

# The Centiloquy

Καρπός

Ptolemy

*translated by J. M. Ashmand*

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## The Centiloquy

Translated by J. M. Ashmand, 1822. The Centiloquy (Καρπός, “The Fruit of his Four Books”), attributed to Ptolemy, comprises one hundred astrological aphorisms, long studied alongside the Tetrabiblos.

THE CENTILOQUY, OR HUNDRED APHORISMS OF CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY<sup>294</sup>; OTHERWISE CALLED, THE FRUIT OF HIS FOUR BOOKS

I. Judgment must be regulated by thyself, as well as by the science; for it is not possible that particular forms of events should be declared by any person, however scientific; since the understanding conceives only a certain general idea of some sensible event, and not its particular form. It is, therefore, necessary for him who practices herein to adopt inference. They only who are inspired by the deity can predict particulars.

II. When an enquirer shall make mature search into an expected event, there will be found no material difference between the event itself and his idea of it.

III. Whosoever may be adapted to any particular event or pursuit, will assuredly have the star indicative thereof very potent in his nativity.

IV. A mind apt in knowledge will discover truth more readily than one practised in the highest branches of science.

V. A skilful person, acquainted with the nature of the stars, is enabled to avert many of their effects, and to prepare himself for those effects before they arrive.

VI. It is advantageous to make choice of days and hours at a time well constituted by the nativity. Should the time be adverse, the choice will in no respect avail, however favourable an issue it may chance to promise.

VII. The mingled influences of the stars can be understood by no one who has not previously acquired knowledge of the combinations and varieties existing in nature.

VIII. A sagacious mind improves the operation of the heavens, as a skilful farmer, by cultivation, improves nature.

IX. In their generation and corruption forms are influenced by the celestial forms, of which the framers of talismans consequently avail themselves, by observing the ingresses of the stars thereupon.

X. In the election of days and hours, make use of the malefics, to the same moderate extent as the skilful physician would use poisons in order to perform cures.

XI. A day and hour are not to be elected until the quality of the object proposed shall be known.

XII. Love and hatred prohibit the true accomplishment of judgments; and, inasmuch as they lessen the most important, so likewise they magnify the most trivial things.

XIII. In every indication made by the constitution of the heavens, secondary stars, whether auxiliary or injurious thereto, are also to be used.

XIV. The astrologer will be entangled in a labyrinth of error, when the seventh house and its lord shall be afflicted.

XV. Signs cadent from the ascendant of any kingdom are the ascendants of that kingdom's enemies. But the angles and succedent houses are the ascendants of its friends. It is the same in all doctrines and institutions.

XVI. When the benefics may be controlled in the eighth house, they bring mischief by means of good men: if, on the other hand, they be well affected, they will prevent mischief.

XVII. Give no judgment as to the future life of an aged person, until the number of years he may live shall have been reckoned.

XVIII. If, while a benefic may ascend, both the luminaries should be in the same minute,<sup>295</sup> the native will be equally and highly prosperous in all things which can befall him. So, likewise, if the luminaries be mutually opposed by the east and west. But the contrary effect will be produced, should a malefic be on the ascendant.

XIX. The efficacy of purgation is impeded by the Moon's conjunction with Jupiter.

XX. Pierce not with iron that part of the body which may be governed by the sign actually occupied by the Moon.

XXI. When the Moon may be in Scorpio or Pisces, purgation may be advantageously used, provided the lord of the ascendant be coupled with some star posited below the earth. If he be coupled with a star placed above the earth, the potion swallowed will be vomited up.

XXII. Neither put on nor lay aside any garment for the first time, when the Moon may be located in Leo. And it will be still worse to do so, should she be badly affected.

XXIII. Aspects between the Moon and stars give the native much activity; and, if the stars be in power, they indicate an efficient, but if weak an inert, excitation to action.

XXIV. An eclipse of the luminaries, if in the angles of the nativity, or of an annual revolution, is noxious; and the effects take place according to the space between the ascendant and the place of eclipse. And as, in a solar eclipse, a year is reckoned for an hour, so likewise, in a lunar eclipse, a month is reckoned for an hour.

XXV. The progression of a significator, posited in the mid-heaven, is to be made by right ascension; of another posited in the ascendant, by the oblique ascension of the particular latitude.

XXVI. There is obvious concealment in the case, if the star significative of any particular affair be in conjunction with the Sun, either under the earth or in a place foreign to its own nature. On the other hand, there is manifestation, should the star be raised to elevation out of its depression, and be located in its own place.

XXVII. Venus gives pleasure to the native in that part of the body which may be ruled by the sign she occupies. It is the same with other stars.

XXVIII. When the Moon may not hold a familiarity with two planets, as is desirable, care should be taken to connect her, if possible, with some fixed star combining their qualities.

XXIX. The fixed stars grant extremely good fortune, unconnected with the understanding; but it is most commonly marked by calamities, unless the planets also agree in the felicity.

XXX. Observe the creation of the first king of any dynasty; for if the ascendant at that creation should agree with the ascendant of the nativity of the king's son, he will succeed his father.

XXXI. When the star ruling over any kingdom shall enter into a climacterical place, either the king, or some one of the chief men of his kingdom, will die.

XXXII. Concord between two persons is produced by an harmonious figuration of the stars, indicative of the matter whereby good will is constituted, in the nativity of either person.

XXXIII. Love and hatred are discernible, as well from the concord and discord of the luminaries, as from the ascendants of both nativities: but obeying signs increase good will.

XXXIV. If the lord of the place of the new Moon be in an angle, he is indicative of the events liable to happen in that month.

XXXV. When the Sun arrives at the place of any star, he excites the influence of that star in the atmosphere.

XXXVI. In the foundation of cities, consider the fixed stars which may seem to contribute thereto; but in the erection of houses, observe the planets. The kings of every city which has Mars in culmination will most commonly perish by the sword.

XXXVII. If Virgo or Pisces be on the ascendant, the native will create his own dignity; but if Aries or Libra is on the ascendant, he will cause his own death. The other signs are to be contemplated in the same way.

XXXVIII. Mercury, if established in either house of Saturn, and in power, gives the native a speculative and inquisitive intellect: if in a house of Mars, and especially if in Aries, he gives eloquence.

XXXIX. Affliction of the eleventh house, in the creation of a king, indicates damage in his household and his treasury: affliction of the second house denotes the detriment of his subject's wealth.

XL. When the ascendant is oppressed by the malefics, the native will delight in sordid things, and approve ill-favoured odours.

XLI. Beware the affliction of the eighth house and its lord, at a time of departure; and that of the second house and its lord, at a time of return.

XLII. Should a disease begin when the Moon may be in a sign occupied at the birth by some malefic, or in quartile or opposition to any such sign, such disease will be most severe; and if the malefic also behold the said sign, it will be dangerous. On the other hand, there will be no danger if the Moon be in a place held at the time of birth by some benefic.

XLIII. The malefic figures of a nation are strengthened by adverse figurations of existing times.

XLIV. It is an evil case if the ascendant of a sick person resist the figuration of his own nativity; and if the time should not bring up any benefic.

XLV. If the ascendant, or principal significators, be not in human signs, the native himself will be also estranged from human nature.

XLVI. In nativities much happiness is conferred by the fixed stars; and also by the angles of the new Moon, and by the place of a kingdom's Part of Fortune, should the ascendant be found in any of them.

XLVII. If a malefic in one nativity fall on the place of a benefic in another nativity, he who has the benefic will suffer damage from him who has the malefic.

XLVIII. If the mid-heaven of a prince be the ascendant of his subject, or if their respective significators be configured in a benevolent form, they will continue long inseparable. It will be the same, also, should the sixth house of a subject or servant be the ascendant of his prince or master.

XLIX. If the ascendant of a servant be the mid-heaven in his master's nativity, the master will place so much confidence in that servant as to be ruled by him.

L. Overlook none of the hundred and nineteen conjunctions; for on them depends the knowledge of worldly operations, whether of generation or of corruption.

LI. Make the sign occupied by the Moon at the time of birth the sign ascending at the conception; and consider that in which she may be posited at the conception, or the opposite one, as the sign ascending at the birth.

LII. Men of tall stature have their lords of nativity in elevation, and their ascendants in the beginnings of signs; but the lords of men of short stature will be found in declination.<sup>296</sup> It must also be seen whether the signs be right or oblique.

LIII. The lords of nativity of slight or thin men have no latitude, but those of stout or fat men have; and, if the latitude be south, the native will be active; if north, inactive.

LIV. In the construction of a building, the principal rulers, if coupled with a star below the earth, will impede the erection.

LV. Mars' evil influence over ships is diminished if he be neither in the mid-heaven nor in the eleventh house; but if in either of those places, he renders the ship liable to be captured by pirates. And if the ascendant be afflicted by any fixed star of the nature of Mars, the ship will be burned.

LVI. While the Moon is in her first quarter, withdrawing from her conjunction with the Sun, the bodily humours expand until her second quarter: in her other quarters they decrease.

LVII. If, during a sickness, the seventh house and its lord be afflicted, change the physician.

LVIII. Observe the place of an aspect, and its distance from the ascendant of the year; for the event will happen when the profecion may arrive thither.

LIX. Before pronouncing that an absent person shall die, observe whether he may not become intoxicated; before declaring that he shall receive a wound, see whether he may not be let blood; and before saying that he shall find treasure, examine whether he may not receive his own deposit; for the figures of all these things may be similar.

LX. In cases of sickness, observe the critical days, and the Moon's progress in the angles of a figure of sixteen sides. If those angles be well affected, it is favourable for the invalid; if they be afflicted, unfavourable.

LXI. The Moon is significative of bodily matters, which, in respect of motion, resemble her.

LXII. By marking exactly the beginning of a conjunction,<sup>297</sup> judgment may be made of the variation of the weather in the ensuing month. It will depend upon the lord of the angle of every figure, for he controls the nature of the atmosphere; assuming also at these times the quality of the existing weather.

LXIII. In the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, pronounce according to the nature of that one which may be higher in elevation. Follow the same rule with other stars.

LXIV. After ascertaining the lord of the inquiry, see what power he may have in the annual revolution, or in the ascendant of the new Moon; and pronounce accordingly.

LXV. In the least conjunction, the difference of the mean conjunction, and in the mean conjunction the difference of the greatest conjunction.<sup>298</sup>

LXVI. Consider no profection by itself alone, but make reference also to the qualifications and impediments of the stars.

LXVII. Years are diminished by the imbecility of the receiver.

LXVIII. A malefic, when matutine, signifies an accident; when vespertine, a disease.

LXIX. The native's sight will be impaired if the Moon be opposed to the Sun, and joined with nebulous stars; and if the Moon be in the western angle, and both the malefic stars in the eastern angle, the Sun being in an angle also, the native will become blind.

LXX. Insanity is produced if the Moon have no connection with Mercury; and, if neither of them be connected with the ascendant, Saturn being in occupation of the angle by night, but Mars by day, especially if in Cancer, Virgo, or Pisces, a dæmoniac affection will be produced.

LXXI. If both luminaries may be in masculine signs, in the nativities of males, their actions will be consonant with nature; but if so placed in the nativities of females, they increase their action. And Mars and Venus, if matutine, incline to the masculine gender; if vespertine, to the feminine.



LXXII. Matters of education are to be considered by the ascending lords of triplicity; matters of life, by the lords of the conditional luminary's triplicity.

LXXIII. If the Sun be found with the Gorgon's head (*\_Caput Medusæ\_*), and not aspected by any benefic star, and if there be no benefic present in the eighth house, and the lord of the conditional luminary be opposed to Mars, or in quartile to him, the native will be beheaded. If the luminary culminate, his body will be maimed or mangled; and if the aspect in quartile be from Gemini or Pisces, his hands and feet will be amputated.

LXXIV. Mars, if ascending, uniformly gives a scar in the face.

LXXV. If the Sun be in conjunction with the lord of the ascendant, in Leo, and Mars has no prerogative in the ascendant, and if there be no benefic in the eighth house, the native will be burned.

LXXVI. If Saturn hold the mid-heaven, and the conditional luminary be opposed to him, the native will perish in the ruins of buildings, provided the sign on the lower heaven be an earthly sign; if it be a watery sign, he will be drowned or suffocated by water: if a human sign, he will be strangled by men, or will perish by the halter or the scourge. Should there, however, be a benefic in the eighth house, he will not suffer death, although he will be brought near it.

LXXVII. Profection of the ascendant is to be made for matters affecting the body; of the Part of Fortune, for extrinsic circumstances; of the Moon, for the connection between the body and the spirit; and of the mid-heaven, for the employment or profession.

LXXVIII. A star often dispenses influence in a place in which it has no prerogative, thus bringing unexpected advantage to the native.

LXXIX. Whoever has Mars in the eleventh house, does not govern his master.

LXXX. If Venus be in conjunction with Saturn, and have any lord of house in the seventh house, the native will be of spurious origin.

LXXXI. Times are reckoned in seven ways; viz. by the space between two significators; by the space between their mutual aspects; by the approach of one to the other; by the space between either of them and the place

appropriated to the proposed event; by the descension of a star, with its addition or diminution; by the changing of a significator; and by the approach of a planet to its place.

LXXXII. When a figure may be equipoised, observe the horoscope (or figure) at the new or full moon, and, if that also be equipoised, be not hasty in giving judgment.

LXXXIII. The time of obtaining a grant indicates the affection between the applicant and his prince; but the seat<sup>299</sup> shows the nature of the office;—

LXXXIV. And if Mars be lord of the ascendant at the time of entering on possession, and posited in the second house, or coupled with the lord of the second, he brings much mischief.

LXXXV. Should the lord of the ascendant be configured with the lord of the second house, the prince will spontaneously create many charges.

LXXXVI. The Sun is the source of the vital power; the Moon, of the natural power.

LXXXVII. Monthly revolutions are made in twenty-eight days, two hours and about eighteen minutes. Judgment is also made by some persons by means of the Sun's progress; that is to say, by his partial equations to that degree and minute which he might hold at the beginning.

LXXXVIII. In making profection of the part of Fortune for a whole annual revolution, a space equal to that between the Sun and Moon is to be reckoned from the ascendant.

LXXXIX. Consider the grandfather's affairs from the seventh house and the uncle's from the sixth.

XC. Should the significator be in aspect to the ascendant, the hidden event or object will correspond in its nature with the ascendant; but if the ascendant be not so aspected, the nature of the event will accord with that of the place in which the significator is posited. The lord of the hour shows its colour; the place of the Moon its time; and, if above the earth, it will be a novel thing; if below, old. The part of Fortune indicates its quantity, whether long or short. The lords of the terms, and of the lower heaven and mid-heaven, and of the

Moon, shows its substance or value.

XC. Should the ruler of a sick person be combust, it is an evil portent; and especially if the part of Fortune be afflicted.

XCII. Saturn, if oriental, is not so highly noxious to a sick person; nor Mars, if occidental.

XCIII. Judgment is not to be drawn from any figure until the next conjunction shall have been considered: for principles are varied by every conjunction; and therefore, to avoid error, both the last and the next should be combined.

XCIV. The place of the more potent significator indicates the thoughts of the inquirer.

XCV. The stars rising with the tenth house prove how far the native may be fitted to the occupation which he follows.

XCVI. In an eclipse, such significations as are made nearest the angles, show the events decreed. The nature of the stars in accordance with the eclipse, planets as well as fixed stars, and also the appearances co-ascending, are likewise to be considered, and judgment is to be given accordingly.

XCVII. The event inquired about will be speedily accomplished, should the lord of the new or full Moon be in an angle.

XCVIII. Shooting stars, and meteors like flowing hair, bear a secondary part in judgments.

XCIX. Shooting stars denote the dryness of the air; and, if they are projected to one part only, they indicate wind therefrom: if to various parts, they indicate diminution of waters, a turbulent atmosphere, and incursions of armies.

C. If comets, whose distance is eleven signs behind the Sun, appear in angles, the king of some kingdom, or one of the princes or chief men of a kingdom, will die. If in a succedent house, the affairs of the kingdom's treasury will prosper, but the governor or ruler will be changed. If in a cadent house, there will be diseases and sudden deaths. And if comets be in motion from the west towards the east, a foreign foe will invade the country: if not in motion, the

foe will be provincial, or domestic.

## Notes

294. Moxon's Mathematical Dictionary says, that the "Centiloquium is a book containing one hundred astrological aphorisms, commonly ascribed to Ptolemy, as its author, but by some to Hermes Trismegistus." This account, however, seems to be inaccurate; for the Centiloquy attributed to Osiris's contemporary and counsellor (eulogized by Lilly as having been "one of the wisest of all mortal men, and as ancient as Moses"), is very different from that known by the name of the *Καρπος*, or "Fruit of the Tetrabiblos." Whether this latter Centiloquy be really the work of Ptolemy is another question: it has been usually edited as his, but some of the aphorisms seem to relate to horary questions only, which are not adverted to in the Tetrabiblos, and there are others also which do not appear to result from the doctrine of that book.

295. Of the same degree and sign.

296. Or in obscure situations.

297. Of the Sun and Moon.

298. On this aphorism Partridge has said, "how Ptolemy meant it to be understood, I know not; and so I leave it."

299. Or part of heaven indicating the grant.