





THE SIGIL HIERARCHY (Part 2 - Interpretation)



Cherry Gilchrist 1982
Saros Publications



General Principles of Sigil Interpretation

Sigils can be interpreted from different viewpoints, depending upon which aspect of the sigil is the focus of attention. Interpretations can be broadly classified under four different headings:

a) A sigil can be interpreted according to the space it defines. For instance, under this heading,  will be seen primarily as a relation between two diamond shapes;  as a pattern of three triangles. Such interpretations dwell on the geometric properties of the sigil.

b) It can be seen as an energy circuit, a network of lines charged with a current. Interpretations will be based on the flow of the sigil, paying attention to tension points, change of direction, cross-overs and so on. For example  would be seen as a simple circular movement;  as a zigzag or spiral of energy along a central axis.


c) A sigil can be interpreted as an emblem or symbol. Here the general appearance of the sigil is viewed, and correspondences sought among objects or entities that we are already familiar with.  is readily seen as a cup and  as a star. This type of interpretation draws on the pictorial content of the sigil.





d) The fourth type of interpretation is potentially more complex and will tend to have relevance when the sigils are viewed in terms of a sequence. This is interpretation based upon how a sigil arises. Sigil A turns to Sigil B through one or more types of pair exchanges, and thus the kind of exchanges involved will shed light upon the nature of Sigil B. For instance,  arises through the exchange of opposite pairs within . However, since each sigil may be reached through one of several other sigils, the matter becomes very complicated in terms of a general definition or interpretation, although this way can be very useful when considering a pathway, cycle or other type of sigil sequence.

Let us take an analogy to show the relevance of interpretations a) b) and c). A king has conquered a country and enters with his people to take possession of it. First he sends his men to find out the extent of his new territory. How large is it? What shape is it? Where are the borders? What area of land is fertile plain, which regions are mountainous, and where does the sea coast lie? He calls for the land to be mapped, and thus comes to know its size and shape. Next, he seeks to know how he and his people can operate in such a

land. He looks at the roads and waterways to find out how goods can be transported, how communications systems can best be established, and where access is most easy or difficult. Finally, taking into account the known resources and properties of the country, he decides what kind of a nation he wishes to create. It may be a sea-faring country, or one where trade is predominant; it may hold together best as a domain of peaceful farmers, or as a hard and war-like nation.

Thus a) can be the map of a country b) its economy c) its flag and identity. Applying this to a sigil, it can be said that a) level of interpretation will give us clues as to the meaning of the structure of the sigil b) to the operation of energy within it c) to the symbolic or archetypal qualities of the sigil.

Many interpretation of sigils will, of course, draw from more than one level of interpretation, and, indeed, I suspect that the interpretations which will be most satisfactory ultimately are those which combine meaning from two, three or four sources of interpretation. A simple example is that of the sigil . Interpretation at level b) can be that of a cyclical process, of gathering in. At level c) it can be seen as a necklace, or crown. Thus the image of a May garland, or harvest crown would combine both these meanings, being composed of greenery or corn woven together and worn to celebrate the growth cycle in nature.

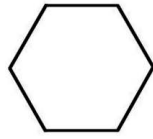
A balanced view of each sigil does need to take into account a) b) and c), even if one overall image or attribution cannot readily be found. For instance, level c), the emblematic source of interpretation is more readily influenced by personal associations as one is endeavouring to see a picture in a shape (like a more restricted version of the inkblot test!) It is therefore desirable to consider the structure and energy flow of the sigil as well, in order to find an interpretation which will be relevant to a larger number of people. Additionally, it is important to realise that level c) and to some extent level b) are affected by the rotation of the sigil. For instance,  resembles a cup, whereas  resembles a fish, and the direction of energy is different in  and in .

However good our interpretations of the sigils will be, there will never be one definitive interpretation since we are drawing from a source of meaning and clothing our comprehension in images and words which are conditioned by our experience and culture. To interpret is to act as an intermediary; in this case, between the source of meaning and the context in which we are considering the sigil. This is where the skill in sigil interpretation lies. A different language is needed for interpreting sigils in horoscopes from that needed for using them as a philosophical system.

The Hierarchy

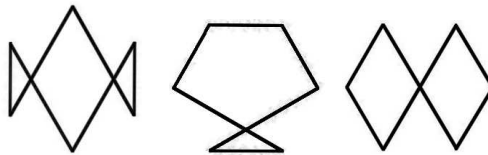
The hierarchy proceeds from the simplest sigil through three on the next level, through six on level three to two at level four. I will endeavour to give examples of how these many be interpreted, bearing in mind that interpretations will vary according to the context in which the sigils are used,

and also that with time more significant or precise definitions may develop as research into the sigils progresses. This interpretation of the hierarchy is intended as a starting point.



This is the simplest, basic sigil, and thus represents the first point in a chain of events, the initial impulse giving rise to a process, or the basic material from which something is to be created. It can be called the mother, the seed, the blueprint, It is the source of that which follows.

By exchanging pairs within this sigil three more sigils can be born. Each one of these three will provide a framework for action.

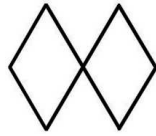


Looking at the way in which these three sigils arise gives us clues as to their meaning.



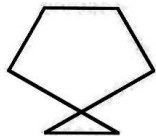
This sigil is created by taking a pair of opposites and exchanging them. It is like a king who takes a foreign queen as his bride, or a queen who marries a foreign king. Through this an alliance of the nations is created, and they relate in a new and special way. This sigil thus represents a state where the boundaries have been extended. It creates an entity from what were two opposing sides. Once created, it provides an environment in which new things can grow. When two nations, or tribes, or individuals have formed a relationship then there is scope for a new language, a new art form and a new way of knowledge to grow. But the alliance must be accepted by the common people of both sides - represented by the two triangles. They sustain the alliance by their acceptance and good will.

The sigil has associations of extending to meet the unfamiliar, and of establishing communication with it. Indeed, it is an excellent symbol for communication showing the speaker, that which is communicated, and the listener.



Here two alternate points are taken and swapped to create this sigil. In astrological terms, these points are 120 degrees apart and represent a trine relationship, which is an easy and flowing one. This is like a marriage between a man and a woman who belong to different branches of the same family. They are already on good terms, but there is some distance between them. When they marry this establishes a new set of relationships within the family. There will be greater interaction between members of the family. There will also be a proliferation of relationships, since a second cousin may now become a brother-in-law as well, and so on. The relationship, and thus the sigil, is sustained by continual energetic interchange. In terms of the family or tribe this would probably be effected by increased socialising, duties of service and visiting, and gift-giving. Kinship customs and also kinship taboos would be emphasised as marriage to a distant relative highlights that which can be united and that which must still be kept separate in order to preserve the family structure. The new relationship is dependent upon energy input. It is vulnerable to quarrels, which can cause a complete rift between the two interacting groups.

This sigil is therefore particularly associated with activation, energy, and interchange. It affirms affinities and polarities.





This sigil takes two adjacent points and exchanges them in order to be formed. This is like the ancient marriage in Egypt of the Royal brother and sister. In more common terms, it is like a boy marrying the girl next door, or his childhood sweetheart. Such a marriage seeks to preserve what already exists, to strengthen it and develop its power. It defines and gives form to what is already present in potential. Once established, it confers authority and power. It is likely to be especially concerned with tradition and can provide a favourable environment for learning, authorised religion and a contemplative yet well-formulated approach to life. The sigil itself is reminiscent of a womb, a protective environment in which ideas can be gestated. However, it can become top (or bottom!) heavy, too dependent upon established precedent and veneration of the past, and stagnant in outlook.


Comparing all three sigils, they can be summarised as follow:





extends and defines a new space.

 polarises and energises

 preserves and empowers







Additionally, it can be said that  has the power to transform. By extending, new boundaries are created. A new 'mixture' now lies within the new territory. The substances within this mixture can be transformed into a new substance. (The modern English language was born after the Normans conquered England). It is like a sealed alchemical vessel in which chemical transformations can take place.


 is like the creation of a force field out of a previously static or inert environment. Energy may arise through a 'marriage' of entities, as in the example above, or through a division, as in the setting up of negative and positive poles.


 has the power to shape or mould. It is like a cup which can contain and preserve that which is in it and gives form to that which may initially be formless, just as molten wax sets in its mould to become a candle.

Level Three

I give this level the nickname of 'The Magician's Powers' because it seems to me to indicate an order of creative activity, showing the different ways in which man can operate within the physical and psychical environment that he finds himself in. Level 2 defines the type of environment. I will endeavour to give a core definition of each sigil and then to expand on each one to show how this may be developed in different contexts.

 Initiating  Collecting  Uniting  Penetrating  Balancing  Measuring

 - This sigil gives the impression of a forceful energy invoked and directed. It can relate to creative artistic work, and to the work of physicists. The emotional connotations are those of excitement and impulsiveness, with implications of speedy reactions and high energy levels.

 - Here we have perpetual motion, a constant gathering-up and re-distribution going on. It can relate to administrative work and to cyclical production work such as farming and factory production. It is work that is never finished. It implies establishing connections between different areas of life or different commodities. Psychologically it can relate to circling thoughts

and internal organisation of impressions (physical, mental and emotional). It may well, therefore, relate to the dream state also.



- This sigil shows balance, but it also has the power to rotate, and thus gives rise to the idea of harmonious movement, best exemplified by the art of dancing. It may thus relate to kinds of work which are concerned with achieving or expressing harmony, such as the performing arts, music, design. It has connotations of flight and speed, and on the psychological level indicates aspirations, ideals and sense of integrity.



- The form of the sigil suggests man's ability to measure, to understand perspective, level, and structure. It relates to mathematics, engineering, and architecture. It gives the ability to raise, lower, and assess the effects of altered dimensions, weight or volume. Psychologically, it seems to relate to the intellect, and to the mental ability to put matters in context, to assess time, to plan, and to remember.



- Different forces are interlocked here. Energies or materials are harnessed, controlled and brought together to create a form which unites differing ideas, forms or substances. It suggests the work of the skilled craftsman who gets the most out of his materials, working with precision and a knowledge of the properties of the substances he uses. The sigil implies mental or emotional concentration.



- This sigil shows the ability to penetrate, challenge and explore. It indicates man's originality and the urge to overstep existing boundaries and investigate what lies beyond. It relates to the work of researchers, explorers, and may also suggest hunting as it implies an awareness of opportunity and of sensing the right time to act. Psychological implications are those of questioning, rebelling, seeking, and of going beyond the ordinary limits of time.



relies on creative impulse, and ^knowing the direction in which to channel that energy.



relies on techniques and systems to assist the process.



relies on desire for movement, and on joy and emotional involvement.



relies on understanding of principles.



relies on traditional learning and acquired skills.

☐☐ relies on the Ability to recognise opportunity.

The affinities in the hierarchy can be considered. ☐☐ is reached only through ☐☐. This is consistent in the light of the interpretations given above; ☐☐ produces an activated environment and signifies polarities, such as the male and female polarity. Dance, an activity of ☐☐, relies fundamentally on masculine and feminine polarity. Most dances consist of movements for partners of the opposite sex, or of interchanging movements based on this division. Some are performed by women for men, and vice versa. Even dances kept secret by male or female members of a society are stressing this polarity. Basically, ☐☐ gives rise to interchange, flow and movement, which inspires ☐☐ with the urge to dance, travel, fly, speed, perform acrobatics and so on!

☐☐ is reached only through ☐☐. I have already shown that ☐☐ can be interpreted as an environment favourable to profound thought and traditions of learning. ☐☐ represents branches of study and activity especially connected with structure and form, and implies respect for hierarchy and established procedure. The cup collects water for ☐☐ to measure.

☐☐ is reached by ☐☐ and ☐☐ but not by ☐☐. The reason for this: ☐☐ has created an environment where new, expanded boundaries have already been established, and the impetus to go still further beyond is perhaps subdued since there is plenty to do within the enlarged scope that this sigil implies. The urge to investigate and explore can be triggered more readily by the activated state of ☐☐ and the urge to challenge and penetrate beyond existing boundaries aroused by the strict formalised context of ☐☐.

The activity of ☐☐ can proceed when ☐☐ has been established. This may relate to the uniting of different qualities or existing traditions which was implied in the example given of ☐☐ as representing an alliance of two foreign nations in which opposing cultures would come together and form something new. ☐☐ can also take the energies generated by ☐☐ and interlock them. ☐☐ is perhaps already too 'locked' to find separated energies or themes to harness.



Three sets of pairs are thus formed



☐☐ ☐☐ are reached by 3 sigils ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐



☐☐ ☐☐ are reached by 2 sigils ☐☐☐☐ / ☐☐☐☐



☐☐ ☐☐ are reached by 1 sigil ☐☐ / ☐☐

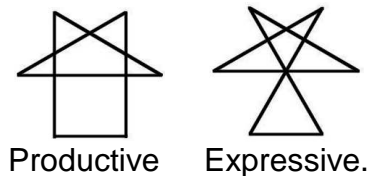
Each pair consists of two complementary sigils; they can be seen as necessary to each other in order to balance.


The energy and impulsiveness of  needs to be balanced by the knowledge of system and method shown by .


The skill and concentration of  needs to be developed by awareness of opportunity and desire to be original shown by .



The defining and measuring intellect shown in  needs the delight in movement and sense of harmony generated by .



The last two sigils (Level 4) in the hierarchy are  and . These plainly form some kind of a complementary pair and I would like to suggest an essential meaning of:











 represents that which is capable of being used, of performing a function or of being productive in some way.



 is complete in itself, expresses its essential nature without further interaction, and shows a result that is a goal in itself without having any specific use.

For instance, a potter might create a dish which would be signified by  since the dish was intended to hold food. He might on the other hand make a model or figurine which would be decorative  rather than functional.

 represents a process which results in organisation;  is a crystallisation of that which has come before.

Most actions, procedures and created objects can be classified under one or other of these headings. For instance, I have intended that this discourse on the meaning of the sigils should serve as a basis for further development and research,  rather than being a finalised and perfected study, . However, the definition of  or  will depend to some extent upon the relative viewpoint of the person interpreting. The potter's dish, once intended as  a vessel for use, but now discovered by the collector as a rare and ancient Chinese item, will surely be assessed as  and counted only fit for display! Or, on the other hand, if you find a bronze sculpture intended as 

singularly unpleasing, it can provide a useful doorstep and be designated as  !

I will make the additional suggestion that  can be considered as a source of knowledge, and  as a source of power.