

# OSMANLI ARAŐTIRMALARI

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## OTTOMAN FOUNDATION LIBRARIES: THEIR HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

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In the Ottoman Empire, as in most Islamic societies, knowledge was praised as being one of the greatest virtues. In order to spread know edge, the foundation of mosques, colleges and libraries as charitable institutions became so common as to be virtually the sole means of establishing an infrastructure of educational and religious institutions. By the end of the Ottoman period, Istanbul alone had several thousand institutions built as charitable foundations. It was customary for a founder to build his pious foundation and make provisions for the upkeep of his endowment by allocating revenues to it in perpetuity. These revenues would go towards wages and make provision for the lighting, cleaning, repairs etc. of the foundation. The running of the foundation was governed by a foundation deed (*vakfiye*) in which was stipulated, in varying degrees of detail, the manner in which the foundation was to be run. There was usually a system of strict financial accounting for these endowments, and we find in these account books, which were rendered at regular intervals, more detailed information on the running of these foundations.

Thereafter, less wealthy benefactors often endowed the institution with various gifts. It was by this mean that the Ottoman Empire established a

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system of higher education which consisted of colleges, not only in the capital, but in every province. It was partly to facilitate teaching activities that the first libraries<sup>1</sup> were founded, while also allowing the common people access to knowledge.

### A. History

The development of the extensive library system which existed in Istanbul and throughout the Ottoman Empire did not have a very auspicious beginning. The early Ottomans were nomadic warriors, squeezed between the larger Turkish principalities and the Byzantine Empire. As they chose to expand at the expense of the Byzantines, they conquered territory which had had no tradition of Islamic institutions. The Ottoman incursion into Europe gave the Ottoman Beylicate a greater degree of security from the Turkish principalities in Anatolia, but culturally distanced the Ottomans from the Islamic heartland. The Ottomans were forced to create their own religious, educational and cultural institutions. As we all know, it is easy to convert a church or monastery into a college, but it is not so easy to find teachers and to ensure that the teaching is properly conducted. The Ottomans began to look to for teachers, arriving not only from the principalities in Anatolia, but also from as far afield as central Asia and the Arab lands. At first there was a small trickle of scholars, but with the conquest of Edirne the trickle became a steady stream. The scholars arrived with their books, and thus the first collections began to be formed. Just as important as the books was the tradition of scholarship and teaching which came with these scholars.

Although the first college in the Ottoman Empire was founded by Orhan Gazi in Iznik in 1331, and some other colleges were founded also in

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<sup>1</sup> The word *kütüphane* (library) in Turkish has a wider range of meanings. It denotes a library, in the modern sense of the word, but equally refers to any collection of books, be they stored in a cupboard, in a series of book cases, in a single book case, or even on a single shelf. With the appearance of the independent library, we can talk about Ottoman libraries in the modern sense of the word: a building with provision for storing and reading books, a space for librarians to work in.

Iznik and Bursa, there is no mention of libraries or librarians in any of the extant records for any institution in either city during the reign of Orhan (1324-1360). Scholars have naturally assumed that these Ottoman institutions would have been endowed with books, just as they were in many colleges and mosques in other Islamic lands.

The reign of Murad I (1360-1389) witnessed significant developments. As the Ottomans began to annex some of the small *beyliks* in Anatolia and established friendly relations with others, the Ottoman State began to acquire the status of the prime Turkish state in Asia Minor and the expanding frontier of Islam in Europe. This new status encouraged the immigration of scholars. Ottoman scholars, for their part, traveled to Islamic cultural centers to increase their knowledge; we see, for example, Mevlânâ Musa b. Mahmud traveling to Horasan and Transoxania, while Molla Fenari went to Egypt.<sup>2</sup> As a result of these scholarly relations with established Islamic centers and the influx of scholars, it is likely that books would have begun to come into the Ottoman state in significant quantities. The *Şakâikü'n-Nu'mâniyye*, a reliable source, notes that Molla Fenarî left 10, 000 volumes on his death,<sup>3</sup> and although this figure should naturally be treated with caution, it would nevertheless suggest that books were becoming increasingly available. Despite the increase in books, there is unfortunately no evidence to suggest that libraries were established in the reign of Murad I.

During the reign of Bayezid I (1389-1402), the Ottomans not only established themselves firmly in the Balkans, but also annexed most of the remaining small independent Turkish states in Anatolia. This gave Ottoman scholars and their educational institutions access to the private collections and book markets in cities which were centers of Islamic culture, such as Kütahya, Manisa and Kastamonu. At the same time, the older Ottoman cities of Edirne and Bursa began to acquire dominant positions as new centers of

<sup>2</sup> *Şakâikü'n-Nu'mâniyye* . ed. by Ahmad Subhi Furat, İstanbul 1985, pp. 14-15 and 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Islamic scholarship in Anatolia and Europe. In the reign of Bayezid I some other colleges were added to the five colleges which had earlier been established in Bursa. In one of these colleges, Eyne Subaşı College, there was an upper room set aside for books.<sup>4</sup> It is very likely that other colleges also had libraries, but it is difficult to find any reference to them, as their foundation deeds and all other relevant documents were probably destroyed during the period of invasion and occupation led by Timur.

Apart from Bursa, other cities were also endowed with colleges during Bayezid I's reign.<sup>5</sup> In one of these, a college in Balıkesir, also founded by Eyne Bey Subaşı, a library was established and a librarian appointed.<sup>6</sup> Another college to be furnished with a library was Bayezid I's own foundation in the city of Bolu.

Timur's campaign in Anatolia (1402) halted cultural development in the Ottoman state for two decades, and it was only during the reign of Murad II (1421-1451) that the Ottomans were able to recover from this setback. In the fifteenth century, following the interregnum, unified political power and stable social and political institutions made a distinctly Ottoman cultural life possible.<sup>7</sup> As a result of this political stability it was possible to establish educational institutions and Murad II's reign witnessed the establishment of many colleges, mosques and libraries.

The earliest libraries for which we have foundation deeds and archival records are Murad II's college libraries in Edirne. In 1430 Murad II built a *Darülhadis* college on the banks of the Tunca River. In the deeds for this college, drawn up on 24 March 1435, it is stated that the Sultan endowed books for the benefit of the students and teachers of the college<sup>8</sup>. Murad II

<sup>4</sup> E. H. Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimarisinin İlk Devri*, İstanbul 1966, p. 444.

<sup>5</sup> Mustafa L. Bilge, *İlk Osmanlı Medreseleri*, İstanbul 1984, pp. 161-207.

<sup>6</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Ruus no. 64, p. 295.

<sup>7</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey I*, Cambridge 1976, p. 142.

<sup>8</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive D. 7081.

also founded the *Saatli Medrese* in the same city and we can see from some documents that a librarian had been appointed at a daily stipend of two *aspers*.<sup>9</sup>

Two further libraries were established in Edirne during the reign of Murad II. The first, a mosque library founded by Gazi Mihal Bey in 1422, is known to us through a reference to the appointment of a librarian to the mosque<sup>10</sup>. The second, also a mosque library, was founded by Fazlullah Pasha, who appointed a librarian with a stipend of 3 *aspers* daily<sup>11</sup>. Libraries were also established outside Edirne. In Skopje, a library was founded in the college of Ishak Bey; this was the first Ottoman library to be established in what is present day Macedonia<sup>12</sup>. One of Murad II's vezirs, Saruca Pasha, founded a college in Gelibolu (1443) and endowed it with eighteen books. The foundation deeds of the college make no provision for a librarian<sup>13</sup>. The best-documented library in this period is that founded by Umur Bey, son of Kara Timurtaş Pasha, who endowed some textbooks to his college in Bergama and several Turkish books to his mosque in Bursa. We have documents and deeds drawn up in different years by him for endowments in Bursa, Bergama and Biga.<sup>14</sup>

These early libraries, with one exception, constituted small collections of less than a hundred books, which were basically theological, and had been donated to colleges and mosques to be cared for by the staff of the institution to which they had been endowed. When librarians were appointed, they were

<sup>9</sup> Ömer L. Barkan, "Edirne ve Civarındaki Bazı İmaret Tesislerinin Yıllık Muhasebe Bilançoları", *Belgeler I/2, Ankara 1965*, p. 322.

<sup>10</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Ruus no. 64, p. 145.

<sup>11</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Ruus no. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Hasan Kaleşi, *Nejstrariji Vakufski Dokumenti u Jugoslaviji na Arapskom Jeziku*, Pristina 1972, pp. 89-109.

<sup>13</sup> M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *XV-XVI. Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livası*", İstanbul 1952, pp. 248-252.

<sup>14</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive 591, pp. 181-182 ; Bursa Eski Eserler Library, Ulu Cami section 435, p. 1a, 436, pp. 329a-b ; Atatürk Kitaplığı (former Belediye Library), Mc. Vakfiyeler 38.

chosen from the existing staff of the college or mosque and fulfilled the role on a part-time basis; nowhere do we find more than one librarian being appointed.

With the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman State acquired the status of a world empire and was able to attract scholars and their books, from all over the Islamic world. Mehmed II, the Conqueror, had ambitions that the city should be not only the capital of his empire, but also a prominent cultural center of the Muslim world.<sup>15</sup> Between 1463 and 1470, Mehmed II built the Conqueror's Mosque and established eight colleges around it.<sup>16</sup> The classes, which had hitherto been held in Byzantine churches, were transferred here, and four libraries were established for the use of students and their teachers, a librarian being allocated to each.<sup>17</sup> At a later date, the collections of these four libraries were brought together and were taken into the mosque. The aim was to create a central library to facilitate the use and care of the books. The collection numbered 839 items, consisting of the books which had been transferred from the four college libraries, with the addition of others presented by the Sultan. The post of librarian in each of the colleges was abolished and two posts were created for the new library: librarian and assistant librarian. In the deed of foundation of the Conqueror's Mosque it is stated that one librarian would be responsible for the protection of the books and the other (*kâtib-i kütüb*) would be in charge of lending services.

In addition to the libraries founded by the sultan, there were others established by statesmen and famous scholars in Istanbul and in the other parts of the Empire. The historian Critoboulos says that Mehmed II encouraged such dignitaries to establish pious foundations, such as

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<sup>15</sup> Halil İnalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II towards the Greek Population of Istanbul and Byzantine Buildings of the City", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23-24 (1968-1969), p. 231-233.

<sup>16</sup> S. Ünver, *Fatih Külliyesi ve Zamanı İlim Hayatı*, İstanbul 1946, p. 51.

<sup>17</sup> Osman Ergin, *Fatih İmareti Vakfiyesi*, İstanbul 1945, p. 63.

theological colleges, schools, public kitchens, mosques and libraries.<sup>18</sup> In the two colleges established by the grand vizier Mahmud Pasha, the one in Istanbul and the other in Hasköy, libraries were endowed. According to the register of the deeds of foundation, the former contained 195 books and the latter 84.<sup>19</sup> Gedik Ahmed Pasha, another statesman who occupied the post of grand vizierate during the reign of Mehmed II, also built some pious foundations in Istanbul, as well as a complex in Afyon containing a library.

Another library founded during the reign of Mehmed II is also of interest. A Sufi sheikh called Sheikh Vefa was responsible for establishing this library, the first *tekke* library about which we have any significant information. A document in the Istanbul court registers, dated July 1485, gives the exact number of books found under each subject heading. In the same document, there are provisions for lending, which do not exist in other contemporary deeds of foundations.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to these libraries, there were others founded in different parts of the Empire. These were mainly located in cultural centers, such as Edirne, Bursa, Amasya and Konya.<sup>21</sup> They were generally designed to be part of a college and were particularly rich in theological works.

The reign of Mehmed II's son, Bayezid II (1481-1512), is considered by historians as a period of consolidation in the Ottoman Empire. Alongside social and cultural reforms, he tried to foster intellectual and artistic

<sup>18</sup> Critoboulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, translated from Greek by Charles T. Riggs, Princeton 1954, p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> Ömer Lütfü Barkan - Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrir Defteri* 953 (1546) *Tarihli*, Istanbul 1970, pp. 42-45.

<sup>20</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive, Evkaf-ı Hümayun Muhasibliği no.102, p.150-151 (Istanbul); İsmail E. Erünsal, "Şeyh Vefa ve Vakıfları Hakkında Yeni Bir Belge", *İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi* I (1997), pp. 47-64.

<sup>21</sup> Among many libraries established during this period one deserves special attention for its very rich collection. According to a document in the Bursa court registers (Bursa Şer'i Sicilleri no.156/208, p. 23-25), the famous scholar Molla Yegani endowed 2,900 books to his mosque in Bursa in 1460. This is the richest collection provided for a library in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.



activities. In his reign Ottoman culture flourished, history and literature were promoted and it is not surprising to find catalogues from this period demonstrating that librarians with analytic minds were attempting to organize collections in a way that would be useful to the reader. These catalogues are preceded by introductions which describe the rules of cataloguing, classification and shelving of books at a level of sophistication well in advance of anywhere in Europe.

During Bayezid II's reign the palace library was greatly enriched. In a register book kept in the palace, we find some entries concerning several persons who had presented books to the Sultan and received rewards in return.<sup>22</sup> This is an indication of the sultan's deep interest in collecting books. It is also related that Bayezid II used to check the palace collection frequently, and had his seal placed on the first and last page of every book. Naturally, he did not neglect endowing the complexes he built with libraries, and these can be found in his colleges in Edirne and Amasya and in his mosque in Istanbul.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from other libraries established in Istanbul, such as the Alaiyeli Muhiddin, Atik Ali Pasha, Efdalzade Ahmed Çelebi and the Muslihiddin libraries, and those in other parts of the empire such as the Ishak Pasha Library (1489) in Inegöl, the Noktaci-zade Şeyh Mehmed Library (1492) in Edirne, the Ishak Çelebi Library (1506) in Manastır, the Suzi Çelebi Library (before 1513) in Prizren and the Hatuniye Library (1490) in Amasya, Bayezid II's reign witnessed the formation of some important private libraries, the most famous of which belonged to Müeyyedzade, the eminent

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<sup>22</sup> Belediye Library Mc. 0.70.

<sup>23</sup> Belediye Library Mc. 0.61, p. 44<sup>a</sup>; Başvekalet Archive, M. Müd. no. 5455, p. 76, 210; Başvekalet Archive, M. Müd. no. 5103 p. 273 respectively.

scholar and statesman. The history books record that his collection contained 7, 000 works.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the fact that Selim I, Bayezid II's son, was a bibliophile, his reign (1512-1520) was not long enough to allow him to found a library bearing his name. We have some documents indicating that during his Egyptian campaign he tried to enrich his private collection with valuable works. In fact, when Süleyman I ascended to the throne he inherited a very rich collection from his father.

Probably as a result of two exhausting campaigns, which created economic and social problems that needed to be resolved, we find that throughout Selim I's reign and at the beginning of his son Süleyman I's reign there was a lack of activity in the cultural sphere. It is only in the latter part of Süleyman I's reign, that we witness the foundation of libraries in Istanbul and other cities. By the end of the 16th century there was an increase in the number and size of libraries founded, and it became the norm for Istanbul colleges to be endowed with libraries; we find that the small libraries which had been set up in mosques and private houses mainly by scholars for the benefit of students and the local population in districts in Edirne and Istanbul were either gradually replaced by larger college libraries or incorporated into larger collections. Thus, we see libraries provided for 16 colleges which were established in this period.

Although today the richest manuscript collections are located in the Süleymaniye Library, the Süleymaniye complex did not possess a library when it was built. This is expressed very clearly in its deed of foundation (1557) thus:

“When books are provided for the college, two librarians are to be appointed by the Grand Vizier”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Hoca Sa'deddin, *Tacü't-Tevârih*, vol. II, Istanbul 1862, p. 556. A list of some of his books which were put together after his death can be found in Topkapı Palace Archive no. 9291/1-2.

However there are two documents, dated 1561 and 1566 respectively, which mention books sent by the Sultan to his college. In the first, it is merely stated that the Sultan had sent some books to his college,<sup>26</sup> but in the second, the titles of 55 works provided for the teachers of the college is given.<sup>27</sup>

By the end of sixteenth century we see a rapid spread of colleges throughout the Anatolian provinces as well. Some of these colleges, such as Sultan Selim II's colleges in Izmir and in Edirne and Bedreddin Mahmud's college in Kayseri, also contained a library.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the college libraries, there were mosque and tomb libraries which were established mainly for the purpose of providing books for college students.

Most of the sixteenth-century libraries seemed to follow the precedent of those established in the previous century. However, there are two libraries which do differ. The first was established in the Cihangir mosque in Istanbul by Mahmud Bey in 1593. Unlike other mosque libraries, the collection of this library consisted of books which were not Islamic textbooks. In fact, almost all of them contained stories which might be regarded as popular and religious.<sup>29</sup> The conditions inserted into the deed of foundation for this library allowed the librarian to lend out books for a month. The second was founded in an observatory in Istanbul by Sultan Murad III. According to a document, this was a specialized library for astronomical works.<sup>30</sup>

Up to the mid-seventeenth century most libraries had collections of 200-400 books, with the exception of one or two larger college complexes. The late 17<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the appearance of the independent library,

<sup>25</sup> Kemal Edip Kürkçüoğlu, *Süleymaniye Vakfiyesi*, Ankara 1962, fascimile p. 151-152.

<sup>26</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive no. E. 861/1.

<sup>27</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive no. E. 2803/1.

<sup>28</sup> Vakıtlar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 741, p. 84; no. 1395, pp. 87-114; no. 581/1, pp. 31-33 respectively.

<sup>29</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive, Galata Mahkemesi no.17, p. 187.

<sup>30</sup> Süheyl Ünver, *İstanbul Rasathanesi*, Ankara 1965, pp. 47-48.

which housed large and rich collections of books, going beyond the strict requirements of the college student. It was this type of library which was to dominate the library system for the next two centuries. While Istanbul could boast a network of large collections, every town and city, throughout the Empire, had a library, no matter how small. To complement this large network of libraries set up primarily for college teachers and students in mosques and colleges, there were dervish *tekke* libraries that housed works of mysticism and literature.

The first independent library in Istanbul was founded in 1678 by Köprülü Fazıl Mustafa Pasha. Although the building had been erected by Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, it was his brother Fazıl Mustafa Pasha who made the necessary provisions for its organization. Unlike other libraries previously mentioned, this had a separate building and full-time staff. The salaries of the librarians and other staff, taking into account the fact that they would be employed in the library on a full-time basis, were considerably high.<sup>31</sup>

The Köprülü Library influenced college libraries to a great extent. Of the many libraries founded at the end of seventeenth century, three are important, two of them owing their existence to statesmen of the Köprülü family, namely Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha and Amuca-zade Hüseyin Pasha. The third was established by a famous scholar, the Sheikh-ul-Islam Feyzullah Efendi. These three libraries, both in terms of collection and the staff, were far superior to the college libraries established at the beginning of the same century. Like the Köprülü Library, more than one librarian was appointed to these libraries, and in the case of the Amuca-zade Hüseyin Pasha Library, a book-binder was included among the library staff.<sup>32</sup>

The second part of Sultan Ahmed III's reign is known in Ottoman history as the Tulip Period (1718-1730). In addition to the famous entertainments and the building of palaces, this period also witnessed

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<sup>31</sup> Köprülü Library no. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Başvekalet Archive, Ruus no. 66, p. 221.

cultural activities, which included the formation of translation groups to render important works into Turkish,<sup>33</sup> and the introduction of printing. Libraries did not, however, benefit from this sudden burst of creativity, but continued to evolve slowly, witnessing some developments<sup>34</sup>

Before dealing with the libraries of the Tulip Period, mention should be made of the Şehid Ali Pasha Library which was founded in Şehzadebaşı in 1715. 2, 000 books were placed here, just before the beginning of this period. Şehid Ali Pasha, the grand vizier of Ahmed III, was a renowned bibliophile who had collected a very rich library in his palace and forbade the export of books from Istanbul.<sup>35</sup> However, he could only dispose of a small part of his collection in his own life-time, for he died during the Austrian campaign before completing the donation of all his books. After his death, the collection in his palace, along with his other belongings, was confiscated by the decree of the Sultan.<sup>36</sup> Thus, many valuable works which once belonged to his collection found their way into the Palace Library.<sup>37</sup> Credit should therefore be given also to Şehid Ali Pasha for the richness of Ahmed III's library, which was established in the palace in 1719. There is no doubt that the number of books in this collection would not have exceed 4, 000 were it not for the contribution of Şehid Ali Pasha. Being housed in the palace, Ahmed III's Library was not open to outsiders. It was intended only for those people who lived or worked in Topkapı Palace.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> For the cultural activities of this period see: Wilhelm Heinz, "Die Kultur der Tulpenzeit des Osmanischen Reiches", *WZKM* volume LXI, Wien 1967, pp. 62-116.

<sup>34</sup> For a general survey of the libraries established in this period see: Mütgan Cınbur, "Lâle Devrinde İstanbul Kütüphaneleri" *Türk Kültürü*, v. IX, Ankara 1971, pp. 363-368, and İsmail E. Erünsal, *Türk Kütüphaneleri Tarihi II: Kuruluştan Tanzimata Kadar Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri*, Ankara 1988, pp. 68-83.

<sup>35</sup> Raşid, *Tarih*, v. IV, İstanbul 1282, p. 238.

<sup>36</sup> For the discussion of the confiscation of his books, see: İsmail E. Erünsal, "Şehid Ali Paşa'nın İstanbul'da Kurduğu Kütüphane ve Müsadere Edilen Kitapları", *Kütüphanecilik Dergisi*, no. 1, İstanbul 1987, pp. 79-89.

<sup>37</sup> Ahmet Refik, *Alimler ve Sanatkarlar*, İstanbul 1924, pp. 331-335.

<sup>38</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, Defter no. 90, p. 3.

Ahmed III and his Grand Vizier İbrahim Pasha were responsible for some other important libraries of this period. İbrahim Pasha established libraries in his college in Istanbul (1720)<sup>39</sup> and in his native city, Nevşehir (1728).<sup>40</sup> A person whose sole duty was the ornamentation of the texts with decorative margins and other ornamental work was appointed to his library in Istanbul. Ahmed III established another library, next to the mosque called Yeni Cami, in 1725. In fact he had earlier donated books to the same mosque, which was placed at the tomb of Valide Sultan; but realizing that access to the tomb was not easy, he erected a new building.<sup>41</sup>

The Tulip Period, which terminated with Patrona Halil's revolt in 1730, did not last long enough to witness the fruition of the cultural activities which had been started. However, as a result of the work done during this period, Mahmud I's reign witnessed a new impetus in the development of libraries. During his reign (1730-1754), which may properly be described as the "golden age" of Ottoman libraries, many libraries were established, both in Istanbul and in other parts of the Empire, even in the border fortresses and the independent library became the norm. Among these, the ones founded by the Sultan, the Ayasofya (1740), Fatih (1742) and Galata Sarayı (1754) libraries, are the most noteworthy. In addition to their rich collections, these libraries were distinguished by their large staff and sophisticated organization, which was to become a model for their successors. When Mahmud I's brother, Osman III, succeeded him he completed the establishment of a library at the Nuruosmaniye complex (1755), which was to house a collection of 5,031 books. In the foundation deed for this library he stipulated that the regulations for the Fatih and Ayasofya Libraries should be adopted for his library as well.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, Defter no. 38, p. 90.

<sup>40</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, Defter no. 64, p. 37.

<sup>41</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Yazma Bağışlar no. 2742, p. 1<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, Dolap no. 49, p. 22.

In the Ottoman Empire it was the practice for rich statesmen to emulate the Sultans in their charitable works. Among the officials of Mahmud I, the most active in the field of creating charitable foundations seems to have been the chief eunuch of the Palace, Hacı Beşir Ağa. Like his patron, he was also a bibliophile, and built up large collections of books which he then endowed to his libraries in Eyüp, Cağaloğlu, Medina and Ziştovi.<sup>43</sup>

Another of Sultan Mahmud I's statesmen, Atf Mustafa Efendi, who was *defterdar*, a post corresponding to minister of finance, also emulated his sovereign by founding a library in the Vefa district of Istanbul in 1741<sup>44</sup>. This library is a good example of an independent library that was not attached to a mosque or a college. In its organization and activities we see that the library at Ayasofya was very much the model.

A Reisülküttab of Mahmud I, Mustafa Efendi, intended to found an independent library in Istanbul. Although he donated all his books and provided for two librarians and three teachers<sup>45</sup>, he died before the building could be started, and his son Âşir Efendi realized the construction of the building (1800)<sup>46</sup>.

Many library buildings that still survive were built during the reign of Mahmud I. As examples we can mention the libraries of Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha (1738), Hacı Beşir Ağa (1745), Ayasofya (1740), Atf Efendi (1741) and Fatih (1742). One of the characteristic features of the libraries of this period was the inclusion of a teaching staff among the library personnel. Thus, teaching became one of the functions of the libraries.

<sup>43</sup> Erünsal, *Türk Kütüphaneleri*, pp. 85-87.

<sup>44</sup> Fuad Sezgin, "Atf Efendi Vakfıyesi", *İ. Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi, Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, v. VI, Istanbul 1955, p. 136; Atf Efendi Library, no. 2858, pp. 1b-26b, 27b-102b.

<sup>45</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, no. 736, pp. 205-206 and no. 738, p. 142.

<sup>46</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Âşir Efendi section no. 473, pp. 7<sup>a-b</sup>. Virginia Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace: Ahmed Resnâ Efendi 1700-1783*, Leiden 1995, pp. 25-27.

The period between 1750 and 1839 in the history of Ottoman libraries can be described as a time of expansion and reorganization of the Ottoman library system. At this period as well bibliophilia was not restricted to Sultans. State officials also built up rich collections and established various libraries. The grand vizier to Osman III and Mustafa III, Ragıp Pasha, was an ardent collector of books, as well as being a poet and writer. He endowed his collection to the library he had built in Istanbul in 1763.<sup>47</sup> Another important library was built by Veliyüddin Efendi, twice Şeyhülislam in Mustafa III's reign. He built a library next to the Beyazıt Mosque and endowed it with 1,690 books. Although not very large when compared to the Fatih or Nur-ı Osmaniye Libraries, the collection drew many scholars. Vasıf Efendi, the historian, noted that there were many rare books in the collection and subsequently this library was busier than others in Istanbul. He also noted that Veliyüddin Efendi's son continued to search for rare books to add to his father's collection.<sup>48</sup> The conditions governing the running of the library were very much the same as those in the Atıf Efendi and Ragıp Pasha libraries.<sup>49</sup> Mustafa III (1757-1774) built a library in a section of the Topkapı Palace, which was referred to as the *Bostancılar Ocağı*.<sup>50</sup> This library was established for the benefit of the Palace staff and books were not permitted to be taken out of the library, so essentially it served as a reference library in which classes were given in certain subjects. He also endowed books to his college, situated in the complex of the Laleli Mosque.<sup>51</sup>

The periods of Abdülhamid I (1774-1789) and Selim III (1789-1807) were marked by the growing realization that the Ottoman Empire was on the verge of collapse after the disastrous treaty of Küçük Kaynarca with the Russians in 1774, and that sweeping and radical reforms were necessary to

<sup>47</sup> *Mür'it-Tevârih* II A, p. 54.

<sup>48</sup> *Vasıf Tarihi* v. I, 206-207.

<sup>49</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 745, p. 80.

<sup>50</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, Kasa 187, pp. 350-358.

<sup>51</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 642, p. 145.



avert the unthinkable. New western-styled institutions were introduced in this period, mainly in the area of military training. In order to establish a new Western-styled army and to pay for the expertise, the State became involved in increasing expenditure. This period is marked by a decrease in imperial endowments, partially compensated for by an increase in endowments from prominent statesmen.

The decrease in imperial largess can be seen in the library built by Abdülhamid I, in a small complex he built at Bahçekapı in Istanbul.<sup>52</sup> The library only housed 1,552 books and the staff consisted of only four librarians, one binder, one sweeper and one doorman.<sup>53</sup> The collection was enlarged by an endowment of 750 books from Lala İsmail Efendi.<sup>54</sup> As for Selim III's endowments, they too were comparatively meager; he is seen to have endowed 30 books to a library in Medina,<sup>55</sup> he reorganized the Laleli library and erected a new building there<sup>56</sup> and he repaired the Selimiye library in Edirne, endowing it with some books.<sup>57</sup>

However, statesmen of this period continued the tradition of either building complete libraries, or at least endowing books to existing institutions. While Istanbul benefited greatly from the expansion of libraries, there seems to have been a growing feeling that the city was now adequately provided for with the existing collections; in this period we see a trend towards establishing or enlarging provincial libraries. The statesmen usually chose a provincial town or city that they had some connection with, either

<sup>52</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet*, v. II, İstanbul, pp. 46 and 81; Hüseyin Ayvansaraylı, *Hadikatü'l-Cevâmi'*, v. II, İstanbul 1281, p. 179. See also Müjgan Cunbur, "I. Abdülhamid'in Vakfiyesi ve Hamidiye Kütüphanesi", *Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, XXII (Ankara 1964), pp. 17-69. See also: Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Hatt-ı Hümayunlarına Göre Bir Padişahın Portresi, Sultan I. Abdülhamid (1774-1789)*, Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, İstanbul University, 1997, pp. 21-22.

<sup>53</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 86, I. Abdülhamid'in Hazine Defteri, p. 31.

<sup>54</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 746, pp. 343-345.

<sup>55</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive no. E. 2885/19.

<sup>56</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 93, pp. 125-127.

<sup>57</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Hatt-ı Hümayun no. 16 161.

their birthplace or somewhere they had been appointed to in the course of their careers. Silahdar Seyyit Mehmed Pasha established a library in his birthplace, the village of Arabsun near Nevşehir.<sup>58</sup> Halil Hamid Pasha, grand vizier, established two libraries, one in Isparta,<sup>59</sup> one in Burdur.<sup>60</sup> Ahmed Ağa founded a library in Rhodes, his birthplace, in 1793, and stipulated that classes were to be given in it five days a week.<sup>61</sup> Mehmed Raşid Efendi, the Reisülküttab, founded a library with a collection of almost 1,000 books in Kayseri in 1797; he had been posted here earlier in his career. This library is particularly interesting in that we see a development in the thinking about the operation through a series of added regulations, each presumably there to correct some existing deficiency or abuse.<sup>62</sup> Other libraries were founded in this manner in Antalya by Hacı Mehmed Ağa (1797),<sup>63</sup> in Keban by Yusuf Ziya Pasha (1798),<sup>64</sup> in Akhisar by Zeynel-zâde Hacı Ali Efendi (1804),<sup>65</sup> in Manisa by Karaosmanoğlu Hacı Hüseyin Ağa (1806),<sup>66</sup> in Prizren by Mehmed Pasha (1805),<sup>67</sup> in Vidin by Pazvantoğlu Osman Pasha,<sup>68</sup> and in İzmir by Hadice Hanım (1806).<sup>69</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 742, p. 66.

<sup>59</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 628, pp. 547 and 554.

<sup>60</sup> M. Zeki Oral, "Mevcut Vesikalara Göre Burdur Kütüphaneleri ve Kitap Vakfiyeleri", *Belleten* XXIV/94 (Ankara 1960), pp. 235-236.

<sup>61</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 743, pp. 93-94 and 156.

<sup>62</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 68.

<sup>63</sup> S. Fikri Erten, *Tekelioğulları*, İstanbul 1955, pp. 17-26.

<sup>64</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 50.

<sup>65</sup> Mehmed Emin Müderrisoğlu, *Akhisarlı Türk Büyükleri ve Eserleri*, İzmir 1956, pp. 85-86.

<sup>66</sup> Sadık Karaöz, *Manisa İli Kütüphaneleri*, Ankara 1974, p. 24 ; İbrahim Gökçen, *Manisa Tarihinde Hayrlar ve Vakıflar*, İstanbul 1950, p. 82; İnci Kuyulu, *Kara Osman-oğlu Ailesine Ait Mimari Eserler*, Ankara 1992, pp. 100-110.

<sup>67</sup> İlhan Polat, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Devrinde Yugoslavya'da Kurulan Türk Kütüphaneleri, DTCF, Kütüphanecilik Bölümü, BA. Thesis, Ankara 1969, pp. 40-42.

<sup>68</sup> Mihaila Stajnova, "Ottoman Libraries in Vidin", *Etudes Balkaniques*, no. 2, 'sofya 1979), p.67

<sup>69</sup> İzmir Vakıflar Müdürlüğü Archive, II. Vakfiye Defteri, pp. 40-45.

Yusuf Ağa, the controller of the mint and holder of several other important positions, founded a library in Konya, which was neither his birthplace nor a place to which he had been appointed at some time in his career. It seems that he wanted to found a library in a city that needed one. The library he built was large by provincial standards: it had over 1,000 books. The regulations for operating the library were the same as those in the Atf Efendi, Ragıp Pasha and Hamidiye libraries.

Istanbul also benefited from the expansion of the network of libraries. In 1775 Mehmed Murad Efendi built an independent library in Çarşamba, which was to house his collection of books. They had previously been housed in a Nakşibendi *tekke* in the same district<sup>70</sup>.

Another library was founded by Selim Ağa in Üsküdar in 1782. He envisaged his independent library as functioning primarily as a teaching library and stipulated that two of the three librarians should be scholars who were capable of performing the duties of teacher. The Şeyhülislam was to choose them and ensure that they were well-qualified for the task. We can see the influence of the Ragıp Pasha and Atf Efendi libraries on the running of this library. The librarians were expected to teach, to lead prayers and to reside in houses built for them close to the library.<sup>71</sup>

A third library was built by Said Efendi in the district of Saraçhane, in the precincts of the Dülgeroğlu Mosque. The collection consisted of 697 books and it had a staff of four librarians, for whom rooms were provided so that they could reside close at hand. Unfortunately, the library building no longer exists and we have no record of what happened to the books.<sup>72</sup>

Another sizable library was founded in 1801 by İbrahim Efendi, who endowed 753 books to the Kılıç Ali Pasha's college in Tophane. The

<sup>70</sup>. Muzaffer Gökman, *Murat Molla. Hayatı, Kütüphanesi ve Eserleri*, İstanbul 1943, p. 12.

<sup>71</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 122.

<sup>72</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive no. D. 10, 294 ; Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 743, p. 501.

collection is interesting in that most of the books were on Qur'anic exegesis, reflecting İbrahim Efendi's profession of teacher and scholar.<sup>73</sup>

In 1807 the reign of Selim III came to an abrupt and bloody end with his deposition and death at the hand of the Janissaries, the Ottoman troops that were set against any reforms that might threaten their status or privileges. When Mahmud II came to the throne in 1809 he realized that the reforms would have to be postponed until he was in a position to neutralize the forces of reaction. Thus, the earlier part of his reign was marked by stealthy preparations for carrying out a broad program of reforms, which would include the education of the future elite. This would inevitably make its impression on the library system.

Mahmud II (1808-1839) attempted to rationalize the control of all charitable foundations, including libraries, by bringing their supervision under the single jurisdiction of a ministry of trusts.<sup>74</sup> As a result, many catalogues were drawn up and some collections and some smaller libraries were consolidated into larger, more manageable collections and were reformed or transferred to new locations. However, state involvement in libraries was confined merely to control,<sup>75</sup> and radical changes in administration did not come until after the proclamation of the Tanzimat (1839).

The system of foundation libraries had for many years been expanding, and the trend was to continue throughout the reign of Mahmut II. An anonymous American traveler in Istanbul in 1833 noticed that there were libraries next to or inside almost every mosque and in many *tekkes* (dervish convents): "there are numerous public libraries. . . To every royal mosque,

<sup>73</sup> Şer'i Siciller, İstanbul Kadılığı, no. 79, pp. 6b-8b, 16b-18b, 85a.

<sup>74</sup> John Robert Barnes, *Evkaf-ı Hümayun; Vakıf Administration Under the Ottoman Ministry for Imperial Religious Foundations 1839 to 1875* (Ph. D. Thesis, University of California 1980).

<sup>75</sup> Beyazıt Umumi Library, Veliyüddin Efendi Section no. 3291, p. 4<sup>b</sup>; Üniversite Library, İbnülemin Section no. 2485; Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, Defter no. 642, p.103.

and to many of the tekkays, or chapels of dervishes, is attached a library and the largest is to contain 6,000 volumes.<sup>76</sup> The fact that Istanbul had become well supplied with libraries meant that the provinces continued to attract foundations, so that almost every city, and indeed many small towns, could boast a library, however small. In this period the foundations of these libraries are well documented. For example, in 1808 Yılanlıoğlu Sheikh Ali built a library in Eğridir, in the courtyard of his college, and placed 218 of his books in it;<sup>77</sup> in 1811 Vahid Pasha opened a library in Kütahya, and in Çay, near Samsun, Süleyman Pasha built a library.<sup>78</sup> In 1812 Ahmet Ağa donated his books to the Kurşunlu Mosque in Harput, in Eastern Asia Minor.<sup>79</sup> However, libraries were also being endowed in areas further afield. Mehmed Pasha founded a library at the Grand Mosque of Jerusalem;<sup>80</sup> while in Europe, Hamza Efendi, the Müftü of Athens, set aside a room in his house for the purpose of teaching and donated books for the use of the students.<sup>81</sup> In 1813 Mehmed Ali Pasha (the future ruler of Egypt) built a library in his home town, Kavalla, now in northern Greece,<sup>82</sup> while in 1818 Sırrı Selim Bey built a library in the Seyfullah Mosque and College in Thessalonica.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>76</sup> *Sketches of Turkey in 1831 and 1832 by an American*, New York 1833, p. 142.

<sup>77</sup> Fehmi Aksu, "Yazma Kitaplar", *Ün III/28* (Isparta 1936), p. 394; Süleyman Sükuflü Yiğitbaşı, *Eğridir - Felekâbâd Tarihi*, İstanbul 1972, p. 132; Yücel Özkaya, "Anadoludaki Büyük Hanedanlıklar", *Belleten* vol. LVI/217 (Ankara 1992), p. 838.

<sup>78</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 733, p. 44

<sup>79</sup> Süleymaniye library, Harput section no. 127.

<sup>80</sup> Şemim Emsem, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Devrinde Türkiye Kütüphanelerinin Tarihçesi, *Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği Bülteni* IX/1-2 (Ankara 1960), p. 35

<sup>81</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 987, pp. 129-132.

<sup>82</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 580, p. 275; Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimari Eserleri: Bulgaristan, Yunanistan, Arnavutluk*, İstanbul 1982, pp. 236-237.

<sup>83</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 987, pp. 115-120. These are just some of the libraries opened in this period. We know that following libraries were also opened: Müftü Mosque Library in İzmir (1819); Şeyh Ahmed Gazzi Library in Bursa (1819); Osman Ağa Library in Arapgir (1820); Hayati-zâde Library in Elbistan (1823); Şeyh Mustafa Efendi Library in Burdur (1824); Halil Ağa Library in Silistre (1823); Necip Paşa Library in Tire (1827); Şakir Efendi Library in Çankırı (1828); Merdiyye and Münire College Libraries in Kastomonu (1828, 1835); Çaşnigir Library in Manisa (1832); Saçlı

Of particular note in Istanbul was the remarkable number of new libraries donated to *tekkes*. In the reign of Mahmut II at least 7 new *tekke* libraries were opened. These collections were of course different from college library collections in that they tended to have works of a mystical and poetic nature. Of these libraries, the Galata Mevlevihane library and Said Pertev Pasha's library are of particular interest for the extent of their collections. For the Galata Mevlevihane, Halet Efendi, a statesman, poet and Mevlevi dervish, built a library building within the garden of the *tekke*. In 1820 he donated 266 books<sup>84</sup> and two years later he donated a further 547 books.<sup>85</sup> The library reflected the founder's interest in history, literature and mystical works. Being a *tekke* library, he stipulated that it was not the trust administrator who was to appoint the librarian, as would normally be expected, but the sheikh of the *tekke*. The first librarian should be a bachelor and be resident in the *tekke*, while the imam of the *tekke* should act as second librarian.<sup>86</sup> Said Pertev Pasha's *tekke* library was set up in the garden of the Çiçekçi Mosque, where the Nakşibendi *tekke* was located. The library building was endowed with a large collection and two full-time librarians were appointed with appropriately adequate salaries<sup>87</sup>.

As for the Sultan himself, Mahmud II chose to make his imperial foundation not in Istanbul, but in the holy city of Medina in Arabia. He built a college and a library and accommodation for the librarians.<sup>88</sup> Although we

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Mahmud Efendi Library in Amasya (1833); Ragıbiyye Library in Diyarbakır (1833); İbrahim Paşa Library in Elazığ (1249); Cennet-zâde Abdullah Efendi Library in Erzurum (1834); Abdullah b. Süleyman Paşa Library in Samsun and Mustafa Ağa Library in Medine.

<sup>84</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Halet Efendi section no. 837/1, pp. 1b-21b.

<sup>85</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Halet Efendi section no. 837/1, pp. 22b-38a; Şer'i Siciller Archive (İstanbul), Evkaf-ı Hümayun Müfettişliği no. 375, pp. 1b-7b.

<sup>86</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Halet Efendi section no. 837/1, pp. 8a-b.

<sup>87</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. Kasa 108, pp. 6-9.

<sup>88</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Hatt-ı Hümayun 26, 913. See also O. Spies, "Die Bibliotheken des Hidschas", *ZDMG*, vol. 90 (1936), pp. 96-98 and Hammadi Ali Muhammed et-Tunisî, *el-Mektebâtü'l-âmmе bi'l-Medineti'l-Münevvere, mâdihâ ve hâzirihâ*, p. 1-7, MA thesis, Cami'atü Melik Abdülaziz, Cidde 1981.

do not know how many books were donated by Mahmud II at the beginning, we know that in 1839 he sent a bookbinder from Istanbul to the library and that the binder repaired 646 books.<sup>89</sup> Sixty years later a yearbook for the province noted that there were 4,569 books in the library<sup>90</sup>. A document from 1835 notes that the Sultan intended to have a similar library built in the holy city of Mecca.<sup>91</sup> We do not know whether his wish was realized or not, but his successor Abdülmecid was to found a library in the city,<sup>92</sup> and it is likely that the books which Mahmud II had ordered to be collected became the nucleus of the Mecidiye library, Abdülmecid's own foundation.

Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Ottoman elite began to realize that reform was necessary. A series of disastrous wars had shown them that the old military tactics they employed had served them well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but that Western Europe had overtaken them, leaving the Ottoman forces no match for a modern army. Western instructors were brought in to educate the officer class of the navy and army. The first library with Western language printed books was established at the School of Engineering ( ). Western books were translated into Turkish and printed; once printing was revived it did not restrict itself to military works, but works of literature and history, including world histories, were produced. Most significantly, Arabic and Persian were no longer seen as the basic educational prerequisites of the Ottoman elite. A knowledge of Western languages, especially French, became the basic skill demanded of the new intelligentsia. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the Ottoman ruling class had begun to embrace Western European values and had left the old mentality behind them - or at least so they believed.

<sup>89</sup> İşkî Mustafa b. Ömer Kilişî, *Ta'tirü Ercâi'd-Devleti'l-Mecdiyye*, University Library (Istanbul), T. Y. 1490, p. 166a-b.

<sup>90</sup> *Sâlnâme-i Hicâz*, Istanbul 1309, p. 307.

<sup>91</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Mühimme-i Mısır no. 13, p. 82.

<sup>92</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Mühimme-i Mısır no. 13, p. 168.

For the vast majority of the Muslim population it was business as usual. The first of the reforming sultans, Selim III, had attempted to reform the institutions of State and discovered that the forces of conservatism were too powerful for him; as we have mentioned above, he was overthrown and killed. It was left to his successors through the 19<sup>th</sup> century to begin building up parallel modern institutions, leaving the older institutions to become increasingly irrelevant. While new schools of engineering, medicine, and law, all with their new libraries in modern Western languages and Turkish printed books were founded,<sup>93</sup> the old foundation colleges continued with their medieval curriculum and manuscript libraries. Increasingly irrelevant to the elite, these libraries ceased to play any significant role in the affairs of State, their collections becoming antiquarian curiosities, as were the scholars who still continued to consult their books.

It should however be emphasized that the Western-looking elite was still a very small minority of the reading public and for the vast majority foundation libraries continued to flourish. Indeed, during the period of reforms there were some significant new foundation libraries established both in Istanbul and other cities of the empire, even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among these the most important were Hüsrev Pasha Library in Eyüp (1839), the Esad Efendi Library in Sultanahmet (1846), the Sheikh Mehmed Murad Library in Darülmesnevi in Fatih (1844), the Nafiz Pasha Library in Yenikapı Mevlevihane (1851), Sheikhülislam Arif Hikmet Bey Library in Medine (1855), the Pertevniyal Sultan Library in the Valide Mosque (1871), the Hasan Hüsnü Pasha Library in Eyüp (1895), and the Hacı Mahmud Efendi Library in *tekke* of Yahya Efendi in Beşiktaş (1901).<sup>94</sup>

Although the foundation libraries had served their purpose well in the past, it had not been possible to introduce the new knowledge into these

<sup>93</sup> For this type of libraries see: R. Tuba Çavdar, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyete Kadar Osmanlı Kütüphanelerinin Gelişimi*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, pp. 29-53, Istanbul University 1995.

<sup>94</sup> For other libraries founded in this period see Tuba Çavdar's thesis pp. 4-26.



libraries, as they were essentially alienated from the State by their status as charities governed by Islamic law. What is more, the scholars and librarians who were familiar with the libraries would not have been able to deal with the new subject headings, least of all the foreign books in Western languages. There was no way that the classical Ottoman library could be modernized; it had to be ignored while new libraries with librarians acquainted with Western languages and culture were founded to serve the requirements of the State.

In the last years of the Empire it was realized that the new library system established in schools and colleges was not serving the new elite as successfully as the old classical library system had served the elite 150 years previously. The lack of general libraries, or even a single national library, was noted and attempts were made to meet this need. In 1882 the Ottoman General Library (*Kütüphane-i Umumi-i Osmani*) was established with the purpose of bringing a copy of all the books published in the empire into one collection and to function as a national copyright library. During the period of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki*, 1908-1918) nationalist trends became more pronounced and several libraries, open to the general public and designated "national library" (*Millî Kütüphane*), were founded in Istanbul and the provinces by the regime. These were national libraries in name only and did not flourish. The libraries of the late Ottoman Empire were effectively restricted to servicing teaching institutions, just as they had been in the earliest period.

The classical Ottoman library ceased to have a monopoly over access to knowledge with the introduction of Western-styled libraries. Although they continued to operate to the end of the Ottoman period, and their collections can still be consulted, they became increasingly irrelevant to the needs of the State. Their death knell was sounded in 1928, when even the script in which their books were written was proscribed in a modern Turkey that had so little need for what it considered to be obsolete to the demands of

a modern society. Their collections have now become of antiquarian value and a source for the study of Ottoman intellectual life and religious studies.

## B. Organization

### a. Personnel

Although there was no uniform pattern for employing staff in Ottoman libraries, there was a general trend to increase the number of librarians as the collections became larger. In the early years of the Ottoman Empire, for instance, as the libraries did not have separate buildings, being part of a mosque or a college or a larger complex surrounding these, there was no particular establishment allocated for a body of library staff.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, in some cases there was no librarian appointed for the care of the books which were placed within these institutions and his duties were performed by a member of staff of the institution in which the library was located. For example, there was no allowance made for a librarian in the libraries of the college founded by Umur Bey in Bergama (1440),<sup>96</sup> in the college founded by Sultan Murad II in Adrianople (1435)<sup>97</sup> or in the college founded by Saruca Pasha in Gallipoli (1442)<sup>98</sup>. However, Umur Bey had allowed an extra stipend of one *asper* per day for the *müezzin* of the mosque he built in Bursa to care for the books.<sup>99</sup> In this early period the only member of staff for the library tended to be a single librarian appointed on a stipend of between one and three *aspers* per day. The other duties associated with libraries, such as

<sup>95</sup> In the account books governing the establishment of these pious foundations the post of librarian is listed among the staff of mosques, colleges or the complexes. See for example Başvekalet Archive M. Müd. 22, p. 5; M. Müd. 626, p. 72; M. Müd. 5455, p. 18; Ruus 94, p. 674.

<sup>96</sup> VGMA no. 591, p. 181

<sup>97</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive no. D. 7081.

<sup>98</sup> M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *XV-XVI. Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livası*, İstanbul 1952, pp. 248-252.

<sup>99</sup> VGMA no. 591, p. 182

supervision, cleaning, maintenance and financial control, were carried out by the staff of the institution in which the library was located.

Although after the conquest of Constantinople(1453), Ottoman libraries continued to form part of larger institutions and were administered by them, there is a discernible increase in the number of librarians and the appointment, for the first time, of assistant librarians (*kâtib-i kütüb*), who were usually charged with organizing the lending service and the preparation of catalogues. As the practice of lending books gradually died out in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the assistant librarian was employed in drawing up catalogues and inventories and the post finally disappeared by the end of the century.

The daily stipend for library personnel however was, with a few exceptions, not increased. Only with the inflation of the second half of the sixteenth century do we see any significant rise. It is only towards the end of the seventeenth century, with the endowment of rich foundations and the appearance of libraries independent of colleges or mosques, that we find a further increase in the number of library personnel allocated to a library.

While at first the staff appointed to the independent libraries consisted of personnel whose duties encompassed those of librarians, as for example in the famous Köprülü Library, later, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the staff of the independent libraries proliferated to such an extent that they included teachers who taught part of the college syllabus. Thus, over four centuries the Ottoman library evolved from its humble beginning as an ancillary function of the mosque and college to that of an independent institution, and finally to a position where the library itself performed the functions of mosque and college. The difference between libraries in the early period, and to a certain extent up to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and those founded after the 17<sup>th</sup> century is one of emphasis. While in the first period the library was an extension of the functions of prayer and learning, in the second period prayer and learning became incidental functions of the library.

Thus, while the staff of the Köprülü Library (1678) consisted of three librarians, a binder and a doorkeeper, the libraries of Sultan Ahmed III (1719) and Hagia Sophia (1740) acquired teachers in Qur'an, Tradition and Islamic Law. In this period the complement of library personnel greatly increased. Apart from the teaching staff, the library at Hagia Sophia was able to boast of no less than six librarians, one assistant librarian, one cataloguer, two *noktacı*,<sup>100</sup> two keepers charged with the security and cleaning of the books, two doorkeepers, three floor-sweepers, one painter/decorator to keep the walls clean, two building maintenance personnel, one plumber for the maintenance of the lead roof, and one *buhurcu*.<sup>101</sup>

The emergence of the independent library did not mean that the smaller institutional libraries founded in college and mosque complexes ceased to exist. In fact they continued to be established throughout the Ottoman period. In these libraries, established in the 16th and 17th centuries, the staff generally consisted of one librarian, one binder and one doorkeeper. Other duties, such as administration, repairing and maintenance etc. were performed by the staff of the complex in which the library was situated. With the emergence of libraries with their own independent buildings it followed that the staff should be enlarged to include a separate corps of maintenance personnel, but administratively the library tended to be treated as an annex of the larger complex.

The most important post in Ottoman libraries was that of librarian. Therefore, in the endowment deeds we find several clauses detailing their job description, qualifications, qualities, duties, responsibilities and salaries. Endowment deeds usually dealt very briefly with the other personnel, such

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<sup>100</sup> Some endowments for mosque complexes made allowance for daily salaries to be paid to persons who were required to read Buhari's book of Traditions. In order to check that the conditions of the endowment were fulfilled by those persons in receipt of the salaries, *noktacı* were appointed to note the progress of each reader of Buhari.

<sup>101</sup> The *buhurcu* was charged with ensuring that incense was burnt throughout the library to keep the air scented.

as assistant librarian, binder, doorman, sweeper, generally stating their duties and salaries.

### **b. Services offered by Ottoman libraries:**

Before the emergence of independent libraries in the seventeenth century, the Ottoman libraries, which were founded in colleges and mosques, usually lent books to the readers. However, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, there was a general trend against the practice of lending books and it became more usual to require the reader to consult the book within the library or the building in which the library was situated. Thus, we find that in earlier foundation deeds little, if any, mention is made of the times of opening, while later on, when lending was usually more restricted, it became common for the founder to specify the hours and days during which the library should remain open.

The Köprülü, the first of the independent Ottoman libraries, founded in 1678, had a policy of restricted lending, and was open three days a week and the hours of opening were from sunrise to just before the mid-afternoon prayer.<sup>102</sup> From the end of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth century libraries generally were open two or three days a week. Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, however, there was a trend to increase the days of opening. While Nevşehirli Damad Ibrahim Pasha's and Sultan Mahmud I's libraries remained open three days, the library of Şerif Halil Pasha was open four days,<sup>103</sup> and Ahmed Pasha's college library in Urfa<sup>104</sup> and Hüseyin Ağa's mosque library in Bursa were open on five days. The latter founder was rather specific in his requirements for opening, stipulating in the deeds that the library should be open five days a week from sunrise till mid-afternoon "even if not one reader was to come to request a book in the

<sup>102</sup> Köprülü Library no. 4, p. 42.

<sup>103</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 38, p. 90, kasa 47, p.15, no. 737, p. 117.

<sup>104</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 737, p. 213.

space of a year".<sup>105</sup> This particular emphasis was to obviate any excuse on the part of the librarian for closing the library due to lack of demand.

In the eighteenth century the founders not only specified days of opening, but were careful to stipulate hours of opening as well. Generally, opening hours were regulated by the sun, so that the libraries were generally open longer in summer than in winter. They usually opened one hour after sunrise and closed either before the mid-afternoon prayer or one hour before sunset. In one library in Bursa, an attempt was made to even out to some degree the discrepancy between summer and winter opening times by having the library open its doors two hours after sunrise in summer and only one hour after sunrise in winter.<sup>106</sup> No particular reason is suggested for the practice of opening libraries at these times, but it is clear that the requirements of natural lighting must have been pre-eminent. Although in some libraries the provision of lamps is specified, it was probably felt that they were undesirable in that the lamp soot from the oil could damage the books.

Libraries founded at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century generally opened five or six days a week and the hours of opening were from one hour after sunrise to one hour before sunset. The libraries founded by Ragıp Pasha (1762), Veliyüddin Efendi (1769), Rodosi Ahmed Ağa (1793), Yusuf Ağa (1794), Kılıç Ali Pasha (1801) and Vahit Pasha (1811) were closed on Friday,<sup>107</sup> on the other hand the libraries founded by Raşid Efendi (1797), Aşir Efendi (1800) and Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Pasha (1813) were closed on Tuesdays and Fridays.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, pp. 41-42.

<sup>106</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 41.

<sup>107</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 82, p. 6, no. 745; p. 80, no. 743, p. 93; Müjgan Cunbur, "Yusuf Ağa Kütüphanesi ve Kütüphane Vakfı", *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* I/1 (Ankara 1963), p. 214; Süleymaniye Library, Kılıç Ali Paşa no.1049/1, p.10; Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 702 respectively.

<sup>108</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 67; no. 580, p. 275; Süleymaniye Library, Aşir Efendi no. 473, p. 9.

Some founders included unusual provisions for the opening times of their libraries; Ahmed Efendi, when founding his library (1775) in the Yakup Bey Mosque in Izmir, specified that his library should be open every day in the month of Ramazan, which was not only the holy month during which Muslims fast, but was often a month in which many people did not carry out their normal occupations, and thus had more time to read.<sup>109</sup> Hasan Efendi founded a library (1825) in the Cedide Mehmed Efendi College in Istanbul and specified Fridays and Tuesdays as the days on which the library should be kept open. However, he also included a clause which provided for the library to be opened on other days should there be a demand.<sup>110</sup> In the library of Hafız Mustafa Pasha in Arapgir (1774) it was the librarian who determined which days of the week it should close.<sup>111</sup>

While in some libraries it was customary to perform the noon and after-noon prayers in the reading room, the libraries of Yusuf Ağa (1794) and Raşid Efendi (1797) were closed during prayer times.

As the libraries ceased to lend books and functioned as independent institutions which remained open for most of the day, provisions were made for the conduct of the readers, the performance of prayers and in some cases even for teaching to be carried out on the premises in the reading room. Typically, the reading room would be a single large room devoid of tables and chairs, in the Islamic tradition. The floor would be covered in rush mats, carpets or both, and cushions would be placed along the sides of each wall. At intervals book stands (*rahle*) would be placed around the room, and the readers would use these to hold their books while leaning against the cushioned wall for support. If they were copying a book they would rest their paper on a board which was supported on their knee. As there is no mention of libraries, with one exception, providing ink, paper or pens, we

<sup>109</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 744, p. 59.

<sup>110</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive (Istanbul), Davud Paşa Mahkemesi no. 95, p. 85.

<sup>111</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive E. 137/44.

must presume that writing materials were furnished by the readers themselves.

As we would expect in a tradition where most, if not all, books were in manuscript form, copying was a major activity in the Ottoman libraries. While most foundation deeds make reference to this practice, it is rare to find any specific instruction as to how copying should be carried out. However, we find some founders specifically forbidding the binding of a book to be broken in order to distribute the fascicles among a number of readers to allow a book to be copied by more than one student at a time. Readers are often asked to take care not to spill ink on the books and not to fold the pages. But in some libraries, especially college libraries, multiple copies of some textbooks were kept in order to facilitate copying. The famous historian, Hoca Sa'deddin, reports that in the Fatih College library, most textbooks could be found in several copies<sup>112</sup>

According to Antoine Galland, who worked in the French Consulate from 1672 to 1673, there were seven copies each of Sudi's commentary on Sa'di's *Gülistan*, and *Bostan* and the *Divan* of Hafiz in Hadım Hafiz Ahmed Pasha's library in the Fatih district of Istanbul. These books were lent out for copying against a deposit of two *piastres*.<sup>113</sup>

We have very little information governing the conduct of the readers in the libraries. When lending was allowed, there were usually fairly detailed instructions on how the books were to be issued and returned, but in cases where lending was not allowed the foundation deeds usually state boldly that books should be read in the reading room. It is only occasionally that we find specific rulings on how books were to be treated while being used. Köprülü Hafiz Ahmed Pasha, when endowing some books to the library founded by his grandfather, specified that the head bands holding the fascicles together

<sup>112</sup> Tacu't-Tevarih I, Istanbul 1279, p. 580.

<sup>113</sup> Antoine Galland: *Istanbul'a Ait Günlük Hatıralar (1672-1673)*, v. I, trans. by N. S. Örik, Ankara 1949, p. 204.



were not to be removed to facilitate copying. In an endowment to his father's college in Crete, he made the same stipulation.<sup>114</sup> Other founders were particular to demand that their librarians be careful to ensure that the readers did not cut out pages from a book,<sup>115</sup> and some asked the readers to be careful not to splash ink on the books.<sup>116</sup>

The only reference to the number of books allowed to a reader at any one time is in the catalogue of the books endowed by Bafıralı es-Seyyid Ahmed Revnaki to the Fatih Mosque, in which the following condition is recorded:

"In the library one book should be given to one person, not two books. This is a condition which should be made known"<sup>117</sup>

Up to the seventeenth century, before the establishment of independent libraries, books were endowed to colleges, mosques and dervish convents, and were issued to readers who would consult them in those buildings. We cannot therefore talk about activities other than consultation of books in the library, as there was no particular area which functioned purely as a reading room. However, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, with the foundation of the larger independent libraries, we find that some founders made provisions for prayers to be performed at the required times and for teaching to be carried out. The library in Topkapı Palace also served as a classroom for the palace trainees, and the Hekimođlu Ali Pasha library (1735) had teachers on its staff.<sup>118</sup> In the Ayasofya library (1740), endowed by Mahmud I, teaching was carried out on a regular basis, as can be seen from a clause in the endowment deeds:

<sup>114</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 76, p. 43; Başvekalet Archive (Süleymaniye section, no. 2918, p.13.

<sup>115</sup> Cunbur, "Yusuf Ađa Kütüphanesi", p. 215.

<sup>116</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 67.

<sup>117</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Yazma Bağışlar no. 251, p. 1.

<sup>118</sup> Topkapı Palace Library Y. 75, p.16; Millet library, Feyzullah Efendi no. 2197 respectively.

"In the said library one person who is able to teach Qur'anic Commentary and subjects related to it should act as head-teacher and offer lessons twice a week for a daily stipend of 50 *aspers*. And a person qualified in Tradition should teach it one day a week for a daily stipend of 40 *aspers*. And a person competent in Recital should teach the Holy Qur'an one day a week, for a daily stipend of 25 *aspers*".<sup>119</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century provisions were also made for teaching in some libraries.

During the hours in which the libraries were open the noon and sometimes the afternoon prayers had to be performed. In the libraries situated within mosques or colleges the readers would have said their prayers within the same building. With the emergence of the independent libraries the readers would probably have left the reading room to say their prayers in the nearest mosque. However, by the mid-eighteenth century, some founders required the librarians to lead the readers in the noon and afternoon prayers. Atıf Efendi and Ragıp Pasha asked their first and second librarians to act as *imam* and *müezzin* respectively.<sup>120</sup>

There was no uniform policy towards lending books in Ottoman libraries. While some founders took great pains to encourage the librarians to lend books, others forbade the practice entirely. The question of whether books should be lent out or consulted in the reading room was not merely a matter of library policy, it was governed by principles enshrined in the immutable Holy Law of Islam, one of the tenets of which was that knowledge should not be withheld. Whatever misgivings a founder had about his valuable collection being lent out to the public, he was often unable to express them, lest he be found in violation of this religious principle.<sup>121</sup> However, as time passed, some founders introduced restrictions

<sup>119</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, Kasa 47, pp. 12-13.

<sup>120</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 735, p. 257 and no. 82, p. 6.

<sup>121</sup> Youssef Eche: *Les Bibliothèques Arabes*, Damas 1967, pp. 383-386.

on lending, in order to prevent losses which the libraries had previously suffered. No matter how specific restrictions or injunctions against lending may have been in the libraries of the Islamic world, we cannot be sure that they were not overruled by this religious principle which encouraged the spread of knowledge. We have, in fact, a case where the provisions of a foundation deed forbidding the borrowing of books were overruled under certain conditions. This particular case occurred in Cairo in the sixteenth century, when the famous scholar, al-Suyuti, observed two of his teachers borrowing books from Mahmudiye College Library, the deeds of which forbade lending. Suyuti, having a high regard for the religious integrity of his teachers, had recourse to the law books to determine the legitimacy of their action, and found that under certain conditions it was allowed by the law. In a short treatise which he wrote on the subject, he determined that no matter what the deeds of the library stipulated, books may be borrowed provided that copies of the book were readily available in other libraries and that the reader did not keep the book longer than absolutely necessary.<sup>122</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that the founders of Ottoman libraries were in some difficulty when dealing with the provisions for lending. While their instincts may have led them to restrict borrowing, the prevalent religious ethos demanded that books be made as available as possible. Up to the seventeenth century most libraries allowed borrowing, but restrictions were increasingly introduced from the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards. In the libraries founded in the second half of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the practice of lending books was virtually abandoned.

From the beginning of the 17th century, we see attempts by founders to prohibit borrowing. The main reason is probably to prevent the losses which some libraries had suffered on account of liberal lending policies. As one would expect, it was not college or mosque libraries that were the most

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<sup>122</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Fatih no. 5294/6, pp. 43a-44a. I am grateful to the late Professor Nihad Çetin for drawing my attention to the existence of a copy of this treatise.

prone to losses, but the smaller local libraries established in the districts of the cities and intended for the use of students and the public. We discover in an endowment register for Edirne, carried out during the reign of Selim II (1566-1574), that these types of local libraries had suffered great losses, to the point where some collections had almost disappeared.<sup>123</sup>

From the beginning of the eighteenth century a more consistent policy towards lending is observable. The larger libraries founded in this period, with one or two exceptions,<sup>124</sup> prohibited lending books, while the smaller collections in many mosques continued to provide a lending service. In the college libraries of el-Hac Mehmed Efendi, Mehmed Efendi b. Veliyüddin, Nevşehirli İbrahim Pasha and Çorlulu Ali Pasha the prohibition is strongly expressed.<sup>125</sup> The foundation deeds for the last of these libraries stipulates that if the librarian is found to have lent even a single page he is to be dismissed.<sup>126</sup> On the endowment seals of the books donated by Abdullah Pasha, Ahmet Hafız Pasha and Carullah Veliyüddin it is inscribed that the books may not leave the building. Hacı Beşir Ağa prohibited the circulation of his books within the college he built in Istanbul and insisted that they be read in the reading room.<sup>127</sup>

Throughout the eighteenth century and the beginning of nineteenth century the trend against the practice of lending books gathered momentum, so that by the end of this period it was exceptional to find a library lending

<sup>123</sup> Başvekalet Archive, Tapu Defteri no.1070. Typical of entries describing collections are the following: "Most of the books recorded in the above mentioned person's deeds have been lost" (p. 19); "... but most have disappeared" (p.19). In another register (M. Müt. 557) it is recorded that "most of Emir Hüseyin's books have been lost" (p. 12).

<sup>124</sup> The most notable exceptions are Ahmed III's endowments to Topkapı Palace and Yeni Cami Mosque, where borrowing was allowed under certain conditions. See Topkapı Palace Library Y. 75, p.15 and Süleymaniye Library, Yeni Cami no.1200, pp. 22-23.

<sup>125</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 571, p. 92; no. 734, p. 43; no. 38, p. 90; no.188, p. 389.

<sup>126</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no.188, p. 389; Başvekalet Archive, Cevdet-Maarif no 2044.

<sup>127</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 736, p. 4.

books. Indeed, in the documents related to the libraries, the clauses prohibiting this practice are worded in increasingly stricter terms. Mahmud I issued an imperial decree (dated August 1743) for his library in Belgrade to strengthen the prohibition against lending.

It would thus appear that while in the earlier period lending was allowed and to some extent encouraged, in the later period under discussion a reaction took place until eventually lending was forbidden in most libraries. The reason for the change was due to several factors. In addition to the loss of valuable books, which has been alluded to above, there was also the fact that as libraries proliferated in the eighteenth century, so that almost all educational institutions had their own library, copies of books which could easily be consulted became increasingly more available to all classes of readers. Another factor to be considered is that by the 19<sup>th</sup> century a viable market in books had been established; indeed Istanbul had become by far the leading center for the sale and exchange of Islamic manuscripts. When Carley visited Istanbul at the beginning of the nineteenth century he estimated that at the time he bought his books, there were at least 4, 000 manuscripts available on the market.<sup>128</sup> Thus we can see that it had become comparatively easy for students to obtain copies of the books they needed for their studies. With the greater availability of books on the market, and the proliferation of library collections throughout the Empire, and particularly in Istanbul, the library founders no longer felt themselves bound by the religious injunction against restricting the spread of knowledge.

### c. The establishment and maintenance of collections:

While the smaller mosques may have had a mere dozen books under the supervision of the preacher or müezzın, the larger libraries boasted collections of up to 5,000 volumes in the care of a large staff, often

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<sup>128</sup> *Memoirs Relating to European and Asiatic Turkey*, edited from manuscript journals by Robert Walpole, London 1817, p. 176.

comprised of more than 20 members. However much they varied in appearance and size, these libraries were all established in the same manner, that is, as a pious foundation or endowment for the benefit of anyone "seeking knowledge". While some library collections consisted of the basic collection endowed by the founder, many collections grew in size as subsequent endowments were made to the original founding collection.

The basic founding, or main, collection of a library was expanded in various ways, one of the most common being for the founder himself or someone from his family to make additional endowments. Almost all independent libraries received large additional endowments from the relatives and descendants of the founder. The collections in the Köprülü (1678), Atıf Efendi (1741), Aşır Efendi (1747) and Veliyüddin Efendi (1769) libraries were significantly enlarged through endowments of this kind.<sup>129</sup>

While these additional endowments tended to be fairly sizable, there were also many more, smaller endowments made by the public. These small endowments were extremely important for the expansion of the libraries, as, for example, in the case of the Fatih Library, which began with a founding collection of 839 books but could, within a hundred years of its foundation, boast almost 1,800.<sup>130</sup> It was common for a person working in a complex to provide for his books to be left to the institution in which he had worked on his death<sup>131</sup> or to leave them to the local mosque, college or library.<sup>132</sup> On the

<sup>129</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşive no.580, p.17-18, no.76, p.43; Şer'i Siciller Archive (Istanbul), Ahi Çelebi Mahkemesi no 163, pp.57e ; Atıf Efendi Library no.2858/9-12; *Vasıf Tarihi I*, Bulak 1246, p.206-207; Süleymaniye Library, Aşır Efendi no.473; Halid Efendi no.486,487.

<sup>130</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive, D.9559.

<sup>131</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive (Istanbul), Üsküdar Mahkemesi no.383, pp.58b-59a; Eyüp Mahkemesi no.212, p.19a; Rumeli Sadareti no.8, p.55a. Uzunçarşılı notes that the famous scholar Mevlana Musannifek (d.1470), who held a teaching post at the Sahn college, left a will that bequeathed his books to that college.(İlmiye Teşkilatı, Ankara 1965, p. 6.

<sup>132</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive (Istanbul), Üsküdar Mahkemesi no.148, p.48b, no.287, p.89b; Ahi Çelebi Mahkemesi no.19, p.36b-37a; Galata Mahkemesi no.584, p.63b-64a.

other hand, many people preferred to leave their books to a library in the province where they had been born and brought up.<sup>133</sup> These smaller endowments usually represented the complete collection of a scholar, teacher, judge or minor statesman, consisting of anything from a handful of books to a relatively large collection of 300.

While it can be generalized that the collections in the libraries in the Ottoman Empire were created by a direct endowment of books, it should be noted that there were exceptional cases where provision was made for libraries to purchase books. We find that in the deeds of libraries created by Murad II in 1435,<sup>134</sup> Bayezid II in 1488,<sup>135</sup> İsmihan Sultan in 1568<sup>136</sup> and Peremeciler Kethüdası Mahmud Bey in 1593,<sup>137</sup> provision was made for funds to be made available to purchase replacement copies of books that were worn out or lost.

Although few Ottoman libraries had funds to purchase books requested by readers, there is evidence to suggest that in some cases books were bought and donated by benefactors to meet the demand of the readers. The historian Vasıf Efendi recounts that the son of Velîyüddin Efendi used to buy the books the students needed in the library endowed by his father.<sup>138</sup> Mehmed Asım Bey, an administrator of the Köprülü library, mentions in the deeds of an endowment he made to the library, that he had purchased and donated many books as they had been required by students. As part of the endowment he left a sum of money specifically for the purchase of books required by readers.<sup>139</sup> However, there seems to be no evidence that many

<sup>133</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive (Istanbul), Eyüp Mahkemesi no.287, p.30"-31b; Bab Mahkemesi no. 57, p.169b-170'; Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no.735, p.97.

<sup>134</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive, D.7081.

<sup>135</sup> M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *XV XVI. Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Lîvası*, İstanbul 1952, appendix p. 54.

<sup>136</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no.572, p.147.

<sup>137</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive (Istanbul), Galata Mahkemesi no.17, p.187.

<sup>138</sup> Vasıf Tarihi I, Bulak 1246, p.206.

<sup>139</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no.580, pp.1 14.

books were bought from this fund; on the contrary, we find from accounts for 1835-1838 that only three books were purchased out of these funds, one, the *Hasiye-i Fenari* being listed under "extraordinary expenditures". On the same page in the account book we notice that the library took out a subscription to the official Ottoman gazette, the *Takvim-i Vekayi'*, which had begun publication shortly before.<sup>140</sup>

It should be borne in mind that, as mentioned above, these books were almost all manuscripts, and consequently expensive. We have some examples of the costs involved in commissioning a scribe to copy a book, and the costs are not inconsiderable.<sup>141</sup> It is understandable therefore that we do not observe Ottoman libraries embarking on a policy of commissioning copies of books to expand their collection. We may presume that the prices of second-hand books were somewhat less than the cost of commissioning a new copy. However, the one institution that maintained an active policy of commissioning the copying of books was the Palace. The Palace Library was important in that it was the source of the many rich imperial endowments made by successive Sultans and members of their family. In the production of these books, a large staff was employed

The collections in the mosque libraries often consisted of the founder's personal library and, therefore, reflected his own particular taste in books or may have been particularly strong in books related to his profession. When Muslihiddin Mustafa founded a mosque in his village, Çavlı (1496), in the district of Kandıra, he gave his own collection of narrative books which had been a tool of his profession as story-teller in the Palace.<sup>142</sup>

There was however a tendency for books endowed to colleges to meet the requirement of the student rather than to reflect the particular taste of the

<sup>140</sup> Köprülü Library no.2491/16, p.2a.

<sup>141</sup> İsmail E. Erünsal, *Kütüphanecilikle İlgili Osmanlıca Metinler ve Belgeler I*, İstanbul 1982, p.78.

<sup>142</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, pp. 224-227.



founder. Among the 800 books endowed to the library at the Fatih Complex (1470), the vast majority are textbooks in Arabic<sup>143</sup>. This is also case in Bayezid II's college library in Adrianople (1488)<sup>144</sup> and in the college libraries founded by statesmen and scholars throughout the Ottoman period up to the beginning of the 19th Century.

Although libraries in the dervish convents tended usually to contain books on mysticism, the larger ones also provided the Arabic textbooks one would normally associate with college libraries. In the convent libraries founded by Sheyh Vefa in Istanbul during the reign of Mehmed II,<sup>145</sup> and that by Halet Efendi in 1820<sup>146</sup> and by Pertev Pasha in 1836,<sup>147</sup> the books on mysticism were complemented by a large number of textbooks. The small convent libraries, on the other hand, usually contained about 50-150 books, almost exclusively on mysticism and in Turkish.

With the emergence of the independent library, we see the formation of collections which were intended to satisfy various types of readers, and the books covered a broad range of subjects. Some of the independent libraries reflected the personality of the founder and his particular taste in books to some extent, so that Ragıb Pasha's library (1762) and Halet Efendi's library (1820) contained a large number of the type of literary books which one would expect to find in the personal library of a famous poet. On the other hand, we find that a large number of the books endowed by Şehid Ali Pasha, a famous statesman, were books on history.

<sup>143</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive no. D. 9559.

<sup>144</sup> M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *XV.-XVI. Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livası*, Istanbul 1952, p. 42-46 (Appendix).

<sup>145</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive, Evkaf-ı Hümayun Muhasibliği (Istanbul), no. 102, p. 151.

<sup>146</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Halet Efendi section no. 837.

<sup>147</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Yazma Bağışlar no. 2431.

#### d. Catalogues and cataloguing:

The earliest Ottoman catalogues were merely inventories of books appended to the foundation deeds, some of which showed attempts at classification, while others were simply haphazard lists, and it was not until the reign of Bayezid II (1481-1512 ) that we get the first independent catalogue in the proper sense of the word.<sup>148</sup>

Making comprehensive lists of the books in endowed collections was an important part of the administration of Ottoman libraries. These lists were made not to facilitate the work of the librarian or to help the reader to locate a book, but rather because the legal status of foundation libraries required that inventories of endowed books were drawn up at various stages as a means of exercising control over the collection.

As collections benefited from additional endowments or suffered losses through wear, theft or fraudulent substitution, it was intended that inventories would be drawn up to update the previous catalogue, the original list being that inventory of books which had been drawn up by the founder at the time when the collection had been endowed. In the early period in the development of the Ottoman library system these "founder inventories" were usually very brief, giving only the title of the book, sometimes the author and the number of volumes. These inventories may be considered the earliest examples of Ottoman library catalogues, as no other catalogue has survived from this period.

There are no surviving foundation deeds or inventories for libraries established before the accession of Sultan Murad II in 1421. At the end of the foundation deeds of the college he founded in Adrianople in 1430, we

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<sup>148</sup> "Catalogues and Cataloguing in the Ottoman Libraries", *Libri* 1987, vo. 37, no. 4, pp. 333-336.

have a list of the books he endowed.<sup>149</sup> In other libraries of this period there are lists appended to the foundation deeds.

In the libraries founded after the conquest of Istanbul the foundation deeds also have inventories. In the lists of books endowed to the four college libraries in the Fatih complex, which were later to be united in a central library, we find inventories drawn up on the back of several of the pages of the portion of the foundation deed that has survived.<sup>150</sup>

After the first tentative steps towards developing classified catalogues appended to the foundation deeds in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century sophisticated catalogues were drawn up. We have three complete independent catalogues from this century. The earliest of these belongs to the Palace library<sup>151</sup>. It consists of 340 folios the first two of which contain a list of contents followed by five folios containing a Turkish introduction that lays down the principles by which the catalogue was set out, followed by a single folio containing a preface in Arabic. There then follows the catalogue itself. Page two begins with a list of the subject headings, the first of these being a branch of Islamic jurisprudence. On the flyleaf of the catalogue there are two poetic chronograms giving the date 1552.

On page five the rules for cataloguing the books in this collection are set out, as well as the exceptions to these rules. It is clear from these rules that the compiler did not have access to an established tradition of cataloguing to fall back on. We see him struggling to create a system which

<sup>149</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive D. 7081.

<sup>150</sup> Başvekalet Archive, Ali Emiri Tasnifi, Fatih Devri no. 70.

<sup>151</sup> Magyar Tudományok Akademia Könyvtára Keleti Gyűjtemény, Török F. 59. The first reference to this catalogue, that I have been able to trace, was made by E. Birnbaum in an article published in 1976: "The Ottomans and Chagatay Literature", *Central Asian Journal*, vol. XX (1976), p. 165. I have made a detailed description of the catalogue in my article: "The Catalogue of Bayezid II's Palace Library", *Kütüphanecilik Dergisi, Belge Bilgi Kütüphane Araştırmaları*, no. 3 (1992), pp. 55-66. The catalogue is also the subject of a recent article by Miklós Maróth: "The Library of Sultan Bayezid II", in *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts*, ed. by Eva M. Jeremiás (Piliscsaba, 2003), pp. 111-132.

would not only be fairly consistent, but would also serve as a guide to future librarians.

The preface in Arabic gives a clear indication that the catalogue had been prepared in 908/1502 on the orders of Sultan Bayezid II. The cataloguer, unfortunately, does not give his name in the introduction, merely referring to himself as the "one of the servants of the Sultan". Fortunately we are able to identify the cataloguer with the help of a reference made to himself in the middle of the catalogue (p. 151) in the section devoted to books on medicine<sup>152</sup>. He identifies three books as having been written by the humblest of the Sultan's slaves, Atûfi<sup>153</sup> who was also the librarian of the Sultan Bayezid's library, and therefore the cataloguer<sup>154</sup>.

The Sultan had commanded the cataloguer to classify the books and to list them under separate headings according to the title written on the fly sheet and binding. The chronograms for 909/1503 on the flyleaf cannot therefore refer to the date of compilation, but must be the date of subsequent copying. The reason for the copying can only be subject to conjecture, but the following explanation seems plausible. As the 909/1503 copy contains blank folios at the end of each subject heading it can be presumed that this was to allow new acquisitions to be catalogued. It could be reasonably suggested that the original 908/1502 version of the catalogue may also have contained blank folios which had been filled, thus requiring a redraft of the catalogue with new blank folios to allow the insertion of new acquisitions.

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<sup>152</sup> My attention was drawn to this reference by Miklós Maróth's above-mentioned article , p.112.

<sup>153</sup> It is customary in the East for authors to refer to themselves in this manner.

<sup>154</sup> From the catalogue we therefore learn that a scholar in the field of medicine by the name of Atûfi has been appointed to be the librarian of the Sultan Bayezid's library. The biographical works on the Ottoman scholars note the name of Atûfi among the scholars of the period of Bayezid II's reign without making any reference to his position as librarian to the Sultan. Some archival documents however note that this Atûfi, a librarian, was the object of the Sultan Bayezid's beneficence on several occasions (Belediye Library , now Atatürk Library, Mc. O. 71, s. 24, 40, 449) .

Although, as an attempt for establishing rules for classification, the introduction of this catalogue is a significant achievement, in terms of cataloguing it is disappointing, in that it is much inferior to the catalogues of the Fatih library, prepared in the same century. It gives only the title of the work and not always the author's name. Here it is the classification that is the overriding priority; no importance is given to the physical description of the books. It would seem that the reason why classification was so important was that the Palace library was built to house a collection which was intended for the court. If information was needed, it was important that the necessary book be found quickly. In order to ensure this, an efficient system of classification was needed. The Palace librarian's role was to identify where information could be found.

However, as a list of Sultan Bayezid II's Palace library, it can offer us much useful information, not only on the literary and scientific tastes of the Ottoman rulers, but also on the subsequent movement of books which were relocated from the Palace library to other libraries. It will also allow us to confirm the existence of certain books which are no longer extant.

The second catalogue from this century belongs to the library of the mosque complex of Mehmed the Conqueror,<sup>155</sup> and was most probably compiled during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II, by Mehmed b. Ali Fenari.<sup>156</sup> In this undated catalogue there is an introduction which covers two pages, the first of which has unfortunately become torn, with the bottom half missing. In the remaining part of the page the cataloguer advises the reader that the catalogue has been drawn up on the order of the reigning Sultan, whose specific orders were that he was to inspect the library which the late Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror had endowed. The cataloguer has been ordered to compare the contents of the library with the existing catalogues

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<sup>155</sup> Başvekalet Archive, D. HMH. SFTH. no. 21 941/B

<sup>156</sup> For the discussion of this assignment see: İsmail E. Erünsal, "The Oldest Extant Ottoman Library Catalogues, in *61st Ifla General Conference, Booklet 7*, 1995, p. 59-61

and to establish which books were missing. This undated catalogue had been prepared to comply with the Sultan's command. After this section, page 2 begins with a discussion of how the books were to be shelved, dealing with philosophy and miscellaneous subjects. As these are the last two classifications in the catalogue we can presume that much of the missing section on the first page is devoted to the shelving of books on scriptural exegesis, the Traditions, Law and theology.

At the end of the introduction, the cataloguer advises us that he has catalogued the collection to the best of his endeavors, taking care to note all the characteristics and particularities of each book. He then gives the number of books in the library as follows: 796 books donated by Mehmed the Conqueror, 41 books given as replacements by a former administrator of the endowment, Yegan-oğlu, 389 books endowed by other scholars and 15 books which were found in the library, but had not been previously catalogued. The total is 1, 241.

The method of compiling the entries in this catalogue is quite sophisticated. After the title of the book and the author's name, the physical description of the book is given and, generally, the binding is described in detail, the type of paper, sometimes the style of hand and color of inks used, the number of illuminated pages and, very rarely, the name of the copyist, the date of copying and whether the book was checked against other manuscripts is noted. If a book does not come within a section specifically donated by one person, then the entry will always specify who donated the book.

The third extant catalogue also belongs to the Fatih Mosque library and was compiled in 1560 by a teacher of the Semaniye College within the Fatih complex.<sup>157</sup> In the preamble to the catalogue the work is described in Turkish as "Kitaplar Defteri" (Register of Books). The Arabic introduction

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<sup>157</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive D. 9559.

to the catalogue (2<sup>b</sup>-3<sup>a</sup>) is in itself an important document in the history of Ottoman libraries. The compiler gives, through a progressive development, a rationale for the collection and care of books, based on their utility as guides to man's salvation. The entries in this catalogue are very much like the previous catalogue of this library and are quite sophisticated.

The main difference in the entries between the catalogues of the library of the Mosque of Mehmed the Conqueror and the catalogue of the Palace library is that in the catalogues of the Mosque library attention is given to physical description of the book, while in that of the Palace library it is the contents of the book which are of foremost interest. This is because the mosque library was a lending library dealing exclusively in manuscripts. In order to establish that a book which is lent out is not replaced by an inferior copy, physical description was paramount. Substitution was a real danger and the catalogue description was a serious attempt to counter this threat. There was no such danger in the Palace library as access to it was very much restricted.

These three catalogues are of great importance in the history of libraries. We can observe librarians in the mid-sixteenth century attempting to make some theoretical sense of the corpus of knowledge in their care. Knowledge is classified, but when books do not easily fit into these categories, pragmatic solutions are applied and formulated into rules. In these catalogues we have the *raison d'être* for the libraries formulated, an attempt at establishing cataloguing rules and a uniformity of catalogue entries that was to become the established form for successive centuries.

By the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, libraries had become an integral part of every college, no matter how small, and cataloguing had reached the apogee of its sophistication, with the detailed description of the books reading like a modern catalogue of manuscripts. At this point, originality of thought seems to have ceased, for from this period on the catalogues stopped developing, except in the case of the large collections, which required an

additional classification heading. It is as if the Ottoman librarian had decided that the level they had reached was as good as they were likely to need, and while in Europe advances began to be made, in the Ottoman Empire nothing innovative crept into the system of cataloguing for the remainder of its existence.

From the second half of the 16th century onwards, there is only a slight improvement in the quality of the bibliographical descriptions and classification of the books listed as appendices to the endowment deeds. In the 17th century, although there is no development in the method of describing books in the list appended to the foundation deeds, there is a general tendency to proliferate headings and introduce subheadings as the collections grew. In the catalogue of Feyzullah Efendi's library in Istanbul, for example, we have subheadings under Qur'anic commentary and Islamic Tradition to separate the supra commentaries (Şerh) and glosses (Haşiye). In the heading for "history" and "biography of the Prophet" (*tarih* and *siyer*) there is a subheading for "Biographical Dictionaries of the names of those men which occur in Islamic Tradition" (*Esami-i Rical-i Hadis*).<sup>158</sup>

In the 18th century it is common to find a separate catalogue apart from the list appended to the foundation deeds. The description of the books is no better, if not worse than their counterparts in previous centuries, but there is a further proliferation of headings and subheadings. However, while previously there may have been a certain consensus as to what the basic headings should be, with the expansion of the collections, the librarians were often at a loss to find appropriate headings for books, and we see the arbitrary introduction of new headings which were peculiar to a particular library. For example, in Turhan Valide Sultan's library in Istanbul, the catalogue separates history (*tarih*) and biography of the prophet (*siyer*) into separate subjects, which were otherwise conventionally kept under the same heading. Likewise, a separate heading is made for eulogies (*kasâ'id*), where

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<sup>158</sup> Millet Library, Feyzullah Efendi section no. 2196, p. 11<sup>b</sup>, 25<sup>b</sup>, 32<sup>b</sup>.



one would normally expect to find these later under "literature".<sup>159</sup> In Sultan Ahmed III's library in Yeni Cami in Istanbul, there is a separate heading for "accounting" (*Hisab*).<sup>160</sup>

All the catalogues prepared for Ottoman libraries were subject catalogues, and these adhered to a more-or-less basic pattern with some variations. Exceptions to this general rule are the catalogues of some private libraries in the 16th century, one of which was classified according to language,<sup>161</sup> another according to authors<sup>162</sup> and some specialized collections which have unusual systems of classifications.<sup>163</sup> These exceptions apart, all library catalogues had subject headings for "Qur'anic Commentary", "Islamic tradition", "jurisprudence", "theology", "history" and "literature". Other subject headings were added according to the strengths or weaknesses of the particular collection or, indeed, according to the cataloguer's own interest or background. Although there was a general increase in subject headings from the beginning of the 18th century, they remained inadequate to cover all the books, and the cataloguers were constantly at a loss to assign all their books appropriately.

However, the deficiencies in the catalogues do not stem solely from an inadequate number of headings, for we can often observe copies of the same work under different headings. The reason lies in the background of most of the cataloguers, who had received a classical Islamic education which more than adequately prepared them for handling college textbooks in commentary, Islamic tradition, theology and Islamic law, but often left them unable to recognize works of history, bibliography, literature, etc. The librarian also wanted duplicate copies to be under as many headings as possible to allow it to be found more easily. However badly classified the

<sup>159</sup> Türk-Islam Eserleri Museum no. 2218.

<sup>160</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Yazma Bağışlar section no. 2742.

<sup>161</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive D. 9710.

<sup>162</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive D. 9940.

<sup>163</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive D. 9710.

collections may have been, the reader was probably able to have access to all the books without difficulty. As few libraries had more than two to three thousand books, it is more than likely that the librarian was able to remember all the titles in his collection. The function of the catalogue was to serve as a basis for taking inventories. It is only as collections grew larger that catalogues were prepared to allow the librarian, and indeed perhaps even the reader, to check the availability of a particular title.

The catalogue prepared at the time of endowment was usually drawn up by a scholar at the behest of the founder.<sup>164</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century the job of drawing up a catalogue, when required, usually went to the assistant librarian, but it is probable that the librarian would have helped him in this duty. When it came to compiling an inspection catalogue, the supervisor, the administrator, the inspector and the secretary of the foundation were also involved.

As we have seen, apart from the catalogues drawn up at the time of the endowment, further catalogues were made after inspections. We have inspection catalogues of many libraries. These catalogues generally reflect the organization and descriptions of the base, or endowment catalogue, and it is only in the counting of pages and lines to a page that we see particular care taken. This was obviously done to discover fraudulent substitution.

In the middle of the 19th century the Ottoman Empire witnessed a process of reform and restructuring which pervaded all areas of life, not least of all education. As Istanbul was already well furnished with books covering all sorts of subjects, it was natural that an attempt would be made to make these works more accessible to the readers. The most important single facility was a union catalogue of the Istanbul libraries.<sup>165</sup> The first attempt to

<sup>164</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 188, p. 388; no. 731, p. 750; no. 759, p. 90; no. 730, p. 86; no. 742, p. 66; no. 630, pp. 889-891; no. 629, pp. 37-40; no. 743, pp. 80-92; no. 624, pp. 4-5.

<sup>165</sup> For a survey of the work of cataloguing in this period see: R. Tuba Çavdar, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyete Kadar Osmanlı Kütüphanelerinin Gelişimi*, Basılmamış Doktora Tezi, İ-

list all the Istanbul library books in one catalogue was made by Ali Fethi Bey. Between 1850 and 1854 he put together a classified list of all works in the 46 foundation libraries in Istanbul, under 14 subject headings.<sup>166</sup> His two volume work, entitled the *el-Âsârü'l-Aliyye fî Hazâ'ini'l-Kütübi'l-Osmaniyye* took four and half year to compile, at the end of which he submitted his work to the Sultan. However, for whatever reason, it was never published and remains in manuscript form in two copies.<sup>167</sup>

A second attempt was made, probably a quarter of a century later. This time the work was published in 552 pages. However, the catalogue bears no date and no mention of an author. One suggestion is that the author was Abdurrahman Nâcim Efendi, who was the inspector of the Istanbul libraries between 1861 and 1870 and who was responsible for drawing up catalogues for the Ragıp Pasha and Damad İbrahim Pasha libraries. Curiously enough, only one copy of this printed work has survived to this day.<sup>168</sup>

During the reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1908), under the Minister of Education, Münif Pasha, an attempt was made to publish catalogues for all

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stanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Kütüphanecilik Bölümü, 1995, pp. 93-100 and Necmettin Sefercioğlu, "Union Catalogs in Turkey in the Nineteenth Century", in *Ankara Üniversitesi, Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Kütüphanecilik Bölümü XXV. Yıl Anı Kitabı (1954-55/1979-1980)*, Ankara 1981 pp.91-93

<sup>166</sup> Ali Fethi Bey provides an introduction in which he gives the classification of subject headings and instructs the reader on how to find a given work. This introduction has been transcribed by Özer Soysal in his habilitation thesis: *Cumhuriyet Öncesi Dönem Türk Kütüphaneciliği (Sosyo-Ekonomik Yapı Üzerine Bir Araştırma)*, Ankara 1973, pp. 114-118.

<sup>167</sup> For documents on the subject see İsmail E. Erünsal, *Kütüphanecilikle İlgili Osmanlıca Metinler ve Belgeler I*, İstanbul, Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1983, pp. 382-386, *Kütüphanecilikle İlgili Osmanlıca Metinler ve Belgeler II*, İstanbul, Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1990, pp. 371-372. As Tuba Çavdar points out, the two volumes do not contain the whole work; from the above documents we learn that the two volumes were presented as an indication of what the larger finished work would be like. However, some scholars refer to the work as having been completed, see: Tekin Aybaş, *Toplu Kataloglar ve Türkiye Uygulaması*, Ankara 1979, pp. 35-37. For the location of copies of this work see: Ali Birinci, "Abdurrahman Nâcim", *Mitteferrika* no. 8-9 (1996), p. 114.

<sup>168</sup> Osman Ergin claims to have the only copy of this work and scholars use a microfilm of Osman Ergin's copy which is kept in the Süleymaniye Library.

the Istanbul libraries. During a 12-year period, starting from 1884, the catalogues of 67 libraries in Istanbul were published in forty volumes.

It is evident that these printed catalogues and the organization of Istanbul libraries were felt to be inadequate; the Grand Vizier Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha invited Ahmed Zeki Pasha from Egypt to evaluate and report on the state of the Istanbul libraries. Ahmed Zeki Pasha was known to be a specialist in bibliography and had played a part in organizing the Egyptian libraries. In 1909 he submitted a 27-page report in which he noted the many deficiencies in the way the libraries were run.<sup>169</sup> He also remarked on the inadequacy of the existing printed catalogues and the desperate need for a comprehensive union catalogue with proper indexes.<sup>170</sup> Probably in response to this report, Hayri Efendi, the minister of pious foundations, and Muhtar Bey, the inspector of the libraries, instructed Ebu'l-Hayr Efendi to begin the work of drawing up a union catalogue in the style of that which had been done for the Egyptian libraries. Ebu'l-Hayr Efendi began this huge task, and in 1915 he was able to present the first fascicle in printed form to the Ministry of Pious Foundations. This catalogue was to be prepared in alphabetical order according to the title of the work, with information on both the work and the author and the location number of all copies in the libraries and discrepancies between copies in terms of title and attribution of authorship. From the one fascicle available, it is apparent that it would have been a very useful and user-friendly work of reference. However, with the departure of Hayri Efendi from the Ministry of Pious Foundations, interest in the project probably waned and the start of the First World War put an end to what would have been a very laudable project.

<sup>169</sup> In fact, almost 50 years ago, Ahmed Fâris el-Şidyâk, Lebanese Arab writer, journalist and intellectual, having difficulties in using Istanbul libraries, made the same sort of criticisms. See: Geoffrey Roper's excellent article: "Ahmad Fâris al-Shidyâq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire", *Libraries & Culture*, vol. 33, No. 3 (Summer 1998), pp. 233-248.

<sup>170</sup> For the text of this report see: İsmail E. Erünsal, *Kütüphanecilikle İlgili Osmanlıca Mehter ve Belgeler I*, İstanbul, Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1983, pp. 323-352.

While the bulk of the books in the Ottoman Empire were in Istanbul, there were many provinces with a concentration of libraries, such as Bursa and Konya. In the 1874 yearbook for Konya, there is, in the form of an appendix, a list of the contents of the 20 libraries in the city. In the 1887 yearbook for Bursa there is also a list of contents of all the libraries. Both lists are set out very much in the same style that was adopted by Ali Fethi Bey, making them of some limited use.

After this, no attempts were made to compile a union catalogue. This was because the traditional libraries were becoming increasingly irrelevant in the face of modern libraries, which were springing up, and the need for a union catalogue became increasingly less pressing with the passage of time.

#### **e. Library buildings and furnishings:**

When the practice of lending was virtually abolished by the end of 18th century, the opening days and hours of the libraries were extended in order to enable the reader to have reasonable access to the collections. Because of the insistence that the books be read in the library, facilities for reading the book were provided in a reading room. The books were sometimes stored in the reading room and sometimes in an adjacent storeroom. The floors were covered in carpets and rush mats and the reader would sit on the floor and read his book often with the aid of a bookstand. Until the establishment of the independent library, the Ottoman library pursued a precarious existence. As we have noted, the Ottoman word for library, *kütüphane*, could cover any collection of books, from a single shelf to a building of several rooms. The library was conceptually the books, rather than the building which housed them, so that we see in the early period that the library was often a cupboard in a mosque or college. Often a space in a mosque was grilled off with iron railings to secure the library. With the foundation of large mosque complexes it was common for a room or two to be allocated specifically to the library. The earliest example of rooms being specifically allocated, and probably built for the library, is at

the Çoban Mustafa Pasha complex in Gebze (1526). Here two rooms joined by a passage situated over the main archway were set aside to be used as a library.<sup>171</sup>

Among several complexes built in the early eighteenth century, each specified that a single room be set aside to be used as a library. In one - Amca-zâde Hüseyin Pasha's complex (1700) - the library room is specially constructed to have eight windows to allow as much light as possible for the benefit of the readers. Another complex, built in 1724, the Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha complex, specified that a room above the main archway be set aside as a library. As in Çoban Mustafa Pasha's library, two hundred years earlier, the idea of situating the library over the archway was to provide as much circulation of air around the building as possible to prevent humidity damaging the books.<sup>172</sup> In some complex libraries, the rooms set aside as libraries were essentially for storing the books. The books were to be read in the other parts of the complex. However, in Damad İbrahim Pasha's complex(1720) in Istanbul, a larger room, the size of a classroom, was set aside as the library. This seems to suggest, as in the case of Amca-zâde Hüseyin Pasha's complex, that the library room was intended not only to store books, but also as a reading room. This would seem to fit in with the general trend of the period towards restrictions being placed on lending books. As lending books became restricted, the tendency seems to have confined reading not only to the complex, but to the library room itself, hence the provision of space for readers in the library.

With the arrival of the independent library we are able to observe purpose-built libraries unrestricted by the needs of the larger complex. The first of these is the Köprülü library, which is the simplest possible construction. It consists of a single room roofed with a single dome. The

<sup>171</sup> Tülay Reyhanlı, *Osmanlılarda Külliye Mimarisinin Gelişmesi*, (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Istanbul University, 1974), p. 275.

<sup>172</sup> Semavi Eyice, "Eski Kütüphane Binaları Hakkında", *Türk Yurdu*, no. 267 (1957), p. 729.

single-room library became the standard model, although a two-roomed format was also common. The square, domed, single room was not the only shape; rectangular and octagonal rooms are also found<sup>173</sup>. Later on, some of the independent libraries would be built on two floors, and sometimes three floors, if we count the basement as a separate floor.

In a study of foundation library buildings Behçet Ünsal, an art historian, has noted the following characteristics: Ottoman library buildings were usually surrounded by high walls on all four sides to cut out as much sound as possible from the surrounding streets and buildings. The buildings usually had one wall without windows which faced southeast to avoid the direct morning sun, which would have damaged the books. Lighting was provided by a double row of windows on the remaining three walls and sometimes more windows at the base of the dome. The floor of the building was usually built some height from the ground to ensure that there was ventilation under the library. Access was by a staircase to the door of the library. The walls were made up of two separate layers of stone to ensure insulation both from heat and noise. Storeroom doors were usually made of iron to preserve the collection from fires and all windows in the library had iron bars to protect it from burglary and inside there were iron shutters as a protection against fire.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>173</sup> For a detailed survey of Istanbul library buildings see: Alime Şahin, İstanbul'daki Osmanlı Dönemi Kütüphane Yapıları Üzerine Bir Araştırma ve Hacı Beşir Ağa Kütüphanesi, M.A. thesis, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, İstanbul 1997; Semavi Eyice, "Eski Kütüphane Binaları Hakkında", *Türk Yurdu*, sayı 267 (1957), s.729; Behçet Ünsal, "Türk-Vakfî İstanbul Kütüphanelerinin Mimari Yöntemi", *VD XVIII* (1984), pp. 95-124 ; Ahmet Küçükalfa, "İstanbul Vakıf Kütüphaneleri", *Vakıflar* , İstanbul, n.d. pp. 51-70 ; Bahtiyar Eroğlu, *Bazı Örnekleri ile Anadolu'da Tarihi Türk Kütüphane Mimarlığı*, MA. Thesis, Selçuk Üniversitesi, Konya 1990; Ayşe Yetişkin Kubilay, "18 ve 19. Yüzyıl İstanbul Vakıf Kütüphaneleri Üzerine Tipolojik Bir Değerlendirme", *Osmanlı Mimarlığının 7 Yüzyılı: Uluslararası Bir Miras Uluslararası Kongresi*, İstanbul 1999, pp. 149-153. M. Sami Bayraktar, "Türk Kütüphane Mimarisi", *Türkler* , c. XV, ed. by Hasan Celal Güzel-Kemal Çiçek (Ankara 2002), pp. 388-394.

<sup>174</sup> "Türk-Vakfî İstanbul Kütüphanelerinin Mimari Yöntemi", *Vakıflar Dergisi XVIII* (1984), pp. 97-105.

As for the furnishing, there is absolutely no mention made in foundation deeds. This is a little less surprising when we consider how spartan were the furnishings of a library. Like the inside of a mosque the Ottoman library consisted of a large extent of carpeted flooring uncluttered by furnishing. There were no tables or chairs, the readers sitting cross-legged on the cushioned floor reading on his lap. Occasionally reading stands (*rahles*) were provided. Apart from the shelves of cupboards for storing the books the only furnishing would be rush mats on the floor sometimes covered by carpets and cushions. Usually the libraries were open during daylight hours to avoid having to use lamps which produced soot which would harm the books. Exceptionally where additional light was required then illumination, as in a mosque, would be provided by lamps suspended from the domes<sup>175</sup>. It is almost as if the furnishing were considered an integral part of the library building and therefore not worthy of any particular mention.

An American lady who worked in Istanbul as president of Women's College at the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century describes the typical foundation library thus:

"The library buildings were very different from modern ones. They simply built, with fine lines, often of stone, with a dome -or several domes arranged in a circle- over the reading room. Through picturesque irregular windows in these domes the light fell directly upon those who were reading, below. Under the domes were cushions, both round and square, to sit upon, and low inlaid stools upon which to rest the books. One could even recline on a cushion and, with his manuscript on a stool in the light under a dome, pursue his education comfortably. The floors were always covered with valuable, and sometimes almost priceless, rugs. Shoes must be removed

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<sup>175</sup> Ahmet Küçükalfa, "Kütüphanelerde Aydınlatma, Kandiller ve Tavana Asılı Diğer Semboller", *Folklor, halkbilim dergisi*, c. 4, no. 2-3 (İstanbul 1984), s. 47-50.



at the door. The books were usually manuscripts, and each one kept in a case to protect it from dust<sup>176</sup>.

Other sources allow us to identify other general characteristics. Ottoman libraries were usually very plain inside - the walls were either painted white or were tiled. The floors were covered in rush mats, woven kilims or carpets, on top of which were cushions. Occasionally divans were set against the walls and these were covered with cushions. Reading stands and writing platforms were often provided for the readers.

I hope in these few pages to have provided a summary of the salient points that emerge from the study of the Ottoman foundation library, from its humble beginnings through its centuries of development into a network of cultural institutions which was to meet the education needs of a large empire and to reach the zenith of sophistication at the beginning of the nineteenth century only to collapse into disuse when the era of reforms deemed it of little further use to an empire which itself was about to meet its own demise.

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<sup>176</sup> Mary Mills Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, (London 1930), p. 94.