

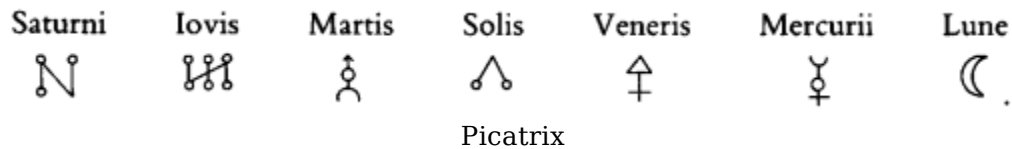
## The Latin Picatrix, The Arabic Ghayat al-ḥakim, And The O9A Septenary System

Those who have studied the Renaissance Latin text known as the Picatrix, and those who have studied the more ancient Arabic text - Ghayat al-ḥakim - on which it is based, will be aware of three things.

First, that describing either book as an "astrological" text is a mistake, given (i) what the term astrology now denotes, such as the making of natal charts, and the writing of horoscopes based on Zodiacal constellations; and given (ii) that the classical Latin term *astrologia* denoted the Art (scientia) of knowing and understanding celestial objects - the stars and planets - and how these objects might affect mortals given that for ancient Greek and Roman philosophers we mortals were considered as connected to, as part of, the cosmic order, κόσμος.

Second, that the subject of Ghayat al-ḥakim - and thus of the Picatrix - is this connection and how a knowledge and understanding of the seven planets, of the Zodiacal constellations, and the relation between them, was a means whereby wisdom - an understanding of the cosmos, and of ourselves - could be attained. Which understanding was of The Unity, the Monas, behind all things.

Third, how a septenary system permeates those two books. Thus, and for example, the Latin manuscript whose scholarly designation is M - Sloane MS 3679 in the British Library - provides a useful summary of the text, a table of contents, listing the seven planets, while in Liber II, chapter X, their sigils are illustrated as follows,



which sigils, however, differ in many respects from those of the much earlier Ghayat al-ḥakim, and which difference will be discussed later.



The Picatrix sigils are followed, some pages on, by their Zodiacal associations, with Saturn for instance, associated with Aquarius (facias in hora Saturni tercia Aquarri ascendente) and Jupiter with Sagittarius (facias in hora Iovis secunda Sagittari ascendente) followed by descriptions of other, more human, planetary and Zodiacal associations and in which descriptions a certain Hermes Trismegistus is mentioned.

Liber III provides detailed descriptions of other esoteric correspondences between these seven planets and the twelve constellations of the Zodiac, including their respective Decans. For example, "Mercurius est minera virtutis intellective. Et habet aspectum ad sciencias addiscendum et sapiencia et dialecticam, grammticam, philosphima..." and "Luna est que recipit virtutes planetarum et infundit eas in mundo virtutis naturalis..."

Liber IV is divided into nine chapters, and concerns "de proprietatibus spirituum, et de his que necessaria sunt in ista arte, et qualiter imaginibus et suffumigianibus et aliis adiuvantur." That is, it concerns the animated principles - the 'spirits', angelus - associated with the seven planets and what is required, in terms of such things as incenses, sigils, names, and human-made objects - *imago* {1} - for those planets to be understood as symbolic of the workings of the cosmos and of ourselves.

In Liber IV various sigils are illustrated of a kind now familiar from much later 'grimoire' texts together with the names of the various 'spirits' - angelus - associated with the seven planets. For instance, Zemeyel with Mars, and Yebil with Sol.

The incenses associated with each planet, and their recipes, are described with that of Sol involving "florum spice nardi, sandali crocei et rubei ana 3x, ciperi, thymi..."

In chapter VII of Book IV it is stated that "deinde scribe in eo nomina septem stellarum, septem figuras earum et nomina septem angelorum et septem ventorum. Nomina autem septem stellarum sunt hec Zohal, Musteri, Marrech, Xemz, Zohara, Hotarid, Alchamar." The sigil of each is then illustrated.

While more quotations from the Picatrix could be included, sufficient have been provided to illustrate that the work concerns a septenary system and the esoteric correspondences of the seven planets including their relation to the Zodiacal constellations, and the incenses, sigils, tinctures, objects, and names of the respective animating principles, necessary to acquire an understanding of the whole system and thus achieve the goal that is wisdom.

There is thus a direct link to the septenary tradition described in the esoteric and typewritten 1980s O9A text *Naos* {2} and which O9A system is independent of the post-Picatrix qabalistic system, with its ten-fold Otz Chim, which all other, non-O9A, modern Occultists use and which later, Hebrew influenced, ten-fold system, has since the formation in the 19th century of the Hermetic Order Of The Golden Dawn, formed the basis of the 'magic' of Crowley, Levey, and Aquino, and which thus has mistakenly come to be regarded as an integral part of Western Occultism.

## Differences, Influences, And Translations

The difference between the sigils given in the Picatrix and those in Ghayat al-ḥakim is indicative of two things. First, how the medieval and Renaissance scribes of the Picatrix (c.1300 - c.1459), not having access to the Arabic text (c.1050) sought to translate the Spanish translation of the Arabic text that they had access to, with differences between extant manuscripts of the Picatrix suggesting that various passages of the Spanish text were interpreted in different ways.

Second, how the later sigils - and the names of certain animating principles, 'spirits' or 'angels' - in the Picatrix may have evolved in the centuries between Ghayat al-ḥakim and the Picatrix, with the sigil of Mercurii for example obviously influenced by the Western alchemical symbol for Mercury.

In regard to modern English translations of the Picatrix, the word *magicus* is invariably mistranslated as 'magic' whereas as Anton Long has explained in his essay *Sorcery In Virgil's Aeneid* {3} it correctly refers to an ancient Art, a particular Craft, and not to what is now associated with the words 'magic' and 'magick'. Also, the first paragraph of Liber II of the Picatrix explains in some detail what is meant:

Sapientes qui naturali sensu sunt dotati numquam cessant nec deserunt petere et inquirere ut sapientum secreta sciant et intelligant, que incluserunt in suis libris et scripserunt verbis occultis. et qui predicta invenerunt sollicitis inquisitionibus quousque attigerunt que voluerunt; sed homines imbecilles et intellectu carentes ad predicta attingere nequeunt vel venire.

Sed motus mee voluntatis processit ad inquisitiones magice et pravitatum tempore quo iuventute florebam. Et studebam in Centiloquio Ptolomei, in quo dicitur quod omnia huius mundi celestibus obediunt formis. Et manifestum est quod omnes sapientes in hoc sunt concordati, quod planete habent influencias et vires in hoc mundo quibus omnia fiunt in eo et alterantur motu planetarum in signis; qua de causa cognoverunt quod radices magice sunt motus planetarum.

In addition, the translation of the Latin *imago* by the 17th century English word *talisman* is a mistake since the Latin implies "a semblance", a crafting of something which of itself presenced, was a semblance of, what was 'higher', numinous, by something which was 'lower', material, with such a presencing well-expressed by Marsilii Ficini in his *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*,

"Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona."

"How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned." {4}

Which is one of the axioms of the Hermetic weltanschauung, and as noted in the essay *An Esoteric Note On The Somnium Scipionis Of Cicero* {3} is a more philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Hermetic text *Tabula Smaragdina*.

Hence, to obtain a knowledge of what is one ancient source for the O9A septenary tradition, the student of the Occult and those interested in O9A esotericism, should study the Arabic text of *Ghayat al-hakim* in preference to the Latin *Picatrix*, and also compare that text to Renaissance works such as those by Marsilio Ficino, as well as study the alchemical texts which mention or which allude to a septenary system. {5}

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{1} The Latin term *imago* as used in the *Picatrix* is usually translated as "talismán". I describe why that is a mistake in the *Differences, Influences, And Translations* section.

{2} A facsimile of the 1980s O9A typewritten text is available, as of August 2018, at <https://lapisphilosophicus.wordpress.com/naos/>

{3} The essay is included in *The Eludent Order of Nine Angles*, available at <https://omega9alpha.wordpress.com/2018/08/24/the-eludent-order-of-nine-angles/>

{4} The translation is by David Myatt, from his *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates. Translation and Commentary*. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369

{5} Many of these alchemical texts are described in *Alchemical And Hermetic Antecedents Of The Seven Fold Way*, available as of August 2018, from <https://omega9alpha.wordpress.com/ἀρρενóθηλυσ/>

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