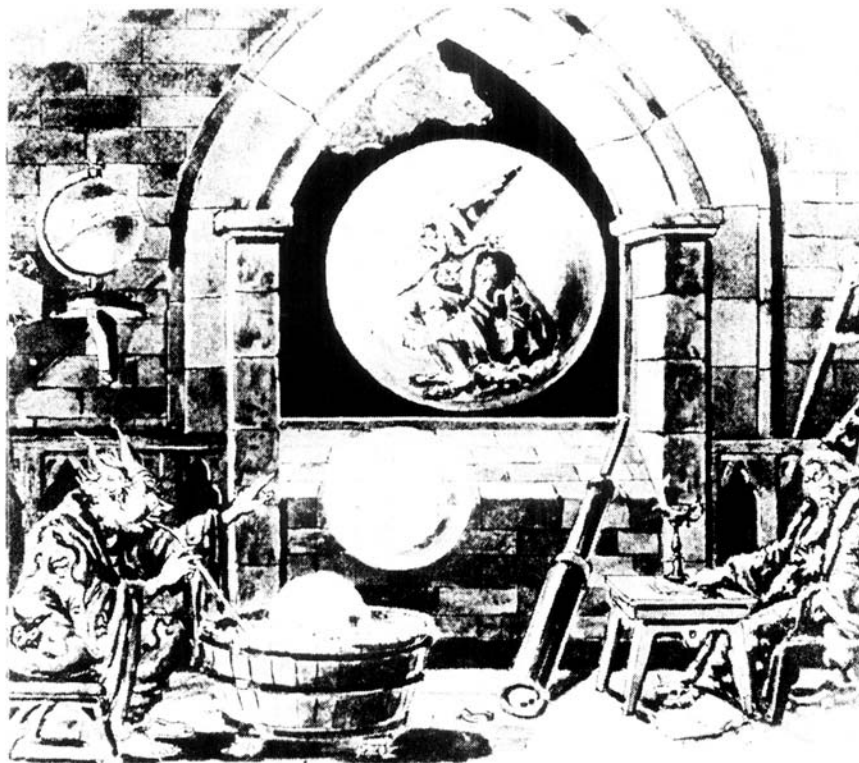


# THE ASTROLOGER'S APPRENTICE

*THE TRADITION AS IT LIVES*

Issue 14.

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## THE ASTROLOGER'S APPRENTICE

Prospective contributors are advised to write or phone first with an outline of their projected article. They should bear in mind that The Apprentice's bias is towards sound traditional practice. Some charts have a crystalline beauty all their own; we would generally, however, prefer to see charts that illustrate or elucidate some particular point of technique.

All submissions should be accompanied by an SAE; while due care will be taken, we cannot guarantee their return. Articles are submitted gratuitously.



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Full page:	£60	Quarter page:	£20
Half page:	£30		
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	Copy date for next issue: December 5th, 1999		

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The Astrologer's Apprentice is printed by Brewers Printers, Peter Street, Chorley, Lancs. PR7 2RP. 01257.262065.

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## CHIEF OF ORGANIC NUMBERS

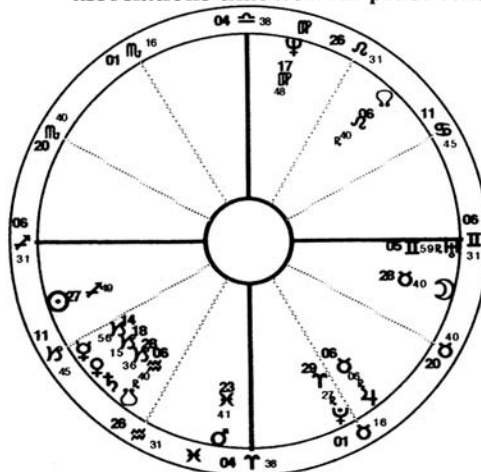
High on a throne of royal state, in the Valhalla of English verse, Milton exalted sits. Having devoted some attention to journeymen poets in previous issues, we now find it fit time to tackle the Master.

The birthchart reveals a melancholic temperament, which might hardly be a surprise, with choler tagging along in second place. This fits less well with the familiar image of the man; but the prose works on which his contemporary fame rested show this side of him rather better than his verse. Many of them were the product of Milton's image of himself as intellectual warrior, championing the English Revolution; their content - not infrequently descending to the 'ya boo sucks' school of rhetoric - reflects this. Unless we follow the more iconographic biographers in refusing to impute the slightest blame to the poet, we must imagine his unfortunate first wife, the utterly unsuitable Mary Powell, exploring the choleric side of his nature in some depth.

Auspices for marriage in the chart are not good: the fixed star Vindemiatrix, associated with divorce and widowhood, holds the Midheaven (in the past the tenth was frequently seen as the house of marriage, the emphasis being more on wedlock as a detriment of social status than on the ideas of partnership implied by the first/seventh axis), while the more avant-garde of the Apprentice's readers will have noticed Uranus lurking on the seventh cusp. One of the few outer-planet associations that work in practice is that of Uranus with divorce. But

Uranus, being retrograde, is separating from the cusp: although Milton achieved notoriety as the propagandist of divorce (Vindemiatrix on tenth cusp), he himself never actually divorced, relying on the traditional method of death in childbed to relieve him of wives who had become surplus to requirements.

His arguments for divorce are clearly heartfelt enough, but the Part of Marriage falling in the fixed sign of Taurus weighs heavily against it. Its dispositor, Venus, is peregrine and closely trines the Part from a cardinal sign: there is



John Milton  
Dec 19 1608 n/s 6.25 am GMT  
London



much initial expectation of happiness, but the typical nature of weak benefics as a fine outside with poison within was to become swiftly apparent. Disposed by dignified Saturn, Venus does the decent thing and soldiers on. The exact trine from Saturn to the Moon tells us the same thing, but "if a malignant planet have a friendly aspect unto the Moon (the spouses) will agree but indifferently, and will be subject to disagree in most things; for as the evil aspect of the Fortunes hurt but little, so the benevolent aspect of the Infortunes for the most part tends to ill." That the ruler of the seventh house and dispositor of Part of Marriage both fall in Capricorn is itself unfortunate, for "The

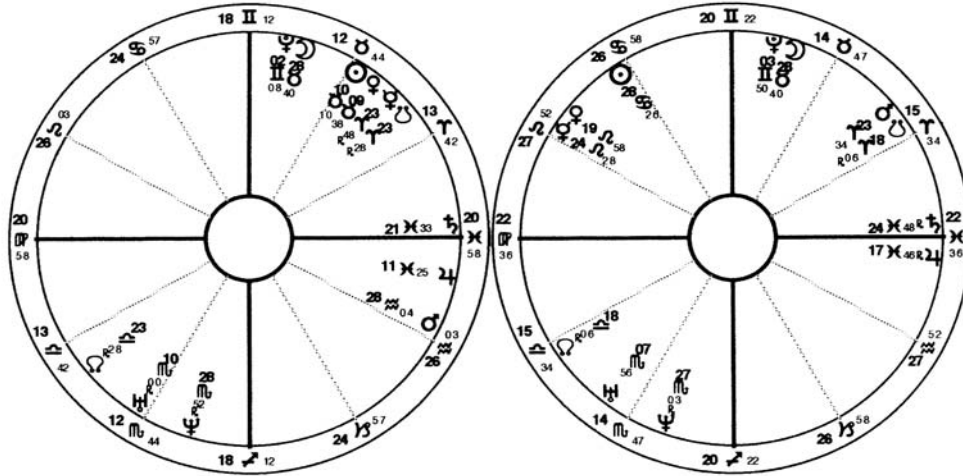
Significators of Marriage in movable signs, argues instability in Marriage, nor doth any great content arise from thence." Lest we impart all blame to the various Mrs Miltons, however, we should note that "Venus in a moveable sign, argues an inconstant man in affection, nor will he be content with one woman." Jupiter in the fifth and the powerful mutual reception between the ruler of the fifth and Mars, which is in the fertile sign of Pisces, assure offspring.

The Lunar Return immediately prior to his first marriage shows Venus applying immediately to conjunct the Sun. Any number of people would



*Milton's first marriage was not a success*

have had such a signification in their Return chart at that time: we must be cautious in judging such testimonies. This conjunction, however, is within half a degree of perfection and so can be given some weight, the more so as it falls by antiscion exactly on the progressed Moon: a Sun/Venus conjunction was what was on his mind at that time. Of dire omen are peregrine Saturn just inside the seventh house and Mercury, Lord of the Return Ascendant, applying retrograde to conjunct the South Node (20' separation), a sure sign of someone about to do something daft. As Mercury rules the natal seventh, we see the area of the life in which he will achieve this daftness. The Return Saturn afflicts natal



John Milton  
Lunar Return, April 1642

John Milton  
Lunar Return, July 1642

Mars, ruler of the fourth house: he is spoiling his happy home. The Mercury/South Node conjunct exactly squares the natal Ascendant/Descendant by antiscion.

The Lunar Return in July picks up the story. The angles are the same, pointing the connection between the two charts. Saturn is, of course, still just inside the seventh house; but now it has turned retrograde and is applying backwards to the cusp. The other malefic, Mars, has reached exactly the position of the previous Mercury/South Node conjunction. The Venus that had been conjunct the Sun is now, by antiscion, exactly square the position of that conjunction. The marriage is not going well. Fortunately, Mars on the Mercury/Node is strongly dignified: had it been weak we would have seen Mars at its worst; as it was, there was a clean break as Mary packed up and went back to Mum and Dad.

In 1645, seemingly prompted by the necessity of supporting her family, who had been ruined during the Civil War, she returned. She bore Milton four children; the Lunar Return before the last of these (Return of April 1652) shows events with beautiful clarity: the South Node conjuncts the seventh cusp, while Venus, ruler of the seventh, is just on the point of entering the turned eighth house. She died.

Memory is a melancholic trait. With the two planets associated with memory, the Moon and Saturn, both strongly dignified and in exact trine to each other, with mutual reception, in melancholic signs, Milton's

was prodigious. What today are regarded as feats of memory would have been taken for granted in ages past; but even then, to have the whole of Homer and most of Virgil and the Bible by heart, all in their original languages, was exceptional. The nice precision with which he marshalled his material over the length of *Paradise Lost*, while totally blind, is yet more astonishing.

Mercury was in first station at birth. By progression, it turned direct again at age 20. It had retrograded back into Sagittarius, the sign of its detriment, and so by the dawning of his 'three and twentieth year' it was just

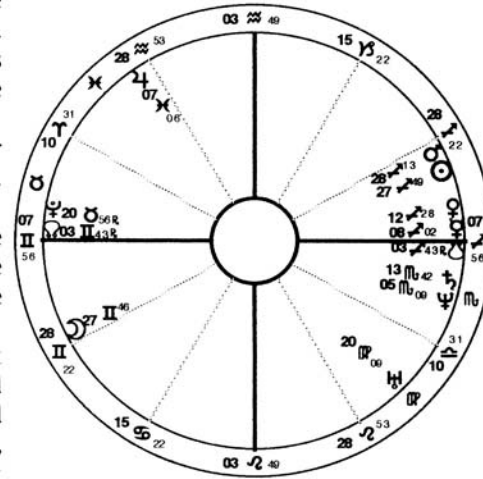
beginning to pick up speed and, at 29.10 Sagittarius, was close to leaving this state of debility. From the Solar Return, we might suspect the previous year to have been a difficult one: the natal Descendant degree was on the Return Ascendant, always an indication of strife, while the Return Moon opposed his natal Sun. Against the natal propensities which we shall consider below, we would suspect an early visitation from the eye problems which were later to recur with such finality. More generally, it is the Return of someone kicking against the pricks. The Ascendant ruler of the return chart, Mercury, planet of youth, is just inside the seventh house - the house of the thief - and is just separating from square aspect to the ruler of the seventh house, the thief himself. Viewing this in the light of the progressed Mercury recovering its strength, we see

*How soon hath time, the subtle thief of youth  
Stol'n on his wing my three and twentieth year!*

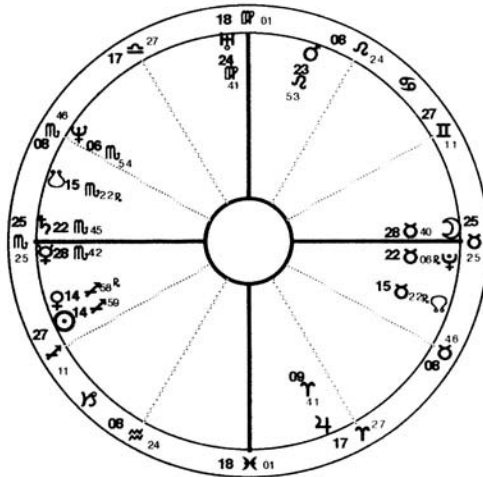
With progressed Mercury so weak and so slow in motion, we see how  
*My hasting days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom sheweth.*

The Lunar Return before his birthday repeats the story. The Moon is just inside the seventh house, showing an urgent concern with either partnership or rivalry: he is concerned not only that he is producing little, but that

*inward ripeness doth much less appear,  
That some more timely-happy spirits endueth.*



John Milton  
Solar Return, December 1630



John Milton  
Lunar Return, December 1631

Mercury, ruler of the tenth house - and, of course, the debilitated progressed Mercury that has been causing such problems - is just inside the Ascendant, showing his career much on his mind. The opposition to the Moon betrays his frustration. Saturn, Lord of time, is bearing down on the Ascendant - he feels its weight as he writes. The resolution of the poem is here too: Mars, Lord of the Ascendant and dispositor of Mercury is in the ninth house; Venus, his poetic calling, is exactly conjunct the ruler of the ninth. Venus is retrograde: his muse is turning her attention to the past, to what he has not yet been able to achieve. This emphasis on the house

of faith is qualified by the particular way in which Mercury leaves its sojourn in debility: it enters Capricorn, ruled by the powerful natal Saturn, strongest planet in the radix. Milton's conclusion is a ninth-house one; but he does not get 'born again' and take up the tambourine: his ninth-house conclusion is what Mercury feels stirring within it as it approaches Capricorn -

*be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be in strictest measure even  
To that same lot, however mean or high,  
Toward which time leads me, and the will of Heaven;  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great task-master's eye.*

This mention of God as his 'great task-master' is from the very heart. As we might expect with so strong a Saturn in so dominant a place, discipline and order are of the utmost importance. Saturn, the strongest planet in the chart, disposes Mercury and Venus (the aesthetic and the facility to manifest this aesthetic), is in exact aspect with the Moon, whose job it is to reflect wisdom into the life, and is exalted on the Midheaven. His great epic begins 'Of man's first disobedience'. *Paradise Regained* begins

*I who erewhile the happy garden sung,  
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing  
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,*

*By one man's firm obedience fully tried  
Through all temptation.*

It would have been quite possible for a poet to frame Fall and Redemption in other terms than these: Adam as Promethean hero, for example.

Of all poets, Milton is the exemplar of decorum, of writing to a strict discipline. There is no other poet in English with such compelling gravitas. These are qualities of his dominating Saturn. Yet so influential a Saturn could have made him simply gloomy and embittered: we see in Milton the qualities of Saturn in strong dignity. So strong, indeed, in close aspect with the almost equally strong Moon, and in the exaltation of another strongly dignified planet, Mars, the planet of ardour (in its own triplicity, terms and face - a powerful combination), that he feels himself worthy of aspiring higher than any of his peers, to 'things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme': to 'justify the ways of God to men'.

The *ruler of manner* shows us the way in which the temperament will be expressed. In practical terms, manner and temperament appear much alike; but manner can be polished - temperament we are stuck with. Our first choice as signifier of manner is a planet in the Ascendant. This would give us the Sun; but the lights can be signifiers of manner only if irresistibly strong, which this peregrine Sun is not. So we would look to its dispositor, Jupiter. Jupiter too is peregrine, and debilitated by being retrograde. A weakened benefic like this gives us, Lilly says, 'good and wholesome manners in show, yet inwardly they are somewhat obscure, muddy, or very simple'. Not too low, however: the great benefic needs heavier debilities than this to be utterly corrupted.

Jupiter is the natural ruler of religious faith. The Sun, lord of the ninth, in exact trine with the ninth cusp is one of several testimonies indicating the significance of faith in the life. The Sun is dispossited by this weakened Jupiter - a Jupiter that is not working quite as it should. Jupiter is in an earth sign, and is ruler of the Ascendant, the place of the physical body. With such emphasis on the corporeal (Ptolemy says that dignified Saturn 'makes his subjects lovers of the body') expressed through a mis-working Jupiter, we have the man who, if perhaps not a card-carrying Arian, was more than somewhat dyed with that heresy.

While the strict followers of Lilly's letter would confine rulership of manner to Jupiter, we must balance this with Saturn. The other determinant of manner is that planet which has most influence over Mercury and the Moon, the two planets of the mind. Dispositing the one and in exact aspect and mutual reception with the other, this planet is Saturn. Such a Saturn - returning to Ptolemy - also makes his subjects 'strong-minded, deep thinkers, austere, of a single purpose, laborious,

dictatorial (quite literally, I suppose, in his later years), ready to punish, lovers of property, avaricious, violent, amassing treasure, and jealous'. We see not only the qualities which his opus embodies, but those that perhaps contributed to his marital disharmony.



*A cosy evening chez Milton*

So we have two distinct sides to the man: the Saturn and the Jupiter. The image may be solely that of the crusty puritan; but for all the high seriousness with which he approached his work - and, quite possibly, his matrimonial affairs - he was a jolly old stick. We must remember that our dour image of the Puritans has much to do with Victorian novelists and little to do with the truth: Milton was fond of his

pipe in an age when calling for a pipe was an action much akin to rolling a joint today, widespread but not quite respectable (that 'he called for his pipe' is evidence of Old King Cole's merriment, not the Holmesian thoughtfulness with which we might more readily associate it) and, son of a musical family, his favoured recreation was boogeying the night away on his chamber organ.<sup>1</sup>

Nor did this distinct Jupiter/Saturn split exist only in his head: he was condemned in his day as a libertine (which did not always mean what it does today - but often did) and advocate of sexual promiscuity. He was even denounced as such before Parliament. The undesirable elements that rallied to his support were just as unwelcome to him as were those who opposed him:

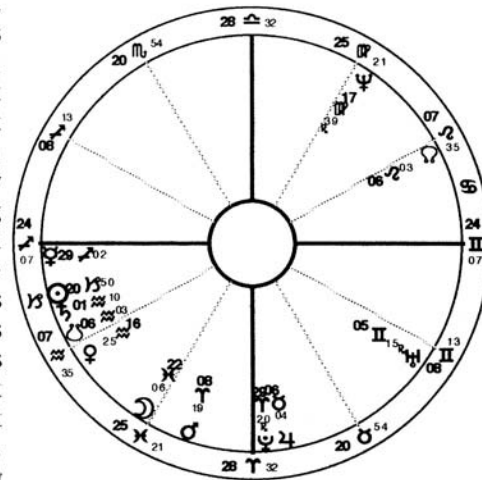
*Licence they mean when they cry liberty;*

*For who loves that, must first be wise and good.*

His attitude to liberty seems to come primarily from the Saturn side of his nature, unlikely as that may sound: liberty of those who are sufficiently well-behaved not to abuse it. Liberty if you are going to do

<sup>1</sup> The common attribution of the irregular sonnet *When I consider thou art nothing but a hound-dog* to the young Milton is now considered spurious; but Professor Craik has demonstrated, I think incontrovertibly, that the original draft of *Paradise Lost* gave Adam's first word on tasting the apple as 'Wopbopalooopawopbamboom' (see his excellent *John Donne and the Birth of Rock and Roll*, Oxford, 1995; pp. 224-6).

what I want you to do. We may see, perhaps, in the contact of this Saturn with the Moon a certain naievity about human nature, that might not have been so apparent had the Moon been in its own sign rather than its exaltation; a naievity that led him to insist on publishing the provocative works in English rather than Latin and then to be surprised by the reaction. With this flawed Jupiter in the sign of Venus in the fifth house, drawn by Venus into the sign of its fall, he must surely have felt, however, that some of mud was not unearned, albeit that with every planet below the horizon the chance of any of his libertine tendencies passing from thought into action must have been remote. The same concentration under the Earth, and with only one planet angular and that peregrine, speaks even more eloquently than any concessions we might make to modernism by introducing the retrograde Uranus of why he did not himself divorce: this is not, by any stretch of the imagination, the chart of a man of action.



John Milton  
Progressions summer 1631

Without the prominence of this Jupiter, the concept of obedience would never have assumed the centrality it did in Milton's work. With only the Saturn in Capricorn having a say, the question of obedience or disobedience would simply not have been an issue.

The Saturn/Jupiter dichotomy had, of course, its most public airing in the pair of early poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the first of which argues the virtues of 'heart-easing Mirth', the second of 'divinest Melancholy', who had been born of Saturn in ancient days when 'yet there was no fear of Jove'. The progressions to Milton's nativity show the genesis of these twin poems.

In progression, both Saturn and Jupiter have undergone changes that would bring these facets of his nature to the poet's urgent attention. Jupiter is picking up speed after second station, and is now returning to its position in the natal chart with the added impetus of being direct, rather than retrograde, in motion. Saturn has recently changed sign. It is still strong, indeed, is stronger yet: in the early degrees of Aquarius it has not only the **dignity** by sign rulership that it had at birth, but is also in its own triplicity and terms. Without this



strength, the cry of

*Hence vain deluding Joys,  
The brood of Folly without father bred*

might have been followed by

*Nobody loves me; everybody hates me,  
Think I'll go eat worms.*

But this is not the nature of Milton's Saturn. Immensely powerful, just entered into what is traditionally the highest, the most refined of all the signs, the most imbued with the humane virtues, it is Saturn at its most positive, ushering in 'the cherub contemplation'. It even teaches Milton astrology, as 'at midnight hour' he is able to 'unsphere the spirit of Plato' which will explain about

*those demons that are found  
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,  
Whose power hath a true consent  
With planet, or with element.*

There are stirrings in both his Saturn and Jupiter nature that bring them to his attention; he does not plump for just one of them to write about, however, but writes on, and speaks on behalf of, both. As he prepares to write, the progressed Moon, the swiftest and hence the most sensitive of all the progressing points, crosses the midpoint of his natal Jupiter and Saturn, showing him both sides of the argument.



*Buxom, blithe and debonaire.*

The poems are of preparation. He is not writing of how he is dedicated to one or other of the planets, but of how he will dedicate himself. The poems end 'with thee I mean to live' and 'I with thee will choose to live'. So what is he preparing for? At birth, Mercury was in first station. Retrograde, it progressed backwards into its detriment in Sagittarius. As he writes, it has turned direct and is about to leave this serious debility and re-enter Capricorn. So what we see is Milton's dedication of his poetic voice. We can also see the poems as showing Mercury's present situation, in the sign of Jupiter, and that to which it is about to return, in the sign of Saturn. The traditional order of printing, which

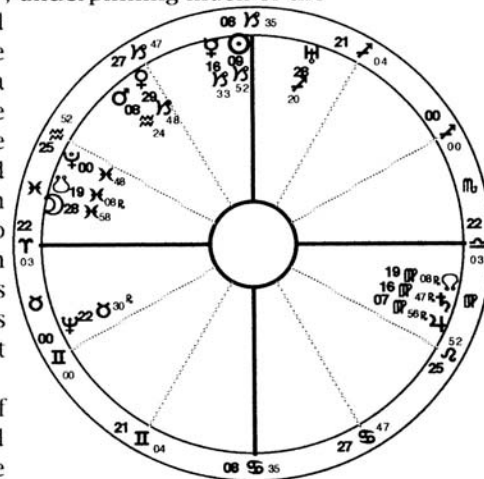


places *L'Allegro* first and thus gives the opening line of *Il Penseroso*, 'Hence vain deluding joys', so much more weight than the 'Hence loathed Melancholy' of the Jupiterian poem cannot be seen as coincidental. Nor is it chance that makes *Il Penseroso* so much the more accomplished of the pair, Milton's lauding of Jupiter falling far short of his master, Spenser's, glorious evocation of mirth. This is Mercury's farewell to jovial delight.

Like Spenser, Milton saw himself as the man who would put England on the poetical - and, in Milton's case, intellectual - map. As he was notably successful in this aim, it is no surprise to find close correlations between his chart and that of England. The Venus/Mercury combination is the key to artistic achievement; the midpoint of the conjunction of these two planets in Milton's nativity falls exactly on England's Mercury. His work is indeed the voice of England. The Saturn that is so closely bound with these two planets falls exactly on England's Venus. Venus is the ruler of England's seventh house: her open enemies (falling on the fixed star Armus, which gives, according to Robson, 'disagreeableness, contemptibleness, instability, shamelessness, nagging and a troublesome and contentious nature', this shows what a long-suffering bunch we Brits are, putting up with the predations of such riff-raff); so we see Milton marshalling his talents to see off England's enemies.

We find more detail on this from the coronation chart of King Edgar, a pre-Norman view of England. The concept of the 'Norman yoke' was much to the fore in Milton's day, underpinning much of the revolutionary ardour directed against King Charles. Before the conquest, Englishmen had lived a life of blissful freedom, until the dire Norman arrived and made them learn maths and wash behind their ears. Jupiter rules the seventh house in the Edgar chart, so showing these freeborn Englishmen's open enemies; Milton's Mars directly opposes it. This was the liberty in whose defence he lost his eyes.

Returning to the 1066 chart: if Venus is the open enemies and Mercury the voice of England, the midpoint of these planets will bring



England - 1066 chart  
Dec 25 1066 noon  
London

the voice and the enemies together. Milton's Venus/Saturn falls on this point: 'lonely people inspired by a great sense of duty', as Ebertin gives us. It is surely this that gave birth to Milton's most moving self-portrait, as Abdiel, standing alone among the hordes of fallen angels,

*Among the faithless, faithful only he;  
Among innumerable false, unmoved,  
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified.*

And the cause? England's Moon - the people<sup>2</sup> - stands exactly in the centre of the Saturn/Moon trine that we have already seen giving Milton an overly rosy view of human nature. Milton, far from the least among many, won them what seemed to be their liberty, only to see them swill it away.

Milton's finest hour was the routing of 'the great kill-cow of Christendom', Claudius Salmasius, widely regarded as the finest scholar in Europe, 'a man so famous... that there could nowhere have been found a champion that durst lift up the pen against so formidable an adversary, had not our little English David had the courage to undertake this great French Goliath'. This was that

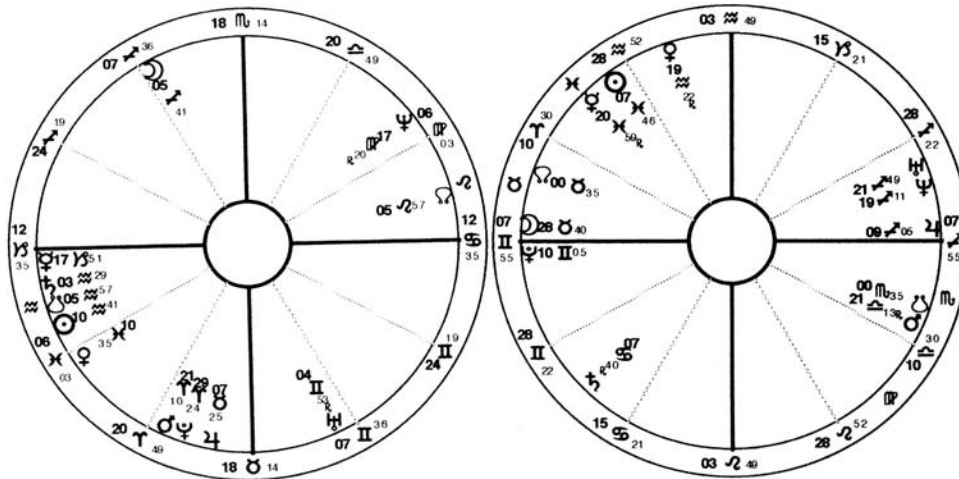
*noble task*

*Of which all Europe talks from side to side.*

Salmasius' *Defensio Regis contra Populum Anglicanum* had denied the populace its claimed right to unseat its king by legal process, suggesting instead the time-honoured recourse of assassination. By general consent, Milton demolished his arguments - to such an extent that his adversary, dismissed from his post as advisor to the Queen of Sweden, could find refuge only in an early grave. 'I had expected nothing of such quality from an Englishman,' wrote one commentator; 'they think it's all over: it is now.'

The progressions block in the background to the picture. The Moon is progressing onto the natal Ascendant: this typically 'denotes a sickly time', and indeed Milton makes much of the extremities through which he battled to complete his *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*, being forced by his weakness to stop work every hour or so. But the Moon is also significant as dispositor of the natal Part of Fame; so its progression onto the leading angle is most significant, especially as the Part of Fame itself progresses onto that most fortunate of fixed stars, Spica. The Midheaven has progressed onto Agena, a first magnitude star associated with honour from speaking or writing, strong passions and an acid

<sup>2</sup> It must be stressed, of course, that Milton's understanding of the term 'people' excluded a good proportion of those whom we would now regard as included in it. We might note that one of the first to use the phrase 'common people' in something like its present sense was our own William Lilly - a fact that must support the Apprentice's contention that the Boss was rather more radical than is usually allowed.



John Milton  
Progressions winter 1651

John Milton  
Lunar Return, February 1651

tongue. It also sextiles the natal Venus, promising ‘much pleasure and content in all his worldly affairs’: the more so here as Venus is ruler of the natal tenth house, and has itself progressed onto the first magnitude Jupiter star, Achernar: ‘success in public office’ (Robson). This is also the Mercury/Jupiter midpoint, and so brings the signifier of career (Venus) successfully (Venus in exaltation on Achernar) into contact with the ‘learning or erudition, most expressed in solitude’ (Ebertin) that so dazzled Europe. As Mercury and Jupiter are the rulers of the natal first and seventh houses, we see this erudition being turned against an open enemy.

The Solar Return for December 1650 concentrates on the parlous state of Milton’s health: the Lord of the Return Ascendant, in its detriment, is disposed by the Lord of the sixth, which is exactly conjunct the South Node in the eighth house. This is grim. The Lunar Return prior to the publication of Milton’s *Defensio* shows us his battle with Salmasius. This chart exactly reverses the natal Ascendant/Descendant degrees, a sure sign of ‘contentions and brawlings’. The Sun is exactly square this Ascendant/Descendant axis, another strong indication that seventh house issues will be to the fore. There can be but one winner in this strife, as the chart makes clear: Jupiter, natal Ascendant ruler, so powerfully placed and conjunct the natal Ascendant (and therefore, of course, in its own sign) is not about to lose to anyone. And the unfortunate opponent? Mercury, Lord of the natal seventh, is in its detriment and retrograde, under the power of

Jupiter, and heading straight into combustion. Milton's crushing victory was commonly held responsible for Salmasius' death.

#### *On His Blindness*

Three years after this triumph, Milton wrote to his friend Cyriak Skinner<sup>3</sup> the sonnet telling how the struggle had cost him his eyesight. Testimonies in the radix of affliction to the eyes are manifold and dire. Rastaban, the Cloudy Star in the Eye of the Dragon, rises: like all cloudy stars, it is associated with blindness. The Sun and Moon are the signifiers of the eyes. The Sun falls in the Milky Way and is squared by Mars, which itself falls on the malefic star Scheat. The Milky Way is unfortunate enough, but within that it is on Spiculum, which is traditionally associated with blindness. As is Prima Hyadum, which afflicts the Moon. The Moon is received into its detriment by the exact trine from Saturn, which is almuten of the Midheaven, so we see the eyesight destroyed by work; as the aspect is a trine, the sacrifice was willingly undertaken.

The affliction to the Sun completes the picture of eyes 'overplied in liberty's defense': the Sun is afflicted by Mars, so the sight is harmed by fighting. What sort of fighting? Third house sort of fighting - words, not swords. Mars is in a mute sign, so it is with the written, not the spoken word. Mars is in the sign of Jupiter, so it is a 'liberty' sort of fighting. Liberty for whom? Jupiter exalts the Moon: liberty for the people. Which brings us back to the trine from the Moon to Saturn. The people in question are exalted (Moon in Taurus: they have taken power that is not rightfully theirs). They already are exalted - they are not striving to enter their exaltation (Milton is defending a power that they have, not writing from behind the barricades of power that they hope to obtain); but this exaltation will not last long (Moon at 28.40 degrees of Taurus) and there are serious constraints to the ability of the people to use their liberty (Moon in the sixth house). As this afflicted Sun is angular 'this blemish shall be inseparable': there will be no recovery from the problems with the eyes.

Return after return, both lunar and solar, has the lights in opposition, indicating continued trouble with the eyes. In August/September 1644, Milton began to be aware that his sight was failing. By this time, the progressed Sun is approaching the South Node, denoting 'grief and paine in his eyes'. The Lunar Return has the Sun poised on the cusp of the twelfth house: the eyesight disappearing from view.

By the end of 1650, as he finished his labours on *Defensio pro*

<sup>3</sup> Skinner had been a student of Milton's - was indeed, according to Aubrey, his 'disciple' - so as among the various languages which the poet taught was Syriac, he may well have performed the unusual feat of teaching Cyriak Syriac.



*Where I may sit and rightly spell  
Of every star that heav'n doth show*

*populo Anglicano*, the Moon progressed onto the natal Ascendant, as we have seen, and hence onto Rastaban. The Solar Return covering the year 1650 had shown the Moon conjunct retrograde Saturn, both opposing the Sun and so, of necessity, in the Milky Way. The Solar Return for the next year has the Moon on the South Node. This Moon opposes Jupiter, Lord of the natal Ascendant, and the return Jupiter opposes the natal Moon: his afflicted (South Node) eyes hinder him, while his actions afflict his eyes.

By January 1652, the game is up. The Lunar Return has the Sun conjunct natal Saturn, a

sure sign - if the radix offers the promise of such - of serious affliction to the eyesight. By the end of February, the Moon has progressed onto Aculeus, which has possibly the most adverse effect on the eyesight of any star. At the end of that month, he realised he was completely blind. Three years later, as Venus (artistic endeavour) transited the natal Mars that afflicts his Sun, he wrote the sonnet to Skinner explaining how

*this three years' day these eyes, though clear  
To outward view of blemish or of spot,  
Bereft of light their seeing have forgot.*

Venus had, of course, made this transit before; in this occurrence on the anniversary we see the particular significance for the poet.

Yet for all this, he is blessed with that powerful Saturn, planet of wisdom, that can reflect that

*the wakeful bird  
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid  
Tunes her nocturnal note*

and pray

*So much the rather thou, celestial Light,  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell  
Of things invisible to mortal sight.*

—————\*—————

## ON THE HEAVENS

Let us turn our attention to the cosmology that underlies the astrology with which we are concerned. We have regularly written concerning this cosmology, particularly with reference to the unfortunate effects of its abandonment on modern society. We may now look more directly at certain facets of this wonderful jewel.

The importance of understanding this cosmology is immense. The further we go in practice, the more we rely on these basic principles rather than niceties of technique. The more we teach, it becomes ever more apparent that those students who develop a real capacity for astrological practice are those who are prepared, if not to abandon - consummation devoutly to be wished! - at least to suspend their belief in the current... to call it a cosmology is being unduly flattering of this mess of confused and contradictory ideas, and to replace it with the traditional model.

Even from the most purely practical point of view, time spent gaining some degree of comprehension of this model is time well spent. Reading yet another astrological text-book will profit us little. Without a knowledge of the cosmology, the techniques have no supporting structure; they remain a collection of disparate ideas which we either remember or forget. Once the cosmology is, to some extent, understood, all astrological method becomes a matter of simple common sense. It is no longer of concern whether we do or do not remember some particular technique, as we have in our hands the first principles from where all these techniques are drawn.

Without an understanding of this background, even if all the particular techniques are remembered and applied, even if judgements of the most unlikely accuracy are drawn, the astrology is still not convincing: it seems just sleight of mind, as there is no intellectual structure to support and explain it. This is the basic problem of real astrology in today's world, where the traditional model of the cosmos has long been forgotten.

### *The Model of the Universe*

Much that we learn in school about the traditional picture of the universe is quite untrue. We are told, for instance, that Christopher Columbus's sailors expected to fall off the edge of the world at any moment, because they thought the world was flat and they would sooner or later reach its end. This is not so: it has been known since time immemorial that the Earth is a globe.

We are also told that our present model of the solar system, with the Sun in its centre and the Earth revolving around it, was given us by Copernicus and Galileo. When they discovered it, a grateful populace realised they had been deluded for thousands of years and immediately acclaimed this model as the true one. This is not so either: the idea that the Earth revolves round the Sun had been known since the earliest times. Aristotle discusses both Sun-centred and Earth-centred systems in the same paragraph.

Galileo's model of the cosmos was actually in some important ways rather less useful than the traditional picture with the Earth at its centre: it was less reliable for predicting where the planets would be at any given moment. It was only some two hundred years later, after it had been refined by Kepler and after there had been a marked improvement in the accuracy of scientific instruments, that it matched and then surpassed the precision of the old system. As has been shown, not by star-crazed astrologers but by respected philosophers of science, the adoption of the one system rather than the other had at least as much to do with the prevailing trend of thought than with any criterion of scientific accuracy.

So what was the old system? Astrology has always existed within one or other of the revealed faiths, so the Creation is regarded as being an act of the Divinity. For the purpose of the model, the Divine can be regarded as surrounding a set of concentric spheres, each sitting one inside the other like a set of Russian dolls. The tiny doll right at the very centre is the Earth.

Working inwards from the outside, there are several invisible spheres which are of great significance to those on the mystical journey to God, but are of no practical concern to astrology. The outermost of the spheres to which we must attend is the Sphere of the Zodiac. Here we come across an important point: the distinction between the zodiac and the constellations.

The Sphere of the Zodiac is completely invisible: there are no stars on it. It is only when we reach the next sphere in - the Sphere of the Fixed Stars - that we find the constellations. The Sphere of the Zodiac is divided into twelve equal sections: these are the signs with which we



are so familiar. That there are twelve of these signs is fixed by the nature of creation. There can be no other number, which explains why we can ignore all this talk about Ophiuchus, Arachne or any other supposed 'thirteenth sign'. We cannot suddenly discover a thirteenth twelfth.



That there are twelve signs is a consequence of the three modes of creation working through the four qualities of matter. Put another way, it is the combination of the number of the Divine (3) combining with the number of matter (4). The Divine act of creation has three modes. There is the initial creative impulse: this is what we know as the cardinal mode, giving us the cardinal signs of Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn. This is the initial push of energy into creation. There is the fixed mode, giving us the fixed signs of Taurus,

Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius. This mode explores all the possibilities within each of the elements. There is the returning mode, giving us the mutable signs of Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius and Pisces. This mode gathers up all the possibilities included in both the cardinal and fixed and carries them back to the source. It is because of this combining both cardinal and fixed that the mutable signs are also known as the double-bodied signs.

We can compare this to a day at the seaside. The cardinal mode is our trip to the coast. The fixed signs are our day on the beach, exploring all the possibilities we find there - ice-cream, sand-castles and donkey-rides. The mutable mode is our journey home, where we reflect on all the events of the day, both those of our time on the beach and also those of the journey to get there. We digest these memories and assimilate them.

The material of which the universe is made is, the tradition tells us, one primal substance. But this same substance exists in four different qualities, or elements - rather in the same way that water exists in three different qualities as ice, water and steam, but is always the same H<sub>2</sub>O. These four qualities are the familiar elements of earth, air, fire and water. So with each of the three modes of creation operating in each of the four elements, we arrive at twelve possibilities. These are the signs of the zodiac, each of them representing a different combination of mode and element.



The scientists would have us believe that way back in prehistory some particularly imaginative caveman decided that one bunch of stars looked compellingly like a man with a jug of water on his shoulder while another looked exactly like a goat with the hindquarters of a fish. Unless we are prepared to accept the unlikely possibility that our ancestors devoted their whole attention to the cultivation of a particularly potent strain of marijuana, we must dismiss this idea as nonsense. The familiar images of the zodiacal signs are not based on someone playing dot-to-dot with some likely-looking stars, but are representations of the quality of each of the signs. The stars in the constellations can be joined in any number of patterns, but a bull describes the nature of fixed earth Taurus or a lion the nature of fixed fire Leo in a particularly succinct fashion. The images are a kind of mnemonic or contemplation focus for the nature of the signs.

The stars themselves, and the constellations into which they are apportioned, are held on the sphere immediately within the Sphere of the Zodiac - the next Russian doll down. This is the Sphere of the Fixed Stars: fixed, that is, as opposed to the wandering stars or planets. This sphere is of the greatest importance, as it is the outermost sphere that we can actually see. In the structure of the cosmos the stars occupy a place balancing and complementary to our own: there is, we are told, one star for each of us. Although they are badly neglected by modern astrologers, the fixed stars are also of the utmost importance in practical astrology, whether for predicting the major events of a person's life or, most especially, in the astrology of countries, cities and empires. When we step outside on a clear night and see so many stars, many of them so bright, burning above us in the heavens, we might wonder why they are forgotten by our astrologers, while Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and Chiron, none of which are visible at all, are given such exalted status.

It is a principle of traditional astrology that which has no light has no power to act: the newly discovered outer planets have no light that is visible without a telescope. The fixed stars have light - and lots of it. In our modern world of books and computer charts, we easily forget that astrology is essentially a visual science, based on what is actually happening, and can be seen to be happening, in the skies above our heads.



We are often told that the constellations that bear the same names as the signs of the zodiac once held exactly the same positions as the signs whose names they share. This is not true. There was a time, some 2000 years ago, when the Sun's entry into the visible constellation of Aries happened at the same time as the Spring Equinox, which is the symbolic 'first point of Aries'. The precession of the equinoxes - the effect caused by the Earth's path around the Sun being an ellipse rather than circle - moves these two points further apart each year. But the rest of the constellations never fell into the nice neat pattern made by the zodiac itself. The zodiac is a regular division of the ellipse into twelve equal segments. The constellations, however, are a shambles. Some of them - Leo, for instance - are huge, stretching far across the sky, while others, like little Aries, are small and insignificant, with no bright stars. Nor do they all form an orderly queue: most of Aquarius, for example, is above, rather than behind, Capricorn, while other constellations, like the notorious Ophiuchus, intrude themselves into the procession here and there.

This distinction between the perfection of the zodiac and the 'tries hard but could do better' of the constellations is far from random. Like everything in the universe, it has its meaning. The zodiac shows all the potential of creation: all possibility is there, in its combination of three modes and four elements. But all this potential exists in an unmanifested form, in the same way that everything in a house exists in the blueprint, but only in an unmanifested form. Once the idea is put into material form, it will always fall short of its intended perfection: such is the nature of matter. This is why the signs and the constellations do not correspond, and why the precession of the equinoxes carries them inexorably further apart.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Planets*

Inside the Sphere of the Fixed Stars, one inside the other, come the spheres of the planets, with our own Earth sitting like the kernel of a nut right in the centre. Working inwards from the outside, the order of the spheres is: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, the Moon. There are seven planets in the traditional cosmos, seven being a combination of 3, the number of the Divine, and 4, the number of matter, just as is the 12 that gives us the twelve signs of the zodiac.

There is a great difference between the 3x4 that gives us the twelve signs and the 3+4 that gives us the seven planets. The twelve signs exist in an unchanging state, holding all potentiality within their grasp. For the universe to become manifest, however, it cannot exist all

<sup>4</sup> This ever-widening gap between potential and realisation shows how the modern schools of 'astrology' that entertain the strange notion of the continuing evolution of humankind are in fundamental contradiction with the most basic structure of the astrology that they pretend to practice.

at once, like the zodiac: it must exist in extension, in time, with some things happening before others. Our image of the house makes this clear: the blueprint shows the whole house, all at once; but if we actually want to build the house we must do it through time, digging the foundations first, building the bottom of the walls before the top of the walls, doing the plastering before we do the painting. In the fullness of time we have the whole house.

3+4, which gives us the seven planets, is the same combination of modes and elements, but acting now in extension, as in the planets' ceaseless motion, one against the other, they weave the fabric of the cosmos. Here we find, among many other truths of our astrology, the distinction between the essential and accidental dignities that are so important if we hope to gain any degree of precision or subtlety in our judgment. The essential dignities are indicated by the sign or parts of a sign in which each planet falls - Mars is strong in Aries by rulership, the Sun by exaltation, while Venus is weak there as she is in her detriment. That is, the essential dignities measure the planet against the unmanifest potential of the zodiac. The accidental dignities are determined by its relationship with the manifest spheres, either the sphere of the fixed stars, the spheres of the other planets, or by its position relative to the lowest sphere of all, the Earth (as shown by the house in which the planet appears in the chart).

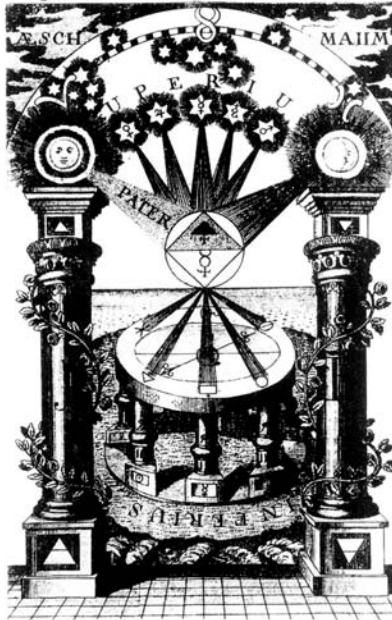
Put simply, the essential dignities show the potential, or how strong the planet is in itself, while the accidental dignities show how strong or weak it is in that actual time and place. A tiger, for instance, is very strong: it has lots of essential dignity. If it falls into a tiger pit, it is still just as strong, but is 'accidentally' very weak: in that time and place it has no power.

All the spheres revolve, one within the other, in their endless unchanging pattern. Only within the lowest sphere, the Sphere of the Moon, do things change, giving us 'the world of generation and corruption' - the world of birth and death in which we dwell. In 1572, however, something unexpected happened to shatter forever this model of the cosmos. Tycho Brahe, the leading astronomer of his day (noted also for having an artificial nose made out of gold) spotted an exploding star - a nova. This caused great consternation, as it was quite clearly happening far above the sphere of the Moon, at a level where nothing was supposed to change. It was this, rather than any superior accuracy in Galileo's model of the solar system, that prompted the abandonment of the traditional picture of the cosmos and the adoption of the one that is in common use today.

But the nova of 1572 was far from being the first that had ever been seen. Somehow previous novae, although they were just as clearly

happening in realms where there was thought to be no change, did not bring this desperate tossing overboard of a system that had worked perfectly well for some thousands of years. Why this happened after 1572 highlights the real difference between the two systems.

When the traditional cosmos is being explained to a class of students, someone will always ask, "But it's not real, is it?" on the assumption that the modern model, with the Earth revolving around the Sun, is 'real'. Ours is probably the first major culture in the history of humankind that has identified its ideas of what is real so completely with the material world. We think our immediate environment - the magazine you have in your hand, the chair on which you sit, the room that surrounds you - is real. Yet this idea would strike anyone from most traditional cultures, and even many that still thrive today, as being quite absurd. Come back in just one hundred years time, a mere flicker of an eyelid in the life of the cosmos, and all these 'real' things will have vanished. The traditional view is that it is the world of the Spirit that is real, while the world of matter is just a fleeting image of that world. Our modern picture of the cosmos is, indeed, perfectly true - but only within the terms of matter. If we raise our eyes a little, we find that the traditional model of the cosmos, the spiritually accurate model, is as true and as relevant today as it has always been. It is this spiritual model within which our astrology works, and it is not the least



benefit of our astrology that the accuracy of its traditional techniques presents us with an immediate and inescapable verification of this spiritual truth.

#### *Why does it work?*

The last stop in our brief trip around the cosmos is to consider the traditional explanation for how astrology actually works. How do all these huge and distant planets maintain their connection with our tiny lives here on Earth?

The sceptical assault on astrology talks as if we imagined there were something like a length of rope connecting the planets and ourselves. Every now and again, the planet gives a tug on the rope and we move. This is obviously daft; but it is exactly the same

principle as is imagined in all the theories about cosmic forces, whether they be gravitational or of nature as yet undiscovered, connecting us with the planets. Any theory that posits a material connection, no matter how tenuous the material in question might be - between man and planet is indefensible.

The solution to the puzzle takes us back to the question of essence. Essence is, as it were, diffracted by the seven planets; it is split into different beams rather as a rainbow. This is the symbolism behind the great stained-glass windows of the mediaeval cathedrals, as they show the white light of the Divine split into different colours as it passes down to us. We may consider Venus as an example. There are an infinite number of things that are ruled by Venus: ballet-dancers, copper, sweets, young women, music, grapes, and so on. These things all have an essence of Venus-nature, just as the planet Venus has an essence of Venus nature. All essence of like nature is one (and ultimately, all essence of whatever nature is as one). The grapes, the copper and the planet Venus may be in different places, but their essences are all one. Not, that is, connected; but one. As they are all one, when one of them moves, all the others will move as well, no matter how far apart they might be. This is why by watching what Venus is up to in the sky, we can make predictions about things of Venus nature on Earth.

Nothing in this world exists in pure form; so everything that has an essence of Venus-nature has this essence coloured by the other planets. Grapes are ruled by Venus; but their fleshiness shows a strong influence from the Moon; the colour of black grapes shows a trace of Saturn. It is because of these admixtures that ballet-dancers, grapes and copper do not all behave in exactly the same way. Their behaviour is modified by the actions of the other planets that colour their natures, and the extent to which these other planets take part in the mix.

This is the traditional explanation for the mystery at the heart of astrology: how it actually works. It demands no special scientific pleading, and no undiscovered forces. It asks only that we step back from the purely materialistic world-view of the scientists and acknowledge the reality of the spiritual truths that are rather more significant.



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## TALES FROM THE FORGE

An emissary from a distant land arrived at the workshop one morning, bearing an arm-load of conch shells and a message requesting the casting of an unusual election. We do not, I should note, customarily accept conch shells in payment for our work, our preference being for a plump chicken - or even Masterchicken from our more up-to-date clients - but the request was sufficiently intriguing to sway our usual reservations about rates of exchange. They have, in fact, turned out to make both decorative and functional holders for the stable-lads' daily gruel.

The emissary explained that in his country, far beyond the distant seas, it is the tradition to hold a purification ceremony for the ground on which a house is to be built. It was such a moment for which the election was required. The available time-frame was from June 25 to July 31 1999.

In our last issue, we gave a general overview of electional astrology; here, we shall examine a case in more detail. As always, our first act in an election is to determine which planets we hope to have strong in the elected chart. It is always important to have at least one of the lights in reasonable condition; as a general principle, the stronger they both are, the better. With this subject, it is more than ever important to have the lights strong, as the Sun is the image of the Spirit and the function of the Moon is to reflect this light to Earth. Here we hit our first snag, for we had already elected a wedding chart for this client, in which too, as male and female principle, it is important to have the lights at their strongest. Wedding and honeymoon took July 3-18th from our time-frame, removing any possibility of giving the Moon substantial essential dignity.

The rulers of the ninth and fourth houses of the elected chart should be strong: the priest and the house. So too Saturn, which ruled the native's fourth house and is natural ruler of buildings, and Jupiter, which is natural ruler of the priestly function.

Having decided which planets are of importance, our next job is to lop some sizable chunks off our time-frame. There is almost always an obvious indicator or two showing how this can be done. Here, the Sun enters Leo on the 23rd. We know we cannot give the Moon much essential dignity: we must grab this opportunity to make the Sun as strong as possible. So we can forget about any date before that.

This gives us a choice of four signs for the Moon: Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius or Pisces. Capricorn takes the Moon into its





*We try out the purification process on one of the stable-lads.*

detriment, so - unless there is a some strong reason to do otherwise - we would avoid that. The latter part of Aquarius is a possibility: in the first half, the Moon is debilitated by its opposition to the Sun and then the square to Saturn. But in either Sagittarius or Pisces we can take advantage of the mutual reception between the Moon and Jupiter. Sagittarius is much the better, as the Moon is still increasing in light. We are not

that concerned about the condition of Venus, but, given the choice, we would prefer it as strong as possible. It is slow in motion on any of our available dates, but it is in first station when the Moon is in Pisces: this confirms that we are right to go for Sagittarius.

We have now narrowed down the possibilities to the couple of days of the Moon's passage through Sagittarius. Taking the first of these days keeps the Moon in trine to the Sun - separating, unfortunately, but still a powerfully benefic influence. It also enables us to have the Moon applying by trine to the antiscion of Saturn. Saturn is proving something of a problem: stuck fast in the middle of Taurus, there is nothing we can do to give it essential dignity. Putting it on the Ascendant or MC to give it accidental strength puts the lights in unfortunate places. A trine by antiscion is not the ideal way of tying it in, but if we can use this trine to connect it to something useful, it could be handy. Although the Descendant and IC also give accidental strength, they are generally to be avoided in elections. An election is the chart for the start of something, so we don't want important planets setting, as they would be if on the Descendant; nor do we want them under the Earth - and we can't get farther under than the IC.

At this stage, we start to juggle possible Ascendants to put our planets in the most favourable light. We want to keep our important planets in strong houses, while avoiding doing anything too nasty to the fourth, which is the house of our subject. The two planets with strong essential dignity are Mars and the Sun: try having one of these as Ascendant ruler? But the overall effect of this on the chart is not helpful. Nor is it if we give them the MC. In either case we have far too much under the Earth. Leo MC puts the South Node into the fourth.

The Fixed Stars can be invaluable when faced with such difficulties. The appropriate star here is Fomalhaut. Fomalhaut (current





four first magnitude stars that does not lead to the throne if prominent in a royal nativity: you're not much use as a king if you're inside the belly of a whale. It is far better suited to internal purification than to the holding of public office. But for a task such as ours, it is ideal.

Placing Fomalhaut on the Ascendant, MC or fourth cusp would be appropriate. The effect of any of these on the other planets is most unhelpful. On the day in question, however, the exact angle between Sun and Moon allows us to put Spica on the Ascendant and find Fortuna on Fomalhaut. Spica is the strongest of all the benefic stars, with powerful protective qualities. It is currently placed at 23.49 Libra, and is easily powerful enough to cover the degree of orb that we need from the Ascendant if we are to have Fortuna exactly on Fomalhaut, which is the more important of the two aims. With Fortuna falling in Pisces, it is dispoised by the Great Benefic and natural ruler of religion, Jupiter, and is in exact sextile aspect to its dispoisor.

A humane sign rising: that will do, as we are not building the house yet, just purifying the land. Libra does give us Venus as Ascendant ruler: this is several points short of desirable, being so slow in motion and in the sign of its fall. The fixed stars outweigh Venus' shortcomings, and the trine from Jupiter does perk it up a little.

We have arrived at a Mercury hour on a Saturn day. Mercury rules the ninth, the house of religious practice; Saturn rules buildings and land. The Moon's translation of light now takes Mercury, Lord of the ninth, to Saturn, the building, at the same time as it connects the hour and day rulers, which in itself is no bad thing. Saturn is accidentally strengthened by falling by antiscion exactly on the North Node.

There are two obvious drawbacks to this chart. The Lord of the ninth house, Mercury, is combust; but as ever, we must take combustion - as with any other dignity or debility - in context. The Sun is the Spirit, and having the Lord of the ninth, our priest, rapt in the Spirit is quite appropriate. There is nothing we can do about the applying opposition from Mars to Saturn. As the malefics become more socially acceptable the stronger they are, we have a favourable Mars here: applying to oppose the ruler of the house, he is not likely to cause too much trouble, and can be seen almost as a positive surgical intervention, as if the purification ceremony were lancing a boil.

As always with elections, it is important to remember - particularly when doing one - that there is no such thing as a perfect chart. There will always be something that is not quite right. More often than not, there will be quite a few things that are not at all right. We do as well as we can with the materials available in the time available.

Before being plunged into the water trough to fix its liquid

elements in place, the chart was finally checked against the nativities of our client and her husband, and the chart for their marriage. All being well on that score, it was doused and then passed to Amos to have its glyphs thoroughly polished before being presented to the emissary to take to his employer.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Christian Astrology*

There has of late been a wailing and a gnashing of teeth among those prospective students waiting outside the gates of the workshop, as supplies of the Regulus facsimile edition of William Lilly's *Christian Astrology* have finally run out, and the suggestion of copying it out longhand is, it appears, no longer well received.

In case any of our readers are somehow still unclear on this point, Lilly's text-book is the masterwork on horary and an invaluable introduction to nativities: overall, there is no other book on astrology that comes near it. The increase in interest in traditional techniques since the Regulus edition was published in 1985 would have died for lack of sustenance without it, and even today, when there are a small but decent number of sound texts available, there is no substitute for *Christian Astrology*.

Whoops and cries of joy, then, as the Seventh Cavalry has finally arrived bearing copies of Deborah Houlding's retyped edition of the horary section of Lilly's text.

When the Oscar for Lifetime's Service to Astrology is handed out, Deborah Houlding has as much right as any to be first in the queue. A high proportion of the rather limited number of titles on any right-thinking astrologer's bookshelf are published by her Ascella Press - and without her efforts the amount of accessible astrological literature of merit would be small indeed. Despite the endless stream of print poured into our society, it would be well-nigh impossible to assemble a dross-free astrological library of even a fraction the size of that which Lilly owned some three hundred and fifty years ago. Exactly why the world needs another volume of *Sun-Signs for Hamsters* while Junctinus and most of al-Biruni remain untranslated is indeed a mystery. Deborah is striving hard to rectify this lamentable state of affairs.

Her edition of *Christian Astrology* does, as they say, exactly what it says on the tin. It reproduces the whole of the horary section of *Christian Astrology* in clear, modern type. This may lack the olde-



of the workshop hens.

It brings a smile to the face - and, I dare suspect, a benevolent tear to the eye - of the Master as he draws his pipe beside the fire after the stable-lads have gone to their rest in the hay-loft and reads their innocent requests. Even the youngest of them is already dyed deep with the spotless altruism for which our yard is, of course, well-known; so each epistle begins, not with the personal desire for sugar-plums and gew-gaws that our sophisticated reader might expect, but with the heart-felt wish that dear Santa might see fit to present the Ascella Press with a decent binding machine. How much more

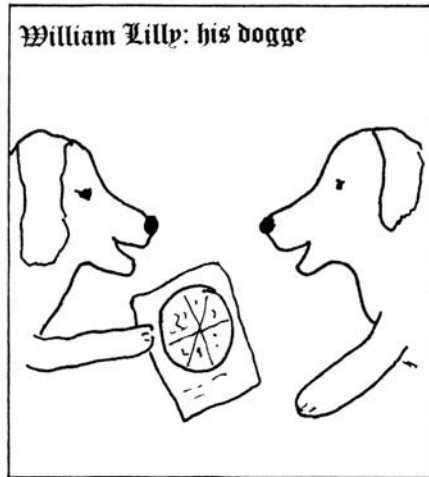
to the benefit of astrology, and how much wiser a use of funds, would that be than the wrong-headed desire of purchasing Lilly's cottage.

For all his jovian benevolence, however, the Master is not Santa (or so he would have us believe; but I for one have noted how similar is his build to that of the rotund figure who floats through the yard on Christmas Eve), so whatever wishes these letters might express are unlikely to be granted. What the stable-lads may well find poking from their pillow-cases, this year as last, is the *Tybol Astrological Almanac*.

We reviewed last year's edition in some depth, and so similar is this that we shall not do so again. Suffice to say that although the astrological content might leaving us wishing for a grave in which we might turn, the book is, if taken in the uncritical spirit which it demands, great fun. Apart from the diary (week to a page) there is plenty of quaint lore from many sources, much of which is curious and some even useful. As a Christmas gift for anyone with an interest in astrology or what claims to be the 'pagan tradition', this is bound to please. At £5.95 it is a bargain; at £5 per copy on orders of five or more, UK postage included, the possibility of filling your Christmas list in one go makes it more of a bargain yet.

*Tybol Astrological Almanac 2000*, 188pp, £5.95.

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- My chart hasn't any nodes.
- How does it smell?
- Terrible!

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*Issue 1 includes:* The Astrology of LSD, part 1; The Battle to Own Truth - Swift, Partridge & John Keats; She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not - analysis of relationships; predicting sporting contests; The Malefic Sun.

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## IN SEARCH OF THE LILLY PAD

- work in progress

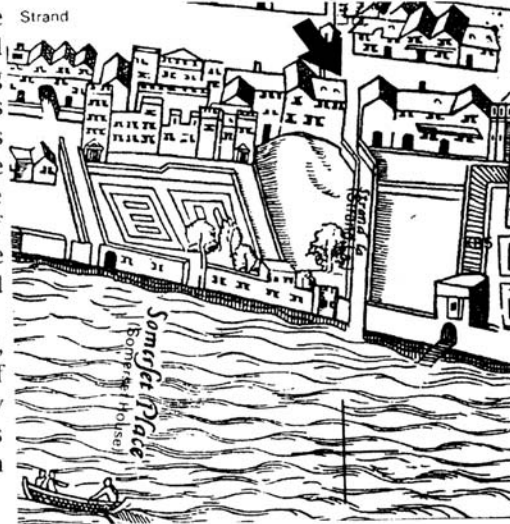
Tony Demetrios, student of astrology, has, over his twenty-one years as a London cabbie, developed a keen interest in the streets of London and their history. Intrigued by the reference in *Christian Astrology*, where William Lilly gives his address as the 'corner house over against Strand-bridge', he has set about tracking down the exact location of this house with the aim of persuading English Heritage to erect one of their commemorative plaques on the site.

Strand Bridge was not a bridge over the river, but a jetty used by small boats ferrying people and goods to that section of the waterfront. It is now long gone. Tony found a contemporary map showing the jetty at the end of Strand Lane, and a slightly later map confirming the name of the same street as Strand Bridge Lane.

Strand Lane still exists, although since the building of the Embankment it no longer runs down to the river. In the nearby Courtauld Institute Tony found a map of 1640 (seven years before Lilly completed *Christian Astrology*) showing the houses at the top of the lane. Lilly must have lived in one of these; the question is, which one?

Fortunately for our sleuth, the parish boundary ran straight down the middle of Strand Lane. To the east was the parish of St Clement Danes; to the west that of St Martin in the Fields (St Mary le Strand had yet to be built). Tony is currently checking parish records and the rate-rolls in the City of Westminster archives to see if he can turn up some historical evidence. Strand Lane no longer runs into the Strand either, its top end having disappeared underneath King's College. On-site measurements from the junction of the neighbouring Surrey Street have led Tony to suspect that the site of the house is now occupied by the disused Strand Underground Station.

As an astrologer, however, he has other means of investigation at his disposal. Stay tuned to this channel for "Lilly's House: the horaries", appearing in our next issue.





## EARLY DOORS

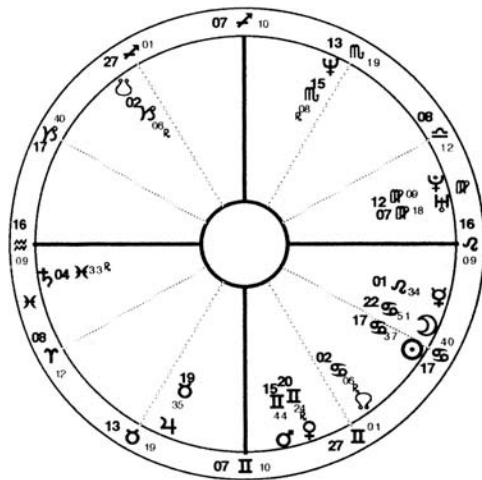
As the new season began, we were asked by *Total Football* to provide predictions of the winners of all seven divisions in the English and Scottish leagues. After the Revolution, all astrologers will be equipped with a murmuration of football supporters, all neatly filed and ready to ask horary questions about the fortunes of their favoured teams at a moment's notice. On that glorious day, making such predictions will be simplicity itself. At present, however, football supporters evidently preferring to live in hope rather than knowledge, we have no such questions on which to base our forecasts.

Needs must, so we look for an alternative. Predicting from the manager's birth-chart is a hit-or-miss affair. We have found it useless in judging individual games, except for those of the very highest profile; we suspect that those who claim otherwise are working from a few lucky hits on a small number of matches. A major part of the problem is the difficulty in finding timed charts for the people in question: for the English Premier League we have but three out a possible twenty. Even given such a chart, however, it is clear that the result of any one game is usually of only minor significance. For the managers it is, after all, just another day at the office.

Timed charts for the foundation of clubs are even harder to come by. Most were formed in the mists of prehistory, having a date traceable - at least from the official histories - only to year or month. Other ideas, such as taking the time of the club's first match, or first professional match, are also non-starters, partly for the same reason of obscurity, partly because many teams' first recorded match was on entry to a league, giving in many cases two teams with identical birth-charts and patently different fortunes. (As the world's oldest club, Notts County, was founded some years before the world's second oldest, we might reasonably wonder who it played against.) That said, we have found the chart for Bury to work rather well (Apr 24 1885, 53N36 2W19). Given a correct time, it would doubtless work still better, but did show the team's successful start to last season, as it topped its league, and subsequent swift decline to end up relegated, giving a satisfactory record in individual match results along the way. If only Bury were ever likely to do anything of significance, this would be all the more pleasing.

We have not found the putative charts for either Arsenal or Manchester United, the two favourites to win the Premiership, to be convincingly accurate. Such as they are, neither showed much promise





Gianluca Vialli  
 July 9 1964 9.30 pm MET  
 Cremona

of success for the coming season. Nor did those of their managers, who are two of those for whom we do have birth-times. Our third timed birth is that of the Chelsea manager, Gianluca Vialli. In February 1998, transiting Jupiter, the lord of the tenth house, perfected its conjunction with natal Saturn, the lord of the Ascendant, just as Vialli was appointed manager of Chelsea. On May 15th 2000, the day after the new season ends, transiting Jupiter perfects its conjunction with natal Jupiter. The Solar Return chart provides encouraging background: its own Lord of the Midheaven, Venus, conjuncts Regulus directly on its

own Ascendant. By antiscion, this Venus conjuncts the radical Jupiter.

Without doing rather more work than a football prediction merits, we cannot be sure what these testimonies signify. Without, for instance, checking thoroughly the intervening progressions and transits, we do not even know that Vialli will still be managing Chelsea at the end of this season. Maybe he will have retired and the Jupiter conjunction will show him signing a lucrative deal to write his autobiography. But the likelihood must be that it shows Chelsea winning the league. As we have found no strong reason to think otherwise, Chelsea are our tip. At the time of writing they are well-placed in the league and at dramatically shorter odds than they were at the start of the season.

#### *Come On You O's!*

The stable-lads in the workshop are, of course, a high-minded lot, whose sole concern is with cultivating wisdom and performing good deeds in the surrounding countryside, whether the recipients of these actions want them or not. Young Seth, however, has been heard admitting to wasting his greener years on the terraces at Leyton Orient, where he had the opportunity to slumber contentedly without being in any way disturbed by anything of interest happening on the pitch. After a good beating, he was persuaded to ask a horary on Orient's prospects for the coming season.

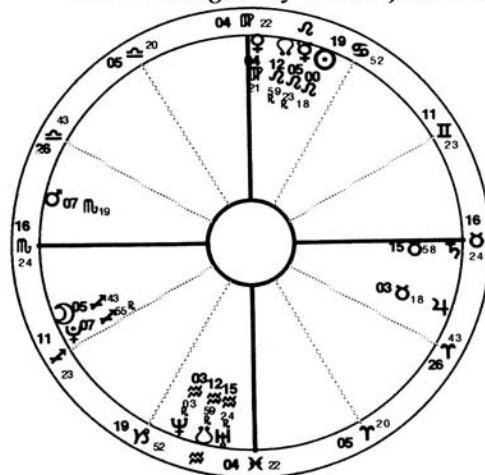
Although he denies any interest in their current fortunes, we know he is just being bashful and harbours sufficient lingering



*The stable-lads listen intently as William Lilly explains the advantages of playing the sweeper system behind a flat back four before the annual match against the youth of the village.*

sympathy for the team for them to be given the first house. Indeed, with a name like 'The Orient', there would be good reason to give them the Ascendant in any chart. Mars, then, signifies the Orient. If this were a question about the result of a particular match, it would be a trial of strength between first and seventh houses. The Lord of the first, Mars, is essentially very strong but accidentally weak by being in the twelfth house. The situation of Venus, ruler of the seventh, is just the reverse: essentially weak by being in its fall, but accidentally strong by its placement just on the MC.

The enemy is further weakened by Venus being slow in motion, as it approaches first station, strengthened by its close trine to Jupiter, weakened again by the conjunction of Saturn with the seventh cusp. A



*Orient win Division III?  
July 23 1999 3.22 pm GMT  
London*

mixed bag, and possibly a case for invoking Lilly's warning: "When the testimonies of fortunes and Infortunes are equal, deferre judgment, it's not possible to know which way the Balance will turne." But where's the fun in that? In a match where a draw were a possible outcome, that would have to be the prediction; if someone had to win, we would back the enemy. Strong though Mars is, there is little prospect of a planet in the twelfth house overcoming one directly on the Midheaven. The expectation would be for our side to have by far the better of play, and its opponents to have a key player injured or sent

off (Saturn on their Ascendant), yet still hang on to win.

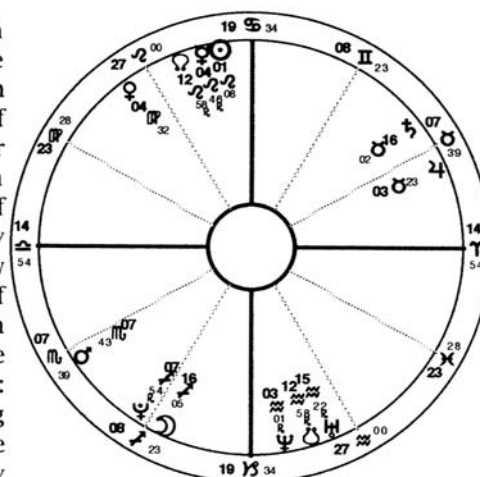
But this is not a one-to-one contest, so we cannot judge by first house versus seventh. We have a race situation, picking the winner from a large field. We look then to the tenth, the house of success and glory. Had Mars held the position of Venus in this chart, just applying to the MC, or had it held the position of the Sun, with the Lord of the Midheaven applying directly to conjunct it, we would have had a clear indication that Orient would win the league. Here, to Seth's disappointment, Mars is neither doing nor being done to by anything connected with the tenth. As we are not now concerned with the seventh house as our team's opponents, the malign influence of Saturn is now turned against the Ascendant, by opposition. Orient will not win.

We have two possible choices for the team that will: Venus, poised on the MC, or the Sun, to which the ruler of the MC applies. The more likely is Venus. We have had mixed fortunes relating planets to teams by the teams' nicknames, but sufficient success to warrant further trials. Venus in Virgo might give us 'the Silkmen': Macclesfield Town. Venus is in its fall and about to turn round and go back to where it has just been: Macclesfield were relegated last year and would, if they were to win, be going back where they were. Their season in the higher reaches, however, was a one-off: their relegation perhaps better signified by leaving exaltation than entering fall. Perhaps a more likely choice for Venus in Virgo would be the pacific 'Quakers': Darlington. (William Lilly, we might note in passing, would have been more than surprised to hear of the Quakers' pacifist tenets. The early history of the sect has been air-brushed with a scrupulousness that any commissar might envy: in his day they were noted more for militancy and military prowess than any niceties about non-violence). Darlington, having recently been taken over by an ex-safe-cracker with plenty of money to invest, were pre-season favourites for this division. So far, they are living up to expectations and are equal top. Had we plumped for the Sun rather than Venus, the choice would have to be Peterborough: 'the Posh'.

None of the other stable-lads would confess to the slightest concern with any particular club. With predictions to be made, we found no alternative but further horaries, asked over a short period of only a couple of days, whenever the outcome of a particular division floated to the top of our mind. There must be considerable doubt over the validity of such charts, set for questions in which we have only the most tepid of interests. Nevertheless, the techniques they demonstrate are valid and it will be interesting to see how well they turn out.

The Scottish Premier league is dominated by the Glasgow clubs,

Rangers and Celtic, to such an extent that the other teams are beginning to talk of excluding them from the league in the interests of fair play. The total transfer expenditure of every other club in the league was less than the cost of even the cheapest of the many players bought by the Glasgow rivals. The bottomless pockets of Glasgow Rangers, however, mean that Celtic are very much the outsiders in this season's contest: Rangers started the season at long odds-on, and these odds have shortened still further as they appear set to take their usual place at the top of the pile. Our horary confirms this.



*Scots Premiership: who will win?  
July 24 1999 12.18 pm BST  
London*

Again, we are looking for a planet entering the tenth house, or a planet to which the Lord of the tenth applies. There is no planet entering the tenth, while the Lord of the tenth - the significator of success - the Moon, is void of course. If it is void of course it is going nowhere. If success is going nowhere it must be staying where it is. If it stays where it is, the team which won last season must win again. Rangers will be champions.

Our horary for the English first division (July 23rd 1999. 11.34 am BST. London) showed the ruler of the tenth - again the Moon - applying immediately to square Venus. A notable lack of imagination among their various supporters leaves most of the potential winners in this division with such uninspiring nicknames as 'Town' or 'United'. With nothing there on which to hang our Venus we resort to its position as a planet in fall, about to turn retrograde. Of the three teams relegated into this division last season, Blackburn is the one whose ejection from the top flight is best described by astrological fall. Without much conviction we plumped for them. Pre-season favourites for the title, they are currently taking a strategic approach to the campaign, letting all their rivals burn themselves out in the evident expectation of overtaking them on the final bend. As the applying aspect is a square, indicative of delays and difficulties, we would not expect them to take an early lead - so we are right so far.

The Second Division chart (July 25th, 11.38 am) again had the Moon doing sterling service as Lord of the Midheaven. At twenty-seven

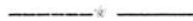
degrees of Sagittarius, we were given the option of taking its immediate quincunx to the antiscion of the Sun, or allowing it to cross into Capricorn where it would trine Jupiter. Quincunxes are shifty creatures at the best of times, and not to be relied on. Our choice then was for Jupiter. This might indicate the wealth of pre-season favourites Wigan; we preferred 'Proud Preston' - who have so far performed with a certain amount of promise. The necessity of the Moon crossing the sign boundary would be another indication of a slow start to their season.

In Scotland, the First Division chart (July 24th, 10.43 am) had Mercury ruling the Midheaven. It applies immediately to square Jupiter. The 'saint' in their name suggested St Mirren as a possibility; we were deterred by their nickname, 'the Bully Wee': one thing Jupiter is not is 'wee'. The 'Honest Men' of Ayr seemed the most plausible alternative. Ayr started the season as long outsiders, and have so far confirmed the book-makers' judgement; but the square aspect does hold out the possibility of an improvement later in the season.

The chart for the Scottish Second Division (July 25th, 7.34 pm) at last gave us a planet applying to the MC. This was Mars, the MC ruler. We have a suspicion of Mars-iness about Ross County, although we can't see quite what; with a team called Patrick Thistle in the division, however, our choice was easy. They too have got off to the slow start favoured by our selections ("It's a game of two halves") and seem to have every intention of going for a slow finish as well; but with their significator in a fixed sign with almost six degrees to travel to its destination... we live in hope.

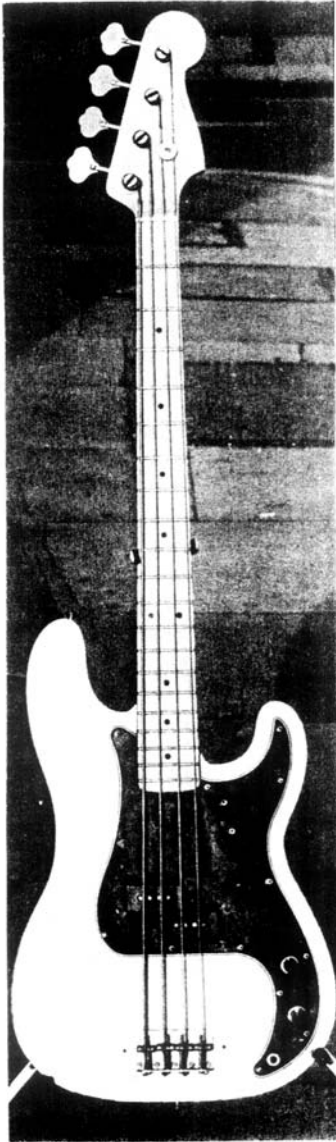
Finally, we have the Scottish Third Division (July 26th, 11.07 am): a league where matches are customarily played before crowds rather smaller than those assembled around the average dinner table. We are back with the Moon as Lord of the MC, applying here to trine Saturn. Clutching at straws, we took Saturn's role of ruler of the fifth house to show 'the Sons': Dumbarton. As the application is by trine with strong mutual reception, we should expect the eventual winners to take an early lead. Indications so far suggest that the vital clue (if these forced charts have validity at all) might rather have been Saturn's rulership of the fourth house. This would give us parks, while its placement in Taurus, where the ruler of the tenth house is exalted, would show Queen's Park, the team who, much to the surprise of both the people who have any interest in this division, now top the table.

Watch this space for further developments!



*Look up at the vault of heaven: see the strength of its foundation and the speed of its movement, and stop admiring things that are worthless. - Boethius*

## LET'S GET HEP!



A querent approached the Temple of Cool that is the Apprentice's workshop with an unusual question: "Where can I find a Fender Precision Bass?" Not just any Fender Precision Bass, either, but a good one: one from the pre-CBS era (any of our readers who still cling to Mr Darwin's strange ideas about evolution might usefully direct their attention to some corrective study of the history of the electric guitar) and having 'a good bottom end'.

The trine from Saturn in a Venus (music) sign to the Ascendant reflects clearly enough the desire for a good bottom end, or even for a bass guitar itself. But locating the object in the chart was not so easy. If the guitar were already hers and had just gone missing, we would follow the usual procedure for lost objects: look to the second and fourth houses and take whichever of their rulers describes the object in question. It is possible that we might take the second house, even though our querent did not already own the guitar, just as we would look to the seventh for a question such as "When will I find a husband?" Venus retrograde in the sign of its fall and the twelfth house gives precious little incentive to follow that lead, however.

We could make out a better case for taking Jupiter, ruler of the fourth. In questions of theft, the fourth shows the location of the object at the time of the question; it would be reasonable, then, to take the fourth as the location of our bass guitar at the time of the question. Jupiter, god of thunder, in a Venus sign and immediate aspect to Venus in a Mercury sign would describe the instrument well enough. We must put aside the prevalent modern nonsense about Neptune



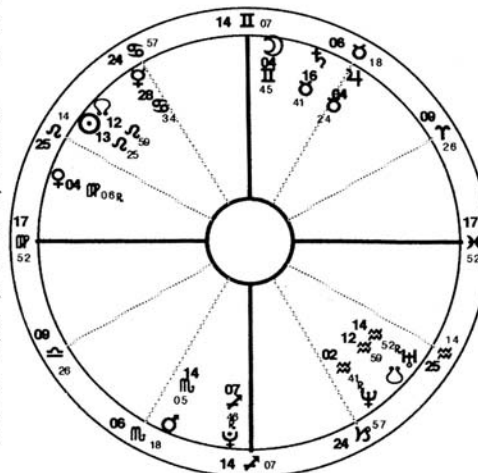
as ruler of music and remember the true indicators: Venus for the aesthetic sense and Mercury for the facility to play.

Our querent's desire for this instrument was so strong, selling other guitars to pay for this, that it was almost a mundane reflection of that pearl of great price, and as such was best signified by the Part of Fortune. The position of Fortuna here confirmed this choice: it is conjunct Alhena, a fixed star of Mercury/Venus nature, bestowing, according to Robson, 'eminence on art'. So Fortuna is the guitar which she seeks.

Now to locate Fortuna. It is in an angular house, so it is not too far away. It is not, however, in the same sign as the angle, so is not in the immediate vicinity. At the top of the chart, it is more or less due south. The chart was cast in north London, so this would take us into the centre of the city, ruling out various possible sources in the East End.

Fortuna is in Cancer, which (along with Aries) rules Denmark. This confirms the obvious first choice of location as Denmark Street, London's 'Tin Pan Alley'. Cancer rules cellars, so we have 'The Bass Cellar' - specifying one particular shop in that street. Fortuna is midway between the Sun and the Moon. If Fortuna is the guitar and the Moon is co-significator of the querent, it is reasonable to think that the Sun would therefore show the salesman (the object being midway between seller and buyer). Our querent confirmed that the salesman in the Bass Cellar is a tall, well-built chap with tumbling golden hair: Sun in Leo.

The querent duly sped along to the Bass Cellar, where she found her treasure - a pre-CBS Precision Bass with all the bottom end her heart could desire. The guitar is perfectly described by Fortuna in Cancer, being the palest possible green, almost white. Its dispositor is on the malefic star Prima Hyadum, showing that it would not be in perfect condition. Prima Hyadum shows injuries to the head: the screws in the neck were cross-threaded and needed resetting. Cancer, of course, is the exaltation of Jupiter, with which Fortuna is in sextile, so we are brought back to the god of thunder after all. Our querent is now grooving happily.



*Where is my perfect bass?  
August 6 1999 8.54 am BST  
London*



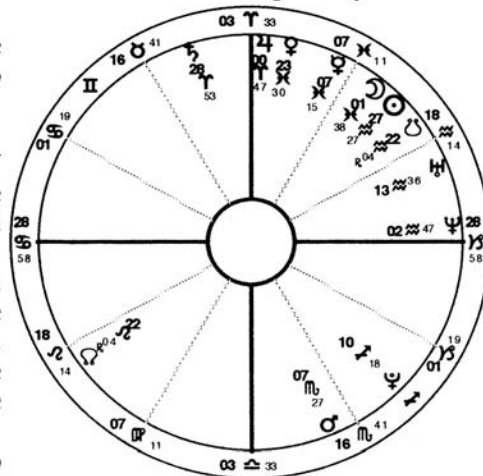
## WHERE ARE THE LIGHTS?

- a horary by Suzanne Knight

*This chart illustrates the simplicity of the reasoning within the astrological chart. Suzanne writes: I had bought some kitchen lights and after searching the house, I could not find them. I had thought they were upstairs in the boxes where I keep lights, but after turning these boxes out to no avail, I decided to cast a horary.*

As a first step, I looked at the second and fourth houses to see if either of their rulers described the object. The Sun, ruler of the second house, obviously fits, so I took that as signifier of the lights. The Sun is in the eighth house, so I knew the lights must be somewhere at home. The eighth is the south west of the chart. The south west of my house is the kitchen.

The Sun is in an air sign, so the lights will be high up. As I was looking at the Sun, the season of the year would be important. The Sun is in Aquarius, a winter sign, so the lights must be somewhere cold. I found them on top of the freezer within minutes of casting the chart. Many thanks to Mr Lilly!



Where are the lights?  
Feb 16 1999 2.31 pm GMT  
51N32 0W38

## OYEZ! OYEZ!

Now hear this: The Institute of Romance Studies at the University of London are hosting a day conference on Magic and Astrology in the Renaissance on Friday, December 10th. Talks include: Simon Forman's Astrological Physic; John Dee's Knowledge and Use of Medieval Magical Texts; Astrology and Magic in Landino's Commentary to Dante's *Comedy*; The Astrology of Marsilio Ficino - Divination or Science? and several others. The subject matter promises well, so at £20 for the day it is not much of a gamble. Details from: 0171.862.8675 (phone); 0171.862.8672 (fax); E-mail: [irs@sas.ac.uk](mailto:irs@sas.ac.uk)

## NEPTUNIA REPLIES...

- a word from our sensitive seer

*Dear Neptunia*, I am so desperate - no one can help me but you! I had this lovely stone circle in my back garden, full of nice things like cushions and scented candles, where I would worship the Moon goddess. Then just last week my boyfriend came back from the pub, moved some of the stones around, stuck his smelly trainers right in the middle of it and said he had re-dedicated it to the Sun god. Then he sent me indoors to do the washing-up. I am so unhappy - what can I do?  
*Yours in desperation, Tracey*

*Dear Tracey*, Oh my dear girl, yours is a common problem - a problem that goes back thousands of years. People build themselves lovely stone circles dedicated to a female deity. They enjoy an idyllic life-style, passing their days in nattering and the exchange of knitting patterns, and all is beautiful. Then one day a bunch of men arrives and tells them that everything has to change. The temple is altered and made over to a masculine, solar god, chocolate suddenly becomes fattening and there is far too much sport on TV. Believe me, if I have seen it once, I have seen it a thousand times.

But I ask you Tracey - have you really thought about what is going on here? Are you quite sure you're not just forcing what you have seen to fit the peculiar conception of 'thought' that is current in this gender-obsessed society? It is very common to look back over the millennia and find a wonderful golden (or should I rather say silver?) age when all was peace and plenty, which bounty was bred by humanity's predilection for female, lunar goddesses. This then came to an abrupt end as masculine, solar gods were installed. Adopting the most simplistic of Whiggish attitudes, this is seen as a Bad Thing. This enables us to indulge in a comforting nostalgia for times past - if *only* we lived in a society where we were understood.

It is, you must, I think, admit, indeed convenient that all these changes happened in prehistoric times, so we can twist what little evidence remains to fit whatever theory we are trying to prove. But rather than probe the dubious understanding of the spiritual implicit in these arguments, and the even more suspect pictures of human society that stem from them, I shall ask you but one question, Tracey. Has your boyfriend started staying at home more often in the evenings?

If you have noticed more of his presence around the house, even when he isn't there himself, you may well have unwittingly seen the cause of this change. Maybe that copy of Klimt's 'Kiss' that used to be in

the bathroom has been replaced by a poster of the Arsenal first XI; maybe the pot of organic yoghurt in the fridge is now hidden behind a six-pack of lager and a half-empty tin of baked beans. If this is so, we have found the seat of the problem: your boyfriend is giving up a nomadic existence and becoming sedentary.

Much though a debate between 'feminine good' and 'masculine bad' may fit the strange tastes of our society, foisting it onto our ancestors does not necessarily make good sense. The salient difference between lunar and solar cultures is not a matter of differing views on the necessity of personal hygiene or the ability to tolerate episodes of *Ally McBeal*. It is to do with the extent to which the participants in these cultures move around.

When your boyfriend was a nomad, Tracey, a solar calendar was no use to him whatsoever. As the Sun does not go through phases, the solar calendar is determined by the position of the Sun's rising on certain days of the year. But these points can be established and referred to only if the viewer is in the same place year after year. Your boyfriend might have noticed that on the Spring Equinox, the sun-rise occurs exactly at the top of the chimney that can be seen from Sharon's bathroom window; but if he is still a nomad and will not return to Sharon's bathroom, this information is useless to him. He can see the phase of the Moon from wherever he might be hanging his hat.

So your boy-friend's actions have little to do with any attempt to impose a masculine life-style on you; they are just a sign that he is settling down and becoming a sedentary culture. Your next question, of course, must be whether you want him to become sedentary right next to you. *Your caring, Neptunia*

## MRS LILLY'S DIARY

*Sunday. Church a great difappointment: fermon only five hours long. William down with ye hypochondriak melancholy againne. Afteroids Grumpy and Fed-up transiting his natal Chiron. I told him to cheer up, but he only said he wished I'd been born with a mute sign on my Ascendant.*

*Monday. Found to my surpise that the large wart on my left thigh is miffing. Asked William to set a horary. Found that ye dogge had run off with it. I fear it shall not be recovered. Stavely Nasham enquireth if it be ye frenche pox or ye spanishe pox with which he fuffers.*

*Tuesday. It being a Venuf hour, ye strumpet from across the way asked a horary. I do wish William would stop telling her where her moles are, as she is more than willing to show him the evidence. Saturn entering Taurus, I decided to have a bath.*

*Wednesday. A fine morning twattling and prating with Mistress Evans. Nothing I enjoy more than a good twattle, as is the weaknesse of my sex.*

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The Astrologer's Apprentice is published five times a year:  
next issue, January.

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