to a number of considerations in delineation that show how well a planet can act: for instance, it is good to be in the domicile of a sect-mate, or to be aspected by a sect-mate, and so on, although such conditions were not always formally laid out and explained. Some of these conditions are called (by Schmidt) "sect-related rejoicing conditions."

One absolutely authentic sect-related rejoicing condition that was passed on through the Arabic period to the Latins, was called *halb* (Arabic for "portion"): if a diurnal planet is above the earth in a diurnal chart or below it in a nocturnal chart, or else if a nocturnal planet is below the earth in a diurnal chart or above it in a nocturnal chart, then that planet is in its own *halb* or "portion." According to al-Qabīṣī, such a planet has power "like the power of a man in the place of his benefits, his gain, and his good fortune."³⁸ Bonatti reports this statement by saying the planet is made stronger, and is like a man with enough wealth to carry out his intentions, and whom fortune favors.³⁹ But due to a copyist's error in an early Arabic copy of al-Qabīṣī's book, the Latins received an erroneous version of this paragraph. The Latin translators were a bit puzzled by the (mistaken) repetition of a certain word, and then tried to insert some clarifying comments which were later taken to be al-Qabīṣī's own words. For reasons such as these,

³⁸ Al-Qabīṣī, I.78.

³⁹ See Tr. 2, Part 3, Ch. 15.

sect-related concepts and rejoicing conditions were often misunderstood except insofar as they appeared in direct quotations from predecessors.

In the *Book of Astronomy*, sect appears in several ways:

1. Bonatti does formally classify the planets into sects.
2. In many passages, Bonatti underscores the importance of the luminary rulers of each sect, which are usually called the “luminary whose authority it is.” These passages rely on statements by Abu ‘Ali al-Khayyat, Abū Ma’shar, Māshā’allāh, ‘Umar al-Tabarī, and others.
3. Bonatti passes on his understanding of Ptolemy’s use of sect. For instance, he reports distinctions between being aspected by a sect-mate or non-sect-mate; and he tries to report Ptolemy’s use of spear-bearing or *doruphoria* (turned by the Persians into *dastūriya*, said to mean “security”).
4. Bonatti passes on his understanding of certain sect-related rejoicing conditions, but these are sometimes stated imprecisely, or mixed with other concepts (such as the gender classification of the planets).

Of those conditions falling under heading (4), several are those known by the umbrella terms *haym*, *aym*, *hayz*, or *ayz*. These Latinized Arabic terms are transliterations of the Arabic *hayyiz*, meaning “domain.”⁴⁰ Now, in al-Qabīsī *hayyiz* is an intensified form of *halb*. For al-Qabīsī, a planet is in *hayyiz* if it is both in *halb* and also in a sign of its own gender. But due to some other terminological issues and the errors mentioned above, Bonatti uses this term *haym* in four ways:

- a. *Haym* is simply a synonym for the word “sect,” and appears this way when conveying Ptolemy’s views. In my translation I simply say “sect.”
- b. *Haym* is a synonym for “likeness” (Lat. *similitudo*) and is equivalent to *halb*. Sometimes this is called being in its “own light.”⁴¹
- c. *Haym* means that a planet is in a sign of the same gender as itself. Note the difference between this and *hayyiz*, which is a combination of *halb* and gender.

⁴⁰ This word ultimately derives by transliteration from the Greek *hairesis*, which means “sect.”

⁴¹ This use of the phrase “own light” seems to be based on Sahl’s *Introduct.* §5.16. I call this “version (a).” See Tr. 5, the 47th Consideration. Version (b) derives from al-Qabīsī III.10, which states that a planet having just emerged from the Sun’s beams, and not yet joined to any other planet, is in its “own light” (emphasis on *own* light).

- d. *Haym* means that a planet is on the same side of the chart as, say, the Ascendant. For example, a planet on the left side of the chart is in the *haym* of the Ascendant. Statements like this seem to come from al-Rijāl, and are understandable if *hayyiz* means “domain”—because such a planet would be in the domain of the ascending side of the chart.

From examples like these we can begin to see that while the uses of *haym* often have a common source in sect concepts, there was no systematic treatment of, or consistency and precision in, its use. This loss of sect doctrine is regrettable. In the future we will know further how these changes happened, and why.

Finally, there is another concept that belongs to category (4) above, which in Persian came to be called *dastūriya*, a transliteration of the Greek *doruphoria* or “spear-bearing.” In Hellenistic astrology, it is notable when the luminaries (and sometimes other planets) have other planets (ideally their sect-mates) act as their “spear-bearers” and “surround” them: this takes place when these other planets are in certain aspects or sign relations to them, with authorities differing as to various other refinements such as whether they had to be angular, *etc.* The effect of having spear-bearers is that, like someone having bodyguards, the planet or the native is shown to be protected and of increased prominence. In the medieval period, astrologers maintained the use of *doruphoria* (now called *dastūriya* or “security,” continuing the bodyguard concept) in certain contexts found especially in Ptolemy, primarily in the delineation of the native’s and his parents’ social standing. But in part because the Hellenistic astrologers did not agree on exactly what counted as *doruphoria*, and partly because of a lack of clarity about what *doruphoria* was all about (and how it linked to sect), the medievals gave mutually incompatible definitions of *dastūriya*. For instance, al-Qabīsī defines *dastūriya* as when a planet in its own *hayyiz*, and in one of the angles of the Ascendant, and is square to the luminary sect ruler, who must also be angular.⁴²

Bonatti’s understanding of *dastūriya* is colored by his reading of both al-Qabīsī and the Latin edition of Ptolemy. It seems that Bonatti believes in three kinds of *dastūriya* (or perhaps these are examples of a more fundamental concept):

⁴² Al-Qabīsī, III.6.

- A planet in its *hayyiz*, and in the day oriental from the Sun, or in the night “occidental from the Moon” (i.e., setting after the Moon).
- A planet in the 4th or 10th, with a luminary square to it in the 1st or 7th. This is similar to al-Qabīṣī, but without the *hayyiz* requirement.
- “Dextration”: a planet in a sextile oriental of the Sun or in a sextile “occidental of the Moon.” For this Bonatti had two plausible examples from his Latin Ptolemy, although he omits Ptolemy’s desire for the luminary to be either angular or succedent. For the eminence of the father, we are to look in diurnal charts for a *dastūrīya* of the Sun from diurnal planets who are oriental of the Sun; in nocturnal figures, look for a *dastūrīya* of Saturn from the Sun. (Presumably this means Saturn oriental of the Sun). For the eminence of the mother, look for a *dastūrīya* of the [nocturnal] planets from the Moon.⁴³

In a forthcoming article I will explain all of this in greater detail, and reconstruct the kind of reasoning (and historical accidents) that must have taken place for Bonatti to have reached his conclusions about sect-related rejoicing conditions such as these. But we must recognize that while the medievals did acknowledge sect, and applied it in certain contexts allowed by their predecessors, they were unclear about some of the sect-related rejoicing conditions and what the purpose of many of the sect concepts were. Ultimately we must complete two tasks. First, we must show for how long and to what extent the Persians, Arabs, and Jews deployed these concepts, and exactly how they were changed or misunderstood during the entire medieval period. Second, we must see to what extent the concepts are still hibernating within the medieval jargon and examples, to see how much can be recovered directly from the medieval tradition, and how much must be re-introduced from the resuscitated Hellenistic material.

D. Perfection in horary—the main methods

Books on horary astrology often overload the student with the types of perfection, treating what are really examples of perfection as though they are separate types. For instance, perfection by sextile aspect might be put side-by-side with perfection by trine, and then next to a wholly different type (like

⁴³ Tr. 9, Part III, 4th House, Ch. 5.

collection of light). Bonatti's presentation is simple and lays bare some basic principles behind perfection.

Essentially, perfection comes down to one fundamental question: "Who or what is getting a planet's light?" We want to see one key planet (or other place) getting the light of some other key planet. If it does, there is perfection; if not, not. Bonatti describes three central relationships (see chiefly Tr. 6, Part 1) that answer this question:

1. Joining. If one planet is in an applying aspect or corporal conjunction with another planet, and completes it without anything else intervening, it perfects the matter. Here, the light of one directly touches or joins with the other.
2. Transfer of light. If the planets cannot join directly but a third planet aspects or joins with first one and then the other, it perfects the matter. Here, one planet transfers the light of one to the body of the other.
3. Collection of light. If the light cannot be joined directly or transferred indirectly, but the two planets are in an applying aspect to a third one, the third one collects the light of the first two. Here, neither body of the first two is touched by the other's light at all, it being put together by a third one instead.

In addition, Bonatti describes (but does not formally name) two others:

4. Location. If the significator of the desired matter is actually *in* or aspecting the house of the querent or subject of the question. Or, if some other planet is in that house, joined to key significators.
5. Benefic reception. If a well-disposed and strong benefic (or malefic with reception), having some rulership in the Ascendant, is joined to the Moon or the significator of the querent with reception, there will be perfection.

With the last two there seems to be a little flexibility in exactly what conditions are allowed. Moreover, there are further refinements as to whether (say) the joining is by trine versus square, or with reception or without, or whether transfers of light require reception, and so on (see Tr. 6). Still, I think this basic list is much clearer on principles and easier for the student to memorize than those often offered.

E. Roots—being—God—freedom

Many astrological readers will recognize the word “radix,” which is the Latin word for “root” and is used by astrologers such as Lilly and Morin to denote the natal chart. But for Bonatti (and undoubtedly other medievals), the notion of a root is much broader, and touches on the question of chart validity and personal freedom. Here I will only summarize the main issues and my interpretation of them, but in a later edition of my *Using Medieval Astrology* I will give them a deeper treatment.⁴⁴ The main points concern the nature of freedom, the broader use of “roots,” and the special nature of horary.

Freedom. Astrologers must eventually confront the issue of freedom, especially given the prediction-laden nature of traditional astrology. This is a complex topic. But the astrologer has also got to ask: “By what right can I claim that horary and electional astrology is valid? For if the native’s life is in the birth chart (or “root”), then one should already be able to tell—down to a rather fine degree of detail—how things will turn out. Electing a good time for action, or asking for practicable advice from the astrologer, would seem to be useless.” Therefore, the astrologer who seeks to go beyond mere technique and understand why astrology is justified, must ask these metaphysical questions about freedom. The modern solution of overestimating our freedom and turning predictive techniques largely into mere potentials, is insufficient. For traditional predictive techniques work very well, and anyway most people really do not act freely. Most of us live by habits, temperament, and stereotypic patterns, and people who know us well can largely predict our behavior on a daily basis. Another solution is needed.

Bonatti seems to adhere to a mainstream medieval Christian view of freedom. According to this view, our lives are for the most part determined and shown in the birth chart, because we live in the sublunar world of the elements, which move in regular and predictable ways, however they are modified by and stirred up by the planets. To do something radically different and not determined, would be tantamount to introducing miracles into the world of the elements. But God, who has a wholly undetermined form of freedom, has created humans in His image. He has given to us a portion or reflection of his total freedom, so that in theory we can act in undetermined, spontaneous ways—somewhat akin to God’s miracles when He acts in the world. But our self-

⁴⁴ My thoughts on this have been influenced in part by productive conversations with Chris Brennan.

understanding and ability to exercise our free will is so low and pathetic that we generally cannot choose realistically as we might want to. Hence most of us live determined lives, we succumb to the easy path of sin, *etc.* With this sort of view in the background, one natural solution is to say that God sometimes helps us change our normal course and choose something different. In this case, God's aid and assent acts as a source of, and grants moral legitimacy to, our free actions. He is a source of action because he helps us choose; He grants legitimacy to them because He will help us to do good. Theologically and ethically, he acts as a kind of "root" for our action. But in order to understand this astrologically, we need to understand what a root is.

Roots. For Bonatti, an astrological chart is a "root" if it either (a) is timed so as to describe the nature of something new, or (b) forms the basis for other charts. For example, the natal figure is a root in both senses. It describes the nature of the native when he is separated from the womb and becomes a discrete individual; and it is also the basis for other charts (like solar revolutions). I believe a mundane solar revolution is a root, because the nature of the world is in some sense renewed when the Sun enters the first degree of Aries. But other charts are not roots, and need to be rooted in one that *is*.

So for instance, a really valid election needs a root.⁴⁵ An election is not an original basis or root for anything, because it presupposes the existing desires of the client. Moreover, an election by itself simply chooses a good time for something in the broadest sense: it may not be good for *this* client, just as a sale on airline tickets to Bermuda may be a "good time" to buy tickets in general, but perhaps not for *this* traveler. Therefore, we must find a "root" for the election which connects the client's *particular* needs to the *general* features of the election. The best root is the natal figure, which already contains the chief indicators of success or failure in life. So if we wanted to elect for wealth, we must adapt the features of the root (the natal figure) so that the election's features act as stimulated outgrowths of the root's promise. But if we do not have the natal figure (as can happen), we need another root. The next best root is a valid horary chart that promises the success for which we would normally examine the natal figure.

Likewise, some solar revolutions need a root. The solar revolutions of natiivities require a nativity, but Bonatti also grants the possibility that solar revolutions can also track the annual progress of an event predicted or con-

⁴⁵ Bonatti does allow that a very general chart could be cast, but that it is inferior and not part of proper procedure.

firmed by some valid event charts.⁴⁶ Why have I emphasized a *valid* horary or event charts? The issue lies in the opening pages of Tr. 5, where a key sentence helps to bind freedom, roots, God, and horary together.

Horary. It came as a surprise to find that the long-standing English version of Tr. 5 (The 146 Considerations) by Coley was incomplete. Not only is Coley's version a loose translation (and sometimes only a paraphrase), but it occasionally leaves material out. Of this omitted material, a key sentence offers Bonatti's startling, astro-theological construal of a verse from Scripture.

In the 1st Consideration, Bonatti describes three things which may move or causally motivate a client to ask a horary question. The first is a psychological motive, apparently based on desire. The second is the motion of the planets, which seems to involve both an interest in what they will cause, along with being motivated by their motions themselves. The third is the motive of the free will. All three kinds of motives must be involved in order to have a trustworthy horary. Now, Bonatti does not demand anything particular about the first two motives. But in the 2nd Consideration, Bonatti says more about the third motive, that of the free will.

In this 2nd Consideration, Bonatti makes three very important statements that support my thesis about his view of God's role in our actions, and help explain his views on astrology and theology. The first statement is that the querent must pray sincerely. This must mean that simply going to the horary astrologer with a question is not enough—even if the question is sincere. The second statement is that God is He “from Whom every good beginning leads.” This confirms that God is the ultimate source for that which begins, which in this context means that God forms the beginning of a valid horary consultation. Just as an election presupposes the client and is not itself a root, so the horary by itself presupposes the native. But, as we have said before, since the nativity seems to be determined, it is unclear how the horary question (which involves advice and suggests free courses of action) can be related to a presumably determined nativity. After the sincere querent has prayed that God will show him the truth, then he should go to the astrologer, “armed with this truth.”

The third statement is Bonatti's astrological construal of Scripture. Bonatti says, “And thus He who spoke, who gave so you may seek, will add [to it] so that you may find.” Of course this is based on *Matt. 7:7*, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” There are several important features of Bonatti's retelling of the verse. First,

⁴⁶ See for instance Tr. 6, Part 2, 10th House, Ch. 1.

Bonatti implies that our ability to ask questions, use free will, and discover truth comes directly from God, just as is standardly the case in medieval theology (“who gave *so* you may seek”). Second, he explicitly links his earlier mention of God (now in the form of Christ) to the asking of a valid horary question. This gives both *active* force to the free will behind the question (he “will add [to it]”), and *moral* justification (because it is a search for truth). Third, Bonatti is clearly capitalizing on the fact that the Vulgate uses the same verb for seeking (*quaero*) as the astrologers do for questions and asking. A horary “querent” and “question” (*querens, quaestio*) are nothing more than “someone seeking” and “the seeking” itself.

In sum, throughout the *Book of Astronomy* Bonatti presents a coherent view of how astrology, the will, and God fit together. Some events which naturally involve the birth of a new being (the native, the seasonal rejuvenation of the world) are roots, and the charts for them are called roots. Other charts are not self-standing because they depend on other rooted events and roots for their own meaning and power: elections and the solar revolutions of nativities are examples of these. But horary charts occupy an ambiguous territory. They are not *naturally* roots, because the querent is already in existence. Yet, in the absence of nativities they can *act as* roots for elections and some other solar revolutions. Now, their very possibility seems in doubt, since by hypothesis the native’s life could be thought of as determined, which contradicts the possibility of real choices and meaningful advice. But God, who has given us a weak version of His own miraculous free will, allows us in theory to be able to form plans that are contrary to type. Unfortunately, our understanding or use of our own free will is so feeble that even if we are moved or motivated to get meaningful advice, we must be aided by God so as to be able to change the normal course of things. Sincere prayer and a desire for truth is a precondition for receiving God’s aid when asking a question of the astrologer.

F. Committing disposition

Another important concept found in Bonatti is that of “committing disposition,” as when one planet is said to commit its disposition to another. At present it is unclear whence this concept arose, but it certainly must have been during the Persian/Arabic period. In order to understand why committing disposition works as it does, we must look at the Latin terms (*commissio dispositionis*).

The noun *dispositio* derives from *dispono*, which means “to arrange,” “to set in order.”⁴⁷ In some cases Bonatti speaks of a planet’s disposition merely in the sense of its general condition (i.e., a good or bad disposition). But disposition in the technical sense refers to a planet’s arranging or setting in order (for better or worse) some affair which pertains to it. But we cannot arrange or set in order something over which we have no authority. Now in astrology, authority is a matter of rulerships or dignities, just as when a sign is said to be the “domicile” of a planet: the domicile Lord is the master of the house. So a planet’s disposition has to do with the affairs it signifies in virtue of its rulerships. In a horary question about the 7th house, if Mars rules the 7th then he disposes the affairs of the 7th because it is his domicile or house, and he is in charge of it.

Now, the verb *committo* is translated as “commit,” but its specific meaning is “to entrust to,” especially with the concrete act of handing something to someone. When we commit something to someone, we show our trust and give them something: something we have the power of *disposition* over.

So, committing disposition has to do with one planet entrusting its affairs to another. But in order to entrust it, there must be some connection between them and at least one of them must actually be occupying or in possession of something—i.e., a relevant dignity. In the *Book of Astronomy* there are two central cases in which committing disposition can occur:

1. If one planet is already in one of its *own* dignities, it can commit its disposition over its affairs to another aspecting planet. Suppose Mars is in Aries, and is applying to Jupiter in Leo: Mars can commit his disposition to Jupiter. This is like someone already holding an object handing it to another, because it is already in active charge of its own affairs. It is similar to Abū Ma’shar’s “pushing power,” and is also described as the “pushing of virtue” in the Latin Sahl’s *Introduction*, §5.10. In Sahl’s case, this “pushing” happens only in the dignities of domicile, exaltation, and triplicity. But in the 1493 Latin edition of Sahl, although the example given right after the definition explicitly equates this pushing with “committing,” these are not Sahl’s own words, nor

⁴⁷ Bonatti (following John of Seville) also uses “disposition” as a synonym for Abū Ma’shar’s “management,” as in “pushing management.” This suggests that disposition has a broader sense, but until we have more translations of Latin and Arabic works we will have to avoid drawing strict conclusions about it.

does Sahl himself offer the example.⁴⁸ The Latin text was originally edited by Salio and may include additions by him.

2. If one planet is in the domicile, exaltation, or two of the minor dignities of the *other*, then the planet whose dignity it is in can commit its disposition to the one occupying them. In other words, reception itself is a case of committing disposition. Let Venus be in Aries, in an aspect to Mars in Gemini. Since Mars receives her by domicile, he can commit his disposition to her. This is like having a guest stay in one's house while one is away: the guest is entrusted with the management of the household. Now, Sahl himself also includes something like this in the *Introduction*, §5.11, but Sahl's Arabic does not include the example found in 1493, and at any rate is ambiguous as to who is pushing to whom.

In these central cases, the whole point is to show a stronger, more successful connection of planets' rays. So while perfection "by joining" in horary is a standard method of perfection (see above), if there is a committing of disposition between the joined planets it shows a more successful and sustained perfection—which is especially important in the transfer of light and collection of light, when light passes between several planets. In fact, Bonatti often links the commission of disposition to these two methods of perfection.

The planet receiving the disposition is strengthened, made more productive, and is more successful at performing its *own* function, not just at joining with or transferring the light of the one committing it. Moreover, the planet receiving the disposition will take on the qualities that the committer is normally in charge of (at least, this is true in cases of actual reception): a mixture of duties takes place. In addition, a planet that commits disposition through reception (version 2 above) will show goodness and peace to the one receiving it—but this does not mean that the one receiving the disposition will return the same good attitude. This is another way of saying that in cases of reception, the received planet gets to do roughly what it wants, but this may not be good for the receiving planet.

However, there are some disagreements or ambiguities in the case of the Moon's disposition. In his *Judgment 1*, Sahl seems to affirm the idea that the Moon commits disposition automatically to every planet, no matter the situation. And in one place Bonatti accurately describes a chart from

⁴⁸ This is clear from Stegemann's edition of the Arabic, Latin, and Byzantine versions of the *Introduction*, p. 49.

Māshā'allāh in which the Moon commits disposition without there being any appropriate dignity involved.⁴⁹ But in Tr. 5, the 9th Consideration, Bonatti says that “certain people” agreed with this and attributed their belief to Sahl (Bonatti may have been thinking of Salio), but that that Sahl did *not* mean this unconditionally. According to Bonatti’s own interpretation, the Moon can commit to any other planet, but only if she has first had some other disposition committed to her. This seems to accord with his general view that a transfer of light should involve some committing of disposition. This is an area needing further research, especially a comparison of Sahl’s Arabic to the translation and annotations of John of Spain and Salio.

Finally, there is one other type of committing disposition which appears in Bonatti’s quotation of passages by Abū Ma’shar in Tr. 8, Ch. 116. There, Abū Ma’shar delineates a mundane solar revolution, and uses a predictive technique to tell what influences will manifest, and when. Abū Ma’shar takes the degrees on which the planets have cast rays or actually are, and simply goes in the order of the zodiac: so if one planet has the “disposition” for a certain amount of time, while another planet’s rays fall somewhere after it in the order of signs, then the first planet will commit its disposition to the second one. The text makes no reference to the dignity requirements we see above, and I have not seen this usage before.

G. *Ante-Post*

This pair of contrasting words is found a number of times in the *Book of Astronomy*, along with several variations like *ante-retro* and *ante-a tergo*. *Ante* means “before, in front of, ahead of”; *post* means “after, behind”; *retro* means “behind, back, in the back”; *a tergo* means “from the back.” There are two central uses of this contrast, which gives additional insight into how the medievals viewed strength, benefit, and harm to planets, as well as how they pictured their movements.

(1) The first central use of these terms pertains to aspects from degree to degree, and from planet to planet. In this use, *ante* or “in front of” almost always means “in a later degree than”; *post* or *retro* almost always means “in an earlier degree than.” For example, let both Saturn and the Sun be in Aries, and let the Sun be approaching Saturn. Saturn is a slower planet, so the Sun must come up to him from an earlier degree. In such an example, Saturn is “in front of” the

⁴⁹ Tr. 6, Part 2, the 4th House, Ch. 4. Bonatti gives another apparent example in the 10th House, Ch. 1. See the entries under committing disposition “with aspect alone” in the Index.

Sun, as though the Sun is looking at Saturn while he travels through the sign towards him. Likewise, the Sun is “behind” Saturn. Or, aspects cast “forwards” or “ahead” from Aries will fall in later signs (like Gemini); aspects cast “backwards” or “behind” from Aries will fall in earlier signs (like Aquarius).

Bonatti understands this use to indicate something about planetary benefit, harm, or effectiveness. For example, in the case of combustion it is worse for the superior planets to be in front of the Sun (as Saturn was above) than to be behind him: it is worse to experience intensifying heat as the Sun approaches, than to experience decreasing heat after the Sun has already passed by. To take another example, suppose Venus is at 15° Gemini, and Saturn is at 17° Pisces. In such a case, Saturn casts a forward or leading square ahead of him to 17° Gemini, which sits right in Venus’s path—the aspect is “in front of” her. Because the aspect affects the degree of 17° most of all, it is worse for Venus to have this aspect cast in front of her, because she is traveling towards it. It would be less bad if Saturn were at, say, 13° Pisces, so that the aspect would fall “behind” her and she would be going away from it.

(2) The other central use of these pairs pertains to the cusps—either locations on or around them, or aspects to them. In this case, *ante* and *post/retro* denote just the reverse. That is, *ante* means “ahead of” the cusp in earlier zodiacal degrees, and *post/retro* means “after” or “behind” the cusp in later zodiacal degrees. For instance, let the degree of the Midheaven be at 15° Capricorn. If a planet were at 13° Capricorn, it would be “ahead of” the cusp; if it were at 17° Capricorn, it would be behind the cusp. So, instead of imagining a planet facing forward in the order of the signs as it looks “in front of” itself while moving via secondary motion, imagine a face on the cusp turned clockwise against the order of signs, watching the zodiac come up from behind and go past by primary motion. On this model, degrees which have passed the cusp are “ahead” of it, and degrees which have not yet come past are “behind” it.

The reason to care about this distinction is that degrees which are passing an angular cusp still bear, so to speak, the mark of the “cusp” or “point” they have just passed, but its power is fading away quickly. Degrees coming up from behind it (i.e., later zodiacal degrees) are gaining in strength. Thus for example, if we are looking for the signifier of the king in a mundane ingress chart, we want to see if there is a planet with a few degrees “ahead of” the cusp (in an earlier zodiacal degree) or a few more “after” or “behind” the cusp (in a later zodiacal degree). The span of effective degrees is greater for those behind the cusp, because they are growing in strength for a greater time; but the span of

effective degrees ahead of the cusp is small, because they go cadent and become much less effective very quickly.

In my translation, I will explain in each instance what I believe Bonatti to mean.

H. Elevation and Overcoming

In a number of places (most notably in Tr. 9, drawing on Ptolemy), Bonatti speaks about one planet being “elevated” (*elevatus*) above another. In most cases it is put in the form of a warning—most especially, that a planet should not have a malefic “elevated” above it. And in one place, Bonatti suggests that the “elevated” planet should be in the 10th or 11th house from the planet in question.

The usual way of understanding “elevation” is that a planet is elevated if it is high up in the chart: that is, close to the Midheaven. One planet will be more elevated than another if it is higher up in the chart than the other. But it turns out this understanding is mistaken.

The Latin *elevatus*, which means “lifted up” or “raised up,” is a translation of the original Greek adjective meaning to be “above” or “superior” (Gr. *kathuperterios*). This adjective itself generated a verb that means “to be superior to.” But the Greek verb can be taken in two ways:

(1) The first, intransitive meaning merely indicates being “above” something else. If we take it to mean “above” or “elevated,” then it would be natural to translate the Greek as *elevatus*, which is apparently how the Latin translators took it. But even so, we still face a decision as to what counts as being “elevated.” For instance, Bonatti mentions in several places that planets in northern ecliptical latitude are stronger than those in southern latitudes—this could reasonably be called “elevation,” and it has nothing to do with being high up in the chart.

(2) The second, transitive meaning indicates an activity of being *set over* something else—i.e., “to overcome” it. In particular, Robert Schmidt has shown that *this* was what the Hellenistic astrologers meant, and that to “overcome” a planet meant nothing else than to be in the tenth sign from it. For example, if Venus is in Taurus and Saturn is in Aquarius, then Saturn “overcomes” Venus, because he is in the tenth sign from Taurus (counting Taurus as the first sign). It makes no difference where in the chart they are, only what their relationship to *each other* is.

According to Schmidt, there are a couple of alternative, minority definitions of “overcoming” in Antiochus, Serapio and Valens: for example, a planet making an applying corporal conjunction with another planet will be “overcoming” it when it approaches. But for the Arabs, Persians, Jews and Latins, Ptolemy was the primary source of this term.

My hypothesis is that early Latin translators of Ptolemy (like Plato of Tivoli, 1139) knew that the Greek spoke of being “above”; but since Ptolemy takes much vocabulary for granted and does not even define this term explicitly in the *Tetrabiblos*, they were not quite sure what he meant. So, they made the reasonable (but mistaken) assumption that it meant to be “above” another planet, near the 10th house of the chart (rather than being in the tenth sign from a planet, no matter where it is in the chart). So while “elevation” in the sense of being high in the chart turns out to be a reasonable mistake, it is a mistake nonetheless. In my translation I will remain faithful to Bonatti’s own words, but I will always remark in footnotes whether or not his source texts mean “overcoming.”

I. Bonatti’s Fixed Stars

Bonatti lists a number of malefic and benefic fixed stars in several places in the *Book of Astronomy*. Some have familiar names (most notably Aldebaran), some unfamiliar, some have no names at all. But there are serious problems with Bonatti’s list, both in determining its source and in the locations of the stars themselves.

According to Burnett (2001), the original ancient edition of the traditional list of fixed stars passed through several Greek versions (including those of Rhetorius and Theophilus and Anonymous of 379). After this, the list passed through two Persian versions and an Arabic one, until it was translated in three different ways: by Māshā’allāh (which was translated into Latin by Hugo of Santalla), that of Abū Ma’shar (never translated from his book on nativities into Latin), and that of Salio of Padua, who translated directly from the Arabic into Latin. Now, Bonatti was personally acquainted with Salio, so one might think that he got the list from there—but the lists are different. Nor is there evidence Bonatti had access to Hugo of Santalla’s version. Nor does it seem that Bonatti had read Abū Ma’shar’s book of nativities. This leaves only one other source, the *Flowers*. It so happens that Bonatti’s list of the malefic fixed stars (the only ones in the *Flowers*) matches the *Flowers* almost perfectly. Moreover, Bonatti draws liberally from the *Flowers* throughout Tr. 8, so he had obviously read the

list. From this we can conclude that Bonatti's list comes from the *Flowers*, and that list does not match any other known version of the traditional star list.

However, there is another wrinkle. *Some* of the stars on Bonatti's list *do* match the older ones, but with the addition of about 6°35' or 6°40' to Ptolemy's positions, to account for precession. This value is very close to the values that Abū Ma'shar himself added to Ptolemy's positions in his version from the book of nativities (6°58'). But it is not quite the same value, and anyway, we still cannot be sure what original list Bonatti is using (especially for the benefic stars).

Unfortunately, all of this scholarly puzzling seems moot when we confront the greatest problem: Bonatti's star lists are useless for normal delineation procedures, because at least half of the stars do not even exist! Although it is hard to notice when looking at each list individually, when put side by side a startling pattern appears: for virtually each malefic star, there is a corresponding *benefic* star exactly opposite it in the same degree and minute (and in some cases, even in opposite ecliptical latitudes), sometimes with a name that means the opposite of the first. (In some cases, the oppositional names seem to be misplaced.)

For instance, in Tr. 8 he describes a malefic fixed star at 9° 55' Taurus, with northern latitude, of the nature of Mars (this may be the Pleiades); but then he also states that there is a *benefic* fixed star at 9° 55' *Scorpio*, with *southern* latitude, of the nature of *Jupiter*. No such star exists. To take another example, the position of Bellatrix ("Warrior") is given as 10° 15' Gemini, having the nature of Mars; but there is allegedly a benefic star Pacifica ("Peacemaker") at 10° 15' Sagittarius, having the nature of Venus! Again, no such star exists. Incidentally, I notice that there is allegedly a star named Malefica ("Witch" or "evildoer") near Bellatrix, and one might expect that Malefica-Pacifica would make a good oppositional pair. However, evil and peace (Malefica-Pacifica) are not truly opposed in the way that war and peace (Bellatrix-Pacifica) are, so perhaps it is not a mistake.

The fact that roughly half of these stars do not exist (and perhaps some pairs are totally imaginary), even if we precess the positions to modern ones (or recess them to Ptolemaic or other ones) it suggests that perhaps many of these stars have symbolic or magical significance. I do note that Abū Ma'shar was a Persian, and ancient Persian Zoroastrianism and Middle Eastern Manichaeism had very much to do with the cosmic opposition of forces of good and evil. Could it be that these stars are meant to represent (or even *be*) divine beings in

perpetual opposition until the forces of good finally triumph? This is a worthy area for further research. In my translation I simply let the text stand as it is, but try to identify individual stars where reasonably possible.

J. Orientality and Occidentality

Nowadays, planets are generally understood to be oriental if they are anywhere to the right of the Sun (i.e., in earlier degrees) in the 180° interval between the conjunction and opposition. Planets are said to be occidental if they are in the 180° interval on the other side. Ultimately this definition is a misunderstanding of traditional doctrine, due to a number of factors. These factors include ambiguity in language and a shift away from the direct perception of the planets. In this translation, I will try to sort out the various meanings of orientality and occidentality as best I can. Ultimately only more translation and cross-comparison of texts will help us understand the exact meanings and uses of these terms.

Our words “oriental” and “occidental” come directly from the Latin *orientalis* and *occidentalis*. But these Latin words are themselves ambiguous, because the roots *oriens* and *occidens* refer both to phenomena and locations: *oriens* means “rising” and “the east,” *occidens* means “setting” and “the west.” The Sun’s rising and the east are linked for obvious reasons, as are his setting and the west; but over time this has led to complications. For instance, if a planet is in an earlier degree than the Sun, but the Sun is somewhere in the 11th house, then the planet is actually more to the *west* of the Sun; but according to the modern understanding, the planet is “oriental,” which again can mean “eastern.”

Following are the three central medieval uses of *orientalis* and *occidentalis*, ultimately derived from traditional Hellenistic practice:

1. Planets are “oriental” if they rise visibly before the Sun, and “occidental” if they set visibly after him. This is similar to the modern understanding, since to rise visibly before the Sun means at least to be in an earlier degree. There were differing opinions on the longitudinal interval a planet had to be in, and whether the intervals were of equal significance.
2. Planets are “oriental” if they are in the “eastern” quadrant between the Ascendant and the Midheaven (i.e., where the Sun rises) or the one opposite to it, and “occidental” if they are in the “western” quadrant

between the Midheaven and the 7th (i.e., where the Sun sets) or the one opposite to it.

3. Planets are “oriental” if they currently, or within seven days before or after the nativity, are *rising out of* the Sun’s beams and will become visible at sunrise or sunset; they are “occidental” if they currently, or within seven days before or after the nativity, are *sinking into* the Sun’s beams and will become invisible at sunrise or sunset. In Hellenistic astrology this is an example of what is called “making a *phasis*,” and the distance from the Sun at which this arising or sinking would happen, was standardized at 15°. According to this definition, the inferiors can be “oriental” (or pertaining-to-arising) on *either* side of the Sun, since they can arise both while going direct and on their retrograde path.

The third definition of orientality and occidentality may be new to most astrologers nowadays (especially the “seven day” clause), and it had fallen out of use even by Bonatti’s day (though he recognizes something very close to it in Tr. 5),⁵⁰ and Ptolemy’s use of it is disguised due to the medieval use of *orientalis/occidentalis* for all three situations when translating him. But it is astrologically important, because it seems to be the basis of the distinction between being “combust” and being “under the beams” of the Sun.⁵¹ First of all, although different planets will become visible at sunrise or sunset at slightly different intervals from the Sun, the distances average out to be about 15°. Therefore, what we now call the outer edge of the “Sun’s beams” is understood to be about 15°. Second of all, since the Sun moves at almost 1° per day, no planet wanting to rise out of or sink into the Sun’s beams at 15° can be—on average—closer than about 7°30’ to the Sun. Again, this distance corresponds to a common value for that of combustion.

What we have therefore, are two Latin terms which are used confusedly to refer to (1) daily rising and setting, (2) being east or west, and (3) being visible or invisible. Some examples may help to make the differences clear. Let the Sun be in 5° Aries, and Mercury at 20° Aries, retrograde. If a chart is cast at night while the Sun is just below the horizon, then Mercury is (1) occidental, (2) occidental, and (3) occidental—or rather, rising after the Sun, in a western quadrant, and about to make a sinking *phasis* within a couple of days. But if both Mercury and the Sun were already above the horizon, then Mercury would be (1) occidental,

⁵⁰ See the 52nd and 54th Considerations.

⁵¹ I have based this discussion on conversations with Robert Schmidt.

(2) oriental, and (3) occidental—or rather, rising after the Sun, in an eastern quadrant, and about to make a sinking *phasis* within a couple of days.

Since Bonatti is aware of the differences between all three forms of *orientalis* and *occidentalis* (though he may not be sure in every instance which one his sources mean), and since he is always at pains to report his predecessors' views exactly, I have done my best to rely on his sources' meanings and in using consistent vocabulary throughout. Therefore, I treat all clear instances of (1) as oriental and occidental; all clear instances of (2) as eastern or western; and all clear instances of (3) as pertaining-to-rising and pertaining-to-sinking. When the context provides no suggestions as to exact meaning, I will use the default terms oriental and occidental. When I have adopted the new vocabulary but am not absolutely certain, or an instance of *orientalis* and *occidentalis* could be read plausibly in more than one way in a given context, I provide footnotes. But the reader must know that (a) Bonatti *only* uses the terms *orientalis* and *occidentalis*, (b) he never formally or self-consciously distinguishes all three forms as I have, (c) it is not always evident that *he* understood in a given case which form his sources meant; and (d) later astrologers may not have understood the difference between them.

K. *The al-mubtazz*

The common Arabic astrological term *al-mubtazz* (Lat. *almuten, almutem, almutez*, from Ar. المبتز), means “one who has gained victory” or “the victor.” According to Kunitsch 1977 (pp. 37-38), it is the Arabic rendition of the Greek *epikratētor* or “predominator,” a significator which wins out when choosing among a hierarchy of possible significators. But in medieval astrology *al-mubtazz* is used in a variety of other ways. Since decision procedures for choosing significators differ, and the medieval sources do not always mention which is being employed, the term *al-mubtazz* often conceals what it is meant to indicate. Following are several ways *al-mubtazz* is used in the *Book of Astronomy*:

- a. Equal point *al-mubtazz*. This kind assigns one point to every planet having some relation to the topic in question. For example, the Lords of each dignity receive one point, aspecting planets receive one point, and so on: the planet with the most points is the *al-mubtazz*. The emphasis here is not so much on points, but on treating the rulerships and aspects (and perhaps other features) equally. There is sometimes judgment required on the part of the astrologer when several planets

- appear to be roughly equal in importance. This type is also found in Hellenistic astrology.
- b. Weighted-point *al-mubtaẓẓ*. Here, each of the dignities over a single place in the chart is given a different point-value, and the planet with the most points is the *al-mubtaẓẓ*. For example, the domicile Lord of a given degree receives five points, the exalted Lord (if any) four points, the triplicity Lord three each (or perhaps only the primary ruler receives them), and so on. According to Robert Schmidt it does not appear in Hellenistic texts, so it must be a Persian or Arab innovation.
 - c. Compound *al-mubtaẓẓ*. This type works just the same as the weighted-point *al-mubtaẓẓ*, but instead of calculating the points given to rulers over only a single degree, multiple significant degrees may be taken. For instance, a compound *al-mubtaẓẓ* for marriage might involve the points and rulers counted up for the degree of the 7th, the Lord of the 7th, Venus, and so on. Abraham ibn Ezra offers a compound *al-mubtaẓẓ* calculation that also assigns weighted points for house positions (as well as points for the Lord of the day and of the hour).
 - d. As a synonym for other concepts. Bonatti sometimes uses *al-mubtaẓẓ* as a purely general term, for instance referring to the *hīlāj* (which, like an *epikeratōr*, is chosen from a list of prioritized candidates), or even to a planet in its role as a universal significator.

Most of the time, it is difficult or even impossible to say what kind of *al-mubtaẓẓ* we are dealing with. I have categorized the types of *al-mubtaẓẓ* references in the Index, and made footnote comments where it has seemed necessary. But of the four identifiable types, (a) medievals (and Bonatti) definitely use the equal point *al-mubtaẓẓ*, although Bonatti sometimes does not seem to realize his sources are using it. (b) The weighted-point *al-mubtaẓẓ* is exceedingly rare. It is described briefly by al-Qabīsī, and appears unambiguously only a few times in the *Book of Astronomy*: once in isolation,⁵² once in repeating al-Qabīsī's own example,⁵³ once when giving an alternative weighting system in Tr. 8,⁵⁴ and several brief and ambiguous allusions (but not specific examples) in

⁵² Tr. 2, Part 2, Ch. 19.

⁵³ Tr. 2, Part 3, Ch. 14.

⁵⁴ Tr. 8, Part 1, Ch. 1.

other places.⁵⁵ At this point I do not have confidence that practicing astrologers like Abū Ma’shar or Māshā’allāh or Sahl used it.

(c) Even more importantly, Bonatti *never* explicitly explains or uses the compound *al-mubtaz̃z̃*. There is one brief sentence suggesting its possibility in Tr. 9, Part 2 (“When these things will come to pass”); but as I point out there, Bonatti’s use of the ablative makes the meaning ambiguous, and his source text in al-Tabarī does *not* employ a compound *al-mubtaz̃z̃*.

The rarity of the weighted-point *al-mubtaz̃z̃* and the apparent non-existence in the *Book of Astronomy* of the compound *al-mubtaz̃z̃* is extremely important. On the one hand, it shows that the Latin astrologers in the key 12th and 13th Centuries were pretty much as traditional as their Persian and Arab predecessors had been. But (so far as our evidence proves now) it also shows that, however well-motivated the compound *al-mubtaz̃z̃* is, it is clearly an untraditional invention, and there is no evidence for it in important texts like the *Book of Astronomy*. (Where ibn Ezra got it is another story.) Later writers such as Schoener, who cannot help but devise a compound *al-mubtaz̃z̃* for virtually everything in a nativity, were part of a possibly unintentional deviation from the mainstream of the tradition. William Lilly’s use of weighting systems for everything from being conjoined to the Part of Fortune to being retrograde, seems to be part of that same deviation.

§7: Other Editorial Principles

Chapters. It is unlikely that Bonatti himself is responsible for all or even most of the chapter headings, much less for the extensive Table of Contents. One indication of this is that the chapter headings are sometimes extracted from the first sentence of the chapter (this is especially true in Tr. 6). Throughout I have maintained the 1491/1550 chapter headings, but I have also made some changes:

- a. In some cases I have had to renumber the chapters based on incorrect numbering in 1491 or 1550.
- b. In Tr. 6 I have also switched some chapters that appear in odd places to their assumed rightful positions (in at least one case due to comments within the text about its relation to other chapters).

⁵⁵ Tr. 4, Ch. 8; Tr. 6, Part 2, 9th House, Ch. 9; Tr. 8, Part 1, Chs. 1, 2, 43; Tr. 9, Part 1, Ch. 4; Tr. 9, Part 3, 2nd House, Ch. 1.

- c. I have added some section headings in brackets for purposes of clarity when the text switches topics without warning (see especially Trs. 2, 8, 9).
- d. I have decided to change all chapter and Treatise numbers to Arabic numerals, instead of retaining the Roman numerals. Although the Roman numbers are more aesthetically pleasing and it would be truer to the printed editions to retain them, it is easier for modern readers to use the Arabic ones.
- e. Bonatti frequently goes through every house or planetary permutation when explaining what a particular configuration means (e.g., if Mars is in the 1st, the 2nd, the 3rd, *etc.*). For the convenience of working astrologers I have broken many of these large, dense paragraphs into smaller indented ones, so that one may more easily find the signification one seeks.
- f. Those familiar with current translations of traditional astrological works will note that I use the word “bound” instead of “term,” to indicate the uneven divisions of the zodiacal signs ruled by the five non-luminaries. The word “term” is only a shortened form of *terminus*, and does not easily express the meaning of *terminus*: an endpoint or boundary or bound. It is true that in medicine, for example, when American doctors complete temporary assignments at a hospital they are said to “term” (used as a verb), but most English speakers use it refer to a politician’s “term in office,” which usually connotes the whole length of time, not the endpoint. But more importantly, when Bonatti explains the bounds in Tr. 2, he emphasizes the notion of a boundary or limit. Therefore I have used the word “bound.” This choice also puts my translation in alignment with the newer standards for translations of Greek material at Project Hindsight.
- g. In Tr. 7 (Elections), Bonatti regularly uses the verb *apto* when telling us to make a planet “fit” or “apt” (*aptus*) for a given election. I have decided to use the English verb “adapt” when translating *apto*. Latin uses *apto* transitively and without any special idiom. But English only rarely uses the verb “fit” in a transitive sense, and even then it often refers to a different object: when we “fit a man for a suit,” we are actually fitting the *suit* to the man, we are not fitting the man himself. In addition, using the English formula “Make X fit” becomes tedious and takes away from the style of Bonatti’s text. Finally, even the Latin for “adapt”

(*adapto*) is nothing more than the same verb *apto* with the prefix *ad* (to, toward), so nothing is really lost or distorted by this choice of wording.

- h. Throughout the text I have placed brackets to add or suggest crucial words, in order to make the text clearer. These bracketed words and phrases are my own, and should not be confused with Bonatti's own parenthetical remarks, which I have grouped with parentheses.

Arabic. I have been able to determine the origin and/or meaning of every Arabic technical term in the *Book of Astronomy* (but not all geographical names), including at least one mistake in the printed editions and many hitherto mysterious words. I am greatly indebted to Terry Linder for his help in this area. For technical terms, I give the Arabic script in a footnote, with a transliteration in the text. Long vowels are indicated with bars (\bar{a} , \bar{u} , \bar{i}). Above this Introduction is a table with the terms used by Bonatti.

Place Names. Where possible, I give modern place names (e.g., Bologna for *Bononia*) unless the names refer to regions not recognized today (e.g., Sigistan). Many of the geographical locations Bonatti mentions in connection with planetary and sign rulerships, are unrecognizable. But because Bonatti frequently follows his sources paragraph by paragraph, I was often able to figure out what names were meant by comparing his own text to others (like Burnett's critical Arabic and Latin edition of al-Qabīṣī). In other cases, such as Bonatti's use of a manuscript translation by Abū Ma'shar in Tr. 8 (see above), many names are left in their Latinized form.

Misplaced pages. Several pages from Tr. 6 of the original manuscript seem to have gotten shuffled and then typeset while in their wrong places. Since there have been no other complete translations of this Treatise, this translation is the first to notice and correct the problem. I have assigned letters to the misplaced sections, and in the text I mark their beginnings and endings with two lines || and a footnote identifying the section and where it falls in the 1550 edition.

Images. The images in the text are of two kinds. The first kind replicates the woodcuts depicting the zodiacal signs and planets from the 1550 edition. The second are of my own design, based on Bonatti's descriptions. Although both the 1491 and 1550 editions provide charts, a few are unclear or combine information from two charts, and moreover the square chart form can obscure the examples given. For instance, in describing a chart by Abū Ma'shar in Tr. 8, the square chart form suggests the presence of intermediary house cusps, even though no cusp is listed by Bonatti and it is not clear that Abū Ma'shar used

them: therefore I have produced the chart in circular zodiacal form with only the angular cusps he provides. I believe this is a good policy to follow as we continue to sort out whole-sign and quadrant house issues in the tradition.

§8: Bonatti's Introduction

Following is Bonatti's introduction to the *Book of Astronomy*, as printed in the 1491 edition. Note that the order of Treatises is given in the order we know them, even though it does not reflect the order the Treatises were actually written or planned.

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, commiserator and holy one, true God and true man, to whom there is none equal nor like, nor could there be (and [in the name] of his most blessed mother Mary, ever a glorious virgin, and of Saint Valerian the Martyr, captain and governor and defender of the community of Forlì), Who is supplicated and likewise glorified by the faithful (at once with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in a unity of essence and a Trinity of Persons, triune and one); nor is there another God besides Him, Who made and secured and produced (all together for the usefulness of man) the heaven and the earth, with all that is in them, and [Who] adorned the heaven with stars—illuminating lamps, so to speak—so that with their virtues they would dispose [all] inferior things together, and rule a command over men just as it was granted to them (likewise so they would exhibit it); and [Who] put what is rational over all living things together so that they might serve, and He made it their prerogative⁵⁶ to [be able] to sense and understand; He even manifested to them the motions of the supercelestial bodies and what is signified by them, and He extended the heavens over them like a tent, so that in it and through it (and with Divine Wisdom revealing and imparting [it]) they would be able to understand not only past or present things, but even so they might beware of, predict, and be able to announce future ones.

“Therefore I, Guido Bonatti of Forlì, since I have studied somewhat in astronomy, and have examined many works of our predecessors (who, even if they are to be honored, and should for the most part be revered by us, still, certain ones of them, loving brevity exceedingly much, say they are going to speak to people who are to be introduced, [but] it was their intention to speak to those proven in *other* sciences, even though [the latter] will be inexperienced

⁵⁶ *Praeroganter...fecit.*

in *astronomy*—and especially in judgments—and will have to be introduced), I wanted to compose this work, and to compile, from the sayings of the ancients who seemed to me to have proceeded in the journey of truth, the more useful things which were reported in them; and to put them in this work for this purpose (both for those who are not very introduced into other sciences, and so that it would be useful in astronomy, and smoothly for it,⁵⁷ even if perhaps they cannot come in a short time to the desired end of judgments), asking Wisdom and Divine Benignness for the grace (even though I am advanced in the days which I have), with the wholeness of body, accompanied by life, that [this book] would be found worthy to be fulfilled, indeed that I might be able to complete [this] work undertaken for the honor of God and all other people wishing to study it—and principally for your usefulness, my nephew Bonatti.⁵⁸

“And since the work will be long and prolix (and long and difficult and very involved [matters] cannot be clarified completely [and] in all respects in a small number of words), in order to avoid greater prolixity I do not intend to put disputations nor many proofs [in it], even though perhaps some could be put in this work; but my intent is solely for the usefulness of those studying and of you, Bonatti.

“And this work is divided into six parts, of which the first is a general introduction. The second is questions. The third, elections. The fourth, the revolutions of years and of the world, and even conjunctions are included. The fifth, on nativities. The sixth, on showers and heavy rains. And I would address it this way in an introduction,⁵⁹ because I will treat first of the usefulness which we can pursue from astronomy and the judgments of the stars, and I will speak likewise on its verification; likewise on its nobility, and I will block certain people wanting to speak against the judgments of the stars, or elections, and on things pertaining to this. Second, I will treat of the division of the orb of signs (and how they are ordered so, and that there are not but twelve, and why this comes to be so) and of their designations (and on the accidents to this). Third, I will say what happens to the seven planets in themselves, and what happens from one of them to another, and on those things which pertain to the eighth sphere. Fourth, I will give a nod to certain conjunctions, and an exposition of

⁵⁷ *Et ipsi leviter.*

⁵⁸ Or: “your usefulness, my nephew, a Bonatti.” He is not saying the nephew’s first name is Bonatti. We do not know whether this nephew is the same as the one whose nativity is given in Tr. 9, Part 3, the 12th House, Ch.

⁵⁹ I.e., *when introducing* students to astrology. Bonatti thinks of an “introduction” as the *process* of introducing something, not the literary piece put at the front of a book.

certain headings [or topics]. Fifth, on certain considerations which fall [to us] in judgments. Sixth, after that I will place the part on judgments. Seventh, elections. Eighth, revolutions. Ninth, nativities. Tenth, and lastly, the revolutions of seasons, or showers and heavy rains.”