



Hermetica Triptycha

The Mercury Elemental Year

Gary P. Caton

(Auckland, NZ: Rubedo Press, 2017)

There is no other way to begin...this is a challenging text. Not because of the subject matter but due to the way the material has been organized and edited.

This is not a book that you can read from cover-to-cover. The first forty pages provide a reasonable introduction and, in fairness, create interest enough to delve into the topic. However, this is exactly where things take a turn. Pages 41-89 could be categorized as "cookbook", if only there were clearer instructions on how to go about using it. Calculating one's *Mercury Elemental Year* is straight forward enough, but the detail to interpret the meaning leaves much to be desired. Frankly, it was a struggle to get through. Only persistence, in the form of reading the material three times, making detailed notes, and an active discussion amongst a group of experienced astrologers while working through numerous chart examples, did the information become relatable. Even so, in the end, our discussion group admitted we had more clarity about the application, but we still had to concede that we were not 100% sure we actually 'got it'.

Throughout the 'cookbook' there are examples of famous or notable figures with a brief note about how their life experience represents a particular element. Some names are very obscure however, and I give the author credit for sourcing them.

It is a shame the material is not more user-friendly as the subject matter is important and certainly relevant. This is not a book for the beginner or novice astrologer! While I do not discourage an experienced astrologer from attempting the read, be prepared that there is some heavy lifting to do to get through it. If you are deeply interested in the material and determined to proceed, a few suggestions might help. First, read the first 40 pages and then skip to Chapter 3; second, read Chapters 3 and 4, to the degree the material resonates with you; third, with your own 'Mercury elemental year' calculated and firmly in mind, return to page 40 to consider the "cookbook" suggested interpretations; and finally, read the remaining sections of the book.

My commentary here may seem critical, but it is my hope that the reader might be spared a degree of confusion and frustration. I will say that, in the end, I did get something out of the book, but I have yet to decide whether it was worth the time and effort.

While the material could have been more effectively organized and more rigorously edited, Gary P. Caton has tried to communicate a great deal of information within the 231 pages of the text. Apparently, a challenging concept to present for practical application, the author must be commended for his effort.

If your level of astrological understanding is anything less than 'experienced' you will, at the very least, need perseverance. [JL]