

Two Astronomers

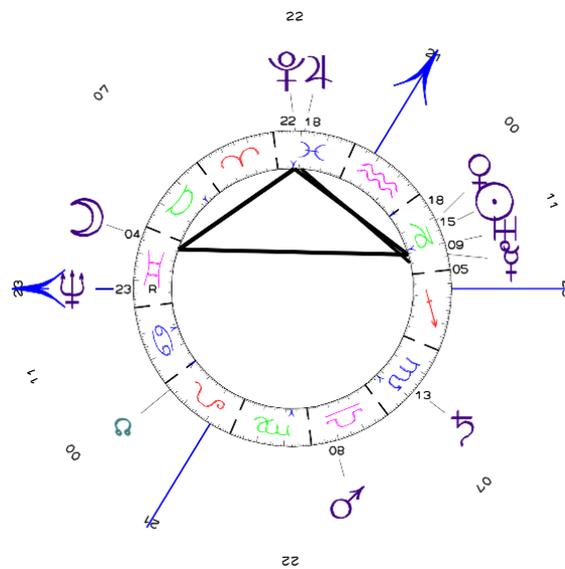
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1. Johannes Kepler, 1572-1630

December 1571 old Style, 6 Jan 1572 NS., 2.30 pm. Weil der Stadt, Germany, 48n45, 8e52 27

Kepler’s five quintiles made a lovely triangle -



- most appropriate for the man who invented the quintile aspect.

He couldn’t see it of course, ha! It was woven of the outer planets¹. In fact he couldn’t see most of the important things in his chart, e.g. his descendent was conjunct the Galactic Centre: he cited his ascendant at 24° Gemini (but taking his birth time as 2.30 pm = 14.06 UT on 27 December 1571 Old Style puts it at 22° Gemini). The Galactic Centre was then at 21° 35 Sagittarius. Nor could he see his Sun-conjunct-Uranus or his Neptune rising at 23° Gemini, which gave him (or predisposed him towards) his transcendental vision of the World-Harmony, that he sought for all his life –



¹ He could see his mercury-Jupiter quintile, but not those of Moon-Uranus, Moon – Pluto, Jupiter-Uranus or Uranus-Pluto.

But now, Urania, there is need for a louder sound while I climb along the harmonic scale of the celestial movements to higher things where the true archetype of the fabric of the world is kept hidden.²

So much of his chart only makes sense in terms of what had not yet been discovered, indicating the manner in which his life had relevance to future centuries - as it is still relevant today.

But at least he could see his Moon conjunct Aldebaran the Bull's Eye, which seems a fine aspect for an astronomer, exact within ten arcminutes.

In 1604 a supernova lit up, at 22° Sagittarius ie on the Galactic Centre and conjunct his Descendent. Soon it became known as 'Kepler's Star' even though he was not the first to see it. He was not in a hurry to prognosticate about it as everyone wanted (it appeared right in the middle of a triple Jupiter-Saturn conjunction) but he did write his book *De Stella Nova* about it. That contained his theory about when Jesus was born.

No visible galactic supernovae have been seen since then.

He could see the Saturn-Sun sextile in his chart, perceiving himself as quite a saturnine character. He lived through two Saturn-cycles, the first of which became exact in November 1601. That was the very month in which he composed *his De Fundamentis Astrologiae Certioribus*, 'On giving astrology sounder foundations,' his classic work explaining how and to what extent astrology worked. It was his bid to become the new Imperial Mathematician. That Saturn-return saw a huge change in his life as he became established at the Emperor's *Mathematicus* in Prague, following the providential passing away of Tycho Brahe - at just the right time, one may add: he died in October, 1601. The Emperor Rudolf II then offered Kepler the job in that very month of November, and Kepler was able to get his hands on Tycho Brahe's priceless data, which was all-important for his future work.

His notebooks show him getting the idea of elliptical motion for Mars' orbit in April of 1602. Thereby he made a complete break with all past astronomy.

With these enormous and historic changes in his life we may not be surprised that his Uranus-trine return was also happening in the summer of 1601. Usually this comes a couple of years before the Saturn-return but somehow they here managed to synchronize. His view that "Almost every motion of the body or soul or its transition to a new state occurs at a moment when the figure of the heavens corresponds to its birth figure" well applied here!

Kepler was a composer of yearly calendars which would predict war and peace, wine harvests, that sort of thing. The one for 1601 the year of his Saturn-return was written in Latin not German, and had the exposition of how astrology worked, mainly from the point of view of Mother Earth as a living being, how she responded to the celestial influences. He remained the Imperial Mathematician living in Prague for a Jupiter-cycle - the best part of his life.

² P.441, Opening of chapter 7 of book V *The Harmony of the World* translated by Eric Aiton et. al., 1997.

He composed his own very Saturnine epitaph, shortly before his passing: 'I used to measure the skies, now I measure the shadows of Earth. Although my mind was sky-bound, the shadow of my body lies here.'

The Saturn-return at his death synchronizes remarkably with Isaac Newton's birth and death Uranus positions. Newton's physics was fundamentally based upon the three laws of planetary motion which Kepler discovered:

	Kepler's Saturn	Newton's Uranus
Births	13 ½° Scorpio	15° Scorpio
Deaths	10° Scorpio	12 ½° Scorpio

The great achievements of Newton's life were measured out by his Uranus-returns, while for Kepler Saturn was his key planet.

Kepler developed a new astronomy, but no-one realised how good it was until the year after his death. His Rudolphine Tables predicted a transit of Mercury in front of the Sun for the year 1631. No-one had ever predicted or even seen (that we know of) such an event before. In Paris, the astronomer Pierre Gassendi observed it, and it was exactly as Kepler had predicted. That rather blew his mind, and he remarked: 'The world will marvel whenever it contemplates the Herculean accomplishments and the incomparable genius of this man.' Gassendi failed to notice – and would not have approved of being told - that the degree of the Sun and Mercury during this transit was precisely that of Kepler's Saturn.

We need to appreciate that the astronomy and the astrology of this situation are of equal interest, and get away from the old, either-or dichotomy. The three new aspects which he invented (or 'discovered'?) the quintile (72°), biquintile (144°) and sesquiquadrate (135°) should be just as interesting as his three laws of planetary motion. Using a musical logic he reasoned that the quintile was equivalent to an interval of a major third (4:5), the sesquiquadrate to a minor sixth (5:8) and the bi-quintile to a major sixth (3:5). The quintile was especially important he reckoned because of its connection with the Divine Proportion (or the 'golden ratio').

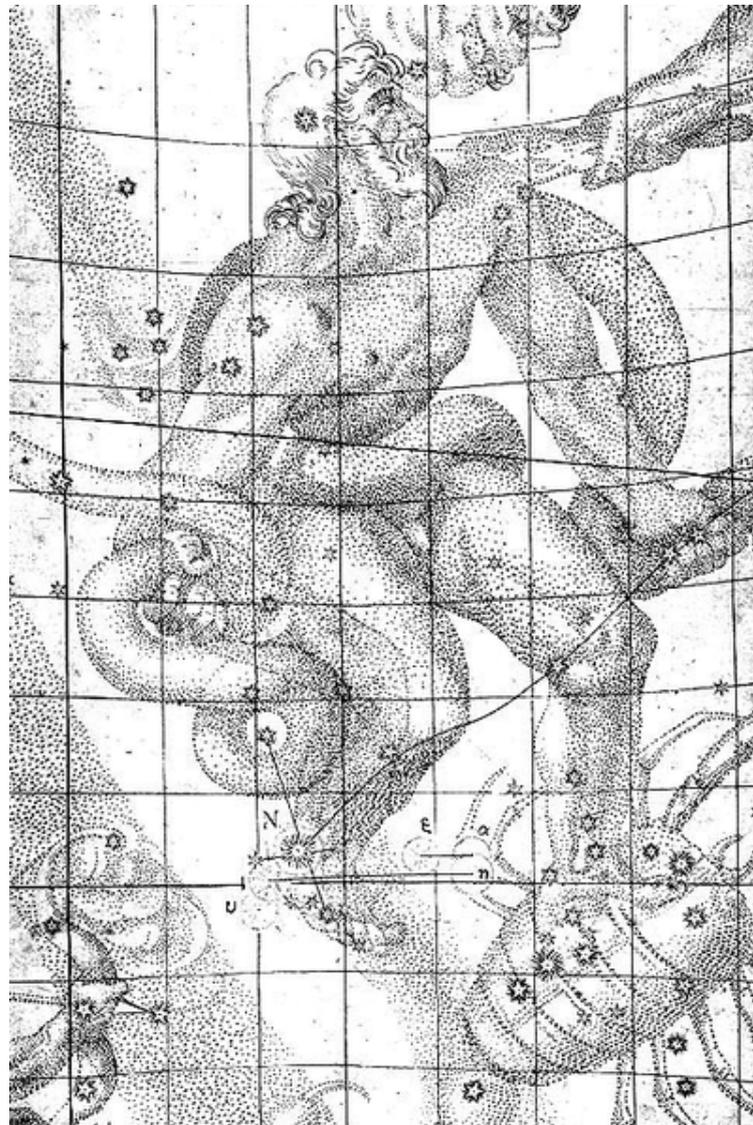
No-one has expressed more beautifully the manner in which astrology works, than did Kepler in his aphorisms. 'Nothing exists or happened in the visible sky that is not sensed by some hidden means by the faculties of Earth and Nature.'³ Or how about this one, on how the Cycles of Time work: 'The soul of the newly born baby is marked for life by the pattern of the stars at the moment it comes into the world, unconsciously remembers it, and remains sensitive to the return of configurations of a similar kind.' Concerning the 'celestial imprint' that is received at birth: 'in the vital power of the human being that is ignited at birth there glows that remembered image...' and 'The natural soul of man is not larger in

³ Kepler, *De Stella nova*, 1610.

size than a single point, and on this point the form and character of the entire sky is potentially engraved.'

If the modern Kepler College wanted to be in tune with what Kepler tried to do, it should endeavour to have a fivefold structure in accord with his *Harmonices Mundi*, 'The World Harmony in five books' which tried to integrate Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy and Astrology – a holistic vision of science.⁴

Here is Kepler's drawing of the Ophiucus constellation, where the supernova lit up - you can see it in his right foot – and it well shows the zone of the Galactic Centre. They didn't know where it was then, did they? No, of course they didn't. But in that case, how come it is the most dramatic point in the entire heavens, in terms of the constellation-images, with three different things pointing to it? It's right below that foot with 'Kepler's Star' in it, i.e. Ophiucus the Serpent-Bearer it treading on it. The tip of the arrow of Sagittarius is pointing directly at it. Plus we can see the sting of the tail of the Scorpion curling up under it. How could that exact zone of space have so much drama around it, if no-one knew what it was? It's just three degree south of the Ecliptic.



⁴ There is excellent translation by the American Philosophical Society, ref.2.

2. Bart Bok, 1906-1983

The Dutch astronomer Bartholomeus Jan Bok had a quite opposite attitude to astrology from Kepler. Visiting a New York Society of Astronomers meeting in the 1940s he was shocked to see astrologers and astronomers happily mingling together. This had to stop, he explained to them. In his lifetime, Bok mapped out the Milky Way, with the new radio



telescopes that were being discovered, which could see for the first time ever the Galactic Centre – thirty thousand light-years away!

Two first-magnitude stars in the sky exactly oppose each other: *Antares* the evil *Cor Scorpionis*, Heart of the Scorpion, and then the more benevolent ‘Bull’s Eye’ *Aldebaran*. The former is red, the latter a pale pink. Both are close to the ecliptic ie well within the zodiac, and traditionally this pair have been greatly associated with war and conflict. They are two of the four ‘Royal stars’ of ancient Persia.

Bok had his Jupiter conjunct Aldebaran. He married the astronomer Priscilla Fairfield, and the Royal Astronomical Society said of their collaboration, "from that point on it is difficult and pointless to separate his achievements from hers". His Sun may have been conjunct her Moon, and her Venus was on his Ascendant. Her Pluto was conjunct his Jupiter and Aldebaran within one degree, appropriate for all the exploring they did together, of the Milky Way.

When asked about his life by *Who’s Who in America* he replied, “I have been a happy astronomer for the past sixty years, wandering through the highways and byways of our beautiful Milky Way.” Jupiter conjunct Aldebaran certainly sounds like a happy astronomer!

As President of the American Astronomical society he was a lifetime foe of astrology. Shocked by how popular it was becoming, he palled up with arch-skeptic Paul Kurtz, author of the 1973 *Humanist Manifesto* (‘No god will save us we must save ourselves’). The world’s biggest-ever attack upon astrology was published in *The Humanist* In 1975. It aimed to ‘challenge forcefully and directly the pretentious claims of astrological charlatans.’ Strong stuff!

Quoting from an interview with him by *Phenomena, The Bulletin of Astrological News & Information* (editor, Malcolm Dean):

Phenomena: About two years ago now, you led a movement to publish a statement which was signed by nearly 200 scientists, philosophers...

Kurtz: In 1975, it was mostly astronomers and astrophysicists.

Phenomena: And this was entitled ‘Objections to Astrology.’ The press reaction was nothing short of incredible. You must have sent it to nearly every newspaper in North America and many in the world besides...

Kurtz: ...*The Humanist* magazine sparked this new Committee for the Scientific investigation of claims of the Paranormal. I don't think you can investigate astrology out of context with, let us say, psychokinesis, UFO's, various monsters, and a whole range of exorcism, cults of the devil.'

Phenomena: But surely astrologers argue that they are not necessarily connected with those other things?

Kurtz: No, that's true, uh, though in our view, it seems to be a return to the mediaeval, pre-scientific work-view.⁵

In the immediate aftermath of this event, Kurtz founded the CSICOP (Committee for the Scientific Investigation of claims of the Paranormal), a well-funded campaign to promote godless, atheistic materialism and call it science. In 1976 Michel Gauquelin in France read about this attack upon astrology and invited Paul Kurtz to replicate his Mars-effect with US sportsmen. Kurtz got caught trying to fiddle his data to iron out the positive result he had obtained!⁶ It was a big scandal. Paul Kurtz had his Sun conjunct the evil star Antares – very appropriate, one may say – in exact opposition to Bok's Jupiter-conjunct-Aldebaran.

They launched *Objections to Astrology* on September 1st, 1975, co-signed by many Nobel-Prize winning scientists.⁷ On the morning of its release, Mars was conjunct Aldebaran opposite to Neptune which was conjunct Antares. The opposition was exact within one degree of orb – a synchrony that only occurs once in many centuries. So Bok was having a Mars-transit, and that Mars was fighting against what he saw as illusion (Neptune)!

No-one could have chosen a better time for the Big Clash. After all, 'When these two stars are both engaged in the horoscope of a conflict .. peace rarely ensues before the total and crushing defeat of one side or the other.'⁸

If that doesn't 'prove astrology,' tell me what does.

⁵ *Phenomena* (Toronto) March/April 1978 2.2 p.15.

⁶For a history of this affair see Patrick Curry, *Zetetic Scholar* (online) 1982 'Research on the Mars Effect'.

⁷ The press releases were embargoed, not to be released before September 1st.

⁸ Eric Morse, *The Living Stars*, 1988, p.82.