

## **PATHWAY THROUGH THE DESERT**

### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF WESTERN ASTROLOGY**

1988

Perhaps curiously, this seems to have become one of the more useful of the essays.

There are a great many people today who are both active members of one of the denominations of the Christian Church, but who are also attracted to the astrological concept. This latter may vary from simple interest or curiosity, to quite deep involvement and technical ability. They see astrology as helpful and useful, just as they find their religious involvement to be helpful and useful in their personal lives. Unhappily they are also aware that almost without exception their religious home will offer no welcome to astrologers.

This is obviously deeply distressing to them.

It is common - for those with religious authority - to pronounce against astrology in terms similar to those used by Fr Concetti and quoted in a previous essay. It implies that the Church condemns the practice of astrology as anti-Christian, foolish, and immoral, and that this has always been its position. Thus those who may be drawn into such an involvement are being warned that in doing so they clearly step outside the historical Christian tradition.

The point of this essay is to say, "That is totally untrue, and is a statement made out of ignorance of the history of one's own faith." The history of western astrology is inextricably linked with the history of the western church, as is the church's history with astrology. The astrologer can call as witnesses for his or her defence Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, and Theologians, some of whom have been elevated as Saints of the church. The witnesses for the prosecution on the other hand carry no such weight.

I have therefore tried to say to those troubled in this manner, "Take heart, you stand in great company"

But for those for whom these particular things do not represent an area of personal conflict, I hope that you will still find the essay to be of interest. Astrology has a great history that sweeps through the panoramas of western civilisation. All of us stand at the end of a long and honourable journey. As it has been said, 'If we can see further, it is only because we are standing on the shoulders of giants'.



We sometimes tend to forget that astrology is about a lot more than the various techniques designed to manipulate and interpret charts and symbols, but that it is also

about people. It is about astrologers, and any kind of history of astrology - no matter how abbreviated - is really a story about those people whose attitudes and aspirations and actions and follies have brought us to that place where we are today.

It is a story about a journey. A journey that was for a long while difficult and daunting, and which few had the inclination or the dedication to undertake. It was a journey that, at the beginning at least, offered the travellers little reward; like those who may commit themselves to travel through a desert and for whom only the conviction that the end to be reached is of sufficient value, vindicates the difficulties encountered.

I therefore would like to think just for a very short time, about some of those people who have been especially responsible for bringing us to that particular place where 20th century astrologers in the western world now find themselves. Those who committed themselves to journey through this desert, and at the end of whose pathway we ourselves stand today.

In this regard it is probably good for us - as in a great many other human activities - sometimes to remind ourselves that we do in fact stand at the end of a long process. We often have a tendency to fore-shorten history and to ignore the middle bits. To jump straight from the time of Claudius Ptolemy (in the 2nd century AD) to that of Alan Leo at the beginning of our own, as if the two had talked to each other over their back fence. A great many very important and very interesting things happened in those 1,800 years, and while it will obviously not be possible to condense almost two millennia of history into a short essay, I hope that at least something of value will be achieved and perhaps another perspective briefly opened up.

I also have a belief that the story of western astrology is often itself its own best defence against those who would criticise its practice as some strange, immoral, irreligious, or unnatural intrusion into our modern well-ordered society. There are of course no doubt some grounds for reasonable and serious criticisms either of astrology or some of its practitioners, but that is another matter. A good, long, clean track record must always be a matter of merit, and should demand some serious consideration of the subject in question.

I would like to begin our journey about the beginning of the Christian era. This is not because of any religious perspective (although as we shall discover, it is in fact impossible to separate the history of western astrology from the life of the Church) but rather because this also represents a kind of gateway between ancient and modern astrology. By the commencement of the Christian era all the essential frameworks of astrology had been constructed and put to use: the intellectual zodiac itself, and the interpretive meaning of planets, aspects, signs, and houses.

Ancient observers and practitioners had perfected over a long period of time all those basic concepts and processes which underlie astrology today. Modern astrology can be viewed as a variety of attempts to refine and develop these structures, and one may reasonably argue that it was from this time that the peculiar character that is recognisably "western" was given to it, and which distinguishes it from other kinds of approaches that have taken place in other world cultures.

The Greeks overcame the Persian empire in the 4th century BC, and were in turn overwhelmed by the Romans about the year 60 BC. The Greeks had absorbed eagerly the astrological knowledge of the Chaldean empire over which they ruled, and the Romans themselves no less enthusiastically and quickly embraced this new wisdom from their Greek vassals. In this way the Chaldean astrological tradition entered the world of the Roman empire, where especially in the 2nd century AD it was to receive an enormous impetus from the writings of Ptolemy. And it is from this empire - for most practical purposes - that our present western culture has sprung.

This new wisdom immediately attracted a great following and had a significant influence upon those who moved in the upper levels of Roman society. Thus (for example) Cato forbade the overseer of his estates to consult “Chaldeans” (the then common term for astrologers) when making decisions that affected the management of his property, and the poet Juvenal cautioned his readers against consorting with a lady “who is always casting upon her ephemerides, who is so good an astrologer that she has ceased to consult and is already beginning to be consulted”. Had astrology not already established itself as a significant influence in society, there would have been no need to issue such cautions.

In 33 AD the emperor Augustus expelled all astrologers from Rome, through fear that they could provide his political opponents with unacceptable advantages. He himself was committed to the effectiveness of astrology, and had his birth sign (Capricorn) placed upon the coins which were struck during his reign. The edict itself appears to have had little effect, as astrology flourished openly in the metropolis. Pliny the Elder dealt with medical astrology in his *Natural History*, and the poets Horace and Manilius both eulogised it in verse.

Claudius Ptolemy was born in Egypt in the year 100 AD, and lived most of his life at Alexandria. By the time of his death in 178 AD he had earned the title “The Divine Ptolemy”. His two greatest writings were the *Almagest* and the *Tetrabiblos*. The first consisted of a great astronomical treatise of thirteen books, which remained the mathematical basis of all astronomical calculation until the 17th century. The *Tetrabiblos* (or The Mathematical Treatise in Four Books) was a summation of astrological knowledge to that time, augmented by his own mathematical genius and great learning.

Its four parts outlined in great detail the casting of the horoscope, its interpretation, and techniques for prediction; not only for individuals but also with regard to the whole range of mundane issues that could be placed before an astrologer for consideration. Its influence was immense, and probably no other single writing has been of such importance in the history of astrology.

One branch of the new Christian faith at this time - known as Gnosticism - had itself an elaborate philosophical system which combined a Pythagorean understanding of the universe with astrological techniques to provide the believer with the required knowledge (or gnosis) to enter the heavenly spheres. More orthodox Christian views also espoused astrology. A writing called the *Clementine Recognitions* of the 3rd century AD held that the patriarch Abraham was an accomplished astrologer. In the next century Bishop Synesius of Ptolemais was an open supporter of astrology.

In the 4th century Christianity had two major rivals. One was a Persian cult called Mithraism and the other the newly arrived Asian faith of Manicheism. Both were permeated with astrological and symbolic traditions. Manicheism proved to be surprising long lived, and did not finally die out until the 12th century.

A devotee of Manicheism was a young man named Augustine. In 387 AD he was converted to Christianity and eventually became one of its most influential thinkers and theologians. Augustine developed a theology which was committed to the concept of human free will, and both because of this and because of his rejection of his old faith, he developed a trenchant opposition to astrological practices.

In Book Seven of his *Confessions* he developed the famous argument against astrology called the “Time Twins” problem. He quoted the example of the child of an estate’s master being born at precisely the same time as the child of a slave. One child lived (as he said) “in the sunnier paths of the world”, while the other continued in his “mean position”. Since the two persons would have possessed the same horoscope and yet their lives obviously differed so markedly, Augustine argued that astrology was a delusion, and that when astrological predictions did in fact come to pass, this was “by chance and not by cunning”.

In his later writings however he admitted that it was indeed possible for an astrologer to predict some future event. However this was evidence of the devil himself working through the astrologer’s art, and not a demonstration of the effectiveness of the techniques themselves.

Augustine’s influence upon the early Church (which itself totally dominated the whole of society) was immense, and once he had pronounced against astrology there were few so daring or foolhardy as to speak for it. Never-the-less astrology itself was never formally proscribed by the Church and there were - here and there - a few able and honest scholars who sought to keep its knowledge alive in Europe.

We have already mentioned Bishop Synesius in the 5th century who was open in his support. At the same time a writer named Firmicus Maternus sought to reconcile astrology with the Christian faith, and Proclus produced a paraphrase of Ptolemy’s famous work *Tetrabiblos*.

However for roughly five hundred years astrology fell into serious decline in the Christian world. Certainly after Augustine’s writings no more direct attacks were made upon it. Its neglect stemmed not only from his condemnation of its practice but also as a result of its unquestionably “pagan” origins, which caused it to be despised by the intolerant and bigoted Christianity of that age. It was therefore across the waters of the Mediterranean in the Arabic world that astrology was kept alive with some of its previous dignity and vitality.

The forces of the Prophet had captured Alexandria in 640 AD. They found a city with four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, and four hundred theatres. The great library which had once been the city’s crown was (alas) no more. It had been destroyed much earlier by Christian mobs at the instigation firstly of the Emperor Theodosius in 389, and then again later by Bishop Cyril. The rationale for these acts

of barbarism being that the books were the product of heathen minds, and should they contain anything of value, this would be found in any case in the Christian scriptures.

The Arabs were not only impressed by this evident luxury which they had inherited, but also by the size of the Alexandrian merchant fleet. Its acquisition was to be the beginning of their delight in mathematics, through the demands of navigation which they now needed to master. From this they developed not only a thorough knowledge of mathematical processes, but also of geography and astronomy. And from the growth of their astronomical understandings they were led quite naturally to astrology.

This search for knowledge set them to the task of translating into Arabic as many of the ancient Greek writing on astronomy and astrology as they could lay their hands on. Under Caliph Harun Al-Rashid translators were paid in gold equivalent to the weight of each of the manuscripts which were translated.

Harun's son - Abdullah Al-Mamun - turned Baghdad into a great seat of learning, with its own library and observatory. To check Ptolemy's statement that the circumference of the earth was 18,000 miles, he had his astronomers measure the actual overland length of one degree of latitude on the plain of Palmyra, north of the Euphrates River. Their calculations produced a figure of 23,180 miles, which compares not unfavourably with our presently accepted one of 24,900 miles

Without this Arabic enthusiasm a great store of ancient knowledge would have been lost forever.

There was however still a small amount of astrological work being conducted in Europe, and it is evident that while the mainstream scholars paid little attention to it, no attempt was made to persecute those who continued its study. In the 7th century Bishop Isadore of Seville composed several astrological works, as did the Venerable Bede in the 8th century, Alcuin and Paul the Philosopher in the 9th, and the Abbot Aelfric in the 11th century.

But it was not from Baghdad that astrology re-entered the western world, but from the other end of the Mediterranean. For centuries Christians and Muslims had lived beside each other on the Spanish peninsula. In spite of their great cultural and religious differences they were inescapably influenced by each other. An important part of the flow from Arab to Christian cultures was the corpus of astrological knowledge.

This first became apparent in the 10th century when the future Pope Sylvester II had his education in Spain. Later as Pope he converted one of the towers of the Lateran Palace into an observatory.

As the 11th century progressed interest in astrology quickened among western Christians. Ibn Ezra - a Jew living in Spain - was enormously influential. He wrote many highly regarded works which ensured the spread of Arabic astrological methods and techniques throughout Europe. Along with his writings, the works of the older authors upon which they were based were also copied and promulgated.

By the 13th century a new climate had settled over Europe. The Muslim thrust had lost its impetus and a revitalised spirit of enquiry now sought to tap the great scientific and philosophical treasures of the Arabic world, which now lay so conveniently to hand in Spain. Michael Scot was an excellent scholar with a fine working knowledge of Arabic. Through his translations the works of the great Muslim astrologers were able to exercise a tremendous influence upon this renewed interest in astrological matters. He was offered an Irish bishopric but refused it: preferring instead to remain as court astrologer to the emperor Frederick II.

In England the learned Robert Grossteste - Bishop of Lincoln and first Chancellor of the University of Oxford - stated categorically that astrology not only enabled men to inspect the future, but was the controlling influence of every aspect of life on earth. He urged its study in relation to the weather, chemistry, medicine, and agriculture.

Grossteste's pupil Roger Bacon was really more interested in magic than philosophy. However he did try to defend a scientific approach to astrology. His imprisonment by the Franciscans followed shortly after the publication of his book *Speculum Astronomie* in which he sought to trace an association between astrology and ancient magic.

On the continent the Dominican scholar Albertus Magnus was the Magi of the middle ages, and his works the standard text books of his day. He stated that the use of astrology was "not a fault, but rather serves a useful purpose and saves many things from harm".

Albertus formulated a statement of astrology which allowed its reconciliation with Augustine's dogmatic rejection many centuries earlier. As we have seen, Augustine was committed to the concept of free will. The Church therefore adopted a position which allowed the use of astrology in medical and natural phenomena, but not in a way that detracted from human free will. As a result of this doctrine, professorships in astrology began to appear in European universities. Bologna had a chair of astrology as early as 1125.

However the true giant of this century was a student of Albertus Magnus, the great Thomas Aquinas. His writings still exercise a strong influence over many parts of the Church to this day. Like his teacher, he asserted that astrology affected the physical and biological structures of the world, and that such influences were entirely in accord with the Christian faith. In several of his books he argues for astrology at length, and gives the use of what he called Judicial Astrology the seal of his approval, particularly in his work *De Judiciis Astrorum*.

He underlines the orthodoxy of his position by upholding Augustine's dogma of free will, "however it behoves us to bear in mind at all times that man's will is not subject to the compulsion of the stars, otherwise free will would be destroyed".

Officially the Church adopted the Augustinian position on astrology as expounded by Thomas Aquinas. In practice it conducted a remarkable amount of discussion and argument on astrological themes that went far beyond the limits imposed by the Angelic Doctor. Even Pope John XIX did not find it inconsistent with his high office to write on astrological themes under the pen-name of Peter Hispanus. The Papal

Chaplain to Pope Urban IV was Johannes Campanus, an accomplished mathematician and astrologer whose system of house division was the first major development in western astrology since the beginning of the Christian era.

At first this new interest was confined to the universities and scholastic circles. But from these it quickly spread to the courts of Europe, and from the courts to the common people. Before the 14th century was half over astrology had dominated the life of the continent, both within and without the Church.

A typical astrologer of this century was Guido Bonatti. He was astrologer to the city of Forli in central Italy. Like many other Italian cities it was racked by partisan strife; in this instance between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines. Bonatti claimed that peace could be restored if the breached city walls were repaired at a time designated by himself. A representative of each of the two families was to cement a foundation stone in place at this precise moment.

In due course 50,000 people assembled to bear witness to the event. Bonatti kept his eyes on the instrument he held in his hands, and at the auspicious moment cried out, "Now!" The Ghibelline representative obediently set his stone in place, but the Guelf one hesitated, and finally threw his trowel to the ground declaring the whole thing to be a Ghibelline hoax. "God damn you!" Bonatti is recorded as crying, "and the whole Guelf party with you. This constellation will not rise above our city for another five hundred years!"

On another occasion he insisted that the army take a circuitous and time consuming route to battle, which was almost lost because of the late arrival of the forces involved.

Today Bonatti is remembered in two ways. His work, *The 146 Considerations* may still be purchased in astrological bookshops, and readers of Dante's *Purgatory* will find poor Bonatti being tormented in the Fourth Chasm of the Eighth Circle.

By the 15th century debate about the appropriateness of astrology had ceased entirely. For both Church and State it had become the accepted basis of western society and thought, and for the next two hundred years it totally dominated every aspect of life. From parish priest to Pope, none questioned the efficacy of astrological techniques. Pope Leo X prided himself that during his pontificate art and astrology especially flourished. His successor Pope Paul III refused to hold a consistory with his cardinals until the date and time had been chosen by his astrologer.

The names of many of the astrologers of this time are still familiar today, which suggests something of the awe with which they must have been held in their own time. Johannes Muller (using the name Regiomontanus) was professor of astrology at Vienna. Michael Nostradamus was astrologer to Catherine de Medici. Some time ago in a local supermarket I came across a paperback copy of Paracelsus' book *Natural Philosophy*. Jerome Cardan was held to be the greatest astrologer of his age. Cornelius Agrippa was employed in 1520 by the Queen Mother of France to be her personal astrologer, and his considerable correspondence with the great scholars of his day is still extant

In England there were two royal astrologers during the last years of the House of Tudor. The first was Nicholas Kratzer, who was astrologer to King Henry VIII. However the most famous was the court astrologer to Elizabeth I, John Dee.

Dee was invited to calculate the horoscope of Mary Tudor when she became queen, and later performed a similar service for Elizabeth. At her request, he chose her coronation date of 15th January 1559. Dee's own diaries record the many informal visits of Elizabeth to his house in Mortlake, and their conversations about mathematics and astrology. Unhappily Dee also dabbled in other less acceptable studies, and his victimisation by his unscrupulous assistant Kelly makes sad reading.

There are two other important names in the 16th century. The first is Nicholas Copernicus, who revived the Pythagorean view that the sun was fixed and that the earth and other planets revolved about it. This was really a mathematical rather than an astronomical concept, as Copernicus was searching for a simpler system for calculating planetary positions than the very complicated one of Ptolemy which was still in use after sixteen hundred years. However Copernicus' writings were not published until after his death in 1543 for fear of the Church's reaction.

Tycho Brahe was the most accurate observational astronomer since Hipparchus in the 2nd century BC. His tables of the movement of Mars were to become the basis of Johannes Kepler's later work.

Brahe was a quite extra-ordinary person. He had lost his nose in a duel when twenty years old, and there after wore a gold replacement. He rejected the Copernican view of a sun centred system, and was a fine astrologer. He wrote that "astrology is not a delusive science when kept within the bounds and not abused by ignorant people".

Johannes Kepler was born in Weil der Stadt, Germany, on 27th December 1571 at 4.37 am, as he recorded in the calculations for his own horoscope, after "a pregnancy lasting 224 days 9 hours and 53 minutes". When he died in 1630 his contributions to astronomical knowledge probably exceeded that of any single person in history. He is remembered today chiefly for his Three Laws of Planetary Motion, formulated between 1602 and 1619.

Today's folk-lore tends to portray Kepler as the first of the great modern scientists, brushing away the darkness of the ages which had preceded him. He certainly did not see his work in that way himself. His great goal in life - reflected in his major work *Harmonicis Mundi* - was to construct a grand harmony of all things, divine, celestial, and terrestrial. His mathematical theories were some of the tools for this process; a process in which astrology also played a key role.

Galileo Galilei was in one sense more important than Kepler; not because of his contributions to knowledge so much as that he became the unwitting catalyst to a point of view which had a profound effect upon the western world. He was born seven years before Kepler and died twelve years after. Galilei in many ways got caught up in a series of events which were not of his making, and certainly not of his choosing.



In 1604 he published a book on the Law of Free Fall. In this he was able to treat a falling body in mathematical isolation from its surroundings, which properly places him at the beginning of that line of scientific theory and practice which seeks to separate the part from the whole in order to study and explore it. However it was the publication of his observations through his telescope of the lunar surface, of sun spots, and of the Jovian moons which aroused the anxiety of the Church.

By 1611 his friend Cardinal Bellarmine was becoming increasingly concerned about the implications to scriptural authority of these discoveries. In 1616 Galilei clashed with the Jesuits whom were staunchly Aristotelian and upheld a geocentric universe.

In 1621 Kepler published his *Handbook of Copernican Astronomy* which the Vatican promptly banned. However the next year Urban VIII was elected Pope. He was a liberal man, and thus there was hope that attitudes might soften. He was also a practising astrologer, who amused himself by predicting the date of the deaths of his own cardinals. When one aging cardinal returned the compliment by hiring an astrologer to predict the Pope's own death, Urban failed to see the joke. He issued a Bull forbidding the astrological practice of predicting the deaths of popes, princes, and members of their families. Cardinals were not apparently included.

Galilei, incidentally, was also himself a professional astrologer who was employed by the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Galilei published his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* in 1632, which argued strongly for a helio centred system. For a variety of reasons - not the least being that Kepler on whose work Galilei's arguments were based was a Protestant - Galilei was immediately summoned to Rome and told to abjure his works. The rest is pretty well known I suspect.

Probably the true successor to Kepler was Isaac Newton. In his work *Principia* published in 1687 his statement of the Gravitational Laws provided the physical dynamics for Kepler's mathematical propositions. But also like Kepler, Newton sought to find the great unifying principles of natural experience. He wrote extensively on philosophy and religion, and while there is no direct evidence that he was involved in the practice of astrology, he did have an extensive correspondence with John Flamsteed. Flamsteed was the first Astronomer Royal, and also a competent astrologer. He erected the electional chart for laying the foundation stone of the Greenwich Observatory, so it is highly probable that Newton would have discussed astrology with his good friend.

Never-the-less it was Newton's Gravitational Laws which appeared to provide a rationale for the neglect of astrology. These laws seemed to demonstrate that the direct physical influence through gravitational forces upon the earth by any planet would be so minimal that their effect upon any individual would not be measurable. Astrology could therefore be spurned as an unscientific foolishness.

However I think that we would be wrong to believe that astrology declined in the western world because there had been discovered physical laws which apparently demonstrated its incorrectness. Rather, western Christian society had changed its mind about astrology and cast about to find a justification for this new point of view.

Western religion was breaking up into the partisan bickerings of the Protestant revolution, and western society was re-aligning itself into the many isolated and separate states which finally defined the borders of present day Europe.

Astrology offered a philosophy of life which was built upon concepts of unity and coherence and purpose. This was not what western society wanted to hear. What it wanted was a philosophy that could justify division, separation, and self interest. The philosophy of deductive science offered just this.

This can be seen no more clearly than in the manner in which we still treat the writings of those two men whom we uphold as the fathers of western science: Johannes Kepler and Isaac Newton. We exult and praise their mathematical and scientific insights, but totally ignore all that they wrote about that great and harmonious framework which they believed their work enlightened, and which they saw as the ultimate goal and crown of their labours.

Of course astrology did not die overnight in western society. Jean Baptiste Morin was astrologer to Cardinal Richelieu in the 17th century. At Padua Placidus de Tito was professor of mathematics, and devised that house system which is still favoured today by many astrologers. In 1666 William Lilly in England was summoned before parliament because of the accuracy of his predictions concerning the Great Plague in 1665 and then the Great Fire of London in the following year. Presumably this was because that while one cannot generally start a plague, one may well light a fire.

In England the bell tolling end of astrology was probably sounded by Jonathan Swift's satirical attack upon an astrological almanac publisher named John Partridge.

Using the pen-name Isaac Bickerstaff, Swift wrote a pamphlet entitled *Predictions for the Year 1708* in which he predicted Partridge's death. After the appointed day for this event had passed (and John Partridge was still in good health) Swift wrote another pamphlet *An Account of the Death of Mr. Partridge, Almanack Maker, Upon the 29th Instant, in a Letter from a Revenue Officer to a Person of Honour*. Partridge's life became intolerable, and his name was even removed from the roll of the Stationers' Hall. The death of astrology came not at the hands of science but of satire.

Astrology simply fell out of fashion. A few almanac writers plied a tiny trade and their works were purchased largely by poorer agricultural workers, but for the next one hundred and fifty years there were few people of any intellectual standing who gave it even a passing glance.

The first signs of renewed life came in the 1850's when R.J. Morrison (using the name Zadkiel) published an almanac, re-issued some of the writings of William Lilly, and adapted the nautical ephemerides for the use of astrologers wishing to cast an horoscope.

In 1875 the incredible Madame Blavatsky launched her Theosophical Society in New York. Her two books - *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* - not only drew extensively upon eastern religious ideas, but also relied quite heavily upon astrological concepts.

This had two effects upon the study of astrology. Firstly the new cult provided it with a social acceptance which had been lacking for almost two centuries. Occultism, eastern mysticism, and the exciting and esoteric ethos of the Theosophical Society had a strong appeal to a large number of people who had discovered the emptiness of living in a society which lacked a great philosophical framework by which to interpret its experiences. With the patronage of Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society, astrology could be seen as one part of an intellectually exciting new age.

Secondly, through her links with eastern thought Madame Blavatsky was able to solve what was then considered to be a great intellectual problem confronting astrology.

The planet Uranus had been discovered in 1781, thereby destroying the ancient seven fold structure of astrology, with its seven heavenly bodies determining human destiny. In 1846 yet another planet - Neptune - was identified. These discoveries appeared to throw into confusion the whole astrological tradition.

Madame Blavatsky pointed out that Indian astrology in fact postulated no less than twelve planets, thus so far from being dismayed by these new discoveries, astrologers should on the contrary be delighted with these new tools at their disposal. The visible planets had governed the ancient world, but for a new age it was appropriate that new ones should be revealed.

However Madame Blavatsky - and her successor Annie Besant - were far too busy with the running of their Society to be concerned about the development of astrology. They needed an official astrologer, and William Frederick Allen was more than happy to fulfil this role. Writing under the name of Alan Leo, his works are still popular today. Thus it was that under the impetus of Alan Leo and his less well known contemporary Walter Gorn-Old (who called himself Sepherial) astrology was reborn in the 20th century in western society.

That it re-emerged not as the proud successor of the highest culmination of western intellectual endeavour, but as the foster child of eastern mysticism and occult interest, has of course had a profound effect upon the way that its rebirth has been accepted and viewed by certain sections of our society today. Certainly for many parts of the Church it has once more been condemned (as it was some fourteen hundred years ago) by its perceived associations and origins rather than by any serious consideration of its content.

But that is another story. And since those who have contributed to astrology's regrowth since the work of Alan Leo and Sepherial really belong to a time too recent to be decently called history; it is probably appropriate at this point to draw our journey to a close.

We have glimpsed some who were giants in their own generation, and whose names even today are still given respect. They may indeed at times have walked a solitary pathway through the desert, but what mighty travellers they were.