PHILIPPUS AUREOLUS THEOPHRASTUS

BOMBASTUS VON HOHENHEIM

“NARRATIVE HISTORY” AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY
November 11, Monday or December 17, Tuesday (Old Style): Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (Philippus Paracelsus), Swiss physician and alchemist, was born in Einsiedeln. Upon his mother’s early death, his father, a German doctor and chemist, would relocate the family at Villach in southern Austria. This is the physician who would coin the New Latin term “laudanum” for extract of poppy or tincture of opium, as diluted with distilled water or with one form or another of ethanol.

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT
At the age of 14, Philippus Paracelsus began a tour of study at the universities of Basel, Tübingen, Vienna, Wittenberg, Leipzig, Heidelberg, and Cologne.

*LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?*  
— No, that’s giving too much to the historian’s stories.  
*LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.*
At this point, at the age of 17, Philippus Paracelsus may have taken the baccalaureate in medicine at the University of Vienna.
Although the University of Ferrara records for this are missing, Philippus Paracelsus claimed in this year to have received his doctoral degree. It is supposed that it was at this point that he began using the name “para-Celsus,” meaning above or beyond the renowned 1st-century Roman physician Celsus.

The initial version of Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* was published at Ferrara. The poem, which then amounted to 40 cantos, was a continuation of Matteo Maria Boiardo’s *Orlando Innamorato* describing the adventures of Charlemagne, Orlando, and the Franks as they battled against their Saracen enemy. The poem
was in the ottava rima rhyme scheme and distanced commentary was interspersed throughout the work.

Philippus Paracelsus took part in the “Netherlandish wars” as an army surgeon, at that time a lowly occupation. Philippus Paracelsus went to Russia, was held captive by the Tatars, escaped into Lithuania, and went south into Hungary.
Philippus Paracelsus again served as an army surgeon, in Italy.

Niccolò Machiavelli wrote *Dell’ Arte della Guerra*.

Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, king of Spain, granted his brother Ferdinand certain Hapsburg possessions and rights in Austria. Charles renewed his struggle with King Francis I of France over the Holy Roman empire’s Italian lands:

   My cousin Francis and I are in perfect accord – he wants Milan, and so do I.

Philippus Paracelsus traveled in Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, and Constantinople.
Philippus Paracelsus returned to Villach to find that his fame for many miraculous cures had preceded him. He was appointed town physician and lecturer in medicine at the University of Basel.

THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT
June 5, Wednesday (Old Style): In pinning a program of his forthcoming lectures to the notice board of the University of Basel, Philippus Paracelsus included an open invitation to attend. The authorities were scandalized and incensed at the blatancy of such an invitation to learning. Where is this going to end?

WHAT I’M WRITING IS TRUE BUT NEVER MIND YOU CAN ALWAYS LIE TO YOURSELF

June 24, Monday (Old Style): Surrounded by a crowd of cheering students, Philippus Paracelsus burned the books of Avicenna, the Arab “Prince of Physicians,” and those of the Greek physician Galen, in front of the University of Basel.

THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT
Spring: Philippus Paracelsus was so at loggerheads with the doctors, apothecaries, and magistrates of Basel that he had to flee for his life in the dead of night. Alone and penniless he wandered toward Colmar in Upper Alsace, about 50 miles north of Basel, taking refuge at various places with friends.

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT
Philippus Paracelsus provided a clinical description of syphilis and treated it with mercury. He coined the New Latin term “laudanum” for extract of poppy or tincture of opium, as diluted with distilled water or with one form or another of ethanol.
Philippus Paracelsus’s *DER GROSSE WUNDARTZNEY* (GREAT SURGERY BOOK) restored his reputation and his fortune.

(This was one of the few works by Paracelsus to be published during his lifetime. He was advocating, for patients who had been wounded, minimal interference with the healing process.)

Bolognese fencing master Achille Marozzo publishes his *OPERA NOVA* (NEW WORK). Probably the first Italian text to stress thrust rather than cut, this was perhaps Renaissance Italy’s most influential fencing text.

Michelangelo painted “The Last Judgment” on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel.
September 24, Saturday (Old Style): Philippus Paracelsus died under mysterious circumstances at the age of 48 at the White Horse Inn in Salzburg, where he had arrived to take up an appointment under the prince/archbishop, Duke Ernst of Bavaria.
August: On a romantic trip down the Rhine River, inspecting medieval castle ruins in the moonlight, Percy Bysshe Shelley got Mary Godwin Wollstonecraft good and (to deploy an Americanism) knocked up. (This primapara of an adolescing female would be severely premature and would be a SIDS death during the night.) One of the places at which the ménage stopped was at Mannheim, near the ruins of a Herr Frankenstein’s castle. Although it is not known whether she was exposed to the ruin at that time or only later became aware of its legend through Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s FAUST, Mary of course would come to utilize that name, Frankenstein.  

There were at this point about 3,000 American sailors being held in the dour granite prison complex near the mist-enshrouded village of Princeton on the stark Devonshire moor about a day’s march from the port town of Plymouth, England.

1. The name “Frankenstein” had begun neither as the name of the “Mad Scientist” nor as the name of his horrid Lon Cheney monster, but as, literally, the stone of the Franks (a Teuton tribe). Around 500CE the Franks took control of a northern part of the Roman empire including Gaul. Within this territory was a Roman quarry near what is now Darmstadt, Germany. The earliest person known to have been using “Frankenstein,” Stone of the Franks, as a family surname, was the knight Arbogast von Frankenstein. In the 13th Century, near the site of this quarry, a castle was erected for a Baron von Frankenstein and his knights. One of the knights of the 16th Century, Sir George Frankenstein, is reputed to have sacrificed his life in combat to save beautiful Annemarie, “Rose of the Valley.” (Hmmm!) Carvings in his crypt near the ruin depict him slaying a dragon, with the dragon’s tail piercing his armor. Another figure was Johann Konrad Dippel born in the castle in 1673, who studied Philippus Paracelsus and claimed an ability to create life, who sometimes signed himself “Frankenstein.” Whatever secret this wandering scholar and alchemist, who also claimed to have in his possession the philosopher’s stone, had for the control of life, it evidently died with him in 1734. The brothers Grimm would write a tale about a dragonslayer from the Frankenstein district. Goethe, who would spend much of his life producing an epic poem about the quest for self-knowledge, had spent part of his youth near the ruin and later read his Faust manuscript in progress to a circle of friends from Darmstadt, under some linden trees near the ruin. In the manuscript, Faust sells his soul to the devil in seeking the philosopher’s stone and the secret of life and its creation.
Mr. Browning was known to us before, by a little book called “Pippa Passes,” full of bold openings, motley with talent like this, and rich in touches of personal experience. A version of the thought of the day so much less penetrating than Faust and Festus cannot detain us long; yet we are pleased to see each man in his kind bearing witness, that neither sight nor thought will enable to attain that golden crown which is the reward of life, of profound experiences and gradual processes, the golden crown of wisdom. The artist nature is painted with great vigor in Aprile. The author has come nearer that, than to the philosophic nature. There is music in the love of Festus for his friend, especially in the last scene, the thought of his taking sides with him against the divine judgment is true as poesy.

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY
PHILIPPUS PARACELSUS

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“It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago.”

- Remark by character “Garin Stevens” in William Faulkner’s INTRUDER IN THE DUST

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This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.
Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology — but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary "writerly" process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.