**What makes a great library？**

Quietly, I am trying to read here.

Oh, excuse me, I didn’t know this is a library.

Well, what exactly is a library?

Have you ever thought about that?

Well, somewhere with lots of books, I suppose, and where you can go to read or study,

A symbol of knowledge and learning, a place to keep warm in the winter, or somewhere to murder victims in a crime novel. Libraries can be all of these things and more.

In this program, we will be looking into the hidden life of the library, including one of the most famous, the Great Library of Alexandria founded in ancient Egypt in around 285 BCE. And as usual we will be learning some useful vocabulary, and doing it all in a whisper so as not to disturb anyone. Glad to hear it. But before we get out of our library cards, I have a question for you, Beth. Founded in 1973 in central London, the British Library is one of the largest libraries in the world, containing around two hundred million books. But which of the following can be found on its shelves? Is it a) the earliest known printing of the Bible? b) the first edition of “The Times” newspaper from 1788, or c) the original manuscripts of Harry Potter books? I will guess it is the first edition of the famous British newspaper “The Times”.

I will reveal the answer at the end of the programme.

Library means different things to different people, so who better to ask than someone who has written the book on it, literally ? Professor Andrew Pettegree is the author of a new book,

“A Fragile History of the Library” Here he explains what a library means to him on BBC radio three programme “Arts and Ideas”. Well, in my view, library can be any collection of books which is deliberately put together by its owner or patron. So, in the 15th century a library can be 30 manuscripts painfully put together during the course of a lifetime. Or it can be two shelves of paperbacks in your home. Andrew defines a library as any collection of books someone has intentionally built up. This could be as simple as a few paperbacks, cheap books with a cover made of thick paper. Today books are available from everywhere from supermarkets to train stations. But back in history, that was not the case. In earlier centuries,

printed books of manuscripts were rare and may have been painfully collected over many years. Andrew uses the adverb painfully or painstakingly, to describe something which took a lot of care and effort to do. But paperback books and private collections are only part of the story. You may not believe it, but libraries are the places of power. To find out why we have to go back in time to the ancient Egyptian port of Alexandria in the third century BCE.

The Great Library Alexandria held the largest collection of books in the ancient world. Found it in the city built by Alexande the Great, the library’s mission is to bring together a copy of every books, then in existence. According to history professor Islam Issa, there were two reasons why the Great Library made Alexandria so power as he explained to BBC radio three programme “Arts and Ideas”:

The first is being in the location at the intersection of the continents, and bring together a diverse set of people together to live in harmony, or relatively harmony, can bring about economic prosperity. And the second is quiet simply, that knowledge equals power, and so the library is a form a soft power, is a way of saying that Alexandira is an important centre of knowledge, a regional capital, by being the guardians of the knowledge.

Alexandria was the meeting point of different cultures where different ideas and philosophies were exchanged, this atmosphere encouraged people to live in harmony - peacefully and cooperatively with each other. But the main reason for the Great Library’s importance is that knowledge equals power. A saying meaning that the more someone knows, the more they will be able to control events. Alexandria became the capital of soft power, the use of cultural and political knowledge rather than military power to influence events.

Now it maybe the time to reveal the answer to your question, I ask you which famous text could be found in the British Library. I guessed it was the first editing of “The Times” newspaper. In the British Library, you will find the first copy of “The Times”, along with the first editions of many famous books, ok let’s recap the vocabulary we have leaned in this programme, starting with shhhhh, the exclamation used to asked someone to be quiet. A paperback is a type of book with a cover made of thick paper and sold relatively cheaply.

Doing something painfully or painstakingly means doing it in a way showing that lots of care and effort has been taken. Harmony is a situation where people cooperate peacefully with each other. According to the expression “knowledge equals to power”, the more you know the more you will be able to control events. And finally soft power involves using political and cultural means rather than military power to get what you want.

Once again, our six minutes are up. Goodbye.

**And unknown goddess**

Some time ago, an interesting discover was made by archaeologists on the Agean Island of Kea. Ad American team explored a temple which stands in an ancient city on the promontory of Ayia Irini. The city at one time must have been prosperous, for it enjoyed a high-level of civilization. House often three storeys high were built of tone. They had large rooms with beautifully decorated walls. The city even equipped with drainage system- a great many clay pipes were found beneath the narrow streets.

The temple which the archaeologists explored was used as a place of worship from the fifteenth century B.C. until Roman times. In the most sacred room of the temple, clay fragments of fifteen statues were found. Each of these represented a goddess, and had at one time been painted. The body of one statue was found among remains dating from the fifteen century B.C. Its missing head happened to be among remains of the fifth century B.C.

This head must have been found in the Classical times and carefully preserved. It was very old and precious even then. When the archaeologists reconstructed the fragments, they were amazed to find that the goddess turned out to be a modern-looking woman. She stood three feet high with her hands rested on her hips, she was wearing a full-length skirt which swept the ground. Despite her great age, she was very graceful indeed, but so far, the archaeologists have been unable to discover her identity.