

**THE PROOFS OF ASTRAL INFLUENCE ON MAN**

by

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Translated from the French

for

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## FOREWORD

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The editor.

# THE PROOFS OF ASTRAL INFLUENCE ON MAN.

## CHAPTER 1.

### GENERAL DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE STUDY OF ASTRAL INFLUENCES MUST BE FOUNDED.

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When accepting the invitation to speak about the present state of scientific astrology and its value, I have, above all, thought it useful to set forth in a logical and objective manner, the proofs that can be attained in this line of investigations. For this purpose I have here summed up what from an experimental point of view is essential in a study that has been carried on for many years. It is proper first to get a clear understanding about the definition of words used as well as about the principle that must serve as a basis for the investigations I am discussing. A fact is valuable to science only insofar as it can be connected with an undisputed principle of observation.

In spite of the apparent barrenness of this beginning, I hope it will be readily understood how necessary it is if we do not want to risk being at variance with reason and experience.

Since the time of most distant antiquity astrology has had for purpose, in its general sense, the study of the correspondences between the stars and us, or what surrounds us. But more specially, astrology has aimed at the study of the astral correspondences - or influences - which may exist between man and the heavens at his nativity.

Such was the object of the genethliacal and judicial astrology of the ancients, and it is that astrology which generally has been termed simply "astrology."

For more than 2,000 years it has really been the subject of all the controversies on the question I am discussing here.

It is, on the whole, a question of finding out whether or not there is a correspondence between the stars and man according to his natal heaven. It is here of little importance whether the influence comes to us direct from the stars or is indicated by them; in order to avoid any misunderstanding, I mean by "astral influence" an influence expressed by the stars; and that without judging in advance concerning the origin, nature and mechanism of this influence. On the other hand, if I sometimes confound the terms "influence" and "correspondence", it is because all natural correspondence implies an influence (direct or indirect) from a more or less accessible source.

But it is above all important to know what we must understand by the general term "correspondence" as well as by all those akin to it like the terms "relation, influence, dependence, connection, correlation, affinity, reference, concatenation, law, etc." For we must indeed admit that up to the present time most philosophers and scholars have on the whole limited themselves, when facing these terms, to defining them one by the other, which could not suffice in case of a definition with a controllable meaning. And they have misused these terms to such an extent in modern languages that we really no longer know what they express. The general definition of a "law", in positive science, has never yet been precisely stated. The majority of philosophers are still engaged in trying to find it. that has, moreover, in many scientific fields, perpetuated confusions and misunderstandings, which it would be urgently necessary to dispel.

This is precisely where we find the real difficulty of the astrological question with the new line of studies attached to it. For if a "correspondence" - or natural connection of some kind - can be defined in a controllable sense, the method characteristic of an observational science must of necessity result. And it is also evident that if we are incapable of giving a definite meaning to the term "correspondence", all that we can say about the pretended "astral correspondences" will remain of almost no value.

The thesis I am supporting is that attentive observation and human reason suffice to determine the signification at issue. And the matter seems to me to be of some interest since all people nowadays agree that "science is made up of relations". And so, the essential in science is to plead just relations.

It is therefore of capital importance to be able to define these natural "relations" or "correspondences" in a general sense. In other words, to furnish the means of recognizing whether there is or is not a natural "correspondence" between two things - or categories of things - in the experimental field, something that is far from being always evident a priori, and is precisely the source of many of our errors; for in every explanation it is above all the premises that count, and without them logic leads nowhere.

But up to the 20th century this idea of "correspondence" has remained extremely confused and without any acceptable definition.

It was necessary to introduce probabilities in observational science for the purpose of presenting it with precision, while revealing clearly a character common to all

correspondences and to all laws. It is this "character common to all natural laws and correspondences" that the scientific philosophy hitherto seems to have sought in vain.

An example will make the discussion much clearer before we go any further. Since the most remote times the astrologers - and among them Ptolemy - have agreed to consider the planet Jupiter as "signifying" honors and celebrity; that for example in a natal horoscope the planet Jupiter in the mid-heaven predisposed the person born under such an aspect to aspire to glory and fame in a general way. "Jupiter in the mid-heaven" must be understood as Jupiter near the superior meridian, that is, near the place where the Sun is at noon. Now, what signification is to be given to such an astral correspondence, either if we deny it or if we affirm it. It is evidently the following, and there is no other: "Jupiter is found more frequently in the mid-heaven of the natal horoscopes of persons who have attained celebrity than in the horoscopes of other persons."

This definition at once implies the idea of just frequencies (that is, percentages) to be drawn from valid statistics, in order to be able to deduct a judicious comparison and, thereby, draw conclusions relative to law. Whether right or wrong this law can here be viewed only under the form of difference in frequency to be verified. Far from being a personal or doctrinary definition, the foregoing one is clear, precise, irreducible, general, impersonal, and incontestable. It is the keystone of the scientific and natural astrology. All the rest follows logically from it. This cannot be overemphasized; for no evasion is possible here if it is the truth we are looking for.

Considering seriously the aphorism concerning Jupiter and renown, the preceding definition is the only experimental and logical signification that we can give to it in a controllable sense.

Let us first note that evidently no one has been able to maintain that all the persons born under the astral aspect in question were supposed to become famous, no more than that all famous people were supposed to be born under that heaven. And this because the simplest observation permits us to verify that it is not so. For example, Kepler, Napoleon, Pasteur, and a great many other famous men are not born under this astral aspect. On the other hand, I could name many modest and obscure people who were born with Jupiter in the mid-heaven. Supposing, furthermore, that this conjunction was equally frequent in the two cases (which it would be if astrology were illusory), it would be absurd to maintain that it is an index - even partial - of the predisposition to become famous.

But if only the aspect of Jupiter presents a real and manifest difference in frequency between the famous people and those who are not famous, it would be untenable - except by a play of words - claim that there is no correspondence between renown and the aspect of Jupiter.

The only contention possible in this case could be based solely on a criticism of the statistics; but statistics can be rectified or shown to be false, in a positive manner, only by other statistics, better than the first, which always brings the discussion back to the same point.

Whatever we do, the reality of the

difference in frequency, which is the question at issue, will for us be the necessary and sufficient condition for any relation or correspondence existing between the aspect of Jupiter at the time of birth and the tendency toward renown. It is this difference which I consequently call the criterion of astrological fact we have in view, a fact that can be verified at will according to just frequencies which themselves can result only from valid statistics.

For this purpose it is enough to possess a somewhat numerous collection of horoscopes of famous people - which is not more difficult than to possess a collection of insects or postage stamps. Thus it can be verified that the above-mentioned conjunction becomes two or three times more frequent in the special case of famous people than in general. I mean here by "famous people" those found in the dictionaries under the heading well-known persons, people who have attained some notoriety as regards their character and their work. And though we may classify the people that are called "famous" into various kinds of categories, - under the pretext that there are many ways of becoming famous, - the setting up and the solving of the problem would essentially remain the same. Let us note in passing that the same aspect of Jupiter is only one feature among many others that may characterize the general aptitude for becoming famous; in the practice of astrology it is the more or less strong convergence of these factors that permit more or less just conjectures.

In fact, every verified astral correspondence is like that, - in the experimental sense we can give it. When choosing the preceding



one, I did not take the one that was most important, but one of those most easily explained.

Such a correspondence, therefore, can be established, verified, or refuted only according to a comparison of frequencies, proceeding respectively from two valid statistics. And these can be "valid" only according to the great number as well as to the impartial and homogeneous choice of cases recorded.

The difference in frequency, the index of the law, may comprise a whole scale of variations between 0 and 100; that depends on the intermixture of influences at work. But it is enough that this difference is real in order that there may be a law of real correspondence.

If it is zero, it is because there is no law. If it is slight, it is because there is an intermixture or interference of concomitant causes and laws which alter the manifestation of the law that is to be revealed - which leaves us in doubt. If the difference is close to 100 or perceptibly like this number, it is because we know the principal conditions under which the law manifests itself clearly to us (this is the case with the laws claimed to be immutable.)

But there are an infinite number of laws in the natural sciences, of which we can know only the highly variable manifestations (sometimes even annulled for unknown reasons) owing to the combinations and interferences of fatal or contingent causes accompanying them.

And those laws can be revealed only with the comparative probabilities and frequencies which precisely leave "room for the unknown" as well as for the "unfavorable cases."

It is to be noted that wherever we can affirm a natural connection within the field of facts, the principle in question can be rigorously applied; and also that our right to affirm this natural connection should be measured exactly according to the facility with which we can establish the two demonstratory frequencies (general frequency and special frequency) to be compared for the purpose of drawing conclusions as to their difference, that is, as to a law.

Some people have tried to criticize the pretended "statistical method", not as to its being a false method - for it would be impossible to deny its value - but wishing to have it considered as simply a method among the number of other methods.

I consider it necessary to clear up any uncertainty on this point; in fact, it cannot be looked upon as a particular method - statistical or mathematical - for it is only a question of a method based on good judgment expressed as precisely as possible. The use of "statistics" in observational science is not a "method"; it is after all only a means - and the only one - to obtain accurate frequencies. The proposition I am maintaining and on which I wish to insist is, that the principle of comparative frequencies - whether we think of appealing to it or not - is the basis of any valid method, not only in astrology, but in the most divers observational sciences; and particularly for the purpose of proving a fact in an exact manner as well as to establish or verify a law.

When we, in chemistry, physics or natural history, in order to distinguish one body from another, say that it presents such and such a phenomenon under such and such conditions, we understand thereby that under these conditions

(realized as far as possible), the body in question will present this phenomenon more frequently than the other bodies of some kind; for, supposing that these present it just as frequently, with what right would we speak of a distinctive character? The real difference in frequency of the observed phenomenon, on one hand as to this body, and on the other hand as to the other bodies, is really the experimental, necessary, and sufficient condition for the existence of the distinctive character and the law implied. It is, therefore, the criterion of the law. Whether the demonstrative difference in frequency be 100% or 30%, provided it is real, the law also is real.

Medical science, on its part, proceeds like all the other observational sciences, and particularly like the science of astrology, for definitely, it is a science of relations between some malady and some remedy applied to cure it.

The result is, that this "remedy" to be applied is not proved and judged better than another except as far as it can be proved - proportionately - that the cures are more frequent after a certain remedy has been applied than after the application of some other remedy. There again the demonstratory difference in frequency will be the criterion of the law.

Accordingly it could not here be a question about a system or a method; the question is about a principle (more or less ignored by us) on which we must rest every right method in an observational science, - and the important thing is to make clear this principle in order to learn the use of it.

The only way to dispute the matter would be to set forth a method that was valid and at

the same time resting upon a principle foreign to that of the frequencies we have shown.

I have issued three publications on this subject: The Probabilities in Observational Science; The Law of Relation, and Introduction to the comparative psychology of Human Characters.

These three general studies emphasize, as much as it has been in my power, the principle in question; and this principle will probably sooner or later serve as obligatory introduction to the "experimental method" in the various observational sciences, provided that precision and impartiality is desired.

For, I repeat, we always rely upon this principle in order to refute or affirm a law as well as to register a proof that is scientifically valid. It is no doubt that which made Henri Poincare say that "without probabilities no science could exist"; though not having precisely stated this truth, he had had a clear presentiment of it.

The classic axioms about causality are true in theory; but they are of no use in practice as long as it has not been said how we shall manage to know if the asserted effect is really due to the cause assigned - or at least connected with it - a matter which is not always so simple as it seems, and which is the source of an infinite number of errors. It is, at any rate, the key to the problem we are dealing with.

It is, in practice, of little importance to us to say in Latin or in French that "the effect us brought about, ceases, or changes according as the cause is established, suppressed, or modified". Every natural phenomenon is the resultant of a great many fatal or contingent

causes, of which it is often difficult to distinguish those that predominate. Therefore the delicate point, in practice, generally consists in having the right to affirm that one thing is indeed the cause (at any rate partially) of another, or really connected with it.

The fact that we say "he who desires the end desires the means" does not enlighten us at all concerning these means. The real difficulty is to know what they ought to be. The same holds good about the saying "the end which justifies the means", when we are not able to prove that the means employed have really been the cause of the "end" we have been looking for. In a general sense, we have to find a way to recognize if there is, or is not, a natural relation between two categories of facts. For the direct relation of causality as well as the concomitant or successive connections of all kinds are comprised in the general definition of "correspondence" or law of relation - which I have expressed in the experimental field.

On the whole, an astral aspect is said to correspond to such and such human pre-disposition or event of some kind when those who present this faculty or event have, in their natal horoscope, that aspect more frequently than other human beings. That is really only a way of emphasizing the fact of our knowing whether a certain aspect of the stars constitutes a distinctive character for those who are born under that aspect. The explanation of the phenomenon is another question to take up, and one that must come afterwards.

We have, after all, to measure repetitions and compare measures. From these there are, of necessity, statistics to be made in order to obtain on one hand the general frequency, on

the other hand the particular frequency, so that we may know if they differ from each other, that is, if there is a manifestation of law or astral correspondence with us.

To scorn here the statistics would simply mean to substitute arbitrary frequencies for true frequencies. Unfortunately, that is what we almost all do on many occasions when we refuse to settle a question impartially, or when we make a joke of statistics without trying to understand their philosophical character.

This emphatic statement which we hitherto had always failed to make, not only in astrology, but also in the most divers fields of our knowledge,--this emphatic statement, I say, about the relation between the sign and the thing it signifies, results most generally in the following definition in a controllable sense:

If we consider any category whatever of living beings, of whom several present certain particular signs, in order to find out if the sign is indeed really the index of a thing claimed to be thus signified (and consequently in relation to it), it is enough to make sure that the living beings presenting this thing claimed to be thus signified possess the sign in question more often than the other living beings. Not that it is necessary for them to always present it, for there is no law without exceptions.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> If "the exception confirms the rule", the too frequent repetition of it may cause it to vanish for the very reason of the play of frequencies, which alone can give us a precise idea about it.

In reality, it is here the question of the only experimental signification we can give to a natural and positive correspondence by yielding the place to the unknown. And we ask ourselves why so many questions, capable of solution according to this definition, have remained in suspense among us since ancient times (like chiromancy, physiognomics, astrology, etc.)

The same holds good about a great many of our current judgments which are founded on fantastic and undemonstrable relations or on an arbitrary symbolism. It is in this light that all the astrological polemics, both ancient and modern, appear vain and puerile to us in the face of verifiable astrological facts we have just stated.

Let us note in this connection that predictions have never proved anything, since they have been invoked in a double sense. Cicero declared, in fact, that astrology was false according to the erroneous predictions, while Tacitus affirmed that it was true according to prophecies that had come true. And the controversy has thus been continued since ancient times.

But none of the ancient writers have stated to us the origin and the verification of the astrological rules that served them so to say as basis for predicting the future, or at least for getting some information about it.

Besides, an incoherent intuition seemed most often to govern the ancient divination.

This proves that the success or failure, in the matter of prophesying, is no evidence, at least when considered by itself.

If, as a matter of fact, the failure does

not prove the falsity of the science any more than the incapacity of its interpreter, the success in no manner proves that the effect stated is really due to the supposed cause connected with it,--which is just the question at issue.

In both cases the relation aimed at cannot be proven false or real except by means of the comparative frequencies and the play of probabilities resulting from them. The divinatory successes and failures, like the arbitrary symbolism, have most often only produced premature convictions in one way as in the other. Therefore, at present divination in astrology must be excluded from the scientific discussions aimed at a proof of astral influences.

Before discussing the consequences of a fact and claiming to derive practical benefit from it, it is necessary first to know if this fact is true and controllable; but that is just the main purpose of the work I have pursued. All the "divinatory prescriptions" that could be gathered together would serve no purpose without a logical procedure of impersonal control.

Some people have seemed to believe that the so-called "recoupment" method could dispense with the theory of probabilities; but that is a misunderstanding. In divinatory matters as elsewhere, if one arrives apparently at the same goal by any different methods and "divinatory prescriptions" whatsoever, it will always remain to be proved that the play of probabilities of the "recoupment" is in favor of the law aimed at.

The way of verification by "recoupments" is not therefore always to be despised, but it is only a special case in the application of the probabilities; for, when we consider a "recoupmen



convincing, it is always in the main according to the calculation of the chances it has to be so because of such or such a measure taken.

In reality, it is here a question of a play of probabilities, the exact statement of which we neglect - which is not always so easy as one might think.

A concordance of observations as well as of graphic outlines always corresponds to a convergence of probabilities - which is the very object of the "compound probabilities."

Whatever we do, we are always brought back to the essential problems of the probabilities if only we seek a precise and impartial mensuration. But, in order to appeal to the probabilities, we must know how to apply them, which, by the way, requires still more by far of logic than of calculation; for, as Laplace has justly observed, "the theory of probabilities is nothing but good judgment reduced to calculation."

And what it would be proper to add here - something that has been too often lost sight of - is, that this theory is a result of experience, and is always based upon it when we do not wish to surrender to a simple play of mathematics. In other words, the calculation is here only a simple tool of good judgment.

It is therefore preferable to begin where we are obliged to end, that means, to seek the safest way to evaluate right frequencies, in order to be able to establish judicious comparisons between them; this permits us to diagnose and prognosticate scientifically on valid bases. From there comes the obligation to make statistics and to know how to observe their conditions of validity in order to get from them percentages or frequencies that can be used when only the scientific truth is sought.

Let us not forget here that the important thing is not to state various kinds of personal convictions, for they are, unfortunately, not always based on valid facts. What above all is important in the bases of a science is to state facts in a logical, communicable, reproducible, and impersonal form:---that is much more interesting than to make a collection of arbitrary divinatory prescriptions like the majority of those in vogue, which could not advance the astrological science one step; the current procedures can hardly serve any other purpose than to obscure it and falsify it in spite of the mathematical equipment that sometimes goes with it.

This is the reason why I have thought I ought to expatiate rather at length on these preliminary considerations, which constitute the essential basis of my investigations, despite the perhaps somewhat too philosophical character of this expose.

The historical study of the question has, moreover, proved to me that if astrology had remained bungled and stationary for more than twenty centuries, it was above all owing to a lack of exact presentation and of method in regard to the definition and the proof of the astrological fact. And indeed, no exuberance of calculations and no theory could replace those two things.

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