

## THE EXPANSION AND REORGANIZATION OF THE OTTOMAN LIBRARY SYSTEM: 1754-1839

İSMAİL E. ERÜNSAL

The reign of Mahmud I ( 1730-1754) established the independent library as the norm . The reigns of his five successors, Osman III (1754-1757), Mustafa III (1757-1774), Abdülhamid I (1774-1789), Selim III (1789-1807) and Mahmud II (1808-1839) , were to see the spread of independent libraries not only in Istanbul but also in the provinces as well. Apart from the libraries he established, Mahmud I, had also begun to build his mosque complex in the well-established tradition of imperial endowment. He chose a site to the south of the Kapalıçarşı (covered bazar) which was close to many of the existing colleges. The mosque is quite unusual for its rococo style and shows definite European influences. But it is most notable for the prominence of the library building, which though part of the complex, was in effect designed to act as an independent library. Many books from the Palace and other sources were designated for this library, and the imperial seal and endowment record of Mahmud I was applied to the fly leaf, indicating that the books had been endowed to the library. Unfortunately, Mahmud I did not live to see the completion of his complex or to give his name to the library which was to surpass all other libraries he had established. When he died in 1754, his brother, Osman III. completed the complex and gave his name to it. Both the Mosque and the Library are known as the Nur-ı Osmaniye, the light of Osman<sup>1</sup>. Osman III sent the books which his late brother had chosen together with other books he himself selected, to the library. Mahmud I's seal and endowment record were pasted over with paper and Osman III's own seal was placed on the books<sup>2</sup>. Osman III did not seem to have shared his brother's passion for library administration. In the endowment deed , in the section where we would normally expect to find the regulation for running the library, we find a short statement to the effect that the regulations applicable were to be the

<sup>1</sup> *Şemdanî-zâde Fındıklılı Süleyman Efendi Tarihi, Mür'î't-Tevârih* II. A, edited by M. Münir Aktepe, İstanbul 1978, pp. 4-6.

<sup>2</sup> For some examples see: Nuruosmaniye Library nos. 622, 1134, 2697, 3873.

same as those which his brother had stipulated for the Aya Sofya and Fatih libraries<sup>3</sup>.

The Nur-ı Osmaniye Library was opened in December, 1755 with the usual ceremonies attended by the Sultan, scholars and high state officials<sup>4</sup>. At this point the library had a collection of 5,031 books, making it the largest collection in Istanbul, the library of Ahmed III being a close runner-up with a collection approaching 5,000 books<sup>5</sup>. It should be noted that Toderini, usually a reliable informant on the subject of Istanbul libraries, has mistakenly given the number of books as 1,693<sup>6</sup>. As befitted such a collection, the designated staff was quite large. The Library was to have one general supervisor, six librarians, three doormen, one sweeper and one binder. Curiously six *mustahfiz* ( keepers) were also appointed whose actual duties had not been defined<sup>7</sup>.

At this period 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 Paşa, was an ardent collector of books as well as being a poet and writer . Having built up a large private collection, he made provision for an independent library to be built in the center of Istanbul to house it. Before he endowed his collection, Ragıp Paşa employed a librarian to look after his books. However, this member of his household staff was not called *hafız-ı kütüb* which means literally "keeper of books", but was referred to as a "*kitabçı*", literally a "bookman"<sup>8</sup>. This nuance reflects a different role. The primary role of a keeper of books was precisely to preserve the collection with the secondary duty of facilitating public access to it. The bookman was a private servant whose duties covered everything to do with books, including not only classification , cataloguing and general maintenance, but also buying them, etc. Ragıp Paşa completed his library in 1763<sup>9</sup>. The historian Vasıf Efendi noted:

<sup>3</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive , Dolap 49, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Mür'it-Tevârih* II. A, p. 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> Nuruosmaniye Library , Fihrist no. 4, p. 161a.

<sup>6</sup> G. Toderini, *De la litterature des Turcs*, traduit de l'Italien en Français par l'Abbe De Cournand, vol. II , Paris 1789, p. 97.

<sup>7</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 98, pp. 10-12 ; Topkapı Palace Archive D. 3311, p. 5b.

<sup>8</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive , D. 6090.

<sup>9</sup> *Mür'it-Tevârih* II A, p. 54.

"Ragıp Paşa, having for many years, collected, selected, searched out, and had copies made of many books and furthermore to preserve them from harm and loss and to make them available for the use of the people, endowed a library in which he placed these books"<sup>10</sup>.

Although these books were inalienably endowed to the library, Ragıp Paşa had reserved to himself the right to borrow books for his own personal use. On his death, 28 of these books were found in his house and were dispatched to the library to rejoin the collection<sup>11</sup>.

As we would expect of a bibliophile statesman, Ragıp Paşa had definite ideas as to how a library was to be run. His first requirement was that the librarians should be full-time and he allowed them an adequate stipend to ensure this. He also created a post of "*hafız-ı kütüb yamağı*", an apprentice to the librarian whose duties appear to have been retrieving books from and replacing them on the shelves. He also required that the librarians should live in residences near the library which had been built for this purpose. He also provided for the librarians alternately to stay overnight in the library. While other libraries were open five days a week at the most, Ragıp Paşa stipulated that his library should be open six days a week<sup>12</sup>.

Osman III's reign (1754-1757) was too short to allow him to do more than complete and open his brother's library. Mustafa III, on the other hand, reigned from 1757 to 1774, and this allowed him to see the completion of two important libraries. The first of these was the library that he endowed to the college situated in the complex of the Laleli Mosque<sup>13</sup>. Mustafa III also built a library in a section of Topkapı Palace, which is referred to as the Bostancılar Ocağı<sup>14</sup>. This library was established for the benefit of the Palace staff. It was not permitted to take books out of the library so that it essentially served as a reference library in which classes were given in certain subjects. Three part-time librarians were appointed to the library, and their

<sup>10</sup> *Vasıf Tarihi*, v. I, p. 129.

<sup>11</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive, D. 6090.

<sup>12</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive (İstanbul), Evkaf-ı Hümayun Müfettişliği no. 171, pp. 1b-6b ; Ahmed İhsan Türek, "Ragıp Paşa Kütüphanesi Vakfiyesi", *Edebiyat Fakültesi Araştırma Dergisi* I/1 (Erzurum 1970), pp. 65-78.

<sup>13</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 642, p. 145.

<sup>14</sup> P. Ç. İnciciyan, *XVIII. Asırda İstanbul*, Tercüme ve tahşiye eden Hrand D. Andreasyan, İstanbul 1956, p. 23.

comparatively low salaries reflects the part-time nature of their employment<sup>15</sup>.

We have additional information about this library from a rather unexpected source. In the retinue of the British Ambassador there came a certain professor Carlyle to Istanbul in 1800. He had come in search of Byzantine manuscripts. Believing that the Palace library may have held some of these, Carlyle bribed a Palace official to show him around the Palace library. He described the library as being cruciform in shape and stated that the building had been erected in 1767. However the library was no longer operating and had been closed in 1800. He was however able to see the books on the shelves but, of course, found no Byzantine manuscripts<sup>16</sup>.

He describes the library in a letter to the Bishop of Lincoln:

"After waiting some time for intelligence respecting the Bostangee Bashi, his deputy arrived, read the letters we had brought, and his principal was engaged in the Seraglio, took upon himself to send for the keeper of the library, and direct him to conduct us thither; we accordingly accompanied him and three other Moulahs to a mosque at a little distance, through which the entrance to the library lies... We passed through the mosque as we were directed, without speaking, and upon tiptoe; and at a length on the other side of it, arrived at the outward of the library, which was locked, and a seal fixed upon the lock; above it is a short Arabic inscription, containing the name and titles of Sultan Mustapha, the present Emperor's father, who founded both the mosque and the library in the year 1767. The library is built in the form of a Greek cross, as in the margin; one of the arms of the cross serves as an anti-room, and the three remaining arms, together with the center, constitute the library itself. You proceed through anti-room by a door, over which is written in large Arabic characters, "enter in peace". The library is much smaller than Your Lordship could have any conception of; for from the extremity of one of the arms to the extremity of the opposite one it does not measure twelve

<sup>15</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, Kasa 187, pp. 350-358; Topkapı Palace Archive, D. 3305

<sup>16</sup> *Memoirs relating to European and Asiatic Turkey*, edited from manuscript Journals by Robert Walpole, London 1817, pp. 172.

yards. Its appearance however is elegant and cheerful. The central part of the cross is covered with a dome, which is supported by four handsome marble pillars ...The bookcases, four of which stand in each of the three recesses are plain but neat. They are furnished with folding wire-work doors, secured with a padlock and the seal of the librarian. The books are laid upon their sides one above another, with their ends outwards, and having their letters written upon the edges of the leaves. Your Lordship may imagine I lost no time in examining the treasures enclosed in this celebrated repository, and the disposition of the books greatly facilitated my inquiries. I am very certain that there was not one volume which I did not separately examine; but I was prevented by the jealousy of the Moulahs who accompanied me from making out a detailed catalogue of the whole. I continued however to take an account of all writers on history and general literature, and I hope by means of a present to procure an accurate list of the remainder. The whole number of MSS, in the library amounts to 1294, much the greatest part of which are Arabic, these are however most of the best Persian and Turkish writers, but alas, not one volume in Greek, Hebrew, or Latin." <sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately what Carlyle is describing as the Palace library is in fact the Bostancılar Ocağı library. The Palace library had been built earlier that century and was a rectangular building, which was never closed at that period. Unfortunately for Carlyle, he had been duped into thinking that this now redundant staff library was the library of the Sultan. But we are fortunate to get this information, which otherwise would not have come to us. In 1831 Mahmud II ordered that the books in this library be moved to the Laleli Library<sup>18</sup>. It is clear that the Palace staff had no great need of a special library for themselves, seeing that they had access to the main palace library. The library was closed after some thirty years of operation and after another thirty years the books were transferred elsewhere.

Another important library was built by Veliyüddin Efendi, twice Şeyhülislam in Mustafa III's reign. He had originally endowed 150 books to the Atuf Efendi Library in 1761, and at the same time augmented the salaries

<sup>17</sup> *Memoirs* p. 171-172.

<sup>18</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 642, pp. 103-145.

of the librarians to compensate them for the extra work involved in looking after an enlarged collection<sup>19</sup>. However this relatively small endowment did not satisfy him and he embarked upon a far more ambitious project; he built a library next to the Beyazıt Mosque and endowed it with 1,690 books, to which were added the 150 books of his original endowment to the Atuf Efendi Library<sup>20</sup>. Although not very large when compared to the Fatih and Nur-ı Osmaniye Libraries, the collection drew many scholars. Vasıf Efendi, the historian, noted that there were many rare books in the collection so that 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>21</sup>. The conditions governing the running of the library were very much the same as those in the Atuf Efendi and Ragıp Paşa libraries<sup>22</sup>.

Quite apart from the above large endowments, the foundation of smaller college libraries and the endowment of small collections to existing libraries continued during this period<sup>23</sup>. Throughout the whole empire libraries were either being founded anew or existing collections were being enlarged.

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 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 pay for the new expertise, the State became involved in an increasing amount of expenditure. This period is marked by a decrease in imperial endowments, partially compensated 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>24</sup>. The

<sup>19</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive (İstanbul), Evkaf-ı Hümayun Müfettişliği no. 164, pp. 381b-384b.

<sup>20</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 745, p. 79.

<sup>21</sup> *Vasıf Tarihi* v. I, 206-207.

<sup>22</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 745, p. 80.

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed list of these libraries see: İsmail E. Erünsal, *Türk Kütüphaneleri Tarihi II, Kuruluştan Tanzimata Kadar Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri*, Ankara 1988, p. 106-107.

<sup>24</sup> *Tarih-i Cevdet*, v. II, İstanbul, pp. 46 and 81; Hüseyin Ayyansaraylı, *Hadikatü'l-Cevâmi'*, v. II, İstanbul 1281, p. 179. See also Müjgan Cumbur, "I. Abdülhamid'in Vakfiyesi ve Hamidiye Kütüphanesi", *Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, XXII (Ankara 1964), pp. 17-69. See also:

Library only housed 1,552 books and the staff consisted of only four librarians, one binder, 1 sweeper and one doorman<sup>25</sup>. The collection was enlarged by an endowment of 750 books from Lala İsmail Efendi<sup>26</sup>. As for Selim III's endowments, they too are comparatively meagre: he is seen endowing 30 books to a library in Medina<sup>27</sup>, he reorganized the Laleli library and erected a new building there<sup>28</sup>, and he repaired the Selimiye library in Edirne and endowed it with some books<sup>29</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 from much of the expansion of libraries, there seems to be a growing feeling that the city was now provided for adequately by existing collections and 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 their birthplace or somewhere they had been appointed to in the course of their careers. Silahdar Seyyit Mehmed Paşa established a library in his birthplace, the village of Arabsun near Nevşehir<sup>30</sup>. Halil Hamid Paşa, grand vizier, established two libraries, one in Isparta<sup>31</sup>, one in Burdur<sup>32</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>33</sup>. Mehmed Raşid Efendi, the Reisülkütab, founded a library with a collection of almost 1,000 books in Kayseri in 1797, where he had been posted 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>34</sup>. Other libraries were founded

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Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Hatt-ı Hümayunlarına Göre Bir Padişahın Portresi, Sultan I. Abdülhamid (1774-1789)*, Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Istanbul University, 1997, pp. 21-22.

<sup>25</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 86, I. Abdülhamid'in Hazine Defteri , p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 746, pp. 343-345.

<sup>27</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive no. E. 2885/19.

<sup>28</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 93, pp. 125-127.

<sup>29</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Hatt-ı Hümayun no. 16 161.

<sup>30</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 742, p. 66.

<sup>31</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 628, pp. 547 and 554.

<sup>32</sup> M. Zeki Oral, "Mevcut Vesikalara Göre Burdur Kütüphaneleri ve Kitap Vakfiyeleri", *Belleten* XXIV/94 (Ankara 1960), pp. 235-236.

<sup>33</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 743, pp. 93-94 and 156.

<sup>34</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 68.

in this manner in Antalya by Hacı Mehmed Ağa (1797)<sup>35</sup>, in Keban by Yusuf Ziya Paşa (1798)<sup>36</sup>, in Akhisar by Zeynel-zâde Hacı Ali Efendi (1804)<sup>37</sup>, in Manisa by Karaosmanoğlu Hacı Hüseyin Ağa (1806)<sup>38</sup>, in Prizren by Mehmed Paşa (1805)<sup>39</sup>, in Vidin by Pazvantoğlu Osman Paşa<sup>40</sup>, in İzmir by Hadice Hanım (1806)<sup>41</sup>.

Yusuf Ağa, the controller of the mint and holder of several other important positions, founded a library in Konya, neither his birthplace or 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 Atuf Efendi, Ragıp Paşa and Hamidiye libraries, save that the salaries were, for reasons unknown, to be paid six monthly, and that it was stipulated that the librarian was to be from the city of Konya<sup>42</sup>. This would seem to be addressing a problem that was bothering the founders of libraries and that was the problem, encountered by Raşid Efendi among others, of allowing librarians leave to visit their families at intervals in the year. Locally-based librarians would not require leave to travel to visit their families. The Sultan was so gratified by Yusuf Ağa's endowment that he allocated sources of state revenue to pay for the running of the library<sup>43</sup>.

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

<sup>35</sup> S. Fikri Erten, *Tekelioğulları*, İstanbul 1955, pp. 17-26.

<sup>36</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 50.

<sup>37</sup> Mehmed Emin Müderrisoğlu, *Akhisarlı Türk Büyüklüğü ve Eserleri*, İzmir 1956, pp. 85-86.

<sup>38</sup> Sadık Karaöz, *Manisa İli Kütüphaneleri*, Ankara 1974, p. 24; İbrahim Gökçen, *Manisa Tarihinde Hayırlar ve Vakıflar*, İstanbul 1950, p. 82; İnci Kuyulu, *Kara Osman-oğlu Ailesine Ait Mimari Eserler*, Ankara 1992, pp. 100-110.

<sup>39</sup> İlhan Polat, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Devrinde Yugoslavya'da Kurulan Türk Kütüphaneleri*, DTCF, Kütüphanecilik Bölümü, BA. Thesis, Ankara 1969, pp. 40-42.

<sup>40</sup> Mihaila Stajnova, "Ottoman Libraries in Vidin", *Etudes Balkaniques*, no. 2, 'sofya 1979), p.67

<sup>41</sup> İzmir Vakıflar Müdürlüğü Archive, II. Vakfiye Defteri, pp. 40-45.

<sup>42</sup> Şer'i Siciller (İstanbul), Evkaf-ı Hümayun Müfettişliği no. 261, pp. 53-54.

<sup>43</sup> Şer'i Siciller (İstanbul), Evkaf-ı Hümayun Müfettişliği no. 261, pp. 57-58.



in a Nakşibendi tekke in the same district<sup>44</sup>. Unfortunately we do not have the endowment deed and therefore we can only speculate at the number of books in the collection when the library was opened. However a later document shows that it was staffed by five librarians, a number which would suggest a largish collection<sup>45</sup>.

Another library was founded by Selim Ağa, the controller of the Imperial arsenals. He envisaged his independent library as functioning primarily as a teaching library and stipulated that two of the three librarians should be scholars capable of performing the duties of a 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 Paşa and Atuf 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>46</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>47</sup>.

Another sizable library was founded in 1801 by İbrahim Efendi, who endowed 753 books to the Kılıç Ali Paşa college in Tophane. The collection is interesting in that most of the books were on Koranic exegesis, reflecting İbrahim Efendi's profession of teacher and scholar. The foundation deed is unusual in that he appoints four librarians from his family and mentions them by name. He stipulates that on their death other members of his family were to be the librarians and failing this the librarians would be appointed from people residing in the district of Tophane<sup>48</sup>. As a scholar he had insufficient capital to endow a building, so to ensure that his books would be available as a distinct collection he housed them in an existing college, and employed his family to act as librarians to ensure that the collection was

<sup>44</sup> Muzaffer Gökman, *Murat Molla. Hayatı, Kütüphanesi ve Eserleri*, İstanbul 1943, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive, Dolap 1628.

<sup>46</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 122.

<sup>47</sup> Topkapı Palace Archive no. D. 10, 294 ; Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 743, p. 501.

<sup>48</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Kılıç Ali Paşa section no. 1049 and 1050 ; Şer'i Siciller, İstanbul Kadılığı no. 79, pp. 6b-8b, 85a, 16b-18b.

properly looked after. He also seems to have wanted the librarians to reside close to the library. The first librarian was to be paid 40 akçe, the second and third 20 akçe and the fourth 16 akçe a day. This contrasts with large libraries of the period where the salaries were between 80 and 120 akçe.

One small collection is worthy of note, in that it was endowed by Abdülkadir Bey to a court of law in Istanbul, in 1808. The books were mainly on jurisprudence and were most useful to the officers of the court. The collection was to be administered by the staff working there<sup>49</sup>.

Of course we should not forget that throughout this period the existing library collections were growing larger through endowment made by relatives and descendants of the original founders. The salaries of the librarians were also increasing and sometimes the library staff was enlarged to meet the demands of growing collections. We also have examples of sons building libraries to fulfill the wishes of a deceased parent. Mustafa Efendi, a reisülküttab in the reign of Mahmud I, had intended to found a library in the Bahçekapı district of Istanbul<sup>50</sup>. Unfortunately, he died before his wishes could be realized, and so when his son, Aşir Efendi, became the Şeyhülislam in 1799, he built the library in Bahçekapı and endowed to it his father's collection together with his own. In the foundation deed, dated 1800, he kept all the conditions stipulated by his father, but increased the salaries by providing new income<sup>51</sup>. The increase in salaries mirrored the changing economic conditions. Aşir Efendi's son, Hafid Efendi, in his turn added both to the collection and activities of the library. When he became Rumeli kazasker he endowed 466 books which were not to be kept as a distinct collection but were to be dispersed in the main collection, according to their subject classification. He also invested 1,500 kuruş so as to provide an income which was to pay for the recitation of the *mevlid-i şerif*, a Turkish poem about the birth and life of the Prophet, on special occasions. Sweets and desserts were to be bought and distributed to the congregation on these occasions<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> Şer'i Siciller (İstanbul), Galata Mahkemesi no. 584, p. 63b.

<sup>50</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 736, pp. 205-206.

<sup>51</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Aşir Efendi section no. 473, p. 7a-b.

<sup>52</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Hafid Efendi section no. 486, pp. 7a-9b.

Again in 1805, we find Mehmed Asım Bey, a member of Köprülü family and also the administrator of the Köprülü library, making provision for the expansion of the collection. He noted in an endowment deed that local college students were requesting certain popular text books which were unavailable in the library. To rectify the situation he bought 350 of the books most in demand and provided money for the future purchase of necessary books<sup>53</sup>. The son of Selim Ağa also increased his father's initial collection<sup>54</sup>.

It is in this period that we see libraries subjected to inspections and occasionally their activities being suspended for a periods of time. The libraries would be closed by the Inspector of Pious Trusts when he discovered irregularities in their operations. For example, the Hacı Beşir Ağa library in the Cağaloğlu district of Istanbul was closed when the inspector discovered that , contrary to the instructions of the founder, the librarians were permitting books to be taken out of the library for a period of five days on deposit of a pledge. It was realized that books were not being returned and the inspector closed the library to prevent further loss. The wishes of the founder were seen as paramount and the inspector's first duty was to put an end to this loss. However, it was also appreciated that the library should be reopened as soon as possible. Thus, we see in 1784 the Hacı Beşir Ağa library reopening and an inventory being carried out to discover how many books were missing. A new list was drawn up and given to the librarians together with a warning that the founder's instructions were to be strictly adhered to and failure to do so would entail their dismissal<sup>55</sup>.

In 1776 when the first librarian of the Nuruosmaniye library died it was discovered that several books in his house belonged to the library. Immediately the library's operations were suspended and an inventory was made. In the words of the inspector:

"I being the inspector of the Nuruosmaniye library hereby affirm that Yusuf Efendi, having been head librarian since the foundation of the library, and having died on the 2 Şevval in the year 1190, some [library] books were discovered among his belongings and it was further ascertained that he had lent out books, in violation of the

<sup>53</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 580, pp. 13-14.

<sup>54</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive (Istanbul), Üsküdar Mahkemesi no. 564, p. 80

<sup>55</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 639, pp. 129-130.

conditions of the library and so the books which he had taken home were returned and the books which had been lent were retrieved as much as was possible and the books were checked against the list and a new inventory was prepared"<sup>56</sup>.

In the list of missing books it is noted that Yusuf Ziya Paşa, a former grand vizier , had borrowed and lost a book and that his receipt for borrowing the book was to be found in a certain box. The inventory was to show that nineteen books had gone missing but none of these were of great value. However 15 valuable books bearing the Sultan's seal were found to have been uncatalogued and there were also 14 valuable pieces of calligraphy unrecorded<sup>57</sup>.

In the Mahmud Paşa college, the librarians seemed to have ceased fulfilling their duties and over a period of 50 years had allowed the 342 books belonging to the college to remain in the cupboards unattended and subject to dust and insects. The students at the college complained to the inspector of trusts and he sent some of his staff to investigate. He finally ordered the books to be cleaned , repaired and catalogued and the librarian was instructed to fulfill his duty by allowing the students access to the books<sup>58</sup>.

This period, as has been mentioned above, saw the state increasingly involved in reforming the central administration, and particularly the military. New libraries were being opened and these contained western books. That is not to say that the classical libraries were being neglected. In fact, this period sees great energy expended on inspection , control and reorganization of libraries whenever necessary. The process of increasing central control over the library system was to become even more significant in the reign of Mahmud II.

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 who were set against any reforms which threatened their status and 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

<sup>56</sup> Nuruosmaniye Library, Fihrist no. 6, p. 206a.

<sup>57</sup> Nuruosmaniye Library, Fihrist no. 6, pp. 205b-206a.

<sup>58</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 741, pp. 336 and 340.

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.

The classical Ottoman system essentially divided learning into the traditional Islamic syllabus which was taught in the colleges created as pious foundations; these, therefore, were not within the realm of the State, and their administration was generally free from direct State interference. In the reign of Selim III a new type of library was introduced in the School of Engineering, a library which was to contain books in Western languages and translations of Western books mainly on technical subjects. This new direction was to continue in Mahmud II's reign. We see new institutions of learning with new libraries -but again not stocked with the classical texts, but rather with Western studies<sup>59</sup>. However, in this period the trend towards Western-styled institutions was constrained by the small number of people who were involved in the process of reforms. As the century progressed the intellectual elite were increasingly to look to the West, not only in the sciences, but also in literature and the social sciences. But at this stage, the overwhelming majority of library books were manuscripts dealing with traditional Islamic sciences, and they were to be found in the traditional Ottoman libraries.

In 1826, with the reform of the whole system of government, new ministries which had not existed before were introduced. One of these was to be the *Evkaf Nezareti* which was a Ministry of Pious Foundations, responsible for the supervision of all trusts. Thus, all colleges, mosques and other trust-institutions, including libraries, were to come under the direct supervision of one single centralized authority.

Shortly after the establishment of the Ministry of Pious Foundations several libraries underwent inspections and new lists of the collections were drawn up. This suggests that there was a policy decision to take stock of what had recently come under their jurisdiction. We have evidence of inspections of several libraries, and reports of these inspections have survived.

<sup>59</sup> See for this type of libraries: R. Tuba Çavdar, *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Kadar Osmanlı Kütüphanelerinin Gelişimi*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, pp. 29-53, İstanbul University 1995.

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 noticed that in 1833 there were libraries next to or inside almost every mosque and in many of *tekkes* (dervish convents)<sup>60</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 foundation of these libraries is well documented. For example, in 1808 Yılanlıoğlu Şeyh Ali built a library in Eğridir, in the courtyard of his college, and placed 218 of his books in it<sup>61</sup>; in 1811 Vahid Paşa opened a library in Kütahya; in Çay, near Samsun, Süleyman Paşa built a library<sup>62</sup>; in 1812 Ahmet Ağa donated his books to the Kurşunlu Mosque in Harput, in the Eastern Anatolia<sup>63</sup>. However, libraries were also being endowed in areas further afield. Mehmed Paşa founded a library at the Grand Mosque of Jerusalem<sup>64</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 students<sup>65</sup>. In 1813 Mehmed Ali Paşa (the future ruler of Egypt) built a library in his home town, Kavalla, now in northern Greece<sup>66</sup>, while in 1818 Sırrı Selim Bey built a library in the Seyfullah Mosque and College in Thessalonica<sup>67</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> *Sketches of Turkey in 1831 and 1832 by an American*, New York 1833, p. 142.

<sup>61</sup> Fehmi Aksu, "Yazma Kitaplar", *Ün* III/28 (Isparta 1936), p. 394; Süleyman Sukuü Yığıtbaşı, *Eğridir - Felekâbâd Tarihi*, İstanbul 1972, p. 132; Yücel Özkaya, "Anadoludaki Büyük Hanedanlıklar", *Bellekten* vol. LVI/217 (Ankara 1992), p. 838.

<sup>62</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 733, p. 44

<sup>63</sup> Süleymaniye library, Harput section no. 127.

<sup>64</sup> Şemim Emsem, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Devrinde Türkiye Kütüphanelerinin Tarihçesi, *Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği Bülteni* IX/1-2 (Ankara 1960), p. 35

<sup>65</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 987, pp. 129-132.

<sup>66</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>67</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); Hayatî-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); Çaşnığır Library in Manisa (1832); Saçlı 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.

The Vahid Paşa library in Kütahya provides us with an insight into how provincial towns attracted libraries. Vahid Paşa was exiled to the city, and during his residence there he noted that the students complained of a lack of a library<sup>68</sup>. When he had the opportunity, at some later date, in 1811, he donated 210 books to the Yıldırım Beyazıt Mosque in Kütahya<sup>69</sup>. The books were at first kept in a cupboard in the mosque, and as he added to the collection he had a special room built in the courtyard<sup>70</sup>. Thereafter he continued to send books whenever the opportunity arose<sup>71</sup>.

There is also evidence to suggest that provincial libraries were used for other activities besides reading. When the Grand Vizier, Derviş Mehmed Paşa, founded an independent library in the provincial town of Burdur, he stipulated that each day a portion of Buhari's Traditions of the Prophet were to be read aloud by one of the librarians as a spiritual exercise. On Thursdays and Sundays after the noon and afternoon prayer, and on holy days, after the evening prayer a derviş ritual, according to the Nakşibendi rite, was to be performed. On the birthday of the Prophet a Mevlid was to be recited after the evening prayer. After all these rituals sweets were to be distributed to all who had attended<sup>72</sup>.

Of particular note in Istanbul is 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 and Said Pertev Paşa'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>73</sup> and two years later he donated a further 547 books<sup>74</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

<sup>68</sup> Uzunçarşılıoğlu İsmail Hakkı, *Kütahya Şehri*, İstanbul 1932, p. 133.

<sup>69</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, p. 706.

<sup>70</sup> Hamza Güner, *Kütahya Camileri*, Kütahya 1964, p. 21.

<sup>71</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 579, pp. 627, 680, 684, 688, 695-699.

<sup>72</sup> Şer'i Siciller Archive (İstanbul), İstanbul Kadılığı no. 122, pp. 37a-38a.

<sup>73</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Halet Efendi section no. 837/1, pp. 1b-21b.

<sup>74</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.

who was to appoint the librarian, as would normally be expected but the şeyh of the *tekke*. The first librarian should be a bachelor and be resident in the *tekke*, while the imam (prayer leader) of the *tekke* should act as second librarian<sup>75</sup>. Said Pertev Paşa's *tekke* library was set up in the garden of the Çiçekçi Mosque, where the Nakşibendi *tekke* was found. The library building was endowed with a large collection and two full-time librarians were appointed, with appropriately adequate salaries<sup>76</sup>.

As for the Sultan himself, Mahmud II, he 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>77</sup>. Although we 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>78</sup>. Sixty years later a year-book for the province noted that there were 4569 books in the library<sup>79</sup>. A document from 1835 notes that the Sultan intended to build a similar library in the holy city of Mecca:

"As there is no independent library in Mecca, books having been donated by worthy benefactors, but with the death of their keepers books having gone missing, it is my intention to build a library in Mecca, just as I did in Medina...." <sup>80</sup>

The Sultan went on to say that he had ordered that all books in existing collections should be brought together and a list drawn up. He would then make up any deficiency in the collection. We do not know whether his wish was realized or not, but his successor Abdülmecid was to found a library in the city<sup>81</sup> and it is likely that the books which Mahmud II had ordered to be

<sup>75</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Halet Efendi section no. 837/1, pp. 8a-b.

<sup>76</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. Kasa 108, pp. 6-9.

<sup>77</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-Tunisi, *el-Mektebâtü'l-âmmeh bi'l-Medineti'l-Münevvereh, mâdhâ ve hâzirihâ*, p. 1-7, MA thesis, Cami'atü Melik Abdülaziz, Cidde 1981.

<sup>78</sup> İşki Mustafa b. Ömer Kilişi, *Ta'ürü Ercâi'd-Devleü'l-Mecdiyye*, University Library (Istanbul), T.Y. 1490, p. 166a-b.

<sup>79</sup> *Sâlnâme-i Hicâz*, İstanbul 1309, p. 307.

<sup>80</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Mühimme-i Mısır no. 13, p. 82.

<sup>81</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Mühimme-i Mısır no. 13, p. 168.



collected became the nucleus of the Mecidiye library, Abdülmecid's own foundation.

In Mahmud II's reign we see an increase in inspections of library collections. Even before the institution of the Ministry of Pious Foundations, noted above, the process of inspecting collections had got underway. With the coming of the ministry, the process gained momentum. As a result of these inspections new catalogues were frequently prepared, deficiencies in collections made good, and when deemed appropriate the location of the library would be changed. One of the most important functions of the inspection was to establish that the trusts' administrators were carrying out their duties in accordance with the wishes of the founder, as laid down in the endowment deed<sup>82</sup>.

In 1815 Çorlulu Ali Paşa's collection in his Darülhadis in Istanbul was checked a new list of books was prepared<sup>83</sup>. In 1816, certain collections which had been endowed to the Conqueror's Mosque, were removed to the independent library at Beyazıt, which had been built some 50 years previously by Veliyüddin Efendi. A new catalogue was prepared for these books<sup>84</sup>. In 1820 both Damad İbrahim Paşa's and the Nuruosmaniye collections, which had been in existence for some 100 years and 70 years, respectively, were inspected "because for a considerable time their condition was unknown", and new catalogues were drawn up<sup>85</sup>. In 1827 the library of Valide Sultan Mosque in Bahçekapı was inspected and a new catalogue prepared<sup>86</sup>. The books which Damadzade Şeyhülislam Ahmed Efendi had endowed to the mosque of Selim I were inspected in May 1828 and transferred to a *tekke* (derviş convent) in the same district, and most importantly, a librarian was appointed to look after the books<sup>87</sup>.

In Cyprus there were several collections which had been endowed to the Ayasofya Mosque over the centuries. In the courtyard of the mosque, Mahmud II erected a building to house these collections, to which he added

<sup>82</sup> Nazif Öztürk, *Türk Yenileşme Tarihi Çerçevesinde Vakıf Müessesesi*, Ankara 1995, p. 393.

<sup>83</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Bab-ı Defteri, Baş Muhallefat Halifesi no. 13 242.

<sup>84</sup> Beyazıt Umumi Library, Veliyüddin Section no. 3291, p. 4b.

<sup>85</sup> Nuruosmaniye Library, Fihrist no. 3, p. 1b.

<sup>86</sup> University Library, İbnülemin section no. 2485.

<sup>87</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Cevdet-Maarif no. 2821.

other collections which had been endowed to other institutions; he also provided for the future running of the library<sup>88</sup>.

In a memorandum written by Mahmud II to his vezir, Mehmed Emin Rauf Paşa, in November 1830, we see the Sultan providing for the repair of the college library built by his father, Abdülhamid I, in the holy city of Mecca. He ordered the 500 books, which were scattered in various locations, to be brought together and placed in newly-built cupboards in the college<sup>89</sup>. In the following year it was stipulated that books were not to be lent out, but to be read within the confines of the college<sup>90</sup>.

In January 1831 Mahmud II had a collection of books removed from the Palace and placed in the Laleli College library, which had been built by Mustafa III. These books were not from the endowed collection of Ahmed III, but were a collection of books established by Mustafa III and placed in the Bostancılar Ocağı, which had fallen into disuse. Mahmud II gave the reason for moving the collection: firstly he noted that the collection had ceased to be used, especially with the opening of Ahmed III's library at the Palace and, consequently, the books were not being cared for and might fall into disrepair. Furthermore, Mustafa III's library at Laleli college had gaps in its collection, which would be made good by the transfer. Finally, he wanted the books to be used by those people who could benefit from them<sup>91</sup>.

Several other collections were inspected at this time: the Ayasofya library in 1831<sup>92</sup>, while in 1833 inspections were carried out at the Merzifonlu Mustafa Paşa college library, the Veliyüddin Library and Abdülhamid I's library in Medina<sup>93</sup>. In 1837 the Galatasaray college library collection, which had been transferred to the Ayasofya library, was inspected by a commission

<sup>88</sup> İ. Parmaksızoğlu, *Kıbrıs'ta Sultan İkinci Mahmud Kütüphanesi*, Ankara 1964; Beria Remzi Özorun, "Kıbrıs'ta Sultan Mahmut Kütüphanesi", *Türk Kültürü* v. VIII, no. 92 (1970), pp. 513-515; Mustafa Haşim Altan, "Die Bibliotheken im türkisch-zypriotischen Bundesstaat", *Biblos* vol. 28 (1979), pp. 306-309.

<sup>89</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Mühimme-i Mısır no. 13, pp. 41-42.

<sup>90</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Mühimme-i Mısır no. 13, p. 54.

<sup>91</sup> Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Archive no. 642, pp. 103-104.

<sup>92</sup> Süleymaniye Library, Fihrist no. 3.

<sup>93</sup> Beyazıt Umumi Library no. 21, 346; Beyazıt Umumi Library, Veliyüddin Efendi section no. 3290; Başbakanlık Archive, Cevdet-Maarif no. 1870 and İbrahim Ateş, "Mescid-i Nebevî'nin Yapıldığı Günden Bu Yana Geçirdiği Genişletme Girişimleri", *Vakıflar Dergisi* no. 24 (1994), p. 14 respectively.

who drew up a list of the works and split the collection into two , one part going to Fatih library and the other remaining at Ayasofya<sup>94</sup>, both libraries and the Galatasaray collection having been endowed by Mahmud I.

With the abolition of the Janissary corps in 1826, the Bektashi *tekkes*, closely associated with the corps, were also closed. When they were closed, lists were made of the books in the *tekkes*, two of which have survived, that of books at the Elmalı *tekke* and that at the *tekke* of Demirci Baba<sup>95</sup>.

In 1838 Mahmud II had binders sent to Medina to repair and rebind the books in various locations in this city. The judge of Medina at the time noted in his history of Medina that the binders had rebound and repaired 521 books in the Prophet's Mosque, 646 in the Mahmudiye college, 432 in the Hamidiye library, 922 in the Karabaş college, 20 in the Özbek college and 961 in the Beşir Ağa college<sup>96</sup>.

Mahmud II's reign is characterized by the rationalizing of all trusts and pious foundations under the jurisdiction of one ministry. Whenever the opportunity arose, collections were split up, brought together or transferred to strengthen existing collections. At the same time as Mahmud II organized and surveyed the classical Ottoman libraries, changes were coming about which would bring with them a new type of library. By Mahmud II's death three institutions had libraries which contained printed books in European languages dealing with medicine, science and technology. Soon these works were to be translated into Turkish and published, and these were to become the bases of the new Ottoman library collections. These new libraries were set up by the government to serve the needs of the reforms. But while the classical Ottoman library was to continue being used until the coming of the Republic, the new, European style libraries, were eventually to make the classical library increasingly obsolete.

<sup>94</sup> Süleymaniye Library , Ayasofya section, Fihrist no. 6, pp. 1b-11b.

<sup>95</sup> Başbakanlık Archive, Maliyeden Müdever no. 9771, p. 10 and 56.

<sup>96</sup> Işki Mustafa b. Ömer Kilibi, *Ta'türü Ercâi'd-Devleti'l-Mecdiyye*, University Library (Istanbul), T.Y. 1490, p. 177a.

