

Essential Dignities

The Essential Dignities are the heartland of Ancient Astrology. By studying and understanding this we gain a profound method of delineating a planet's ability to perform. If you think of each planet as having a mission, a promise or a role to play, then the degrees and zodiac sign of its location will indicate how effective the planet is at fulfilling this role. If the planet is in good condition then it can deliver its function in a positive and effective manner. If the planet is struggling it can cause difficulties in the function of the area of life that planet has effect over.

A planet in good condition will be more effective when in aspect to another planet whereas a weak planet can damage a stronger planet.

Planet	Rulership	Detriment	Exaltation	Fall
☉	♈	♋	♌	♍
☽	♌	♎	♍	♈
♀	♌/♍	♈/♉	♍	♈
♀	♈/♉	♌/♍	♈	♍
♂	♌/♍	♈/♉	♎	♌
♃	♈/♉	♌/♍	♌	♎
♅	♎/♏	♌/♍	♉	♌

The modern planets Neptune, Chiron, Uranus and Pluto do not have essential dignities. These planets indicate the ways in which the larger, outer world and the collective impact on us. By the ancient understanding of rulership the allocation of these planets to rule certain signs is questionable because of the very specific use of rulership as a dignity.

Rulership

Rulership is a precise relationship between a planet and a zodiac sign where a planet has supreme ability to function to its fullest extent. It has the ability, power and unquestionable right to perform its duty and it will fulfil its promise.

Exaltation

A planet in exaltation has gained power through struggle or conflict. It has the same power as a planet in rulership but always has a sense that it may be challenged or confronted and therefore always has to be well prepared. Exalted planets have a touch of paranoia about them feeling they need to keep ahead of the crowd.

Detriment and Fall

A planet in detriment is a planet opposite its place of rulership and a planet in fall is one that is opposite its place in exaltation.

The planet in detriment is one that has not lost anything but rather has problems achieving in the eyes of other people whereas a planet in fall has the feel of the deposed conqueror and was considered a greater depletion than detriment.

Robert Zoller says a planet can do three things

1. It can fulfil its promise
2. It can seem to fulfil its promise but then destroy what it has given
3. It can block and not give anything

The condition of detriment and fall places a planet in the second two possibilities. It is somewhat difficult to separate the two conditions but the first point of which to be aware is that the area of life which the planet rules via the houses, will, from time to time, go through periods of loss and confusion. Also the nature or qualities that the planet is meant to give will be weakened or non-traditional in some way.

Rulership or Exaltation will mean the planet's expression is acceptable to society. It functions in a mainstream or establishment manner. However, a planet in detriment or fall will not function in an establishment way and will therefore have to struggle against the majority culture. This may mean the planets' expression causes problems or disasters or it may lead the person into leading edge areas in some manner.

Research Articles on the Net

<http://www.esotech.com.au/steph/pdfs/EssDig.pdf>

A few links with more information about dignities:

- Hand, Robert. Dignities and Debilities as Collected from a Variety of Sources.
<http://www.robhand.com/alldign.htm>.