

Lilly's CONSIDERATIONS

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In his *Christian Astrology*,¹ William Lilly commences his instruction on horary with a list of ‘Considerations before Judgement’. These have stimulated great debate and gained great attention amongst horary astrologers, perhaps more than Lilly intended or would have liked.

Often overlooked is that, later in his text, Lilly reports the necessity to enlarge his account of ‘Aphorisms and Considerations for better judging any Horary Question’, presenting a list of 43 considerations, some of which add important details to those previously introduced. Although tucked away in his section on seventh house matters, Lilly explains that these 43 aphorisms... *if well understood, will give great light, not only for better understanding what concerns this house, but the whole body of Astrology.*

Both sets of considerations are reproduced below. In my opinion the second list is just as informative, if not more so, than the first. These hand-picked aphorisms briefly remind us of critical principles that are reliable enough to deserve attention in any chart. My article in the *Mountain Astrologer* magazine (August/September 2014) gives a detailed exploration of the theoretical principles and practical use of these considerations and how they impact upon the issue of “radicality”.²

¹ William Lilly, *Christian Astrology*, London, 1647; facsimile download available on Paulo A. Silva’s *Astrologiae Medieval* website: www.astrologiamedieval.com/tabelas/William_Lilly_Christian_Astrology.pdf (June 2014). This reproduction follows the original punctuation but has updated the spelling of some words to modern equivalents.

² Deborah Houlding, ‘An Introduction to Horary Astrology Part 9: Considerations and Radicality’; *The Mountain Astrologer*, Aug/Sep 2014. Details available at www.mountainastrologer.com.

CONSIDERATIONS *before Judgment.*

All the Ancients that have wrote of Questions, do give warning to the Astrologer, that before he deliver judgement he well consider whether the Figure is radical and capable of judgement; the Question then shall be taken for radical, or fit to be judged, when as the Lord of the hour at the time of proposing the Question, and erecting the Figure, and the Lord of the Ascendant or first House, are of one Triplicity, or be one, or of the same nature.

As for example; let the Lord of the hour be ♄ , let the Sign of ♋ , ♉ or ♊ ascend, this Question is then radical, because ♄ is Lord of the hour, and of the watery triplicity, or of those signs ♉ , ♋ , or ♊ .

Again, let the Lord of the hour be ♄ , and ♋ ascend, the Question shall be radical, because ♄ is both Lord of the hour and Sign ascending.

p.123 Let the Lord of the hour be ♄ , and let the Sign ♌ ascend, here, although the ♄ is one of the Lords of the fiery Triplicity, and the sole Lord of the Sign ♌ , yet shall the Question be judged; because the ♄ , who is Lord of the Ascendant, and ♄ who is Lord of the hour, are both of one nature, *viz.* Hot and Dry.

When either 00. degrees, or the first or second degrees of a Sign ascend (especially in Signs of short ascensions, *viz.* ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐), you may not adventure judgement, unless the Querent be very young, and his corporature, complexion and moles or scars of his body agree with the quality of the Sign ascending.

If 27, 28, 29 degrees ascend of any Sign, it's no ways safe to give judgement, except the Querent be in years corresponding to the number of degrees ascending;³ or unless the Figure be set upon a certain time, *viz.* a man went away or fled at such a time precise; here you may judge, because it's no propounded question.

It's not safe to judge when the ♄ is in the later degrees of a Sign, especially in ♋ , ♌ or ♍ ; or as some say, when she is in *Via Combusta*, which is, when she is in the last 15 degrees of ♌ , or the first 15 degrees of ♍ .

All manner of matters go hardly on (except the principal *significators* be very strong) when the ♄ is void of course; yet somewhat she performs if void of course, and be either in ♌ , ♍ , ♎ or ♏ .

You must also be wary, when in any question propounded you find the Cusp of the 7th house afflicted, or the Lord of that house Retrograde, or impeded, and the matter at that time not concerning the seventh house, but belonging to any other house, it's an argument the judgement of the Astrologer will give small content, or any thing please the Querent; for the seventh house generally hath signification of the *Artist*.

The *Arabians*, as *Alkindus* and others, do deliver these following rules, as very fit to be considered before a Question be judged.

Viz. if ♄ be in the Ascendant, especially Retrograde, the matter of that Question seldom or never comes to good.

p.123 ♄ in the seventh either corrupts the judgement of the *Astrologer*, or is a Sign the matter propounded will come from one misfortune to another.

If the Lord of the Ascendant be Combust, neither question propounded will take, or the Querent be regulated.

The Lord of the seventh unfortunate, or in his fall, or Terms of the Infortunes, the *Artist* shall scarce give a solid judgement.

When the testimonies of Fortunes and Infortunes are equal, defer judgement, it's not possible to know which way the balance will turn: however, defer you your opinion till another question better inform you.

³ Lilly's choice of words here is very misleading. He is using the phrase "in years" as a general reference to age (for example, an old person would be described as "old in years"). He is not implying that a late ascendant is descriptive of a person in their 28th, 29th or 30th year of age; such a person would not relate to the symbolism of endings attributed to the last degrees of any sign. Similarly, whilst an early ascendant might offer appropriate signification for a querent who is very young or immature, we would not expect correspondence between the degrees rising and the querent's year age (which would need the question to be asked by a baby or a toddler!).

APHORISMS and Considerations for better judging any HORARY QUESTION

- 1 See the Question be radical, or fit to be judged; which is, when the Lord of the ascendant and hour be of one nature or Triplicity.
- 2 Be not confident of the Judgment if either the first degrees or later of any Sign be ascending; if few degrees ascend, the matter is not yet ripe for judgment: if the later degrees arise, the matter of the Question is elapsed, and it's probable the Querent hath been tampering with others, or despairs of any success: however, the Heavens advise you not to meddle with it at that time.
- 3 The position of ♃ or ♂ in the tenth, and they peregrine or unfortunate, or the ☽ in that house, the Artist hardly gets credit by that Question.
- 4 Judge not upon every light motion, or without premeditation of the Querent, nor upon slight and trivial Questions, or when the Querent hath not wit to know what he would demand.
- 5 Have special regard to the strength and debility of the ☽, and it's far better the Lord of the ascendant be unfortunate than she, for she brings unto us the strength and virtue of all the other Planets, and of one Planet to another.
- 6 Behold the condition of ♃ in every Question, he is naturally ill by his excess of cold; ♂ is of ill influence, because of his too much heat: in very truth, neither of them is cold or dry, but signify so much in their virtue and operation, and therefore in all Questions they show tardity and detriment in the Question, unless the ☽ and they receive each other in the signification.
- 7 See the condition of ♃ and ♀ be observed, who naturally are Fortunes and temperate, and never import any malice, unless by accident; where they are Significators without reception, they put forward the matter, but they best perform the matter in question when they apply by Δ or ✕, and to purpose when in Essential Dignities.
- 8 In every Question where Fortunes are Significators, hope well; but if the Infortunes, then fear the worst, and accordingly order your business.
- p.299 9 Generally consider the state of the ☽, for if she be void of course there's no great hopes of the Question propounded, that it shall be effected; yet if she be in ☾ ☽ ♁ or ♃, your fear may be the less, for then she is not much impeded by being void of course.⁴
- 10 See from what Planet the ☽ is separated, that Planet shows what has already been done: if from a Fortune good; if from a malevolent, ill; according to the nature of the house, &c.
- 11 The application of the ☽ shows the present condition of the thing demanded, viz. her applying by a good aspect, and in a good house, to a good Planet, intimates the strong hopes of the thing intended.
- 12 The application of the ☽ to a Planet in his Fall signifies anguish, trouble and delays in the thing demanded.
- 13 A Retrograde Planet, or one in his first station, Significator in the Question, denotes ill in the Question, discord and much contradiction.
- 14 We ought warily to consider if evil Planets be Significators in any thing, for if they predict evil in the thing quesited, the vengeance is more heavy; if they foretell of any good, it's less than what is expected, it's imperfect, and nothing therein comes, without infinite solicitation and affliction, &c.
- 15 A Planet that is slow in motion prolongs the thing quesited after, so that it's hardly performed; the nature of the Sign wherein the Planet is, doth herein much advantage the judgment.
- 16 When the Infortunes are Significators of any evil, do you well consider if the Fortunes, viz. ♃ or ♀, cast not any aspect unto them, then the evil intended formerly is lessened; do so when the Fortunes are Significators.

⁴Following Bonatti, whose 64th consideration is "to consider, whether the Moon be in Cancer, Taurus, Sagittarius or Pisces; for it signifies good in the business although she be joined to the infortunes and not to the fortunes; nor does she, being void of course, prejudice so much in those places as elsewhere, provided she be not combust." The Moon has dignity in Cancer and Taurus, and enjoys dispositorship by Jupiter in Sagittarius and Pisces.

- 17 *If the Fortunes signify any thing, and are cadent, or ill placed in Dignities, or behold not the ascendant, or are Retrograde, then are they impeded, and shall perform little, if not received.*
- 18 *Notwithstanding Reception, if he be an Infortune, he performs but little; but if the same happen when the Fortunes are Significators, the thing is perfected.*
- 19 *A Planet Peregrine, viz. having no essential Dignities where he is, he is malicious beyond expression; if he be in essential Dignities, the less; for then he is like a noble soul that bath his enemy in his clutches, but scorns to hurt him.*
- p.300 20 *And yet generally, if ♃ or ♂ be in House, Exaltation, Triplicity ... and Angles, and then have signification in a Question, they perform the thing desired.*
- 21 *Confide not too much in the assistance a Fortune lends, unless he be in essential Dignities; for then he performs matters wholly, else but by halves.*
- 22 *When in a Question wherein both the Fortunes and Infortunes are either weak or equally ill placed, promise no success upon that demand; defer the Judgment until the Heavens have a better Position.*
- 23 *Beware in all Judgments, when the Significator of the Question is either Combust, or in opposition to the Sun, he will then signify nothing of the matter, no good, nor is he able to bring anything to perfection.*
- 24 *One Infortune joined to another, if good be signified by their aspect, yet will it have no effect, or come to any thing: If they signify evil, it's probable that it may fall out with more malice than expected.*
- 25 *The Lord of the ascendant out of his essential Dignities, Cadent, &c., shows the Querent is out of all hopes in his business.*
- 26 *A Planet within twelve degrees of the ☉, is said to be under his Beams,⁵ and then hath no fortitude, let it be in what Sign it will; when a Planet is within sixteen minutes of the ☉,⁶ he is said to be in cazimi, or heart of the Sun, and then it's an addition of fortune, and he is wondrous strong.*
- 27 *See to what Planet the Significator commits his disposition, and if oriental or occidental; if it be to ♃, ♄ or ♂, and they oriental, the matter is sooner performed; later, if occidental; do the contrary in ♀ and Mercury.*
- 28 *Observe if the Planet that is Significator of the thing desired, be in a fixed Sign, moveable or common: fixed signs show stability, and that the thing shall continue, whether it be begun, or is to be begun: common signs show the oft probability of perfecting the thing, and yet not its conclusion: moveable signs show a sudden resolution or conclusion of the matter one way or other. From hence we begin foundations of houses and towns when Significators are fixed; short journeys when they are in moveable: but in things wherein we define a mediocrity, we elect common signs.*
- p.301 29 *The Lord of the ascendant or the ♁ with the Head or Tail of the ... Dragon brings damage to the Question propounded; see in what house they are in, and receive signification from thence.*
- 30 *Look whether the degree of the ascendant, or place of the Sign the Significator is in, be the then place of any Eclipse at hand; though the matter propounded be in a fair way to be concluded, yet shall it insensibly receive prejudice when least is expected, and hardly be concluded.*
- 31 *If you find the ♁ impeded in any Question, be it what it will, there will be the like stay, demur or hindrance in the thing quesited; and indeed there's seldom good end comes of a Question where the ♁ is impeded; if it*

⁵ This differs from *Christian Astrology* p.113, where Lilly uses the moiety of the Sun's orb (8°30') to determine the limits of combustion, and its full orb (17°) to determine the limit for being under the Sun's beams. He admits there "I know many are against this opinion". Sometimes older sources use the 12° orb of the Moon, as Lilly does here, so that planets were considered combust within 6° of the Sun and the under the beams within 12° of it; other sources combined the orb of the Sun and that of the planet going under its beams.

⁶ This also differs from the definition given on p.113 where a planet is defined as cazimi when "it is 17 min. forward or backward" of the Sun. This whole aphorism shows support for the approach demonstrated by Abraham Ibn Ezra in his *Beginning of Wisdom*, chapter VI. Ezra also explains (*Book of Reasons*, Epstein translation, p.17) how the 16 minute limit to cazimi is based upon a planet being within the diameter of the disc of the Sun:

The diameter of the Sun is approximately 31 minutes, so [when a planet is] less than 16 minutes from the centre it is considered to be with the centre [of the Sun], and further away to the right or left it is not under the body of the Sun.

be in going to War, you may fear the life of the Querent; if in a Journey, ill success; if Marriage, an ill end of Wooing, &c.

- 32 *If the Lord of the Question or the ☽ be in a Sign opposite to his own house, as ♀ in ♈ or ♏, &c., the Querent hath no good hopes of his demands, he despairs, nor doth he delight in it, nor doth he care whether it can be performed or not.*
- 33 *Consider diligently the Planet impeding the Signifier of the thing demanded, and what house he is either Lord of, or is posited in; from the nature or person of that house require the cause obstructing.*
- 34 *The nearer your Significator is to an Angle, the more good you may expect; less, if placed in a Succedent house; little, if in a Cadent.*
- 35 *In all Questions, know there's not so great an affliction to the ☽, as when she is in conjunction with the ☉; the ill aspects of the Infortunes doth much afflict her, but none so powerful as her Combustion.*
- 36 *In any Question, see if an Infortune aspect your Significator, and whether they be both Peregrine, Retrograde, Cadent, or in signs contrary to their own nature, it may then be doubted they infer such a mischief in the Question, as is inevitable, according to natural causes.*
- 37 *Planets that are Significators in any thing, if they are in ♌, and in a Sign agreeing to their own nature, then the thing quesited after is brought to perfection with much ease and facility, else not.*
- 38 *Have special regard to the Significators, and whether any frustration or prohibition be before the perfect aspect: the Planet frustrating describes the party or cause hindering the matter demanded.*
- 39 *Ever consider the ☽, which if well dignified in any house, the querent gets by men, or things denoted by that house; and so, if ill dignified, damage from thence.*
- p.302 40 *In Questions of Marriage, an unfortunate Planet in the seventh threatens ill agreement in marriage, unless the same Planet be a Significator at the birth.*
- 41 *If the Lord of the eighth be impeded or unfortunate in the eighth, the querent shall receive prejudice by the death of some woman, or concerning some debts due unto him from men deceased.*
- 42 *In what house you find ♃ and ♀ well dignified, you may expect benefit from such men and things as are signified by that house; as if in the third, from Kindred; in the fourth, from Father, or by Lands, &c, in the fifth by Play, &c and so in other houses.*
- 43 *Beware of men and things appertaining to that house wherein ☿ is in; it seldom fails, but the querent shall receive damage, Scandal or slander from men and matter signified by the house he is in.*

