

# Book Reviews

***The Book of [the] Iran National Library. Tehran National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran 2005 40p English text 112p Farsi text No ISBN***

The political importance of national libraries has long been recognised in western countries. Middle Eastern and Asian countries with their very different political, religious and social contexts are no less aware of what is involved, although circumstances have, in many cases, been unfavourable to their aspirations. Iran is a country whose tangled history, which includes the 1979 Islamic Revolution, has, in terms of library development, made early efforts to promote libraries, but until recent times with limited success. The story of the National Library of Iran (NLI) is too involved to go into here, but the publication of a fine illustrated book to mark the inauguration of stage one of a splendid new building must be seen in its full historical dimension for an accurate grasp of the significance of the occasion. This review offers comments on both the progress of NLI and on the volume in hand.

*The Book of [the] Iran National Library*, issued in 2000 copies, celebrates the completion of stage one in May 2005. This stage provides a building with some 65 000m<sup>2</sup> of space distributed over eight storeys, of which four are partly underground. Because the building is built on the side of a hill, it has receding levels. Special care has been devoted to allowing the use of natural lighting wherever possible. The library's present stock is estimated at 1.5 million volumes and the new building is expected ultimately to have a storage capacity of four million volumes using traditional shelving, or seven million volumes using close storage (p33). Since there is an ambitious intention of acquiring in the next decade four million volumes from abroad (p20), close storage will be needed.

Built in the Tehran city quarter where the Islamic Republic is concentrating its learned academies and societies, the library building has a striking presence. Designed as a 'high tech' building able to withstand major earthquakes, the structure uses traditional Iranian materials and architectural styles. Brick is the main material used and is employed to excellent effect. The fine, mostly coloured, sometimes full-page photos of the exterior and interior amply demonstrate the expertise of the Iranian architects, engineers and bricklayers. NLI is entirely an Iranian achievement, unlike the international effort which created the Alexandria Library in Egypt.

The volume consists of two sections with separate pagination. Beginning as Islamic books do from the back, the Farsi section meets the English section which begins at the, to us, front of the book. The English section, printed in double columns, brings translations of most of the Farsi text which consists of interviews with the National Librarian (K M Bojnourdi), with his deputy (F Kousravi), and with others, and articles dealing with the history of NLI, the Iranian National Archives and Documentation Office, the planning and technical details (computerised facilities, for example) of the new building and outlining its specifications and technical requirements. The opening message from Khatami, formerly President of Iran and earlier National Librarian (1992-1997), expresses the nation's pride in, and hopes for, NLI. Clearly the prestige and political power of this important person facilitated the launching of this massive public work.

The photos show some large grand areas, but there is not much information on the subject reading rooms for Islamic studies, science and technology, children's literature, rare

books and manuscripts, or staff working areas. An overall staff establishment of 1 500 persons is mentioned for the completed project. There are child-minding facilities, public refreshment facilities and staff cafeterias which are not photographed either. Perhaps there are parking facilities, but we are not shown them. All photos are devoid of people so it is assumed they show a period before actual use of the building. The décor and interior outfitting seem both harmonious and elegant. The reviewer has not personally seen the building so impressions from photos may be subject to error.

The various contributions provide a quantity of pertinent information, but it is not easy to be certain about the overall functions and organization of NLI. Some Farsi sections which deal with the legal status and functions of NLI are not translated, which seems a strange oversight. A chart on pp91-92 in the Farsi section gives a brief record (with snapshot photos) of the 22 national librarians since 1937 to the present. The first National librarian, M Bayani, served from 1937-1961. Some of the terms of his successors were very brief and in some years there were as many as three successive National Librarians appointed. Political patronage played a role in this. Some of the dates in English seem wrong. The contribution of the well-known Pouri Soltani, who deals with the present role and functions of NLI, pulls no punches in describing the moribund state of NLI in earlier days. She even mentions (p31) the suspected presence of snakes in the old building's basement!

NLI intends to create an e-library for Persian classical texts and expects also to further promote 'academic planning and research for librarianship' (p32). Other aims include active participation in international librarianship, a field where Iranians are already noteworthy, compilation and publication of guides and reference aids for cataloguing Islamic works, furthering the creation of Iranian MARC, consolidating NLI's existing CIP and national bibliography programmes, and tightening up the legal deposit of Iranian publications. All these aspirations clearly require well-trained and numerous professional and sub-professional staff. It is not clear how many of these resources exist at present. The new building certainly makes progress possible, but that will come only with continuing investment and clear policies. In this regard it is salutary to draw attention to the wise words of Dr Herbert S White, published in his 1997 review of the Benton Foundation Report. Although he is addressing the US scene, his remarks might well find resonance in Iran.<sup>1</sup> Iranian librarians have in the meantime good reason for enthusiasm and hope in the future of their profession.

Will there be a sequel to this volume when the whole project is finalised? The present publication, welcome and broadly informative, really invites a sequel that can deal more authoritatively and analytically with the future of NLI. Unfortunately, the volume has some deficiencies which need remedying. The main deficiency is the inadequacy of the English translations. They reveal a lack of familiarity with library terminology ('Latin books' instead of 'books in roman script'), exuberant use of inflated adjectives ('glorious' is a favourite), confusion with homonyms ('weather' instead of 'whether') and an uncertain understanding of usage ('informing' and 'information' cause trouble). The desirability of having translations checked by a qualified native speaker is apparent. Another point which struck the reviewer is the different spellings of proper names between articles. In fact, the compilation overall seems to have been hampered by hasty preparation. This may account for the lack of a CIP and no ISBN. Another suggestion is to avoid the use of full-page coloured cartoons in future. They do not enhance the volume and rather detract from NLI's stated desire to be 'a centre of Islamic culture.'

Our Iranian colleagues have some major challenges facing them in realising the vision that inspired the new building. Obviously they must not only justify the massive public investment President Khatami has already obtained; they must also demonstrate how necessary it is to have the ongoing support of the government and the Iranian community for continuing investment. The building of this impressive library is obviously a matter of great pride to Iran and it will enable significant progress in the development of librarianship in Iran, provided that domestic and international affairs do not nip the promise in the bud. Iran has had an unhappy history of well-intentioned ventures failing, but the present auspices seem uncommonly positive. We wish our Iranian colleagues every success with their new National Library.

R L Cope

### Reference

1 Herbert S White 'Who will Lead the Unsuspecting Lemmings over the Cliff?' *Library Trends* vol 46 no 1 Summer 1997 pp83-91. The reviewer thanks Dr Ebrahim Afshar for providing the copy of the work. Both he and Professor Rahmatollah Fattahi of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad are thanked for advice and information.

***BIALL Handbook of Legal Information Management* editor Loyita Worley. Hants Ashgate 2006 316p ISBN 0754641821 £70.00**

This volume constitutes the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians' successor to its two previous editions of the *Manual of Law Librarianship*. As would be expected, the volume concentrates on the law in England and Wales, with a lesser focus on Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Australia is included in the discussion on 'Overseas Law Librarianship'.

The President of the Association flags in her foreword that the change in title to *Handbook of Legal Information Management* represents a change from its emphasis on materials to a new focus on management of information services. The volume achieves this while still maintaining its practical approach with reference to concerns of current relevance to law libraries. Its new editor, Loyita Worley, has gathered together new and diverse contributions from 18 experienced legal information professionals to address in a practical fashion the key topics essential in providing legal information services in today's environment.

The topics cover a variety of subjects – Pettit on 'E-learning and Virtual Learning Environments', Gordon-Till on 'Ethics in Law Librarianship', Maher on 'Financial Management: Planning and Charging', Berry on 'Managing Legal Information Professionals' and Doe on 'Knowledge Management', as well as an updated review of copyright and data protection by Ansell. The functional nature of the work is especially noticeable in chapters dealing with the variety of legal information sources particularly with reference to their formats – from Holborn's 'Sources of Legal Information and their Organisation', the various parties who require legal information services ('Law Libraries and their Users') by Winterton and how best to help them by Clinch ('Legal Research – Techniques and Tips') to purchasing information systems by Webster ('Library and Information Systems Management') and the use of legal taxonomies ('The Role of Taxonomies in Legal Knowledge Systems') by Miskin. The volume also recognises the diverse nature of legal librarianship by the inclusion of case studies from individuals working in various library environments such as academic law libraries, government libraries and law firm libraries, among others.

While the entire volume is exceptionally functional, Clinch's guide entitled 'Answering Legal Enquiries' alone makes it an invaluable inclusion in all law libraries. This section contains all the instructions veteran law librarians wished someone had provided them with when they first started, while providing a clear and succinct guide that should be mandatory reading for all new law

librarians. It includes techniques to use to focus a patron's enquiry, where to obtain legal definitions if an enquiry contains an unfamiliar term and how to classify the requested material. Clinch also provides a critical assessment of the variety of media used for legal research, including the limitations of search engines, how to differentiate between personal directories and official websites, and the pros and cons of print media, CD-ROM databases and the Internet.

The editor states (p xv) that the book is to be a 'starting point to those who are new to the subject and... a reference tool pertaining to legal information and the disciplines surrounding it, to those with more experience'. The inclusion of a glossary of abbreviations at the start of the volume and other abbreviations in the index makes the work accessible to novice law librarians, and the depth of this book has much to offer law librarians in Australia despite its focus on Britain. A must for all law libraries.

Aladin Rahemtula  
Supreme Court Library Queensland

***Characteristics of the Successful Twenty-First Century Information Professional* Dennie Heye. Oxford Chandos 2006 167p ISBN 1 84334 145 X (paperback) £39.95**

This brief and breezy book is laid out like a blog. And boy, is it connected in cyberspace: it has its own blog – [http://mlis-kw.blogspot.com/2006/03/characteristics-of-successful-21st\\_16.html](http://mlis-kw.blogspot.com/2006/03/characteristics-of-successful-21st_16.html) You can buy it online from Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/184334145X/qid=1141846016/102-6239509-8128150> and you can check out the author on his own Web site: [www.dennie.heyne.nl](http://www.dennie.heyne.nl)

But is it any good? Sixteen short chapters divided into short sections with short paragraphs and short sentences rocket through the author's view of what it takes 'to become a more successful information professional'.

Dennie learnt his stuff at Shell's headquarters in the Netherlands – and it sure shows. If you're looking for a primer for a front foot stance against the forces of darkness seeking to question your value or reduce your budget, this is the new *Hitchhiker's Guide*.

He covers innovation, expert searching, conceptualisation, work-life balance, leadership, persuasion, networking, adding value, presentation skills, measuring value, time management, information architecture, project management, self marketing, staying up to date, and tosses in a glossary of contemporary buzz words. Absorb the messages and become warrior librarian.

Despite the occasionally self-indulgent tone ('I listen to a variety of podcasts while commuting or when I am working out in the gym'), the ambitious title (it's just possible Dennie's list is short of comprehensive) and the idiosyncratic index, this is a great little book. It's highly readable, highly practical... and highly priced.

But as an approachable introduction to and for the next generation of information professionals it's well worth the ask. For a free sample, see *inCite* for May 2006, p8.

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Director, Libraries Alive! Pty Ltd  
Secretary, Aurora Foundation Ltd

***A Model for Work-Based Learning* Belle Alderman and Patricia Milne. Lanham MD Scarecrow Press 2005 200p ISBN 0810850206**

This book is based on the authors' experience of an initiative run over ten years by the (now defunct) undergraduate library studies program at the University of Canberra, aiming to integrate a professional work experience unit with the course of study. Starting in 1994, the authors developed a work-based learning internship for undergraduates that provided a personalised learning plan involving both university staff and mentors in the workplace. The aim of the internship was to enable students with little or no workplace experience to understand and apply the linkages between their tertiary studies and their application in practice.

Comprising two distinct parts, this volume provides a good overview of the theory and then describes its application on the University of Canberra program. In Part 1, Alderman and Milne

synthesise a broad range of the literature to provide short, easy-to-read chapters relating to experiential learning, facilitated mentoring and work-based learning more generally. They write clearly and concisely, providing a useful overview of the literature and its practical application in a professional experience program. Part 2 comprises a detailed list of activities based on an overview of the subject, together with sample documents drawn from the authors' experience, aimed at providing a model for educators interested in pursuing similar approaches. This sample material covers key concepts, learning outcomes, assessment forms, student feedback and so on. which is valuable both for the educator and the workplace mentor.

Overall this is a well written and clearly presented volume that will be particularly useful to anyone involved in developing an internship or similar program, regardless of discipline. Even those with more experience in the area will find this a useful tool for assessing their own programs.

Bob Pymm  
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***Planning, Renovating, Expanding, and Constructing Library Facilities in Hospitals, Academic Medical Centers, and Health Organizations* editor Elizabeth Connor. New York Haworth 2005 218p ISBN-10 0-7890-2541-8 US\$24.95**

Connor's book is aimed at hospital, academic, health association and other special librarians (and interested students) planning to refurbish, renovate or construct libraries. It provides descriptive, illustrated and practical information with an emphasis on the academic setting.

As an assistant professor of library science with extensive experience in planning, designing, managing and consulting for renovation and design projects, Conner is well placed to edit and pull together this collection. Thirteen case studies are presented in similar format, largely as a result of a call for involvement on the US MEDLIB-L Listserv in late 2003.

Two of the reports come from special libraries (aka 'Health Organisations'), six from academic medical centres, and five from hospitals. Twelve are from the US, one from Canada. The majority represent renovations and, as can be expected, the scale, cost and angst varies. Two mergers and three new libraries are discussed.

Having moved a 900m<sup>2</sup> hospital library at the end of 2004, I was pleased to see discussion about qualitative as well as quantitative considerations: stresses on staff, the ongoing need for vigilance of the architects (including learning their language) and the needs to constantly communicate to the stakeholders, and occasionally, to compromise. The imperative to support your institution's goals and objectives, not just those of the library, is also highlighted.

I would recommend the book to anyone in any discipline about to change their library's physical circumstances, with the caveat that not all answers are contained within. Whilst we can extrapolate the North American experience to Australia, we do face, inter alia, different funding issues and varied user patterns. Also, the experiences of the larger settings which dominate the text are not entirely applicable for solo or small libraries.

Read this book, post your own queries to the ALIA listservs (as I did), research the journal literature, read other texts ... and good luck! It's a hugely challenging task, but what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

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## Publications Received

*Comparative Perspectives on E-government: Serving Today and Building for Tomorrow* eds P Heron, R Cullen and HC Relyea Lanham, MD Scarecrow 2006 ISBN 0810853574

*Electronic Journal Management Systems: Experiences from the Field* ed G Ives New York Haworth 2005 ISBN 0789025965

*Essential Thesaurus Construction V* Broughton London Facet 2006 ISBN 185604565X

*Handbook on the International Exchange of Publications* 5th ed eds K Ekonen, P Paloposki and P Vattulainen München K.G. Saur 2006 ISBN 3598117523

*Interlending and Document Supply in Britain Today* eds J Bradford and J Brine Oxford Chandos 2006 ISBN 1843341883

*Preserving Digital Materials* R Harvey München K.G. Saur 2005 ISBN 3598116861

*Real Life Marketing and Promotion Strategies in College Libraries* ed B W Petruzzelli New York Haworth 2005 ISBN 0789031587

## **Revised Australian Interlibrary Resource Sharing (ILRS) Code**

A revised Australian Interlibrary Resource Sharing (ILRS) Code was launched at the National Resource Sharing Consultation Forum on 18 May 2006 for adoption by Australian libraries from 1 July 2006. The new ILRS Code is available online in HTML and PDF versions from <http://alia.org.au/interlibrary.lending/>. The Code has been simplified and takes into account developments in automation and ILL/DD services since the ILRS Code was introduced in 2001. Key features of the revised ILRS Code are:

- Three service levels instead of five
- Four-day supplier turnaround for the Core service level (reduced from five days)
- No changes to recommended fees, except for the introduction of a recommended charge for colour copies of \$2.20 per page copied
- A new principle of a recommended minimum loan period of three weeks
- Other new principles cover providing complete bibliographic details, supplying quality copies and using the most efficient payment methods
- Clarification of a requesting library's responsibility to ensure that user-initiated requests comply with the principle of the ILRS Code, and
- Addition of a service level standard for automatic expiry of requests from an automated system of the Core service plus one day.

The revision of the ILRS Code was coordinated by the ALIA Interlibrary Lending Expert Advisory Group, with extensive input from across the library sector. The new Code has been endorsed by ALIA, CASL, CAUL and the National Library.

## **State Library of NSW Appoints New State Librarian and Chief Executive**

Belinda Hutchinson, President of the Library Council of NSW, has announced the appointment of Regina Sutton as the new State Librarian and Chief Executive of the State Library of New South Wales. Ms Sutton will formally take up the position on Monday 10 July 2006. The appointment is the result of a comprehensive nation-wide search by the executive search firm, Egon Zehnder, following the retirement of Dagmar Schmidmaier AM in April. Ms Sutton spent 14 years with the Eastman Kodak Company where she held senior business leadership roles across several imaging market segments in the US and Asia. She was the General Manager of the Document Imaging Business for Greater Asia, based in Tokyo and then Sydney. Following Kodak's acquisition of ENCAD, a leading global printer manufacturer, she was appointed CEO of this company based in San Diego, California with a business revenue of \$160 million and 1 000 employees. In Australia Ms Sutton has worked for IBM and Telstra, and her most recent position was IBM's Director for the Distribution and Industrial sectors. Ms Sutton has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Administration and a Masters degree in Business Administration.