

Imum caelum (IC) – the Latin term for ‘lowest heaven’; hence the abbreviation: IC. The degree of the ecliptic (zodiac) that reaches its lowest declination beneath the earth (due north in the northern hemisphere; due south in the southern hemisphere). In quadrant systems of house division it denotes the 4th house cusp. Not to be confused with the nadir.

Inconjunct aspect – traditional term for the quincunx aspect (planets that are 150° apart). It conveys a sense of being disconnected – anciently planets separated by this degree were said to be unable to make a relationship because signs cannot behold (aspect) others that are five signs ahead or behind them.

Inferior/superior planets – the ‘superiors’ are the planets which were traditionally conceived to be placed above the sphere of the Sun: Mars, Jupiter and Saturn; the ‘inferiors’ those which fall beneath its sphere: Moon, Mercury, and Venus. Modern definitions say inferiors are those whose orbits fall within that of the Earth, superiors those outside of it, which amounts to the same result but misses the point about the Sun being a central factor. The outer planets are included in modern definitions but fall outside the traditional notion of ‘superiority’ because of their limited signification. It is a principle of traditional astrology that the heavier, superior planets are less subject to the detrimental influences of the lighter, inferior planets, but the inferior planets are readily susceptible to the influences of the superiors.

Intercepted signs – the full enclosure of a sign within a house that has two other signs on cusps – for example, if the 2nd house cusp is at 23° Aquarius, and the 3rd house cusp at 6° Aries, Pisces is intercepted within the 2nd house and any planets in Pisces may be described as being within an intercepted sign. Modern authors have suggested that planets in intercepted signs are weakened or in some way confined, though this view does not appear to be supported in traditional texts.

Luminary(ies) – Sun or Moon, so called because they illuminate the sky. Also known as ‘the lights’.

Malefic planets – also known as ‘infortunes’, these are planets that are judged capable of afflicting a positive outcome. Under normal circumstances Saturn and Mars are considered naturally malefic because of their intemperate natures, (Saturn is traditionally known as the ‘Greater Malefic’ and Mars as the ‘Lesser Malefic’). Many traditional texts also consider the south node to be representative of decrease and therefore term it a malefic. The outer planets – Uranus, Neptune and Pluto – also tend to be considered malefic in their influence. See ‘benefic planets’.

Malevolents – another term for malefic planets (see above).

Masculine/feminine – in many ways the polarities of masculinity and femininity are similar to those of sect (diurnal/nocturnal); masculinity representing the active, solar principle, and femininity representing the passive (or receptive) lunar principle. But diurnal/nocturnal definitions seem to be more dependent upon the generation of heat (diurnal) or lack of it (nocturnal), whilst the masculine/feminine definitions are more dependent upon dryness (masculinity) or moisture (femininity). It may be that both divisions arose as alternate ways to describe the same essential polarisation that modern astrologers prefer to label ‘positive or negative’. The masculine/feminine definitions are also heavily dependent upon Pythagorean numerological principles, where all the masculine signs, (which are also the diurnal ones), are the odd numbered ones; and all the feminine signs (which are also the nocturnal ones) are even numbered. The masculine planets are the Sun and the superiors: ☉ ♂ ♃ ♅; the feminine planets are the inferiors: ♄ ♀; with ♃ being common to both genders. The distinction may be partly based upon the way that the planets emerge from conjunction with the Sun – the superiors always emerge on the right hand side, the Moon always on the left, with Venus and Mercury able to emerge on either side. See ‘diurnal’, ‘occidental’, ‘dexter’ and ‘sect’.

Melancholic – one of the four humours, related to the season of winter and the element of earth. It denotes a cold and dry temperament and the word ‘melancholic’ is often used to describe

someone who is slow to respond to passions, profound in thought, with a serious (often pessimistic) outlook which inclines towards depression and introversion. In physiology the melancholic humour is traditionally reputed to be seated in black bile (faeces), which supports the principle of retention by the function of compression.

Meridian – the imaginary line passing through the celestial poles and the observer’s zenith and nadir, dividing the sky into east and west; a celestial equivalent of terrestrial longitude (from the Latin *meri*, ‘middle’, and *diem*, ‘day’, because the Sun crosses the meridian at noon).

Midheaven (MC) – the degree of the ecliptic (zodiac) that culminates above the earth (this occurs due south in the northern hemisphere; due north in the southern hemisphere). In quadrant systems of house division it denotes the 10th house cusp. The Latin term was *medium caelum*, ‘middle heaven’; hence the abbreviation: MC. Not to be confused with the zenith.

Mundane – in general terms: ‘earthly’, ‘elemental’, ‘relating to the earth’.

Mundane astrology – the branch of astrology dealing with influences affecting nations, collective experiences, weather, political leaders, historical trends and world events. Also known as political astrology.

Nadir – the point directly beneath an observer (opposite to the zenith) which is always perpendicular to the celestial horizon.

Nocturnal – see ‘diurnal/nocturnal’.

Nocturnal hemisphere – the hemisphere beneath the horizon, comprising the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th houses. See *p.xix*.

Nocturnal sect – see ‘sect’.

Nodes: north or south – the north and south nodes indicate the points in the zodiac where the plane of the Moon’s orbit intersects the plane of the ecliptic. These are sensitive areas where eclipses occur.

Occident/orient – ‘occident’ is from the Latin term for the west, originally meaning ‘falling’, ‘setting’ or ‘perishing’ (as in sunset);

‘orient’ is from the Latin term for the east, originally from *oriens* meaning ‘rising’ or ‘emerging’, (as in sunrise).

Occidental/oriental – with regards to the houses or the angles, occidental means ‘western’ and oriental means ‘eastern’. Also, if a planet is described as ‘oriental in the figure’, it means that it is located near the ascendant which is the eastern angle, whilst ‘occidental in the figure’, means that it is located near the descendant which is the western angle.

When applied to planets or stars however, occidental means ‘setting into the Sun’ and oriental means ‘rising from the Sun’, relating to the original basis of the terms by which they are associated with the cycles of growth and decay (see above). The usual definition is that an oriental planet is one which rises before the Sun; whereas an occidental planet is one that rises after it. (When the superior planets are thus defined as oriental they are beginning a new solar cycle, having recently emerged in their heliacal rising, and are considered dignified; this is not necessarily the case for Mercury, Venus and is never the case for the Moon which emerges from the Sun on the left hand side, which is why these planets do not gain dignity by being oriental).

Occidental hemisphere – the western/setting hemisphere, incorporating the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th houses. See p.xx.

Occidental quarter – the quadrant of the chart that falls beneath the western horizon, incorporating the 4th, 5th and 6th houses. Also known as the phlegmatic quarter – see p.xxii.

Orient – see ‘occident/orient’.

Oriental – see ‘occidental’.

Oriental hemisphere – the eastern/rising hemisphere, incorporating the 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st, 12th, and 11th houses. See p.xx.

Oriental quarter – the quadrant of the chart that rises from the eastern horizon, incorporating the 1st, 12th and 11th houses. Also known as the sanguine quarter – see p.xxi.