

## Bibliotheca Alexandrina

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

Bibliotheca Alexandrina was one of the most significant libraries of the ancient world because of several reasons. The BA is the first and oldest public library in the ancient world. Also, because it was built during the Pharaonic, Greek era, it has intermarried collections between Pharaonic and Greco books. Also, the greatness of those who made it, where was required on all writers in the areato give the library a copy of their books. Also, it was the stronghold of science. It freed scientists from Thabo politics, religion, sex, race, and discrimination. BA was looking for knowledge. So, it was the one and only in the ancient world that did not ask for religion, nor nationality.<sup>1</sup>

In the past of the ancient world, it was named the greatest library. BA was founded in 1749, in Egypt by Ptolemy I Soter. BA faced many numerous fires and suffered a lot.

<sup>1</sup> Whibley, Leonard. Companion to Greek Studies. Place of Publication Not Identified: Cambridge Univ, 2015. P 122–123

In 2002, it was rebuilt under the Bibliotheca Alexandrina me.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.1 The History of Bibliotheca Alexandrina

The history of Bibliotheca Alexandrina was not clear. Who had created it? The majority of historians said that Alexander the Great, who was one of the kings of the ancient Greeks, and the most famous military leaders and conquerors throughout history, was responsible. Alexander the Great decided to build the library in Alexandria, Egypt.<sup>3</sup> Then, Ptolemy I Soter who was one of the generals of Alexander the Great and the Pharaoh of Egypt, ruled Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great. Ptolemy, I Soter may have been the one who built the library. After that, Ptolemy II was one of the Ptolemaic kings and the son of King Ptolemy I; he ascended to the throne of Egypt in 285 BC. Ptolemy II continued building the library.<sup>4</sup> In the past of the ancient world, it had more than 700,000 manuscripts and a huge number of books.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina had been through many fires and destruction during the wars that had been in Egypt, but this did not stop them. Whenever the wars and fires ended, the Princes, Arab leaders in Egypt, intellectuals and scientists tried to bring back to life the significant library again.<sup>5</sup>

During wars and destruction, most library materials were transmitted to various Arab libraries, such as Palestine Library, the House of Wisdom Library, and the Academy of Gundishapur.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Bandt, Beverly Seehorn. "The Online Books Page." The Alexandria, Virginia, Library: Its History, Present Facilities, And Future Program. P1. Accessed 8 Mar 2017. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015033919005;view=1up;seq=9>

<sup>3</sup> Berry, Arthur. A Short History of Astronomy. London: John Murray, 2010. 7 Mar. 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Abed Rabbo, Israa Mohammed. Royal Library of Alexandria. 1st ed, 2008. Ser.1

<sup>5</sup> Staikos, Konstantinos Sp. "The Great Libraries: From Antiquity to the Renaissance." Oak Knoll. Web. 10 Mar. 2017. p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> Goldhill, Simon, Matthew Nicholls, and Serafina Cuomo. "The Library of Alexandria." BBC Radio 4 - In Our Time. 12 Mar. 2009. Radio.

## 1.2 The New Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Because Bibliotheca Alexandrina was one of the top libraries in the Arab world, the former president of Egypt Mubarak sought to revive and try to create a new BA in 1990 through the development of the library and the creation of its electronic library. In 2002, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization "UNESCO," Mubarak set up and launched the new BA. After that, it became the first digital library in the 21st century in the Arab world, involving various Egyptian, cultural and human heritage.<sup>7</sup>

## 2 MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LIBRARY

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina is trying hard to restore the glory of the ancient Alexandrian library, through the creation of this organelle edifice, which aims to be the first place for communication between Arab people and all the peoples of the world. Also, the library aims to be a great center for the production and distribution of knowledge. Besides, it aspires to be a foundation successful in the digital era. Moreover, it seeks to achieve this through the inception of its distinct and unique library. Also, it makes sure that users to take advantage of their services and encourages beneficiaries to take the best result or advantage of their services.

## 3 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

As what the people are saying about BA, "Bibliotheca Alexandrina is much more than just a library." BA designed the buildings to achieve its objectives and mission. It was designed as a library to comprise the following: "The Main Library (which can hold up to millions of books). In fact, the total number of library collections is 8 million books, 1500/4000 of patrols, 10000-50000 audio-visual materials and multimedia, 10000-50000 manuscripts and rare books, and 50000 graphs."<sup>8</sup> The library has affiliated libraries, six specialized libraries, four museums, the Culturama, and VISTA; it has thirteen academic research centers, etc. Also, it has fourteen permanent exhibitions, contemporary Egyptian permanent art exhibitions, and hosts the new Library of Alexandria for many institutions. In fact, today, BA has more than 1.5 million visitors annually.<sup>9</sup>

As for the exterior design, the BA is one of the most important libraries in the Arab world with its unique engineering design. The library is designed in the form of an italic and surrounded by the water of the Mediterranean Sea

from all sides, a circular shape, causing it to capture and reflect the sun's light in place. The intention was a reflection of the sun's rays to enlightenment and knowledge. However, the external walls of the library contain the designs and inscriptions with very distinctive symbols and characters in all languages of the world. This unique design makes it the focus of attention of tourists from all over the world.<sup>10</sup>

## 3.1 The Workforce

At this point, we must mention the significant role played by those who recruited their energy and time to revive the library for more than a quarter of a century. The library is a statement of the creative effort that has been made, from UNESCO to engineers, architects, contractors, and project management to the quarry workers, and associations of friends of the BA in the world to eminent personalities who worked on international commissions and got generous contributions from governments. Bibliotheca Alexandrina is keen on hiring and acquiring of the owners of merit and employing the candidates who can best meet the library's needs and support the library's mission and objectives.

If we want to talk about the library staff, library workers are different people from all over the world. For example, the Board of Trustees consists of Prince Turki al-Faisal, Kjell Magne Bondevik, Gordon Conway, Nadia Makram Ebeid, Alexander Likhotal, Zlatko Lagumdzija, etc. BA is administered by three different departments: a council of patrons, a board of trustees, and a director. In fact, the total employment is 250 people,<sup>11</sup> and it is managed under the director of the library, Ismail Serageldin.<sup>12</sup>

## 4 LIBRARY SERVICES

As discussed earlier, the BA aims to disseminate cultural and scientific knowledge and a culture of dialogue and tolerance, the most prominent of the goals that the library is seeking to achieve through its projects and activities. Because of that, BA is starting new projects, events, activities, services, the annual book fairs to art exhibitions, and conferences to seminars, concerts, and theater.<sup>13</sup> That could be achieved only through the library sections or by the various departments. So, we have to discuss the library departments and who offers the services for users. The BA is divided into

<sup>7</sup> About the BA." About the BA. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017 <http://www.bibalex.org/ar/Page/About>

<sup>8</sup> Al-Omran, Hamad Ibrahim. "Informatics Journal-Library of Alexandria." *Informatics Journal*. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017. <http://archive.is/2TAre>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> "BibAlex Walls (Library of Alexandria)." *BibAlex Walls (Library of Alexandria)*. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017. <http://www.yearsandmiles.com/bibalexwalls>.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Omran, Hamad Ibrahim. "Informatics Journal-Library of Alexandria." *Informatics Journal*. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017. <http://archive.is/2TAre>.

<sup>12</sup> "Jobs." *Vacancies - Bibliotheca Alexandrina*. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017. <https://www.bibalex.org/en/jobapplication/currentactivejobs>.

<sup>13</sup> "Projects and Activities." *Projects - Bibliotheca Alexandrina*. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017. <http://www.bibalex.org/ar/project/index?page=11>.

several buildings to serve their aims, so every building is for a particular purpose. For example, in addition to the main library, the BA contains six specialized libraries: "the Library Arts and Multimedia, Taha Hussein Library for the visually impaired, the Library of Child, Adolescent and library exchange and Archive Department, Department of Rare Books, and Francophone Library."<sup>14</sup>

Also, it has three museums, and these museums are designed to encourage research and innovation and cultural awareness through three different languages: English, Arabic, and French. The first museum is the Museum of Manuscripts. It contains manuscripts and rare books, and it has the largest collection of digital manuscripts. This museum aims to preserve the artifacts that we have and teach the next generation how important it is and how to maintain them. The second museum is Sadat Museum. This museum has a unique collection about Egyptian president Anwar Al Sadat. The last one is the History of Science. It has a collection of the history of science.

The library does not stop as it continues to extend to include a planetarium. The planetarium is part of the museum of the history of science. The planetarium is designed to stimulate and develop the awareness and the interest of the public and the absorption of science through a variety of programs and educational exhibits. It focuses on school and university students with the provision of its activities. Also, it focuses on providing scientific workshops for visitors regardless of age and scientific background.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the library includes a hall of scientific explorations and shows for children. It is an educational center that has a set of scientific instruments to focus, innovate and develop the new generation to face all the new challenges.<sup>16</sup> Also, the library has almost 400 rooms, meeting rooms, and halls for meetings and exhibitions, such as Salon Meeting Room VIP, space for digital collections, personal collections, as well as three restaurants and a coffee shop.<sup>17</sup> Also, the library has a room that has the necessary infrastructure and technology that allows scientists and researchers to analyze the molecule as a reality. This technique is called Vista. The purpose of this is to enable scientists and scholars to work in close collaboration with researchers from all over the world.<sup>18</sup>

Certainly, BA is not devoid of the traditional library services like any other library, such as using computers. Computer networks associated with it are available as more than 250 computers are found in the main hall of the users. It allows the users of computers access to the BA-mail, catalogs,

Internet websites, select databases, and an index of other electronic resources index. It has a print service. Surely, you cannot get it without a library card. Also, the library offers guided tours for the visitor to recognize the historical background of the library reviewing the history of the ancient BA and the story and revival efforts to design and build as well as to introduce them to other sections within this great cultural edifice, services and activities provided by the beneficiaries. Besides, the library provides a unique service for specialists in library science, where they are given a tour of the library in which librarians specialize to explain systems and how they used the library service and enable the opportunity to establish a close relationship between the library and other libraries, whether local or global. Furthermore, it offers unique services for researchers and graduate students as giving researchers and graduate students from private collections, microfilm, manuscripts, and rare books in private halls for it. BA offers many rooms, and research provides an opportunity to book one of these rooms to work quietly. The library provides interlibrary loan services and should be noted that not everything is available to borrow. It is applied for non-available materials library service as well as procurement services. The library provides imaging subject to copyright, which stipulates that no filming more than 10% of the book.<sup>19</sup>

## 5 BUDGET AND FINANCE

Based on the annual report of Hosni Mubarak in March 2001, the materials budget is provided by the government. It is divided in the following manner: the provision of funding for acquisitions by the financial year, with the total amount to be determined by the director of the library. Providing a small amount of money to meet public needs and emergencies and using the bulk of the budget for purchases, taking into account the improvement of the topics that are outdated, weak or non-existent demand, etc., it should also be directed that the allocation of funds is determined by the head of a group of professional development experience, judgment, and relations with the selectors and specialists in the subject, in cooperation with other members of the library, and knowledge of the local, national and international trends affecting the Library and its collections. All of this is in the general budget. Also, there are other sources of funding, such as grants, donations, bequests, and for the services performed by the library.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "About the BA." About the BA. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017 <http://www.bibalex.org/ar/Page/About>

<sup>15</sup> "PSC." PSC. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017. <http://www.bibalex.org/psc/ar/home/aboutus.asp>.

<sup>16</sup> "About the BA." About the BA. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017 <http://www.bibalex.org/ar/Page/About>

<sup>17</sup> "Services and Catering." Services and Catering - Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017. <http://www.bibalex.org/en/page/servicescatering?keywords=>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Zahran, Sahar Hamdi. "Services Provided by the Library of Alexandria." Blog Librarians Menoufia. 4 Apr. 2008. Accessed 10 Mar. 2017. <http://librariansinmenoufia.blogspot.com/2008/04/250.html>

<sup>20</sup> "Bibliotheca Alexandrina, BA Libraries, Collection Development Policy." Bibliotheca Alexandrina, BA Libraries, Collection Development Policy. Accessed 8 Mar. 2017. <http://www.bibalex.org/Libraries/Presentation/Static/15611.aspx#7>.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Bibliotheca Alexandrina is that more than just a library because it is considered one of the great libraries in the world and the top library in the Arab world. Characterized by the library's history, it contains several libraries, and various museums, the international and domestic conference room, and Research Centre activities and services. Also, the collection is characterized by scarce resources and Library visitors, such as writers, researchers and readers, students, and different types of users, people young and old, regardless of color, religion or ethnicity. The distinctive design of the library, whether external or internal and the large size of the library, allows around 2,000 people per day. We cannot deny the support of different writers and thinkers, philosophers and researchers from the whole world and they join the Library's boards as a board of trustees and others. All of this makes it one of the most significant libraries in the world.

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