

## A Question of Horary

by Sue Ward, Q.H.P.

In this issue the announcement has been made that *The Horary Practitioner* is in its last year of publication. For that reason, this column will take a different form. I want to express my personal thanks to Carol Wiggers and CJ Puotinen for their hard work, but more importantly for their honesty and sincerity. This seems to be a very rare commodity these days, not least within the astrological community. They have produced a magazine of high academic standard and have never ceased in their efforts to maintain that.

All of us who have submitted charts and articles to this journal know that they leave no stone unturned in order to obtain scholarly work. There have been times when we might have found such rigor irritating and tiresome, but we had to admit the result was always much improved. Our source references, when not included with a manuscript, have been requested with tireless consistency. How uncommon this is, and how easy it is to take integrity for granted, as I discovered for myself very recently.

I have had the misfortune to read an article by a well known astrological writer which purports to be a book review. As a summary of the book it raises several questions through its inaccuracies and misunderstandings of the author's actual words. However, its real purpose seems to be to accuse William Lilly of plagiarizing the words of Dariot, who wrote *The Judgment of the Stars* in the 16th Century. Not only is this accusation untrue, but it demonstrates a marked lack of erudition on the part of that writer. I find this kind of behavior, particularly among astrologers, upsetting and distasteful. It only brings our craft into disrepute.

Lilly itemized all of his sources, both in his bibliography at the end of *Christian Astrology* and in his "Letter to the Reader" in the front. Here he acknowledged Dariot's contribution to both the first and second volumes of *Christian Astrology*. Plagiarism is probably the worst offense an author or writer can commit. There are occasions when it can be brought about accidentally, but it is usually inexcusable. It is because it is so serious a matter that I want to explain the foundation of such misapprehensions with classical and traditional texts, and also because of its ramifications for the future of astrology.

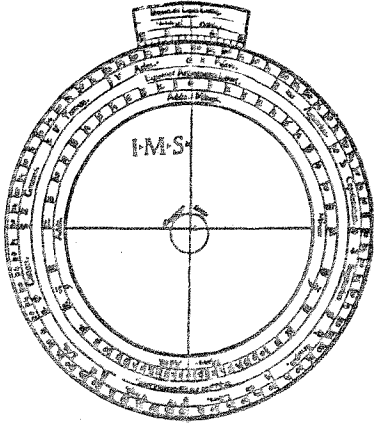
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The passage quoted by the review writer refers to matters of theft and, according to the review, it is drawn from a 1653 reprint, in English, of the 1555 edition. This, our writer asserts, is the same version which Lilly lists in his bibliography. In fact, Lilly cited the 1598 edition. I have a copy of the Fabian Wither translation of Dariot, which is also mentioned in the said article. This seems to have been published in 1583, but that is uncertain and, as I write this, I have been unable to discover the exact date. The point is that I cannot find the above mentioned section on theft in my version of Dariot. This does not mean that it never existed, but it does serve to illustrate the whims of translators and printers in adding to and subtracting from original texts. Whatever the case, I cannot check the quoted section from Dariot.

The offending passage appears on page 334 of *Christian Astrology* under the heading, "Whether it be stolen or no." Without giving the full quotation here, it describes, in the usual way, significations and arguments for deciding whether an item has been stolen or lost, a straightforward list of rules that Lilly may or may not have found in Dariot or perhaps in some other, even older, source. No one, least of all William Lilly, ever said that he invented astrology, and neither did Dariot. Lilly did what all writers of his time and before it had done: he reported the rulings of ancient authorities. Lilly's importance as an astrological writer is in the fact that he *did* draw on much earlier sources and collated the information he found there. In this he did nothing more or less adventurous than Ptolemy did in his *Tetrabiblos*, albeit an enormous task. His originality was to then take this information and test it in his own practice in order to sort the wheat from the chaff. He translated all of this into English - an almost sacrilegious task by contemporary standards - and published it against a great deal of opposition.

It has become fashionable only in very recent times to invent astrological technique and call it truth. We all bear witness to the damage that has been done to our art in the name of "originality." Not to mention the havoc wreaked by poorly researched material such as the previously mentioned review. Before very recent times, pulling astrological ideas from the ether would have caused great hilarity. Fortunately, it still does for some. Those of us who have studied the traditions of our art constantly refer back to the

4 authors of old to ensure that we have not made errors. Astrology is, after all, an academic discipline. We would expect to find great similarities between writers because one would draw from another and the next would pass the knowledge on for the students of the future. This is how we are able to trace the history of astrology back so far, by studying the similarities.

It is also in vogue to embark on fault-finding missions against the authors of traditional and classical texts. I've never been sure why, other than that such missionaries might find some kind of security in pointing out the errors of our forebears. I have seen more mistakes in modern publications, with all our technology, than appear in the more scholarly texts of the past.



Study traditional volumes with the anticipation of education, not of faults. By all means draw attention to them and be aware of them, but these errors should not be the focal points of what you read. Approach your researches in a rounded way, with soft eyes, and you will reap the reward. Read these works in spite of their shortcomings, not because of them.

William Lilly laid himself open to public scrutiny when he published *Christian Astrology*. He did not have to do that. He was exposed to insult, ridicule, and abuse, and all for the sake of the art to which he devoted so much of his life. His arch rival, Gadbury, accused him of many things, including plagiarism, as the reviewer mentioned, but at least Lilly was then alive to defend himself. He has put the work of many ancient authors at our fingertips and saved us countless hours of research and study. This was his earnest and sincere intention, and for that we should all be extremely grateful. And to you also, Carol and CJ. For your hard studies, my heartfelt thanks.

☆☆The End☆☆