



Choice Astrological Aphorisms

By William Lilly
~ transcribed by Sue Ward ~





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Extracted from *Merlinus Anglicus* by William Lilly, London 1676.

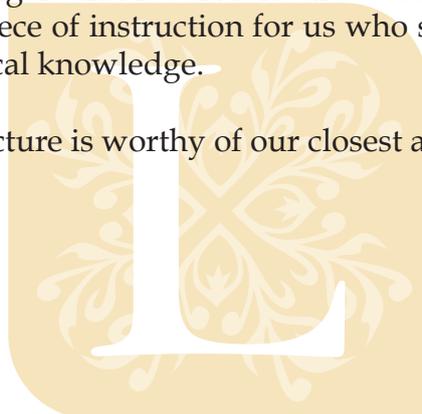
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Written during a prolonged illness, William Lilly passes on his great understanding and knowledge of the art in order that the astrology he had recovered some thirty years before should survive him. Written towards the end of his life, this teaching becomes the more important and should be closely studied.

These aphorisms constitute, in modern terminology, a master class; they are Lilly's own teachings. He provides a list of steps to be taken in the judgement of world events - Mundane astrology - interspersed with his teachings regarding the more esoteric or occult facet of the art. Comments regarding essential dignities, fixed stars, eclipses, comets, angels and revelations are to be found here and nowhere else. It is a remarkable piece of instruction for us who suffer from the loss of oral transmission of astrological knowledge.

This truly outstanding lecture is worthy of our closest attention.

Sue Ward



Choice Astrological Aphorisms not hitherto published by any person, wherein is briefly comprehended the whole Mystery of Annual Judgments of Mundane Affairs, now freely communicated to all grateful and industrious Sons of Art,
by the Author William Lilly.

1. He that would judiciously consider the Annual and Monthly Contingencies or great Concernments of the World, it is necessary in the first place, that he understand the Natural and Accidental signification of every Planet in the *Macrocosm* and *Microcosm*.
2. He must also have a certain *Epoche* or *Radix* from whence to derive, first his greater Judgment, secondly his lesser Judgment, when he intends a serious Discourse.
3. The *Artist* must know how to vary the *Planets* significations according to the year wherein he writes, having still a regard to the *grand Epoche* of superior *Conjunctions* or *Comets* preceding.
4. He should (if possible) attain the true time or positive Ascendant of the *King* or *Prince*, in whose *Dominions* he shall write, and the Ascendant of that Kingdom or Principality, as also the Ascendants (if they may be obtained) of most of the great *Cities* and Towns Corporate therein, and the Nativities of those Officers who are in most Authority, or regulate the then present Affairs under their *Prince*, as also the Nativities of most *Christian Kings*, or of all *Europe*, with the *Direction* each King hath operating every year, &c.
5. Of *Epoche's* or *Radices* the *Astrologer* ought seriously to consider the first great *Conjunction* of the superior *Planets*, *Saturn* and *Jupiter*, when they leave one *Trigon*, and enter another, and curiously observe the main design of that *Conjunction*, and how it agreeth with that present time, or what material change is in any Nation, or what new Dominion, &c.
6. Every succeeding *Conjunction*, from the first to the last, or unto that time the *Astrologer* writes, and more especially that *Conjunction* which last preceded the time of his writing, ought to be warily considered, and also how it differs essentially from the first *Conjunction* either in unity or discordancy.
7. The several *Conjunctions* of *Saturn* and *Mars*, and *Jupiter* and *Mars* succeeding the last *Conjunction* of the Superiors, and either lately preceding, or presently succeeding the time of the Artists writing, must be carefully observed in Judgments; for the great *Conjunctions* may aptly be compared to a Tree, and the lesser *Conjunctions* to the Branches.
8. The true place, *viz.* sign and degree in the *Zodiack* of any *New Star*, *Comet*, *Stella Crinita*, or *Miraculous Apparition*, ought to be had (if possibly it may be obtained.) If the degree cannot be procured, yet the sign wherein any such *Phænomena* appears, must assuredly be known, and as near the degree thereof as may be. For though *Philosophy* and *Philosophers* teach us, that *Comets* have a matter or *Ethereal*

substance, of which they are created, yet those Learned men wanting *Angelical* conversation, are deceived. For how should it come to pass, that a rude Matter from which they say Comets are derived or created, should put the *Comet* into such or such a form, and cause it to be either *Direct* or *Retrograde*, or the Tail thereof to be of one colour in some Comet, and different in others, of such a magnitude, form, or length, and to vary in motion to the several quarters of the Heavens, where the effects do ever most certainly succeed either for good or ill? Therefore the *secret Learning* of which few of the *Ancients* had any knowledge is most to be adhered unto, but rarely to be communicated to Mankind; but this is *obiter*.

9. The *Ancients* do enjoyn us seriously to consider of present *Solar* and *Lunar Eclipses*, and there is something therein to be considered; but in reality I declare, That nothing of that powerful efficacy ever appeared unto me as they have delivered and given caution of, I mean *Eclipses* operate not with that violence, or so terribly as the *Ancients* have recorded and left in their Writings to Posterity, however they are with moderation to be handled; and the very truth is, they do rather work generally than particularly.
10. Consideration ought to be had (in judging of general Accidents of the World) what fixed Stars of the first or second Magnitude are near the place of any greater or lesser *Conjunction* or *Comet*, *Stella Crinita*, or unusual Apparition, and whether their *Destination* or *Latitude* be North or South, as also the colour is to be observed, and what little fixed Stars are near them, with the *Constellation* or *Constellations* these Apparitions possess: In these things great circumspection and care ought to be taken.
11. Nor are the *Secundian Intelligences*, *viz.* what Angel then governs, to be omitted in consideration, for the judging of future Events, as to search when he began his Dominion, and how many years since his Government; for there is a very great Mystery in this; *Tritemius* his mensuration of time in those matters, doth excel all that I have seen, and it doth concur with the Opinion of the most Learned Rabbins; but they were too much superstitious in their application. His Measure or Limitation of time was deduced from certain or assured Revelations, other mens conceits are only conjectural, and have no true affinity with verity or experience. Herein the true understanding of the Assigination of the *Planets* and *Signs* to particular *Kingdoms* and *Countries*, or Communities of Mankind, will much avail in giving Judgment.
12. Now in order it follows, that the *Astrologian* do also consider the *Essential Fortitudes* of the *Planets*, the *Superiors* especially; for all those *Planets* that are below the *Sun*, *viz.* *Venus*, *Mercury*, and the *Moon*, do not occasion any great Mutation in the World, they do sometimes for a while put great Actions forward, and at other times retard them, but always without violence.
13. In the Consideration of *Essential Fortitudes* in some matters, the *House* of a *Planet* ought to be preferred before the *Exaltation*. For this is certain, that *Matters*, *Things*, *Governments* erected when the principal Significator is in his *House* or *Mansion*, do endure longer, and more firmly, than when the Significator at the time shall be posited in his *Exaltation*; for then those matters, *viz.* new erecting

a Government, City, Family, &c. do continue but for a short time with much *pride* and conceited estimation and *Fame*, &c. rather than sober reality.

14. As in taking the Fortitudes of the *Planets*, great care ought to be had, so their Debilities must be observed with no less care and prudence; wherein I advise you to beware of the Effects or Influence of a *Planet* when he is in his detriment, rather than when he is in his Fall. For a *Planet* in his detriment is like a person cast out of all his Estate without hopes of Recovery, whereas the Fall shews but a present subjection unto a misfortune with hopes of Recovery; but these things are only introductory.
15. Above all things, let the Artist rather judge by the strength of his reason, guided by Art, upon the Configurations of the *Planets*, than by ill digested *Aphorisms* laid down by some Authors, which if not judiciously applied in Judgments, rarely hit the white, or speak the truth; and therefore 'twas judiciously written by *Ptolomy, a te & Scientia*.
16. Be conversant in precedent Histories, and therein observe either the great happinesses or calamities that have befallen any Kingdom, Country, or People, and in what year they manifested themselves; then also observe what *Planet* in those times was most potent or essentially dignified, or the contrary, what *Comet* or *Blazing-star* preceded, and the Sign it appeared in, what greater or minor *Conjunction* was then in force, also what Eclipses, &c. and accordingly frame a Judgment, &c.
17. It is observable, that Calamity or Misery never afflicts any people, but *Saturn* hath a strong hand in it; peace and plenty proceed in a natural way from the Influence of *Jupiter*, Comotions from *Saturn*, the *Moon*, and *Mars*, Wars from *Mars* and the *Sun*.
18. The Lunations preceding the Change and Full-Moon concurring with the Figure of the *Change* and *Full-Moon* near the time of any great and notable Transit, or eminent *Conjunction* or Opposition of the superior *Planets* put Designs then on foot into present Action, and with much secrecy, if it have signification in the Change; but publickly and openly, if those Configurations happen at or near the Full Moon, and the figure thereof correspond as aforesaid.
19. The Signs of the Zodiack are seriously to be observed; for *Aries* is violent, *Libra* is moderate, *Cancer* is sudden, *Capricorn* is slow, *Taurus* is heavy, *Gemini* is nimble, *Leo* is valiant, *Virgo* is barbarous, *Scorpio* is false, *Sagittarius* manly, *Aquarius* sober, *Pisces* cowardly. Of all the Signs in the Zodiack, *Cancer* is the most impetuous as to Comotions and shedding of Blood without mercy, for in that Sign *Hercules* and the two *Dog-stars* are located.
20. Great Actions are usually presignified by the superior Planets ♃, ♄, ♂, and ♁, and petty matters by the three Inferiors ♀, ☿, and ☽. *Saturn* in *Aries* denotes high matters transacted with fear and care; in *Taurus* with great labour and to no effect; in *Gemini* with much speech to little purpose, &c. an ingenious Artist will find out the rest.

21. There is in the Art of Astrology (which some ignorant persons are pleased to vilifie) *Arcanum quoddam* equivalent to Prophecy; but so distributed to man by the Almighty, that he cannot easily communicate his knowledge or conceptions therein to another, and yet it is attainable by prayer and the assistance of the *Divine Genius*.
 22. When and at what time the *Divine Genius* invites or secretly prompts the Understanding to curious Notions, observe that time, (viz. the Ascendant of the Figure of Heaven for that moment) and how the *Moon* applies; for whatever concerns those Notions must be farther agitated, written, or studied when the *Moon* is in a *Sextil*, or rather a *Trine Aspect* to that Sign she was in at that time, and if possible, with the *Planet* who was then Patron or proper Significator of those conceptions, and this is something near attaining *Prophecy*, if rightly understood. *Above all things serve God: Astrology is attainable by prayer and industry, especially by such a person that hath a natural propensity to the study thereof.* These Notions were write [writ] without any assistance or inspection of a Book, and will bear or require a Commentary thereupon.
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