

Figures relating to early modern astrological medicine

From Joseph Blagrave, *Blagrave's Astrological Practice of Physick* (London, 1671), unless otherwise stated

To be read in conjunction with the document "Astrological medicine, Blagrave instructions."

Michael Bycroft, June 2019

Figure 1. "The character of the seven planets with the dragon's head and tail"*

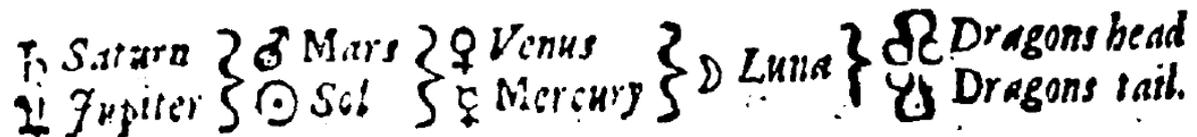


Figure 2. "The characters of the twelve signs, with the parts of the body by them signified; and how they stand opposite unto each other in the Zodiack." Aries is opposite to Libra, Taurus to Scorpio, etc.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ♈ Aries Head and Face. | ♎ Libra Reins and Loins. |
| ♉ Taurus Neck and Throat. | ♏ Scorpio Secrets and Bladder. |
| ♊ Gemini Arms & Shoulders. | ♐ Sagitary The Thighs. |
| ♋ Cancer Breast, Stom. & Ribs. | ♑ Capricorn The Knees. |
| ♌ Leo Heart and Back. | ♒ Aquary The Leggs. |
| ♍ Virgo Eowels and Gutts. | ♓ Pisces The Feet. |

Figure 3. The Lords and Ladies of the signs. Each planet is associated with two signs over which it "rules." From Richard Saunders, *The Astrological Judgment and Practice of Physick* (London, 1677).

minion, are thus: ♃ ruleth in ♋ and ♏ : ♃ in ♌ and ♎ :
♄ in ♍ and ♏ : ☉ in ♌ : ♀ in ♍ and ♎, ♀ in ♊ and
♁ : the ☽ in ♋. &c.

*The 'dragon's head and tail' are the two points in space where the path of the moon intersects the plane in which the sun moves around [sic] the Earth. Like planets, these two points move over the course of the year and were thought to influence events on Earth.

Figure 4. “The Five Aspects of the Planets.” Note also that conjunction, square and opposition are “hostile” aspects, whereas sextile and trine are “friendly” aspects.

- ♄ *Conjunction*, That is when any two Planets are in one and the same degree of any Sign.
- * *Sextile*, That is when any two Planets are 60. degrees from each other : And containeth a fixth part of the Zodiack.
- *Square*, That is when any two Planets are 90. degrees from each other : And containeth a fourth part of the Zodiack.
- △ *Trine*, That is when any two Planets are 120. degrees from each other : And containeth a third part of the Zodiack.
- ♁ *Oppsition*, That is when any two Planets are 180. degrees from each other : And containeth half the Zodiack.

Figure 5. The signs and the aspects. The symbols around the circumference of the figure are the constellations, starting with Aires at 12 o'clock and going counter-clockwise through Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, etc. For example, Leo (at 9 o'clock) is in Sextile with Taurus, Square with Aires, Trine with Pisces, and Opposition with Capricorn. From Stoeffler and Pflaum, *Almanach nova* (1506), reproduced in Anthony Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* (Harvard University Press, 2001).

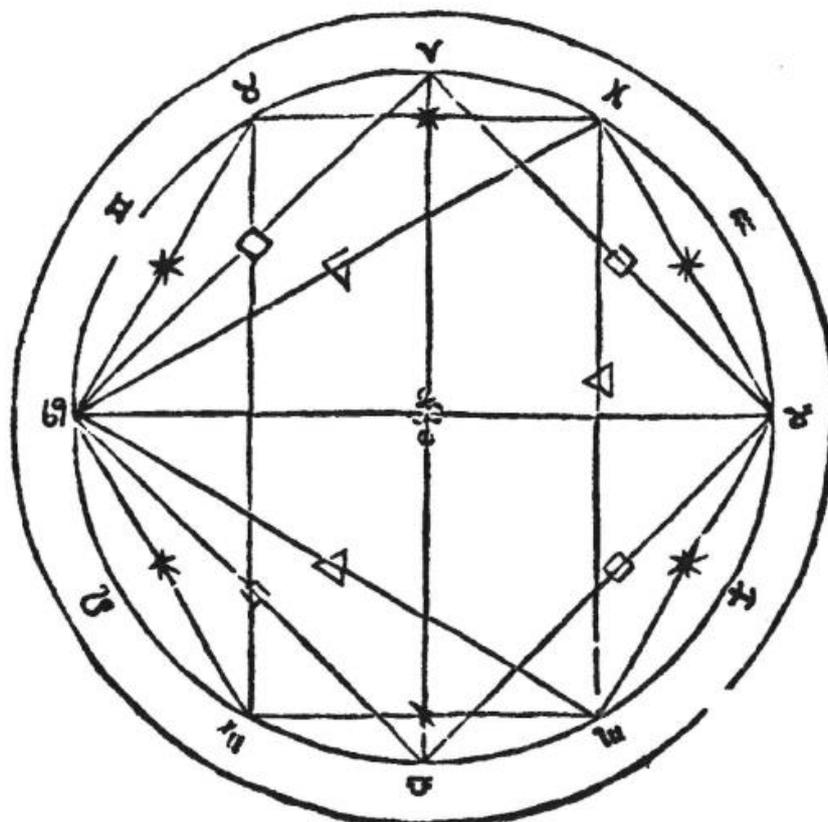
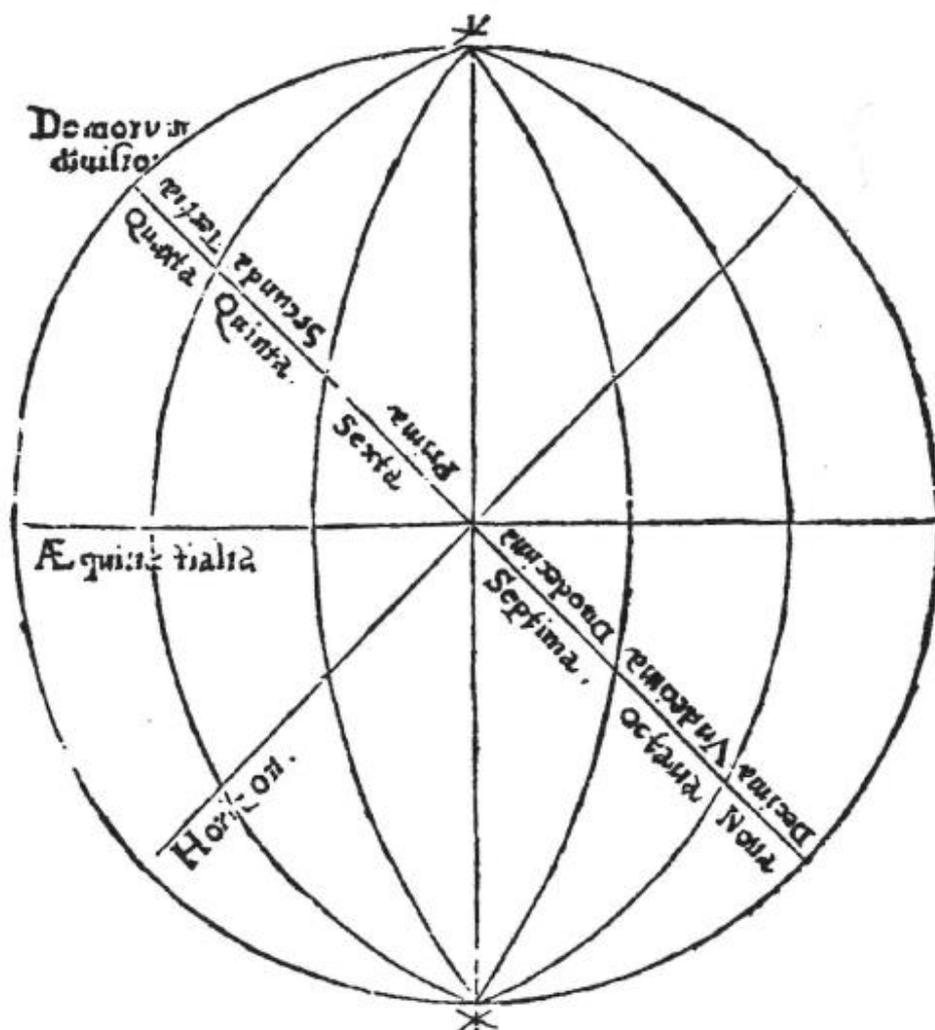


Figure 6. Extract from an Ephemeris showing data for October 1st-10th, 1667.

| | | October hath XXXI. dayes. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Month days | Week days | The daily motions of the Planets and Ω | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | h | m | m | \odot | m | m | D | Ω | | | | | | | | | |
| | | v | r | m | | | | | | | |
| 1 | a | 25 | 35 | 1 | 59 | 3 | 8 | 18 | 2 | 7 | 21 | 3 | 25 | 1 | 48 | 10 | 29 | |
| 2 | a | 25 | 36 | 1 | 51 | 3 | 45 | 19 | 1 | 8 | 36 | 5 | 9 | 14 | 25 | 10 | 26 | |
| 3 | c | 25 | 37 | 1 | 43 | 4 | 21 | 20 | 1 | 9 | 51 | 6 | 45 | 27 | 25 | 10 | 23 | |
| 4 | a | 25 | 39 | 1 | 35 | 4 | 57 | 21 | 1 | 11 | 6 | 8 | 25 | 10 | 11 | 16 | 10 | 20 |
| 5 | e | 25 | 40 | 1 | 27 | 5 | 33 | 22 | 0 | 12 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 24 | 48 | 10 | 17 | |
| 6 | f | 25 | 42 | 1 | 19 | 6 | 14 | 23 | 0 | 13 | 37 | 11 | 47 | 8 | 18 | 10 | 14 | |
| 7 | g | 25 | 43 | 1 | 11 | 6 | 48 | 24 | 0 | 14 | 52 | 13 | 28 | 21 | 47 | 10 | 11 | |
| 8 | a | 25 | 45 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 23 | 25 | 0 | 16 | 7 | 15 | 9 | 6 | 11 | 18 | 10 | 8 |
| 9 | b | 25 | 47 | 0 | 55 | 7 | 59 | 26 | 0 | 17 | 22 | 16 | 50 | 23 | 39 | 10 | 4 | |
| 10 | c | 25 | 49 | 0 | 47 | 8 | 35 | 27 | 0 | 18 | 38 | 18 | 32 | 8 | 7 | 31 | 10 | 1 |

Figure 7. The twelve houses laid out on the Zodiac. The diagram is based on the geo-centric cosmos, with the Earth at the centre and the stars rotating around it on a giant sphere. The Zodiac is the band of the heavens through which the sun and planets pass during the course of the year. It is divided into twelve parts or “houses” that are numbered on the diagram (*prima, secunda, tertia*, etc.). From Robert Fludd’s *Utriusque cosmi historia* (London, 1618), reproduced in Anthony Grafton, *Cardano’s Cosmos* (Harvard University Press, 2001).



IMPORTANT: signs and houses are not the same thing! They both divide up the zodiac into twelve parts that are roughly equal in size, but they do this in different ways. The signs are what we now call the constellations – Aires, Aquarius, etc. -- each of which is named after a cluster of stars in a suggestive pattern. The houses are imaginary segments of the zodiac that are defined by a given observer at a given place and time. As Figure 7 suggests, the first house is the segment just above the observer’s horizon; the second house is the next segment, and so on across the sky. Any given sign can appear in any of the houses, depending on the observer’s time and place. Normally, the boundaries of the houses don’t coincide with the boundaries of the signs. So it makes sense to say, for example, that the sign Aquarius has progressed by such-and-such a number of degrees through the first house.

Figure 8. "How to frame the twelve houses, and what every house concerns, in a decumbiture figure." Each house was associated with a different aspect of a patient's life, and physicians used these associations to help with their diagnoses. Blagrave makes little use of this technique in his *Astrological Practice of Physick*, but he does display the houses in a chart like the following. The first house is the triangle at the 9 o'clock position on the chart, and the eleven other houses follow in a counter-clockwise fashion. The number of each house is marked on the border or "cusp" of the house. Clarifications: pson = person, phisition = doctor, phissick = medicine, frindes = friends.

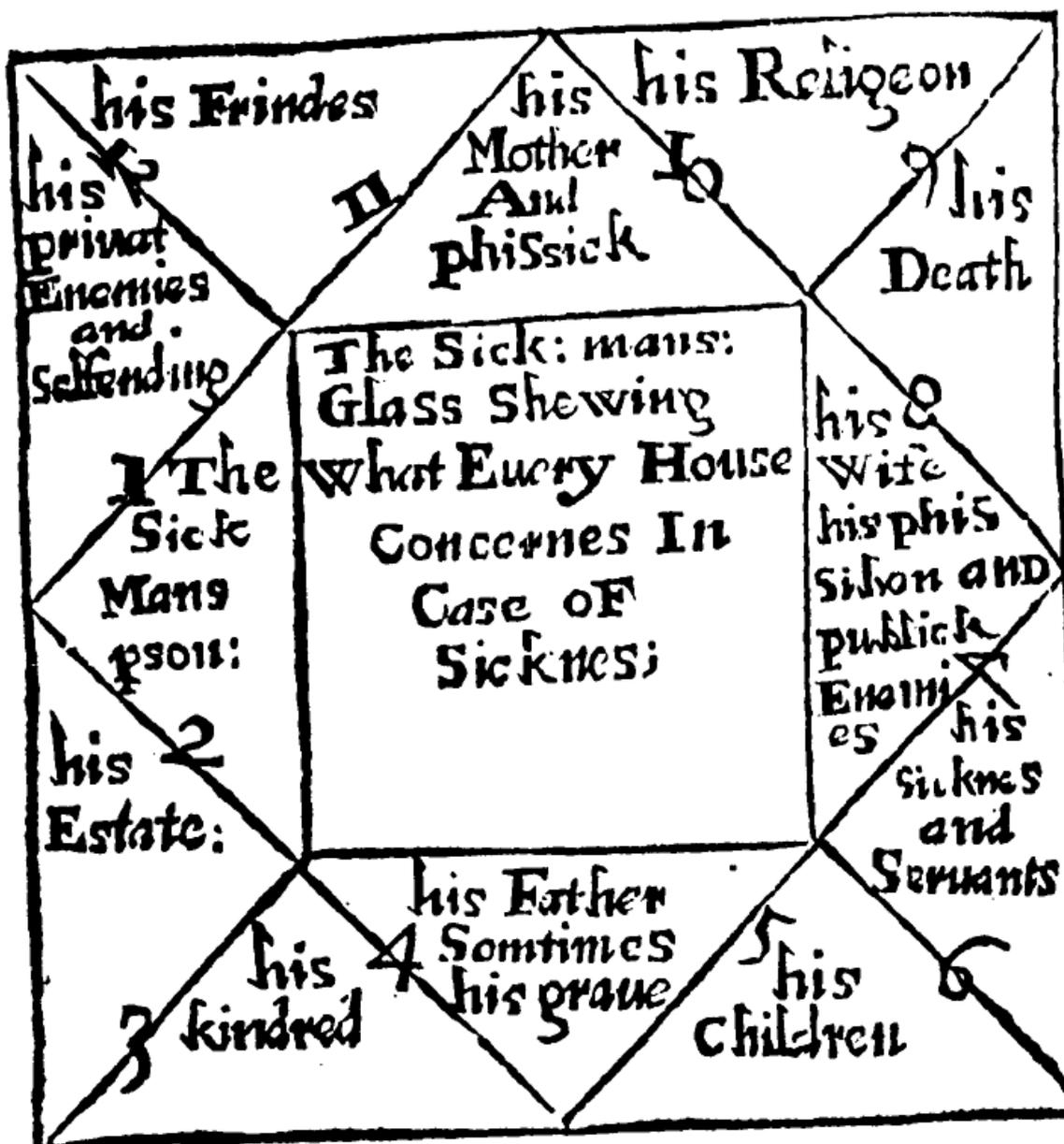


Figure 9. Extract from a Table of Houses showing data for when Sol (ie. the sun) is in the constellation Libra. "dom." stands for "domus", which means "house" in Latin. "G" or "Gradus" is Latin for "degrees." The latitude shown is roughly that of London; the same table for, say, Florence, would have different data. From William Lilly, *Merlini Anglici ephemeris, or, Astrological Judgments for the Year 1667* (London, 1667).

| A Table of Houses for the latitude of 51. degr. 34. min. <i>Sol in Libra</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Time from Noon. | | | dom.X | do.XI. | do.XII. | Ascend | do. II. | do.III. | | | | | |
| H | M | S | ♌ | ♍ | ♎ | ♏ | ♐ | ♑ | ♒ | ♓ | | | |
| | | | Gradus | G | M | G | M | G | M | G | M | G | |
| 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 34 | 14 | 6 | 3 | 19 | 1 | 32 | 17 | 22 |
| 12 | 3 | 40 | 1 | 26 | 20 | 14 | 46 | 3 | 59 | 2 | 24 | 18 | 23 |
| 12 | 7 | 20 | 2 | 27 | 6 | 15 | 28 | 4 | 40 | 3 | 15 | 19 | 44 |
| 12 | 11 | 0 | 3 | 27 | 52 | 16 | 7 | 5 | 20 | 4 | 7 | 20 | 56 |
| 12 | 14 | 40 | 4 | 28 | 39 | 16 | 47 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 22 | 8 |
| 12 | 18 | 20 | 5 | 29 | 26 | 17 | 23 | 6 | 43 | 5 | 55 | 23 | 21 |
| 12 | 22 | 0 | 6 | 30 | 12 | 18 | 8 | 7 | 23 | 6 | 49 | 24 | 36 |
| 12 | 25 | 40 | 7 | 30 | 59 | 18 | 42 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 44 | 25 | 51 |
| 12 | 29 | 20 | 8 | 1 | 45 | 19 | 29 | 3 | 46 | 8 | 39 | 27 | 5 |
| 12 | 33 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 31 | 20 | 10 | 9 | 28 | 9 | 34 | 28 | 20 |
| 12 | 36 | 44 | 10 | 3 | 19 | 20 | 51 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 32 | 29 | 37 |
| 12 | 40 | 24 | 11 | 4 | 5 | 21 | 31 | 10 | 52 | 11 | 30 | 0 | 53 |
| 12 | 44 | 4 | 12 | 4 | 52 | 22 | 12 | 11 | 35 | 12 | 28 | 2 | 11 |
| 12 | 47 | 48 | 13 | 5 | 35 | 22 | 54 | 12 | 38 | 13 | 27 | 3 | 29 |
| 12 | 51 | 28 | 14 | 6 | 25 | 23 | 34 | 12 | 59 | 14 | 26 | 4 | 46 |
| 12 | 55 | 12 | 15 | 7 | 11 | 24 | 16 | 13 | 43 | 15 | 27 | 6 | 6 |
| 12 | 58 | 52 | 16 | 7 | 57 | 24 | 57 | 14 | 26 | 16 | 23 | 7 | 24 |
| 13 | 2 | 36 | 17 | 8 | 44 | 25 | 39 | 15 | 10 | 17 | 30 | 8 | 44 |
| 13 | 6 | 20 | 18 | 9 | 28 | 26 | 20 | 15 | 54 | 18 | 32 | 10 | 4 |
| 13 | 10 | 4 | 19 | 10 | 15 | 27 | 2 | 16 | 39 | 19 | 37 | 11 | 26 |
| 13 | 13 | 48 | 20 | 11 | 2 | 27 | 44 | 17 | 23 | 20 | 44 | 12 | 49 |
| 13 | 17 | 32 | 21 | 11 | 50 | 28 | 26 | 18 | 8 | 21 | 50 | 14 | 10 |
| 13 | 21 | 16 | 22 | 12 | 36 | 29 | 8 | 18 | 54 | 22 | 59 | 15 | 32 |
| 13 | 25 | 0 | 23 | 13 | 22 | 29 | 49 | 19 | 39 | 24 | 6 | 16 | 54 |
| 13 | 28 | 48 | 24 | 14 | 10 | 0 | 33 | 20 | 26 | 25 | 17 | 18 | 21 |
| 13 | 32 | 36 | 25 | 14 | 57 | 1 | 16 | 21 | 14 | 26 | 23 | 19 | 45 |
| 13 | 36 | 24 | 26 | 15 | 44 | 1 | 57 | 22 | 1 | 27 | 41 | 21 | 9 |
| 13 | 40 | 12 | 27 | 15 | 32 | 2 | 43 | 22 | 49 | 28 | 57 | 22 | 35 |
| 13 | 44 | 0 | 28 | 17 | 29 | 3 | 26 | 23 | 37 | 0 | 27 | 25 | 26 |
| 13 | 47 | 48 | 29 | 18 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 24 | 26 | 1 | 27 | 25 | 26 |
| 13 | 51 | 26 | 20 | 18 | 54 | 4 | 51 | 25 | 15 | 2 | 44 | 26 | 51 |

Figure 10. Sequel to Figure 9.

A Table of Houses for the latitude of 51. degr. 34. min.

Sol in Scorpio.

| Time from Noon. | | | dom. X ♏ | do. XI ♐ | do. XII ♑ | | Ascend ♑ | | do. II ♒ | | do. III ♓ | | |
|-----------------|----|----|-------------|-------------|--------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|----|--------------|----|----|
| H | M | S | Gradus | G | M | G | M | G | M | G | M | G | M |
| 13 | 51 | 36 | 0 | 18 | 51 | 4 | 51 | 25 | 15 | 2 | 44 | 26 | 51 |
| 13 | 55 | 24 | 1 | 19 | 42 | 5 | 34 | 26 | 5 | 3 | 59 | 28 | 17 |
| 13 | 59 | 16 | 2 | 20 | 30 | 6 | 19 | 26 | 56 | 5 | 25 | 29 | 44 |
| 14 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 21 | 18 | 7 | 4 | 27 | 47 | 6 | 49 | 31 | 9 |
| 14 | 6 | 56 | 4 | 22 | 6 | 7 | 49 | 28 | 39 | 8 | 13 | 2 | 36 |
| 14 | 10 | 48 | 5 | 22 | 54 | 8 | 34 | 29 | 39 | 9 | 38 | 4 | 0 |
| 14 | 14 | 40 | 6 | 23 | 43 | 9 | 20 | 0 | 24 | 11 | 6 | 5 | 28 |
| 14 | 18 | 36 | 7 | 24 | 31 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 11 | 12 | 34 | 6 | 56 |
| 14 | 22 | 28 | 8 | 25 | 21 | 10 | 51 | 2 | 13 | 14 | 7 | 8 | 24 |
| 14 | 26 | 26 | 9 | 26 | 9 | 11 | 38 | 3 | 10 | 15 | 40 | 9 | 51 |
| 14 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 26 | 56 | 12 | 25 | 4 | 6 | 17 | 15 | 11 | 19 |
| 14 | 34 | 16 | 11 | 27 | 47 | 13 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 18 | 52 | 12 | 47 |
| 14 | 38 | 12 | 12 | 28 | 37 | 13 | 59 | 6 | 1 | 20 | 31 | 14 | 15 |
| 14 | 42 | 8 | 13 | 29 | 26 | 14 | 47 | 7 | 0 | 22 | 12 | 15 | 41 |
| 14 | 45 | 4 | 14 | 0 | 16 | 15 | 35 | 8 | 0 | 23 | 53 | 17 | 9 |
| 14 | 50 | 4 | 15 | 1 | 6 | 16 | 22 | 9 | 2 | 25 | 41 | 18 | 37 |
| 14 | 54 | 4 | 16 | 1 | 56 | 17 | 14 | 10 | 6 | 27 | 26 | 20 | 4 |
| 14 | 58 | 4 | 17 | 2 | 46 | 18 | 31 | 11 | 9 | 29 | 15 | 21 | 30 |
| 15 | 2 | 4 | 18 | 3 | 36 | 18 | 52 | 12 | 14 | 1 | 6 | 22 | 56 |
| 15 | 6 | 8 | 19 | 4 | 27 | 19 | 41 | 13 | 21 | 2 | 57 | 24 | 23 |
| 15 | 10 | 12 | 20 | 5 | 19 | 20 | 23 | 14 | 29 | 4 | 53 | 25 | 49 |
| 15 | 14 | 12 | 21 | 6 | 10 | 21 | 24 | 15 | 37 | 6 | 49 | 27 | 14 |
| 15 | 18 | 16 | 22 | 7 | 1 | 22 | 14 | 16 | 46 | 8 | 47 | 28 | 39 |
| 15 | 22 | 20 | 23 | 7 | 53 | 23 | 7 | 17 | 58 | 10 | 42 | 0 | 4 |
| 15 | 26 | 24 | 24 | 8 | 44 | 24 | 0 | 19 | 11 | 12 | 48 | 1 | 28 |
| 15 | 30 | 32 | 25 | 9 | 36 | 24 | 54 | 20 | 27 | 14 | 52 | 2 | 52 |
| 15 | 34 | 40 | 26 | 10 | 29 | 25 | 48 | 21 | 43 | 16 | 58 | 4 | 17 |
| 15 | 38 | 48 | 27 | 11 | 21 | 26 | 43 | 23 | 3 | 19 | 4 | 5 | 40 |
| 15 | 42 | 51 | 28 | 12 | 15 | 27 | 38 | 24 | 24 | 21 | 11 | 7 | 3 |
| 15 | 47 | 4 | 29 | 13 | 8 | 28 | 34 | 25 | 47 | 23 | 18 | 8 | 25 |
| 15 | 51 | 12 | 30 | 14 | 0 | 29 | 30 | 27 | 10 | 25 | 25 | 9 | 47 |

Figure 11. Astrological chart ("figure") for a patient whose time of being laid up in bed ("decumbiture") was October 10th, 1667, at 1:15pm. The text on the edge of each house describes the position of the house with respect to the signs and the planets. Eg. for the first house, the text "♄10 6" means "the constellation Capricorn lies in this house, and has progressed through it by an angle of 10 degrees and 6 minutes." Still in the first house, the text "♄ 25 49" means "the planet Saturn is in this house, and has progressed through the constellation in this house [ie. Capricorn] by 25 degrees and 49 minutes."

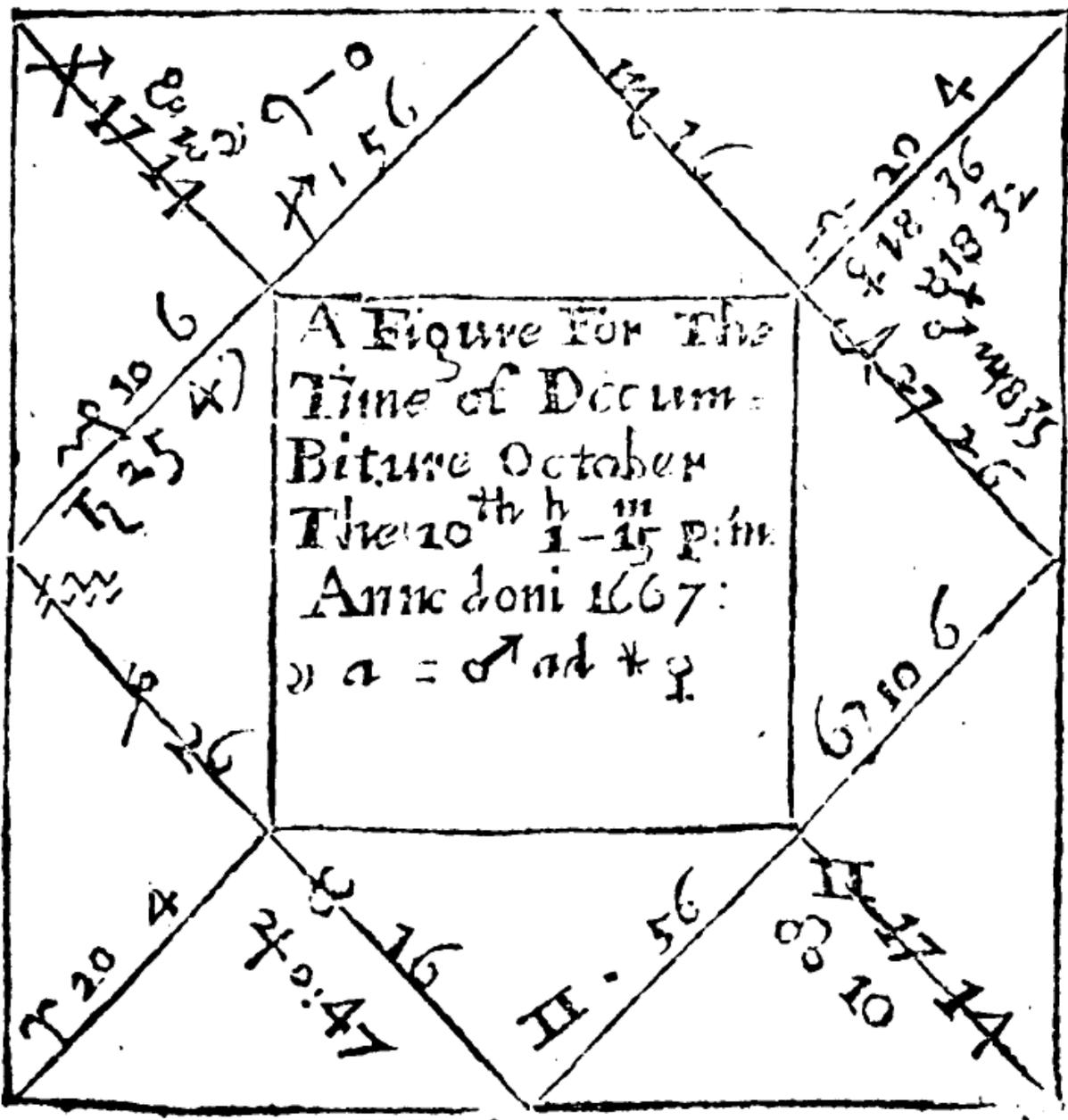


Figure 12. Hand-written astrological chart by an early modern physician. This is what astrological medicine looked like in practice. The image is from a page in the notebooks of the astrological physician Richard Napier. As the text at the top shows, it is for a patient who visited Napier on 15 September 1599, at 1:15pm. From <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk>, where you can browse the tens of thousands of pages in Napier's notebooks.

