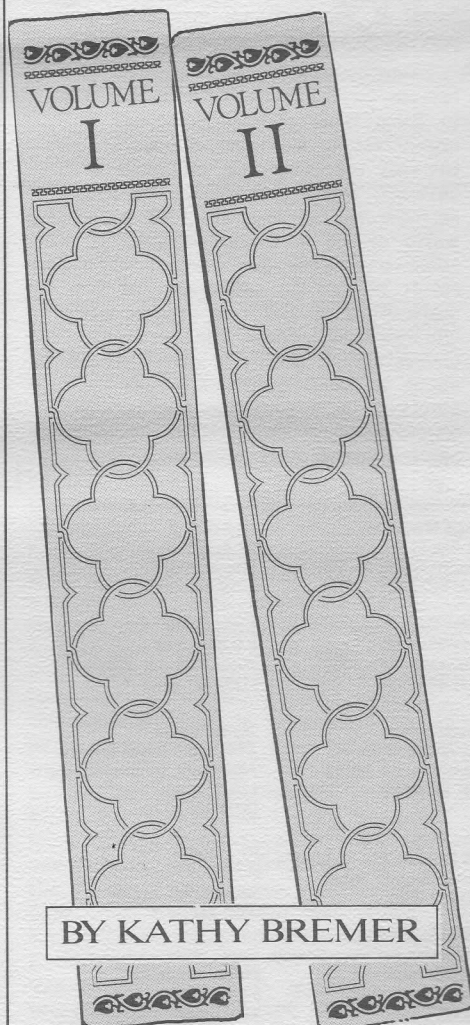


PROJECT

ALEXANDRIA



Project Alexandria was named after the famed Egyptian Library that burned down to the ground centuries ago with the result that ancient scrolls were lost forever. Today, modern technology is drawing together all of the books, textbooks, encyclopedias, research reports and other written materials into one computer system and creating what they refer to as the "Great Comprehensive Encyclopedia".

Astrological literature is scattered all over the world. According to Dr. Geoffrey Dean in **Recent Advances**, there have been approximately 10,000 books and as many journals published on serious astrology in Western languages between 1900-1981. Many articles have been written and published by Astrological groups and Organizations in their newsletters, magazines, journals and periodicals.

Dr. Geoffrey Dean who has visited and toured many collections. At this time, the AFA Library is unorganized (uncataloged; books and other written materials stacked in boxes and shelves), therefore, the contents are not clearly known and inaccessible for use.

Recently, after receiving consent from Robert & Sara Cooper of the AFA, Neil Michelsen and Lillian Huber (AFA members), plan to go to Tempe and help organize the AFA Library. This job will entail a lot of work and time and will need the support of the AFA and its membership to see it through.

2. **Recent Advances and Recent Advances II** in Western Australia, contain many rare and serious astrological books and materials. Geoffrey Dean has analyzed the materials on

Unfortunately, most of this material is only accessible to a few of us. Needless to say, it limits our field from producing any satisfactory conclusive results in the area of research, but also wastes the valuable time of some who unknowingly concentrate in areas that have already been explored. In order to enhance our field and earn a respectable reputation as a serious professional study, we have to work more co-operatively internally and seriously concentrate on giving a stronger base to our educational system.

Project Alexandria's purpose is to inspire, encourage and globally network together the Astrological community to retrieve, collect and record our literature and other astrological data. The eventual goal is to abstract the materials, organize a central data bank and create our own "Great Comprehensive Electronic Encyclopedia" of astrology. With the aid of computers and copy machines, we can preserve our Astrological literature and also make it readily accessible for use. Hence, our written materials do not have to be lost to all of us — as were the ancient scrolls of Alexandria.

There are several Astrological collections in our field. Some noted ones are the following:

1. The 45 year old AFA (**American Federation of Astrologers**) has a library in Tempe Arizona that members are allowed to visit. It is said to have the largest Astrological collection in the world, according to

the shelves of his RA and RA II libraries and also the Astrological Association Library in London in a report entitled: 'Simple is Beautiful'. He is sharing his findings with other noted individuals involved in Library work in our field and is in the process of updating this report.

3. The **Library of Congress** in Wash. D.C. contains a rough estimate of 3,000 books on astrology and has a Xerox machine available.

4. **ISAR**, Los Angeles CA, is in the process of card indexing their **KOSMOS** collection — putting emphasis on research. There are other materials and books in this library that are made available to members.

Two libraries in our field are paralleling the work envisioned in Project Alexandria: the **IAO Research Centre** in Toronto, Ontario and the **Astrological Association** in London England. Both are in the process of computer cataloging their collections and have plans to give a photocopying service to the astrological community.

The **IAO**, a library of 8 to 10 thousand books, volumes and publications on astrology, mysticism, the divining sciences, yoga, religion and other related subjects has been receiving a tremendous amount of world wide support and recognition from astrological groups and organizations in the past few months. Astrological books and publications are currently being donated to this library.

The **IAO** plans to provide other services which will include the Astrologer's Registry, speaker lists and listings of where future seminars, classes and lectures will be sponsored. Robin Armstrong of the **IAO**, plans to set up a telecommunications system in the near future and is currently in the process of linking up the **IAO** Library with other libraries in our field. A newsletter updating the progress of the **IAO** will be published soon.

Other noted work connected with computers, research and education will prove to be of valuable use for research and educational means. **ISAR** of Los Angeles, CA is engaged in an ongoing birth-data base project. Also, **MATRIX** of Big Rapids, MI has started a birth-data base of famous personalities plus sets of research data. In addition to this, **MATRIX** is also storing data on the chronology of historical events and correlating them with astrological events! Contributions of information are welcome.

It is important to understand, that in order to organize a central data bank, information, books and publications have to be collected and stored by at least one good source or by several who are cooperatively combining their efforts, sharing and exchanging information and/or copies of materials and books with each other. This project will not succeed nor achieve its goal to the fullest without the astrological community working together. This is a project that is long overdue and needs the active support of the entire astrological community.

What can you do to support it? Since the **IAO** is the only center in North America that has plans to give this service to the astrological community at this time, I advise Northern American astrologers who have access to collections of books and publications (especially those that are out of print) to donate copies to the **IAO** or send them there to be copied. As funds are needed for equipment, upkeep, the tremendous work involved, housing and other expenses, this too, can be donated to the centers engaging in computer, library, and information projects. Another way you can help is to pass the word onto others thru your publications, meetings, etc... The more active support this project receives, the greater the chance it will have in expediting its progress and materializing its goal. Thank you!

The **IAO** Research Centre, P.O./Box 5265, Station "A", Toronto, Ontario. (Include self-addressed and stamped envelope).

Alexandria is an A.F.A.N.-supported project.

Editor's Note: I want to clear up a question that Kathy Bremer suggested in an earlier version of this article that was circulated among astrologers regarding the AFA library and that some of you may have read. In that version of the article their was reference to the fact that the AFA has a salaried librarian and yet a library that is unorganized and inaccessible. I called and talked to Sara & Bob Cooper to find out what, in fact, was the status of the AFA library. Here is what they said:

The AFA library consists of duplicate copies of AFA publications, donations of book collections left to the AFA (mostly containing AFA publications and a few sets of astrological magazines like **Horoscope Magazine** and **American Astrology**. It is not a comprehensive library. The AFA does not have a salaried librarian. 25 years ago the designation for the job Sara Cooper now has was coined: "Librarian of Services". This was a standard and accepted term for someone who handled all of the various organizational chores of running the day-to-day work of the business. People have misunderstood the term librarian and have assumed that someone was taking money for a job that was never done. No one has been taking money for working on the AFA collection of books. Bob pointed out that he would like to find the time to better organize the existing collection but added that it was not in any sense a complete or comprehensive collection.

In other words, the collection may not be worth the effort and money expended to organize it. As far as it's being inaccessible: I know that is not true because when Geoffrey Dean stopped by in Big Rapids for a visit, he had just come from the AFA library. The library can be accessed by AFA members — in person. It is not a lending library and there are no facilities for loaning books out by mail. If it is not organized, then this may amount to inaccessibility. Physically, it is accessible.

My next phone stop was with Lilian Huber who apparently is one of the few individuals who has cared enough about the AFA library to actually schedule and make a visit to inspect it. Here is the gist of her report:

She called Bob Cooper, asked to visit the library and was told to come ahead. The library is housed in what appears to be a conference room. A large conference-type table fills the center of the room and the walls are shelved. On the shelves were piles and boxes of books. The books were not in any very obvious order. Lilian spent about 30 minutes in the book room and confirms that there are mostly duplicates of the AFA publications and back issues of several of the pulp astrology

magazines like **bAmerican Astrology** and **Horoscope**. She went on to add that "If they have 5 old books in there, I would be surprised".

My last phone call on this issue was to Neil Michelsen who, along with Lilian Huber, was asked by the AFAN Network to look into possibly organizing the AFA library. Neil had three conversations with Bob Cooper on the subject and has drawn up a plan (The AFA Library Project Proposal) for organizing the library which he has sent to Bob Cooper.

Space does not permit me to include the entire text of Michelsen's proposal. In essence, it encourages all astrological organizations that have book collections to cooperate in cataloging their collections. Michelsen goes on to suggest a method for ordering the books on the shelves, for cross-referencing titles, sharing materials between libraries and more. It amounts to an outline for action.

In addition, Michelsen has volunteered to go to AFA headquarters and assist in getting this project underway. He plans to donate a week of his time and pay for his own expenses. His proposal closes as follows:

"It is envisioned that there is sufficient interest in this project by the astrological community that it would be staffed by voluntary workers over the life of the project, which could be several years. A lead team would provide the initial impetus, and based upon their experience, the procedures could be developed and documented so that there would be a continuity of effort even though many people would participate.

"The question of whether the astrological community would support such a project is best answered by starting the project. If it moves forward, the answer is yes. If it dies for lack of volunteers, the answer is no.

"The willingness of astrologers to participate and the availability of computer technology to support such an effort point to early 1984 as the time to begin. Let's get started!"

As Neil points out, it's really up to us how much we care about all of this. How much effort and/or funds are we willing to donate to an international library project? **ASTRO*TALK** welcomes your opinions and comments on this topic.

ACT (Astrological Conference on Techniques) at the 1984 AFA convention will have one workshop devoted to the Library project. I have already spoken to Kathy Bremer who will make every effort to be there. In addition, Neil Michelsen, Lilian Huber, Sara or Bob Cooper, Robin Armstrong and others will be invited to participate on the panel.

