

A MODERN MIRACLE: CONJOINED BABIES SEPARATED

By Carol Squires, PMAFA, DTASNZ, member APA

While nothing can quite surpass the miracle of birth, medical marvels have got to be right up there with them. The two came together on 8th October 2004 when the *New Zealand Herald* reported the successful separation of conjoined babies after a 22-hour marathon operation two days previously.

Over the next two days while more information of the operation was divulged, in line with the parents' wishes all personal details such as sex and age of the twins remained private. However the newspaper did disclose that the premature birth was understood to have taken place 'around July'.

What we know is that the babies were joined at the lower spine and pelvis, a condition known as 'pygopagus twins'.

Seven different procedures needed to be carried out during surgery, the most delicate of which was the separation of their spinal cords.

The surgical team were reported as being elated at the success of the surgery but remained cautiously optimistic as to the continued health and well-being of the babies.

Although the birth data for the twins was unknown I was nevertheless intrigued by how astrology might describe the separation process as well as determine the twins health and future prospects.

According to *New Zealand Herald* reports, the operation began at 8am on Tuesday, 5th October 2004 (Chart #1). It took 17 hours to separate the babies — which takes us to 1.00am Wednesday, 6th October (Chart #2) — and a further five hours to reconstruct bone and use skin to cover the wounds. The operation finished at 6am on Wednesday, 6th October (Chart #3) ¹.

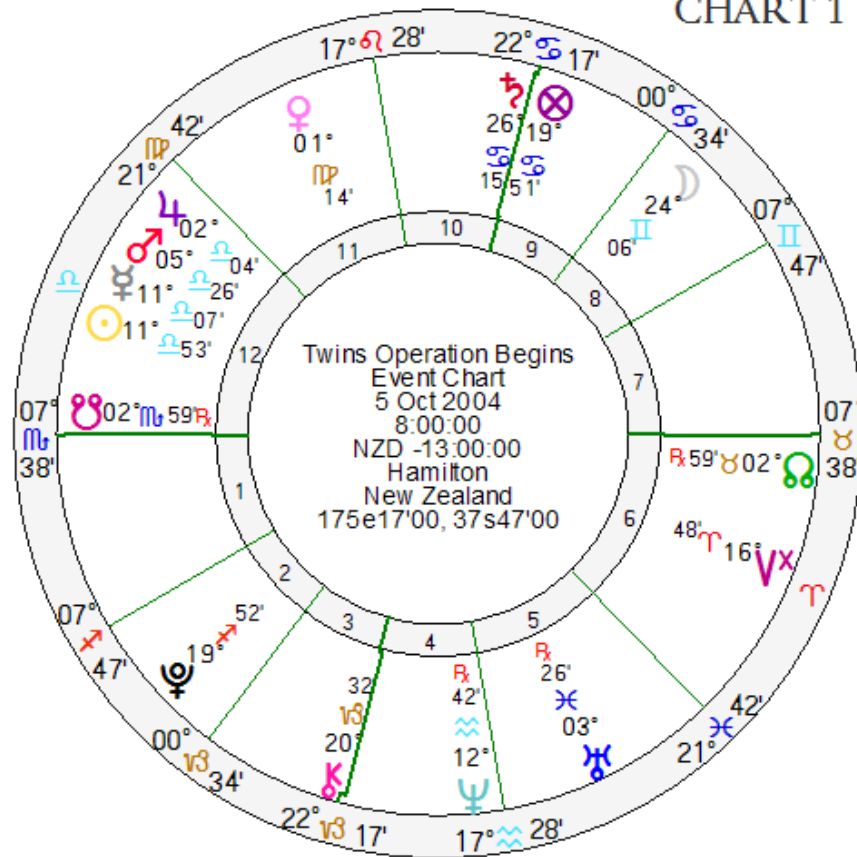
The operation begins

We know that the operation was a success — and while hindsight is all very well, it is certainly interesting to see some of those indications in this chart.

The first thing that struck me was that both the MC and the Part of Fortune were conjunct the fixed stars Castor and Pollux — the heavenly twins!

Saturn in the 10th House conjunct the MC also conjuncts the fixed star Procyon² — amongst its attributes is one of good judgement. The MC is all about what one is aiming for in any endeavour and the main aim of this operation was to separate two babies inexorably tied together — the realm of Saturn.

CHART 1



The 7th house describes the physician. Taurus here, with its ruler Venus having a huge role to play in this chart. Not only as a significator of the physician but in 11th house his being a part of the enormous team effort – which included 40 medical staff – required for this operation.

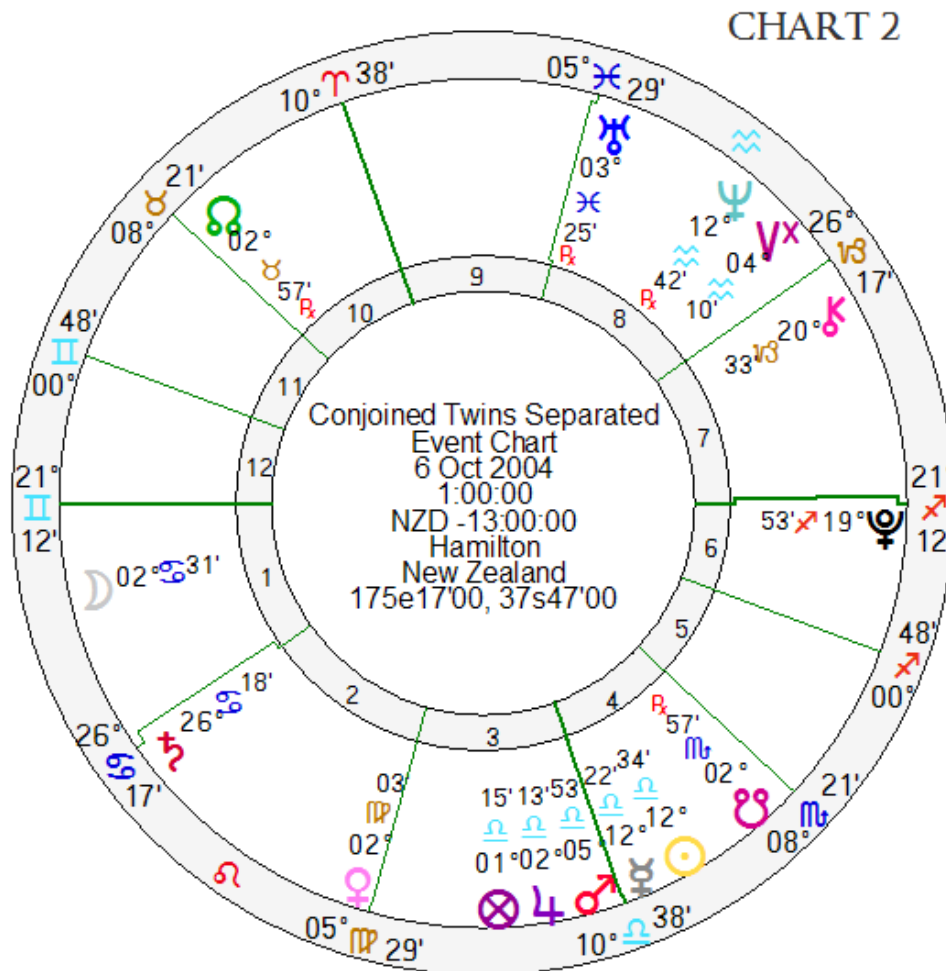
The sign of Virgo describes the clinical and precise nature of the physician. Venus disposes the four 12th house Libran planets – including the Lord of Life the Sun, and ascendant ruler Mars: the life of the babies is certainly in the hands of Venus, the physician and his team. In turn Venus not only disposes but is mutually applying to the Moon's node in Taurus in the 6th house of illness – another positive indication of a successful outcome.

Add to that Venus in mutual reception with Mercury, also considered very helpful as one works for the benefit of the other. However, Mercury is combust the Sun which weakens it but as we will see over the course of the next 22 hours the faster moving Mercury finds itself cazimi – in the heart of the Sun – a very strengthening position³.

The Moon in the 8th House is waning and while it carries with it the life-threatening contact with Pluto it is well past the opposition. In the last degrees of Gemini it makes no other aspects before leaving the sign – often this means there is no cause for alarm. Note how its 24°♊ position carries through in the following two charts.

Twins Separated

It was reported that it took 17 hours to separate the babies. Chart 2 is set up for 1.00am, 6 October 2004. I am assuming that the time given is approximate but with Gemini rising, we can't ignore the symbology of twin souls being separated, with the ascendant degree of 21°II linking in with the 24°II Moon of the operation chart. Note how the ascendant ruler Mercury has now moved into the heart of the Sun, being strengthened.

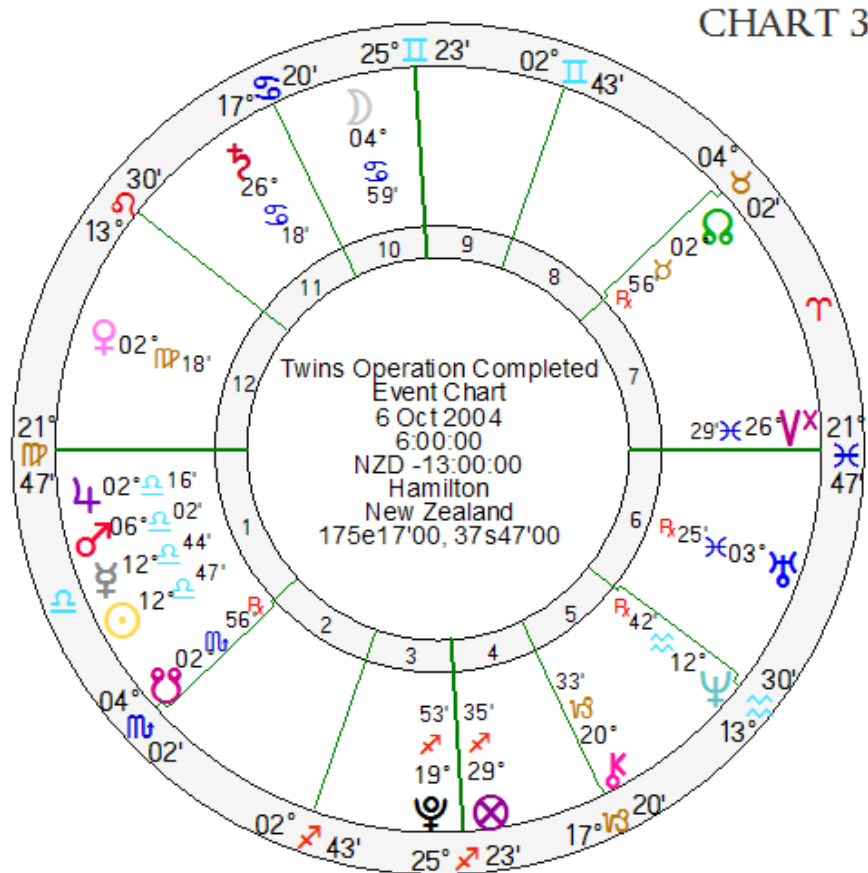


There must have been must cause for celebration at that point – the Part of Fortune conjunct Jupiter, in this chart ruler of the 6th house of illness as well as the 7th, the physician. Jupiter in turn conjuncts Mars, ruler of the 10th – their objective has been successfully achieved.

By this time the Moon has moved into Cancer, exact midpoint between the Venus/Node trine, and trine Uranus – success and release. With Moon square Jupiter it must have been a hugely emotional moment for all concerned.

Operation completed

I find this chart (see Chart #3 on following page) interesting from the point of view that while it is cast for the completion of the operation, the events leading up to its completion are described so well.



The ascendant and 1st House denotes the health and body. The clinical sign of Virgo rises and fits very nicely with the seven or eight different procedures, including delicate neurosurgery, that was required to separate the twins.

Also in the 1st House, Libra is intercepted and holds Jupiter, Mars, Mercury and the Sun. I view intercepted as 'being in a bind' in some way, unable to express as outwardly or as strongly as one might like. The ascendant ruler Mercury is but 3 minutes of arc from the Sun. Ancient authorities deemed that any planet within 0°17' of the Sun was 'in the heart of the Sun' — or Cazimi. Such a position fortifies the planet as much as a Combust position debilitates it. Both planets form a partile trine with Neptune and while a trine may be beneficial its nature could be one of wasting and being retrograde and close to the 6th house cusp of health/ill-health may suggest unknown forces at work. The ascendant is exactly trine Chiron, the one who is wounded only to be healed.

The ascendant ruler Mercury is in Virgo. At first glance this position has a lot going for it not least of which is the Mercury/Venus mutual reception — one working for the benefit of the other — and Venus' trine with the north node which suggests ongoing development of a beneficial nature. However, Venus is in its fall in Virgo in the 12th house of hospitalisation (which is very appropriate anyway) but traditionally being in its fall as well as the 12th serves to weaken the benefits promised. Add to this Venus' applying opposition to Uranus in the 6th House so there might be sudden and unexpected turn of events.

The two planets of vitality, Mars and the Sun, while strengthened by their angular 1st house position are in turn weakened by virtue of their placement in Libra: Mars in detriment and Sun in its fall. We could look at this positively though . . . obviously two tiny babies having survived a long and intricate operation are of course going to be in a weak and vulnerable position. Things can only get better. It must be remembered that at this point, the twins were placed in intensive care.

Now looking at the Moon as reflecting functioning, ongoing development and likely outcome, it is very strongly placed both by being in its own sign of Cancer and in the angular 10th house. And what an active Moon she is . . . two degrees past a sextile to both Venus and its (Moon's) north node — which could well be the connection with the birth of the twins. This might suggest that the birth took place between 2 and 2.6 months previously which ties in with a birth mid-July to early August. Note also that with the Moon's sextile to Venus at the same time as it formed a square to Jupiter; the square suggesting the enormous decisions that needed to be made and the many challenges that lie ahead.

Just to divert slightly, regarding timing in charts such as this (which I'm reading as I might a horary chart) I generally take the number of degrees between the moon and its aspect to a planet to signify when and what has passed (separating aspects) and when and what is to lead from that (applying aspects). Depending on the subject of the chart, the number of degrees apart corresponds to the number of hours, days, weeks, months or years. I have found that, for example in this case with the Moon's 2 degrees separation from Venus that the time frame could apply to both days, weeks or months.

Interestingly, the *NZ Herald* reported that two weeks before the surgery, the team had a trial run with dolls the same size as the babies, made by the hospital's orthotic department'.

The operation separating the twins took place 22 hours previously - this can be seen by the Moon's separating trine from Uranus in the 6th, the trine giving success. But like Neptune, Uranus is retrograde, and further intervention may be necessary.

Carrying on Uranian theme, the operation itself was unique for several reasons. Only 30 cases of pygopus twins — those joined at the lower spine — had been reported world wide. This was the first for New Zealand and Australia.

Initially, the Moon's position looked strong but its applying aspects were not so promising. It quickly squared Mars in 1x (one day, one week, one month) — more decisions involving surgery to be made? Day 8 could well have been a turning point when it squared both the ascendant ruler and Sun and quincunx Neptune. Its waning square helpful in that the difficult nature of the square was lessening rather than increasing. Day 15/16 gave a quincunx to Pluto, opposed Chiron which did not look particularly promising or helpful; but its sextile to the ascendant gave a ray of hope with the opportunity to look towards a more positive future.

As it happened, on 20th October, 15 days after the operation, the *NZ Herald* reported the twins were out of intensive care.

Twenty-two days (or 22 weeks) later Moon made its final aspect to Saturn before leaving the sign. The *Herald* reported that the babies' parents have the support of a large extended family. The conjunction between Moon and Saturn is a fine indicator of this support.

On Tuesday, 26th October, 21 days after the operation the *NZ Herald* reported that the twins had returned home the 'previous weekend' (23/24 October). Venus at 23°/24°♍ was now conjunct the Chart #3 ascendant — a happy occasion for both the paediatric surgeon, Mr Askar Kukkady, medical staff and family.

So what of the prognosis? I think the chart is a good reflection of both the events leading up to the twins' successful separation and the ongoing reconstructive and orthopaedic surgery they face as they grow and develop. While there are many indications of ongoing success there are just as many accompanying challenges and possible setbacks.

We wish these wee souls well.

References:

¹ All times quoted are New Zealand daylight time, 13 hours ahead of GMT

² ref *The Fixed Stars & Constellations in Astrology* by Vivian E Robson

³ from de Vore's *Encyclopaedia of Astrology*

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Carol Squires has been a student, teacher and practitioner of astrology for over thirty years, holding classes and workshops, and running a successful practice. She continues to learn, her students and clients being an ongoing source of inspiration.

Carol is a Diploma Teacher Member of the Astrological Society of New Zealand, Inc (DTASNZ), and established the Astrology Correspondence School in 1983. In 1995 she qualified for Professional Membership of the American Federation of Astrologers (PMAFA).

Since 2004, Carol has been Editor of the *New Zealand Journal of Astrology*, published by the Astrology Foundation Inc, a position she has found to be a particularly enjoyable challenging and learning experience. Carol's website is located at www.astrologyschool.com