



Backstory

Astrology for Aquarius
Sharing our Knowledge

The Story of Astrodynes

DW Sutton

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Hermetic astrology before astrodynes

Before astrodynes Hermetic astrology employed a general rule to determine the prominence (power) of a planet in any birth chart.

The rule did not permit power grading or measure a planet's harmony or discord. Students employed the rule to judge which planets in their charts had sufficient prominence to play an influential role in their lives. And like all general rules it had uncertainty and was subject to a high degree of personal bias.

The fundamentals of Hermetic astrology had been organized and systematized by Elbert Benjamine and published in 1922.

Writing as CC Zain he explained that your birth chart is a map of your soul's thought-structure; that each planet in the chart represents a not-conscious dynamic urge or driver; that the zodiac signs represent attitude-motivations that give these psychological urges distinct modes of expression; that the angular relationships formed by the planets identify not-conscious thought-complexes that have constructive or destructive modes of expression; and the houses represent your local environment – the life-matters and people that influence what happens and what you do.

He then described the best and worst qualities of each planet and zodiac sign; introduced keywords into the science of astrology; and in 1929 presented the spiritual teachings associated each of the 48 constellations. Then came the science of the progressed chart, and the continual upgrading of the information based on new data provided by statistical research.

Prior to the astrodynes Hermetic astrology already had a knowledge-base of scientifically sound astrological facts. All that was missing was a reliable way of measuring the power, harmony or discord of the astro-data encoded in a birth chart.

The need for mathematical reliability

The inability to reliably measure astral-force and its functionality posed a big problem for Hermetic astrology. The subjective assessment of a planet's power and prominence employing a general rule wasn't exactly scientific.

The potential for expectation to cloud personal judgment and deliver what the user expected to find was just too high. So there was a pressing need for reliable measurement to eliminate uncertainty and personal bias from the judgment process.

Mathematics is an exact science – it eliminates guesswork and avoids false argument – and Hermetic astrology needed a set of equations that would reliably measure the power, harmony and discord embedded in any birth chart.

Measurement was needed to provide mathematical proof. It would eliminate uncertainty and controversy and satisfy the demand for measurement that was driving the new scientific age.

Hermetic astrology needed a purely mechanical way of measuring the energy being furnished by each planet in any birth chart and its harmony or discord; and it needed a way of measuring movements in a planet's power, harmony or discord due to progressed aspects.

The credibility of astrological research rests upon the method used to measure what's being measured. Statistical analysis provides scientific proof in some instances, but the measurement of planet power in vocational research requires a reliable set of calculations to do the measuring.

So the desire to have a method that would reliably measure the power, harmony and discord of the planets, aspects, signs and houses in any birth chart and their thought-cell correlates was the driving force behind the development of the astrodynes.

The quest to measure astral-force

Astral substance presents problems as far as physical analysis is concerned, yet it functions in response to known laws.

Its functions have been determined by experiment and statistical analysis which permit the actual assessment of stellar vibratory rates. But its measurement was another matter.

Elbert Benjamine believed that the life-data embedded in your birth chart was mathematically drafted and that mathematics was the key to a better understanding of the data. So, Hermetic astrology required a set of calculations that would reliably measure the astrology code mapped in any birth chart.

By 1938 The Brotherhood of Light Astrological Research Department had established the astrological principles that had to be quantified if the power, harmony or discord of astral-force was to be measured. They were:

1. The Sun, Moon and Mercury have more power when they occupy a given position in the birth chart than do the other seven planets, thus their (unmodified) power is greater.
2. A planet in an angular house has more power than the same planet in a succedent or cadent house; and that, aside from its unmodified power, and the aspects it makes, the power of a planet varies according to the house it occupies.
3. Each aspect a planet makes increases its power and the amount of increase varies according to the aspect. A semisquare has less power than a square and a sextile has less power than a trine.

And in 1938 the task to measure astral-force was taken up by Brotherhood of Light members who had mathematical ability. They included Lawrence Duns-moor, Will P Benjamine, Sue Starnaman and Elbert Benjamine.

The initial work produced formulae that were published in December 1938; and in January 1939 Lawrence Dunsmoor published an article in which he proposed that a unit of star-force be called an astrodyne. And during 1939 the quest to measure astral-force was on in earnest.

In February, 1940 Elbert Benjamine explained what the measurement of astral-force entailed and identified three problems that had to be solved. They were:

Problem 1: To find a formula that can be used with any given chart without too much labor, which will accurately express in mathematical terms the energy mapped by each birth chart planet, and which can also be used accurately to express the energy of a progressed aspect.

Problem 2: To find a formula that can be used for any given chart without too much labor, which will accurately express in mathematical terms the energy mapped by each birth chart house. And

Problem 3: To find a formula that can be used with any given chart without too much labor, which will accurately express in mathematical terms the harmony or discord mapped by each birth chart planet and which can also be used accurately to express the harmony or discord mapped by any progressed aspect.

But the task to measure astral-force was far more difficult than first realized and the initial burst of enthusiasm and effort didn't produce equations that would reliably measure the power, harmony or discord of the planets, aspects, signs and houses in any birth chart.

Success eventually came after 8 years when Elbert Benjamine and William Drake finally developed the set of calculations known as Astrodynes in early 1946.

September 1946

In September 1946 Elbert Benjamine announced the development of the astrodynes to the astrological community. He wrote:

‘This is a period of technological development. Radar, television, atomic energy, jet-propelled planes, rockets and machines operated through remote control are a few of the recent developments due to greater technological knowledge. And it would be strange if astrology also, during this period did not experience certain technological improvements.

These technical improvements do not, in any manner, change the fundamental teachings of the Hermetic System of Astrology relative to either the birth chart or to progressed aspects.

Instead, they are designed to make the calculations easier or the energies they represent understood with greater facility – which is the aim of the various methods of calculating progressed aspects or they are designed to give greater precision in determining what to expect from each birth chart position or progressed aspect.

The latter is the aim of Stellar Dynamics, which embraces the calculation, both in the birth chart and from progressed aspect, of the number of astrodynes, harmodynes and discordynes.

To deal more precisely with non-physical electromagnetic force, science established standard units and gave the names by which it measured this Boundary-Line force and its attributes.

Luminous intensity is thus measured and expressed by the unit Candle Power. The unit of electric current is the Ampere, the unit of the potential of the current is the Volt, and the unit of the resistance to the current is the Ohm.

Not only was it necessary for science to establish such standard units, but it was necessary to devise mathematical methods for determining the number of each unit of the Boundary-Line force present under a variety of circumstances. And to facilitate such calculations the ampere and the volt were given values so that the product of the current measured in amperes by the electro-motive force measured in volts in any instant equals the unit of power, which is called a Watt. 1000 watts are called a kilowatt.

Your electric service meter measures the number of kilowatt-hours of electricity you use in your home during a given period, and this determines the size of your electric bill covering that period.

Years ago it became obvious to The Church of Light Astrological Research Department that it is not enough to know that a certain planet, a certain aspect, or a certain sign or house, is powerful in a given birth chart, but that there should be available a standard unit and a mathematical method of computation by which it can be determined how much astrological power is thus represented.

It also realized that it is not enough to know that a certain planet, a certain aspect, or a certain sign or house is harmonious or discordant, but that there should be some standard way of determining how much harmony or how much discord is thus represented.

The Church of Light's Astrological Research Department started investigating this branch of astrology, known as Stellar Dynamics, some years ago. And much preliminary work was done by C. of L. students both in the U.S. and in Canada in 1938.

Dyna, used as a prefix, means power. Dyne is a standard unit of force in physics. And astrodyne, as the unit of astrological power, was first used by Lawrence R Duns Moor in the January, 1939, issue of The Rising Star. Harmodyne is now used as the standard unit of astrological harmony; and discordyne is now used as the standard unit of astrological discord.

As the attainment of unusual precision requires painstaking work, it does not lend itself to mass production methods. Because of the amount of work involved in gaining precision, in our statistical work relative to birth charts and progressed aspects, in which 100 charts covering each condition analyzed are used, we employ the mass production method of inspection. And for broad purposes such inspection and mental estimation of the power and harmony or discord of a given position or aspect in the birth chart or in the progressed chart commonly are sufficient.

But there are many other instances, such as when it is difficult to diagnose the disease afflicting the patient, or difficult to know how much attention to give a certain progressed aspect – and especially relative to one's own chart on which one is warranted in doing much work – in which it is highly advantageous to gain greater precision than can be had through inspection.

We are happy, therefore, to be able to announce that 1946 has brought to completion the method sought by The Church of Light Astrological Research Department of solving the various problems of Stellar Dynamics.

It is now possible to compute, and to express as so many astrodynes, the power of any planet, aspect, sign or house in the birth chart, or the power of any planet, aspect, combination of aspects, sign or house in the progressed chart.

And it is now possible to compute, and express as so many harmodynes, or so many discordynes, the harmony or discord of any planet, aspect, sign or house in the birth chart, or the harmony or discord of any planet, aspect, combination of aspects, sign or house in the progressed chart.

We consider the solution of these problems in Stellar Dynamics to set up a still further milestone marking the progress of astrological knowledge and practice.'

Elbert Benjamine and William Drake

Elbert Benjamine always claimed that the birth chart was mathematically drafted. So the development of a set of calculations to measure the power, harmony or discord in any birth chart required mathematical intelligence – the ability to see the chart as a mathematical construct.

Elbert was gifted with mathematical intelligence and the evidence suggests that his perception of how a chart's power, harmony or discord could be measured evolved and developed over many years.

Elbert's astrological journey commenced in 1910 and by 1936 he had cracked the astrology code. It was an absolutely brilliant piece of intellectual detection. It's just amazing that one man could decipher ancient teachings and link the astrology code to the evolution of intelligence and ability. It's breathtaking Aquarian Age knowledge.

Then in 1938 he turned his attention to measuring the astrology code in individual birth charts. The inability to definitely state that planet A was the dominant planet in a specified chart was a big problem and Elbert saw measurement as the best solution. But at the start progress was slow and in 1943 the question of measurement got shelved when his life work was put in jeopardy by forces intent on silencing astrology and The Brotherhood of Light teachings.

William Drake was born January 24, 1912 at 8.49am LMT – 41N31; 83W03. The data is from him. He joined the Church of Light in 1935 but did not participate in the initial attempts to develop mathematical equations to measure astral-force and its functionality. In 1944 he was living in Los Angeles.

Bill Drake's chief interest was horary astrology and in the last three months of 1945 he was conducting a research project into picking the winner of a contest judging a horary chart. It was during 1945 that he and Elbert began collaborating on the development of a set of calculations that would reliably measure the power, harmony or discord of astral-force.

Developing mathematical concepts into practical, reliable results involves long hours of hard work and flashes of inspirational insight and Elbert and Bill's eureka moment came in early 1946.

It was during the first 4 months of 1946 that they set the parameters and developed all the equations that would provide you with a set of numbers to reliably measure your character. They saw your birth chart as a mathematical structure and provided a set of equations that would reliably measure its component parts.

The astrodynes were announced to the astrological community in September 1946 and following the announcement Elbert Benjamine and Bill Drake actively promoted the new tool for measuring astral-force by explaining the calculations and encouraging students to do them on their own charts.

There is one outstanding feature that distinguishes great men.

They help people by assisting them to become who they are. They discover or develop things that contribute to human welfare. So Bill Drake's contribution to human welfare, via his role in the development of the astrodynes, makes him a great man. His physical body ceased to function on December 16, 1983 and he relocated to inner-plane work.

Elbert Benjamine's contribution to human welfare can't be measured – not even by astrodynes. And even though the words he wrote have largely gone under the radar he enlightened humanity by providing information that only his intel-ligence could discover.

He went way beyond what the magnifying glass and electron microscope could detect and reveal. He entered the high-speed not-physical astral soul-world using his psychic abilities that were his only means of getting there.

Elbert's intelligence perceived reality in a way that it had never been perceived before.

His extraordinary intellect could fly to undiscovered regions where he found sensational and glorious information and his intelligence could read the book of nature correctly.

He provides you with glimpses of a region that has never before been explored – your soul. The words he wrote introduce you to a new personal reality. Your soul is a developing intelligence system; your intelligence and ability is being forged by experience in the laboratory of life; and there's an eternity of time in which to develop it. Elbert's perception of reality will save you from the lies, disinformation, mystical deceit and scientific deceptions that are everywhere.

Astrology is a specialized branch of knowledge and misconceptions abound, but with Elbert Benjamine you can avoid believing erroneous notions. He applied the scientific method to astrology and other occult phenomena. And no one has ever done that.

It required occult insight and deductive intelligence that he developed through his university education. He had a passion for definite and exact knowledge that could only be acquired through observation, investigation and statistical testing. So he investigated astrology by analyzing the physical evidence provided by the birth chart. And he invites you to explore your birth chart to discover yourself and then he inspires you to keep on exploring.

The whole of human history has produced only one Plato, one Shakespeare, one Thomas Edison, one Albert Einstein, one Sigmund Freud, one Mahatma Gandhi and one Elbert Benjamine. After a lifetime of non-stop work on behalf of The Brotherhood of Light Elbert's physical body ceased to function on November 18, 1951 and he transferred to the inner-plane where he continues to develop his intelligence and ability.

Elbert's astrological talent was second to none and Bill Drake had extraordinary mathematical intelligence. Their meeting produced one of the greatest intellectual achievements of all time – the measurement of astral-force.

Why we chose the number values we did

In May 1946 William Drake and Elbert Benjamine explained why they chose the number values they did. Here's what they wrote:

'For a wide variety of purposes it is highly desirable that a method be established of computing planetary prominence. And – which is probably the greater difficulty – that the method be as simple and easily applied as possible.

In considering such prominence there are three things to consider:

They are (1) houses; (2) aspects; and (3) the unmodified energy of the planet.

In reference to (2) and (3) the aspects and their orbs used in Hermetic astrology has weathered the test of time and seems a reliable basis for computing their influence on prominence. With the exception of the parallel and aspects involving Mercury we can simply use the number of the orb of the aspect of the particular planet in the house when the aspect is perfect, and then taper the number off proportionally to the outside limit of the orb which is zero.

When the parallel aspect is perfect it has the same energy as that of the same planets making the perfect conjunction aspect in the house involved. But as its orb is only 1 degree, its energy tapers off proportionally to the outside limit of this 1 degree.

Brotherhood of Light statistical work has determined that any planet in house 1, 4, 7 or 10 is prominent, and that any planet aspecting the Sun, Moon or Mercury with a reasonable degree of closeness is also prominent.

This contingency is taken care of by giving them wider orbs than the other planets.

Mercury has no wider orb than the other planets, therefore, except when Sun or Moon is involved and the wider orb used, to take care of its unusual power we are justified in adding to the prominence derived from an aspect involving Mercury a number that will give it an energy equivalent to that if the aspect involved Sun or Moon. To do this, for the conjunction or opposition we add 3, for the square or trine we add 2, and for each of the other zodiacal aspects we add 1. When Mercury is involved in a parallel aspect we give it the same energy as Sun or Moon when making a conjunction aspect in the same house.

So far we are on tested ground, and the number representing the prominence of each aspect made by a planet from a given house may be easily ascertained.

But irrespective of its aspects a planet in an angle is prominent. Just how great a value to give to house prominence in comparison to aspect prominence is open to wide difference of opinion. But if we give it no value for fear it may not be correct, we will never establish a method of computing planetary prominence. It is better to do the best we can in the light of present knowledge, and should future statistical studies show error in the evaluation here given, we can then adjust to the greater precision indicated. If the evaluation given here seems too low, it must be considered that in addition to its unaspected number, the house position also increases or decreases the prominence number of every aspect the planet makes.

In Hermetic astrology the highest number of degrees for an aspect is 15 when the Sun or Moon in house 1, 4, 7 or 10 forms a conjunction or opposition. So let us use this number to indicate the most powerful house influence possible in a chart. In the past there has been considerable discussion to indicate that the power of the sixth house is less than one-half the power of the first house; and that a planet has more power when it's near the cusp of a house. Let us, therefore, build a sliding scale from the weakest point in the chart from the standpoint of house position to the strongest point – taking 6·5 as the weakest point in the sixth house – following the general pattern of strength used for each house in Hermetic astrology.'

A few words about astrodynes

The formulation of a set of equations that would measure power, harmony and discord and give the planets, aspects, signs and houses in any birth chart numerical values was not only a milestone marking the progress of astrological knowledge, it was one of the truly great achievements of the Aquarian Age.

After eight years of experimental investigation and testing the equations that finally did the trick fell into place. And while in 1946 the calculations were tedious and time consuming now, in the 21st-century, they are done quickly and accurately by the Horoscope chart calculation program.

The accuracy and usefulness of any measuring scale depends upon the care and ingenuity of its creators and after eight years of experimental testing Elbert Benjamine and William Drake got it right. And the equations they developed are, in fact, superb and amazingly simple.

They quantify established astrological principles and by giving each birth chart marker a power, harmony and discord score they clarify its influence. As a measurement tool they give you greater reliability when assessing your birth chart. They do not change Hermetic astrology's knowledge-base, but by adding precision they could. And their use by an astrologically aware community will bring amazing benefits.

Hermetic astrology investigates and explains nature's laws. They're laws are designed by God; and God is a higher intelligence than science.

Yours are written in your birth chart. It provides a set of operating instructions. They're astrological principles and your challenge is to get in tune with the instructions. The astrodynes are here to help.

With astrodynes Elbert Benjamine invites you to live a measured life. And that's when the story written in your birth chart becomes that much more interesting.

William Drake explains...

'The chief function of the Hermetic system of astrology is to aid you to master yourself and your environment. Stellar Dynamics, contributing to the chief function of the Hermetic system, gives greater precision in determining what to expect from each birth chart position and each progressed aspect by inspecting the number of astrodynes, discordynes or harmodynes.

Vocational aptitudes are dependent upon the thought-cell activity of certain planetary types; therefore, it is very important to know which planets in your chart are the most active. And as house activity also increases your aptitude to follow a certain vocation successfully, it is desirable to know how weak or how powerful each house is.

There are birth chart and progressed constants for diseases; and as the aptitude of a disease to attack a particular zone of the body is influenced by the power of that sign, it is extremely important to know the power of each sign in your birth chart.

You may wish to undertake an activity on a certain date and knowing the power, harmony or discord of the planets and the house or houses involved is a decided advantage. And one of the most practical and best uses of Stellar Dynamics is selecting a harmonious time to start a venture.

You can pick a time when a harmonious major progression is being reinforced by sub-major or minor progressions so that the power of this harmonious aspect is at its most beneficial peak.

Therefore I would like to impress upon you that it is of the utmost importance to have and use astrodynes, harmodynes and discordynes. If you don't, you must, as your colleagues have done in the past, guess, often with embarrassing results.'

Astrodynes post 1946

Following the announcement of the astrodynes in September 1946 Elbert Benjamine and William Drake immediately began a series of articles in *The Rising Star* magazine explaining the calculations.

In 1950 Elbert Benjamine published *The Astrodyne Manual*. It presents a step by step guide to calculating the astrodynes so it's only recommended to those students who are mathematically inclined and who have a natural interest in how the birth chart and progressed astrodynes are calculated.

Astrology in the 1950s was nothing like the high-tech astrological world of today. Even though humanity was moving rapidly into the brave new world of Aquarian age science and technology the calculation of the birth chart, its aspects and astrodynes and the start, peak and finishing dates of the progressed aspects was done by hand. And most students lacked the mathematical expertise required to construct a birth chart and fewer still had the time and skills needed to calculate a chart's astrodynes.

In 1952 Doris Chase Doane published *Horoscopes of the U.S. Presidents* and presented the birth charts and hand-calculated astrodynes, of every president up until then. But by now, after going nowhere for six years, it seemed, that barring some technological miracle, the astrodynes were doomed to extinction.

In 1968 Ken Stone published *Astrodynes*, another work that focused on the math. Then in 1971 a technological miracle occurred when Horace A. Howe, PhD, Director of Astro Numeric Service in El Cerrito, California offered a computer service that could calculate a birth chart's astrodynes for a small fee.

It was followed by a similar service provided by Neil Michelson's Astro Computing Services and others. The astrodynes were now available to the astrological community.

In 1972 Ken Stone published *Delineation with Astrodynes*, the first work to introduce the astrodynes into chart interpretation. But the book has a credibility problem and suffers due to example charts that are unreliable and errors in the astrodyne calculations. And you won't learn anything about yourself and your chart by reading about other people's charts and their lives.

In 1974 Doris Chase Doane published *How to Read Cosmodynes* – a practical guide to using astrodynes in chart interpretation written for those with a good knowledge of astrology. In it she defines Stellar Dynamics as 'judging the relative power, harmony and discord of the four basic factors in the natal and progressed chart – planets, signs, houses and aspects – by employing astrodynes, harmodynes and discordynes' and claims that she coined the term Stellar Dynamics in 1952, although its use can be traced back to 1946.

In the introduction she explains that Dr Horace A. Howe... 'suggested that I write a book on how to use the cosmodynes, his term for stellar dynamics.' She continued to use the term cosmodynes in her work on vocational selection and while cosmodyne and astrodyne refer to exactly the same thing a potential for confusion does exist. It's bad science to call the same thing by two different names.

Since then a research project that employed astrodynes failed to give the expected results and this resulted in some users questioning their reliability. It resulted in some students making progress by going back to the past and the old way of measuring planet prominence. This situation reveals problems that easily arise when an observer seeks to replicate previous findings using new technology. And it reveals just how personal the birth chart really is and that the best person to research yours is you.

Nothing has been published on astrodynes till the eBook *Astrodynes*, by DW Sutton/*Astrology for Aquarius*, in April 2019.