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Translations of Kepler's Astrological Writings

Part I, Section 2.4. Excerpts from Kepler's Correspondence and Interpretation of Wallenstein's Nativity, 1624-1625

**Translated from the German by Cornelia Linde, with
some Latin translation, minor editing and annotations
by Dorian Greenbaum**

Kepler wrote a great amount of material on Wallenstein's astrology. Some has been translated into English, and the (German and Latin) interpretations of 1608 and 1625 are now reproduced in their entirety in GW 21, 2.2, pp. 445-470, with calculations on pp. 471-475.¹ In this section we present some of the letters leading up to the 1625 interpretation and excerpts from the interpretation itself. These letters and partial translation of Kepler's 1625 re-evaluation of Wallenstein's astrology in this section complement Kepler's earlier interpretation of 1608, which has been translated into English by Kenneth Negus.²

¹ In *OO*, the Wallenstein material can be found in vols 1. pp. 386-391 and 8.1. pp. 345-358 (Frisch has omitted some material in the interpretations and all the calculations).

² Ken Negus, 'Kepler as Practicing Astrologer: Translation and Commentary', *Considerations* (2000-2001), vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 13-20.

Cornelia Linde (trans.) and Dorian Greenbaum (trans. and annotated), 'Excerpts from Kepler's Correspondence and Interpretation of Wallenstein's Nativity, 1624-1625', *Culture and Cosmos*, Vol. 14 no 1 and 2, Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter 2010 pp. 123-139.

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Wallenstein's Nativity

The chart of Albrecht Wallenstein³ is one of the more interesting ones interpreted by Kepler. Kepler first cast the chart in 1608 when Wallenstein was 25, and reinterpreted it later at Wallenstein's request (some of the letters dealing with this request are translated below). It appears that Kepler did not have a very high opinion of Wallenstein. Sheila Rabin, in her study of Kepler and Pico,⁴ translates the following remarks made by Kepler about Wallenstein and his chart (I have emended the translation slightly):

Thus may I in truth say about this lord, that he has an alert, excited, industrious, restless temperament, eager for all kinds of novelties, not liking common human pursuits but seeking new, untried, solitary paths. Yet for all that he has much more in his thoughts than he lets outwardly be seen or felt. Saturn on the Ascendant makes for deep, melancholic, constantly alert thoughts, alchemy, magic, sorcery, communion with spirits, scorn and disregard for human law and custom, and also all religions. It makes everything suspicious and distrustful that God or men do as if it were pure fraud and underneath were much different from what one pretends. And because the moon is cast off [in the 12th house], he will have a remarkable prejudice towards anyone with whom he converses or deals so that he will be considered a solitary, thoughtless brute. In manner he will also be merciless, without brotherly or conjugal love, respecting no-one, yielding only to himself and his desires, hard on his subordinates, selfish, greedy, deceitful, varying in behaviour, mostly silent, impetuous, and quarrelsome, fearless towards both women and men,

³ Wallenstein was a Bohemian soldier, later a Count, described by Sheila Rabin as 'the notorious and treacherous general of the Thirty Years War'. (Sheila J. Rabin, 'Kepler's Attitude Toward Pico and the Anti-Astrology Polemic', *Renaissance Quarterly* (1997), vol. 50, pp. 750-77, here p. 752.) For a biography of Wallenstein, see Francis Watson, *Wallenstein: Soldier Under Saturn* (London, 1938).

⁴ Sheila J. Rabin, 'Kepler's Attitude', pp. 752-53.

*although Saturn disorders the imagination so that he often has inexplicable fear.*⁵

*Numerous publications allude to Kepler's prediction of Wallenstein's death, though the wording of the actual prediction did not make that specific forecast. Near the end of the 1625 re-evaluation of Wallenstein's chart, Kepler mentions directions in 1634 that, especially in March, make for 'terrible disorders in the country' that 'might coincide with the native's [i.e. Wallenstein's] fortune.'*⁶ *Wallenstein was murdered on 25 February 1634; as Kepler died in 1630, he naturally was unaware of this event.*

*When Wallenstein decided he wanted Kepler to reinterpret his chart, he engaged the services of Gerhard von Taxis as an intermediary.*⁷ *Five letters were written by von Taxis on Wallenstein's behalf, two to Christoph von Hochkircher (on 20 November and 22 December 1624) and three to Kepler himself (on 20 November, 16 December and 25 December 1624). In the two to von Hochkircher, von Taxis asks von Hochkircher to intercede for him and Wallenstein in persuading Kepler to reinterpret the nativity based on events which had transpired, but not exactly at the moment that Kepler had predicted them. In the letters to Kepler, von Taxis asks Kepler to rectify Wallenstein's chart and give fuller predictions for the coming years, promising him ample remuneration. Kepler complies, but with caveats and at times an almost irritated tone.*

The letters translated here give a sense of the style in which von Taxis pled his employer's case. Kepler replied with his reinterpretation on 21 January 1625 (excerpt follows the letters).

Taken from Opera Omnia 8.1, pp. 345-51; Gesammelte Werke 18, pp. 217-220; 21, 2.2, pp. 456-459

⁵ 'Nativitas Wallensteinii', in *OO* 1, p. 388. Note Kepler's comment about Wallenstein's Moon, which he brings up again in his interpretation of Wallenstein's rectified chart; see below, p. 137.

⁶ '...schröckhlichen Landverwirrungen mit des Gebohrnen Glück vereinbaren möchte' (*GW* 21, 2.2, p. 470). Inexplicably, this paragraph was omitted in *OO* (it would have immediately preceded the second-to-last paragraph on p. 357).

⁷ Gerhard von Taxis (1578-1654) was a military officer in Wallenstein's employ. As an interesting aside, Kepler himself calculated von Taxis's natal chart: see *GW* 21, 2.2, no. 1074, pp. 381-382.

Letter of 20 November 1624, from Gerhard von Taxis to Christoph von Hochkircher in Vienna

[*GW* 18, p. 217; *OO* 8.1, p. 345]

Noble and brave, especially dear Master Ensign. Besides wishing everything dear and good from God the Almighty, at any moment he has me ready to serve him. Here I am writing to Master Kepler in the known matter. I am asking the Master obligingly to do me such a favour so that the letter may safely arrive to him and, on the other hand, so that an answer may arrive from the Master. I deserve such [an act of] friendship via another way. I would prefer it (if it is possible) that the Master himself write to him about it, with the promise of considerable compensation for his troubles; so that he cannot conjecture, due to my name, who this man could be who desires such a thing from him, because he would not like to be known to him in person before the casting of the nativity. Therefore, if the Master [*i.e. von Hochkircher*] himself would ask for and procure such a thing (namely the making of the nativity) from him, it would happen more safely and with less suspicion; who knows whether the same Master [*i.e. Wallenstein*] could not let the Master [Hochkircher] enjoy a promotion in the near future.⁸ In case the Master wanted to take such a thing upon him to obtain the agreement for that nativity from him, the Master must not send the letter to him but rather keep it with him. In the adverse [case] the Master may send my letter to him and procure the answer from him, but I would prefer it the other way. The day after tomorrow, I shall (God willing) travel to the Master Cardinal, [and] hope to be back here again in 6 or 7 days, and put my service forward to the Master. Recommending us all to the protection of the Highest.

Given at Vienna, 20 November 1624
The Master's Gerhard von Taxis,
Lieutenant Colonel, always ready to serve

Von Taxis's first letter to Kepler, also dated 20 November 1624, asks Kepler to give his judgement on a chart for an unnamed person, for which he will be well compensated. In his letter of 16 December to Kepler, von Taxis explains that Wallenstein (still unnamed in the letter, though he provides enough information for Kepler to figure out who he is) had annotated Kepler's earlier interpretation of 17 years ago. Now,

⁸ Lit., 'today or tomorrow' (*heut oder morgen*).

based on events (noted in the margin by Wallenstein) which did not happen at exactly the same times Kepler predicted, he asks for the old chart to be rectified and a new interpretation made. He says the client is especially interested in how he will die and where, if he would obtain honours and wealth outside of his native country, whether and for how long he would continue as a military man and whether he would have good or bad fortune in his career. Finally he wants to know about his enemies and what the stars say in this regard. In the next letter to von Hochkircher von Taxis reiterates some of these same points.

Letter of 22 December 1624

From Gerhard von Taxis in Vienna to Christoph von Hochkircher

[OO 8.1, p. 347; GW 18, pp. 219-220]

Noble and brave, especially dear Ensign, all my willing service is to the Master, in addition to wishing all blissful salvation from God the Almighty. Today I received yet another letter from his princely Grace von Waldstein [*Wallenstein*] in which he writes to me that he has postponed his journey to come here by 14 days, but that they think they will have left Prague within 14 days. Meanwhile he writes me these sentences:

‘Eight days ago I sent you the nativity which Kepler made for me 13 years ago, but in the meantime many things were placed too early or too late, so I added them in the margin when they happened to me; thus you will have to ask him for the judgement, but a bit more fully than happened before. If it is possible, I would like to hear from him what luck and misfortune I can expect in every year; also, if I will continue in war or not; also if I will have my home, and finally death, in the fatherland or abroad. [GW 18, p. 220] For some astrologers disagree about this and say that I will live – and will also later die – outside the fatherland; and most of them say that I shall die of apoplexy. On this now I would like to hear his discourse. I presume I will arrive in Vienna in the next 14 days. N.B.: also [I would like to hear] from what nation and which profession my hidden and public enemies are, for that can be known from the chart.’

So I ask the Master now very obligingly to do me the great favour of going to Master Kepler and hearing from him if he has started work on the matter, and besides that, to make known to him word by word his princely Grace’s here-presented wish; but concealing the name of the Duke. I would also like to know if he has started working on it so that I will know the day after tomorrow what I can write to his princely Grace

as an answer. I zealously recommend myself to the Master and wish [him] a good night. Given on 22 December 1624.

The Master's Gerhard von Taxis, ready to serve

The final letter in the series was written by von Taxis to Kepler.

Letter of 25 December 1624

From Gerhard von Taxis to Kepler

[*OO* 8.1, pp. 347-348]⁹

Noble, respected and most learned Master Kepler, I am always in the Master's service, in addition to wishing all luck and well-being from Almighty God.

And I let the Master know that his princely Grace, the Duke of Friedland, my most gracious lord, when he started off from Prague together with the imperial subjects, delivered the included Master's efforts and judgement to me and ordered me to announce to the Master on his part his princely greetings, affection and mercy. [He ordered me] to send this to the Master at the first possibility and to ask cordially if he may do him [*i.e. the princely Grace*] a great favour, and polish his judgement and effort, especially (where possible) to explain his concerns and his judgement and extend it more elaborately and amply, more spread out over future years, more in detail and [*OO* 8.1, p. 348] give his opinion of the same, under the assumption that the Master could do such a thing, if only he wanted to do his princely Grace a favour, because he especially and particularly hints at some things in this attachment and got them right. His princely Grace offers to compensate [him] with an honest and better remuneration than before, and offers adequate favours in any forthcoming situations when the Master thinks that his princely Grace might be of service to him.

When the Master has done as his princely Grace wishes, he shall afterwards send his writings or judgement to Vienna by certain and sure means so that it will not get lost, and there let it be handed to Master Johann Battista Maralto, who lives at the moat across from the Elephant. The same [man] later on will send it to me through a secure arrangement.

⁹ We are unable to find this letter in *GW* vols 18 or 19.

Herewith I recommend us all to the protection of the Highest. Given in Gitschin,¹⁰ on 25 December 1624.

The Master's willing servant at all times

Gerhard von Taxis
Baron of Huls, lieutenant colonel
and governor of the Duchy Friedland

On January 21, 1625, Kepler finished Wallenstein's rectified nativity.

[*GW 21, 2.2, pp. 456-459; OO 8.1, pp. 348-351*]

[*Pulkovo XIX, 60r*]

A different explanation of the Birth-figure, set up in January 1625

After I finished the former birth interpretation many years ago in the kingdom of Bohemia, and I remember it very well, since I did not let myself be induced to explain certain nativities at that time and [have not] since then unless I am assured by [the clients] – whether requested in their or another's name – that my work is for someone who understands philosophy and who holds onto no superstition that is contrary to it (such as, that an astrologer should foresee from the sky certain future things and things pertaining to the future); how well I remember that Master Stromair, who was a learned physician, demanded this chart reading, and gave me that assurance; back then I surely would not have dreamed that this work of mine should return to my hands with a request for more detail.

Therefore I would like to ask most assiduously straight from the beginning, that when I warn the client¹¹ against his incorrect impression, which Master Gerhardt von Taxis [*OO 8.1, p. 349*] has brought to light (and I herewith protect my good name and philosophical profession), the client may not attribute it to me as laziness or contempt, since he will see that for the rest, I have not spared any less effort in calculating the chart, the directions and revolutions than those who are more favourable to him in their own astrological opinions, but do not follow the true calculations (thus adding to the necessity for the demanded individual prognostications). I have also, in the work, put a lot of effort into evaluating his

¹⁰ Written as 'Bitschyn' in *OO*, but we have not been able to find any such geographical location. We believe the place is Gitschin, modern Jičín, Czech Republic.

¹¹ Lit. 'native' (*der Geborne*), but 'client' seems better suited to this context.

health and well-being by means of [*Pulkovo XIX, 60v*] other assumptions which are taken from nature and politics, and are attributed to general astrological signs. [*GW 21, 2.2, p. 457*] Right at the beginning it is necessary to examine the letter of Master von Taxis, and relate the better and more certain things.

At first he writes, on December 16th from Vienna, that the client has written, in the margin of my former judgement, some events as they have happened to him and as I had predicted them; but, as they happened about a year later or earlier, [he hopes] I might find out the correct time of birth and minutes of the hour, and thereby rectify the chart and improve my discourse.

It is not bad that herewith the right and proper process was written down, which is, if possible, considered by all astrologers for the correction of the right and true hour of birth, and is at least requested; every now and then I consider this process in lack of other certainty, for I also find this way of nature not unsuitable, if such biographical events are caused only by nature itself and are not promoted or delayed by deliberate effort.

It rarely happens that a man is so secluded that he does not at every hour and moment make manifold impressions on his inborn nature and bodily temperament due to disorderly eating and drinking, heat and cold, work, travel, anger and all kinds of excesses, and thus impedes his health or naturally approaching disease, or encourages the time of the same; thus it is not only reasonable for itself, but I also hope I have achieved that much standing with the client due to my long experience, [*Pulkovo XIX, 61r*] that in this matter he will put more weight on my mature experience than on that of some youngster following the beaten track, a hasty, imprudently acting and practising person who only ever agrees and makes empty promises for what the client would like to have or believes. But this way of correcting the chart by means of events, naturally reliable, which are nevertheless manifold and supernatural, do not stand the test or cannot assure the astrologer.

I'll start by grappling with a point made from the earlier judgement, and after explaining the same I will again return to Master von Taxis's letter.

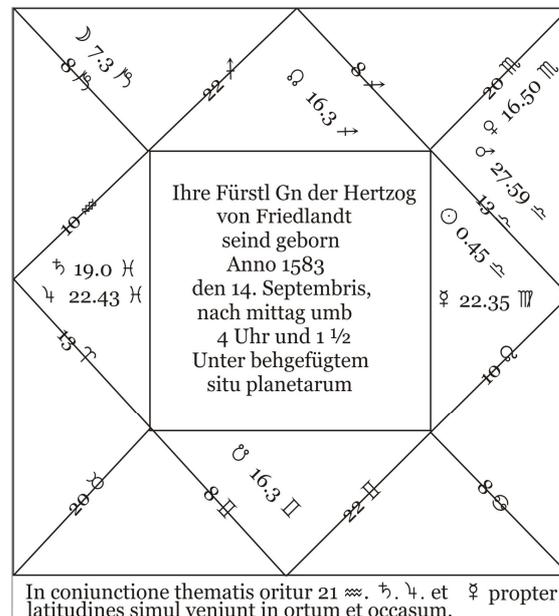
The following four paragraphs concern the calculation of directions in January of 1605, the time of Wallenstein's bouts with 'the Hungarian disease and the plague', as he informed Kepler. Kepler correlates these illnesses with the Ascendant coming to Saturn (followed by Jupiter) and,

at about the same time, the Descendant coming to Mercury. He is using the technique of primary directions here to discover when the Ascendant will come to Saturn and the Descendant to Mercury. He then suggests that these directions can be used to rectify the chart to 4:36 ½ p.m.

Figure 1. The first birthchart cast by Kepler for Wallenstein.

Drawing created from the positions in transcriptions

[Darmstadt, Hessisches Staatsarchiv Ms. 2608, f. 267;
Karlsruhe, Generallandesarchiv 65, 1144, f. 145]¹²



¹² The positions of houses and planets in *GW* 21, 2.2, p. 446; position of house 2 corrected to 13 Aries (from mistranscription of 13 g); position of the Sun corrected to Libra (from mistranscription of v); positions of the nodes corrected to 16.3 (from mistranscription of 16.7). According to *GW* 21, 2.2, p. 446, n. 4, the planetary positions, in fact, are those calculated for 4h 36½m using the Rudolphine Tables (so, according to the editor, ‘a good half hour later’ than the stated time). But these positions correspond to those in Pulkovo XXI, 523r-525v, which according to the transcription on p. 471, is for the time of 4h 22 ½ m, not 4h 36 ½m. In any case, there is no chart diagram in the Pulkovo collection, so the positions have been taken from the Darmstadt and Karlsruhe archives. The same chart appears in *OO* 1, p. 386, in diagram form. In this diagram the position of house 2 is correct at 13 Aries, as are the positions of the nodes at 16.3.

Since the client has written in his own hand that in his 22nd year, that is in January 1605, he had the Hungarian disease and [OO 8.1, p. 350] the plague, assuming this was due only to a natural cause, or at least mostly due to a natural cause – that the body’s nature desired to rid itself of the evil humours from which a Hungarian disease grew – then it is to be assumed that the direction of the Ascendant to the body of Saturn gave instructions for this; for nature takes its ways and laws from the directions. Here now the oblique ascension of Saturn has to be searched for under latitude [*Altitudine Poli*] 51°. With [Saturn] rising around 22 Pisces,¹³ the Ascendant (*Angulus Orientis*),¹⁴ is 15° 36’ [Aquarius],¹⁵ the meridional latitude [i.e. *celestial south latitude*] of Saturn is 2° 27’.¹⁶ Therefore the co-oriental difference (*differentia coorientaria*) [i.e., *ascensional difference, the difference between oblique and right ascension*] is 8° 47’, and Saturn rises [GW 21, 2.2., p. 458] with about 27° 47’ Pisces [n].¹⁷ It is quite difficult, therefore, to refine this co-orient; the

¹³ ‘Oriente circiter 22° Pisces est Angulus Orientis 15°36’. It is difficult to ascertain the antecedent of ‘oriente’. We think it can only refer to Saturn, since Kepler is trying to calculate when Saturn would reach the Ascendant to produce Wallenstein’s illness at age 22.

¹⁴ At this time, *angulus orientis* was a common locution for the Ascendant. See, e.g., Johannes ab Indagine, *Chiromantia* (Paris, 1543), part 4 (Astrologia naturalis), Sequitur de cardinibus coeli: ‘Primus angulus orientis, ea est domus Arietis, natalitii horoscopus.’ (‘The first [cardine] is the angle of the east, that house is Aries’, the horoscope [i.e. *Ascendant*] of the birth-hour.’).

¹⁵ In this case, the ‘Angle of the East’ must be in Aquarius for the direction of Saturn to the Ascendant to make sense, though Kepler does not specify a sign. (The rectified chart has an Aquarius Ascendant.)

¹⁶ Meridional latitude is the common locution in this time period for south latitude (that is, celestial latitude south of the ecliptic). North latitude was called ‘septentrional latitude’. See, e.g., W. Lilly, *Christian Astrology* (London, 1647, repr. facsimile Exeter, 1985), p. 28, where Lilly explains the abbreviations in the ephemeris.

¹⁷ OO has, correctly, ‘n’; GW has ‘Π’. Note that this is oblique longitude, the ecliptical longitude with which a body rises, not oblique ascension (oblique ascension is the equatorial position with which a body rises). Many thanks to Robert Hand for clarifying this issue.

angle with it [*i.e.* Saturn] is $15^{\circ} 29'$.¹⁸ And so the co-oriental difference is $8^{\circ} 50'$. So Saturn rises with $27^{\circ} 50'$ Pisces [η].¹⁹

And since the meridional latitude of Jupiter is $1^{\circ} 37'$ in the same angle,²⁰ therefore the co-oriental difference [*Pulkovo XIX, 61v*] comes to be $5^{\circ} 50'$, and Jupiter rises with $28^{\circ} 33'$ Pisces [η]. Likewise also, since the latitude of the opposite point, for Mercury, is $1^{\circ} 46'$ in the same angle,²¹ its co-oriental difference comes to be $6^{\circ} 23'$, whereby Mercury sets with $28^{\circ} 58'$ Virgo [h]²². Now the oblique ascensions are $359^{\circ} 5'$ for Saturn, $359^{\circ} 30'$ for Jupiter, $359^{\circ} 34'$ for Mercury opposite.²³

Herewith all three directions happen within half a year, and the fourth direction of the Ascendant to the opposition of the Sun happens the year after, which is rather unusual. Saturn fits well for the Hungarian disease, Mercury fits very well for the plague, and Jupiter makes a good mediator in both situations, according to the teachings of the astrologers.

If, then, the middle, $359^{\circ}30'$, is taken, and a right ascension of the Midheaven [R.A.M.C.] of $269^{\circ}30'$,²⁴ therefore $29^{\circ}22'$ Sagittarius culminated.²⁵ If, then, the course of the Sun in $21\frac{1}{3}$ days – that is, $21^{\circ} 7'$ – is

¹⁸ Kepler seems to be outlining the steps taken in rectifying the chart to produce the correct time for the intersection of Saturn and the Ascendant. The language of this section is quite terse (and therefore difficult to interpret), however.

¹⁹ Again, this is oblique longitude.

²⁰ Saturn and Jupiter are conjunct in Wallenstein's chart: Saturn at 19° Pisces and Jupiter at $22^{\circ}33'$ Pisces, both in the 1st house.

²¹ Mercury at [ca.] 22° Virgo in the 7th opposes Jupiter and Saturn.

²² Here *OO* has, incorrectly, 'x' (Scorpio).

²³ Kepler is deriving the planets' bodily rising, as opposed to degree rising. To do that, he is factoring in celestial latitudes and oblique ascensions. He adds the co-oriental difference to the planet's right ascension to obtain its oblique ascension.

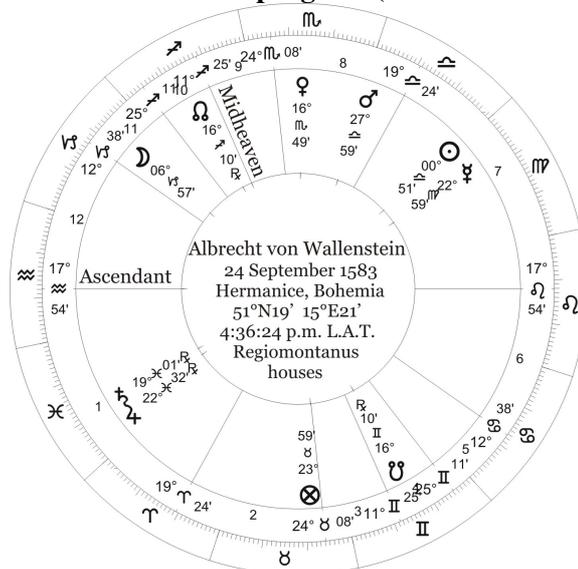
²⁴ Reading '269.30' for '269.20' (this figure appears both in *OO* and *GW*). We have chosen to emend to 269.30 because 90° subtracted from $359^{\circ}30'$ yields $269^{\circ}30'$, the R.A.M.C. for $359^{\circ}30'$.

²⁵ This is exactly what the R.A.M.C. would be if $29^{\circ}22'$ Sagittarius were the M.C.

added to the place of the Sun on the birthday, and minutes $0.44\frac{1}{2}'$ Libra [z], then the place of the direction of the Sun will be $21^{\circ} 52'$ Libra [z]. Its right ascension is $200^{\circ} 12'$, and this subtracted from $269^{\circ} 20'$ gives the corrected birth-hour of $69^{\circ} 8'$. That is 4 hours and $36\frac{1}{2}$ minutes. Thus the birth-minutes would be shown as about a quarter of a hour too early, and that was the Midheaven in the birth-figure ($69^{\circ} 8'$ added to $180^{\circ} 44'$, so that the R.A.M.C. is $249^{\circ} 52'$), [which] would come to $11^{\circ} 25'$ Sagittarius [C], the true Ascendant (oblique ascension $339^{\circ} 52'$) would be $17^{\circ} 00'$ Aquarius [b], the place of the radix Moon $7^{\circ} 10'$ Capricorn [v], the Ascendant directly in square with Venus.

The previous paragraph suggests that Kepler is using these directed positions to further rectify the chart so that it fits with the directions in 1605. However, aside from this paragraph, no chart or table of positions exists in Kepler's hand for the time of 4:36½. Nevertheless, a modern calculation of the chart for 4:36:24 p.m. at 51°19' North Latitude and 15°21' East Longitude (modern coordinates for Wallenstein's birthplace) yields almost the very angles Kepler has supposed (see Figure 2).²⁶

Figure 2. Birthchart for Wallenstein cast for 4:36½ p.m., using a modern calculation program (Solar Fire Gold)



²⁶ A similar chart was cast by Ken Gillman, 'Comments on Kepler's Time Periods,' *Considerations* (2000-2001), vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 21-27, here p. 27.

More Comments on the Rectified Birthchart²⁷

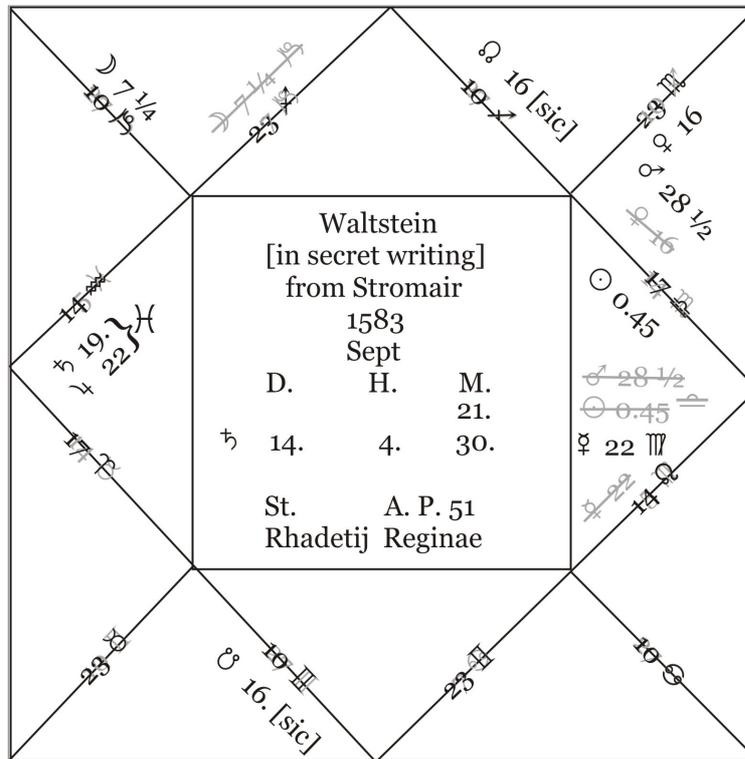
Figure 3. Kepler's drawing of Wallenstein's rectified chart, with the name written in secret writing, and the house positions for 4:21 written over house positions for 4:30

[Pulkovo XVIII, 250v]



²⁷ Annotator's title.

Figure 4. Drawing made from Kepler's drawing, with original positions greyed²⁸



²⁸ Information from the editor's notes in *GW* 21, 2.2, p. 445, nn. 2, 3 and 9: 'Stromair' was a physician who was another go-between for Wallenstein when Kepler made his first interpretation in 1608. The Saturn glyph in the central square means Wallenstein was born on Saturday. 'St.' = <Old> style of dating. 'A.P.' = Altitude of the Pole [i.e. latitude]. 'Rhadetij Reginae' is Königgratz, modern Hradec Králové, Czech Republic. As one can see from the image in **Figure 3**, it is very difficult to read the original positions, especially the house cusps. A transcription of the original and new positions appears in *GW* 21, 2.2, pp. 445-446, and I have used that and the original drawing in my rendering. I think it is possible that houses 2 and 8 are 4° Taurus and Scorpio, not 14° as in the transcription; and that houses 3 and 9 are 10° Gemini and Sagittarius, not 8° as in the transcription. Note that the nodes were not moved from their original positions. I think Saturn and Jupiter were not moved either, which is why Kepler has added a curly bracket and the glyph for Pisces.

Concerning the explanation of the corrected birth-figure,²⁹ according to my philosophical approach it would be no different from the earlier one, only that the signs turn out to be a lot stronger than before, because three planets, Saturn, Jupiter and Mercury, come to the Ascendant (*Horoscopus*) and its opposition at the same time, also [*Pulkovo XIX, 62r*] because they are closer to the Eastern and Western Angles; through this all my conclusions in the former explanation are confirmed.

What was cast off in the 12th house was only the Moon, and what has therefore been supposed for the client's disagreeable (*absurdus*) manners is now changed somewhat. For the Moon now comes out of the 12th house up into the 11th, and Venus on the other hand positions herself in the heart of the sky (*Cor Coeli*), illuminating the Ascendant by square,³⁰ through which the customs, behaviour and even manner in conversations is improved.³¹

To come back to Master von Taxis's letter: he affirms that I have predicted the events written in the margin; but this cannot be understood from the condition now examined and the diseases in the 22nd year of life.

²⁹ I think there is something strange about the original Ascendant position of 5° Pisces (greyed in **Figure 4**). First, the Ascendant degree at 4:30 p.m. L.A.T. in the birth location cannot be 5° Pisces. Modern calculation for 4:30 p.m. in Hermanice, Bohemia (German Königgratz, modern Hradec Králové, Czech Republic) using Kepler's latitude of 51° North, and the longitude for Hermanice of 15°21' East gives an Ascendant of 14°11' Aquarius. Secondly, the Ascendant degree would not change that much between 4:21 and 4:30 (the Ascendant moves roughly 1 degree every 4 minutes; in 9 minutes it would move back only about 2 ¼ degrees; Aquarius is a sign of short ascension, so it moves faster). At 4:21 p.m., by modern calculation, the Ascendant is 10°23' Aquarius; at 4:01:30 the Ascendant is 2°47' Aquarius. Is it therefore possible that Kepler used 5° Pisces, regardless of the actual time at which such an Ascendant would be produced, because it would correlate with a directed Ascendant of about 28° Pisces in Wallenstein's 22nd year?

³⁰ The 'heart of the sky' is not the Midheaven, but the highest elevation, which is square to the Ascendant – this falls around 17° Scorpio, the position of Venus.

³¹ Here is another instance of Kepler using a standard astrological technique which he claims to disdain on philosophical and scientific grounds: using the houses in interpretation. The 12th house is traditionally malefic, so a Moon in the 12th might contribute to 'disagreeable' manners, where a Moon in the 11th would improve them (the 11th house is traditionally the house of the good daemon or spirit).

For [OO 8.1, p. 351] I first gave this explanation in the year 1608, which was the 25th year of life, and this event was already over before that.

If I had written earlier and long before 1605, even if I had used these very same words, it would not have meant that I would have predicted precisely the Hungarian disease and the plague. I was just writing in general, but the condition is specified with circumstances, on which I should not have commented. Now that the things have happened, it can certainly be well applied, and to a degree I did that, [namely] the Hungarian disease to Saturn and the plague to Mercury. But before it happened, it need not have been the Hungarian disease and the plague, as several other diseases are attributed to Saturn, for example the quartan fever; [GW 21, 2.2, p. 459] while to Mercury is attributed the acute discharges,³² and to the combination of Jupiter and Mercury also the corruption of humours, putridity and pneumonia or the French disease.

I am making all this known for the purpose of disabusing the client of the idea that particular things can be predicted from the sky. It is indeed true that celestial particulars follow from the sky, but not earthly ones, neither special nor individual ones; but all earthly events take their form and shape from earthly causes, where each thing has its particular cause.

That Master von Taxis announces that the predicted events have arisen a year earlier or a year later, and that he assumes the sole cause for this is that the chart was not quite correct, I had to accept for the above-mentioned events in the 22nd year; but, that this way of correcting the chart is so exact and just that one can justly and artificially (*künstlich*) make the calculation, or assuming that the correction is so exact and just that therefore afterwards all events fall exactly into the predicted year, would be attributing too much to the art. For although certain times are a celestial particularity and need to be derived from the heavens, consider in addition to that, what the sky does on its own: so it is noted above that the sky rarely and almost never acts alone, but rather the native and others with whom he deals, want to do and start from free choice what they could have refrained from, and to which they were not forced by the sky, but through which they stimulate or inhibit natural chance so that they may not attain their celestial time, measure and particularity.

Kepler's comments continue for ten more folios in the manuscript (GW 21, 2.2., pp. 459-470; OO 8.1, pp. 351-358). Also extant (in GW 21, 2.2, pp. 471-475) are Kepler's calculations of the planetary positions in

³² Sudden respiratory infections?

*Wallenstein's birthchart, using the time of 4:22½ p.m., close to the time of 4:21 p.m. in the chart Kepler wrote out (**Figure 3**).*