



Book Reviews

by Margaret Gray MSW D. Psych. Astrology

The first three books in this review offer a rich astrological contribution based on synthesizing the “traditional” with the “modern” in depth yet with an easily accessible manner. By sheer synchronicity *Traditional Astrology for Today* and *Planetary Strength* both arrived in my letterbox within a few days of each other. With minimal expertise in “traditional astrology” my reading started with Benjamin Dykes’ superb introductory work. I immediately found myself fascinated with the material and practicing many of the outlined techniques. Having laid the groundwork, I easily moved to Bob Makransky’s excellent book on *Planetary Strength* referring back to Dr. Dykes book to review some of the terminology.

It is interesting to note that as Dr. Dykes reminds us in his introduction that there has been a recent revival of “traditional astrology.” In many ways it is not so surprising with Pluto’s transit through Capricorn about to be squared by Uranus in Aries, offering us the potential to dig beneath the surface to find the gold within the depths, for the purpose of leading us into the new.

David Hamblin’s book on “the spirit of numbers” similarly draws upon the well-known principles of harmonic astrology whilst also extending way beyond them into the expansive richness of numbers themselves. How easy it is to forget that mathematics is the most universal language available to us, enabling the creation of music and thereby touching and awakening our soul. With Neptune finally settling into Pisces, the power and potential of numbers is likely to come greatly to the fore.

The new book by David Tresemer on the *Venus Eclipse of the Sun in June 2012* presents an exploration of this

rare transit from the perspective of Astrosophy, which is guided by the teachings of Antroposophy. Our last book for this issue is an entertaining astrological detective story by Alan Annand, reminding us that astrological skills can indeed be shared and taught through a wide variety of mediums, including the ever popular detective novel.

Traditional Astrology For Today

An Introduction

Benjamin Dykes

Translator of Guido Bonatti’s *Book of Astronomy*

ISBN-13: 978-1-934586-22-8

The Cazimi Press

621 5th Avenue SE #25, Minneapolis, MN 55414

www.bendykes.com

\$15.99

This wonderful new contribution by the prolific author, Dr. Benjamin Dykes offers a rich, easily readable introduction to the world of traditional astrology. Dr Dykes is particularly well known for his translation of Guido Bonatti’s *Book of Astronomy* as well as his three works on traditional horary.

This book has innumerable strengths, including the clarity and simplicity with which the key concepts and techniques of traditional astrology are explained. This is particularly helpful, as many astrologers have stayed away from this fascinating branch of astrology because of the apparent complexities involved. Outlining the differences and similarities, throughout the book, between modern and traditional approaches, is also very helpful in answering questions that are likely to arise for many modern astrologers. It is also a very useful reminder of the many overlaps between these apparently differing approaches.

The book is divided into two sections. Part 1 includes a succinct and interesting history of traditional astrology as well as an exploration of ideas and values. The author questions some of the more modern views of the chart as a picture “of our mind” versus the traditional approach where the chart “is a picture of our place in the whole world, only part of which is our mind.” Addressing the concern for many modern astrologers of the concept of “good” and “bad” planets and placements, Dr. Dykes clarifies that good or bad does not equal “morally good,” but rather, it shows “whether something performs its functions well.” Dr. Dykes also presents different views on what “happiness” entails as this was of great concern to traditional astrologers.

In Part II, Dr. Dykes explores traditional techniques and concepts including planets, signs, dignities, houses, lots, predictive techniques, and a short case study, as well as a helpful section on questions and answers. The author manages to demystify and clarify ordinarily fairly complex concepts with the help of some excellent simple tables and explanations. It is hard to imagine anyone reading this section of the book without immediately trying out several of the easily applicable suggested techniques, including using the whole house system and working with the predictive technique of profections. The frequently asked questions address most of the concerns often expressed about traditional astrology, including the issues of “fate and choice” and the concerns that traditional astrology seeks to predict behavior. Dr. Dykes suggests that since modern astrology was reinvented, after the disappearance of traditional astrology, it may be worth “rediscovering its approaches, so as to help clients with the same issues found in ancient Greece, medieval Persia —.”

The very comprehensive appendix at the back includes a bibliography with texts marked with an asterisk for beginners as well as helpful suggestions from the author linked to many of the titles and a list of useful websites. The glossary offers quick easy access to new terminology and there is an excellent epilogue that includes where to go from here for anyone whose desire to continue with this work has been awoken.

This superb book is ideal for any astrologer who is interested in learning how traditional astrology might enhance their practice. It is also a perfect book for all astrology students. On a personal level, it is an absolute delight to find another “must have” book for my astrology bookcase.

***Planetary Strength
A Commentary on Morinus***

Bob Makranski
ISBN 9781902405506
The Wessex Astrologer Ltd
4A Woodside Road
Bournemouth
BH5 2AZ
England
www.wessexastrologer.com
11.99 Sterling

According to the author Bob Makransky, this traditional astrology book emerged from a quest to explore “what exactly astrologers mean by planetary strength” inspired by a translation of the work of the astrologer Jean Baptiste Morin de Villefranche, *Astrologia Gallica XVIII (known as Morinus Book 18)*. Weaving his way back and forth from the work of Morinus, the author focuses on the concept of planetary strengths depending on their celestial (sign), terrestrial (house), and aspectual state (aspects). With a chapter dedicated to each of the above, the final two chapters offer a comparison of different canons of differing planetary strength and a discussion on other dignities. The latter section also addresses retrogradation and station.

Presenting a mixture of discussion, detailed cookbook offerings and chart examples as well as keywords and tables, this fascinating book also addresses the fixed stars, including a short but very useful ephemeris for the main ones. The first appendix addresses the angles of the chart, with a final appendix on the methodology of Dr. Jones.

As mentioned by the author, this fascinating book assumes a fair knowledge of astrology as well as some experience in preparing charts. For experienced astrologers who are unfamiliar with traditional astrology, Dr. Dykes book above is an excellent preparation for this valuable and very interesting book.

***The Spirit of Numbers
A New Exploration of Harmonic Astrology***

David Hamblin
ISBN 9781902405537
The Wessex Astrologer Ltd
4A Woodside Road
Bournemouth
BH5 2AZ
England