

# Peter Lor's 2<sup>nd</sup> library ABC, part 1: ABC

**A** is for **Amsterdam**. Pictured here is one of many informal reading spaces in the Central Library of the [Amsterdam Public Library](#), opened in 2007. This acclaimed [building](#) is located in the Oosterdok, an island in the river IJ, very close to Amsterdam's Central Station, and forms part of a mixed-use urban redevelopment project. It is a striking ten-storey building, packed with resources and facilities, and some clever technology. When we visited we particularly liked the way many reading areas opened up to the cityscape of Amsterdam. The cafeteria on the top floor offers great views of the city. I hope to go back there some time to see how the building has aged after a decade's use.



**B** is for **Bergamo**. During the 2009 IFLA Congress in Milan I visited the [Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai](#) in Bergamo, in the Palazzo Nuovo di Bergamo, on the Piazza Vecchia. The 1600s Palazzo has a splendid [facade](#) completed in 1928. Its ornate [interior](#) includes some impressive globes. Opened to the public in 1768, the library is a scholarly public library with extensive heritage collections, including printed books, journals, manuscripts, incunabula, prints, maps, and photographs. It also houses the historical archives of the city of Bergamo. The library's website emphasizes heritage and cultural/scholarly activities, but does not say anything about other popular/public library facilities in that city.



**C** is for the **Cape Town Campus** of the [National Library of South Africa](#). As the banners in the photo indicate, the library celebrated its bicentenary in 2018. [Founded in 1818](#) by Lord Charles Somerset, Governor of the Cape Colony, as the South African Public Library, it was later renamed South African Library and became one of South Africa's two national libraries, the other being the State Library in Pretoria. The two were merged in 1999 to form the National Library of South Africa, of which I was privileged to serve as the first National Librarian. In the beautiful Victorian building in Cape Town (opened by Prince Alfred in 1860) there are rich heritage collections, including medieval manuscripts, incunabula, early South African imprints, and part of the Lloyd/[Bleek Collection](#), which includes priceless San drawings.



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Photographs of libraries A & B by Peter Lor. Compiled by Peter Lor, [peterlor@gmail.com](mailto:peterlor@gmail.com). For background on the Library ABC and earlier issues look [here](#).

To all friends and colleagues and friends – my best wishes for 2019! Peter Lor