What is the ruler of astrology?

When I was approached to give my views on what is the ruler of astrology, one of the first thoughts that came to mind was to approach the question as if it were the next exercise in a module. Unlike module exercises however there was no article 3.7 or such to read before attempting the associated exercise. Rulerships of signs and related houses of course have been part of my daily astrological thinking for some time now, but rulerships of professions hadn't tended to occupy my attention up until receiving the email from the faculty office asking if I was interested to take part in today's discussion. Apart from being aware of astrologers and astrology being ruled traditionally by Mercury and in later times by Uranus, hadn't given it much thought apart from wondering if having both of them in my first house might give me some hope yet of becoming an astrologer.

With my deadline to complete module 4 on time, I had to give that priority, so I simply found myself walking through the hectic streets of Hong Kong surrounded by paranoid people concerned about the latest initial public offerings on the stock market, while trying to make connections and come up with ideas no matter how far removed on how any planets could be connected with astrology and its practioners.

I decided to simply take every planet in turn and see how I could find a way of linking it to being considered a ruler of astrology. At first I had a few doubts about this train of thought, as it felt as if I was going against commonly agreed rulerships, but when I went to check what today's other more experienced speakers were planning to say on the matter felt a little more encouraged as I also saw mention of the Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Chiron, Saturn, Neptune and Pluto. Even if we

were representatives in some kind of debate between various astrological political groups I think it would be easy to form a coalition!

Dwelling upon the idea of rulership, also led me on to thoughts of what are called 'correspondences' in the western mystical tradition. Since early childhood I have been fascinated by colours and their association with particular times of the year or various celebrations. Unlike in traditional astrological rulership, these correspondences are not always as clear cut. On a personal level for quite a few years now I like to change the colour of candles at home, so I have a specific colour of the month. As a result these colours have taken on a meaning for myself on a purely personal level even if not in agreement with various tables of correspondences taken from various sources. Another example is how for some reason now forgotten, as a musician I associate the note of E flat with a rich dark green. These colours may have no relevance or meaning for others but they do for myself. Leading on from the colour associations of candles of the month and notes, we maybe come to the possibility that whatever the choice of rulership for a particular profession etc, if on a specifically personal level that has meaning for the individual, it will then take on a validity of its own relative to that individual's world. What happens if that individual's idea of a particular rulership is taken up by larger numbers? Do we then get the so called '100th monkey effect' whereby the non mainstream idea becomes part of the larger mindset.

In the early days of my module 1 studies, I found it fun to go around, in everyday situations asking myself what is this or that ruled by, trying to make my own connections and sometimes referring to a couple of rulership books I bought at the time to

see how my rulerships compared with those given. As a result of having to give this talk today, I went back to one of those books to see if I could get some more ideas. The book I am referring to is by the astrologer Lee Lehman, entitled 'The book of rulerships, keywords from classical astrology'. In her introduction she discusses the disagreement between astrologers on rulership. We're not of course talking about basic rulership such as if Mars rules Aries,etc, but more debatable areas such as human moods or plants, alongside of which it seems we can add the profession and study of astrology. To quote 'Does everyone agree? Trying to get different astrologers to agree on anything is rather like herding cats'.

Turning one's mind to the fact that Uranus is considered to be the modern co ruler of astrology, then by its very nature, Uranus is non status quo, the questioner, the revolutionary, so ironically as ruler, is capable of overturning its own rulership.

Within traditional astrology, then Mercury is the accepted ruler with its intricate mythological associations weaving together the threads of magic, astrology and alchemy, although some sources such as Ptolemy in his Tetrabiblios include Scorpio as the sign ruling astrology and William Lilly, the great English astrologer who is said to have predicted the Great Fire of London, classifying astrologers as artists and ruled by the 7th house. Apart from Mercury ruling astrology and its practitioners, we also find ourselves grouped together under our mercurial overlord alongside fellow cabbages, humidity and squirrels. Before moving on to thoughts about the other planets, with the idea of rulership and correspondences my mind turned to the equivalent of rulership in the Catholic church in the form of patron saints. Maybe unsurprisingly I couldn't find any patron saint of astrology in the present day official list of patron saints,

even though professions such as bar tenders, bailiffs and truss makers all have their accompanying patron saints. With a little bit of net surfing however, I did come across a listing for Albertus Magnus as patron of mathematicians and astrologers and in the course of red herring type of diversions, also learnt that Placidus as in the Placidus house system happened to be a Dominican monk/astrologer, who according to historian Lyn Thorndike, became a patron to astrologers of the day.

Taking a look at possible alternative modern contenders for rulership or co rulership of astrology, some planets would appear to have stronger cases than others. I personally don't have any strong inclination to put forward a serious case for the Sun. On the other hand, as an astrological exercise and playing with the idea of associations, wanted to look at all planets and possibilities. How about the idiosyncratic astrologer who practices solar astrology? I certainly didn't find any mention of the Sun as ruler of astrology, but found a surprising number of websites of solar astrologers. Some simply concentrate on readings based on solar returns etc but there are also those who practice heliocentric astrology. Maybe there are some of you present who have more specific knowledge of this field and can enlighten the rest of us later on. Heliocentric charts appear to be similar in construction to geocentric charts except the planets and aspects are relative to the Sun and not to the Earth. Quite possibly apart from that aspects, rulerships etc are the same as for the type of astrology we are more familiar with. At the same time, I could quite imagine a heliocentric astrologer accepting the Sun as ruler of their field of astrology.

Traditionally, the Sun rules garlic, sudden swooning and turtle doves

Moving on to the Moon, the possible connections to astrology become easier to make. In the qabbalistic tree of life, the sphere of Yesod is basically the sphere of the Moon. That then leads on to the various moon deities and their associations. Corresponding to the Moon's various phases, there are 3 goddesses assigned to her; Diana, Selene/Luna and Hecate. Hecate is a goddess of witchcraft and enchantments, with astrology playing an integral role in the casting and timing of spells etc. The Egyptian moon God Thoth, Lord of Magic is also Mercury, traditional ruler of astrology.

With or without knowledge of, or special interest in the magical, symbolic aspects of the Moon, the association of the Moon and astrology would still be naturally powerful for anyone who identifies with the 'Goddess' mindset and astrological practices which emphasizes the lunar side of things, so someone coming from such a background if asked to suggest a new ruler could well opt for the Moon.

Less well known traditional rulerships of the Moon include narrow streets of common people, prisons for Wizards and weasels.

Next comes Venus and how it could be considered a contender for rulership, which brought initial thoughts on beauty and structure. Astrology is often referred to as being partly an art, so the Venusian connection would be very appropriate. Visually the chart to me at least has a certain beauty in its structure, so I could easily imagine a liason between Venus and Saturn, rather than just Venus on its own, to incorporate the celestial geometry aspect.

As with all the other planets, I took initial ideas that came to me and then moved on to see what others had to say on the matter. Well, although I never found any specific mention of Venus being an actual ruler of astrology, found writings by astrologers practicing what they call Venusian astrology. From what I can gather this is a form of western astrology that places an emphasis on value systems, thus linking it with the 2nd house along with its natural rulers of Venus and Taurus.

If we take an astrologer that specializes in relationships especially of the more personal and romantic nature, then 7th house and Venus will no doubt play a central part in chart readings and counselling. For such astrologers then Venus could easily be the ruler of their specific branch of astrology. Going back to the idea of patron saints and those only known of or celebrated locally, then Venus might well be the local patron as it were of sub sets of astrologers. This idea of sub rulers/associate rulers or whatever they could be called, rather than rulers or co rulers could apply to any astrologer who practices a specialized type of astrology within the larger framework, so that there will be generally accepted rulership as in Mercury or Uranus for astrology in general, but lesser rulers that have relevance to the mindset of those practicing in areas closely related to a specific planet in addition to accepted rulerships agreed by the general astrological practitioner.

Rabbits, haunters of taverns and delicate children are traditionally ruled by Venus.

Mars seems one of the least likely planets to be considered for rulership. In my comments on the faculty day webpage I mentioned that maybe an astrologer from medieval or renaissance times if asked to choose an alternative ruler to Mercury might have put forward Mars. From a modern day way

of thinking that might seem to make sense, but in reality, by the nature of astrology in times past probably wouldn't have been the case as everything had its very specific place and purpose. I'm in the early stages of learning something about medieval astrology and so far at least feel it is unlikely anyone would have questioned Mercury's position. Even if Mars was not a serious contender in times past, astrologers were often required to assist in matters of warfare with Mars the 'bringer of War', being of obvious importance. The foremost astrologer of the 13th century was Guido Bonatti, much sought after by leaders temporal and spiritual. One of his books is entitled 'On war', where amongst the moral aspects of warfare he discusses the role of the astrologer as military advisor.

If we move forward to the 20th century we come across Hitler and his astrologers so although probably acknowledging Mercury and Uranus as co rulers of their art would have been engaged in military strategies as much as Bonatti back in the 13th century.

It also appears that even in the present day, techniques from the astrology of warfare can be applied to sporting competitions and strategies.

Unlike Venusian astrologers and astrology, there don't seem to be any Martian astrologers advertising their services, but anyone specialising in competitive sports techniques or competitions in general may look to Mars as their own private ruler of their practice.

Traditionally Mars rules sellers of wooden cups, chick peas and the right nostril.

Jupiter rules Spain, sleepiness without rest, and gluttony. Any possible rulership over astrologers isn't so obvious, unless

planning a study holiday with good intentions to complete the latest delayed module exercises in a small Spanish town but finding oneself getting invited to a party in Benidorm instead. Apart from the lighter side of Jovian correspondances, Jupiter doesn't appear to have a strong case for rulership. Looking outside of western astrology I found mention of the Jovian year in Vedic and Indian astrology not that that implies any kind of rulership. As with the Sun possibly having rulership on a personal level for the solar astrologer, likewise Jupiter would belong in the equivalent category for the philosopher /astrologer who approaches astrology as a search for meaning. Stretching the imagination a bit further Jupiter can be associated with long distance travel, crossing of cultural barriers etc, so maybe an astrologer with a special interest in rulership of world cultures and countries might place Jupiter in high esteem.

Saturn as mentioned earlier I associate with Venus if applied to astrology as far as astrological charts are concerned. Associations that come to mind are mathematics and geometry. I did read a passing comment somewhere about Saturn ruling astrology. As 'old father time', then the chart is a symbolic clock of a cosmic clock. Much of astrology is about number, movements in time and relationships between planets, angles etc, all part of the larger picture of mathematics, geometry and calculation which is interconnected with the world of structure something very Saturnian. The period of traditionally calculating and drawing up a chart could easily be considered to be ruled over by Saturn. Maybe each stage in reading a chart could be ruled over by different planets for that matter?

Chiron for the psychiatrist/astrologer working with clients going through a healing process could take on an important role.

One influential astrologer friend in the past with special interest in Chiron gave me a 90 minute or so Chiron birthday reading..not that she thought I was in especial need of healing. On the other hand another experienced astrologer who happens to be a psychotherapist has no time for Chiron, so there's no pleasing everyone. For those though that are somehow involved in healing therapies making use of astrology then Chiron could be their personal ruler.

I came across an article written back in 1957 by the French astrologer Dane Rudhyar , for the 'Horoscope Magazine'. The article is entitled 'Does Uranus rule astrology?'. He questions the rulership of Uranus saying that it is maybe how astrologers would like to be seen playing the role of transformers of society but considers astrology to be of a Neptunian nature. He talks of 'the ocean of life' and how astrology is a way of bringing together seemingly meaningless events into understandable and meaningful cycles. Another reason for his preference of Neptune over Uranus is that Uranus is about overturning established patterns but then the astrologer traces his art back to Ptolemy, and symbols rooted in the ancient past. Uranus doesn't belong to the world of classifications and textbooks, which Dane Rudhyar says the astrologer does belong to. Neptune is the all encompassing, bringing together everything into harmony and hence for Dane Rudhyar at least a much better candidate than Uranus.

Before coming across the Dane Rudhyar article on the website khaldea.com which whether agreeing or disagreeing with his opinions makes fascinating astrological reading, my own basic thoughts concerning Neptune were more along the lines of the world of symbols, the 'sea of consciousness' and how to make sense of this somewhat evasive world which at times almost

seems to make sense but falls out of ones grasp so easily. So for me, without Dane Rudhyar's reasoning can see the Neptunian side of astrology.

Apologies to Dracana/tongue in cheek comments about Pluto.!

Pluto has no traditional rulership in older sources, but since its discovery has built up its own group of associations, especially with that which is hidden and taboo. It seems hard to find any pleasant rulerships and even if it has a case for rulership of astrology and astrologers most of us would prefer not to be associated with it! Pluto is listed as having rulership however over televisions, space flight and washing machines, so maybe it's not all bad news for the image of our profession if Pluto starts gaining ground in its rulership bid. Although we are trained not to make assumptions and judgements in our readings, if we know that we are dealing with an unusual/extreme case can make for fascinating study if we see Pluto high lighted in the chart. The criminologist astrologer might like to specialize in the charts of notable villains and their psychological makeup for instance. In the general sense, Pluto can represent that which is repressed so if a chart is read with a view to uncovering secrets and taboos it can give an insight into the inner workings of the psyche. For the kind of astrologer that specialises in or is fascinated by more extreme charts involving Pluto, am sure would be happy to opt for Pluto as the ruler of their approach to astrology.

I'm not here to take sides with or put forward any strongly held opinion and since I am the last of the speakers today may have even changed my own mind after hearing what the others have had to say! This little talk is more about sharing how my

own seed thoughts developed around the idea of rulership in general and my attitude of 'it's all relevant', depending on the individual, mindset and circumstances. At this moment in time many of us may have come under the temporary communal rulership of the Moon over our stomachs, seeing it is fast approaching lunchtime.