

July 2008 - Nina Gryphon interviews James Herschel Holden

NG: What got you interested in the history of astrology and how does one kind of get into working with these texts as you have?

JH: Well, all my life I've been interested in history, history of everything. When I was in school I didn't care anything about modern history but I was interested in ancient history. If you say why was that, the answer is I don't know; that's just the way I was. And I guess it was perhaps a little exotic, and so it appealed to me more than every day things that you see around you.

And when I first learned something about astrology; I got interested in where it came from, how it got started, and that led me back to the origins of it in the old books and so on.

I was about eighteen when I ran across a translation of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* and I read that. And then about the same time I found a Latin text of Julius Firmicus Maternus. And since I could read Latin, that was another one that sort of whetted my appetite for the old stuff.

NG: So you were hooked. Is there a particular era in the history of astrology that you find interesting? It sounds like you're very interested in the ancient texts, even before the medieval era, is that accurate?

JH: Well, not to the exclusion of anything else. I would say that I'm interested in all periods of astrology, except maybe what somebody thought up last month. I can say that I've been more interested in the older things than I have in a few of the modern things that have come up. But I don't have any particular [favorite] period. If you've got my history book [*History of Astrology*, 2nd Ed., AFA] you saw how it was divided up into sections.

And each section in that is interesting to me; I'm interested in the classical section, also in the medieval section, what the Arabs had to say, and early modern, and so on. And there's a whole lot of material to read in each one of those eras.

NG: I saw you have a new edition of your *History of Astrology*. I know it's one of those books that it seems everybody I know has it and has read it.

JH: Well, I hope they like it. That's the distillation of many years of reading about astrology and thinking about it. And you asked the question about the 2nd Edition whether there was any significant change, and I guess the answer is No.

What had happened, is that the first one sold out, and we had noticed maybe as many as eight or ten typographical errors in it; most of them trivial, so we had a chance to correct those, and I was also able to correct some omissions that were in the 1st Edition. One of them was rather significant. Being a member of the American Federation of Astrologers, I had written that 1st Edition and never even mentioned our President, Doris Chase Doane.

I just forgot about it. I think the reason is that of the modern people that were alive today, or we'll say the 20th century people, I was trying to think of those who had done something a little bit different or had acquired some notoriety in recent years or something. And Doris wrote an awful lot of books, but she hadn't written any very recently at the time that I was putting that history together, and for some reason I just didn't think of her. And I know the lady personally, or rather knew her. She passed away a couple years ago but, this is one of those things you slap yourself with your hand on the forehead, and you think how in the world could I have forgotten her.

In the 2nd Edition Doris is in there, and also I had left out three or four Europeans that I think were of some importance, and I simply forgot them the same way. So they're in there now. And one of my friends in Greece, Thomas Gazis, was kind enough to rewrite the whole section on modern Greek Astrology, so that's revised from the 1st Edition.

And I have a little bit more information about astrology in other countries. And of course in the ten years that went by, some of the people mentioned in the 1st Edition had passed away, so I've got their death dates in there.

I think there's five hundred and some odd [people] in there. And so percentage wise... leaving those few out was a small error, but I regretted it.

NG: What do you think are some of the biggest changes in our knowledge, what we've learned in the last ten or twenty years that we didn't know about the history of astrology before?

JH: I would say that maybe going back as far as thirty years ago we began to get some old books, and I'm talking about English speaking countries, I think what I'm saying is largely true of foreign countries too. But in this country, if you go back about thirty years, about the only old book you could get was Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*. And many astrologers, not being aware that anything else existed, assumed that Ptolemy invented astrology and that everything that was original about it was in that book, which isn't true.

Ptolemy was a science writer. He was like Isaac Asimov who wrote books on practically everything. I suspect that Ptolemy had been hired by some rich man who said: "I've got a nice, private library in my house and I'd like to have some books on the sciences. And I'll pay you good if you'll write them." So Ptolemy wrote him a book on astronomy, and he wrote one on geography, and he wrote on two or three other subjects.

And then the man said: “Oh, and astrology; write something on astrology.” So Ptolemy wrote something on astrology. But if you look in the very first chapter of the *Tetrabiblos*, Ptolemy says he has left out a whole lot of what was current in his lifetime, and he said: “My book is not complete, I’ve left out a whole lot of things because it’s a big subject and if I wanted to put everything in it, it would be a whole lot bigger book.” Why, I think hardly any astrologer after his time ever bothered to read that part of it. Most of them assumed that he was first so he must have invented the whole thing.

For example, there was a man who was a professional astrologer, named Vettius Valens who was living in Alexandria from about 150 to 175 AD, which would have overlapped Ptolemy’s lifetime. He didn’t know Ptolemy and never mentions him once.

I’ve written a paper on this that hasn’t been published yet, but I think what happened is that Ptolemy wrote his books for a client or a patron whose name was Cyrus. All Ptolemy’s books are addressed to a man named Cyrus who is otherwise totally unknown.

When he finished he gave all the books to Cyrus, the guy stuck them on the shelf, and they sat there for 150 years. They were not published or made available to the general public until around 300 AD. And Valens lived in the same town with Ptolemy and never heard of him, though Valens was a professional astrologer and also had a school of astrology. He would have known if the *Tetrabiblos* had been available; he would have had a copy; and he would have known all about it. And yet Valens’s book is true to what was going on at the time. For example, I think it’s got almost a hundred example horoscopes in it. Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos* doesn’t have a single one.

So one is a theoretician, and the other one was a practicing astrologer. Ptolemy went down to the Alexandrian Library and got out two or three books on astrology, read through them, and then thought, well, I’ll talk about this part of it, and wrote the *Tetrabiblos*. Now, what he put down there is good, there’s nothing wrong with it, but it’s not complete, that’s the point I’m trying to make.

And yet, I don’t think up until thirty years ago, hardly anybody knew about that. But since that time, various people have translated some of the old books. I think Robert Schmidt translated all or most of Vettius Valens, for example. A translation of Firmicus came out in 1974, I think. People little by little began to get some of the old books and found out, hey, there was more to it back then than we thought.

Then, in the last ten or fifteen years, why there have been people who got interested in medieval astrology and began to read the medieval books. And that opened up a whole new field too. So those are things that have happened in recent years that have expanded our knowledge. Now, if you are a working astrologer and you’re dealing with clients and so on, you probably don’t have time to sit around and devote yourself to reading the

history, and as a result many astrologers today haven't read any of the old stuff. They haven't read my book. They haven't read any of those old texts either. So they're not familiar with that. I think it's good to know how things started.

Did you ever see the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*? Well, there was something very significant in that. At one point some fellow says to Tevye the dairyman, "why do we do this particular thing?" And Tevye says, "it's tradition." And the man says, "Why do we have this tradition?" And Tevye says, "I'll tell you, I don't know." That's kind of situation that I think many astrologers are in. They learn the rules and they even learn to read charts pretty well, and so on. But if somebody said: "why do we do it this way?" all they could say is: "Well, that's the way I learned it."

And where did the rule come from? It says that Mars rules Scorpio? They were using Scorpio, and so on like that. Well, somebody made that statement 2000 years ago and we're stuck with it.

I think that's interesting, but most people don't. I guess I could say that if you have any interest in the old stuff, I think my book is helpful because it not only mentions a lot of the old timers, but it gives some excerpts and it gives you a lot of footnotes and refers you to where you could find additional material.

NG: You have a book that just came out, *The Five Medieval Astrologers*, and you have picked the very books that I would have wanted in that one book. I've always wanted to read *The Book of Flowers*, but as far as I know it doesn't exist in English right now other than in your translation.

JH: Well, this is true, but if you read the preface you could see that I actually translated that thing a long time ago. It's been sitting here in my house and I never had a chance to get it published until recently. And when the executive secretary of the AFA said: "Jim, have you got any books that we can publish?" I said: "Yeah, I've got some."

And I thought immediately we can put *The Book of Flowers* in there because I think the thing's interesting. If you're interested in mundane, I think we're [AFA] going to publish a book in a few months that will probably interest you. I have translated half a dozen or so of the Jean-Baptiste Morin books from his *Astrologia Gallica*. Book 25, I have translated that; it's on mundane and meteorological astrology.

NG: Other than mundane astrology, my other favorite topic is weather astrology, so I'm looking forward to it.

JH: You'd probably like that book, and I would think that maybe by October we may have it published. Right now, we're working on Sahl's book on horary and elections.

And also, I have translated [*Astrologia Gallica*] Book 16 on aspects and Book 17 on astrological houses. Both of those will be published later this summer.

When they publish Book 25, we will have nearly all the books from 13 down to the end. The last book, number 26, is on horary astrology, and elections. And I've translated the first half of that. And I don't know whether I'm even going to finish it or not. Morin didn't like horary astrology. He thought it was silly rubbish that the Arabs had invented. I have a great deal of respect for Morin. A lot of his stuff is good and his *Astrologia Gallica* is good. But if you think about it, the main emphasis in the Morin Method is on what you would call accidental significators, that is, rulers of houses and things like that, rather than on universal significators.

For example, if you read some of the older books, you find that Mars rules warriors and Venus rules women, and so on like that. And that if you have a chart and you're reading the thing, and you want to know something about a woman, well you look at Venus. And like if it's a marriage question, well, look at Venus. Well, Morin says, No, look at the seventh house. See what's in the seventh!

See what the ruler of the seventh is and how it's related to all the other planets, then you can look at the fifth house too, but look at the seventh mainly. And what he's doing that he didn't seem to understand, is that he's applying the horary method to natal astrology, because that is exactly what you do in horary if somebody comes in and says; "I have a question about my son," what do you do? You look at the fifth house. And this is precisely what Morin says to do in reading a natal chart. If you want to know something about money look at [house] two. If you want to know something about marriage and business relations and open enemies you look at [house] seven and so on like that.

And this is exactly the horary method, and yet he says horary doesn't work. But the reason he said that was two-fold. First, though, he didn't know anything about the history of astrology. People didn't in those days.

The old standard was Ptolemy, and they didn't know there was anything else. And most of the books that were available were books that had been translated from Arabic in the 12th century, and he read those things, and he knew that those books had been written by Arabs. Morin didn't like the Arabs because he was a devout Catholic, and those people, to him, were infidels. Also, Ptolemy never mentions horary astrology any place in the *Tetrabiblos*. So plainly it must have been invented by those wicked Arabs.

I think that this is one thing that sort of illustrates the advantage of knowing something about the history of the art. If you know the overall history of astrology, you know where the different techniques came from; you realize that people were making horary charts back in the days when astrology was a Greek science. And that it was medieval, and it wasn't something the Arabs invented. Arab astrology is basically Greek astrology,

because if you read my history book, in the 8th and 9th century Arabs got hold of Greek books on astrology and translated them into Arabic and that's where they learned the business.

But Morin didn't know that. And in one place, I think it's maybe it's in Book 16 or 17 some place, he even accuses Firmicus Maternus of having copied the Arabs. Well, Firmicus lived in the 4th century, and the Arabs didn't know anything about astrology till the 8th century. So that didn't make any sense, but like I said, he plain and simply didn't know the history of the thing. Nobody did in his day. It wasn't that he was ignorant and other people were aware, because it hadn't been studied. This is why I think that it's important to know something about the history.

Now back to The Five Medieval Astrologers. I had gotten a copy, I guess thirty, forty years ago of a 17th century book that had translations of the three *Centiloquies* in it. And I've been using that all along but I got to thinking, well, if we're going to put *The Book of Flowers* out, well, maybe we ought to print all three of the *Centiloquies* too, because otherwise, let's say you wanted the *Centiloquy of Hermes* where would you have found it?

You would have had to have located some old, out of print book or something to get the thing. Henry Coley had translated all three of them, and they're in his book that was published about 1660 or the late 1600's. And you can get a copy of that. Maybe you've got one. You can get a copy of his book.

NG: I did, before yours came out, but yours is much better, because he translated, but often he just paraphrased and it's not the same.

JH: He not only paraphrased, but he actually left out about a fourth of it. He didn't even have it all in there. And that one's hard to read; I think the Latin's bad. You can see in the footnotes that I had to struggle with part of it, too. Anyway, I thought to myself it would be nice to have all three of those things in one place. And then also there was *The Hundred and Fifty propositions of al-Mansur*, which I don't know where you'd ever find that. I have never seen it any place, so I thought we're going to put all this together, and if anybody is interested in this old stuff, there it is all in one book.

NG: That's wonderful. I'm really glad that you did, because I think a lot of people just don't know it's out there.

JH: I guess you read the little thing I put down there about why would anybody want to read a thousand year old book. But anyway, some of these books that I put out, well, I have to think about what Mark Twain said about a book once. "This is a good book for people that like this kind of a book."

NG: I was curious what prompted all your recent translations.

JH: There is one thing that's causing some of them to come out pretty close together. I don't know if you're aware of it but the AFA was reorganized last year. And now we have a new chief executive officer, Kris Riske. For about six months or a year before last summer I don't think the AFA had printed very many books. And this was partly because people hadn't offered any and said, "Hey, I've got a book; would you like to print it?" And then when the AFA was reorganized, why it took six months or a year to get the office straightened out, because there were a lot of things that needed to be done with a leadership change. So during that time they didn't publish any books, because they were busy doing other things. And it's just in the last few months that Kris Riske, who also is the principal editor, has had time to deal with anything like that.

And so some of the things that she's done for me, I had done in earlier years, but they're coming out close together now, not because every month I did something new, but they're just kind of sitting around waiting to be published. And there's more to come.

If you're interested I can tell you a little bit about the Morin Method. Twenty years ago, and for two or three decades before that, there were only two people to my knowledge in the United States that knew anything about the Morin Method and they were the only ones that had ever even heard of it, except for the Morinus system of houses which is kind of a joke. But anyway, one of them was Zoltan Mason, and he was in New York City. And the other one was a man named Gerhardt Howing who lived in Dallas. I used to be in Dallas. And I attended some classes with Gerhardt and he taught the Morin Method. Now those to my knowledge were the only two people in the United States that knew anything about it. And both of them taught classes. And Bob Corre was a student of Zoltan Mason.

Mason died a couple years ago I think. And he hadn't been teaching any for the last few years of his life. But Corre has picked up where Mason left off and he is a very active teacher of the Morin Method. He travels all over the world. He's lectured all over Europe and Australia and every place else on it. And he also has a correspondence course over the Internet that you can sign-up for. And Corre has encouraged me to translate a good many of the books of Morin's *Astrologia Gallica*.

And that's what caused me to do most of those. And I think the method is good, and Corre finds them useful in his course so I have translated quite a few of them.

I have a new translation of Firmicus, for example, that I hope we can get printed this year. And I think it will be a considerable improvement over the Bram translation that's available now.

And also, there's several other things. Like I said, Book 25 is going to come out on Meteorology and Mundane Astrology, which I think people that are interested in either one of those will like.

Incidentally, if you are interested in Meteorology, Kris has written a book on that. Kris did something that I think a lot of people didn't do. She actually collected statistical data on notable hurricanes and all kinds of storms and things like that and studied them astrologically. And [she] took some of the old rules that were in the old books; and well, she tried them out to see if they work. And so the book that she wrote is based on practical experience, and she gives a whole lot of examples in there. So, if you're interested in that subject, I recommend that book.

NG: One of the things I was also wondering is, if you are also a practicing astrologer, whether amateur or professional.

JH: No, I'm not. Actually, I'm a retired telephone engineer. I worked for the phone company all my life. And I was a senior engineer, and then I got put in charge of the engineering budget for the state of Texas. That was when I was living in Dallas; I've only been here in Phoenix since '93. And prior to that, I was living in Dallas. And I would say that I never did practice professionally to amount to anything. I have read charts and answered questions for friends and family, for free of course. I think we all do that. And I had have done some work for pay in the past. Nothing in recent years. But if somebody came up to me that I hardly knew and wanted me to do their chart or answer a question or something, I charged those people. And I did it partly for this reason: I thought, well some other professional might have gotten this job and if people get the idea that they can get it done for nothing, why then I'm sort of knocking somebody else out a fee. And since I was a Professional Member of the AFA, I thought I guess I really ought to charge people that weren't close friends.

But as far as having a standard practice or putting my name on the door and having the public come in, I never did that at anytime, because I didn't have time, for one thing. And after I retired, I spent most of my time studying and writing books. That's all I did.

JH: You were curious about how I got started in astrology. You'll laugh at this. I think I was about twelve when I got interested in astronomy. And I studied up on the planets and their orbits and the stars and eclipses and all that kind of stuff. And the next year I took note of a publication that we got every year which was an almanac that was printed by the Telephone Company. And on the front, they had the figure of a man with the signs of the zodiac all around, Aries for his head [and so on]. And then they had some Sun sign material. I think they had one page of that in there; and I read that, and I got fascinated by that. I thought, hey, this is something really interesting.

And then that was age thirteen. I guess when I was thirteen and maybe early fourteen, I used to occasionally go to the beauty shop with my mother; she would pick me up at school, and then stop off at the beauty shop to get her hair done, or something like that. And here I am a teenage kid sitting there with nothing to do. They had two kinds of magazines. They had movie star magazines and they had astrology magazines. Well, at thirteen or fourteen, I couldn't care less about reading about movie stars. But I began to read astrology magazines. They had *Horoscope*. They had *American Astrology*. I think there was one that used to be called *World Astrology*, and there were two or three others. Back in those days there were more of them than there are today.

And I read those and I looked at the charts and I got fascinated. And I found out they were sky maps and I looked at the numbers around the edge, the cuspal numbers. And I wondered how they figured those. And I got real interested in all of that, and I guess in a way, that's what really sucked me into astrology. Like I said, when I was around eighteen I got hold of a copy of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*. And about the same time I found the Latin text of Julius Firmicus. I'd had four years of Latin in high school so I could read Latin pretty well. And at the University I had had nine hours of Latin, in which I guess would be fifth year and first half of sixth year. So I could read the Latin without much trouble. And both of those books fascinated me. And they got me interested in the old stuff, and then I began to apply the astronomy that I had.

Well, I did quite a bit of those things like you saw in the introduction to *The Book of Flowers*, I was working on that thing back in the sixties. When I'd get bored with doing anything else, I'd say oh, I'll get that out and translate another page or two, something like that. And also I had in the late fifties and early sixties begun to acquire the Greek texts of some of the classical Greek astrologers that had been published in Europe. And I taught myself Greek and I began to translate some of those.

NG: You must have a real gift for languages.

JH: Well, I guess I do or I wouldn't have been able to have done it then. I can't take any credit for it, I guess you're born with that sort of thing. I have thought to myself sometimes, and I don't say this as a piece of braggartry, but just as a fact. I think of all the people in my high school that took Latin I'm probably the only one that ever did anything with it.

To show what you can do, I got that Latin text [Guido Bonatti's *Book of Astronomy*]; I guess I've had that thirty years or so. And I sat down one day and I made a table of contents for it. The pages aren't numbered, but they have what they call folio numeration every fourth page: why, you've got B and then you've got one, two, three, four and then you've got C, and so on. And I made a complete index of the whole thing, so now if I want to look up something, well I get that out. I can open up the book and find a page that's got that information on it. So it's kind of handy. And then I discovered the

Universal Bookstore (or something like that) up there in Canada that reprints old books. Anyway, they've reprinted a lot of the old books, and they offered Coley's book, for example. And I bought that thing, oh, I guess twenty-three years ago.

I got several other of the 17th century English books that they reprinted, and those are very handy. You can find a lot of stuff in there that you'd be hard put to locate in the modern books. Like I said, Coley had done the three *Centiloquies*, and that was the only place I knew where you could find all three of them. And I don't know that anybody ever did al-Mansur, or I guess somebody must have translated it, but I've never seen it. Anyway, that's some of the stuff that I put together over the years.

You asked me are there any particular techniques or areas that you favor. I guess looking back over the years I have been particularly interested in reading personality out of a chart. In fact, I wrote a paper on that that was published in our Journal of Research a few years ago. As you well know, trying to make predictions and put specific dates on them is hard to do with great accuracy, but we can do it to some extent. And we all try it. I mean if somebody gives you their birth date, then you put the chart up, and you can look at the thing, and you can pretty much tell what kind of person you're dealing with there. To me that's particularly fascinating, to try to work out the personality from the chart.

I might mention what's in my paper, and I have devised a technique that works for me, and I'll mention it to you. It's very simple, and you might try it yourself. The first house, the ascending sign, shows you the animal nature of the person. Now what I mean by animal nature is that this is the instinctive thing. If somebody suddenly says something to you, asks you a question, or somebody trips you up, or hits you, or says, "look at that." You have an instant reaction to it, and this is a reaction that's without thought. It's what's natural - that's the ascendant, as I said.

And I will give an example with animals. If you have a rabbit sitting in the floor in front of you, a pet rabbit, and you throw a ball of yarn down in front of it, He'll turn around and run away from it. If you throw it down in front of your pet cat, he'd pounce on it. That's animal nature. This is the thing that you see with the ascendant. It's what you do without thinking!

The Moon is the conscious mind inside your head, it's what you think. And the Sun is a kind of a censor that sits there in the background. It's kind of like a backseat driver. It says you're going too fast or turn left here or something like that. And I think if you look at a chart like that, why it makes a whole lot of sense and you can read personality pretty well with that kind of technique.

And since there are three areas, and each one can be in a different sign, or in the same sign, or something, you've got 1,728 different combinations. And that's about how many different kinds of people we might run across in the world. Now if you've got a planet in

any one of those, obviously, that modifies it. For example, if you've got Mars in the first house then violence, to some extent, comes natural to you. If somebody comes up and hits you on the shoulder, you may turn around and slap them without even thinking about it.

On the other hand if you've got Mars in conjunction with your Moon or strongly configured with it or something like that and somebody slaps you, why you may think, I guess I ought to hit him, but I don't know whether I want to do it or not. You'll think about it before you do it.

And if you've got Mars with the Sun, then the Sun says it's okay to hit if you want to. It's kind of a censor. I see the Sun as a censor. It doesn't necessarily tell you what to do, but it tells you what it thinks is right and what it thinks is wrong. We have all had the experience of saying something and then instantly wishing we hadn't said it. And very often, why that is the Sun down there saying, oh No, that wasn't right; you shouldn't have said that. And it popped out because either the ascendant popped it out instantly, or the Moon thought it up and put it out. But the Sun said: that doesn't suit my personal, ethical standard; you shouldn't have said that. I think if you look at a chart like that, I believe it'll make more sense than the usual way that people do.

Now part of that you can trace back to some old writer. I think Alan Leo said something that agrees with part of that, but not the whole thing. I have found in the old books that there was always a lot of confusion over what does the Sun mean and what does the Moon mean and which one is the personality. Well, I think the personality really is the ascendant.

When you first meet somebody, you see him. You size people up from their looks, their physical appearance, and that's the ascendant. When you get to know them, then you talk to them and then your Moon is evaluating what their Moon has them say. And if you get to know them real well, why, then maybe you get down to the Sun sign level and you see that their ethical standard either agrees with yours if you've got the same Sun sign or else it's different.

One other thing that I've been interested in over the years is the house problem. Are we going to use Placidus? Are we going to use Regiomontanus? Are we going to use Koch? Are we going to use Sign-House? What are we going to use? And I would like to recommend that you take a look at what I call Sign-House, and some people call Whole Sign. But Sign-House is what I call it.

The way this works, you look at the ascendant, and no matter what the degree is, the sign that's there, the whole sign, is the first house. Now if you've got twenty degrees of Aries coming up, then all of Aries is the first house. And all of the next sign is the second and the one after that's a third.

Now this was the original system. This is what the people that invented it in the 2nd century BC came up with. And I'm not saying that they were smarter than us, or that since they did it that way, why, we ought to all fall in line and say hi-ho we'll use it too, and so on. But I recommend you try that. I have tried it and I usually put a chart up in Placidus if it's a natal chart. And then I look at it the other way.

I wrote a paper sometime back that was published in our monthly publication, *Today's Astrologer*. It had the horoscope of Mussolini. And if you draw the chart in Placidus, or Regiomontanus, either one, I don't think the house position suit him nearly so well as they do if you use Sign-House. For example, I think if you do it with either Regiomontanus or Placidus you've got the Sun and Mercury in the ninth house. If you do it with Sign-House, they're in the tenth in Leo. Look at the kind of guy he was. He was a flamboyant speaker. He got up and blah, blah, blah to everybody, and people just ate that up.

Also, the other thing, is that he had the Moon and I think Mars and Saturn in the seventh house with Placidus and Regiomontanus. But if you do it in Sign-House, it's in the eighth. How did he die? He got nailed by some partisans and they strung him up and machine gunned him. And that perfectly fits.

And all I'm saying is, try it. Now here's the other advantage to that: It'll work everywhere. If you take the city Murmansk. Now it is above the Arctic Circle and there's 300,000 people that live there. And using Regiomontanus or Placidus, you cannot draw their horoscope. But with Sign-House you can do it. And even if somebody's born at the North Pole, they've got zero Libra rising and you've got a sign for each house all the way around. And it seems to me that if the thing's true it ought to work everywhere.

I'm not saying that Placidus is wrong or Regiomontanus is wrong, but I'm saying try this other one, and I think you'll see some samples right in your own chart. And if it moves some planets into another house, well, look at it and say, now which one of those really suits me best. And the further north you are the more likely it is that they are going to move them into different houses. And I think putting up a chart using any of the quadrant systems in Stockholm, for example, where you can have houses that only have eight or nine degrees in them and others that have two whole signs; that doesn't seem to make any sense.

I'm just saying here's something that I discovered that people used at the dawn of time, and maybe you ought to take a look at it.

NG: My last question was if you're related to Sir William Herschel [the discoverer of the planet Uranus].

JH: Oh, I'm sorry to say that I'm not. Sir William was German. He was born in Hanover I think. And I'm nearly all English with a tiny bit of Scotch in there some place. I don't know where the name Herschel came from. My grandfather Holden's middle name was Herschel. He was Albert Herschel Holden.

And he was the first in our family that ever used the name Herschel, and why in the world he had that middle name, I've never been able to discover. He's long since passed away so I can't ask him. I wish I was kin to Sir William, but I'm not.

I've got to tell you something funny though. I'm interested in genealogy. I discovered quite by accident that I was kin to Doris [Chase] Doane [former president of the AFA]. Yes. She and I were about tenth cousins I think. Now that isn't very close but her maiden name was Chase, and if I go way back up to my great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandfathers, one of them was named Chase. [Doris Chase Doane] was directly descended in the Chase line from that one. I was indirectly descended, I think one of this granddaughters married a man named Sergeant; and straight down the Sergeant line was my paternal grandmother, who was Cordelia Sergeant Holden. And so Doris and I were very distantly related. And I found that out just a few years before she passed away, and we kind of had a little bit of a laugh over that.

JH: This is for you or anybody else that's bought one of my books. If anybody has got one of my books and they read something they don't understand, let me know about it. Send me an e-mail and say, hey on page thirty-seven it says this, and that doesn't make any sense, or I don't know what you're talking about, and I'll be glad to answer their question.

And let me say this about my latest book, *The Five Medieval Astrologers*. I solicit comments from anybody that's bought the book. If you like it, tell me you like it. If you say, well, you should have done so and so in this part of it, or I read this, and I don't understand it, why, let me know about that too, because this is feedback. And if we can fix it, we will.

JH: [On William Lilly] I've got a Master's Degree in English and I was able to write my thesis on William Lilly. "William Lilly Christian Astrologer: a Biographical and Critical Study." How about that? It's probably the only astrological thesis that the University ever accepted.

But anyway in Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales*, which I suppose you have read. You remember the Doctor of Physic? And in one place it says of him, "Gladly would he learn, and gladly teach." And I have adopted that as a motto. I mean I like to learn things, and if somebody asks me a question, then I'll do my darndest to answer it.