The Gauquelin Mars-effect:
Did it Replicate?

By Nick Kollerstrum

Michel Gauquelin's first results were presented in his L'Influence des Astres, which appeared in 1955, and included a collection of 570 top French sports champions. He found that Mars in their birthcharts was present in his two 'Key Sectors' 136 times (68+68). That was a large excess, of 39% above chance,[1] quite a bit higher than other results he obtained in later years.[2]

I reconstructed this database to 569 sports champions, i.e. all but one,[3] and using the modern Jigsaw program, I obtained a Mars-in-Key-Sector excess of only 124 (58+66), suggesting that Michel's hand-computation score was too high. A re-check on this using the Pegasus program[4] gave a score of 125 (58+67) for Mars in the two Key Sectors: these two results give a mean excess of 27% in the two Key sectors, which is still quite high.[5]

A colleague Kyosti Tarvainen was able to check this score using the Placidus house-system, which will in general give more or less the same results as the Gauquelin sectors. He obtained a key sector excess of 126 (59+67). I checked this using the Jigsaw program set for the Placidus house-system and obtained the same score (60+66).[6] Few researchers are able to compute these values: I'd estimate they can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Kyosti Tarvainen lacks such a program, but kindly checked it using Placidus.

As a general comment, I suggest that the Gauquelins should have stuck to the traditional Placidus houses, which would have saved a lot of bother. We never saw evidence showing their newly-concocted 'Gauquelin sectors' gave any better results.[7]

MG quoted the significance level of this finding as 1 in 370,000. He never quite grasped the subtle point, that computing significance on one's original data-set is forbidden, because the hypothesis he was testing had been formulated on the basis of results from that original group: a significance level can only be estimated on the basis of a replication. Accordingly, his wife Francoise suggested that they should get some more data to re-test their hypothesis. In 1960, his next book les Hommes et Les Astres reported the result of a Europe-wide survey conducted by the two of them, after they had collected another 915 sports champions from four other European nations Belgium, Holland, Germany and Italy. They found that that new data gave them 191 (99+92) Mars positions in key sectors, an excess of 21%[8]: still a decent effect even if not so strong.

Regrettably, they never published the birth data of this group.

In 1970, they started co-authoring their large data-volumes, which included their full and final total of 2,088 sports champions. Considering their previous totals of 570 (French, 1955) plus 915 (rest of Europe, 1960), it is clear that an extra 603 has somehow appeared. We were alas not advised as to where they had come from. They merely averred in this volume that their new data "corresponds roughly to the results given in 1960."[9] One is taken aback by such a claim.

They claimed that Mars in this 'final' total of sports champions' birthdata scored in key sectors 452 times (240+212), – an excess of 26%.[10] That figure became pivotal in the great debates that went on in the 1980s. Thus, the professional statistician John Goode wrote in 1982:

> "The basic observation of Gauquelin was that of 2,088 European sports champions, of whom 452 were born when Mars was in Gauquelin's sectors 1 or 4."[11]

This sounds like a 'hard fact' with which 'real science' is supposed to deal, but alas it was greatly mistaken. It was wonderful that a professional statistician chose to become thus involved, spending four pages analysing this result - and one can only regret that no-one had checked the data properly.

In 1980, the Gauquelins visited the Astro-Computing Services in California (which still exists). All their calculations were re-checked by Neil Michelson using his computer. Their large group of 2,088 sports champions was then found to have Mars in key sectors 435 times – a large drop from their published total of 452. This, the biggest arithmetic blunder ever made by the Gauquelins – if that is what it was - was never publicly announced and only appeared in an obscure table in a 1984 article in a little-read British journal.[12]

Let's try to summarise. Their first published result in 1955 involved an overcounting of Mars-in-key-sector scores by twelve points. Then their 1970 publication – the next for which data was published – involved a similar over-counting by five points. Those are the two points in time at which we have the data and so can check. Bias or cheating – you decide! After the corrected values were obtained in 1980 by the ACS computer, using the final 1970 total, they surely ought to have republished their 1970 data-volume, explaining the early by-hand errors: instead of merely leaving it to the sceptics to try and fathom what had happened. Everything fell apart with Michel's suicide in 1991 and one can understand why the sceptics just wanted to walk away.

One can readily check the 'final' total using either the Jigsaw or Pegasus programs, because it's up online on the CURA website: 2088 sports champions.[13] I thereby confirmed that little-publicised total as obtained at the ACS in 1980. There were two occasions where the data was given by the Gauquelins – in 1955 his first publication, then in their 'data-set' volume in 1970. Subtracting one from the other, shows that their later-acquired data has less than half of their original excess – it drops to a mere 15%. The chi-square here is 5 which most people would view as hardly adequate to verify such a hypothesis.
The data hasn't really replicated. Or it may have replicated, but not to a level of significance adequate to establish the claim.

Here one could quote the US astronomer George Abell: 'Gauquelin's findings represent an anomalous result that remains unconfirmed to the degree necessary to be accepted as scientific fact.' (1979) [14]

The graph published in 1960 has been widely reproduced and could be the most famous of Gauquelin graphs –
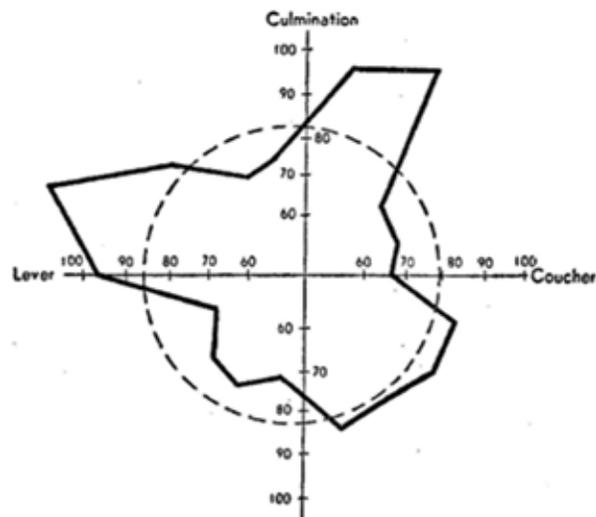

Figure 1. Sports Champions (Gauquelin 1960)

That is what a 29% excess looked like![15] Simple arithmetic shows us that the extra 'mystery' lot of birthdata 2088-1485 => 603, which appeared in 1970, had only a 12% excess. Something's fishy here, but unless we're going to get out the Ouija board and summon back the dead, we're unlikely to find the answer.

A Replication
One would like to see a modern reconstruction of the sports-champion data set, to sort out the confusion. It could be defined as for example, all reliably known birthdata of sportsmen featured in Le Roy's Bibliographie Dictionnaire Encyclopedique des Sports (1973). It has 3302 'sportifs' from all nations and also in l'athlege/ biographies des plus grands champions français de tous les sports (1949). Alternatively, one could just use the 'Who's Who' volumes. We could describe this as an intersection of two sets whereby the truly eminent cases as required for the Gauquelin theory appear in both of the chosen reference-volumes. Once that definition of eminence has been fixed, then we obtain the sub-group of those for whom reliable birthdata is available. Thus, the Gauquelin professional group would come from the intersection of these three sets (see Figure).

Try Something New?

But you may object, we've heard about the Mars-sports champion effect ad nauseam, can't we try
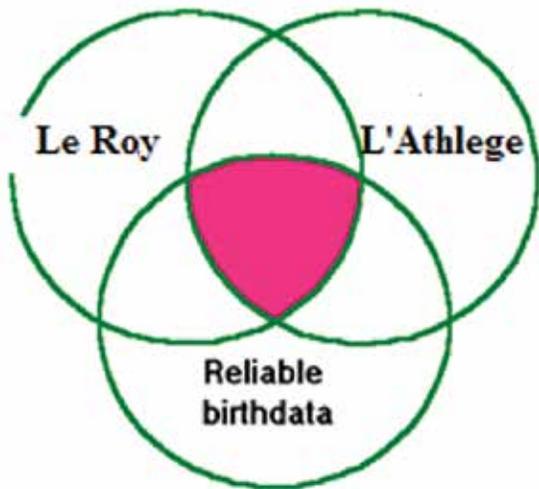

Figure 2. The Gauquelin sports-champion group, as an intersection of three sets.

something else? One could indeed: for example, suppose groups of eminent scientists and artists were assembled. The Gauquelin theory predicts a positive Saturn (an excess in the two Key Sectors) for scientists and a negative Saturn i.e. a deficit for artists. A test would compare excess in one group and a deficit in the other. That would have the advantage of not needing any 'control' group of chance-expected values, which are always tricky to estimate.

Or, suppose data were available for eminent actors, i.e. theatrical types: on Gauquelin's theory they have an affinity with Jupiter, so they would give an excess of Jupiter in the two Key Sectors. Whereas, Jupiter scores negative in this way for scientists. A straightforward comparison should here be feasible. That would be in effect comparing introvert versus extravert groups of people. Michel unfortunately tended to bracket his medics and science-types together, into one huge group: here is the Jupiter-score for that big group though the twelve sectors -

The two Key sectors (1 and 4) here show the main deficit, plus there's a weaker effect for the setting and IC positions. Jupiter scores in the Key Sectors would be compared for these two groups, the prediction being that more would appear for the actors and less for the 'tech' or science types. It would be convenient to have two groups of equal size, but that's not essential. Everyone can here
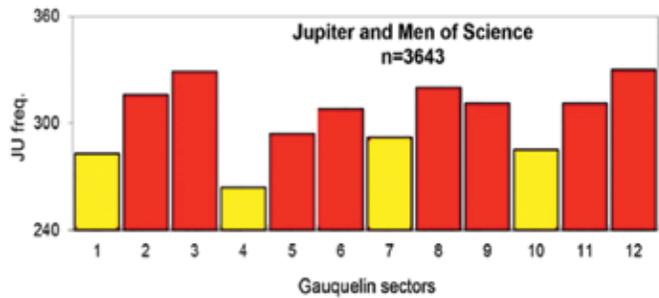

Figure 3. Graph by NK plotting Jupiter in the 12 Gauquelin sectors, using the birthdata of 'Men of Science' total (Gauquelins, 1970).

understand the basic concept, viz. that Jupiter types are extravert. Generally speaking, scientists are introvert and not showy types, but there are exceptions of course.

Alternatively, for a collection of eminent scientists, one could predict an excess of Saturn and a deficit of Jupiter, in Key sectors. There is room for discussion as to how one would do the stats for such a trial.

For any such replication, would one need old data, e.g. early 20th century? The theory does require that natural birth has taken place (Michel believed that the foetus tended to trigger its own birth when the time was right). For any group of data, one first checks the solar distribution, which Francoise called the 'nycthemeral curve.' Here are two examples of it.
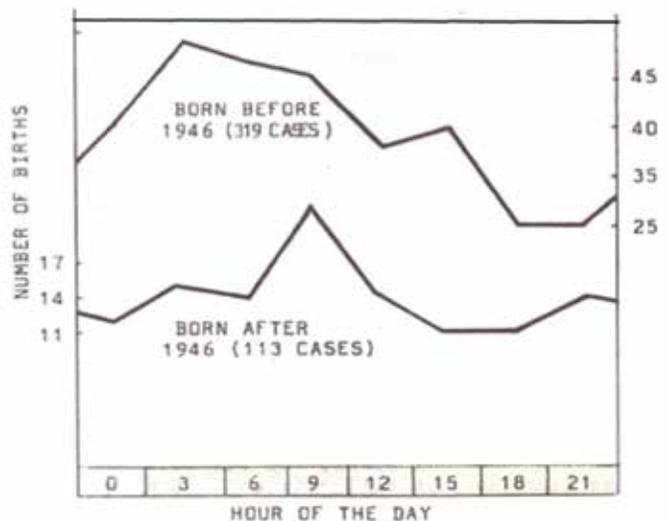

Figure 4: Time of day birth distribution, in data before and after 1946 (MG, The Mars Effect & Sports Champions, a New Replication 1979, Series B, p.9).

The top line shows natural birth which peaks before dawn (these are pre-1946 births), because Nature prefers the night-time for birth; whereas the bottom line shows more by way of hospital-induced births, being post-1946 birthdata: does this mean that babies lose their proper horoscope and have the wrong planets rising, for the convenience of hospital admin? The Gauquelin effect is said not to show up in the latter case.

The Qualities of Character
The Gauquelins concluded that the Mars-qualities, which showed up in character-traits, extracted from biographies, were more fundamental than the professional groups.[16] Thus Michel wrote,

> *The relationship between planet and character-trait could be observed without any need to take account of the professions.[17]*

These were found in 789 biographies, for which the birth charts scored 78% Mars excess in the four cadent houses (see figure). This effect is four times larger than what was earlier found using the professions, and it works equally in the four cadent houses.

The professional groups may score only or mainly in the two above-horizon cadent houses ('Key Sectors') because they are concerned with eminence and visible success in this world; whereas character-traits as such score equally in all four. The latter fact was pointed out by John Addey, i.e. that what he called the 'pure 4th harmonic' was here manifesting, so that -

> …there is no longer any tendency for there to be stronger peaks after the rise and upper culmination; all four angles are more or less equal in strength.[19]

The Gauquelin work of the last century is the largest and most impressive astro-research project ever undertaken but has become sadly neglected in this century. Using modern programs one can readily re-check the data: it may then finally be able to do what it was supposed to do, namely provide hard evidence that supports astrology.
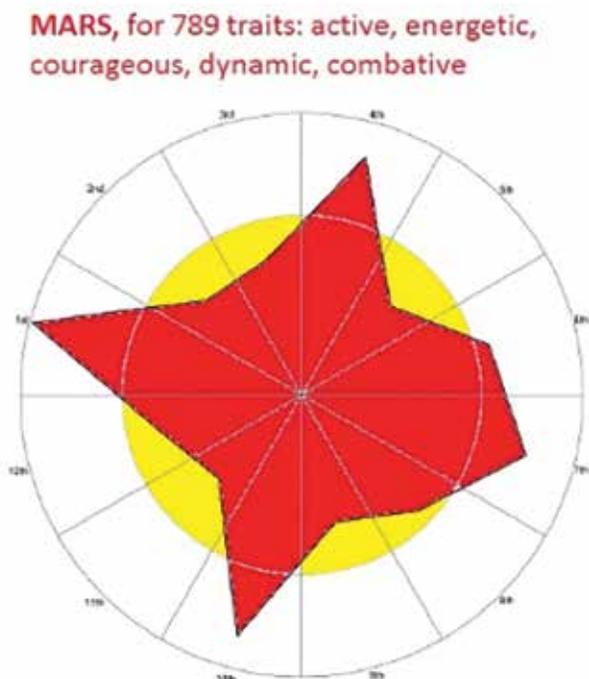

Figure 5: There were four volumes of character-traits published by the Gauquelins, from which I extracted all the birth-data for persons accredited with the following traits: Courageous, ardent, active, energetic, combative, dynamic.[18]

Endnotes:
[1] MG, 1955, L'influence Des Astres pp.143, 237.
[2] See table of his final data-sets on page two of newalche mypress.com/gauquelin/ Using the 1955 book L'influence Des Astres, the 1970 'complete' list of G sports champions, 2088 of them.
[3] CURA web page which has these online (at http://cura.free.fr). The 1970 opus assigned 'Gauquelin numbers' to   each of the champions.
[4] Pegasus is sold by Cosmic Patterns Software USA; Jigsaw by Astrolabe. David Cochrane kindly obtained the Pegasus score for this data-set.
[5] See newalchemypress.com/gauquelin/ page 2.
[6] The Placidus houses 12 and 9 are equivalent to the two Gauquelin key Sectors 1 and 4, counted in the other direction.
[7] See page 2 of newalchemypress.com/gauquelin/
[8] MG, Les Hommes et Les Astres, p.86.
[9] M&F G., 1970 Sports Champions series A, p.VI.
[10] M&F G., profession-Heredity Series C, 1972 p.80
[11] J. Good, the Zetetic Scholar, 1982, 9, 'Is the Mars-Effect an Artefact?'pp.65-9, 65.
[12] MG 'Profession and Heredity: Computer reanalysis and New Investigations' Correlation, Journal of Research into Astrology, 1984 4(1), 8-24, p.11.
[13] http://cura.free.fr/gauq/17archg.html

[14] Quoted in Eysenck & Nias, Astrology, Science or Superstition? 1982, p..208.

[15] Hommes et Les Astres p.86.

[16] See NK, 'The Gauquelin Character-traits: New Studies' AFA Journal of Research, 2018, pp.1-8; online at astrozero.co.uk.

[17] MG, The Truth about Astrology, 1983, p.63.

[18] See newalchemypress.com, page 9.

[19] John Addey, A New Study of astrology, 1996, p.125.

Biography:

Nick Kollerstrom, PhD is a science historian who was affiliated to University College London for fifteen years. For thirty-five years he has produced a Biodynamic lunar-gardening calendar. Some years ago he obtained a grant from the Urania Trust for making the Gauquelein work and data more available for home computers. Nick manages the Gauquelin-research page https://newalchemypress.com/gauquelin/ and has self-published the book https://www.amazon.com/Gauquelin-effect-Reloaded-Nick-Kollerstrom/dp/1086036301.

His other books can be found at https://www.amazon.co.uk/Nicholas-Kollerstrom/e/B07FQLDQQ8/ref=ntt_dp_epwbk_0