

## An Information Special from Astro Communications Services, Inc.

by David Dukelow

### Retrograde Planets

In a birth chart retrograde planets are identified by the letter R (or the symbol  $\Re$ ) next to the planet that is retrograde. There may be none, one, or several such planets in a birth chart. The planets' usual motion is in zodiacal sequence: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, etc. Planets moving in this usual direction are said to be direct. A planet is retrograde when its apparent motion, as observed from earth, is the reverse of this usual motion. If a planet was transiting in a retrograde manner when you were born, it is retrograde in your birth chart.

As an example of the effect of retrograde planets in terms of transits, consider Mercury. Mercury goes retrograde several times a year while some planets do not go retrograde at all in this or that year. Frequently, when Mercury goes retrograde there are problems with communication — mail gets lost or delayed and some feel tongue-tied. At times like this people can feel that parts of their personalities are obstructed or cloudy, while people who have Mercury retrograde in their birth charts can get along better than ever. How an individual experiences the transit (or current motion) of a planet depends on the specifics of that person's chart.

### Secondary Progressed Charts

To paraphrase author Steven Forrest (see *The Changing Sky*, Ch. Eight), a natal chart is like a seed, and its growth in large measure is described by how the chart progresses. The most common form of progression is called Secondary Progression. This method has been known since Biblical times and is mentioned in the *Old Testament*. The progressed Sun moves about one degree per year and the progressed Moon moves about one degree per month. The progressed motion of these two "planets" is always direct while the progressed motion of other planets can be either direct or retrograde.

It is easy to estimate where your progressed planets are, or you can let Astro do the work. If you are familiar with an ephemeris, find your birth date and count down, trading a day for a year. Thus to approximate the progressed positions of the planets when you are twenty years old, count down twenty days from your birth date and read the positions. While it is most common for people to get their chart progressed to their birthday, Astro can calculate a progressed chart to *any* day after your birth. When you order a progressed chart, please give the current date you want your chart progressed to, such as your birthday in 1995, the day you got married, and so on, not the equivalent day as you would look it up in an ephemeris.

There is often confusion between Solar Return charts and progressed charts. A solar return chart is drawn up for the day that the Sun returns to its natal place (this may be as much as two days before or after the birthday). This chart gives a symbolic picture of the year from that solar return date to the next solar return date. Progressed charts are different. Because the progressed Sun moves only about one degree per year, and the usual orb used for progressed charts is one degree, a progressed chart is good for about six months on either side of the date it is drawn up for. The position of the progressed Moon can then be approximated. If it's at 10° Aries for the date the chart is drawn up, four months later it will be at 14° Aries, while two months before

that date it would be at 8° Aries. The other planets move more slowly than the Sun. Remember, a chart is not progressed for a year; it is progressed to a certain date and is valid for about six months before and after that date.

A progressed chart is like a snapshot of how the natal chart has grown. To see the "movie," consider ordering five years of secondary progressions. These always start on January 1 and run for five consecutive years. The positions of the progressed planets are given for the first of each year, and in a column below each of these lists are given the dates the progressed planets make aspects to other progressed planets and the natal planets. You can see at a glance when your progressed Moon changes sign or natal house, when a planet, such as Mercury, changes direction by progression (if it does), and so forth.

Here are two examples of the value of knowing where your progressed planets are or when they change direction (if at all) by secondary progression. A man was elected President of a club for a year. His progressed Moon was in Taurus. He found, to his surprise, that he had the perseverance to do the many things that needed to be done. Perseverance and stamina are peculiarly Taurean qualities. Later, when his progressed Moon moved into Gemini, he did some volunteer work for a medical library through the Red Cross. He enjoyed being in a place where there was so much information and interesting people to talk to. He looked back on his tenure as club president and at times wondered how he'd had the energy to do all the work he'd done. When he learned about where his progressed Moon had been it all seemed natural and correct.

When a planet changes direction by progression (as opposed to transiting direction, discussed under Retrograde planets above), there usually is a change of emphasis in the individual's life. For example, a man has Pluto in his tenth natively in the sign of Leo. By secondary progression it became retrograde a few years ago. When he became aware of this fact, it occurred to him that he got a new job within a month of the date Pluto changed direction. At the time, his attitudes toward work and career were changing — he came to feel that his career did not have to be in line with all of his deepest desires. The tenth house is the house of career, and his new job was in teaching, where he felt he could express some of his Leonine needs appropriately. He came to feel that it was the right time for the change to take place. His earlier resentments about not finding appropriate work largely evaporated. This is an illustration of the fact that when a planet changes direction by progression, there is a change in emphasis or direction in the expression of certain portions of the personality, and that outer circumstances often change to accommodate this inner change. In particular, note that if a planet goes retrograde by progression it does not mean that part of an individual's personality will regress.

### Two Good Books

See the books *The Changing Sky*, mentioned above, or *The Only Way To... Learn About Tomorrow* by Marion D. March and Joan McEvers, for readable discussions of secondary progressions. They have lots of examples presented in plain English — easy to understand. These books are published by ACS Publications.

**The Changing Sky** ..... BCSKE2 \$12.95  
**The Only Way to Learn about Tomorrow** ..... B136X \$19.95

# GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRESSIONS

All systems of progression are methods of predicting future trends based on the unfolding of a birth chart through time. Each type of progression equates one unit of time after the birth moment with a second unit of time of longer duration, as shown below:

**Secondary Progressions** ..... day = year  
**Minor Progressions** ..... lunar month = year  
**Tertiary Progressions** ..... day = lunar month

Whatever system is used, the planetary movements and aspects formed in the period after birth are said to be effective during the corresponding longer period in the person's life. For example, using secondary progressions, the planets' movements during the first day of life represent the first year of life; the second day represents the second year; etc.

## PROGRESSED ANGLES

You have a choice of how the angles (Midheaven and Ascendant) will be progressed:

1. The **Solar Arc Method** moves the MC by the **exact arc** that the Sun has progressed since the moment of birth. The progressed Ascendant and other house cusps are calculated from this MC, using the latitude of the place of birth. **The Solar Arc Method is the most popular in the United States, and will be used for your order unless you specifically request a different method.** This applies to all three systems of progression: Secondary, Minor, and Tertiary.

2. **Natal House Cusps:** a few astrologers prefer to put the progressed planets on the framework of the natal wheel, without progressing the cusps at all. For them, we offer the **Secondary Progressed Chart with Natal Cusps (PROGNH)**. This option applies to Secondaries only, and **not** to Minor or Tertiary Progressions.

3. The **RA of Mean Sun Method** moves the right ascension of the MC forward at the rate of the Sun's **average daily movement**. The number of progressed days since birth is multiplied by the Sun's average daily movement (3 min. 56.553 sec. per progressed day) and added to the natal RAMC. **Progressed angles** are derived from this value. **The RA Method is available only as a technical option** — see our latest Technical catalog. It is currently available in every system of progressions that we offer, on all options **except** the **Quotidian (Daily) Progressions (QUOT)** listing.

4. The **Birthtime Method** is currently available only in Secondary Progressions, and only on two kinds of charts: the **Progressed Chart to the Birthday (PROGB-BT)** and the **Quotidian (Daily) Progressed Chart (QUOTC-BT)**. In this method, the cusps are progressed by the same method used for the planets, namely that one day after the birth in transit is equated to one year after the birth in Secondary Progression. Thus a **Birthtime Secondary Progressed Chart to the Birthday** is calculated as an actual transit chart that

occurred so many days after the birth, and at the same Universal Time as the birth. This method is available only as a technical option — see our latest *Astroguide* catalog.

5. In **Quotidian (Daily) Secondary Progressions**, the angles of the progressed chart are rotated throughout the entire zodiac during the progressed year, returning on the birthday to the position obtained by the method selected (**Solar Arc, RA of Mean Sun, or Birthtime**). Note that while Astro offers **Quotidian Charts** for any of the three methods, the listing format uses **Solar Arc** only. Again, these are technical options — see our latest *Astroguide* catalog.

## TIMING OPTIONS

Some astrologers have proposed a non-traditional approach to determining exactly what constitutes a “day” and a “year,” suggesting that the rate of movement of the secondaries should correspondingly speed up or slow down, at the rate of the transiting Sun. These progressions have been termed “true” progressions. The difference in timing between regular secondary progressions and True Progressions can amount to 12 days, but is typically about half of this. The difference will vary during the year. To calculate True Progressions, one figures the fraction of the Sun's orbit elapsed between the Sun's position on the target date and the natal Sun. This fraction becomes the fraction of the ephemeris year to use in calculating the progressed positions. True arc is used for such systems as “Meridian of the Day” progressions (Quotidian with True Arc) and True Arc Minor Progressions (Church of Light or Hermetic Minors). If you want True Progressions of any kind, be sure to specify true arc on your order form.

## SECONDARY PROGRESSIONS

Secondary Progressions are by far the most commonly used. Astro offers four types of reports in the *Astroguide* catalog: **Progressed Profile** (an interpreted report), the **Progressed Chart, Day-by-Day Progressions** and **Quotidian (Daily) Progressions**.

If you prefer to calculate your own secondary progressions, you can take advantage of the Adjusted Calculation Date (ACD) which is printed in the center of our standard **BNC Natal Chart Wheel**. ACDs are given for use with both noon and midnight ephemerides. (0 hour refers to the ACD for a midnight ephemeris; 12 hour refers to the ACD for a noon ephemeris.)

The ACD is the date during the year on which the planetary positions in the ephemeris are accurate as given without any interpolation. Count forward in the ephemeris one day for each year of life. The planetary positions on that day are accurate progressed positions for the ACD date in that year. Since most planets move less than a degree from one day to the next, and the outer planets only a few minutes of arc, many astrologers consider the ACD date positions to be sufficient for a quick look at secondary progressions for the year. Since the Moon moves 12 to 14 degrees, however, you will want to interpolate it so that you can see which month it aspects other planets. You can figure the average monthly motion of the progressed Moon by dividing its total movement in one year by 12.