

the basic requirements for properly testing astrological hypotheses: the need for asking the 'right' question in order to get a meaningful answer, and the need to replicate the results.

On the second day, Grazia Mirti, director of *Linguaggio Astrale*, the Journal of the Centro Italiano di Astrologia (CIDA), gave one of the most original lectures of the seminar devoted to the history of astrology, 'Zodiac or memory theatre?'. She explained the relationships between the 'art' of memory and the 'art' of astrology from antiquity to the Renaissance. She was followed by Michel Gauquelin's paper, 'Is there a Mars Effect?'. Gauquelin showed how the 'Mars Effect' on sports champions, which he published in *L'Influence des Astres* in 1955, has survived a 30-year methodological controversy with the scientific community. Fausto Passariello presented the potential effectiveness of more refined statistical tools than used previously in his talk. 'The multivariate statistical analysis applied to astrological research', Mark Portenger, in his paper showed the need for using accurate astronomical frequencies and described his fine technique for researchers looking for evidence for the effects of astrological aspects. Zipporah Dobyns explained how to expand the astrological universe by including asteroids, star occultations, kinetic revolution, etc. She also pointed out the necessity to keep alive the notion of the meaningful single case vs. statistical results. Dante Valente, President of the CIDA, delivered an interesting talk, 'A sensitive evaluation of individual qualities with astrocomputing'. Then, it was the turn of a sceptic, André Koeckelenbergh, astronomer and member of the Para Committee of Belgium. His paper, 'Arguments and refutations concerning astrology', discussed theoretical motives for calling astrology a pseudo-science on the basis that it cannot be explained in terms of physical influences. A panel discussion, involving the speakers and the public, closed the meeting. Prof Eysenck ended it with some general remarks on the current status of astrology. His conclusion was that very few results have been convincingly demonstrated. Among these few observations he quoted the sunspot cycle effects observed by the Russian A.L. Chizhevsky, recently rigorously re-analysed by Prof Suitbert Ertel, and the Gauquelin Mars Effect.

Those who were not able to attend the the Naples meeting should note that all the papers presented have been published in Italian and in English, and are obtainable from: Pegaso Institute, Viale Umbria 105, 20135 Milan, Italy.

Michel Gauquelin

Seventh International Astrological Research Conference

The Astrological Association and the Urania Trust will be joint sponsors of the above conference, to be held at the Polytechnic of Central London, 35 Marylebone Road, London NW1, on November 26th-27th, 1988. Speakers will include Dr Suitbert Ertel, Michel Gauquelin, Professor Peter Roberts, Dr Percy Seymour, Dennis Elwell, Nick Kollerstrom, Dr Beverley Steffert, Simon Best, Michael O'Neill, and from the USA, Dr Margaret Millard and Dr J Lee Lehman. To book, contact Elizabeth Medler, 12A Queens Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4JW.

RELATING PLANETARY ASPECTS TO HUMAN BIRTH: IMPROVED METHOD YIELDS NEGATIVE RESULTS

Dr Suitbert Ertel*

ABSTRACT

An attempt was made to find evidence for relations between traditional aspects and human birth. Gauquelin data on 20,528 eminent individuals representing 11 professions were subjected to time series analysis, segmenting a critical A-period of hypothetical influence ($A =$ aspect condition) together with three preceding (P) and three succeeding (S) time periods of equal duration. The frequencies of births within sequences of $3P + 1A + 3S$ time segments were superimposed for each profession and for each of 15 aspects (conjunctions, squares and oppositions between Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn). Mean time series obtained for empirical aspect occurrences were compared with mean time series for equivalent random segments as controls. No indication of an aspect influence was found.

KEYWORDS: Aspects, time series, Gauquelin data, superposition

INTRODUCTION

Aspects are angular relations within the framework of celestial geometry. Angular lines may be drawn between celestial bodies, eg. between two planets, or between a celestial body and a geometric point or line in the sky, eg. between a planet and the North Node. There are *geocentric* and *heliocentric* aspects, depending on whether the Earth or the Sun serves as vertex. The present study deals with *geocentric* aspects.

Considering these, one may distinguish between diurnally changing aspects using the Earth's horizon as a line of reference, eg. Gauquelin's meridian aspect, and others with a slower rate of change (traditional aspects). Diurnal aspects, as we may call the former, change with the Earth's daily rotation. The latter are constant with respect to the Earth's rotation; they change with ultra-diurnal time periods due to the Earth's revolution around the Sun. In the case of planetary aspects the planet's own revolution around the Sun contributes to aspectual changes.

The present study was devoted to traditional aspects. Since the existence of an aspectual effect of the diurnally changing type had been supported by the author's re-analyses, it appeared worthwhile to find out whether traditional aspects would also reveal substantial effects. Positive results would broaden the platform for understanding the Gauquelin findings. They would probably be welcomed, too, by traditional astrology.

Within the category of traditional aspects, traditional astrology distinguishes between major aspects: conjunction (0°), opposition (180°), square (90°), sextile (60°) and trine (120°), and minor aspects, eg. semisextile (30°), novile (40°), septile (51.43°), quintile (72°), quincunx (150°), etc. Since Gauquelin results had shown angular 'prägnanz', it appeared to be most promising to select the first three of the above major aspects for the present analysis.

Another astrological distinction between aspects, 'soft' and 'hard' (once called 'good' and 'bad'), will be neglected since it presupposes what has to be examined first: aspect-dependence of terrestrial events.

A search for effects should not be restricted to observations at the exact moment of an aspect reaching mathematical precision. On the one hand, if aspectual effects really exist, temporal

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