

their manifest connexion with neighbouring constellations, seem to demonstrate?(1)

What would be the consequence, if, as Macrobius distinctly says,(2) “each sign should be considered as an emblem of the sun, considered in some one of his effects or general phenomena, and without any reference to the months through which he passes, either into the sign or into its opposite?”

Finally, how would it be if names had been given in an abstract manner to the divisions of space or time, as they are now assigned by astronomers to what they call the signs, and had not been applied to the constellations or groups of stars but at an epoch determined by chance, so that we could conclude nothing farther from their signification?(3)

Here are, doubtless, sufficient arguments to deter an ingenuous mind from seeking into astronomy for proofs of the antiquity of nations; but even if these pretended proofs were as certain as they are vague and destitute of convincing results, what conclusion could we thence draw against the great catastrophe of which we have so many other indisputable demonstrations? We can only allow that, as some modern writers have said, astronomy was amongst the sciences preserved by those persons whom this catastrophe spared.

(1) See the *Zodiac Explained, or Researches on the Origin and Signification of the Constellations of the Greek Sphere*, translated from the Swedish by M. Swartz. Paris, 1809.

(2) Saturnal. l. 1, c. 21, sub fin. *Nec solus Leo, sed signa quoque universa Zodiaci ad naturam solis jure referunter, &c.* It is only in this explanation of Leo and Capricornus, that he has recourse to any phenomena relative to the seasons; Cancer even is explained under a general point of view, and with relation to the obliquity of the progress of the sun.

(3) See M. de Guignes' *Memoir on the Zodiacs of the Eastern Nations*, *Academie des Belles Lettres*, vol. xlvii.