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A Question of Horary

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Understanding *Christian Astrology* and its language takes practice, patience, and an old dictionary. I use the *New English Dictionary* published by Odhams in 1931, but an older one would be better. These are usually very cheap and are common in second hand bookshops. The shopkeeper will probably think you are mad for buying an out of date dictionary, but they often give archaic words and phrases with their derivations.

A reader has asked for explanations of the following, which can all be found in the above mentioned *New English Dictionary*. Page numbers refer to *Christian Astrology*.

Croceal (p. 52): Saffron colored.

Conies (p. 53): Rabbits, but also other small, burrowing animals.

Neatherd (p. 53): Usually a cowherd, but in the case of the 6th house it probably means someone who works with the animals listed, such as sheep and pigs. So it would include goatherds, too.

Warriner, warrener (p. 53): Someone who looks after or breeds rabbits (from rabbit warren).

Inferior part of the belly (p. 53): Probably the lower abdominal region, which includes the lower intestines, bowels, and anus.

...in physics the physician... (p. 54): This pertains to the 7th house, and the reason it has not been understood is simply that a comma has been omitted. *In physic, the physician*, meaning that in matters about healing, medicine, health, etc., the 7th house indicates the physician.

Benefices and advowsons (p. 55): The former is a church living or estate, thus producing an income for whoever held the benifice. An advowson is the right of presentation to a benefice.

Additional questions from readers:

Q: I thought ♍ included grains, wheat fields, etc., as well as tailors and seamstresses. Is this true?

A: Under the places associated with ♍ are corn fields, granaries, malt houses, haystacks, and stacks of barley, wheat, peas, or beans (p. 96). The signs on their own do not actually signify jobs as such. These are usually found by way of planetary associations. However, it is possible to link signs to certain jobs through the planetary ruler, triplicity, quadruplicity, etc. It would not be true to say that signs rule jobs, or anything else for that matter.

Lilly associated ♃ with clothiers and woolen drapers (p. 63), and ♀ and ♂ with tailors (p. 67, 78). Seamstresses are associated with ♀ (p. 74) because ♀ is connected with, among other things, women's clothes and those who make or sell them. In this sense, the planets are associated with people and jobs because of the substances that are connected with them. For example, ♂ is associated with cooks (p. 67), but this has more to do with ♂'s connections to fire, knives, and metal implements than the suggestion that Martian types enjoy cooking.

To obtain descriptions of jobs it is necessary to consider other planets and their relationships. Lilly describes these in detail in the nativities section of *C.A.*, p. 626-634.

Q: In response to your articles on the void of course ☽ (#5, p. 8, and #8, p. 2), I have the following question. According to most publications, if a chart has a void of course ☽, it signifies that "nothing will come of the matter." However, I have cast many charts with a void of course ☽ in which the situation did indeed come to pass, precisely as asked. Is this not a contradiction of what the void of course ☽ is supposed to portend? How can one determine whether the issue will come to pass if this is true?

A: I am of the opinion that you are speaking for many. Please read the article which follows, for it contains an important discovery – in fact, a redefinition of the void of course ☽ in horary. Certainly I have made incorrect predictions based on rule you describe. I checked old charts in the light of what I found regarding this matter and discovered that in some my prediction had failed because ☽ really wasn't void of course, and in one or two I had assumed there was an applying aspect, when in fact ☽ was void of course. So it can work both ways. I hope my findings help you in this matter. In fact, I would like to hear from anyone who finds that failed charts now work because of this new perspective.

Further, I disagree with the interpretation of "nothing will come of the matter." I think it is more likely that there is nothing the querent can do about the matter, notwithstanding strong significators and ☽ in ♓, ♐, ♉, or ♋, the signs in which ☽ "is not much impeded by being void of course" (*C.A.*, p. 299). It is sometimes true that nothing comes of the matter, but more often it isn't, so this phrase is misleading. If there is nothing the querent can do about the matter, then it is possible nothing will come of it. However, in a question such as, "Will I

go to prison?", how much control does the querent have in the first place? The querent might go to prison, especially if he was caught red handed, but to say that nothing will come of the matter is silly.

Of course, there is also the question of whether we should try to judge questions with ☽ void of course in any case, but that is a separate matter.

The Void of Course Moon: An Important Discovery

Most of us follow the same method for deciding whether ☽ is void of course. We look to see whether ☽ will make any major aspects before leaving its present sign. Using this definition, Lilly presented several charts that contain a void of course ☽. As I have pointed out in previous columns, in each of those cases Lilly used ☽'s next aspect, which was already in orb at the time of the question even though it did not reach perfection until after ☽ changed sign. But, as I have just realized, there is much more to it than that.

Lilly wrote, "A planet is void of course when he is separated from a planet, nor doth forthwith, during his being in that sign, apply to any other...." Contrary to what most of us have understood, this does not mean that the aspect has to reach perfection while ☽ is in its current sign. What it does mean is that the application has to be in effect – that is, the aspect has to be within orb – while ☽ is in its current sign. Application operates only when ☽ (or a planet) is within orb of the next major aspect. It doesn't matter whether it has to leave its present sign before perfecting the aspect. To be void of course, ☽ or a planet has to be outside the orb of its next major aspect, even if it will eventually reach this aspect within its current sign.

This understanding depends on the definition of the word *application* in Lilly's terms and that of the authors he drew upon. *Application* meant *to be within orb*. "The application happeneth when as the circles or beames of the planettes come to joyne together by a corporall conjunction or by aspecte of the one half of their deamiters" (Chapter 7 of *A Breefe and easie Introduction to Astrology* by Claudius Dariot, 1583). This definition is clear: a planet cannot be described as applying until it is within orb of the aspect, by which I mean when the moiety of each planet touches. What we have done over the years is alter the meaning of application, so that any aspect made while ☽ or a planet moves forward in its sign was considered valid. *Applying to*

aspect means to be *within orbs of that aspect*.

Now to the definition of void of course.

☽ is void of course when she is "not joined to any planet by body or aspect" (*Anima Astrologiae* by Guido Bonatus, Regulus edition, p. 4).

"If ☽ is so located that she is moving toward nothing, is in aspect to no planet, she is void of course" (*Mathesis* by Firmicus Maternus, translated by Jean Bram, p. 123).

In these definitions and others not included here, all from authorities who predate Lilly, no one says that ☽ has to perfect the aspect before it changes sign. This is a modern assumption based on a misreading. The evidence in *Christian Astrology* does not support this misreading, and it leads me to conclude that ☽ is not void of course if it is within orb of an aspect at the time of the question, whether that aspect reaches perfection in or out of ☽'s current sign. In addition, ☽ (or any planet) can be void of course even when in early degrees, if the next planet it aspects is outside the allowed orb at the time of the question.

On page 107 of *C.A.*, Lilly gave the following list of moieties: ☉ 7°30′–8°30′; ☽ 6°–6°15′; ☿ 3°30′; ♀ 3°30′–4°30′; ♂ 3°30′–3°45′; ♃ 4°30′–6°; and ♄ 4°30′–5°. A moiety is half a planet's orb, and the orb of any aspect is the sum of its two planets' moieties.

The crucial point about all of this is the definition of *application* and I have checked all of the charts in *Christian Astrology* to see just how Lilly used this term. Of the 35 examples, only three are dubious in this respect.

Page 156, *C.A.*: ♀ at 17°♋ is described as applying to a □ of ♃ at 27°15′♎. The orb of every ♀-♃ aspect is about 9°30′, so this □ is a half degree out of orb.

Page 399, *C.A.*: ☽ at 8°♉ is said to apply to ☿ at 21°♓. The orb of every ☽-☿ aspect is about 10°, so their △ is 3° out of orb.

Page 468, *C.A.*: ☽ is at 6°20′♏ and Lilly says that ☽ applies to the ☍ of ♄ at 15°30′♉, then to the △ of ♀ at 23°♓. The △ to ♀ is about 7° out of orb.

I cannot explain these discrepancies, but I think that having only three charts at variance with the rest of the evidence does not necessarily invalidate that evidence. Besides, one-half of a degree is too small to worry about when Lilly himself wrote that he used whichever orb he remembered at the time. (Page 107 shows the variety of orbs he offered, and the list above shows the range of moieties.)

The most telling example of how application was used and, perhaps, an explanation of how it became confused, is Lilly's well known horary, "If Presbytery shall stand?", his question about the future of the Presbyterian Church in England (*C.A.*, p. 439). ♀, ruler of the 9th house, is at 9°16′♈. He says, "...but before she fully get out of this movable sign ♈, she first hath occurse to the sinister □ of ♃, then of ♂...." With ♃ at 28°54′♋ and ♂ at 25°40′♋, ♀ is not yet within orb of these aspects and is not, therefore, applying to either. He registers this by using the word "occurse," meaning that ♀ has to make these aspects before leaving the sign. He is not saying that ♀ is applying to aspect them.

This is further supported in the same judgment. "We have ☽ separating from ♀ in the 8th, then going to be *vacua cursus* [void of course]; afterwards she squares with ♂, then with ♃." ☽ is at 13°37′♎, ♂ is at 25°40′♋, and ♃ is at 28°54′♋. ♂ and ♃ are outside the orb of any ☽ aspect, so ☽ is not applying, but because he felt that these aspects

were relevant he mentioned them as occurring later. This chart has been judged with ☽ void of course.

The following example charts from *Christian Astrology*, which at first appear to have ☽ void of course, are good examples of the rules in practice and show that Lilly did not ignore them.
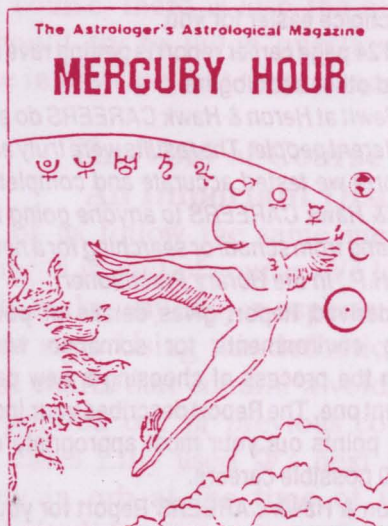
Page 152: ☽ at 26°43′♓ appears to be void of course, but it is within orb of a △ to ☉ at 7°03′♌.

Page 238: ☽ at 29°53′♍ is within orb of a □ to ☉ at 0°31′♋.

Page 385: Lilly has noted ☽'s progress as *a vac* [from void of course] *ad opposition Sun* [to the ☍ of ☉]. ☽ is at 28°09′♐. Its last aspect, an ☍ to ☿, was at 15°55′♐. After separating from ☿, it next begins application at about 20°30′♐, when it enters orb of the ☍ to ☉. So, for around 4°30′, it was void of course; that is, it was within the orbs of no other planets. In this way ☽ is separating from void of course and applying to the ☍ of ☉.

Page 401: Another example of ☽ separating from void of course (*a vac.*) and applying to the ⚹ of ♂ and the △ of ☉. ☽ is at 27°33′♌ with ♂ at

5°14'♋ and ☉ at 7°17'♉. The combined moieties of ☽ and ♂ is about 10° and of ☽ and ☉ about 15°. Therefore these are all within orb and ☽ is not void of course, but it was for a while after separating from the △ of ♃ and until it entered the orb of the ✳ to ♂.

Page 471: ☽ at 28°10'♒ applies to a ✳ of ♄ at 0°36'♉ and then to a △ of ♃ at 5°53'♋. Both are considered because both are within orb. In fact, if you needed to, you might also include the △ to ☉, which is also within orbs at 6°30'♏.

In short, we can conclude that it was rare for Lilly to judge a chart in which ☽ was void of course. The one example I have mentioned ("If Presbytery shall stand?") had great descriptive value. It was also afflicted in other ways, such as having ☽ in the Via Combusta, but that is hardly surprising considering the nature of the question and its implications.

As for the interpretation of a void of course ☽, Lilly mentioned it in several situations. On p. 190 he wrote regarding an absent brother, "yet if 3-ruler is in the 5th and void of course ... it's an argument the absent brother is indisposed in health." On p.

192 he said, regarding the truth of a news report or rumor, "if ☽ was void of course, the news proved of no moment, usually vain or mere lies." On p. 310 he described the causes of strife in marriage and wrote, "if ☽ aspects ♄ or ♂, or is in the 12th or 8th, or is void of course, they shall have both troubles, griefs, and sickness." On p. 377, in rules regarding the buying and selling of commodities, he wrote, "If ☽ be void of course, unless the significators apply strongly, there's seldom any bargain concluded." And on p. 448 he wrote that if ☽ is void of course, the querent will be forced to leave his present command or office. The fact that Lilly provided these interpretations implies that he did not reject a chart just because ☽ was void of course; instead he accepted the information it offered.

This is my understanding of the evidence, but it is possible that I have overlooked something which refutes it. If you know of anything that does, please write to me.   ☆☆*The End*☆☆

To be continued: Part Two of this essay will appear in Issue #16. Meanwhile, Sue Ward invites letters regarding her discovery. Write to her in care of *The Horary Practitioner*.