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Translations of Kepler's Astrological Writings
Part I, Section 4.2. Kepler's Weather Calendar
of 1618

Translated and annotated by John Meeks

Taken from Gesammelte Werke 11.2, pp. 155-172

Astrological Predictions

For the Year M.DC.XVIII
after the Merciful Incarnation of our Lord
and Saviour Jesus Christ
According to the customary reckoning of the occidental churches

Concerning the Natural Influences of the Stars
In this Lower World

Based on the Rudolphine Tables

Made for Austria on the Enns, and its Capital Linz

By

Johannes Keppler, Mathematician to the Roman Emperor
and His Praiseworthy Country: The Archdukedom of Austria on the
Enns

Printed in Linz / by Johann Blancken
M. DC. XVIII

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Dedication

Your Royal Highness received and remunerated with unexpected graciousness and generosity the **Prognostication** for the year 1617, based on the Rudolphine Tables and dedicated to Your Royal Highness. This gives me both cause and resources to continue the difficult and laborious calculations of the Ephemerides (from the still incomplete, although fundamentally correct Tables) for the approaching year of 1618. As far as the present year is concerned, the weather predictions proved even more accurate than I had dared to hope; and this success gives me some comfort and encouragement to persevere in this field of work, which has fallen into great disrepute due to the abuses to which it has been subjected. I shall continue with my daily observations in the hope of refining the weather predictions – for which task the indispensable resource of an accurate ephemeris had hitherto been lacking.

For what more could the *prognosticators* wish for? They admit themselves that the movements of *Mercury* are of central importance. And the old calculations upon which they base their predictions are so far off the mark that they place a conjunction of the Sun and Mercury on 3rd February, which, according to my revised calculations takes place eight whole days later, on 10th February [sic].

To be sure, we find that the weather was gloomy and overcast with heavy rain on the 3rd and 4th February, owing to two other aspects to be found in the calendar, while the following days were clear and unnaturally warm. This lasted until the 10th (more on this anon) on which day the clear skies became overcast, and rainy weather returned. On the 21st strong winds and heavy rains assured us that the full effects of this aspect had arrived.

Would God that the presumptuousness of those who write calendars, and the impatience of publishers to get them out for sale ahead of all the others, might be tempered by requiring the authors to use the most accurate available calculations. To be sure, this would reduce the numbers of calendar writers, and the Art would soon be improved by enhanced awareness in different parts of the country.

But far be it from me to set too lofty goals for this Art, or to overreach the limits set by the very nature of the firmament, as though celestial influences alone were responsible for the weather. No, I shall abide by my conviction, outlined in the afore mentioned *Paragraph*, that many terrestrial causes must be taken into account which do not necessarily follow from the movements of the heavens, and that the latter may be augmented by other extraordinary celestial influences, such as *Comets*, in

particular with regard to *Qualities* and *general* weather conditions. For the Aspects normally work only on the particular days on which they take effect. Nor do they bring down heat or cold, dryness or moisture from the sky, but rather they impel the mountains and chasms to pour forth what they have laid up in store.

Last winter was unnaturally warm, so that in January, but more especially around the time of Candlemas, many plants in sheltered gardens burst into flower, violets blossomed, larks and thrushes sang, and this not only here in Austria, but elsewhere on this side of the Alps, particularly in Alsace.

The stars had some part in this: the fiery planet Mars standing close to the earth in February, in the constellation of Leo. But this is no rare occurrence, and does not always engender such warmth. The true cause revealed itself in February, when the ground might have been compared to a bird with something stuck in its crop, becoming as it were sick, feverish and perspiring, until it was able to release this pent up energy in the form of a violent thunderclap – in our country on 7th February, in Strassburg on the 11th. The matter thus released was fiery and sulfurous, and the fact that the lightning bolt struck under clear skies is indicative of its nature (in Strassburg, where it struck into a tower, the sky had been clear until very shortly beforehand). In our part of the country and at Gmund it was widely believed to have been caused by an earthquake: several people saw something fall in the form of a burning ball; it was most likely propelled into the sky from a chasm or cave, only to fall earthwards, once it wearied on its ascent.

Now since the winter tended to be warm on the whole – and terrestrial causes are sufficient to explain this – those aspects which would normally have caused snowfall, and which I predicted in my Calendar would do so, did not, but rather were only able to bring much more rain, and often only fog. However, travellers have reported that heavy snowfalls affected the Alps; moreover we have the evidence of the prevailing cold winds in March and April, when the sun began to melt the snow, and finally of the Danube, whose waters rose to unusual heights in the spring and summer.

Even though the weather predictions in my Calendar for last spring and summer were seldom off by more than a day, it does not necessarily follow that this will continue to be the case for all years to come. For this year of 1617 had its natural measure of moisture in spring and summer, rendering the astrologer's task relatively easy. Another year may bring unusual regional conditions, as was the case last winter, or in the summer of 1616, making it more difficult to discern the effects of the aspects. We

must be prepared to accept this, and not be too easily put off by such inaccuracies, having reason enough to hope to overcome them with time.

I therefore humbly dedicate this **Prognostication** for the New Year to your Royal Highness as evidence of my diligence in investigating the secrets of Nature and in humble gratitude for the boons bestowed on me last year.

May God grant thee in every respect Happiness, Peace and Health in this New Year. In the hope that your Royal Highness will see fit to continue to render unto me and my studies the necessary patronage and support,

Your Royal Highness'
Humble and Obedient
Mathematician,

Johann Kepler

PROGNOSTICATION For the Year 1618

Winter

I shall begin this Prognostication where I left off a year ago: namely, with the shortest day and the entrance of the Sun into Capricorn, where it begins to re-ascend the sky. This takes place at the end of 1617 on 21st December at 2:52 p.m. At this moment Jupiter stands high in the sky, while Mercury is setting / Mars in the Ninth House has moved a little beyond its Square with Saturn, which occupies the Twelfth House / Venus stands opposite Saturn in the Sixth / and the Moon is below the horizon in Square to Mars.

I cannot come to any clear conclusions from this configuration, which I have described by way of introduction, as is my custom. But the aspects which follow in this winter season indicate moist, and not very cold weather, as will be elucidated below.

December is likely to be fairly cold until the 17th, then milder weather will set in. The return of cold, wintry weather cannot be expected before the year's end. The Christmas Holidays may bring moderate cold, soft snow falling on the 26th during a Semisextile of Jupiter and the Sun while the 29th will be milder during a Sextile of Jupiter and Venus, and a Biquintile of Saturn and Mercury, so that it may either rain or snow. The causes being Venus and Mercury in Sagittarius / Mars within one sign with the Sun / as the latter approaches Jupiter.

January

There should be no need to stress that the heavens do not govern the weather in its entirety, a fact which is fairly obvious in our own country. And the farmers and others familiar with the woods and fields pay closer attention to natural phenomena than does Astrology, observing the conditions relevant to the forthcoming Winter directly, while Astrology makes its predictions years in advance. According to their rules we may expect a severe winter, judging by the large numbers of nuts, which are already well-developed. Therefore, even though celestial factors would seem to predispose January to enjoy mild and dry weather up to the 13th it must nevertheless be stressed that if the mountains in Tyrol and Silesia had received heavy snowfalls the previous December, and had the snow stayed, then the winds in January would not bring us mild weather, but

severe frost, and this all the more if we had also had fairly deep snow. So that in a case like this a snowy mountain on earth can have a stronger effect than chilly Saturn in the sky. The New Year will be ushered in with beautiful, but fairly cold weather, which can be expected to last from a few days before New Year's Day until the First Quarter Moon on the night of 3rd January, at 10:34 p.m.

N.B. Now I must make clear here at the outset that in calculating the Moon's Quarters for this year I have adhered to the meaning of the Greek name *Dichotomos*, or Latin *bifida*, *bisecta*, indicating the moment when the Moon appears bisected by a straight line, so that, viewed in the reflecting telescope one would perceive not the slightest curvature either in the upper or lower portion of the Moon. This moment does not coincide exactly with the Moon's square to the Sun, but the First Quarter (according to the proportion of the Sun and Moon which I utilise) takes place 4 hours before, and the Last Quarter almost exactly as long after the exact Square with the Sun. I wished to make this clear in order to ensure that no one who chanced to notice the discrepancy between my calculations and those of Herr Origanus should conclude that this is due to a mistake, and not deliberate.

This Quarter Moon will bring snow on the 3rd during the Semisextile of Mars and Mercury, to be followed by one to three days of slightly improved weather, until the 7th & 8th, when rain can be expected during the Semisextile of the Sun and Venus, the Trine of Saturn and the Sun, and the Semisextile of Jupiter and Mercury. In the following four days (during which time the Moon becomes Full in Cancer at midnight between the 10th and 11th) little improvement can be expected, because Venus comes into Biquintile with Saturn on the 12th, and on the 13th Mercury comes into Trine with Saturn, while Mars presses fairly close beneath Jupiter, both being close to the Sun. Under these aspects I expect wind and strong precipitation, all the more so because rain or snow will have fallen during the previous fortnight. As soon as this struggle is past, the weather should clear up and become tranquil, as there are no major aspects for ten days or so. But as the Sun is moving swiftly on towards Jupiter and Mars, I fear there may be some rain. In the midst of this period the Last Quarter Moon appears before daybreak on the 19th, at 1:40 a.m.

On the 23rd it will become tempestuous again, as Mars is in Square to Saturn, and Mercury in Conjunction with the Sun, although these two events deviate from local noon. And even though the five days following can bring some improvement (the light of the New Moon being kindled at

3:46 in the afternoon of the 26th in Aquarius), Mercury advances on towards Jupiter, and Venus stands in Semisextile to both on the 28th. This will bring most tempestuous rain once again, and snow which will not abate until February, since on the 31st Saturn is in Square to Mercury and in Trine to Venus.

February

This month Saturn and Jupiter reach Square, while Venus approaches ever closer to the Sun, and the Sun to Mars. With regard to celestial influences, this will be a winter without equal – for we have already explained what terrestrial factors, such as snow-covered mountains, can contribute. Therefore, the ice formed in December will still remain. The beginning of the month may be fair during First Quarter Moon, which falls on the 2nd at 6:36 a.m. But already on the 3rd the Sun reaches Jupiter, bringing moisture; over the next days it approaches Square with Saturn, which is attained on the 6th. Mercury stands in the same aspect to Mars, which will once again bring tempestuous winds, snow and rain. And should the wind change directions and abate somewhat, this can hardly be expected to last, due to Mercury moving between Sextile and Quintile to Saturn.

The Moon becomes Full in Leo on the 9th at 3:36 p.m., and on the very next day a Quintile of Saturn and Mercury will bring us snow and rough winds. And the following day will decide how the weather will develop for the rest of the month. For if it is cold we can expect a great deal of snow, but if it stays mild the outcome will be much rain, especially around the 14th, when Mars and Venus enter a slow Semisextile.

The same applies to the Quintile of Saturn and Mars on the 16th, which working alone, without the aspects which follow, could well usher in a cold spell at this time of year. The Last Quarter Moon appears on the 17th at 10:35 p.m. On the 18th the Square of Saturn and Jupiter is virtually completed, Mercury standing between the two, in Semisextile and Sextile, will be a welcome relief after the rather unpleasant spell which preceded it. On the 3rd we may expect some wind as Jupiter stands in Semisextile to Mercury. On the same day the First Quarter Moon appears at 2:56 p.m.

From the 5th until sometime during the 9th we still have a double Opening of the Doors (*Apertio portarum*),¹ and we may expect some very

¹ The significance of the *Apertio portarum*, or 'Opening of the Doors', is explained in the Introduction to this Calendar, **Part I.4.1** in this volume. It was

tempestuous weather to drive out the winter, as it were. At this time not only does Mars advance from a Sextile with Saturn to a Semisextile with Jupiter, but Mercury advances from a Sextile with Saturn to a Conjunction with the Sun, with Mars just below: that can be the cause of much wind and rainfall. Following this, the heat referred to above begins to take effect, although the 10th may be a bit unsettled respectively. This will make itself felt in the form of snow or rain, depending on the conditions described above. Then we shall have reason to hope for fine weather until the New Moon, which takes place on the 25th at 2:53 a.m. Following this, the weather will be unsettled until the end of the month due to a Quintile of Saturn and the Sun on the 25th, with Venus joining in on the 26th and 27th forming an Opening of the Doors in the form of a Conjunction with Jupiter and a Square with Saturn. And finally, Venus makes a Semisextile with Mercury, just as he reverses his course to become retrograde.

March

The fiery planet Mars stays quite close to the Sun throughout this month, being finally overtaken on the afternoon of the 26th, the Sun passing just above him without making contact. Apart from this, there are no other major aspects this month. For this reason, and most especially because the preceding month of February has fairly exhausted its resources of snow, rain and wind, we can expect quite a warm March: foggy in the mountains, but dry in the low-lying areas, especially after the first eight days. And this fair weather is due to a Sextile of the Sun with Saturn, the next morning being Full Moon at 6:26 a.m.

during this *Apertio portarum*, on 8 March, that Kepler experienced a momentous breakthrough in his search for the laws underlying planetary motion. ‘After a long period of uninterrupted labour, in which I had determined the intervals of the orbits with the help of Brahe’s observations, the true proportion between the periods of revolution and the distances of the orbits was revealed to me. On 8th March of this year 1618, if one wants to know the exact date, it first emerged in my mind. But when I put it to the test, a wrong calculation induced me to reject it as erroneous. Finally the idea returned on 15th May, and this time vanquished the darkness of my spirit...’. (Max Caspar, *Johannes Kepler* [Stuttgart, 1948], p. 339 [my English translation of Caspar’s German translation of Kepler’s Latin, taken from *Harmonices mundi*, Book V, Chapter 3 [GW 6, p. 302]; English translation from the original Latin in ADF, p. 411]).

From the 13th to the 23rd Venus moves from Quintile to Sextile with Saturn. This configuration normally causes a longer period of unsettled weather. But because Venus is the only planet involved, I expect typical cold April weather, lasting no longer than the 13th and 14th, when a Semisextile between Jupiter and the Sun also occurs.

I shall not attribute any great significance to the Conjunction of Venus and Mercury between the 15th and 16th this time, because they pass each other at a considerable distance.² Otherwise, I expect fairly continuous warm and dry weather at the Last Quarter Moon on the 19th at 4:16 p.m.

Spring 1618

On 20th March at 3:11 p.m., or according to my equal distribution of the time (*aequatio temporis*) at 3:24 p.m., the midpoint of the Sun reaches the Celestial Equator, or the First Degree of Aries, quite close to the planet Mars. At this time Saturn is high in the sky, Venus and Mercury are close to setting, Jupiter is in the sixth and the Moon in the fifth House below the horizon. According to the Arabian view, Mercury with Saturn as auxiliary should be the regent of this year. I for my part hold to the configurations and aspects which take place in succession this season, and not so much to those which can be read from this figure. If I were to consider these alone, I would have to conclude from the Conjunction of the Sun and Mars in the fiery sign of Aries, that the whole year, or at least the whole summer would be dry and hot. But I fear that the weather will develop quite differently in May, in view of the particular aspects which take place then. But for the present in March this aspect will be decisive.

For even though Mercury ends its retrograde motion on the 22nd while standing in Sextile to Saturn platically, and on the following day the Sextile of Venus and Saturn becomes exact, which will hopefully bring needed rainfall, soon hereafter the New Moon (which takes place three quarters of an hour after noon) will bring dry weather until the end of the month, giving much cause for complaint. Only the Semisextile of Jupiter and Venus on the 28th may bring some light rain.

April

I expect this month to be dry and hot almost throughout, for Mars and Venus remain quite close to the Sun, and there is little else to induce rainfall. The First Quarter Moon falls on the 2nd just after midnight at

² Venus stood 3 ½° south of Mercury.

12:27. The weather will be fair until Full Moon on the 10th at 1:13 a.m. Then the Sextile of Saturn and Mercury may bring rain, perhaps a heavy downpour. The 14th, 15th and 16th may also bring some moisture, but under the influence of a Semisextile between Saturn and the Sun, and another between Jupiter and Mercury the weather will become very hot again towards the Last Quarter Moon on the 18th at 6:27 a.m. Then on the 19th a very vehement, heated union of Mars and Venus takes place near the Sun, the two planets being in Semisextile with Saturn. When they cross the Meridian Venus is below Mars. We must pray to God that the 19th and 20th should pass over without much harm being done, for I fear violent weather and torrential rain.

On the 21st the Sextile of Jupiter with the Sun will also bring heat and thunder. When the New Moon follows on the evening of the 24th at 8:53 p.m., hot and sultry weather will prevail around the 23rd, 24th and 25th, until at last a Sextile of Jupiter and Venus on the 26th brings what may be a fair amount of rain, though the situation is uncertain, due to Venus and the Sun advancing from Sextile to Quintile with Jupiter.

May

This month has very dangerous aspects, as five planets gather together in Taurus, four of which advance from a Sextile to a Quintile with Jupiter, for which reason I think that once the rains begin, they will be persistent, with cold winds, and heat alternating with frost, showers, torrential downpours and flooding with damage to bridges (in our regions especially, since the snow in the mountains of Tyrol tends to melt at this time of year). Whether I am right in this will become clear on the first of the month, when the First Quarter Moon appears at midday, at 11:42 a.m., with a Semisextile of Saturn and Mercury and a Sextile of Jupiter and Mars. This should bring rain and thunderstorms, but some days of intermittent fair weather until Mercury moves from a Sextile with Jupiter to a Conjunction with Mars on the 5th and 6th. In overtaking Mars, he comes quite close, passing below, while the Sun and Venus come into Quintile with Jupiter. We can be sure that the weather will not be spinning silk; and if cold showers should be followed by clear nights, there may well be frost. I expect the 8th will be moderate; although Full Moon on the 9th at 5:21 p.m. stands opposite all five planets, and Venus finally reaches the Sun in Taurus, passing very close below the solar disc, we may expect nothing worse than a thunderstorm, and on the 11th a cloudburst or strong wind, owing to the Quintile of Mercury and Jupiter;

after which, the weather will become fair again. But from the 14th to the 18th all four planets: Mars, the Sun, Venus and Mercury move together within a small space of each other, with four conjunctions taking place in this brief span of time: Mercury sits on the Sun on the 14th near the Pleiades,³ and hurries on thence towards Venus; these two planets then rush together over Saturn, Mercury being uppermost, and Venus in the middle. It remains to be seen whether the difference in latitude (which prevents the conjunctions from being perfect) will be sufficient to exercise a mitigating effect. I suspect not much: cold, blustery showers may be expected, which may well continue in a milder form until the 18th, when the Sun passes over Saturn. The Last Quarter Moon takes place on the 18th at 4:18 p.m.

The 20th, marked by the Square of Jupiter and Mercury, and the 21st, by the Quintile of Jupiter and Mars, will be unsettled and wet, but warmer, while on the 23rd and 24th during the Trine of Jupiter and Venus, there may be a fearful downpour.⁴ In that night the New Moon occurs at 4:11 a.m. Lovely warm weather will follow; the 27th will be sultry and hot. On the 28th, the Square of Jupiter and the Sun will bring rain and wind; while the Semisextile of Mars and Mercury points to fair weather.

June

I expect this month for the most part to be settled, hot and dry, despite fertile rains on the 1st during the Semisextile of Saturn and Mercury and on the 5th during the Trine of Jupiter and Mercury, enhanced by aspects of the Moon. Nor will I let the Full Moon (on the 8th at 6:35 p.m.), nor the Conjunction of Saturn and Mars between the Pleiades and the Hyades tempt me to abandon this conclusion. For both planets stand nearly 2 degrees apart on one side, and Mars being high in the north, the lower planet cannot come close to him. For a few days there will likely be unsettled winds, dry air and black clouds, and in the mountains even rain. Dry weather will follow, excepting rainfall on the 12th during the Semisextile of Saturn and Venus. After this the Last Quarter Moon

³ This expression is exceptionally apt. Mercury was very nearly occulted by the Sun, and on the day in question passed some 38 seconds of arc north of the solar disc.

⁴ The Defenestration of Prague, which is generally seen as the event which triggered the Thirty Years' War, took place on May 23.

occurs in the night of the 11th/12th at 12:19 a.m. Then on the 17th, 18th and 19th a there follows a strong Square of Jupiter and Mars, which Venus joins in Semisextile and Trine, respectively. Hopefully, that will suffice to bring a strong and much-needed rainfall, but not a storm. Thereafter a hot and arid spell will follow.

Summer

On June 21st at 7:12 p.m. the Sun reaches the highest point on its orbit, being the First Point of Cancer, from which time its begins its southward descent. At this moment the Moon is just setting in the 21st degree of Gemini, Venus, Mars and Saturn preceding him in the Sixth House; for which reason the Astrologers will grant Mercury first precedence, giving him Jove as his servant.

This configuration might also be taken as a fair indication of dry weather, if it were not for the daily aspects. But as we are able to include them in our account, let us do so conscientiously, for the sake of a more accurate and detailed picture. Now the rest of the month would seem to bring unremitting hot and arid weather; the New Moon taking place on the 22nd at 12:07 midday. But on the 24th during the Semisextile of Saturn and the Sun there may be a little rain. When the First Quarter Moon takes place on the 29th at 3:53 p.m., the Trine of Jupiter and the Sun may also bring rain.

July

This month should bring us somewhat more moisture and rain, especially towards the end. This can be attributed to the fact that in the course of July Mercury changes course and becomes retrograde, while Saturn and Jupiter approach closer and closer to Square. This would seem to indicate that the beginning will be overcast, but generally hot as long as Mercury remains retrograde. And on the 4th the Conjunction of Venus and Mercury may generate a thunderstorm, or at the very least thunderclouds, for I do not think this Conjunction will be very strong, as they are 5° apart, Venus in the north, Mercury in the south.

From now on the weather will be hot and dry until shortly before Full Moon (on the 7th at 9:55 p.m.), which will bring rain, on account of the Biquintile of Jupiter and Venus. On the 9th and 10th a Sextile of Saturn and Venus will bring showery rain, which will continue into the 11th due to the Semisextile of Mars and Mercury. After this the weather will once again become mostly clear and hot, but somewhat unsettled as Venus

moves between a Sextile and a Quintile with Saturn. The Conjunction of Mercury and the Sun on the 14th will not have any great effect, as Mercury is 5° to the south; the result will be wind and black clouds or a little rain. From the Last Quarter Moon on the 15th at 5:44 a.m. the weather should be moderate until a little before New Moon, when a Quintile of Saturn and Venus and a Semisextile of Venus and Mercury both take place on the 20th. Here the skies needs must open, and the New Moon (on the 21st at 8:44 p.m.) will be ushered in with rain. Although a day of two of warm, dry weather may follow, the Biquintile of Jupiter and the Sun on the 24th will bring overcast skies, and Mercury resumes his forward motion on the 25th. From now on until the end of the month and through the First Quarter Moon (the 29th at 10:39 p.m.) it will be fairly unsettled, for the Sun reaches Semisextile with Mars on the 27th, so that Mars is just one whole sign removed from the Sun. On the 29th there follows a Sextile of Saturn and the Sun and on the 30th a Semisextile of Saturn and Mars, so that Saturn, Mars and the Sun stand equally spaced one full sign apart. Moreover, Saturn and Jupiter approach Square at the month's end, which becomes exact on the 30th. Finally, Jupiter and Mars attain a Trine.

August

In this month I shall be hoping for fairly warm and clear weather until Bartholomew's Day, though not without needed precipitation, for on the 4th and 5th Venus will bring strong rains with an Opposition to Jupiter and a Square with Saturn. Following this, the Full Moon on the 6th at 9:36 will bring lovely warm weather, which should hold until the 11th, apart from a shower on the 9th due to the Biquintile of Jupiter and Mercury. The Sextile of Mars and Venus may have a stronger effect on the 11th and 12th with thunderstorms, because it is joined by a Quintile of Saturn and the Sun. The same applies to the Sextile of Saturn and Mercury on the 14th; otherwise the Last Quarter Moon (on the 13th at 11:34 a.m.) should be pleasant and warm. New Moon takes place on the morning of the 20th at 7:44; it will be accompanied by dreary, rainy weather on account of Mars standing in Semisextile to Mercury and in Quintile to Saturn; after this, fair weather will prevail nearly until the Last Quarter Moon, which takes place in the night of the 27th/28th at 2:21 a.m. From the 26th on right up to the end of the month we will have very foul weather, spoiling the Church Day at Linz, so that all finely-dressed folk who take pride in their appearance will find it vexing to go out in public, and it will be well to

keep a watchful eye on the bridges. For the Sun and Mercury meet head-on,⁵ both in Semisextile to Venus, both in Opposition to Jupiter, and both in Square to Saturn. At the same time, Mars and Venus stand in Quintile, and each in Biquintile to Jupiter; while Venus forms a Trine with Saturn. So that within a span of just four or five days eleven aspects occur. In the high mountains there may be some snowfall.

September

Assuming that the end of August passes without too much harm being done, and nothing occurs which the heavens cannot alter (as, for instance, a deep snowfall in the mountains, which the Sun were powerless to melt, so that we had to contend with cooler air-masses for a longer period), I have reason to hope for good weather this month, as far as the celestial influences are concerned, especially in the first fourteen days, during which the Full Moon appears on the 4th at 8:01 p.m. The Last Quarter follows on the eleventh at 4:19 p.m. So it is to be hoped that this period will be warm and dry, while the Earth is not afflicted by aspects. From the 14th onwards the weather will become unsettled, for Mercury is in Biquintile with Jupiter, and afterwards on the 19th a Sextile of Saturn and Mars takes place. On the 14th and 16th Mercury comes into Sextile and Trine, respectively, with these two planets, causing an Opening of the Doors (*Apertio portarum*). If this should give rise to heavy rain, at least there is little danger of cold winds and frost. Around the time of New Moon on the evening of the 17th at 9:27, it will become unsettled and windy or foggy on account of the Trine of Jupiter and Venus on the 18th, and the Sextile of Saturn and Mars on the 19th. Likewise, the Biquintile of Saturn and Venus on the 20th.

Autumn

On the morning of the 23rd September at 9:46 the Sun reaches the Equinox with its entry into Libra. At this moment the 11th degree of Scorpio is rising, with Venus and the Moon both in this sign: the former above, the latter below the horizon. Jupiter is retrograde in the nethermost part of the sky, Mars is elevated in the ninth house,⁶ Saturn in the eighth house and Mercury in Quintile with Mars.

⁵ Mercury was 1°45' north of the Sun at Conjunction on 27th August.

⁶ [*Nonagesimo eclipticae*, lit. 'ninth [portion] of the ecliptic'. –Ed.]

Although not many more aspects follow after the 20th, I do not feel confident enough to conclude that the weather will be beautiful. Partly because of the nature of the season, but also because Mercury is advancing from Sextile to Quintile with Mars, while Mars performs the same movement with respect to Saturn. In particular, following the First Quarter Moon, which takes place on 26th September at 7:57 p.m., a Biquintile of Jupiter and the Sun occurs. This will bring rain, and when the Quintile of Mars and Mercury becomes exact, there will be wind and rain; likewise on the 30th, during the Trine of Jupiter and Mercury.

October

This month is mixed, for at the beginning until Full Moon, and then again from New Moon to the end, the weather will be unsettled, rainy and unseasonably cold. But I am hoping for reasonably good weather around mid-month.

On the first there is a Square of Mars and Venus and a Trine of Saturn and the Sun, and on the following day a Biquintile of Saturn and Mercury. This means a continuation of the foul weather at the end of the previous month. Full Moon falls on the morning of the 4th at 5:40. This will bring more constancy until the 8th, when a Quintile of Saturn and Mars will bring either cold winds and frost, or rain and fog. The Last Quarter takes place in the night of the 10th/11th, just 11 minutes past midnight. The nights will be frosty, and the Square of Jupiter and Venus on the 13th will bring rain and fog. After this the weather will become tranquil and good for the season, until after New Moon, which takes place on the 18th at 1:13 p.m. First of all, the Opposition of Venus and Saturn will bring reeking mists, and help the Sextile of Mars and the Sun to generate heavy rain, which will continue during the Trine of Jupiter and the Sun on the 21st, while on the 22nd the unusually exact opposition of Jupiter and Mars from opposite zones at equal latitudes (*ex diversum plagarum latitudinibus aequalibus*) will awaken stormy west winds. It is to be hoped that suitable precautions will be taken at sea, or else that ships will stay in port.

After this it may become somewhat more tranquil, but on the 24th a Biquintile of Saturn and the Sun will bring cold rain, for Mercury becomes retrograde, and at First Quarter Moon on the 27th a Quintile of Jupiter and Venus can generate fog and rain. From now on it will be unsettled, especially on the 29th during the Semisextile of Venus and Mercury.

November

Because the Sun is approaching Saturn this month, and numerous other aspects occur, I expect the weather to be exceedingly inclement. But whether this will take the form of protracted rains or of heavy snowfalls with wintry temperatures, does not depend on the heavens alone, but rather on earthly factors – as whether in the preceding months rain or snow will have fallen in the mountains, and whether enough of the latter will have stayed on the ground to generate cold winds and frost affecting our lower altitudes.

To be sure, freezing temperatures do not usually prevail at this time of year, but because I have found the end of August to be very wet, and the conjunction of Saturn and the Sun is now approaching, I am tentatively assuming that cold temperatures will arrive early in the year. I hope, in view of the large number of factors at play, and the high level of uncertainty involved, that the reader will not be wroth with me should I be wrong and nothing more come about than gloomy, wet skies.

During the first eight days Mercury is advancing from Quintile to Sextile with Mars, and at midnight from the 4th to the 5th (by my reckoning) passes before the Sun. However, I should advise **Astronomers** to stand in readiness with a reflecting telescope throughout both days, and to cast the Sun's image through the latter onto a sheet of paper, just in case my calculation should prove inaccurate, and the conjunction take place by day. Others have placed it on November 1st.⁷

It will proclaim itself through the weather, on whatever day it occurs. On the 6th there is a Square of Saturn and Mars, on the 7th a Sextile of Jupiter and Venus, and on the 8th a Biquintile of Saturn and Venus. On account of these causes, I expect these first eight days of the month to be dreary, melancholy and rainy, with boisterous west winds. The Full Moon takes place on the 2nd at 3:08 p.m. But after the 8th, I expect the Sextile of Mars and Mercury will bequeath chilly winds, which will bring frost in the following clear nights. In case there has been snow previously, we shall have to be prepared for a prolonged cold spell with more snow to come; whereas if it has only rained, it will be more uncertain how much cold to expect. At 8 minutes before noon on the 9th is the Last Quarter Moon, and from the 7th to the 23rd Venus is advancing from Sextile to Quintile with Jupiter; in the same span of time, Mercury

⁷ Kepler correctly predicted this Transit of Mercury over the solar disc. Details are given in the Introduction., **Part I.4.1**, pp. 172-173.

moves from Square with Jupiter to Biquintile with Saturn, and from thence to Quintile with Venus, and Sextile with Venus. Being surrounded by these planets like a boar encircled by dogs, Mercury uses the same strategy as this animal when thus pressed, and lies down rather than risk running into the jaws of one of his pursuers.⁸ This situation promises mostly unsettled weather: snowy or rainy, especially because the Sun is moving from Sextile to Quintile with Mars. That will make itself felt on the 12th when Venus and Mercury are in Sextile, and on the 13th and 14th, when Mercury becomes stationary, likewise on the 16th at the Quintile of Mars and the Sun. New Moon falls on the 17th at 7:35 a.m. There will not be much time for the weather settle down, for the 20th with a Trine of Mars and Venus, the 21st with a Square of Jupiter and the Sun and the 23rd with a Biquintile of Saturn and Mercury, as well as a Quintile of Jupiter and Venus, will hardly pass without a great deal of rain or snow. The First Quarter Moon follows on the morning of the 26th at 4:36. And now the weather might well have exhausted its fury, so that even the Opposition of Saturn and the Sun on the 27th would be unable to have much effect, but for the fact that the Sextile of Mars and Mercury on the 28th have wind, snow and rain in store for us. After this it will clear up.

December

This month is mixed. The first eight days will enjoy clear weather, but cold, continuing on from November. The Full Moon takes place in the early morning of the 2nd at 1:04. On the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th there will be a wild mixture of fog, rain, snow and wind on account of a Semisextile of Jupiter and Venus on the 6th, a Square of Jupiter and Mercury on the 7th, a Trine of Saturn and Venus on the 8th, and an Opposition of Saturn and Mercury on the 9th, when the Last Quarter Moon takes place at 2:55 a.m. On the 11th and 12th Mercury in Sextile with Venus and in Quintile with Mars portends more of the same. Fine, seasonable weather will follow. When New Moon takes place on the 17th at 2:57 a.m. we can expect a freeze, in case one has not already set in; this is like to last until the 20th, when there will be a thaw, to be followed by generous amounts of rain or

⁸ The standstill, or stationary point is the single exception to the otherwise swift motions of Mercury, making the simile particularly fitting. In this case the standstill occurs just as the planet reverses direction and becomes direct, following its inferior conjunction and transit of the Sun on the 4th. This standstill occurred on the 13th November (Kepler gives the 13th and 14th below).

snow, on account of the Square of the Sun and Mars, and a similar aspect of Saturn and Venus, to conclude the season.

On Eclipses

It is sufficiently well-known that the movements of the heavens cause three, four or five eclipses to take place each year; this year there are three,⁹ the fourth being a near-miss. None of these is visible from here.

The solar eclipse on 26th January can be seen in the uttermost parts of *America* and *Africa*, from the Magellanic Straits to the Indian Ocean, which the Spanish and Dutch use year-round for seafaring. In this month it is not winter, but summer there, and the Sun will be totally eclipsed.

On 9th February following, the upper portion of the Full Moon sweeps across the Earth's shadow, losing about a third of its disc. The beginning of the eclipse is 3 p.m., and the end 4:23, at which time the Sun will not yet have set here, so that we will not see the end of the eclipse. It will rather be visible in the Gulf of Bothnia, Finland, Lithuania and Constantinople. In Transylvania a part of its left side will still be eclipsed at its rising.

Finally, on 21st July the Sun will once again be totally eclipsed in the New World. The eclipse can be seen in North America, particularly in Virginia and Nova Francia, as far south as Brazil, and over the great ocean with its many islands. The easternmost area of visibility is West Africa, where the Sun may be seen partially eclipsed at its setting. The eclipse is favourable as seen from ships travelling between Africa and America near the island of St. Helena. I shall not dwell further here on the significance such eclipses may have for the captains, admirals and rulers of the open seas in determining the exact location of uncharted lands.

But to conclude, let me express my wish that this Prognostication may become available to some travellers on their way to the New World. Wishing them a good journey and a felicitous homecoming, I should like to ask them to do me the favour of closely observing the Full Moon before sunrise on the morning of 6th August, to determine whether some small portion of its southern edge should die away. According to my calculation, it should miss the Earth's shadow by just 1½ minutes of arc,

⁹ Details of the three eclipses of 1618 can be found in the Introduction, **Part I.4.1**, pp. 170-172.

passing by it unwedded. Therefore I should be grateful to be informed how it transpires, for the sake of improving my calculations.

On the Fertility of this Year

Weather conditions should allow fruits to ripen early (assuming my predictions are correct); the fodder plants in March and April will be parched, while cereals and fruits in May will fall out poorly. Like the grapevines, they may well suffer frost damage. But what remains will ripen well in June and July.

August and September should be fairly auspicious for the grapes, although towards the end of each of these months there is some danger from rain and frost. Therefore, do not pin your hopes on cereal crops alone, but also on the wine, which may be of good quality, even if it is not produced in great quantity.

On Illnesses

The transition from damp winter weather to the sudden heat of spring will make itself felt in numerous fevers, headaches or Hungarian Diseases and *petechiae*,¹⁰ and if I have got it right, in the weather and the parching of fodder crops. There may be some livestock deaths, from which dysentery or *infection* could well follow in autumn.

However, should the weather prove more favourable than I have predicted, the stars alone should not be held responsible for the above mentioned diseases, for what they do is done through the weather.

However, if a Comet should appear – for there has been none since 1607 – then people would have something to lay the blame on afterwards.

On World Trade, War and Peace

Since most readers will adhere to the erroneous view that what happens on earth is predestined, and must of necessity come to pass as the stars have presaged, it has become a dangerous thing for an Astrologer to make public his views – both on account of the community, for fear of circulating ideas which will be turned to harmful ends, and on account of

¹⁰ Reddish spots caused by mini-haemorrhages, often accompanying fevers. The term *petechiae* was still in medical use in Kepler's time.

the authorities, lest they should view his Prognostication with suspicion, and chastise him accordingly.

But may the reader, whether his social standing be high or low, only try to comprehend that the stars with their influences work no differently from any other natural cause; that they may be used or abused, according to how we relate to them, and how we are able to give and to take. A man should try to govern a people as he would govern his own heart and mind. At certain times he would be well-advised to be on his guard, so as not to throw fire into the straw, and so that the stars – as wrath or wine may otherwise do – do not tempt him or his subjects to commit those very misdeeds to which each one, according to his nature, is susceptible. By contrast, it may be of no little importance whether a ruler or military commander should plan an attack against his enemy at a time when the stars predispose people to be in a more daring, or a more tranquil, state of mind. This is one point in the Prognostication which could be put to use by the government and by private persons alike.

With this appeal, reminder and the added entreaty that no one should indict me on account of my disinterested and steadfast convictions, or abuse my Prognostication, I shall now set about faithfully carrying out my duty, and entrust God with its success. And I maintain that in the coming Spring not the weather alone, but quite especially the course of the planets may turn the head of many a gallant cock, giving him the pugnacity of a warrior. This has a way of happening (as a countryman of mine recently put it) when two people look at each other for a good while, without an improvement in their mood – this tends to happen during such aspects.

For it is a natural thing that the minds of all people, but most especially of those – be they potentates or commoners – who have some similar aspect in their own birth charts or nativities, tend to be guided by them in unforeseen ways. The more harmonious the relationships among the planets in the sky, the more the hearts and minds of men commune together, and join in common endeavours, pursuing them with united hands; but if they are without guidance and restraint, their means may turn violent.

For this reason, and because the horses are like to run wild, the best precaution will be to lock the stable doors: that is, to do away with the causes. Many may be inclined to be on their guard, keeping a hand on the hilt of their swords, and ensuring that they are at home in the hour of need; and yet are too hot-headed, blinded by desire, and unable to feel or see that they are throwing fire on the straw. It would be better if they tried

to survey the situation calmly to see how they could remove the fuses which have been laid – then there would be no fire to extinguish.

Now whether we call it self-defence or destructiveness, all potentates and rulers, especially those who govern large, populous states, would be well advised to take pains that the auspicious events of March and April do not turn their heads, making them imprudent or reckless, undertaking things which could easily incite the people to riot. For in May a great amount of trouble can arise in this regard, especially where the populace enjoys considerable freedom, and where no watchful eye is present.

No one will need to expend much effort guessing at my meaning. For I am not aiming my remarks at any particular party (although I do have a number of *Nativities* in mind). I am neither thinking of a particular situation, nor do I advocate particular measures, but I give my warning as a Doctor would do, in advising people for example to avoid eating too many fruits and mushrooms at this time, not knowing which people would suffer or fall ill from them. My fundamental argument is this: that a Conjunction of Mars and the Sun takes place next March in Aries, under the influence of which Germany stands; while numerous Conjunctions take place in May in Taurus near the Pleiades; and that we have precedents to show us the effects of such aspects in definite instances, as in the Peasants' War in 1525, in the Revolt in the Netherlands in 1565, and in 1604 in Hungary.

It is true, that quite apart from the vehement aspects in May and June, even now, from day to day, more and more earthly comets are appearing and flying about, which bode no good. But whether these are really such important and remarkable comets, or just lowly, vain will-o'-the-wisps, that dissipate again in a moment, I leave those to judge who are better acquainted with the earthly comets than the celestial ones.

But if a genuine Comet should appear in the sky, or an Earthquake strike, it would be better for us Astrologers to sharpen our quills side by side with the politicians.

Violent aspects, like to stir up anger, or to awaken courage, fall on:

6th February
 5th and 26th March
 1st and 6th May
 14th and 28th September
 20th October
 1st, 8th, 16th and 28th November

On 13th January a Conjunction of Jupiter and Mars takes place in 10° Aquarius. This is an auspicious time to make alliances, for the mind possesses the necessary skills. On the 23rd there follows a Square of Saturn and Mars. This is well-suited for action, but care should be taken in the front lines.

On 19th February, 30th July and 10th December we have a triple Square of Saturn and Jupiter. If the highest authorities should negotiate together, great confusion could result from too much obstinacy. The same applies to the Opposition of Jupiter and Mars on 22nd October. The events of March, April, May and June, and in particular, the Opposition of Saturn and Mars on 8th June, have been discussed above.

The Square of Jupiter and Mars on the 18th June can also stir up quarrels. Should we become involved, let us hope that they may have a fortunate outcome.

On 5th June chill Saturn wanders out of Taurus into Gemini, and on 1st July passes very close above the uppermost of the five rain-stars of the Hyades, or the Eye of the Bull. In December, when it returns on its retrograde path, it comes close to occulting it.

In themselves, these things have no significance. But they remind me to express a veiled warning to those for whom life appears in terms of twin aspects, or of polar opposites, and who are therefore easily drawn into conflicts: An axe seems to be cutting into the root of a beloved tree, and as long as one neglects to consider what may be needed to maintain peace, no more good fruits will be able to grow. My other warning is directed to those with an affinity to the gloomy rain-stars, lest they should suffer unawares the loss of a light or an eye, giving rise to great confusion, as generally happens in the dark. This is especially relevant during the Square of Saturn and Mars on 6th November. Let each one see where he stands, and who is nearby, as long as there is light to see by. For the time being we can all be attentive, prepare for the future, and as Jupiter is entering Pisces, let us provide ourselves with a peaceful regiment. May God the almighty and omniscient Lord grant that all things that come to pass through natural causes should bear good fruits through His mercy.

AMEN.