

about 642-46 A.D., there were very few rolls left in the library to be destroyed. The accounts according to which the Arabs burned the library, have been shown to be fraudulent.

Rebuilding the Library of Alexandria

It is fitting that it is an Arab government which has restored the Alexandrina, given the widespread belief in the story that the Arabs destroyed it. The library was, for centuries, in the center of a fight to the death between those forces—in different cultural traditions—which promoted the spread of knowledge as the means to uplift and develop human society, and those forces dedicated to the idea of the tyranny of the few, who would impound such knowledge to maintain control over the ignorant masses.

The idea to rebuild the library goes back to 1974, and is attributed to Egyptian historian Mostafa al-Abbadi, author of a definitive history of the library. The ambitious project was designed not only to commemorate the historic library, but to replicate it for the modern world. On June 26, 1988, President Mubarak laid the foundations for the building, accompanied by the director general of the UN Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which issued a call to individuals, organizations and countries to support the project. An International Committee for Supporting the Funding Campaign, was established at the request of Egypt. In 1990, \$230 million was pledged, mainly by Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The Egyptian government underwrote the budget.

The design of the building is circular, to reflect the Sun, which is a central motif in Egyptian culture. As one government press release explained, “The inclination of the building therefore represents the rising of the Sun, while its face to the sea indicates the unlimited open space and distance which is the search for knowledge.” The building is encased within a granite wall, on which all the alphabets of the world have been carved.

The project leaders have striven to replicate the efforts of the Ptolemies, in gathering important works from all over the world. The library used its budget, donated by the Egyptian government, to purchase 350,000 books initially. With further purchases, and generous contributions by governments and institutions, the library has 4 million volumes, 50,000 maps, 100,000 manuscripts, 10,000 rare books, 200,000 disks/tapes of musical works, 50,000 disks/videos, and 100 CD-ROM titles. The complex includes a conference center with 3,200 seats, a science museum, a planetarium, a school of information studies, a calligraphy institute, and a museum.

The inauguration of the library has made the world considerably richer. The revived Biblioteca Alexandrina should become, like its namesake, a center of learning and research, with emphasis on the civilizations of ancient Egypt, Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean. Scholars from throughout the world should flock there, as their ancient counterparts did, to study, deliberate, research, teach, and discover.

Queen's Ecologists Lose Brazil Lawsuit

Judge Paulo Maurício Pereira, of Rio de Janeiro's 24th Civil Jurisdiction, has thrown out the lawsuit filed by the Brazilian chapter of the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) against the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (MSIA, associates of Lyndon LaRouche), as without merit. In the suit, the environmentalist non-governmental organization created by the British monarchy had demanded 50,000 reals indemnization for “moral damages” allegedly caused by the MSIA's repeated denunciations of its political activity at the head of Brazil's environmental movement and abroad, as well as of the damaging effects of radical environmentalism on socio-economic development generally, and particularly on large infrastructure projects. WWF-Brazil, headed by the vice president of Organizações Globo José Roberto Marinho, was ordered to pay for the cost of the proceedings and lawyers' fees, and has 15 days to appeal the verdict.

The WWF-Brazil's suit placed emphasis on the MSIA's May 2000 pamphlet, “The WWF's Forest Trap,” on whose cover appeared a panda bear, chewing on a human bone. (The panda is the WWF's trademark.) The pamphlet, the WWF charged, was filled with “absurd, mistaken, and unfounded information, a real exercise in creative speculation, with texts filled with lies and absurdities, not to mention the illegal use of the WWF logo and image of the panda bear, known worldwide as the plaintiff's trademark.”

In his ruling, Judge Pereira wrote that the MSIA's denunciations are coherent with the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Federal Constitution. Moreover, the opinions expressed do not constitute “falsehoods or distortions, as they can be summarized as discussion involving what nationalists call ‘the imperialist policy of the great world powers’ and ‘the policy of the internationalization of the Amazon,’ material which for some time has been discussed by the media, including by members of the Brazilian government and military, seen as their duty to defend our borders and sovereignty.”

Pereira didn't consider the panda image as an offense to the plaintiff, “but rather a spirited speech, a playful composition, taken in the context in which it was used.” In addition, “it's worth remembering that Mr. Luiz Inácio ‘Lula’ da Silva has also been portrayed ‘eating babies’, yet today, is close to being elected President of the Republic; a simple accusation cannot cause harm to someone's reputation, chiefly because it always has a bit of humor and enjoyment embedded within it, leading us to recall the words of Umberto Eco (*The Name of the Rose*): ‘He who laughs doesn't take seriously that about which he is laughing, but neither does he hate it.’ ”