

## Significations of Mercury According to Ancient and Modern Astrologers

This document gives some excerpts from different ancient and modern astrologers about what Mercury signifies in astrology. It is meant to accompany the discussion in episode 307 of The Astrology Podcast titled [Mercury in Astrology: Significations and Meanings](#), with Jo Gleason and Chris Brennan. Please see that episode for a full discussion of these passages.



### Mercury



Domicile



Domicile /  
Exaltation



Antithesis



Antithesis /  
Depression

### Vettius Valens, *Anthology*, 2nd Century CE, trans. Brennan, *Hellenistic Astrology*

The star of Mercury signifies education, writings, disputation, speech, brotherhood, interpretation, the office of Herald, numbers, calculations, geometry, commerce, youth, play, theft, community, messages, service, profit, discoveries, following, contest, wrestling, declamation, sealing, sending messages, weighing, suspense, testing, hearing, versatility. He is the bestower of critical thinking and judgment, lord of brothers and of younger children, and author of all things pertaining to the market and the craft of banking. Properly speaking, he makes temple builders, modelers, sculptors, doctors, teachers, lawyers, orators, philosophers, architects, musicians, diviners, sacrificers, augurs, dream interpreters, braiders, weavers, those who are methodical, and those who are in charge of managing wars or strategic actions, and those who utilize paradoxes and craftiness in calculations or false reasoning, those who are strong performers or mime-actors, making their livelihood from display, while still wandering and roaming and unstable; and those with knowledge of the heavens or those who seek to become knowledgeable, undertaking the marvelous work with pleasure and contentment, for the sake of the honor and benefit it brings. For this star holds the power of many pursuits, granting occupations in accordance with the variations of the zodiacal signs or the interweavings of the different configurations of the stars; for some it gives knowledge, while for others, brokerage;

service for some, while it procures trade or teaching for others; and for some agriculture or temple-keeping or public <office>; moreover, for some it grants the ability to exercise authority or leasing rentals or labor contracting or rhythmic performance or managing public services or even body-guarding or wearing the linen robes of the gods or bestowing the pomp of powerful men. It brings about all the irregularities in our fortunes and many distractions from our goals, and even more so when this star is upon signs or degrees ruled by malefics, in which case things may even take a turn for the worse. Of the parts of the body, it rules the hands, the shoulders, the fingers, the joints, the belly, the hearing, the windpipe, the intestines, the tongue. Of substances, it is lord of copper and all coinage, giving, taking: for the god is common.

### **Abu Ma'shar, Abbreviation to the Introduction to Astrology, 9th century, trans. Burnett**

Mercury inclines its nature to the natures of the planets and the signs with which it mixes. It indicates youth, younger brothers, love for servants and servant-girls. It indicates divinity, revelation to prophets, trustworthiness, intellect, speaking, rumors; the various sciences: calculation, surveying, geometry, astrology, omens by birds, sorcery, rhetoric, poetry, the art of writing, poetic anthologies; little joy, corruptions to weath, commerce, receiving and giving, cunning, swindling, slyness; assistance, patience, friendliness with one who is suitable.

### **William Lilly, Christian Astrology, 1647**

**Nature:** Masculine or feminine, depending upon its placement; if in conjunction with a masculine planet, Mercury becomes masculine; if with a feminine, then feminine. By its own nature Mercury is cold and dry, and therefore melancholic. Mercury is adaptable; its influence is beneficial when associated with good planets, malefic when associated with bad planets. Mercury rules the animal spirit and is the author of subtlety, tricks, devices, and perjury.

**People Signified:** Literary men, philosophers, mathematicians, astrologers, merchants, secretaries, scribes, diviners, sculpturers, poets, orators, advocates, schoolmasters, stationers, printers, exchangers of money, attorneys, ambassadors to emperors, commissioners, clerks, artificers, generally accomptants, solicitors, sometimes thieves, prattling muddy ministers, busy sectaries, and they unlearned; grammarians, tailors, carriers, messengers, footmen, usurers.

**Manners when well dignified:** When well dignified, Mercury represents a man of a subtle and political brain, intellect, and cogitation; an excellent disputant or logician, arguing with learning and discretion, and using much eloquence in his speech, a searcher into all kinds of mysteries and learning, sharp and witty, learning almost anything without a teacher; ambitious of being exquisite in every science, desirous naturally of travel and seeing foreign parts: a man of an unwearied fancy, curious in the search of any occult knowledge; able by his own genius to produce wonders; given to divination and the more secret knowledge; if he turn merchant, no man exceeds him in a way of trade or invention of new ways whereby to obtain wealth.

**Manners when badly placed:** A troublesome wit, a kind of phrenetick man, his tongue and pen against every man, wholly bent to spoil his estate and time in prating and trying nice conclusions

to no purpose; a great liar, boaster, prattler, busybody, false, a tale-carrier, given to wicked arts, as necromancy and such like ungodly knowledges; easy of belief, an ass or very idiot, constant in no place or opinion, cheating and thieving everywhere; a news-monger, pretending all manner of knowledge, but guilty of no true or solid learning; a trifler; a mere frantic fellow; if he prove a divine, then a mere verbal fellow, frothy of no judgement, easily perverted, constant in nothing but idle words and bragging.

### **Reinhold Ebertin, *The Combination of Stellar Influences*, 1940**

**Principle:** Intellect, mediation.

#### **Psychological Correspondence:**

+ Good grasp or understanding of a subject, sound judgement, critical ability, dexterity in expression and in writing, mediation, diplomacy, general intellectual abilities, analysis.

- Negative: A lack of understanding and of objective criticism, the tendency to diffuse one's energy into too many channels, inhibitions in speech and in writing, overdevelopment or weakness of intellect.

**Biological Correspondence:** The motor-nerves (speech - and hearing organs).

**Sociological Correspondence:** Intellectual workers, tradesmen, agents or mediators.

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### **Steven Forrest, *The Inner Sky*, 1988**

**Function:** Intelligence, transmission of information: talking, teaching, writing; reception of information: listening, learning, reading, observing.

**Dysfunction:** Nervousness, rationalization, worry, flightiness, intellectualism, chattering, inconsistency, hyperactivity.

**Key Question:** What are my intellectual and communicative strengths? What are my intellectual and communicative weaknesses?

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### **Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 2006**

The principle of mind, thought, communication, that which articulates the primary creative energy and renders it intelligible; the impulse and capacity to think, to conceptualize, to connect and mediate, to use words and language, to give and receive information; to make sense of, to grasp, to perceive and reason, understand and articulate; to transport, translate, transmit; the principle of Logos; Hermes, the messenger of the gods.