

Turkey

OSMAN ERSOY AND
BERIN U. YURDADOĞ

FROM ANCIENT TIMES Turkey has been recognized as "the cradle of the libraries."¹ Thousands of clay tablets were excavated at Hattusas (present Boğazköy), the capital of The Hittites. During the Greek and Roman periods Pergamum and Efesus were well-known for their libraries. The making of parchment in Pergamum (present Bergama) was quite a significant contribution to the culture of that period.

In the Middle Ages one of the greatest libraries of the world was located in Istanbul. It is a pity that this library was destroyed by the Crusaders.² Fortunately, other libraries were quick to appear and fill the gap created by the destruction of one library. The conquest of Istanbul by Mehmet the Conqueror was a source of anxiety to the rest of the world for some time. But "the proud tradition of Byzantium did not die in 1453; . . ." as Dr. L. S. Thompson rightly stated, ". . . for the great libraries of mediaeval Constantinople were not transferred in their entirety to Italy but were liberated in part by Mehmet the Conqueror, a humanist in the best sense, for the library of the Topkapı Sarayı (the so-called "Seraglio"), where remnants may still be seen."³

During the Seljuks (1071-1308) and the Ottomans (1300-1923), book making reached its excellence with richly decorated and illuminated manuscripts. Several of the Turkish libraries today, especially Süleymaniye Library, contain excellent examples of these manuscripts.

Though the libraries go back far in history, and though librarianship as a profession has a long past, education for librarianship is quite new in Turkey. Modern librarianship starts, as everything else in Turkey, with the Republican era. When John Dewey was invited to Turkey in 1924 to study the educational problem in general, he prepared an

The authors are Associate Professor and Assistant Professor respectively in the Department of Library Science, Faculty of Letters, University of Ankara, Turkey.

official report. Among his recommendations was a clause about training librarians for existing libraries. He suggested that some young people should be sent to the United States to study libraries. He also pointed out that a course on library practices should be set up in at least one of the teacher training colleges to train librarians for small libraries in small and remote communities.⁴

Whether due to John Dewey's recommendations or to some other reason which made the need more pressing, Fehmi Edhem Karatay, a promising young man, was sent to Paris to the "Ecole de Bibliothécaires established in 1923 under the aegis of the American Library Association."⁵

Upon his return to Turkey, Karatay, the very first Turk who was sent abroad to study library sciences, was appointed Director of Istanbul University Library. When he found out that there was literally no other trained librarians besides himself, he decided to set up a course, the first on this subject in Turkey. The course was given to the practicing librarians in Istanbul libraries, from September 15, 1925, to May 1, 1926.⁶ The treatment of the subject in the course resembled that of the American school in Paris. Thus, together with a new system of education, the concepts of modern librarianship and practices such as preparing dictionary catalogs or using the Dewey Decimal Classification were introduced to Turkey within the first three years of the Republican era.

The second course in library science was slow to follow. When the Higher Agricultural Institute was founded in Ankara and Dr. Josef Stummvoll was asked to establish and organize a library for the Institute, the same problem was faced again—lack of trained personnel. Therefore, Dr. Stummvoll set up a three-month course in the beginning of 1936. The course was not restricted to the librarians of the Ministries alone, but was open to all who showed an interest. When the course was completed an examination was held, and those who passed it were given certificates.⁷

The third course in this field differs from the first two by its consistency. Adnan Ötügen, founder and Director of the Turkish National Library was sent to Germany to study librarianship. On his return to Turkey his chief concern was to impart his newly acquired knowledge on the subject to others. The most important factor which gave prestige and consistency to his course was that it was set up at the Faculty of Letters. When it started in March 23, 1942, however, the course was an evening class open to the university students as well as others

Education for Librarianship Abroad: Turkey

interested in the subject. Therefore, the educational background of the students varied from junior high school up to university level. In 1952 the course was recognized as an optional course of the Turkish Department of the Faculty of Letters.⁸ With this character, the course went on until the establishment of the Library School (the present Chair of Library Science) in the same Faculty.

While Adnan Ötüken was busy with his courses, Aziz Berker was appointed Director (presently General Director) of Libraries, Ministry of Education. Unlike Karatay and Ötüken, he had no chance to go abroad to study library science. But he was a man with uncommonly sound common sense. He educated himself on whatever literature he could find and he made a thorough inspection of the libraries which fell under his responsibility: archival, public, children's, and school libraries. Since there were many problems to be solved and it was necessary to take them one at a time, he decided to give priority to the personnel problem along with a new law pertaining to libraries and librarians.

In 1941, before Adnan Ötüken started his courses in Ankara, he suggested that what Turkey needed was a school of library science to educate (not just to train) librarians. At that time there were some faculties giving university education in Ankara, but they were not as yet united as the University of Ankara. Since most of the libraries were in Istanbul, and the University of Istanbul was a well-established institution, he suggested that the University of Istanbul was an ideal place for the kind of library school Turkey needed.⁹ When this could not be realized, he set up courses for librarians working in archival, public, children's, and school libraries.¹⁰ These courses were held in the summer and are still going on. After the establishment of the Chair of Library Science, the Ministry and the Chair combined their activities to get better results.

Another course which had a lasting effect on the development of library education in Turkey was given by Dr. Lawrence S. Thompson. When he was invited to come to Turkey, Dr. Thompson prepared and executed a heavy schedule for himself. In addition to the inspiring report¹¹ he prepared after he had seen the status of libraries in Turkey, he directed and gave a course for librarians.

The urgent need for a library school became more pronounced when Dr. L. S. Thompson's suggestion was supported by a group of Turkish and American librarians, among whom Mrs. E. A. Heilman (then Mrs. Emily Dean, the Director of the USIS Library in Ankara)

should be specially mentioned. "The enthusiasm of the Ankara group for the project," as Robert B. Downs points out, "convinced officials of the Ford Foundation, who, in 1954, approved a four-year grant to the University of Ankara, to inaugurate the program. . . . At an early stage, the American Library Association was asked to step in and assist with the establishment and direction of the new school."¹² In 1955 Mr. Downs came to Turkey to work on the organizational phases and teach the first classes.

With an idea of giving it more flexibility, the school was called the Institute of Librarianship, not a chair, in the beginning. After Mr. Downs' short stay, Elmer M. Grieder came for a two-year period. In spite of his heavy schedule at the Institute, Mr. Grieder found time to give intensive courses to a group of teacher-librarians on school libraries, at Gazi Training College for Teachers in Ankara. For the second two-year period Dr. Lewis F. Stieg came as Director. By that time the number of students had increased to such an extent that it was impossible for one person to administer the institution and give all the lectures in a foreign language, and with the help of only two native assistants. Therefore, another American professor had to be added to the teaching staff. Upon Dr. Stieg's and Miss Norris McClellan's return, a serious problem had to be faced. The four-year grant from the Ford Foundation had expired, and the Turkish staff was not yet ready to take over the responsibility. An additional two-year grant brought Dr. Carl M. White and Miss Anne Ethelyn Markley to Turkey and made it easier for the Turkish staff to prepare themselves for responsible positions. In July 1960, the Institute of Librarianship was changed into a Chair of Library Science to give it a better academic status.¹³ After the Ford Foundation's additional grant expired, the Faculty of Letters applied to the Fulbright office and thus could invite Miss Nance O'Neill and Dr. Ralph H. Hopp, each for a year. In the academic year 1963-64 Dr. Arthur McAnally will serve as the last Fulbright professor. By that time it is hoped that the Chair will have a stronger Turkish staff, consisting of two associate professors, one assistant professor, and one instructor with the Ph.D. and another assistant professor about to take his Ph.D. Ever increasing number of students will certainly create new problems for the staff.

As for the instruction, when it was an Institute the library school was planned to give both undergraduate and graduate courses. But it did not work out as planned. Those who came with a high school diploma completed their education in four years (eight semesters)

Education for Librarianship Abroad: Turkey

with a strong liberal arts background, and were awarded a B.A. degree.¹⁴ A university graduate, however, spent two years (four semesters) and was awarded only a certificate, not an M.A. degree to show that he had completed graduate study.¹⁵ Therefore, the graduate course had to be dropped.

Another factor bothering the staff was that the students were obliged to obtain all their minors in the Faculty of Letters. New regulations give more freedom to the students and greater flexibility to the curriculum. Now the students can obtain their minors in any of the faculties of the University of Ankara.¹⁶

Contents of the courses are more or less the same as in any modern library school. Since the aim of the Chair of Library Science is to educate rather than to train, the emphasis is upon principles and philosophy of librarianship rather than the technical skills. This is to be expected, as the trends in library education follow closely the trends in other countries, especially in the United States. Yet it is found that Turkish students must also be given practical work, since the number of "modern" libraries is not high, though the libraries *per se* are quite numerous. Experiments are going on to find a proper balance between the theoretical and the practical aspects of library practice."¹⁷ The staff believes that a curriculum with a dynamic character will give better results. Though titles of the courses are usually retained as they are originally decided, the content shows a change when the need arises.

The number of students is more than can be adequately educated by the present staff. Besides the increasing interest in librarianship as a profession, the Emily Dean Award,¹⁸ given for excellence in the graduation thesis, is a strong factor in attracting better students to the Chair. Yet Turkey needs more trained librarians than the Chair can possibly prepare. The statistics from 1958 to 1962 with the year of graduation first, and the number of graduates following are: 1958, 8; 1959, 8; 1960, 32; 1961, 19; and 1962, 23.

Seventy-five percent of the graduates prefer to take positions in special libraries. The salary situation in the other libraries is not good enough. Simply to meet the needs of the libraries under the direction of the General Directorate of Libraries of the Ministry of Education, Turkey should produce 1,758 well-trained librarians. Obviously, at the present slow pace, the graduates of the Chair of Library Science will not meet this need for many years to come. More library schools are needed, but before they are established there must be careful

planning so that the mistakes made in the present school are not repeated.

References

1. Downs, Robert B. "Librarianship in Turkey," *Stechert-Hafner Book News*, 10:18, October 1955.
2. Thompson, J. W. *The Medieval Library*. New York, Hafner, 1957, p. 326.
3. Thompson, L. S. "Books Are Basic Beyond the Bosphorus," *ALA Bulletin*, 46:193, June 1952.
4. Dewey, John. *Türkiye Maarifi Hakkında Rapor*. 2nd ed. Istanbul, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1939.
5. Carnovsky, Leon. "Education for Librarianship Abroad," In Bernard Berelson (ed.), *Education for Librarianship*, Chicago: American Library Association, 1949, p. 73.
6. Ötügen, Adnan. "Türkiyede Kütüphanecilik Öğretiminin Tarihçesi," *TKDB*, 6:1-6, 1957.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-24.
9. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Dosya No. 5032/2/228, November 27, 1941.
10. Ötügen, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
11. Thompson, L. S. *A Program for Library Development in Turkey*. Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1952, pp. 46-47.
12. Downs, Robert B. "How to Start a Library School," *ALA Bulletin*, 52: 401, June 1958.
13. "Final Report from Ankara," *ALA Bulletin*, 56:573, June 1962.
14. In the Turkish educational system, the schools one has to attend before entering the university are elementary school (5 years), secondary or junior high school (3 years), and lycée or senior high school (3 years). Kindergarten education in the beginning is optional and unofficial in Turkey. Thus a child starting to go to school when he is 7 years old, will normally graduate from lycée when he is 17 or 18 years old. The normal university education is 4 years. But it requires a six-year university education to be a physician or an engineer.
15. Ankara Üniversitesi, Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi. *Oğrenci Kilavuzu, 1960-1961*. Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1961, pp. 66-67.
16. Ankara Üniversitesi, Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi. *Yönetmelikler*. Ankara, Üniversite Basımevi, 1962. p. 16.
17. Asheim, Lester E. "Education for Librarianship," *Library Quarterly*, 25: 80-81, January 1955.
18. White, Carl M. "The University of Ankara's Institute of Librarianship in 1960," *ALA Bulletin*, 54:665, September 1960.