

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

---

Fall Student Research Symposium 2022

Fall Student Research Symposium

---

12-6-2022

## How Poetry Saved Nostradamus From the Pope

Alexis Julander

Utah State University, a02077162@usu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fsrs2022>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Julander, Alexis, "How Poetry Saved Nostradamus From the Pope" (2022). *Fall Student Research Symposium 2022*. 70.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fsrs2022/70>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Fall Student Research Symposium at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall Student Research Symposium 2022 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usu.edu).



## Introduction

I came across the work of Nostradamus as part of a curatorial team working with books housed in special collections. Instantly, I was intrigued by the background of the man whose most enduring work is an attempt to calculate the events of the future based off the mathematics of astrology. Nostradamus was a doctor and astrologist living in France from 1503 to 1566. He wrote his first prophecies in 1550 after a visit to Italy sparked his interest in the occult. In order to keep his predictions from seeming too close to biblical prophecies, they were written using poetic forms.

## Methods

Using a mix of historical research and literary analysis, I have attempted to find historical relevance to the prophecies and discover if the poetic devices used create deeper meaning or if they obscure it.

## Analysis

Century 1 Quatrain 1

Estant assis de nuit secret estude,  
Seul reposé fus la selle d'airain;  
Flambe exigue sortant de solitude  
Feit proferer qui n'est à croire en vain.

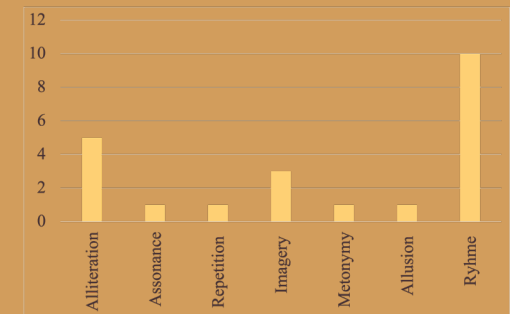
Sitting alone at night in secret study;  
it is placed on the brass tripod.  
A slight flame comes out of the emptiness and  
makes successful that which should not be  
believed in vain.

$$\text{Year} = 1550 + (\text{Century} - 1) + (\text{Quatrain} - 1)$$

# How Poetry Saved Nostradamus From the Pope

Poetic Devices used:

- ABAB Rhyme Scheme (French)
- Alliteration (French & English)
- Assonance (French)
- Repetition
- Imagery
- Metonymy
- Allusion



Scan For Additional  
Information



Alexis  
M.  
Julander



ARTH 4630 | Alexa Sand

## Conclusion

The poetic devices used in Nostradamus's prophecies made his work more difficult to understand and harder to interpret. This protected him from accusations of heresy as well as lending some level of credibility to his work. Because the prophecies were difficult to understand they can be applied to many historical events with some level of believability. This isn't to say that he was trying to mislead people.

Nostradamus was a man living in a fraught world. Had he not concealed the meanings of his prophecies he probably would have been accused of heresy and killed.