Of all the heavenly bodies, the Mesopotamians were keenly aware of the moon. Its position and condition—in relation to asterisms, visibility, and meteorological phenomenon—were watched carefully.

One cycle of particular interest was the cycle of the Moon's latitude. The Mesopotamians' lunar latitude texts and earliest ephemerides tracked the moon's latitudinal path around the earth, and in a few instances we have horoscopes delineating the moon (as well as other planets) based on latitude. In short, somewhere along the line, the Mesopotamians realized that the moon's latitude was related to nodal elongation, the distance of the moon from its nodes, recognized it as important for eclipse prediction and thought it essential to horoscope delineation.

Here’s how we see lunar latitude from our perspective on earth:

**LUNAR LATITUDE CYCLE:**

**LAL LAL (Positive Increasing):** When the moon is in the quadrant from the north node to the waxing square. In a natural wheel, if the north node was at 0° Aries, the moon sector begins at the north node and ends at the waxing square at 29° Gemini.

**LAL U (Positive decreasing):** When the moon is in the quadrant from the waxing square (again, using the north node as the reference point) to conjunct the south node. In a natural wheel, if the north node was at 0° Aries, the moon would be anywhere from 0° Cancer to 29° Virgo.

**U LAL (Negative increasing):** When the moon is in the quadrant from the south node to the waning square (using the north node as our reference point). In a natural wheel, with the north node at 0° Aries, the moon could be anywhere from 0° Libra, that is, conjunct the south node, to 29° Sagittarius.

**U U (Negative decreasing):** When the moon is in the quadrant from the waning square (using the north node as our reference point) to conjunct the north node. In a natural wheel, if the north node is 0° Aries, the moon could be anywhere from 0° Capricorn to 29° Pisces.
The critical junctures in this cycle are when the moon is 1) **conjunct the north node**, 2) **square the north node** (at the “north bendings” – 90° in a counter-clockwise or sign-order direction from the north node), 3) **conjunct the south node**, or 3) **square the south node** (at the “south bendings” – 90° in a counter-clockwise or sign-order direction from the south node). At any of these four junctures, the moon is unstable; it is changing directions.

- When the moon conjoins the north node, it is at 0° latitude and on the ecliptic. (If the sun conjoins or opposes the moon at this time, we have an eclipse.) As the moon passes the north node, toward the waxing square, it gains in north latitude, defined as **increasing positive latitude**.
- When the moon is 90° from the north node (in sign order), it is at its position of maximum north latitude (+5°06’ of the ecliptic). After the moon passes the 90° mark, it loses North latitude, so defined as **decreasing positive latitude**.
- When the moon conjoins the south node, it is at 0° latitude and on the ecliptic. If the sun conjoins or opposes the moon at this time, we have an eclipse. As the moon passes the south node, toward the waning square, it gains in south latitude, so defined as **increasing negative latitude**.
- When the moon is 90° from the south node (in sign order), it is at its position of maximum south latitude (-5°06’ of the ecliptic). As the moon goes passes 90° from the south node, it is moving in the direction of **decreasing negative latitude**.

**The Babylonian moon sectors, which emphasize northern latitude as positive and increasing may be the precursors to our modern Western delineations of the North node being propitious (increase/positive) and the South node being loss (decrease/negative). We have extant horoscopes delineating the quadrants to that effect and other examples in Mesopotamian culture which affix meaning to direction and assign positive to the North and negative to the South.**

An alternative visual for this phenomenon can be seen in a graphic ephemeris. The green star represents the South Node, the red star represents the North Node and the yellow line is the ecliptic. The wavy line is the moon’s journey in latitude.

The green arrow represents the moon’s path SOUTH (LAL U/U LAL sectors), beginning after the waxing square from the North Node (maximum North Latitude) and ends at the waxing square from the South Node (maximum South Latitude). The red arrow shows the moon’s path North, starting at the waxing square from the South Node and extending to the waxing square from the North Node (UU / LAL LAL).
OBSERVATIONS

- When doing electional work, avoid having the moon conjunct or square a node. The moon represents change, and the four critical points in the latitudinal cycle represent the moon at extremes in its cycle (at the bendings, square the nodes) or changing directions (on the ecliptic and moving from North to South or South to North latitude). When you’re trying to choose an optimal date, you don’t want the moon at its most unstable.
- In horary, the moon or a planet squaring a node can indicate a key decision or choice for the querent, a turning point. If it’s a 1st house – 7th house question, the ruler of the 1st house at the north bendings indicates an argument for the 1st house. Or, if at the south bendings, an argument against the 1st house. It can also indicate a fork in the path: a choice that has to be made (but one that closes other options).
- In a solar return chart, the moon (or a planet) square the nodes can indicate an emotionally charged event or issue with which a client is dealing. For more detail, look to the planet and its ruler and the houses involved in the natal and the solar return chart.

Bendings Planets

- In natal charts, the moon (or a planet) square a node indicates stress. The planet is being asked to change in some way and becomes a lightning rod for developmental issues represented by the planet/luminary. I use a 3.5 degree orb to determine bendings planets.
- Outer planets may stay at the bendings for weeks, so are probably less important than personal planets. (My study has focused on personal planets.)
- The moon at the bendings is the most sensitive of all. While other planets are symbolically at an extreme, the moon *is* at an extreme of latitude. If you have the moon at maximum declination (around the solstices every 18.6 years) and maximum latitude in the same direction (both North or both South), you have a major lunar standstill. If you have the moon at maximum declination and maximum latitude but in opposite directions, you have a minor lunar standstill.
- You can time when the developmental issue will be triggered by identifying the solar return years where the nodes are angular. (Using nonrelocated solar return charts.) Solar returns in which the nodal axis is angular indicate pivotal years for these natives, where they find themselves at a crossroads and facing a deeply personal, emotionally charged decision.
- **North Bendings** is connected to pioneering action; to taking risks that others see as unusual, unwise, even foolish. Leaps of faith, opening up, and acting despite opposition fall here, as does the sense you must do something unpopular or “out there.” There can be a sense of urgency to act, despite finding oneself in unfamiliar territory. The focus is on opening up, breaking out, and liberating oneself.
- **South Bendings** is connected to feeling stuck and discovering the strategies employed successfully in the past aren’t effective anymore. You can feel cornered, exasperated, and a little crazy because nothing seems to work. “I can’t go on like this” is a common statement. Often the realization is that you may need to walk away or surrender, because you’ve exhausted your options. Planets at the South Bendings, when activated in the solar return, often involve the client being projection upon. The south bendings client finds him/herself in a situation where another person becomes triggered by what the bendings planet represents. In short, the other person reacts to an unresolved situation in his/her own life rather than to the client him/herself, so it becomes difficult to resolve issues. For instance, if your client has Virgo moon in the 6th at the South Bendings he/she could have a troublesome employee who is impossible to supervise because the South Bendings individual represents the mother the employee could never please. The south bendings person, even with very reasonable expectations, may be confronted with a petulant, resentful and hurt child whenever he/she (in the role of supervisor) tried to give feedback or correct the employee.
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