

1st International Congress on Geo-cosmic Relations: 'The Earth and her Macro-Environment', April 19-22nd, 1989, Holiday Inn, Crone Plaza, Amsterdam, Holland.

This landmark conference focussed on how life-forms on Earth respond to the rhythms of the solar system, particularly its geomagnetic components, which form the time-matrix within which life has evolved. A cross-disciplinary exercise, it brought together scientists from many countries, with Russians easily outnumbering Englishmen, for example. Attendance was as good as it should have been, with perhaps no more than 100 at the main lectures, but hopefully this will improve for the second congress which the organisers plan to hold in 3 years' time.

Of those speakers well-known to *Correlation* readers, Percy Seymour discussed his theory of how geomagnetic and planetary mechanisms might account for much of the Gauquelin results, while Michel Gauquelin himself described his findings concerning the Mars effect for those unfamiliar with his work. Dr Geoffrey Dean, by contrast, dismissed astrology as a 'pre-scientific geo-cosmic theory', claiming there was no need to bother to research the subject anymore, in a paper read in the absence. Dr Suitbert Ertel, however, gave the first presentation of his finding that scientific inventions and discoveries follow the solar cycle, taking Russian Aleksandr Chizhevsky's bold heliobiological theory a major step forward. Chizhevsky, who died in 1964, correlated human activity with the sunspot cycle and claimed to show that world mass movements, including wars, occurred mainly at sunspot maxima. Imprisoned for his ideas, he was later rehabilitated and acknowledged as the father of a new science. Ertel visited the Chizhevsky archives in the USSR prior to formulating his own converse proposition that scientific discoveries are more likely to peak at sunspot minima. His own 'citation count' method, which he has used so effectively in checking the Gauquelin 'eminence' data, the subject of his second talk, was applied to scoring scientific discoveries from many sources.

From the States Dr M Webb, a colleague of the late Prof Frank Brown, presented new evidence, mainly on oxygen consumption by potatoes, supporting Brown's exogenous timing hypothesis. From Brazil, Alexandre Harkaly reviewed much evidence on lunar rhythms in plant growth and the research by the Biodynamic Institute at San Paulo. A paper by Prof K Kudrna, from the Agricultural University of Prague, read in his absence, claimed a 90% success in predicting rainfall, based on the observation that above- or below-normal rainfall is related to 'triple Sun-Mercury-Earth' alignments. Also absent, Prof Alexandre Dubrov, from Moscow, has just published his latest book, *Lunar Rhythms in Humans* (Medecine, 1989), presently only in Russian. Dr I Ormenyi, from Budapest, reported finding ELF waves of about 3 Hz linked to solar emissions and Moon phase, with a maximum lunar effect in years of low solar activity. A team from the Moscow Institute of Biophysics audaciously questioned the very concept of chance by reporting that when plutonium decay at different geographical locations was monitored, the decay patterns were more similar at any given time than chance would expect, particularly at Moonrise and Moonset. A link-up by 10 Russian labs, in a Piccardi-type study, observed a decrease in an organic chemical reaction rate with the shadow time of a solar eclipse. Happy to say, the Piccardi Institute is now being revived. For details of the forthcoming Proceedings (in English), write to: Dr Willem Beckman, Dept of Ecological Agriculture, Wageningen University, Haarweg, 333/6709 RZ Wageningen, Holland.

Nick Kollerstrom

PURIFYING GAUQUELIN'S 'GRAIN OF GOLD': PLANETARY EFFECTS DEFY PHYSICAL INTERPRETATION*

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ABSTRACT

The author's previous research with M.& F. Gauquelin data confirmed the existence of planetary effects for eminent professionals. However, the present research casts doubt on Gauquelin's physical explanation. (1) For sports champions the planetary effect was unrelated to astronomical variables (distance of Mars from Earth, its angular size, apparent magnitude, declination, right ascension, solar elongation, and radius vector). Furthermore the effect did not diminish during Mars-Sun conjunctions. (2) For ordinary people, Gauquelin's claim that geomagnetic activity enhanced the planetary correspondence between children and parents was not supported. Nor did the planetary effect for eminent professionals covary with geomagnetic activity. It seems that Gauquelin's positive results with geomagnetism are due to random oscillations. (3) Gauquelin's claim that planetary effects decrease after 1950 - a presumed side-effect of applying obstetric drugs - could not be verified with professionals' data. However, the number of post-1950 births was insufficient for a definite conclusion. (4) The accuracy of birth-times on official documents increased markedly through decades 1830-1950 but produced no corresponding increase in planetary birth frequencies. In the light of these results, Gauquelin's 'midwife' hypothesis, seems to be untenable, in which case an interpretation of planetary effects in terms of physics and physiology must be replaced by something else.

KEYWORDS: *Gauquelin planetary effect, astronomical variables, geomagnetic factors, obstetric drugs, planetary midwife hypothesis.*

INTRODUCTION

In 1982, Hans Eysenck and David Nias scrutinized astrological research and found that most of the conclusions based on seemingly positive results were invalid.¹ Among the exceptions were Michel Gauquelin's contributions and those of his former co-worker Françoise Gauquelin. This 'grain of gold' had passed their critical inspection.

I first came across Gauquelin's research in 1976. I, too, was struck by its apparent golden glitter. But was it genuine? Today, after many trials, I believe that its original kernel is genuine while some of its later additions are spurious, as explained in what follows.

Gauquelin's planetary message is based on three empirical pillars (see Figure 1). The pillar on the left was set up first and represents research on planetary effects with eminent professionals.^{2,3} Different professions such as physicians, painters, and actors were found to be related

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† Based on a paper presented at the Seventh International Astrological Research Conference, London, November 26-27, 1988.