FURTHER GRADING OF EMINENCE: PLANETARY CORRELATIONS WITH MUSICIANS, PAINTERS, WRITERS†

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ABSTRACT

This is the second study of a series dealing with the so-called eminence hypothesis first put forward by Michel Gauquelin. Planetary effects, it was hypothesized, co-vary in extent with fame/sucess within samples of professions. A previous study relating degrees of sporting eminence, determined by citation frequencies, to percentages of births with Mars in key sectors had revealed a steady increase of deviation from chance for critical birth percentages with increasing eminence of sportsmen. In the present study the eminence slope hypothesis is tested with Gauquelin musicians (N=866), painters (N=1381), and writers (N=813). Increases in deviations from chance level with eminence were expected for those planet/profession combinations which had shown, as a whole, in previous Gauquelin studies, significant key sector deviation. The results supported the hypotheses for Mars as well as for Saturn, in general. Overall consistent trends were also found for the Moon and for Venus. Surprisingly, however, the directions of the Venus trends were reversed for the three professions tested. This exceptional observation notwithstanding, the results remove final tenacious suspicion that planetary effects, as reported by the Gauquelins, could perhaps be due to data selection bias and/or fraud.

KEYWORDS: *Eminence, sportsmen, musicians, painters, writers, citation frequency, Moon, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Key sector deviation, data selection bias.*

INTRODUCTION

Claims of relations between planetary positions and births of human beings are extraordinary in the context of scientific world views today. Contemporary knowledge of astronomy, geophysics, biology, psychology, etc does not offer any possible bridge of explanation, not even a reasonably speculative one. It is therefore understandable that committees and individuals, stressing the dangers of fundamental errors in beliefs about conditions of man's existence, resist acceptance of Gauquelin's research results on planet–human relations. The essence of his results—disregarding differences in detail—coincides with astrological beliefs, and these are regarded as damaging to public mental health (see the 'Mars Effect' debate, documented in detail in *Zetetic Scholar* 1982, nos 9 and 10, and 1983, no 11).

As a matter of fact, after centuries of successful attempts to increase human knowledge by critical experience it can hardly be denied that progress in any belief, even astrological belief, is dependent on empirical observation subjecting itself to standards of control. However, M. Gauquelin's research has been guided by just those standards. After about 25 years of

† Based on a talk given at the 5th International Astrological Research Conference, London, November 22-23, 1986.

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neglecting his work and after more than additional 10 years of futile attempts to reject his results empirically—replication studies have hitherto been done on shaky grounds[1]—more serious research is needed.

The present contribution is the second in a series of reports about replication and extension trials with Gauquelin data.[4] In these studies methodological standards are acknowledged which science—not astrology—has developed in the service of empirical critique.

The first eminence study: sportsmen

One of the shortcomings of previous Gauquelin replication trials was the neglect of a distinction between two different claims: according to the general claim, concerning professions, births of infants taking up certain professions in later life are said to deviate from chance in the frequency with which certain planets cross so-called 'sensitive' zones (i.e. 'key sectors' 36, 1, 2, 4 = post-rise sectors, 'key sectors' 9, 10, 11, 12 = post-meridian sectors, using Gauquelin's 36-sector divisions equivalent to astrology's Placidus system). The second claim states that frequency deviations of that kind are more pronounced for eminent representatives of these professions than for less eminent ones. M. Gauquelin first published claim no. 1 in 1955,[5] claim no. 2 in 1960,[6] although he had already tried, in 1955, a first empirical comparison between groups of higher and lower eminence.[7] In 1960 Gauquelin compared, more systematically, groups of eminent professionals with less eminent groups, and he reported predicted differences for the majority of his trials.[6] His and F. Gauquelin's later objection,[8] raised against Kurtz, Zelen, and Abell for not having selected most renowned individuals, in their US replication with sportsmen,[9] was fully justified. US researchers' carelessness in sampling (see Ertel[4]), as well as Rawlins' mockery of Gauquelin's alleged rescue to the 'crème de la crème',[10] was perhaps due to not knowing the details of Gauquelin's previous research, the bulk of which had been published in French. Gauquelin himself may not have made the eminence requirement explicit enough, in due course, to his English-speaking critics. Kurtz then dropped the matter with statements like, 'Gauquelin has still not satisfactorily explained on what basis he decides who is or is not a "famous sports champion."'[11] Similiarly, Abell rejected Gauquelin's post hoc 'fishing' for outstanding athletes as not safe enough.[12] In their reappraisal Abell, Kurtz, and Zelen regard it as 'most important' that they had neglected to obtain 'in advance a clear understanding with the Gauquelins on exactly what they were predicting and what directories of famous sports champions would be satisfactory according to their hypothesis'.[13]

The author's idea that gave rise to his studies on eminence is that there remains, nevertheless, an opportunity to determine post hoc, without subjective bias, the eminence of individuals from samples already collected, by obtaining frequencies of citation. The controversial requirement of deciding for each individual, at the very first moment of his recruitment, whether he is famous enough or not to be included in the sample may be dropped. Objective citation counts may be obtained after sample completion. The main difference from previous approaches consists in replacing the objective of research, i.e. the question of whether frequencies of planetary positions deviate from chance for a total sample is replaced by the question of whether frequencies of planetary positions differ between sub-samples of graded eminence, in other words whether they increase with eminence in predicted directions. This hypothesis is more rigorous than the general one.

Reliable citation counts require an appreciable number of sources offering expert information—biographical dictionaries, historical lists of records, etc. Each occurrence of a name in a screening source is given equal weight (= 1), due to the absence of criteria for more refined differentiation. Thus, the frequency of citations of an individual in the sample of sources determines his eminence without subjective interference.

In a first study using an aggregate of sportsmen, data published by Gauquelin (N=2364), by Comité Para (N=332),[14] and by Kurtz, Zelen and Abell (N=192),[15] as well as unpublished data