

Correspondence

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ASTROLOGICAL SYMBOLISM

Sir,

Mr. R. Bolton does not seem to be aware that there do exist books which treat of the zodiac both from the historical point of view (*The Origin of the Zodiac*, Cape, 45s.) and from that of character analysis (*Your Character in the Zodiac*, Dent, hardback, 35s., paperback, 10s.). Unfortunately for some of our readers, *The Origin of the Zodiac* treats the matter solely from the historical point of view, but was found by a number of reviewers both pleasing and plausible. From the historical point of view it stands to reason that the earliest measuring-points of the zodiac were visible ones; but this is certainly not the case with what Mr. Bolton would call the "traditional" measuring-points, which are comparatively modern. Perhaps one ought to point out that in the sidereal (or ancient) zodiac Gemini and Sagittarius do not have the same connotations as they have in the "traditional" zodiac. The sun now enters real (not "traditional") Aries on 13th April.

London, 17.10.69

RUPERT GLEADOW.

Sir,

Although I have only recently become a subscriber to your excellent quarterly and so missed Robert Bolton's original article on astrological symbolism, I think I ought to comment on Dr. Hans Bandmann's letter in your autumn issue.

It is true, of course, that there are, so to speak, two Zodiacs: the Zodiac of the constellations (alternatively known as the "fixed" or sidereal Zodiac) and the Zodiac of the signs (the moveable or tropical Zodiac).

Perhaps there would have been less fuss if these two circles had been known by distinctive names; the fact that they are both called "Zodiacs", however, has led to endless arguments about which is the "correct" one.

There is no need for such arguments; astrology is full of symbolic circles and symbolic starting points, all equally valid when applied in their proper way and context.

It is true that somewhere between the discovery of the precession of the equinoxes (the phenomenon which gives rise to the divergence between the two Zodiacs) by Hipparchus (190-120 B.C.) and the time of Ptolemy (100-178 A.D.) the view evidently crystallized, and was expressed by Ptolemy, that it was the constellations which were moving and the equinoxes and solstices which were fixed, thus the "heaven of the signs" was placed beyond that of the constellations. At the time, of course, there was no means of knowing which was moving and which was fixed—relatively speaking—but in time it

was realized that the precession of the equinoxes happens because of the gradual rotation of the poles of the earth's axis (the kind of slow "wobble" which can be observed in a spinning top).

Thus, because the zodiac of the signs depends for its position upon a purely local (terrestrial) movement, it is the constellations which are relatively fixed and the signs relatively moving.

To say, as Dr. Bandmann does, "Let it be clearly understood that the heaven of the signs is the place of the heavenly prototypes or archetypes, which remain eternally as they are..." is meaningless. The heavenly archetypes are, of their very nature, spiritual and essentially beyond time and space, thus they cannot be identified exclusively with *any* of the countless circles of the cosmos but are reflected over and over again in *all* of them.

One more point: Dr. Bandmann speaks of "the time when both signs and constellations coincided, about 2000 B.C." There has admittedly always been uncertainty and, therefore, debate about this subject but this date has always been taken as coinciding (roughly at least) with the start of the Christian Era and it would have been a physical impossibility for it to have been as early as 2000 B.C.

Those who are interested in this subject will find a good chapter—The Great Year of the Ancients—in W. B. Yeats's book *A Vision* in which he quotes from numerous sources, classical and modern.

London, 13.3.70

John M. ADDEY.