

**THE FIXED STARS AND
CONSTELLATIONS
IN
ASTROLOGY**

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A STUDENTS' TEXTBOOK OF ASTROLOGY**



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PREFACE

OF late years the subject of fixed stars and constellations has aroused the interest and curiosity of the astrological student who has been debarred from examining their effects owing to the lack of available information. Most modern textbooks of astrology are silent upon the subject except perhaps for some tantalizing remarks upon the influence of the stars in cases of blindness, and for further details it has been necessary to consult a great number of old books that are difficult to obtain and in many cases prohibitive in price. For this reason there has been for several years an increasing demand for a book devoted solely to the astrological significance of stars and constellations, and the present work has been undertaken to meet this demand and to fill the most serious gap in astrological literature.

My object in compiling the mass of information here gathered together has been neither a critical nor an originative one. It has appeared to me to be desirable to place before the student as complete and systematized an account as possible of all that has ever been written about the stars from an astrological point of view, unburdened by alteration or criticism, in order that the work may stand as a foundation upon which future research may be built. For

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this reason I have obtruded few, if any, personal opinions or criticisms.

Originality is not claimed, but it is believed that the book will be found to contain practically everything that has been published on the subject since the Middle Ages, and to be as complete as it was possible to make it. No pains have been spared to attain this end, and a free use has been made of all sources of information. A detailed bibliography is unnecessary, especially as it would cover some two hundred books, but it is only fair to acknowledge my indebtedness to *The Science and Key of Life*, Vol. IV, by Alvidas, which contains much information on the effects of certain stars, and to R. H. Allen's *Star Names and their Meanings*, which I have followed throughout as the best available authority on the orthography and derivation of the names of stars. The references throughout the text to Ptolemy, Wilson, Simmonite, Pearce and Bullinger refer, unless otherwise stated, to the *Tetrabiblos*, *Dictionary of Astrology*, *Arcana of Astral Philosophy*, *Textbook of Astrology*, and *Witness of the Stars*, respectively. No plates or illustrations of constellations have been given for the reason that they would have added to the cost of the book without conferring any corresponding benefit. The student who wishes to follow up the subject in a serious manner will, of course, require some kind of star map, or, what is much better, a celestial globe, but for the ordinary purposes of astrology not even a map is necessary.

If the present work has the effect of stimulating

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the astrological study of the stars and encouraging research it will have achieved the purpose for which it was intended.

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CHAPTER I

THE FIXED STARS IN ASTRONOMY

IN the early days of astronomy the celestial bodies or stars were divided into two groups, the one consisting of the fixed stars and the other of the "erratic" or wandering stars which we now term planets. The fixed stars were thought to be immovable, and, although it was known that their positions with respect to the equinox were changing owing to precession, it was not until comparatively recently that the so-called "fixed" stars were found to possess independent motion and to be moving through space in immense and unknown orbits. It may, therefore, be remarked at the outset that to speak of "fixed" stars is really erroneous, but it will be convenient to retain the term here as there is an unfortunate tendency among certain astrologers to use the word "stars" in a would-be poetical manner for the planets.

Each fixed star that we see in the night sky is a *Sun* very similar to our own Sun in structure and general composition, and differing only in size and temperature. It shines by its own light and is probably surrounded by its own system of planets, though owing to the enormous distance no telescope constructed on present lines can ever hope to dis-

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cover even the largest of such planets ; in fact were our Sun removed to the distance of the nearest of the fixed stars it would appear to us as a sixth magnitude star, and Jupiter, big as it is, would be totally beyond the powers of our telescopes. It follows from this that a great many of the visible stars and all the brilliant ones are immeasurably larger than our own Sun, which is a comparatively small member of the Universe.

DISTANCES. The distance of a star when expressed in miles is such an enormous quantity that the mind is unable to grasp it, and in order to reduce the figures to manageable dimensions such distances are usually expressed in *light years*, the unit of which is the distance travelled in one year by light moving at the rate of about 186,330 miles per second, namely, approximately six billion miles (6,000,000,000,000). The distances of only a few of the nearer stars are known, that nearest to us being Bungula (*α Centauri*) at a distance of 4.3 light years, and one of the furthest Polaris at a distance of 44 light years.

The basic principle underlying the determination of the distance of a fixed star is simple and easily described. Suppose we measure the altitude of a star, or the angle between it and the horizon, on a certain night in the year, and again on a night six months later, when the earth is at the opposite point of its orbit. We know the diameter of the earth's orbit and we have determined the altitude of the star from each end of this diameter, so that we know one side and the two adjacent angles of a triangle from which the length of the other sides

may easily be calculated. The difference in the angles so obtained is called the *parallax* of the star, and it is found to be only in the cases of the few near stars that any parallax can be measured, there being usually no appreciable difference in the star's position when viewed from opposite points in the earth's orbit.

MOTION. It has already been stated that the stars are by no means fixed, and there are in fact three distinct kinds of motion, viz. :—(a) Precession, (b) Proper Motion, and (c) Radial Motion, or motion to or from the earth.

(a) *Precession.* The precession of the equinoxes is a phenomenon that causes all the stars to appear to advance in longitude in a body at the rate of about 50" per annum, due to the retrograde motion of the Vernal Equinox, or first point of Aries, through the constellations. The cause of this phenomenon is not absolutely certain. It is usually said to be due to a slight annual change in the inclination of the earth's axis, but it has been suggested that the effect comes from the motion of the Sun in space along its own orbit, by which, of course, all the planets would be carried along independently of their own paths just as the Moon is carried round the Sun by the earth. This precessional change does not affect the relative positions of the stars among themselves.

(b) *Proper Motion.* In the year 1718, Halley discovered that Arcturus and Sirius had moved southwards since the time of Ptolemy, and it is now recognised that all stars possess a proper motion

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of their own that causes them gradually to change their positions relative to each other. In all cases this proper motion appears very small owing to the great distances of the stars, though their actual velocity is no doubt exceedingly high. As seen from the earth the average proper motion of a first magnitude star is about $0''.25$ per annum, while that of a sixth magnitude star is about $0''.04$ but the actual rates vary in individual cases, the maximum proper motion known being that of an eighth magnitude star (G. C. Z., V, No. 243) invisible to the naked eye which is as much as $8''.7$ per annum.

In common with the other stars our Sun is moving through space, and if, as we are sometimes told, this is the real cause of precession, it is probable that its orbit is one necessitating about 26,000 years for a complete circuit. The direction in which the Sun, and of course the whole Solar System, is moving at present is known, and the point which it is approaching, or the Apex of the Sun's Way as it is called, lies on the border of the constellation Hercules in R. A. $277^{\circ} 5'$ and Dec. 35° N, which corresponds to $\text{R} 11^{\circ}$ and Lat. 58° N.

This universal motion of the stars has led to the suggestion that there may be a Central Sun round which the whole universe moves, and it has been suggested that Alcyone in the Pleiades is probably this body, but the suggestion does not find favour among present-day astronomers.

(c) *Radial Motion.* This is really only another form of proper motion that has recently been investigated. It is found that in the case of an ap-

proaching or receding body the lines in the spectro-scope move, and this has been used as a means of measuring its velocity. The greatest velocity yet found is that of μ Cassiopeiæ, which is approaching the earth at the rate of 61 miles per second, while other high velocities are ζ Herculis, 44 miles approaching; Aldebaran, 30.1 miles receding; and γ Leonis, 24.1 miles approaching.

BINARY AND MULTIPLE STARS. Many stars that appear single when viewed with the naked eye are found under telescopic examination to be composed of two or more stars lying very close together. The simplest case of this is furnished by the so-called *double stars*, in which the two stars are not related in any way but appear close together because of the angle at which we view them. Frequently one is countless millions of miles further away from the earth than the other, but as they both happen to be nearly in line they appear to us to be close together. In the same way we may have triple and quadruple stars accidentally grouped together. In the case of *binary stars*, however, the two bodies are actually related and revolve round each other, while even more complex relationships may be found in which three stars forming a ternary system are all linked in the same way.

CLUSTERS. When a very great number of stars appear together we have what is called a cluster, a well-known example being furnished by the Pleiades. The Milky Way also forms an enormous cluster extending right across the heavens. It is now thought that the universe is disc-shaped, and that the Milky

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Way represents the edge of the disc. If this is the case we ourselves and all our visible stars probably lie within it, for its thickness is estimated to be at least 10,000 to 20,000 light years, and probably much more. In looking at the Milky Way we are gazing along the disc from inside, and, therefore, an infinite number of stars appear to be crowded together, while looking at right angles the comparative scarcity of the stars is due to the fact that we are looking outwards from within the disc and the stars that we see form the top and bottom beyond which lies infinite empty space, unless as may well chance, other disc universes lie at distances so immense that their combined light fails to reach us.

NEBULÆ. Many clusters were known to the ancients, but as a rule they called them nebulous stars or nebulae, as the components could not be separated with the inadequate means at their disposal. Nowadays, however, a great many real nebulae are known. These consist of incandescent gaseous matter extending over many millions of miles of space and gradually condensing to form a star or solar system. They are in many stages of development, and their relative age can frequently be determined by their colour and spectroscopic composition. For astrological purposes nebulae and clusters have always been grouped together, for at present we do not know what, if any, distinction should be made as to the nature of their influences.

COLOUR AND MAGNITUDE. Although it is not generally recognizable by the naked eye, the fixed stars exhibit a great variety of colour, and this,

as will be seen later, was one of the early means of establishing the influence of a given star, though it could be applied only to the larger ones. For purposes of comparison the apparent sizes of the stars are denoted by numbers representing magnitude. The 1st magnitude stars comprise the brightest in the heavens, such as Sirius, Arcturus, and Aldebaran, and the remaining stars are classified in accordance with their apparent size and brightness down to the 14th and 15th magnitudes. Anything below the 6th magnitude is almost if not quite invisible to the naked eye and forms what is called a *telescopic* star. It is estimated that of the visible stars in the sky north of 35° S. declination there are 14 of the 1st magnitude; 48 of the 2nd; 152 of the 3rd; 313 of the 4th; 854 of the 5th; and 2,010 of the 6th.

It is found, however, that certain stars appear to change in brightness and to vary periodically between certain magnitudes. Thus Algol varies between the magnitudes 2.3 and 3.5 during a total period of 2 d. 20 h. 48 m. 54.4 s., whilst the classic example Mira (*o Ceti*) varies between the 9th and 2nd magnitudes over a period of about 11 months. In the case of Algol the variability is caused by a dark companion star that produces a periodical eclipse as the two bodies revolve round one another, but the reason for the variability of stars in general is very imperfectly understood.

In addition to these periodic variables there are certain stars that show a gradual change of magnitude and others that blaze out temporarily and then

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diminish in light rapidly or disappear altogether. As an example of the former we have Zubeneschamali (β *Libræ*), which in the time of Eratosthenes was brighter than Antares (α *Scorpii*) and is now one magnitude fainter. The latter group covers the temporary stars or *Novæ* that suddenly appear from time to time. One of the most recent of these was Nova Cygni that was discovered by Mr. W. F. Denning, of Bristol, at 9.30 p.m., G.M.T., on 20th August, 1920, in R.A. 299° , Dec. $53\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ N., corresponding to Long. $\propto 1^\circ 22'$, Lat. 70° N. $50'$, which was thought to have been connected with serious rioting and incendiarism at Belfast. The cause of the sudden increase in brilliancy of these bodies is not known with any degree of certainty, but it seems probable that in some cases it is due to the collision of two stars.

CLASSIFICATION. Several different methods have been used throughout the ages to classify and identify the stars, but almost all are based upon the fundamental grouping into constellations. In the days of Ptolemy only 48 constellations were recognized, the remainder having been added since 1600, but the origin of these ancient star groups is quite unknown. Forty-five of them were mentioned by Aratos in 270 B.C., but they were in existence hundreds of years before his time, and may have been formed by the Chaldeans or an earlier race of people. It seems certain, however, that the constellation figures were chosen for astrological reasons, since the arrangement of the stars in any group bears no resemblance to its traditional form. Originally only

those stars falling on the constellation figure were recognised as belonging to the group, those outside being called "unformed" or "scattered," but at a later date the boundaries were extended and now every star in the heavens is a member of some constellation. Unfortunately the boundary lines are not by any means well defined, and may not be absolutely correct from an astrological point of view, for they have been settled only comparatively recently, Argelander's boundaries being accepted for the northern constellations, and Gould's for the southern. The original divisions were probably more regular, especially in the case of the zodiacal constellations, which are now of very unequal extent.

(a) *By name.* The earliest method of identifying stars was by name. All the large stars and many small ones bore distinctive names, most of which have come down to us. The Arabs gave nearly all the names in use in western astronomy, but they were probably outrivalled in their lists of star names by the Chinese, who seem to have had a very comprehensive system of stellar nomenclature. Identification by name has now been almost entirely superseded by other and better methods. At best it is a cumbersome system, which gives no proper clue to the approximate place where the star may be found, and moreover is hopelessly inadequate to deal with the countless small stars now revealed by the telescope. For astrological purposes, however, where only a comparatively few stars need to be considered, it is a much handier method than any

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other, and I have, therefore, retained the old names, and indeed added a few new ones where necessary, for it is much easier to talk of Sun conjunction Capulus, for example, than Sun conjunction 33 ♁ vi Persei.

(b) *By place in constellation.* Ptolemy made a certain advance in stellar identification by introducing the system of naming a star according to its position in the constellation figure, as, for example, "the Right Knee of Boötes" for Arcturus, but the system is a very cumbersome and inexact one, and of course fails completely in the case of stars lying outside the boundaries of the constellation figures. It was, however, in frequent use among the 17th century astrologers, and unfortunately has survived among those of the present day who pay attention to the fixed stars.

(c) *By constellation and letter.* In 1603 Bayer introduced a method in which each star was known by the name of the constellation containing it and further distinguished by a letter of the Greek alphabet. In assigning the letters it was usual to start with the brightest star, calling that α , and so on through the alphabet in order of brightness. Thus Regulus, being the brightest star in Leo, became known as α Leonis, the genitive case being used for the constellation, and this system with slight modification is the one in use at the present day. It was, of course, necessary to introduce numbers as well as letters when the Greek alphabet became exhausted, and this was done by Flamsteed.

(d) *By catalogue number.* At the present time

it is usual to retain the last method for well-known stars but to identify the telescopic ones since discovered by their number in some reliable catalogue. Thus we have Groombridge 1646, Lalande 21285, and so on, these various catalogues containing the places of nearly a million stars, and giving the *mean* positions irrespective of precession, nutation, aberration, and proper motion. Thus almost every star can now be identified when once its Right Ascension and Declination are known, the use of longitude and latitude having long since been given up.

For the convenience of those who wish to investigate the influence of any star not dealt with in the following pages, the method of converting its Right Ascension and Declination into longitude and latitude is fully explained in the Appendix.

As Greek letters are extensively used throughout the text I append herewith the characters and names of the letters in the Greek alphabet :

α Alpha	ν Nu
β Beta	ξ Xi
γ Gamma	\omicron Omicron
δ Delta	π Pi
ϵ Epsilon	ρ Rho
ζ Zeta	σ Sigma
η Eta	τ Tau
θ Theta	υ Upsilon
ι Iota	ϕ Phi
κ Kappa	χ Chi
λ Lambda	ψ Psi
μ Mu	ω Omega.

CHAPTER II

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CONSTELLATIONS

THE constellations known to the ancients were but 48 in number, their names being as follows :

Zodiacal Constellations.

Aries	Leo	Sagittarius
Taurus	Virgo	Capricornus
Gemini	Libra	Aquarius
Cancer	Scorpio	Pisces

Northern Constellations.

Andromeda	Cygnus	Pegasus
Aquila	Delphinus	Perseus
Auriga	Draco	Sagitta
Boötes	Equuleus	Serpens
Cassiopeia	Hercules	Triangulum
Cepheus	Lyra	Ursa Major
Corona Borealis	Ophiuchus	Ursa Minor.

Southern Constellations.

Ara	Cetus	Hydra
Argo	Corona Australis	Lepus
Canis Major	Corvus	Lupus
Canis Minor	Crater	Orion
Centaurus	Eridanus	Piscis Australis.

To these many more have been added in comparatively recent times until their number is now well over 100. The original constellation figures are all traditional and have been a source of annoyance to modern astronomers, who have naturally failed to trace among the stars the slightest resemblance to the objects they are supposed to represent. To those actively engaged in a study of stellar and constellation influences, however, it will soon become apparent that these seemingly fanciful shapes are in reality a fair representation of the collective influences of the stars contained in them, and that the constellation of the Dog, for example, actually influences dogs, ridiculous as it may appear. This, of course, may be explained by assuming that the ancients based the figures and divisions upon their knowledge of the influence of each, but the same certainly cannot be said of the modern constellations and it is an amazing fact, though easily proved, that they also closely represent the nature of the influences.

The rationale of this is inexplicable and we can only suppose that the originators were in some way led to choose the most appropriate figure. That this has happened in the case of the planet Neptune is a fact well known to every astrologer, and it is none the less true that it is also apparent in the case of the constellations.

To those of an occult turn of mind the foregoing explanation will be adequate, but to the scientific investigator it will, of course, have no weight. If he will examine the facts in an unbiased manner, however, he will see that they are indeed facts, even

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if they appear at first sight to be unreasonable and absurd.

With this brief apology we may turn to a more practical consideration of the matter. The chief difficulty confronting the student is that each constellation occupies a fairly large part of the heavens and overlaps others when referred to the zodiac. Moreover the actual boundary line between any two constellations is not defined with any degree of certainty. It is probable that the chief effect of each is located in one or more particular places which are at present unknown. It seems, however, that the major points of influence lie in the vicinity of the important stars and also near the boundary of the constellation, which thus appears to play the same part as the cusp of a house. It must be remembered that a star may have its own effect apart from that of the constellation, which is the group influence of many stars, and therefore the two must be separated when endeavouring to fix the most sensitive points. It is also extremely likely that there may be sub-influences in each constellation, perhaps varying with the part of the figure on which a given group of stars may lie, and this is a matter that will certainly require attention in the future. In practice it will be found that the effect of the constellation is most marked when the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant is posited there. The conjunction, opposition and parallel have effect but the influence of aspects cannot be traced.

It will be noticed that Ptolemy expresses the nature of the constellations in terms of the planets,

a method that will be found fully explained in Chap. IV. The other descriptions are modern and to be found chiefly among French authors. It will be observed that the characteristics of many of the groups resemble those of the sign in which they fall. Some years ago Sepharial suggested that the signs themselves might not be the real originators of all the influences ascribed to them, some of which might more properly be attributed to constellations. Thus in the case of Cancer the pushing nature of its natives may really be due to Monoceros, their love of dogs to Canis Major, and their love of the sea to Argo. This should be borne in mind for by careful research we may eventually be able to assign more exact influences to both signs and stars. In this connection it will be obvious that the separate influence of each degree of the zodiac may also be a stellar phenomenon.

A word is necessary, perhaps, as to the zodiacal constellations. These are actual irregular star groups lying along the ecliptic, or earth's path round the Sun, and should not be confused with the *signs* of the zodiac which are regular divisions of the ecliptic bearing the same names. In the descriptions given below comparatively little has been said as to the nature of these constellations because each has the same influence as the sign of the same name, and the latter are fully described in all textbooks of astrology.

In order to facilitate its use and avoid the necessity of consulting a globe or map the approximate extent of each constellation, both in longitude and declina-

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tion, as nearly as can be estimated, is indicated against its name. In the descriptions that follow, the legendary history of the constellations has been given wherever possible so that students of symbolism and occultism may exercise their powers of interpretation. In all cases, however, the Biblical parallels have been omitted, partly because they are often obvious but chiefly because they are later importations and not so worthy of study.

I. ANDROMEDA. The Chained Woman. $\varphi 12-8\ 15$. $20N-55N$.

Legend. Andromeda was the daughter of Cepheus, King of Æthiopia, and Cassiopeia. In consequence of Cassiopeia's boast that the beauty of Andromeda surpassed that of the Nereids, Neptune sent a sea-monster (CETUS) to lay waste to the country, and promised deliverance only on condition that Andromeda were offered as a sacrifice to it. She was accordingly chained to a rock, but was discovered and released by Perseus, who, riding through the air on Pegasus, slew the monster by turning it to stone with the Medusa's Head and claimed Andromeda as his bride.

Influence. According to Ptolemy the influence of this constellation is similar to that of Venus, though the legend would lead one to suppose some connection with Virgo. It is said to bestow purity of thought, virtue, honour and dignity upon its natives, but to cause battle with chimerical fears and a tendency to become easily discouraged. By the Kabbalists it is associated with the Hebrew letter Pé and the

17th Tarot Trump "The Stars." If Mars afflicts the luminaries from Andromeda, and especially if in an angle, it causes death by hanging, decapitation, crucifixion or impalement.

2. ANTINOÛS. ♀ 13—♋ 10. 8N—13S.

History. Antinoüs was a youth of extraordinary beauty, born in Bithynia, and was the favourite of the Emperor Hadrian. He is said to have drowned himself in the Nile in the belief that the Emperor's life would thereby be prolonged, and the constellation was formed in his honour by Hadrian in 132 A.D. Antinoüs has also been associated with Ganymedes who was seized by an eagle and carried off to be cup-bearer to Jupiter, but this legend belongs more probably to Aquarius.

Influence. No astrological influence was suggested for this constellation by the ancients, but it seems to have been associated with the ideas of passion, love and friendship, for certain of its components stars were named Alkhalimain or Al Halilain, the Two Friends, by the Arabs, and the Kabbalists associated it with the Hebrew letter Vau and the 6th Tarot Trump "The Lovers." It has also been said to give a love of swimming, and to be connected with certain sex irregularities, the latter probably being greatest in that part of the constellation lying in Capricorn.

Note. Antinoüs lies just south of Altair in Aquila and is now taken as part of that constellation. He is sometimes represented as carrying a bow and arrow as he is borne aloft in the Eagle's talons.

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3. **ANTLIA PNEUMATICA.** The Air Pump. π 0—
 ≈ 0 . 30S—43S.

History. This constellation was added by La Caille, 1752 A.D., under the name Machina Pneumatica.

Influence. It is said to bestow prosperity, harmony and spiritual force.

4. **APUS.** The Bird of Paradise. \uparrow 0— \uparrow 25.
75S—80S.

History. This constellation was added by Bayer, 1604 A.D., under the name Apis Indica.

Influence. It is said to confer a kind, benevolent, sympathetic and ambitious nature. This part of the sky has apparently always been associated with birds, for it was known to the Chinese under the names "The Curious Sparrow" and "The Little Wonder Bird." The connection of Gemini-Sagittarius with flight may possibly be due to this constellation.