

NOSTRADAMUS

A short Essay by

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*Nostradamus in un dipinto del figlio César de Nostredame
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c6/Nostradamus_by_Cesar.jpg
César de Notre-Dame [Public domain or Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons*

2. Edizione

Introduction.

The ingenuity and time that have been wasted to bring out a sensible theory on Nostradamus are awesome. It is not my intention to add more time and waste of wisdom, whether I have any of it or not, to prove or refute the interpretation/truth of any of his predictions. On this road, it has become clear for centuries that one gets nowhere: everybody will keep his ideas and will feel that the others are complete, stubborn imbeciles.

Facts

I wish to state now that I think that Nostradamus did not see in the future more than anybody else, and nothing of any use can be extracted from his quatrains, essentially:

- 1) because of the lack of a precise temporal collocation of the events which are predicted (with only a few exception that I know);
- 2) because his predictions clearly reflect the world of his times, when the kings, their families, and single individuals defined politics.

Moreover, international politics only considered Western Europe, mostly France (and Italy), North Africa, and the Middle East. The other parts of the world, rigorously in the Northern Hemisphere, received only marginal attention. At least, this is what Nostradamus wrote in his letter to Henri II of France.

(“Et l’ensemble sera composé et accordé au calcul Astronomique, correspondant aux années, aux mois et aux semaines (aux temps) et aux régions, aux contrées et à la plupart des villes et des cités (aux lieux) de toute l’Europe, y incluant l’ Afrique et une partie de l’Asie, à cause du changement des régions, qui s’approchent à la plupart de tous ces climats, et il sera composé par une faction naturelle”. Climat is correctly translated as “latitude”)

In fact, Nostradamus appears to consider only one republic, that of Venice. Consequently, the Centuries are rich in names of places, which were well known to a Frenchman of the XVI century, but almost nobody not living in their neighborhood would be capable to place on the map today. Too many interpretations are left open to the imaginations of the interpreters if one wants to include the USA, Russia, China, Japan and so on.

An “Americh” (X,66) is mentioned once, but it is not clear whether it is a person or a place. If it means America, then one should wonder why such an important (nowadays) country is mentioned only once. It would mean that Nostradamus knew the existence of America, but assigned to it very little importance in the future.

There are indeed also name of persons: for example, Henry II had a famous semi-official lover, Diane of Poitiers, and attempts to identify her with Princess Diana in the two instances in which “Diane” (a name also used to indicate the Moon) is mentioned, seem to me to show only that the interpreter was looking for sensationalism. Let Princess Diana rest in peace.

3) Finally, his staunchest supporters insist that some of the predictions turned out to be correct, albeit mostly with the help of some desperately acrobatic efforts of interpretations. However, if true, this proves the uselessness of the predictions of Nostradamus: **nobody interpreted any of the “correct” prediction before the fact, in such a form as to allow anybody to take either advantage of it, or corrective, preemptive actions.** Nobody of whom I know, interpreting Nostradamus, ever arrived at anything of use to him.

However, I have seen with pleasure that no Wikipedia in the languages I verified quotes anymore by name the author of no less than three volumes of interpretations of the prophecies of Nostradamus, by the title “*Conversations with Nostradamus.*” Here the author applied no logical system but claimed to be in “hypnotic” or “telepathic” connection with the seer, who, of course, gave her the correct version of the interpretations. Of all non-scientific methods of interpreting Nostradamus, as Wodehouse would have put it, this “would have taken the cake with almost insolent ease.” Having thrown her work in the dustbin can only do a favor to the cause of the supporters of Nostradamus as a serious, if not truthful astrologer.

No, there are more interesting things for me, also because I have seen them rarely discussed. Therefore, I will briefly present the following topics:

I. The intentions of Nostradamus;

II. An explanation of the closing date of 3797 for the predictions, announced in the "Preface";

III. A proposal of a key to read the Prophecies and related works, whether or not they predict the future;

IV. An idea of how the prophecies were composed;

V. A short computer test-program, using the method explained in IV, which allows composing quatrains, in pure Nostradamus style. So to speak, a "Do-it-yourself Nostradamus."

In a word, a rather large intent for such a minuscule essay.

I. The intentions of Nostradamus

It is evident that Nostradamus was hoping for a job as court astrologer. This purpose required a certain caution because the means to achieve it were in contradiction with each other.

- (1) He should have acquired positive fame, by making correct predictions, as broadly as possible;
- (2) On the other hand, no employer likes to receive bad news about himself.
- (3) The predictions, in general, must not be open to the public.

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The simplest way to reconcile these points is that the prospective Astrologer abstains from publishing anything, and instead reserves his predictions only to the King or whoever employs him and communicates them in private conversations.

In fact, we know the names of many Court astrologers, and a few anecdotes about them, but we know that prudently they wrote very little. Thus, the question is, why did Nostradamus write his predictions?

The answer probably resides in "how", not "why" or "what" did he write. His written predictions belong to two categories.

1. First of all, we have what we could call “advertising predictions.”

Most biographers report that around the age of forty, from 1550 onwards, until his death in 1566, Nostradamus wrote almanacs (*Almanachs, Prognostications, Présages*), generally one year for the next, although sometimes he published two or three in one year. Apparently, they were released each year until after his death (2 July 1566). We do not have his complete works from 1550 onwards, but, apparently, he enjoyed a broad success. If his almanacs were not meant from the beginning to promote his highest ambitions, he certainly became interested in making himself known in the highest circles of the society. Thus, around 1554-55, he added some hints aimed at making the Court of France believe that he had more critical revelations of their interest in his store, leaving it to the Court to call him and have with him private conversations. That, I think, was his dream. Indeed, **Queen Catherine de Médicis** became interested in his Almanac for 1555 and summoned him to Paris, where he allegedly made his prediction regarding her seven children (but one has good reason to suspect that, if he knew, he did not say all he knew). He received a meager (so he said) compensation, got scared, probably fearing that his methods of prediction could make him the target of the Inquisition, and eventually left Paris somewhat in a hurry in September of the same year. He maintained his contacts with the Court and other friends and admirers in there but had no fixed employment until very late, and at a point (1661) **Charles IX**, son of Catherine, even asked a friend to imprison him. He died on 2 July 1566, having predicted his death to his secretary **Chavigny**, who eventually edited his almanac for 1566-67.

2. In the meantime (before 1555) he had started on his major work, “LES PROPHETIES”, which was supposed to be in ten books, each containing 100 quatrains, for a total of 1000 stanzas. For reasons variously explained, the total in our hands is 942 stanzas. 58 quatrains of the VII Century are absent and apparently never existed. A sarcastic commentator would say that here we have an unfulfilled prediction, i.e., a poor start.

But “how” did he write? The near impossibility of interpreting his Prophecies was the secret of their success: “*ignotum pro magnifico*” (what cannot be understood must be magnificent). That was the ingenious yet simple solution of his problems: writing much, publishing much, but in such a way that the meaning of his predictions - if any – could not be understood without the

help of the seer. Here, the device of not dating the predictions was another stroke of genius to achieve the same purpose.

The publications of Nostradamus sold reasonably well (judging from his will, 300 000 of today's dollars) but did not give him real wealth, nor the vast renown he apparently expected during his lifetime. Instead, he complained that practically everybody, from all learned layers of society, from England to France, was against him, and more or less offensive pamphlets appeared everywhere, written by Catholics as well as Protestants. *Still, and that was a real prophecy, he stated that he relied on his fame after death, the one evident and successful prediction I have found.*

3. The works of Nostradamus: The Almanac of 1559.

How could the Court of France be impressed, not by the so-called Centuries, but by the Présages or Almanac of 1559, the most unfortunate of all - for a reputed astrologer? Here I must note that we do not have any original French edition of the 1559 Almanac, but the already mentioned Jean-Aimé de Chavigny (a sort of secretary, and no doubt a believer in the predicting powers of Nostradamus) copied and published thirteen quatrains allegedly related to 1559. If they are authentic, we may also guess why they disappeared.

Here I give the originals of two of them, with my literal translation, which is a disadvantage, because the Prophecies gain much in translation, especially in English or – even better- in American.

One must keep in mind that the King of France, Henri II, was wounded in a tournament on 30 June and died on 10 July 1559. The Présage of the two months gives these warnings:

XL 1559 Iuin.
De maison sept par mort mortelle suite,
Gresle, tempeste. pestilent mal, fureurs:
Roy d'Orient d'Occident tous en fuite,
Subiuguera ses iadis conquereurs.

Of house seven through death, deadly sequence
Hail, storm, pestilent evil, fury:
King of East, West, all in flight,
He will submit his former conquerors.

*XLI 1559 Iuillet.
Predons pillez chaleur, grand seicheresse,
Par trop non estre. cas non veu, inoui:
A l'estranger la trop grande caresse,
Neuf pays Roy. l'Orient esblouy.*

Robbers plunder heat, great drought,
For too much not to be. Case never seen, unheard of:
Abroad the too great caress (?) [I would guess
“famine”]
Nine countries King. East dazzled.

No matter how one choses to interpret the various words of the Présage,
there is no serious hint of the death of Henri II. Then, one could ask, how
about the famous quatrain (I-35):

*« Le lion jeune le vieux surmontera
En champ bellique par singulier duelle,
Dans cage d'or les yeux lui crèvera,
Deux classes une puis mourir mort cruelle. » ?*

The young lion will overcome the older one,
in a field of combat in single fight:
He will pierce his eyes in their golden cage;
two wounds in one, then he dies a cruel death. (I.35)
??

Apparently, no contemporary historian mentioned this quatrain, in particular
as referring to the death of Henry II, although other astrologers apparently
told the king to avoid any “*singulier duelle*” (among them, **Luca Gaurico** is

explicitly mentioned). But the king was then forty years old, and any physician could have given the same advice, or even any friend (**Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy**, apparently, did so). Probably, the fact that the king died was an extra, but certainly, a king should not enter a joust against a younger and capable opponent, with the risk of being beaten: it was the end of the day, and the king had been jousting (and winning) the whole afternoon. These facts lend support to the theory that the quatrain was composed after the event, also because it appears only starting with the 1614 edition of the “Prophecies” (the first edition was in 1555).

Posthumous fame.

If Nostradamus enjoyed a broad, if contrasted, fame during his life, an impressive legend started to build up after his death. A collection of more or less remarkable facts enriched his biography. Such events happened both before and after his death (voyages, marvelous healings, places visited, people met, predictions, etc.). Even the prophecy of his death seems to have been manipulated by his faithful secretary, Chavigny, who published the related quatrain (CXLI) two years after the event *for the wrong month*, November instead of July 1566.

CXLI. Novembre (!)

Du retour d’Ambassade. dô de Roy. mis au lieu

Plus n’en fera: sera allé a DIEV:

Parans plus proches, amis, freres du sang,

Trouué tout mort prés du lict & du banc. (Publ.1568)

Back from an Embassy, a gift from the King. But back home
He won’t do anything more: he will be gone to GOD
Nearest relatives, friends, blood brothers,
Found already dead next to bed and bench.

Chavigny appears to be so blinded by his faith in Nostradamus, *as to become unreliable and to put under serious questions all quatrains of which we do not possess a published version preceding the death of Nostradamus.*

Inevitably, the most astonishing facts find their sources in traditions without any reliable documentation: such is the story of the three revolutionary soldiers who dug out his body to discover to their surprise the date of the disinterment, May 1791, engraved on a plate or medallion placed on the breast of the corpse. Then one of the soldiers, a man from Marseille, drunk wine using the skull of the corpse as glass, and according to the tradition was immediately killed by a stray bullet. Beyond hearsay, there is no basis for this story. But again, en-Wikipedia states that “Curiously, this particular story seems to have been first recorded by **Samuel Pepys** as early as 1667, long before the French Revolution. Pepys records in his celebrated diary a legend that, before his death, Nostradamus made the townsfolk swear that his grave would never be disturbed; but that 60 years later his body was exhumed, whereupon a brass plaque was found on his chest, correctly stating the date and time when his grave would be opened, and cursing the exhumers”. I believe that two such predictions cancel each other as if it were necessary.

As I said earlier in this essay, no prediction by Nostradamus, even those which, according to the experts, turned out to be correct after the event, was interpreted before the fact, at least in such a form as to allow anybody to understand it and take either advantage of it, or corrective, preemptive actions.

The main problem, of course, is that only very few clear dates (eleven to be precise) are given for predicted events in the whole text of at least 1000 predictions.

Here is the list, for a total of 11 dated prediction, some dubious:

1) I.49 1700

*Beaucoup beaucoup avant telles menées,
Ceux d’Orient par la vertu lunaire
L’an mil sept cens feront grands emmenées,
Subjuguant presque le coing Aquilonaire.*

Long before these happenings
the people of the East, influenced by the Moon,
in the year 1700 will cause many to be carried away,
and will almost subdue the Northern area.

Main events: Election of Pope Clemens XI, born in Urbino; The
“War of the North” begins

2) III.56 (1)743 – very uncertain;
Montauban, Nismes, Avignon et Besier,
Peste, tonnerre et gresle a fin de Mars:
De Paris pont, Lyon mur, Montpellier,
Depuis six cens et sept vingts trois pars.

Montauban, Nismes, Avignon and Beziars,
Plague, thunder and hail in the wake of Mars:
Of Paris bridge, Lyons wall, Montpellier,
After six hundreds and seven score three pairs.

Main events: Pestilence in Italy

3) III.57 (290 years counting from 1557 ? =1847 uncertain);
Sept fois changer verrez gent Britannique,
Taintz en sang en deux cents nonante an
Franche non point par appuy Germanique
Aries doute son pole Bastarnien.

Seven times will you see the British nation change,
Steeped in blood in 290 years:
Free not at all its support Germanic.
Aries doubt his 'Bastarnian' pole.

Main events: in London the Communist League begins;
insurrections in Southern Italy.

**In those 300 years the British nation changed with the
revolution against Charles I, the restoration under Charles II,
The Glorious Revolution.** Of course, one can add other
(bloodless) changes, but then it is easy to go well above the
number of seven (which were predicted by Nostradamus).

4) III.77 year 1727, October
Le tiers climat sous Aries comprins,
L'an mil sept cens vingt et sept en Octobre,

*Le Roy de Perse par ceux d’Egypte prins
Conflit, mort, perte: a la croix grand approbre.*

The third climate included under Aries
The year 1727 in October,
The King of Persia captured by those of Egypt:
Conflict, death, loss: to the cross great shame.

The event: a fairly obscure peace treaty (Hamedan) between
Afghans and Ottomans. (Egypt had nothing to do with this).

5-6 VI.2 (1)580?; e (1)703?;
*En l’an cinq cens octante plus et moins,
On attendra le siecle bien estrange:
En l’an sept cens, et trois cieux en tesmoings,
Que plusieurs regnes un a cinq feront change.*

In the year five hundred eighty more or less,
One will await a very strange century:
In the year seven hundred and three the heavens witness
thereof,
That several kingdoms one to five will make a change.

Main events: 1580: union of the kingdoms of Portugal and
Spain (will last until 1657)
1703: Saint Petersburg is founded; commercial treaty Portugal-
England.
1700 : Great War of the North : Sweden against Russia, Poland,
Denmark.

7. VI.54:1607
*Au poinct du jour au second chant du coq,
Ceulx de Tunes, de Fez, et de Bugie,
Par les Arabes, captif le Roy Maroq,
L’an mil six cens et sept, de Liturgie.*

At daybreak at the second crowing of the cock,
Those of Tunis, of Fez and of Bougie,
By the Arabs the King of Morocco captured,
The year sixteen hundred and seven, of the Liturgy.

Main events: many, but none regarding north Africa.

8) VIII.49 six february;

*Saturn: au beuf joue en l'eau, Mars en fleiche,
Six de Fevrier mortalité donra,
Ceux de Tardaigne a Briges si grand breche,
Qu'a Ponteroso chef Barbarin mourra.*

Saturn in Taurus, Jupiter in Aquarius. Mars in Sagittarius,
the sixth of February brings death.
Those of Tardaigne so great a breach at Bruges,
that the barbarian chief will die at Ponteroso.

Deadly events on 6 February: many, but just a few in Europe.
1934, attempted far-right coup in France (bloodless); 1958:
Munich air disaster; 2000:Russia captures Grozny, Chechenya.

9) VIII.71, year 1607 (see VI.54)

10) X.72, 1999 seventh month;
*L'an mil neuf cens nonante neuf sept mois,
Du ciel viendra vn grand Roy d'effrayeur:
Resusciter le grand Roy d'Angolmois,
Avant que Mars regner par bonheur.*

The year 1999, seventh month,
From the sky will come a great King of Terror:
To bring back to life the great King of the Mongols,
Before and after Mars to reign by good luck.

Main events: 23 July, Mohammed VI of Morocco becomes king
upon the death of his father Hassan II ; Fourteen Kosovo Serb
villagers are killed by ethnic Albanian gunmen in the village of
Staro Gračko. July 27 Twenty-one people die in a canyoning
disaster near Interlaken, Switzerland.

*Reading all the attempts which were made to interpret this date as the
prediction of the 11/9 massacre, or even the end of the world, and
prove Nostradamus right makes interesting reading.*

11) X.91 election (of Pope?) 1 January 1609
*Clergé Romain l'an mil six cens et neuf,
Au chef de l'an feras election:
D'un gris et noir de la Compagne yssu,
Qui onc ne feut si maling.*

In the year 1609, Roman clergy,
At the beginning of the year you will hold an election:
Of one gray and black issued from Campania,
Never was there one so wicked as he.

No election was made in 1609, neither of a Pope, nor of a Jesuit General (la Compagne?).

There are two more dated predictions in the letter to Henri II:
1) *the Christian Church will be persecuted more fiercely than it ever was in Africa, and this will last up to the year 1792.*

There was no particular persecution in Africa. However, there was a persecution in France (the massacres of September), which went on after 1792.

2) *For according to the signs in the heavens, the reign of Saturn will return; so that, all told, the world is near an death-dealing revolution: from this moment, before 177 years, three months and 11 days have passed, by pestilence, long famine, wars, and most of all, by floods, the world will be so diminished, with so few remaining, that no one will be found willing to work the fields, which will remain wild for as long a period as they had been tilled.*

This prophecy does not come from a quatrain, but from the "Préface" to his son Cesar, dated 1 March 1555: from which, $1555+177 = 1732$ (12 June to be precise). If one reads carefully, there is no explicit prediction of the end of the world, and in any case on 12 June 1732 nothing of relevance happened.

Other dates could be reconstructed from some astrological indications: a difficult task made uncertain by the recognized limited knowledge of Astrology attributed to Nostradamus by professional Astrologers.

In any case, all other predictions could refer either to tomorrow or equally well to the year 3000. Who would take any action on this basis?

The supporters of Nostradamus might suggest that he clarified his obscure predictions in private conversations. I would add: maybe with the unreliable Chavigny.

One can make useful exercises: for example, to take quatrains (and translations) and guess which events interpreters claimed to be predicted by them.

Example:

*Le sang du juste à Londres fera faute
Bruslés par fouldres de vint trois les six.
La dame antique cherra de place haute :
De mesme secte plusieurs seront occis.*

The blood of the just will commit a fault at London,
Burnt through lightning of twenty threes the six:
The ancient lady will fall from her high place,
Several of the same sect will be killed

Believe or not, this is almost unanimously considered to be the prediction of the fire of London (II,51), “complete with exact date” in the second verse. Others think that the second verse means “burned by fire, six every twenty-three houses,” and still others accept both explanations at the same time, admiring the cleverness of the author. Definitely a clear alarm for the fire brigade of London in 1666, 1766, ...until 3766.

Frankly, I would say that the quatrain might refer to the persecution of the Catholic Church under Henry VIII and followers, with the burning (they were actually hung) of the justs, six out of 23 (one in four). The persecution, of course, had been going on since 1538. Alternatively, the prophecy might refer to the persecutions of the Protestants by Mary I of England, which, however, had been under way since 1553. In either case the prediction would be neither clear nor impressive.

At first sight, finding an explanation in some complicated way centuries after the facts sounds almost ludicrous, but I would not be so stern. Maybe, the hope of the interpreters is that of understanding the key to interpreting also other future events. However, frequently the same quatrain is used to explain many events (even by the same interpreter). Who can tell which one is the event to which the prophecy refers, and can thus give us the key we want to find?

II. The Date 3797.

Nostradamus writes in his Préface: *“j’ay composé Livres de prophéties, contenant chacun cent quatrains astronomiques de prophéties, lesquelles j’ay un peu voulu raboter obscurément : & sont perpétuelles vaticinations, pour d’yci à l’année 3797.”* “I have composed books of prophecies, of which each contains one hundred astronomical quatrains of prophecies. I have sought to polish them a bit obscurely. They are perpetual prophecies, for they extend from now to the year 3797.”

One should observe that Nostradamus does not explicitly say that 3797 is the date of the end of the world, although in the same Préface he mentions a few times the “Last conflagration”. But the date of 3797 and the “last conflagration” are not identified by him. On the other hand, “Yci” according to the letter to Henri II, seems to be the 14th of March 1557.

Having said that, those who, from Nostradamus's prophecies, foresee the end of the world before 3797, must explain why and how they do so. Any author that, on the basis of other quatrains written by the same Nostradamus, predicts an earlier end of the world, such as 1999, has to explain what happens between 1999 and 3797. Some authors have taken the toil of explaining that 3797, in reality, means another much nearer date: many wrote that the year concealed under 3797 was indeed 1999. But in these exercises, they have against them Nostradamus himself, who wrote that “some will frown, seeing such a long extension of time” (*“Que possible fera retirer le front a quelques-uns en voyant si longue extension”*).

I admit that other sources of inspiration, such as the Bible or other, less known texts, might suggest earlier dates for the end of the world, but clearly *they cannot be originated by the text of Nostradamus*, as I will try to explain.

Still, it is worth noticing that, taking the number 3797 at its face value, it follows that the Prophecies (942 quatrains) should be spread over about 2300 years, which means that about 41 quatrains should refer to each century, that is on the average not more than one every two-three years. However, today (2017), some interpreters claim that Nostradamus made about ten (mostly evil) prophecies for 2017 alone. Interpreters should show a minimum of restraint, because most of these events will not happen, and will be forgotten in less than fifty years.

More interesting to me is the question of how Nostradamus came to this extraordinary date. It is generally admitted that Nostradamus believed in the existence of cosmic cycles. In the quotation I made at the beginning of this section, he writes about "*perpetuelles vaticinations*", perpetual prophecies. The notion comes from astrology and is clear: the same relative position of the celestial bodies dominating our destiny repeats with a well (?) defined period, which means that all events should be exactly repeated forever, cyclically. Whether the end of each cycle is marked by a universal conflagration or similar disaster is possible, but not assured.

Nostradamus was scorned by professional astrologers, who claimed (with reason) that he made frequent mistakes in his calculation. This, of course, complicates the task of unraveling the figure of 3797. In any case, I can see three approaches, all of them rooted in the fact that the creation of the world in the western tradition was believed to have taken place around 4000 BC. **The conclusion is that Nostradamus was obviously aiming at a cycle lasting close to 8000 years**, after which, predictions would become useless, because all events would virtually repeat in the same succession forever.

As we said, astrologers thought that, as planets rule our destiny and the same celestial configuration repeats cyclically, so should the fate of Mankind. This belief led the astrologers to the concepts of the "Platonic Year" and /or "Great Year," on whose duration there was no agreement: we go from Josephus (600 years) to Macrobius (15000 years). After the discovery by Hipparchus of the precession of the equinoxes became known, however, the length of the "Great Year" increased to 26000 or even 36000 years. In conclusion, Nostradamus could have picked almost any number of years for this cycle, and the only constraint was that he had to make his choice a credible one. Of course, Nostradamus here also had to be very careful: God and free will can intervene and change the general scenario. Even more dangerous, the Holy Scripture foresees the end of the world, a prediction which certainly was well clear in the mind of Nostradamus.

In any case, based on the revolution of the planets and Moon I have found no credible way to get to a "Platonic Year" close to 8000 years.

In 1558 Nostradamus wrote to Henri II a dedicatory letter of his 1558 edition, which is now missing, as an introduction to the VIII, IX and X Centuries. It is a curious letter in the sense that it makes many predictions which one

cannot find in the text of the Centuries. Most of them are not dated, but many of them (I would even say most of them) appear to be in chronological order. Maybe a patient interpreter should start from that letter to find the key to the “Centuries.” Interestingly, many interpreters think that Nostradamus predicts the advent of Henri IV (who at that time was five years old) and even claim that the letter is (cautiously) written to him rather than Henri II. I don’t want to enter into these matters, which add darkness to obscurity. What matters here is that Nostradamus makes two calculations of the number of years from the creation to the birth of Christ:

1) Of the first he gives no total, just the partial elements: From Adam to Noah, 1242 years; from Noah “and the flood” to Abraham, 1080. From Abraham to Moses, 515 or 516; From Moses to David, 570; From David to Jesus, 1350.

Total: 4757, which, summed to 3797, gives 8554 years.

2) Much later in the text, Nostradamus proceeds to a second calculation, based neither on classical authors nor the Scriptures, but on his inspiration, which seems to indicate that he had a precise number in mind.

Of this calculation, he gives the total: from the creation of the world to Jesus Christ, the time is 4173 years and 8 months. Summing to 3797 we get 7970. However, the case of this second calculation is far less clear. If we do the calculation following the dates and events he gives, we get 4092 and two months. Summing to 3797 we get 7889.

The most confusing information relates to the stay of the Jews in Egypt. Nostradamus states:

“From the birth of Abraham... 100 years ... till the birth of Isaac. And 60 years later Jacob was born. 130 years elapsed between the time he entered Egypt and the time he came out. Between the entry of Jacob into Egypt and the exodus, 430 years passed”.

As one can see, this does not help. One would think that Nostradamus misread the Masoretic chronology, which states that there were 290 years between the birth of Abraham and the entrance of Jacob in Egypt, given by the sum of 100 from the birth of Abraham to the birth of Isaac, 60 to the birth of Jacob, 130 to the entrance of Jacob in Egypt. Clearly, these 130 years are a problem in both chronologies.

But it does not matter, because Nostradamus cheated, as we have seen, in his wish to have a figure of about 8000 years for the duration of the whole cycle he probably had in mind. He arrived at 7970.

Does this number make any sense by itself? We make use of this number in two ways:

1) the preaching of Christ started at the age of thirty, which summed to 7970 makes a round figure of 8000. But then we are left with the task of explaining what is so special about the figure of 8000.

2) If we rely either on the much advertised weakness in mathematics of Nostradamus, or on the fact that, as we said, the second calculation presents a number of doubts, ten years could be recovered, and the number 7970 could become 7980. (For example, a mistake or a misprint could have produced a date for the creation of 4173 instead of 4183 BCE). But 7980 is the *Julian Period*, allegedly invented by **Joseph Scaliger**, to put into agreement the major time reckoning systems in use in ancient time, i.e. the Indiction (with a cycle of 15 years), the Solar Number (with a cycle of 28 years) and the Metonic number, referring to the phases of the Moon (with a cycle of 19 years).

NOTE: Every 19 years the phases of the moon repeat in the same days of the week (Metonic Cycle), while in the Julian calendar (not Gregorian) the days of the week correspond to the same date of all months every 28 years. The Indiction cycle of 15 years had fiscal, not astronomical reasons, and was in use probably starting from the fourth century AD.

The minimum common multiple ($15 \times 19 \times 28$) is indeed 7980: if on any year Y the Indiction year is A, the Solar Number is B and the Metonic number is C, in year Y+ 7980 years we will have again the same trio, A B C, which will repeat in the same sequence, until Y + 2 x 7980 etc...to infinity. If Scaliger *invented* the Julian Period, then it is unlikely that Nostradamus, who was born almost forty years earlier, also used it, although it is not excluded. However, **Herschel**, who proposed to extend the use of the "Julian cycle" also to days, wrote: "*We owe its invention or revival to Joseph Scaliger, who is said to have received it from the Greeks of Constantinople*". (Sir J F W Herschel, *Outlines of Astronomy*, London 1858, p. 678).

What is certain is that Scaliger started his whole system from 1 January 4713 BCE, a date in which $A=B=C=1$. But this is not really important. It is almost sure that Nostradamus would have started from the creation of the World, whatever A, B, C (calculated backward) were at that time, being confident that after 7980 years the cycle could start anew with the same A, B, C.

I only repeat once more that Nostradamus does not say that 3797 is the year of the end of the world, just the end of a cycle of his "*perpetuelles vaticinations*", which might be repeated as many times as God will please. But the destiny of the men which will reproduce the men who lived in the present cycle will be subjected both to the will of God and to their free will. On the other hand, the end of the world might happen earlier, even before 3797, but such a statement cannot be found in the Prophecies of Nostradamus. He knew very well his Gospel, that: "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only*" (Matth.24.36).

In a sense, Nostradamus presented us with a virtually eternal world, with repeating cycles of 7980 year or so, but bound to be interrupted at any (unpredictable) time at the call of God.

Lastly, if all I wrote is correct, the Seventh Millennium started in 1827 and will end in 2827.

This is all I have to offer on this subject. If it has already been said, I apologize to those who first thought of this explanation for the number 3797.

III. A proposed help on how to read the Prophecies.

My belief is that, if people want to play a mad game, there must be a method in their folly. I now propose a table I never saw elsewhere. Again, it is quite possible that I did not read enough, and I apologize to any author of any similar table. The table is simply a correspondence between Metals, Colors, Planets, Animals, Nations, weekdays. It was more or less complete already at the time of Nostradamus and I think that he did not invent it. However, the table allows the Astrologer to vary the meaning of a sentence from one involving Alchemy, and therefore Metals, into one involving, all or in parts,

any other category. The advantage is that the already large number of meanings of each quatrain is broadened by a large factor.

Metals	Colors	Planets	Animals	Nations	Week days
Gold	Gold/Yellow	Sun	Lion/Rooster	France	Sunday
Silver	Silver/white	Moon	Wolf?	Church	Monday
Iron	Red	Mars	Horse	Rome/Spain	Tuesday
Mercury	Purple	Mercury	Snake?	England/Portugal	Wednesday
Tin	Blue	Jupiter	Eagle	Empire	Thursday
Copper	Green	Venus	Dragon?	Islam	Friday
Lead	Black	Saturn	Donkey	Jews	Saturday

Let's see how the table above can provide some help for the game of interpreting Nostradamus. See for example the first quatrain of Century III:

*Après combat et bataille navale,
Le grand Neptune a son plus haut befroy:
Rouge adversaire de peur viendra pasle,
Mettant le grand Ocean en effroy.*

After combat and naval battle,
The great Neptune in his highest belfry:
Red adversary will become pale with fear,
Putting the great Ocean in dread.

If you interpret Red as Spain (see table), there you have a fairly clear description of the storm which severely damaged the Spanish Armada after the (inconclusive) battle of Gravelines (1588). It is not really necessary, but one could make the quatrain even more explicit by implying a comma in the last verse: "Mettant le, Grand Ocean en effroy", which, translated, would sound "As the great Ocean puts him in dread".

Still, on the basis of this fairly clear quatrain, if you had been King Philip II of Spain, would you have given up the attack on England?

There is a theory that the number of the Quatrain indicates the two last figures of the date of the event. In this case Philip II could sleep peacefully, as this quatrain is numbered 01, not 88.

Frankly, I wish this table could have a broader application, but the quatrains to which it applies are maybe one in twenty. Still, it might be of some help.

IV. An Idea of how the prophecies were composed.

*“...così al vento, ne le foglie lievi
si perdea la sentenza di Sibilla».* (DANTE, *Paradiso*, XXXII, 65-66)

Nostradamus quoted a number of different systems he used to arrive at his predictions, but many commentators agree that most of them were given only as examples. Perhaps astrology was the main instrument, but he might have refined the result of astrological divination in other ways.

Nevertheless, he was heavily criticised by professional astrologers of the day, such as **Laurens Videl**, for incompetence and for assuming that "comparative horoscopy" (the comparison of future planetary configurations with those accompanying known past events) could actually predict what would happen in the future (from en.Wikipedia and others).

Suppose however that he had an insufficient knowledge of Astrology: then, the similarity of events is sufficient even without knowing what was the astronomical situation in both cases. This might give the date, if we only knew which was the original event.

Thus, I think that he used the method (roughly) attributed to the Sybil. Here is the recipe:

- 1) He wrote (or found already written) **past history** in quatrains, better if rhyming as ABAB
- 2) he cut the quatrains in couples of verses, rhyming two by two (AA and BB);
- 3) then by a random process (the Sybil used the wind) he selected two quatrains, ABAB, and abab, and joined the couples of verses two by two to make quatrains with the right rhymes: AbAb (or aAaA, BbBb etc, for that matter).

4) He retouched here and there the resulting quatrains to give them a more prophetic appearance.

Example:

i) By some random process, two Quatrains (A and B) are selected from a text: the text might have been any text, either written by Nostradamus or not, either referring to the future or to the past. But, since the verses of the original are scrambled, it is irrelevant whether we succeed in finding the original text, or we use directly the Centuries by Nostradamus. So, we use two random Quatrains by Nostradamus:

A: IV.5)

Croix, paix, soubz un accomply divin verbe,
L'Espagne et Gaule seront unis ensemble:
Grand clade proche, et combat tresacerbe,
Coeur si hardy ne sera qui ne tremble.

Cross, peace, under one the divine word accomplished,
Spain and Gaul will be united together:
Great disaster near, and combat very bitter:
No heart will be so hardy as not to tremble.

B: IV.75)

Prest a combatre fera defection,
Chef adversaire obtiendra la victoire.
L'arriere garde fera defension.
Les defaillans mort au blanc territoire.

Ready to fight one will desert,
The chief adversary will obtain the victory:
The rear guard will make a defense,
The faltering ones dead in the white territory.

Taking the lines marked in red, we get a quatrain with the right rhymes:

Croix, paix, soubz un accomply divin verbe,
Chef adversaire obtiendra la victoire
Grand clade proche, et combat tres acerbe,
Les defaillans mort au blanc territoire.

Cross, peace, under one accomplished divine word,
Enemy chief will obtain the victory
Great massacre near, and fight very bitter,
Those who fall dead on white territory.

One could find a prediction of the Russian campaign of Hitler. Or anything (I guarantee, these are two random quatrains). Here, croix = swastika, paix = the agreement Molotov-Ribbentrop, divin verbe = "Gott mit uns", chef adversaire = Stalin; great massacre, bitter fight, those who fall remain dead on the snow.

One could find a prediction of the Russian campaign of Hitler. Or anything (I guarantee, these are two random quatrains). Here, croix = swastika, paix = the agreement Molotov-Ribbentrop, divin verbe = "Gott mit uns", chef adversaire = Stalin; great massacre, bitter fight, those who fall remain dead on the snow.

How would one classify the resulting quatrain? Is it a copy? But, for what we know, maybe also Nostradamus copied verses from someone else with the same method. Is it a plagiarism? But of what? For me, it could be called "a new Nostradamus quatrain", with all rights to be seriously considered, if it could be interpreted in a realistic way, perhaps in the future.

And what about Nostradamus? Was he an imposter? Not more than the Sybil whose "*modus operandi*" was well known in ancient times, and yet she was consulted with confidence by thousands of pious people in the course of the centuries.

I have recently read that **Charles Ward** in his classic "Oracles of Nostradamus" (1891) comes up with a similar theory, although crediting Nostradamus with a real prophetic gift, a subject which I prefer not to enter. It is evident, I suppose, that I think that Nostradamus was a seer not more than the Sybil – whatever that means.

V. Needless to say, such a process may be easily simulated by computer.

The program I offer ("Nostradamus – Primi tre libri") is only a demonstration, and should be improved by Nostradamus fans. If I will find a

way, I will make the improvements myself in a future edition. Just don't hold your breath.

The first reason why I say that it is only a demonstration is that you will be able to select randomly the two quatrains to be merged *only from the three first Books of Centuries*. This is essentially because I am not a Nostradamus believer and I think that I could make a better use of my time.

Secondly, because on the Web I have only found the English translation (1961) I present, and I don't like it, because I find it "leading to predefined conclusions". For example, translating the city of "Tour de Boucq" (I.28) with Tobruk, irritates me beyond measure. It is not the only example. Thus, I strongly suggest to always compare the English translation with the original French, just to be sure.

Thus, if you want to play Nostradamus, please go to <http://dainoequinoziale.it/altro/2017/08/25/nostradamus3.html> And follow with some care the instruction thereby included.

Enjoy.