

Predicting with the Winter Solstice Chart by Madalyn Hillis-Dineen and Patricia White

“The year is a wheel with eight spokes. Each circuit is comparable to the cycle of a human life. The Winter Solstice is the time before we were born, the great dark uterine void from which all is formed. The vast black ring around all possibility, its perimeter bulging with promise. Light is conceived in the cold dark at the time of the Winter Solstice. The smallest spark, the most tentative hint of a glow, is imagined in the dense ambience of its absence. The sun is a mere gleam in the eye of eternity. Light, no matter how tiny, equals life.” -- Donna Henes, Celestially Auspicious Occasions (1)

Why the Winter Solstice Is Important

On December 22, 2002, at 1:14:17 AM GMT (December 21 at 8:14:17 PM EST), the Sun enters Capricorn, marking the Winter Solstice, the point in the annual solar cycle when the Sun reaches its maximum south declination and the Northern Hemisphere experiences the shortest day of the year.

Cardinal ingresses like this have been used to predict public events at least since the time of Ptolemy, but which of the four Cardinal ingresses best signifies the coming year has long been a subject of debate. Ptolemy favored the Aries ingress as the year’s true inception, because it is then that the length of the day starts to exceed the length of the night, and the moisture of the season fosters generation and new growth. In the 20th century, after his own extensive researches, E.H. Troinski considered the Libra ingress the most important for prediction.

However, in very ancient times the most important yearly turning points were considered to be the summer and winter solstices. Later, in the 4th century A.D., the Emperor Julian opted for the Winter Solstice in particular, “when King Helios returns to us again, and leaving the region furthest south and rounding Capricorn as though it were a goal-post, advances from the south to the north to give us our share of blessings of the year.”(2)

In the 20th century, Charles Carter in England and Alfred Witte in Germany both echoed the Emperor Julian’s sentiments and made a persuasive case for the Capricorn ingress. Quite reasonably, Witte saw the Capricorn ingress as the beginning of the solar cycle. In the Northern Hemisphere it’s the time when the old Sun dies and a new one is born, and, as Chinese astrologers saw it, increasing yin switches over to increasing yang. Like the New Moon, which most astrologers acknowledge to be the beginning of the lunar cycle, the Winter Solstice marks the end of the waning half of the cycle and the beginning of a new waxing half.

Also, at least in Northern latitudes, Capricorn is probably the most emotionally laden of the four Cardinal ingresses -- the one that brings up primal fears of darkness, cold, hunger and the cessation of all life. Will the light return? Will the round of life continue? For peoples who routinely experienced cold, famine and nights lit only by fire, seeing the

waning of the Sun's strength finally reverse itself must have truly seemed like a rebirth and must have been an occasion for heart-felt rejoicing.

Today, around the time of the Winter Solstice we still compensate for the withdrawal of the Sun's light and heat by cozily nesting indoors, stoking the fire, festooning trees with lights, and warming ourselves with food, strong spirits and the company of others. To counter nature's threat of scarcity, we invoke a great-bellied saint clad in the color of fire, whose pack brims with human-made abundance. Our thoughts turn from fresh-picked food toward what is preserved and stored, from the vanished lushness of the natural world toward the human-created social order with its own ingenious methods for sustaining life and hope.

And then, a week later, further reinforcing the idea that the astrological year begins here, we start our civil year.

Uses for the Winter Solstice Chart

Whether or not it marks the true start of the solar year, the Capricorn Ingress chart has to do with the social order, and for this reason it is a plausible tool for predicting political events. Witte also believed that it is especially related to "telluric" events -- earth-related phenomena like earthquakes and floods.

In addition, Witte's successors have found that the Capricorn Ingress chart can also say something about an individual's relationship to the larger world around him. Reading the Winter Solstice chart with reference to a person's natal and progressed Sun is a quick and easy way to derive information about that person's upcoming year.

Reading the Solstice Chart

Whether you're doing a mundane or a personal reading, you can, of course, use your own favorite techniques to read the solstice chart. However, astrologers of the Uranian School simplify the process of reading a solstice chart by first looking at what they deem most important -- the state of the Cardinal Axis at the time of the solstice. This they deem basic and fundamental.

For convenience, Uranian astrologers sometimes call the Cardinal Axis the Aries axis, or simply "Aries," but it actually consists of 0 degrees of all four Cardinal signs (Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn), plus the midpoints between them (15 degrees of the Fixed signs, Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius). In other words, this axis is actually an 8-armed cross with particular emphasis on the 4 Cardinal points, but with secondary importance given to the middle of the Fixed signs as well.

For Uranian astrologers, the Cardinal Points rank up there in importance with the Ascendant and MC. Each of these three types of sensitive points is formed by the intersection of two primary astronomical planes. In the case of 0 degrees of Aries and Libra, the intersection is that of the plane of the Earth's daily rotation (the equator) with

the plane of the Earth's yearly trip around the Sun (the ecliptic). Thus the Cardinal Axis connects the day and the year, the two primary cycles of the earth, and has to do with the seasons, which are fundamental to all life on earth. This is why it carries a world-wide connotation. As Witte's successor Ludwig Rudolph put it, "The four turning points of the revolution [of the Earth around the Sun] are astrologically connected with mankind, the Cross of the general experience of the multitude of Men."⁽³⁾ Along with the Sun, Moon, Asc and MC, the Cardinal Axis (which for convenience Uranian astrologers often call the Aries Point or simply Aries) was considered by Witte to be one of the all-important personal points of the horoscope. Unlike the other personal points, however, the Cardinal Axis is at the same position in everyone's chart. As such, it marks a person's point of commonality with the rest of the world.

The Cardinal ingresses correspond to the four seasons and mark for us the turning points in the earth's connection with the Sun, the giver of light and life. Cultures throughout the ages have celebrated these eight turning points with various holidays or traditions, just as we celebrate Christmas near the Winter Solstice, Easter near the Spring Equinox, and Halloween near the 15 degrees Scorpio point. This division by eight is not exclusive to our observation of the Sun. We also follow the eight phases of the moon, from new to full and new again, and we sing the eight tones of the musical scale.

Interpreting the Cardinal Axis

In reading the state of the Cardinal Axis you would first look to see if any planets are conjunct any of the arms of the cross. Of course, by definition, the Sun will be on the Cardinal axis, since the Winter Solstice is the moment that the Sun enters 0 degrees Capricorn. But the other planets that might be there along with the Sun will help to describe what is in store for the world during the coming year.

In addition, Uranian astrologers get further information about the qualities of the Cardinal Axis that year by looking at the midpoints to it (and possibly also to multi-point Uranian planetary pictures involving it -- but this is advanced Uranian astrology, and we will leave for another time).

The midpoints to the Cardinal Axis can be very telling because they are more than mere midpoints. When two planets are equidistant on either side of the Cancer-Capricorn Axis, they are also at each other's antiscion. This means that they will be roughly in parallel of declination.

Since we are talking about the whole Cardinal Axis, we also look at pairs of planets that are equidistant from the Aries-Libra axis. These will be in contra-antiscion (or contrascion), which means that they will be roughly contraparallel each other.

The ancient astrologers used antiscia and contra-antiscia as a basic tool, and their importance is often underestimated. Declination is very much in vogue now, but the use of antiscia as a rough and ready way of identifying planets that are in parallel goes back more than a thousand years. While Uranian astrologers recognize the importance of

planets that are exactly in parallel, they retain the use of antiscia because they also find that pairs of planets that have the same number of degrees between them in longitude are related by a kind of harmonic resonance. Equal arc openings are a fundamental concept in Uranian astrology, just as they are in John Addey's harmonics theory.

Using a 90-degree Dial

The classic way of looking at the Cardinal Axis is on a 90-degree dial, but this isn't mandatory. However, a 90-degree dial makes it very easy to see what's going on in all 8 arms of the Cardinal Axis – something that isn't so easy to see otherwise.

Basically, a 90-degree dial is made by dividing the 360 degrees of the zodiac into four 90-degree segments and then laying these segments on top of each other. Then it stretches this quarter-circle out into a full circle. The result is a full circle with only 90 degrees. Each degree therefore appears four times larger, and so using the dial is like applying a magnifying glass to the chart. It makes small differences much more apparent, and it enables you to see instantly which hard aspects have the smallest orbs. This is because on the 90-degree dial, the conjunction, opposition and square all appear as conjunctions. On the dial it's very easy to see how far apart these planets are from each other. (The Uranian and Cosmobiology schools both concentrate on the hard aspects not because they're pessimistic, but because these are the aspects that tend to produce action and events. In other words, these are the aspects that tend to make people consult astrologers.)

The 90-degree dial makes the Cardinal Axis easy to work with because it shows all 4 of the primary arms of the cross as if they are conjunct. This is because 0 degrees of all the Cardinal signs falls on the 0-degree point of the 90-degree dial. (Following this, 0 degrees of all the Fixed signs falls at the 30-degree point on the dial, and 0 degrees of all the Mutable signs falls at the 60-degree point on the dial.)

To see the aspects and midpoints to the Cardinal Axis and Solstice Sun, you would place the pointer on the position of these sensitive points, which will always be 0 degrees on a 90-degree dial chart.

- If there are any planets conjunct, square or opposition the Solstice Sun, they will be very near this 0-degree point.
- If there are any planets semisquare or sesquare the Solstice Sun, they will be directly opposite on the dial, near the 45-degree tick.
- If there are any pairs of planets that have the Cardinal Axis as their midpoint, you will see them equidistant from the pointer line. If you're unsure, count the degrees on either side of the pointer line. (In Solar Fire a line will appear connecting the two planets. Also, a little midpoint tree in the center of the dial will show all the midpoints that are centered on this axis.)

In this way the 90-degree dial enables you to investigate not only the Cardinal Axis, but also any other axis in the chart. In the personal solstice reading described further on, you can also use this method to investigate the person's natal and progressed Suns and how they relate to the planets in the solstice chart.

Using Midpoint Trees

You can also investigate the Cardinal Axis and other axes without using a dial. This is particularly easy when you have a program like Solar Fire to calculate midpoint tables and midpoint trees. There are many ways of displaying midpoints, but the tree, which is a simplified diagram of the planets arrayed on either side of an axis, is probably the most intuitively easy to understand.

While the example below uses a Solar Fire-generated tree, if you're using trees generated by another program or by hand, the basic principles are the same.

As our example, let's look at the 2002 Winter Solstice chart. Below we've displayed its Sun axis as a midpoint tree. Of course in a solstice chart, this is the same as the Cardinal Axis. (In this particular example, the Asc and MC have been calculated for Washington, DC.)

Sun	(Orb)
Ven Mar	-0°59'
Ven Asc	-0°47'
Ven	-0°07'
Ura MC	+0°02'
Mar Jup	+0°23'
Jup Asc	+0°35'

If there are planets closely conjunct the Sun axis or in hard aspect to it, they are included on the midpoint tree as single points. Here, Venus, which is at 14 Scorpio 53, is semisquare the Sun axis within 7 minutes of arc.

Pairs of planets that have the axis as their midpoint are shown diagrammatically on either side of the axis.

Note that the points and midpoints on the tree are listed in order of orb, with orbs for those that fall slightly earlier in the zodiac showing a minus sign and the ones a little beyond the exact axis showing a plus sign. The points and midpoints with the plus or minus orbs closest to zero (i.e., the ones half-way down in this tree) will be the ones that are closest to the actual axis, and so they will be stronger. (Here, the closest midpoint to the Cardinal Axis is Uranus/MC.)

If a planet or midpoint is shown with a "d" after the orb, it means that it has additional strength, because it is "direct" -- right on the Cancer-Capricorn axis rather than in square

or semisquare to it. Direct midpoints are always extra-strong, but they're even stronger on the Cancer-Capricorn axis because here they're also in antiscion, which means that the two points are roughly in parallel. (In this solstice chart there aren't any points or midpoints directly on the Cancer-Capricorn axis. At other localities with different MCs and Ascendants, however, there may be.)

When you're doing the interpretation, emphasize what's most important by putting the single points that lie directly on the axis first (that is, the ones, if any, that are marked with a "d"). Then put in the single points that lie in square or semisquare to the Cancer-Capricorn axis. Then put in the direct and lower-orb midpoints, and finally the indirect and higher-orb midpoints. You should also give special attention to any midpoint to the Sun that involves the Moon, Ascendant or MC.

Alternatively, instead of looking at midpoint trees, you can look at a 360-degree-modulus midpoint sort generated by Solar Fire or another computer program or by an astrological chart-casting service. Then, to see what's on the Cardinal Axis, look for midpoints that fall within a one degree orb of 0 Aries, 0 Cancer, 0 Libra and 0 Capricorn and 15 Taurus, 15 Leo, 15 Scorpio and 15 Aquarius.

Using Interpretation Cookbooks

For an easy-to-use guide to midpoint meanings, see the classic Cosmobiology cookbook, *The Combination of Stellar Influences* (4), or its Uranian-School equivalent, *Rules for Planetary Pictures*.(5) Both give interpretations for all possible 3-point combinations. *The Combination of Stellar Influences* is easier to use and has slightly fuller interpretations, but in addition to the regular planets, node, Ascendant and MC, *Rules for Planetary Pictures* includes the 8 Uranian hypothetical planets and the Aries point (a.k.a. the Cardinal Axis). From these books you can write out an extensive description of the particular qualities of a given solstice's Sun axis.

To use the interpretations in *The Combination of Stellar Influences*:

1. **Read the hard aspects** (conjunctions, oppositions, squares, semisquares and sesquiquadrates) **to the Solstice Sun** by looking at the Sun paired with the other planet. All the combinations of the Sun with other points will be in the Sun section near the beginning of the book. There are two pages for each two-point combination, arranged in the order Sun-Moon, Sun-Mercury, Sun-Venus, Sun-Mars, etc., with Sun-Node, Sun-Asc and Sun-MC at the end. Then, in the same order, there are similar sections for the Moon, Mercury, Venus, etc. Under each two-point combination, the two-point combinations are delineated first. Then there are delineations of each combination of those two points with a third point.
2. **Read the midpoints to the Solstice Sun.** You can first look in the Sun section, find the Sun combined with one of the planets in the midpoint pair, and then read those two points in combination with the third point at the end of the section on those two points. For additional information about that combination, start with the

planets in the midpointing pair and then read these in combination with the Sun as the third point.

To use the interpretations in *Rules for Planetary Pictures*:

1. **Read the hard aspects to the Cardinal axis** by turning to the “Aries + Aries” page (the second section of the book, right after the section on the Meridian) and looking at the paragraph for the point making the aspect.
2. In the same way, **read the hard aspects to the Solstice Sun** by looking at the “Sun + Sun” page (in the next section of the book).
3. **Read the midpoints to the Cardinal axis** by looking in the “Aries +” section. Turn to the page for the Aries point combined with one of the planets in the midpoint pair. Then read the paragraph for the other planet in the midpoint pair.
4. In the same way, **read the midpoints to the Solstice Sun** by looking at the “Sun +” pages.
5. **(Optional.)** If you are versed in using Uranian planetary pictures, you can also use *Rules for Planetary Pictures* as it was intended, to **delineate the A+B-C combinations**.

The Location of the Solstice Chart

The planetary positions in the solstice chart will be the same no matter what location you calculate it for, but of course the Ascendant and MC axes will change when you calculate the solstice chart for another place. Looking at where on earth the various planets are angular can be a first step in seeing how the solstice chart will affect the world.

You certainly would want to look at the solstice chart for your own and your clients’ localities. To anticipate national trends, you may also want to look at the solstice chart calculated for the capital city of your country. Try also investigating various “hot spots” across the globe by doing the solstice chart for those locations as well.

In each of these charts, note how the planets fall in the houses. Planets that are close to the Ascendant, MC, Descendant or IC at a given locality may show the themes in the solstice chart that are likely to be prominent in that geographical area during the coming year. Planets that are on the midpoint between the Ascendant and MC axes also have the possibility of being especially felt.

To get a quick and easy overview of what planets are angular in various parts of the world at the moment of the solstice, you can view the Winter Solstice chart on a world map by using the mapping features in Solar Fire or Solar Maps.

The lines you'll see in the Astro-Mapping (Astro*Carto*Graphy) maps will show where in the world the planets in that chart would be rising, setting, culminating or anticulminating—in other words, where on earth they are likely to be particularly strong and influential. For the Winter Solstice of 2002, you will see Pluto rising in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Uranus on the IC in Syria and western Iraq, Venus and Mars rising together in Turkey, and Jupiter rising near New York City.

Note that the lines on the map are *in mundo*, meaning that they show when the planet is actually on the horizon or meridian, and not when it is conjunct the degree of the Ascendant or MC axis in longitude. In the case of a planet like Pluto, which can stray far from the ecliptic, there can be a considerable difference between zodiacal and *in mundo* positions. However, Jim Lewis and other proponents of Astro*Carto*Graphy find that the *in mundo* positions seem to work best.

Also note that an angular planet is just one of many indicators. In the classic book *Mundane Astrology*, Charles Harvey points out that, statistically speaking, war hasn't proven any more likely to happen at spots that have Mars angular in the ingress chart, and a revolution isn't bound to break out where Uranus was angular. Angularity is just one condition to be considered. In any chart the dire-looking planets have to be angular somewhere on earth. When a major event happens, research shows that it is reinforced by recurring themes in many charts, possibly including the chart of the political entity, charts for leaders, and charts for other major astrological turning points such as lunations, eclipses, major aspects and stations. Also, to make an accurate prediction, you need to take into account the area's previous history and present conditions to see what trends are waiting to be set off. (6)

That said, it is possible to refine predictions based on angular planets at least a bit without looking at piles of other charts. If you see Mars angular at one of the world's trouble spots, look at the condition of that Mars. Is it happy in its sign and house? How does it connect by aspect to other planets? And what midpoints lie on the Mars axis?

The Personal Solstice Reading

The personal solstice reading also uses the Winter Solstice chart. This is a technique that was developed in the 1960s and 1970s by a circle New York astrologers including Hans Niggemann, Wayne Booher and Gary Christen. It has been used by Christen for many years in his annual solstice readings. While the personal solstice reading was inspired by the Uranian school, you can do it with or without the hypothetical planets and the 90-degree dial. It does, however, require using midpoints.

The Steps in a Personal Solstice Reading

The personal solstice reading is a quick and easy way to predict for the coming year. To set up the necessary charts, you first relocate the solstice chart for the person's current residence. Then, on this solstice chart, you mark in only two extra positions: the exact

degree and minute of a) the person's natal Sun, and b) the person's progressed or solar-arc-directed Sun at the moment of the solstice.

On the 90-degree dial, you'd have the person's natal and progressed Sun marked in as points on the solstice chart. In Solar Fire, it's easiest to put the natal and progressed Suns in the two outer rings of a tri-dial.

As with the mundane reading, you'd begin by looking at the Cardinal Axis of the solstice chart to get a sense of the quality of that particular solstice. To see how the Cardinal Axis ties in with the person's local environment, you'd then see if the MC or Ascendant of that person's locality creates any additional aspects or midpoints to the Cardinal Axis.

To see how the person will tie in to the collective during the coming year, you'd look at the hard aspects and midpoints that the solstice chart makes to the person's natal and progressed Suns. (If you wish, you could also look at other factors such as Uranian planetary pictures and hypothetical planets, but this isn't absolutely necessary.) This is meant to be a fast and simple technique in which you look mainly at only three axes: the Cardinal Axis (a.k.a. the Solstice Sun), the natal Sun, and the person's progressed Sun.

To see the timing of the Solstice Chart's influences in the course of the coming year, you then move the progressed Sun the distance that it would move from this solstice to the next, and note when the aspects and midpoints between the progressed Sun and the solstice chart become exact to the minute of arc. Since the progressed Sun will move only about a degree, there will be only a handful of hits, even if you use midpoints. If you direct the Sun backwards on the dial as well as forward, add the 8 Uranian hypothetical planets, use the hard micro-aspects (such as $22\frac{1}{2}$ and $11\frac{1}{4}$ degrees), and/or use Uranian A+B-C sensitive points, you will get more hits. However, using only the regular planets with midpoints and the five 8th-harmonic aspects (conjunction, opposition, square, semisquare and sesquiquadrate), you will see the most important influences.

If you are comfortable using a 90-degree dial, you can use the dial to do both the basic personal reading and the progressed timing, but you can also get similar information by using regular charts along with midpoint trees.

Progressing through the Year

On average, the progressed Sun travels about one degree per year -- a bit more for a winter birth, and a bit less for a summer birth.

- If you're working on a dial, you can get fairly good timing by assuming one degree per year. This means that for every month after the solstice date you would add about five minutes of arc to the position of the progressed Sun.
- If you're working with only the conventional chart or you want more exact timing, you can use Solar Fire's Dynamic features to print out a list of the actual dates and times of the progressed hits.

The Cardinal Axis and Your Connection to the Whole

Regarding the Capricorn Ingress chart, Hans Niggemann's compendium of Uranian writings says: "Since a nation is composed of all the individuals in it, this ingress necessarily affects the individual also. Therefore, the Cardinal point does affect the destiny of the individual and belongs in the birth chart. It represents the relationship of the individual to the group, environment, nation, or the world in general, including natural events such as earthquakes, floods, etc."(7) Elsewhere he presents a delineation of the Cardinal or Aries axis as: "The generality, the street, the many people we superficially know and have dealings with, without making their acquaintance."(8)

A few further insights about the Cardinal Axis come from Madalyn Hillis-Dineen's chapter in *Astrology for Women*:

As the planets move through time and space, their connection with this Axis is ever-changing, making each day different and new. The planets are constantly moving in relationship to one another and thereby define the course of human history in the broadest sense as well as in everyday ways. How you fit into this universal, ever-changing rhythm is quite elegantly defined in how the planets were arranged around the Cardinal Axis at your specific time and place of birth.

Astrologically, the "whole of humanity" is represented by the Cardinal Axis and your place in this whole can be described by looking at this axis in your chart as described above. We look to the four Cardinal points to define our subjective connection to the world, enabling us to sow the seeds for our self-unfoldment. They are analogous to the angular houses (1,4,7,10) in the horoscope which tell us about ourselves, our emotional roots, our relationships and our career in a subjective way. The Fixed points have more to do with the material manifestation in the outer world of who we are. Their correlates, the succedent houses (2, 5, 8, 11) describe the measurable, material results of who we are -- our money, our children, our taxes and our group interactions.

Any search for wholeness in a person's chart rightfully begins with examining the Cardinal Axis. Though we may be born alone and die alone, our lives are not lived in isolation. Defining your connection to the whole is an important step in the process of living life happily and successfully on every level -- physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. One of life's great dichotomies is that although we are certainly separate individuals, we are also part of a greater whole. Every action you take affects the people around you and, in fact, the whole world. Yet, how insignificant we usually feel that we are. Once you are in touch with where and how you are connected to the universe, with your higher purpose, so to speak, you come to know that nothing you do is insignificant. Understanding your place in the larger scheme of things is the first step towards taking responsibility for your own life. (9)

Footnotes

- (1) Donna Henes, *Celestially Auspicious Occasions: Seasons, Cycles & Celebrations* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1966), p. 5.
- (2) Quoted by Charles Harvey in Michael Baigent, Nicholas Campion and Charles Harvey, *Mundane Astrology*, 2nd ed. (London: Aquarian Press, 1992), p. 243.
- (3) As translated by Hans Niggemann in his *Principles of the Uranian System* (self-published, 1961).
- (4) Reinhold Ebertin, *The Combination of Stellar Influences*, trans. by Alfred Roosedale and Linda Kratzsch (Aalen, Germany: Ebertin Verlag, 1972).
- (5) Alfred Witte and Hermann Lefeldt, *Rules for Planetary Pictures*, trans. by Curt Knupfer (Hamburg: Ludwig Rudolph [Witte-Verlag]), 1959.
- (6) Baigent, Campion and Harvey, Chapter 9.
- (7) Niggemann, p. 6.
- (8) Niggemann, p. 64.
- (9) *Astrology for Women: Roles and Relationships*, ed. Gloria Star (St. Paul, MN Llewellyn Publications, 1996).