

Magnetic Declination and Change of Times

A macro feng shui perspective.

By D.H. Van den Berghe, June 2012

The recent crisis in Greece has prompted some feng shui practitioners to wonder whether there is something in the feng shui of Greece that indicates these problems.

I first visited Greece more than 25 years ago, when I was still a student, and visited Greece again last year. The country largely looks and feels the same. Yes, some houses and roads will have been constructed, but broadly speaking, in terms of forms of the land and the surrounding waters, Greece has not really changed significantly for thousands of years. It is not as if mountains have been moved or waters have disappeared.

So, in that sense the feng shui environment of Greece is no different from what it was when Greece was one of the most prosperous and cultured places on the planet.

What has changed (and continues to change) is the magnetic field directions. Some schools of feng shui consider compass directions, and compass directions inevitably change over time because the magnetic field is alive. So, there is a possible connection between these changes and the ups and downs in the history of a country or region.

This article tries to explore that idea.

What is Magnetic declination?

Some people think that the needle of a compass always points to the North. Well, that is not true in most places.

In the Northern hemisphere we can find True North as the direction of the shadows created by the Sun at true noon.

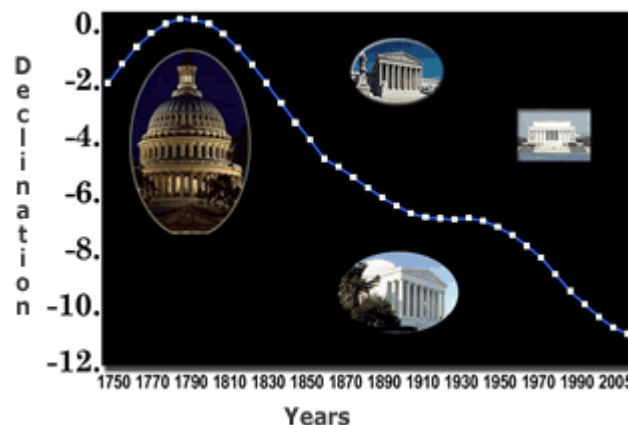
Magnetic North is the direction shown by the compass needle. In most locations they differ, and the difference can be up to 30 degree of arc (and even more in far North regions).

The difference between Magnetic North and True North is called "Magnetic declination" (MD), and it varies from place to place while also changing over the years.

For more details: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnetic_declination

Magnetic Declination and USA independence

A while back, when doing some research in magnetic declination, I came across this image:



(source: <http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/geomag/declination.shtml>)

(also available at: <http://fourpillarsnet.bo.lt/d3d2g>)

This picture shows the evolution of magnetic declination (MD) in Washington DC, from 1750 until 2005.

What we see is that magnetic declination touched the zero level and changed direction around the time when the USA declared independence and Washington DC became the capital. A coincidence?

We also see that MD briefly changed direction around WW1 well into the 1930s depression era, before resuming its old course after WW2. Also a coincidence?

By the way, since 2005 the MD for Washington is again flat (not shown in this chart), coinciding with the current economic depression. Also a coincidence?

Working with declination maps

This observation has led me into looking what has happened with magnetic declination in other parts of the world. Maps from 1590 – 1990 are available here: ftp://ftp.ngdc.noaa.gov/geomag/Historic_UFM_maps/

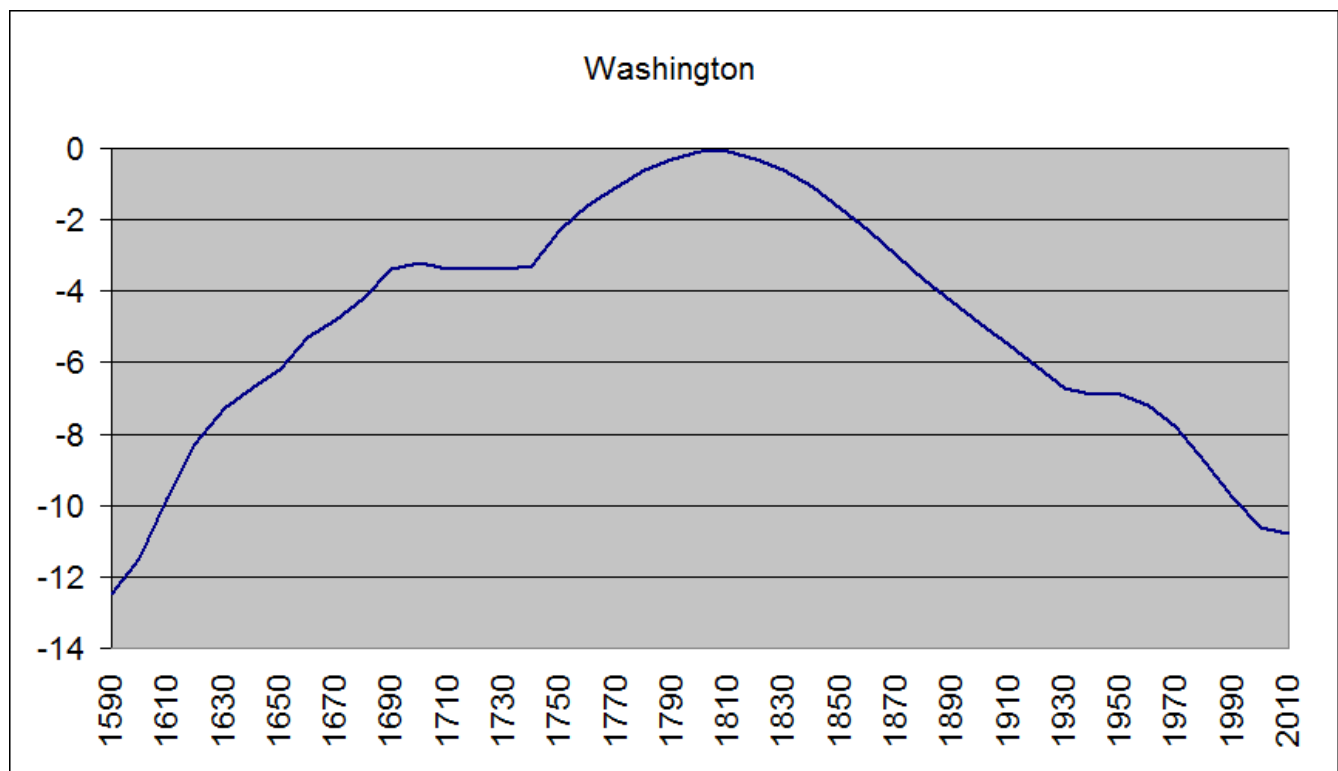
So we can see the evolution over the course of several centuries.

If we concentrate on a specific place, then we can create a chart showing the changes in MD for that place.

Three things stand out when we look at long term magnetic declination charts:

- 1) Major tops or bottoms in the chart caused by major change in direction
- 2) Crossing of the zero line (this is a change from West to East declination or vice versa)
- 3) Minor changes of direction, or stagnation that lasts for a few decades

Here is the MD chart for Washington DC since 1590:



In the late 1700s we see a major top and a touching of the zero line at the same time (which is very rare).

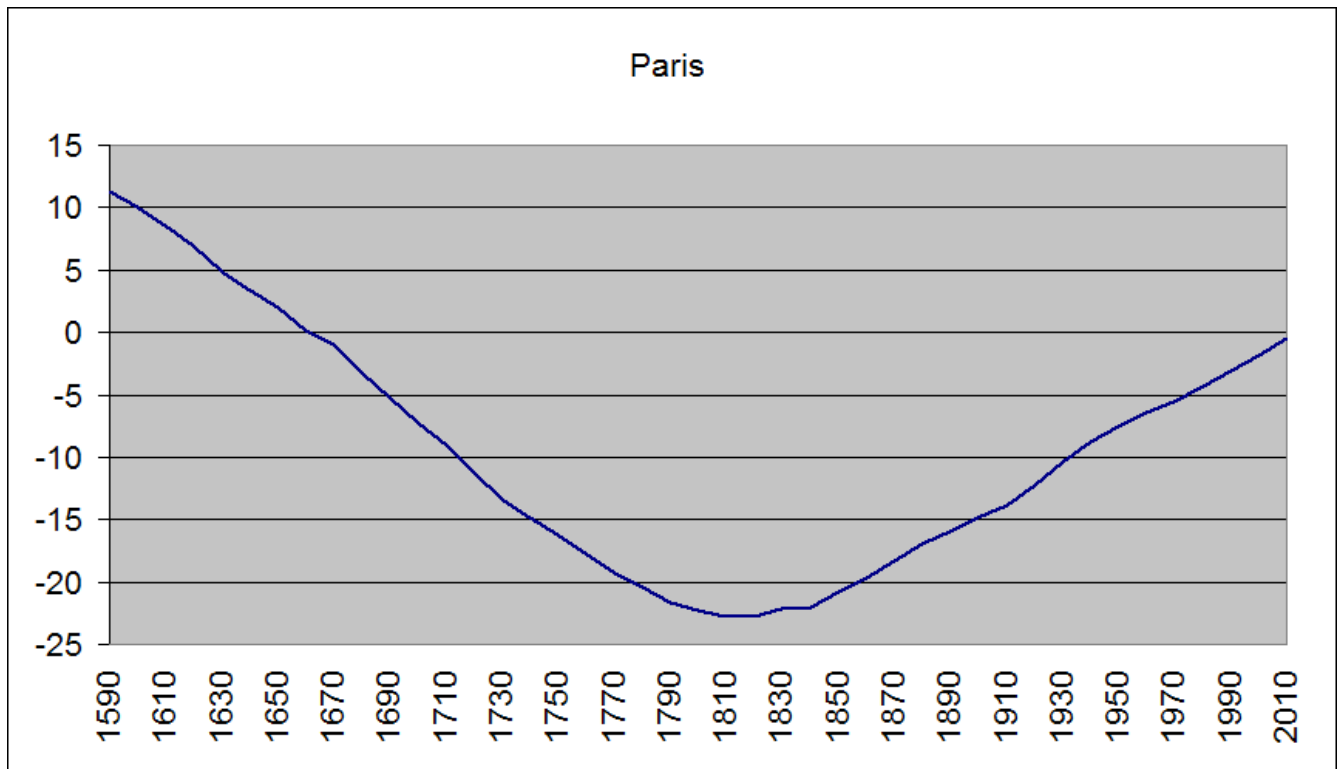
The 1930s is an example of a period of stagnation and a minor change of direction that reverses again rather quickly.

Notice how it has entered stagnation again in the recent decade.

Now let's have a look at some other examples.

Magnetic Declination of France

France has obviously played an important role in the history of Europe. Here is the magnetic declination for Paris since 1590:



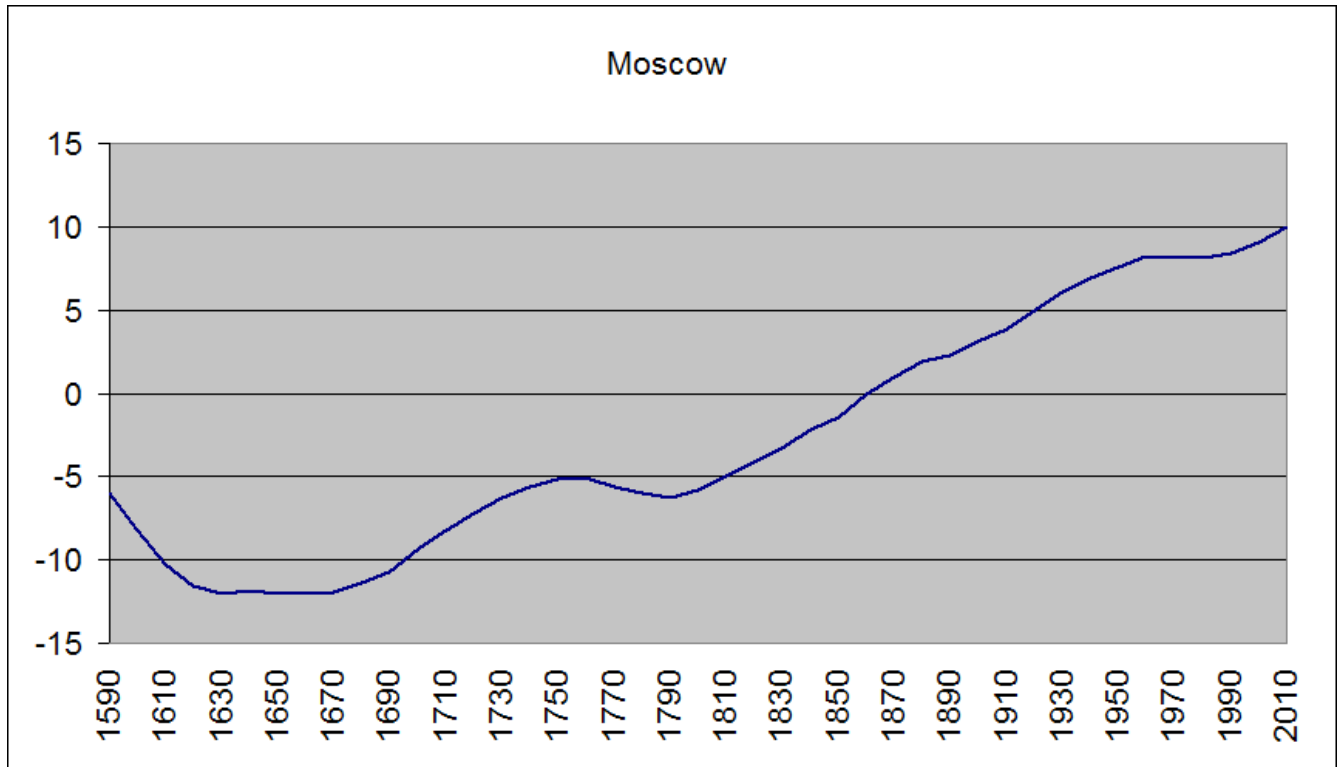
We see how MD for Paris crossed the zero line (going from East to West declination) around 1660. This period was the reign of Louis XIV, and a period of frequent wars in which France expanded to become a dominant power.

The MD in Paris continued to go more West for another 150 years, finally bottoming at 23 degree West around 1810, which marks the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the French dominance of the continent. It was clearly the start of a new era for France.

The MD for Paris is now coming close to the zero line again, and is going to turn East a few years from now.

Magnetic Declination of Russia

Here is the chart for Moscow since 1590:



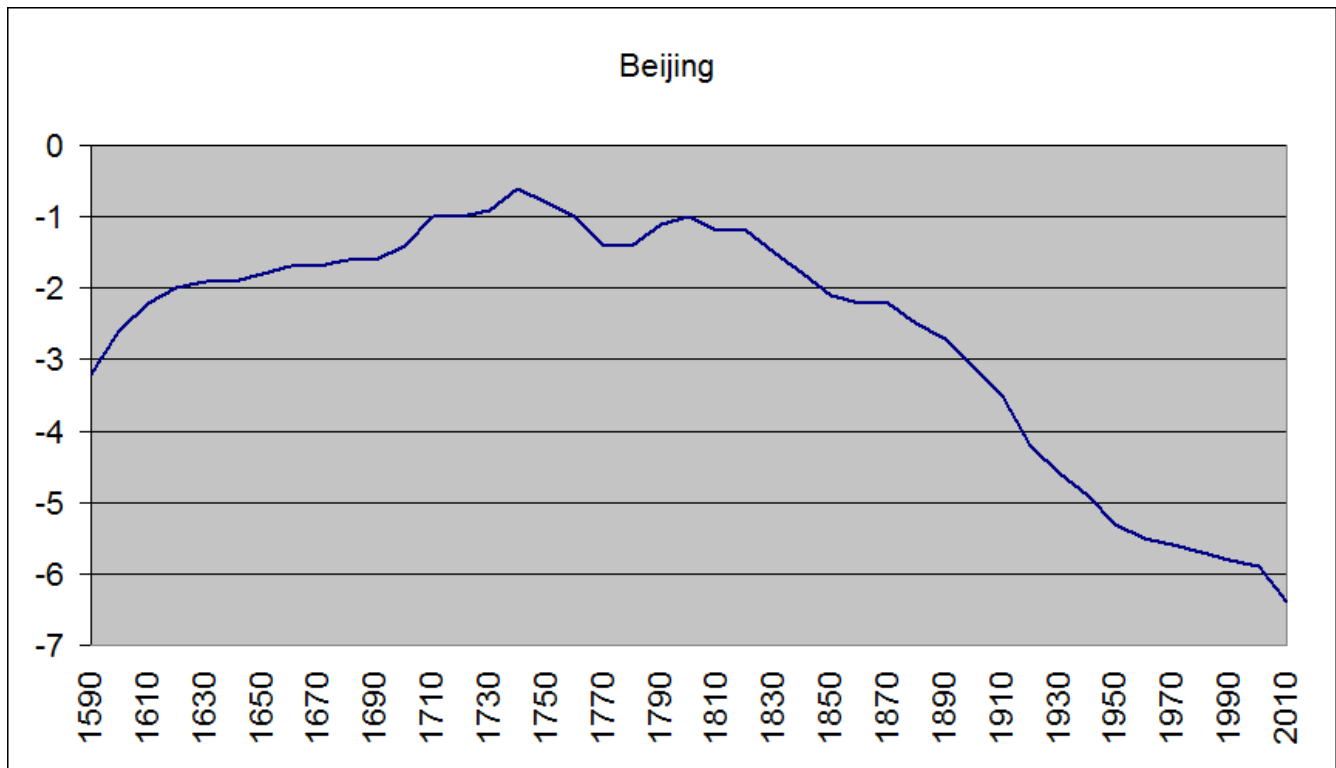
Here we see a major bottom and change of direction in the 1610 – 1670 period. This was a very difficult time for Russia, with a famine wiping out one third of the population, riots and civil war. It marked the start of the [Romanov dynasty](#), which would reign for almost 300 years.

We see how MD crossed above the zero line around 1860. However, the capital had been moved to Saint Petersburg by that time. In Saint Petersburg the MD crossed above the zero line around 1900, shortly before the [Russian Revolution of 1905](#) and later the [Russian Revolution of 1917](#), which ended the Romanov dynasty and moved the capital back to Moscow.

We also see a stagnation period around 1980, which marked the fall of the Soviet Union.

Magnetic Declination for China

Not every part of the world has seen such dramatic changes in its magnetic declination. For example this is the MD chart for Beijing since 1590:



Here the MD has hovered within a few degree of arc for centuries, and now there is a more steady move to more West declination. Notice how in the example of Paris it took only 10 years to get a 2 degree of arc change in MD, in Beijing it took more than 100 years to see a 2 degree change. Basically the period from 1640 until 1860 has been one long period of stagnation.

The period of stagnation started around 1640, which marked the end of the Ming dynasty. For the next 250 years, the MD barely budged between -2 and -1 most of the time.

The Qing dynasty peaked around the time that the MD for Beijing peaked, and the [White Lotus Rebellion](#) around 1800 is known as an important turning point in China's history. This is marked by the secondary peak in the chart.

We see a stagnation period around 1860, which was the time of the [Taiping Rebellion](#) (the 2nd bloodiest war in history, after WW2).

Mao's [Great Leap Forward](#) and [Cultural Revolution](#) also came during a time when the MD for Beijing barely moved for 40 years.

A look at some current cases

The zero declination line has gradually moved over the former East Bloc nations after WW2.

By 1968 the city of Prague had come to a magnetic declination of 0.7 degree West. But the [Prague Spring](#) came too early and the reforms where halted.

The zero declination line continued to move slowly in westward direction and reached Berlin around 1985. By the time the Berlin Wall came down, the city had changed from West declination to East declination.

The zero declination line has meanwhile continued to move westward.

In 1999, Frankfurt was right under the zero declination line. In June 1998 Frankfurt was chosen to be the headquarters for the European Central bank, and in January 1999 the [Euro](#) was officially introduced as an accounting currency (with Euro coins and notes being issued a few years later).

In late 2010, Brussels and with it most of the EU institutions, have come under the zero declination line. It coincides with the Euro crisis and EU wide problems. Major changes have become inevitable.

Paris and London are in line to become the next major capitals that come under zero declination and likely to go from West to East declination.

For Paris it is expected around March 2014, while for London it can come around the end of the decade.

Conclusion

We see some interesting coincidences when we look at MD charts in the light of recent history.

Stagnation in the MD chart tends to coincide with periods of stagnation or crisis in the given place. Rapid change in the MD chart goes together with dynamic changes in the country. Crossing of the zero MD line shows the capital or country at a major crossroads.

Of course more research and observation will be needed.

For that purpose you can use this online calculator to find the magnetic declination for any other place or year that interests you:

<http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/geomag-web/#declination>

But bear in mind that changes in magnetic declination can only be predicted for a few years into the future. More than a few years out the forecasts become increasingly unreliable. The magnetic field can change for reasons that science cannot measure yet.

Is there a possible explanation for this “effect”?

Animals and humans have already been found to be quite sensitive to changes in the magnetic field, for example in the case of [geomagnetic storms](#).

If people are indeed sensitive to changes in the magnetic field, then we could expect a possible “group” effect on all the people who live in a certain location, and are thus undergoing the same local changes in the magnetic field, as shown by changes in magnetic declination in that location.

If you find other interesting examples for this hypothesis, then I would be happy to hear about it.

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