

PALMISTRY ~ ORIGINS & HISTORY©

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Chiromancy or cheiromancy is the art of characterization through the study of the palm; also known as palmistry, palm-reading, chirolgy or hand analysis. It is practiced all over the world with numerous cultural variations. Practitioners of chiromancy are called palm-readers, palmists, hand readers or chirologists. Palmistry evidently began about the same time the human species stood upright and began walking on two legs. Hand gestures made to tell the story of the hunt brought attention to the changing structure of the hand and led to clues for self-understanding. Archaeological discoveries have revealed hands made of stone, wood and ivory by ancient civilizations. Palmistry dates back thousands of years to prehistoric caves in Europe with hand drawings of palms; the major lines portrayed in amazing detail. Judging by the number of hands painted in prehistoric caves, it would seem the hand held an interest for humans since the Stone Age. Using information from the palm of the hand as a tool for healing, and as a link between man and god, has been repeated over and over again in history.

3000 BC: Palmistry dates to ancient Egyptians, Chaldeans and to ancient India; it subsequently spread to China, Tibet, Persia and other countries in Asia and Europe. The emperor of China used his thumbprint when sealing documents in 3000 BC. Information on the laws and practice of hand reading are found in Vedic scripts, and early Semitic writings. An ancient text now known as "*The Teachings of Valmiki Maharshi on Male Palmistry*", consisting of 567 stanzas relating all major aspects of palmistry. Gypsy palm readers have their roots in northern India as early as 3000 BC; palmistry progressed to Greece, developing with the roots of western thought as we know it today.

2000-1000 BC: In addition to written eastern Vedic references, traditions of hand reading knowledge are noted from the earliest of biblical times. Exodus 13.9: "*And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand*". Proverbs 3:16: "*Long life is in her right hand and in her left riches and honour*". Job 37.7: "*He seals up the hands of every man that all men might know his work*". The passage in Job, considered the most significant, literally reads: "*In the hand of every man He hides (unknown) for the knowing of all men of his making*"; which has been used over the ages as supporting that the study of the hand will lead to the right relationship with God.

400-200 BC: Hand reading was well known in ancient Greece during the 4th century reign of Alexander, who revealed his concerns about the future by a strong interest in methods of predicting it. His sword makers were gypsies who were also skilled fortune tellers. Alexander's tutor, Aristotle, is reported to have found an ancient Arabic document on hand reading written in characters of pure gold on an altar to Hermes (Mercury). In 350 BC, Aristotle wrote the following: "*Palmistry is a judgment made of the conditions, inclinations and fortunes of men from the various lines and characters imprinted in the hands*". The Greek physicians Hippocrates and Galen used palmistry as a clinical aid. A document written in 247 BC deals with the significance of itching and twitching of various parts of the body, and we still associate certain characteristics with "itchy fingers" or "twiddley thumbs".

1000-1600 AD: Palmistry flourished, but met with opposition from organized religion, branded as the Catholic Church as "devil worship", palmistry was nearly destroyed. Anyone found to have an interest was quickly eliminated. Also, during the middle ages, terminology for the various parts of the hand was based on astrology; the hand was regarded as a miniature zodiac. When the gypsies arrived at the gates of Paris about 1427 the church warned that they were inspired by the devil. Gypsy fortune tellers explained that the devil was afraid of silver and the sign of the cross. If you made the sign of the cross over their hands with silver, you would be perfectly safe. Naturally, the gypsies kept the silver. After 1437, gypsies formerly used as spies for the holy roman emperor were condemned. The first book on palmistry was Michael Scott's "*De Physiognomid*" written in 1477 on the physiognomy of the human body with a chapter on all aspects of the human hand. He wrote: "*Just as a pebble thrown into the water creates ripples, so our thoughts create similar effects on our palms.*" In 1530, Henry VIII mandated a statute against hand reading. As the church's influence weakened, interest began to revive. Notable people, such as Paracelsus (1493-1541) and Fudd (1574-1637) brought respectability to palmistry through their writings.

1600-1700 AD: In the 17th century, many books were written that included the early gypsy ideas about the hand that had been handed down through tradition since the early 1400's. Unfortunately, during this time the practice was forced underground since it was still branded devil worshipping. Palmistry's awakening as a tool of divination links to the working of the mind, consciousness creates reality. We've thought those lines into the hand.

1800 AD: In the early 1800's, hand reading gained stature through its use by Napoleon, Balzac, Dumas and more. Each had his own favorite hand reader. Near the end of the 19th century, the Chirollogical Society began. Their aim was to incorporate further advances for palmistry, including scientific research, and to ward off charlatans. Dr. Carl Carus, physician to the King of Saxony in the 19th century matched palms to personality. About this time, Irish palmist William John Warner, AKA Count Louis Hamon, more commonly known as Cheiro, became a popular palm reader. Cheiro, who also practiced as an astrologer and chaldean numerologist found favor as a society palmist by authoring "*Palmistry for All*". His writings also advocated reading palms for certain types of medical diagnosis and research. Today, the medical and psychology fields are still learning that the hand can show where and what is the cause of many situations that need immediate attention. In 1892, prosecution of a palmist was dismissed citing that the English law dealing with witchcraft did not include hand reading.

1900 AD: In 1900 "The Laws of Scientific Hand Reading was written by William G. Benham. In 1901, Scotland Yard adopted the technique of fingerprinting in criminal investigation and identification. Medical researchers studying skin patterns (dermatoglyphics), discovered a correspondence between genetic abnormalities and unusual markings in the hand. Research confirmed a link between specific fingerprint patterns and heart disease. Advances in genetics, psychology and forensics have propelled palmistry into the modern age. Swiss psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was a follower of palmistry; his entire body of work was based on the astrological elements and archetypes as well as other ancient symbolism.

2000 AD: Drawing from the wisdom of the ages, palmistry has evolved to reflect the psychology of any given culture. There are two different ways in which a hand can be read. Psychic hand reading and Scientific hand reading. A psychic hand reader may not memorize the meaning of every single line and shape, for them the hand is a point of focus. The scientific approach itemizes and analyzes the meaning of each marking and line on the hand.

We are born with markings on the hands; some consider the hands as the mirror of the soul, but nothing is fixed. The lines and markings continually change with our actions. Our lives are 'fated' in a sense; we will operate within certain guidelines, like a map; but the gift of free will enables us to have some degree of control over our lives. The lines in the palms reveal potential to unfold. There are ways around any roadblocks and we always have a choice when we come to a fork in the road.

The palms reflect mind/body connections that give us useful information about psychological and physical health. Unlocking the secrets contained in the hands is a step-by-step procedure that begins with the shape of the hand, fingers, and thumbs and culminates with specific major and minor markings. It's not an exact science, since we are in constant change in our lives the lines will change over time. There are significant variations from individual to individual; we are each uniquely different. No two people on the planet have exactly the same hand markings, fingerprints, or DNA profile (unless we have an identical twin).

Hand reading continues to fascinate us as it has since before the beginning of time. The curiosity about who we are, where we came from and what we are doing here are as ancient as consciousness itself. We love to be touched and we like to hear about ourselves. Palmistry serves well as entertainment and should always be light hearted and encouraging. It's also especially useful for getting information about health, and relates closely to reflexology. There is no right or wrong, good or bad; there can, however, be healthy or unhealthy, and the choices we make create situations and/or influence outcome. There is no text or person with all the answers; palmistry can, however, provide unlimited discovery and insights into the questions.

