

tive action programs has had a negative impact on minority admissions. Its abandonment also affects enrollment; the number of minority applicants declines and some of those who are accepted choose to attend other institutions which may offer more welcoming environments and more students like themselves. The reader is presented, in *Chilling Admissions*, with a substantive, research-based discussion of an issue critical to academic libraries.—Mark Winston, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

*Digital Culture: Maximising the Nation's Investment: A Synthesis of JISC/NPO Studies on the Preservation of Electronic Materials.* Ed. Mary Feeney. London: British Library Board, 1999. 85p. (ISBN 0-7123-4645-7).

It has been clear for some time that in digital preservation matters the U.K. and Australian library and archival communities are well in advance of those in the U.S.A. This booklet emphatically marks the practical progress that Britain has made so far and is an essential framework for anyone working in the difficult area of digital preservation. Its eight chapters

are related to the previous work of a number of U.K. agencies; the seven relevant studies are included in the brief bibliography. (JISC is the Joint Information Services Committee of the U.K. Higher Education Funding Council, an outgrowth of the 1993 Follett Commission that articulated the digital library needs for U.K. universities; NPO stands for the National Preservation Office.)

We can be grateful to the Digital Archive Working Group (DAWG) and its chair Peter Fox for commissioning this progress report. Its collation of the crucial studies over the past three years (none older than 1997) shows the remarkable speed with which important work can be done. This summary also displays one common characteristic of the varied study groups: the usefulness that each one found in taxonomy.

The chapter on stakeholders describes potential interested parties (e.g., creators, rights-holders, providers, archivists, regulators) and the nature of their interests. The chapter on technological decisions examines the major technological approaches: technology preservation, technology emulation, and data migra-

#### **Statement of ownership, management, and circulation**

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tion. Its table on "categories of digital resource" does not claim to be complete but is a most informative listing of currently encountered data types (data sets, structured texts, design data, presentation graphics, video recordings, and half a dozen more). In this table, the characteristics of each are described; in a parallel table, recommended preservation strategies are noted.

Biting the bullet, there is a chapter on estimating costs of digital preservation. Few actual numbers are given—the main purpose is once again to taxonomize and comment on the cost elements of digital preservation: creation, selection, data management, resource disclosure, data use, data preservation, and rights.

Picking up on the aggressive rescue concept from *Preserving Digital Information: Report of the Task Force on Archiving of Digital Information*, the 1996 RLG/CPA study by Waters and Garrett (which the booklet handsomely acknowledges), there is a chapter on data rescue. However, the focus here is on technological and mechanical rescue (e.g., damaged *Challenger* spacecraft tapes), with little or no mention of the property or rights rescue needs noted in 1996. Another lack is the matter of authentication, or assurance, of data integrity, which is only treated as an intake matter and assumes no flaws or malfeasance in the preservation process.

The "life cycle" concept, developed by the Arts and Humanities Data Service for digital resources, is outlined in a chapter on best practices. Included is a taxonomy (again) of the various life cycle stages. Case studies describe how the University of London Computing Centre and the National Environment Research Council actually manage each stage of their data preservation practices. A final chapter on the management process analyzes the variety of tasks and subtasks required. A chapter on key recommendations follows; they are at a high level of abstraction in contrast to the remarkably detailed and concrete descriptions in the preceding chapters.

From the title on, the booklet focuses on the U.K. case. Occasionally, a sentence does not ring true for Americans—such as "Most agencies agree that there should be national funding for the preservation of electronic resources"—attractive as it may sound. The challenge for the Digital Libraries Federation, the Research Libraries Group, and other U.S. agencies that claim to be working in this area is to provide even preliminary studies such as the ones that resulted in this informative, authoritative progress report. Since 1996, the American silence has been deafening.

This well-edited booklet is handsome, but difficult to read due to the poor choice of light sans serif body type on reflective paper.—*Peter Graham, Syracuse University.*

*Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature.* Eds. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey. London & New York: Routledge, 1998. 2-volume set, 857p. \$290, alk. paper (ISBN 0-415-06808-8). LC 96-047907.

A reader-friendly, ready-reference work that currently stands alone in its chosen niche, this encyclopedia is noteworthy for the large, distinguished group of established scholars who have contributed signed articles to it. First conceived as a companion to Arabic literature, it retains some of that spirit in articles such as "theatre and drama, medieval," "Africa, Arabic literature in," or "singers and musicians," articles that are often of more general interest than the purely biographical ones. Most entries have a helpful, brief bibliography, divided into two sections: "Text editions" and "Further reading," with preference given to more accessible references, where possible in English. The two volumes share a single, adequate, but hardly exhaustive, index; a five-page glossary, which is too short to be of much use; and a set of chronological tables, which curiously are limited to political rulers and therefore contain none of the authors or movements celebrated in the text. There are no illustrations of any kind. Photographs of recent authors would have been a nice addition. Although there is a brief "cinema and lit-

erature" entry, which is written almost entirely as a summary of literary works that have been filmed, with only one director being named, the editors clearly do not perceive Arab cinema to be part and parcel of Arabic literary activity.

Compared to even the new edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, this new and much shorter work is obviously more reader-friendly in terms of both the layout of pages and the length of the entries, as well as through the elimination of figures not of literary interest. In addition, there are more entries for more recent authors than in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Even with a 1998 publication date, however, the cutoff date for emerging authors was 1980. It seems inevitable that an online version will eventually be needed and that this work will form part of some larger database. The focus of this work on its selected realm of Arabic literature, ancient and modern, is both a strength and a weakness. If a would-be user does not know whether the subject person is Persian, Turkish, or Arab or actually a literary figure or perhaps a scientist, she or he will not know whether to consult it, although Persians writing in Arabic have been included as well as Arabs writing in French.

If a much-less-expensive paper edition were available and perhaps limited to modern authors, whose coverage seems to be a major strength of this work, that smaller book might well be a student's best friend when studying for an examination in Arabic literature in translation. In its current form, it will, instead, be of most use to instructors preparing a class, wondering at the last minute, for example, whether Moulud Mammeri (1917–1989) was Algerian or Tunisian and wrote in French or Arabic.

All of the many people associated with this labor of love are to be congratulated. It would have been interesting, however, to see what would have issued from them had they been given a longer leash in the form of more lines and encouraged to write only about figures and topics they found passionately engaging. If one rea-

son for the 1980 cutoff date was the editors' fear of letting new authors into the canon prematurely, this encyclopedia constitutes a canon and stands as a statement of the status of the study of Arabic literature among, primarily, English-language scholars. The work contains a great quantity of carefully sifted, useful information on Arabic literature and authors, but few pyrotechnics. In short, the editors and contributors may end up preaching to the choir by providing information for those best able to discover it on their own in other sources, rather than finding new readers for Arabic literature.—*William Maynard Hutchins, Appalachian State University, Boone.*

**Jones, Plummer Alston, Jr.** *Libraries, Immigrants, and the American Experience.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood (Contributions in Librarianship and Information Science, no. 29), 1999. 236p. \$59.95, alk. paper (ISBN 0-313-30769-5). LC 98-26439.

"Bustling Queens [New York] Library Speaks in Many Tongues," proclaimed the headline of a recent *New York Times* article on the nation's busiest library system. Describing collections that include Hindi newspapers, Chinese mystery novels, Harlequin romances in Spanish, and Urdu potboilers (not to mention *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* in Chinese), along with children's story hours and English classes, the article captured the purposefulness and dynamism of the library system's operations as they pertain to immigrant populations. The interaction between American public libraries and immigrant communities is, of course, not new; and some of its history may be found in Plummer Alston Jones Jr.'s thoughtful, well-documented new volume. It is nicely illustrated and contains a good index.

Jones focuses on two particular eras in American immigration: the years of "free immigration," from 1876 to 1924; and the time of "restricted immigration," from 1924 to 1948. Interspersed with general discussions of each period's political cli-