

Routledge
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Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services

ISSN: 1464-9055 (Print) 1873-1821 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ulca20

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To cite this article: Hakan Anameriç (2006) Stamps as an information source in the National Library of Turkey, Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services, 30:1-2, 117-127, DOI: 10.1080/14649055.2006.10766112

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14649055.2006.10766112

Published online: 03 Dec 2013.

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Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services 30 (2006) 117–127
Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services

Stamps as an information source in the National Library of Turkey

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Available online 7 September 2006

Abstract

Stamps, like any other non-book material such as banknotes, coins, posters, and maps, serve as recording media and source for information that illustrates the social, commercial, political, cultural, historical, and artistic aspects of a society in their own unique style. Using short and abstract text, color graphics and symbols on a limited surface area to communicate its contents is the key attribute that differentiates stamp from other non-book material. For this unique attribute, the stamp can be deemed both as a communication tool and a work of art. Conversely, stamp and other philatelic material in Turkey are largely regarded as collection materials rather than being a source for information. This study aims at performing a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the stamp collection at the National Library of Turkey as well as providing information on cataloging and maintaining of stamps and offering them to the attention of the public to stress the importance of stamps as a source for information rather than just a collection material.
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Keywords: Stamp; Stamp cataloging; Philatelic collection; Philatelic material; Turkish stamps; National Library of Turkey; Turkish National Library of Turkey stamp collection; Ottoman postage stamps

1. Introduction

A stamp is a valuable piece of paper – it can even be considered to symbolize the sovereignty of a nation – cut into a square, a rectangle, a triangle, a hexagon, or even a circular

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doi:10.1016/j.lcats.2006.07.018

shape, bearing either a symmetrical or an asymmetrical texture with various images, figures, and/or pattern printed on the face and some sort of a special adhesive spread on the reverse side.



Additionally, it can be regarded as an information-recording medium and information source that provides knowledge about the past and present efforts of a nation in social science, culture, politics, arts, education, tourism, sports, and economics. The first stamp was printed in Britain in 06.05.1840 and used for mail. Mail services in Turkey were organized in a systematic manner thanks to the Ministry of Postal Services that was established in 23.10.1840 and stamps to cover the postage were begun to be used in 13.01.1863[1] in accordance with the Imperial Edict issued by the Sultan and suggested by Âgâh Efendi, the Minister of Postal Services and the founder of the newspaper Tercüman-ı Ahval.[1] On the first stamp were the crescent, Sultan Abdulaziz's signature, and the phrases "*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniyye*"[2] and "*Nezaret-i Celile-i Maliye*"[3] and it was printed at the printing press of the Ministry of Finance using the lithography technique. [2]

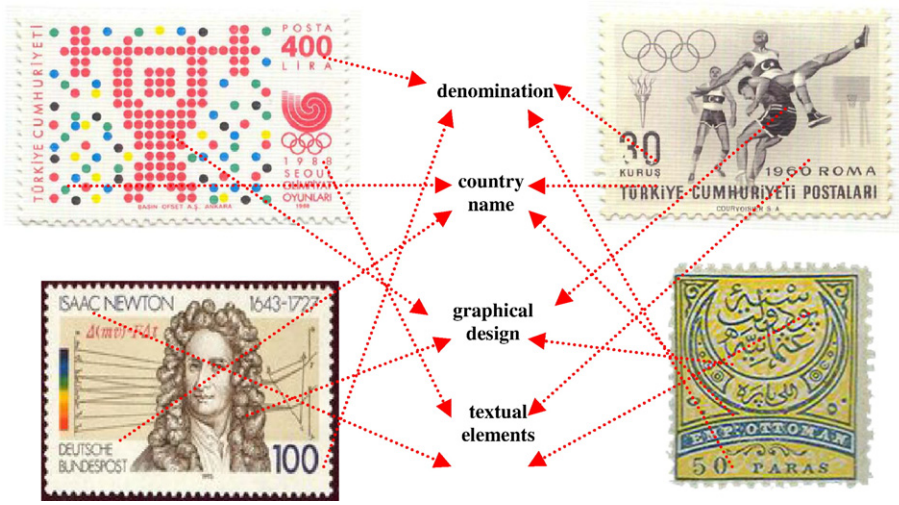


Postage stamps, while issued almost in every country, are generally used to cover the postage for written communication instruments sent from one place to another such as mail or postcards as well as goods shipments of various sizes and with different contents.[3] In addition, some countries widely used revenue stamps to pay for taxes and duties for official documents subject to government procedures—as it was the case with Darphane[4] (the State Mint) in Turkey until 2005 when the practice was finally abandoned.

2. Stamps as an information source

Before they can serve as an information source, offer some ease of use, carry out their role, and provide proper identification, stamps need to bear certain visual elements. The four core

[1] Ottoman Empire- Period of Sultan Abdülaziz (1861–1876).
[2] It means "Grand Ottoman Empire".
[3] Ministry of Finance.
[4] Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry, Undersecretary of Turkish Treasury, General Directorate of Turkish State Mint.



Scheme 1. Required fields on a stamp.

elements include denomination, country name, graphical design, and the textual elements.[4] Moreover, stamps may also contain some sort of unique and non-standard concealed insignia. Still, the most important elements are the denomination showing the commercial value of the stamp and name of the country that issued the stamp (see Scheme 1).

The main purpose of a stamp is to cover the postage expenses. Different shipping materials in different sizes necessitate different charges. The tool used to determine the charge is a stamp with varying monetary value (denomination). Denomination is usually located at the corner of the stamp and shown in figures.







A very rare case was with the first stamps where the domination was shown in letters. In 1874, Universal Postal Union (UPU) formed an agreement and reorganized the much-complicated postal procedures and decided to use Arabic numbers to make stamps easier to use.[5] Denomination on a stamp shown in numbers and/or letters may also give some information on the economy of the issuing nation. Stamp prices can change as the currency of the issuer changes. A most current example to that would be the New Turkish Lira (YTL) that replaced the old currency in 01.01.2005.[5] The date marked the start of use of the new currency and stamps were reprinted according to their new value in YTL.

The second important element that constitutes a stamp is the country name. It allows collectors and other enthusiasts having an interest in stamps as well as the officers who are in charge of handling mail to easily identify a stamp. From an information source perspective, the source of the stamp, place of printing along with the other attributes of the stamp can give information about the culture, tourism, history, literature, economy, traditions, and sportive efforts of the issuing country. First stamps carried no country name. As this led to some complications, UPU acted to include the country name on all stamps to be printed. The only exception applied to the United Kingdom – probably because she was the first country to print and use stamps – which even today does not include the country name on the stamps she produces. All other UPU members – 195 nations – are required to include their names on stamps they issue.

Countries, which did not use the Latin script or only started using the Latin script at a certain point, printed their names using their original Cyrillic, Hebrew, Arabic, Ottoman, or Greek script. Identification of these stamps and finding the issuing country is a demanding work that requires expertise. Names on the stamps are usually the names the issuing countries use to call themselves. They are plain and simple.[4] Some examples are as follows; "*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*" for Turkey, "*Magyar*" for Hungary, "*Shqiperia*" for Albania, "*Republik Österreich*" for Austria, "*Finland*" and/or "*Suomi*" for Finland, "*Deutsche*" for Germany, and "*U.S.*" for the United States. Country names are the most important source for information on stamps. They give details on the country, region, state, city, or time period the stamps relate to. Turkish stamps since 1863 carried different textual elements based on the specific period they were issued in. They were printed in Ottoman

[5] One million Turkish Lira (1,000,000 TL) equals to 1 New Turkish Lira (1 YTL).



Turkish using Arabic script during 1863–1928 and from 1928[6] onward they were issued in Turkish using the New Turkish Alphabet based on the Latin script. Various country names used on Turkish stamps between 1863 and 1923 were "*Emp. Ottoman*," "*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniyye*," and "*Devlet-i Osmaniyye*," all written in Ottoman Turkish using Latin letters—usually in French. From 1923 to 1928, the textual elements were still printed in Ottoman Turkish but starting in 1928 the phrase "*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*" written with Turkish letters replaced the country name on all stamps in Turkey.

The third element is the graphical design along with drawings, shapes, symbols, insignia, and numbers that make up the design. Graphical design on a stamp comes in four main styles. The first one is the portrait/bust illustration of the statesmen, artists, authors, and other leading individuals—usually from the printing nation. For example, British stamps during 1840–1900 showed a portrait of Queen Victoria while Turkish stamps from Republican Period mostly display Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

The second style is to use insignia comprised of flags, national symbols, the posthorn, and other figures. The third is the ornament and arrangement framing the denomination. The fourth style is to illustrate anniversaries, important meetings, sports events, artworks, important days, social events, and institutions. The availability of many options for graphical design elements has resulted in millions of different stamp designs in the world, which are generally co-created with various artists. Public demand comes also into consideration. "*Citizen Stamp Advisory Committee*" in the United States evaluates recommendations from the public before having a stamp designed. A new legislation in Turkey, which came into force in 2005, allows individuals to print their own portraits or designs on stamps with certain limitations.

Graphical design elements on a stamp help provide information on its purpose, the key points it highlights, the issue the stamps is dealing with and its meaning to the community,

[6] 01.11.1928 Türk Harflerinin Kabul ve Tatbiki Hakkında Kanun.

and the message it intends to communicate. Various materials coming in a wide variety of specifications can be used to this end. Themes illustrated on a stamp to draw public attention include Olympic Games, drug, alcohol or tobacco abuse, national days, public awareness for certain diseases, bilateral trade or friendship agreements, traffic regulations, libraries [3,6] and other institutions, birth or death anniversaries, institutional services, and significant technological developments. Stamps are considered an important source for wartime propaganda, creation of public awareness for serious diseases, promotion of artwork, fund raising for organizations (aid stamps), and introduction of national culture. They function both as an information source and a communication tool. Their plain and brief outlook when communicating their message differentiates them from other information and communication sources.

Examples on the right illustrate different subjects using different contents and graphical designs. The first stamp informs about substance abuse by highlighting the harmful effects of smoking. The second stamp was issued to commemorate Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's 100th birth anniversary by using another stamp designed for him in 20.07.1936 as a template. The third one stresses the importance of using safety belts when driving as the greatest lifesaver with the catch phrase "*The belt protects you*."

On the fourth stamp represented is a festival in Cologne, Germany by some clown illustrations. Figure of a train set out in Istanbul (Turkey) for Bulgaria on the fifth stamp is aimed at drawing attention to the railway connection between two countries that was established in 1971.

Textual elements compose another important part of the stamps. They are included almost in every graphical design. Their main use is to elucidate the stamp theme and enhance its communication as well as to display the name of the issuing country. Textual elements include other components that are essential to be visible on a stamp. Type of the stamp (postage or official), booklet serial, place of issue, names of the individuals, organizations or events, national mottos, and name of the stamp designer are to be found on a stamp.

In addition to the required elements mentioned above, invisible insignia or symbols can also be present on a stamp. Watermarks or holograms may be added to prevent counterfeits.

3. Stamps in Turkey and the National Library Stamp Collection

Turkish stamps that have been issued since 1863, without being subject to any legislation, are collected and exhibited in various museums and libraries throughout Turkey and serviced to the readers/researchers. "Basma Yazı ve Resimleri Derleme Kanunu-Depositary Law", enacted in 1934 and still in effect, took all "newspapers, news agency announcements, journals, books, booklets, thesis reports, maps, atlas books, paintings, engraving prints (gravures), all kinds of images, posters with artistic value, guides, plans, sketches, saga and song publications, musical notes, dance notes and theatrical plays, non-governmental organizations-NGO and corporate reports, all kinds of catalogs, calendars, almanacs, and memoranda" into coverage of the compilation. Additionally, "with the exception of publication kept in confidence by the state authorities all printed works and graphics produced by state printing houses and

organizations – *with bonds, cheques, stamps and financial instruments marked as annulled* – are required to be submitted" to the following compilation libraries in five copies each as demanded by the act.

The six depository libraries are as follows:

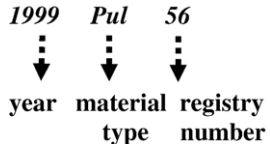
- The National Library-Ankara (copies were amassed at the Ministry of Education before the National Library was established in 1950)
- Adnan Ötüken Public Library-Ankara
- Beyazıt State Library-İstanbul
- İstanbul University Library-İstanbul
- İzmir Public Library (İzmir National Library)-İzmir [7]
- The Parliament Library (added for coverage later on)

The National Library of Turkey was established in accordance with an act that came into force in 1950 to facilitate national cultural studies, establish a center to collect all appropriate works and documents, and support science and art studies. Library material collection methods are through purchase, donation, exchange, and deposit. One of the information sources supplied through deposit is the stamp. User services regulation that was drawn up in 2004 included stamps in the authorized National Library material.[8,9] As a result, a stamp collection was added to the inventory of the National Library.

Two different sorts of stamp that happen to be used almost in every country – "postage" stamps for mail and official stamps for government work – are also used in Turkey. Turkish postage stamps are issued in three main categories; revenue stamps, permanent postage stamps, and official postage stamps. The periodic stamp issuing program outlines price, theme (stamp title), circulation, and date of issue for stamps to be printed. Each year (term) the General Directorate of Post, Telegram and Telephone in consultation with various organizations, finalizes fifteen to twenty new stamp designs on average. An example is the last year's (2005) stamps issued in Turkey that dealt with international events, days and Turkish culture such as XXII World Architecture Congress, World Environment Day, Formula 1 Grand Prix Turkey, Sultan Caftans, Zeugma, and Turkish Police Department. PTT stamps of 2006 will treat XX Olympic Winter Games, World Forestry Day, Solar Eclipse, Turkish Cartoon Heroes, World Cup 2006, Turkish Cinema, 50th Anniversary of METU (Middle East Technical University), and National Geothermal Resources.[10] General Directorate of PTT has issued 2511 stamps between 01.01.1950 and 31.12.2005, which roughly comes to 45–46 stamps annually (meaning one term).

Stamps and other philatelic material in Turkey are regarded as collection materials rather than as an information source. Therefore stamps are more often than not to be found in select exhibitions and museums for the delight of collectors and the enthusiasts. There are many philatelists in Turkey and periodicals have being issued for the last seventy-five years. Yet a scan of the periodicals has revealed that stamps have never been considered an information source before. [11]

General Directorate of PTT submits a copy of every stamp issued to the National Library and Adnan Ötüken Public Library according to the act. Additional copies are also sent to the PTT



Scheme 2. Stamp call number.

Museum, the Museum of War of Independence and Republic, Atatürk's Mausoleum Command, Presidential Museum of Atatürk, and the Universal Postal Union. The Non-book Materials Division of the National Library runs the administration for the technical and user services. The Library employs no separate section or collection for stamps or other philatelic materials. The National Library maintains various national and international stamps that were issued from 1933 to 2006. There are 863 non-dated and 3000 dated (1939–1999) stamps in the Library, totaling up to 3863. Among them are stamps that came in 4–6 copies. Most of the dated stamps carry imprints of annulment. A number of dated stamps also carry these imprints. The National Library Stamp Collection is primarily composed of PTT provided stamps that are subject to the compilation act and plus a few donations.

There are three books for non-dated and ten books for dated stamps, arranged in order by call numbers based on year and date of receipt. Each stamp is given a call number that holds the year, material type and the registry number (see Scheme 2). Stamps are offered to library users without any specific restriction or need for authorization. They can be borrowed just like any other library material by filling out a request card. Books containing dated and non-dated stamps are safe kept in a sealed room and stored next to audio disks, audiotapes, and videotapes. The text-based library automation software (ALEPH) used by the National Library provides no separate module for stamps or other non-book material. Stamps are recorded same as books. It is possible to look up a stamp record by the author or the title field using the Internet browser interface (http://www.mkutup.gov.tr/scan-tur.html–http://www.mkutup.gov.tr/scan-eng.html) or the terminal interface of the library automation software.

At the moment there are 1933 stamps recorded under the author name "PTT" within ALEPH system. Typing in themes in the title field can look up stamp records. A search returns

	SYSNO	0644589
	YER	1998 Pul 16
	Yazar	PTT
	Eser	Nagano'98 [grafik] / Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Posta
	Yayım	Ankara : PTT, 1998 (Gaye Matbaacılık)
	FizTan	1 pul ; 40x25 mm
	Dil	TUR

Scheme 3. National Library Database bibliographic record of a stamp.

all stamp records matching the theme entered and details of the records can be seen on the stamp registry card displayed on the screen. Example record on Scheme 3 is obtained by searching with the keyword "Nagano'98" in the title module.

Stamps are recorded and sorted out with respect to their publication dates, and then categorized by the corresponding time periods. Standard MARC fields are used for recording the stamps but some differences apply (see Scheme 4).

On a stamp record, Document No and SYSNO precede all other data fields. Then follows (020) ISBN where the denomination data are stored. Location is to store information on stamp's position within the book; (100) main entry keeps data on the issuing organization; (245) Title stores name of the subject that is intended to be associated with the stamp and/or stamp theme and contains a tag (here "graphic") to define the material type as well as the name of the issuing country and type of the stamp. Field (260) Publication contains information on the place and date of printing and the printing press responsible for publication. The next field (300) called Description stores physical description information such as the quantity and dimensions of the stamp. Notes field is reserved to store color, pattern, and graphic details of the stamp. Additional fields defined within the library automation software are accession number, database, language, and publication date. Value "30" next to the "*DATABASE*" field refers to the code of Fine Arts database maintained at the National Library. Language is defined as "*TUR*" for Turkish while publication date is entered with the same data as from the field (260) (see Scheme 5). Stamps cataloged at the National Library are not given any category numbers. However, books and articles related to stamps, stamp collecting (philately), and other philatelic material are categorized under 769.56,[12,13], economic value of the stamp under 332.63, and its use in mail under 383.1. [14]

In addition to cataloging stamps as information sources, there are also special cataloging software and printed catalogs that list stamps as collection material. Michel Catalog, Minbus Catalog, Stanley Catalog and Scott Catalog, all of which categorize stamps with respect to certain periods and countries, are the most notable ones.[15] The

```
ARAMA                GÖSTER          Format=07     Taban=   NLT
S2     2 Nagano'98
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
K1   1998 Pul 16

     PTT
       Nagano'98 Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Posta[grafik] /. -- Ankara :
     PTT,  1998 (Gaye Matbaacılık)

       1 pul ; 40x25 mm.

       Karışık renkler.

       0644589
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Devam  > C    Kopyaları göster > H no.     Diğer seçenekler  > HELP
Önceki > P    Tüm kaydı göster > XP no.    Kümeler listesi   > LS
Çık    > Q    Kaydı kaydet     > SAV no.   Yeni aramaya başla> START
```

Scheme 4. A catalog card of a stamp (ALEPH Browser Interface).

| Document No. 0644589 Line No. 1
| SYSNO 0644589
| 020 125.000 TL
| Yer 1998 Pul 16
| Yazar PTT
| Eser Nagano'98 [grafik] / Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Posta
| Yayım Ankara : PTT, 1998 (Gaye Matbaacılık)
| FizTan | pul ; 40x25 mm
| Not Karışık renkler
| Aksesyon D.M. YOK
| Taban 30
| Dil TUR
| Yay.Yıl 1998

İmleci OK veya TAB ile
kullanın veya ışıklandırılmış karaktere basın
C Devam> B Geri> N Sonraki> P Önceki Q Çık>

Scheme 5. Detailed catalog card and data fields of a stamp.

most well known equivalent of such a catalog in Turkey is of the Pulko Publishing, which annually issues "PULKO" catalogs listing Ottoman and Turkish Republic stamps and banknotes.

4. Conclusion

Stamps are information sources that introduce a proposed idea, communicate an argument, deal with important events, people or products, and inform us about their significance with help of their graphical and textual attributes. The way these attributes are organized, associated, and designed effectively turns the stamp into a work of art. When ability to transfer a message, as an attribute, is added to other attributes, namely being an information source and work of art, it should be clear that the stamp is intended to function as a communication tool. Its different style of expressing the message and the purpose differentiates the stamp from other non-book materials. This, in turn, lays emphasis on the fact that stamps need to be regarded as information storage media rather than just collection material and/or a commodity. The National Library of Turkey, in accordance with the Printed Works and Graphics Compilation Act, successfully managed to add a minimum of one copy of every stamp that was issued since 1934 to its collection. This collection provides users with valuable information on Turkish history, culture, institutions, tourism, and folklore. A study of Turkish stamps issued between 1863 and 2005 may allow someone to approach Turkish history from entirely different perspectives. Revenue stamps in particular tell us about the significant events and days of the past. Commercial value of a stamp on the other hand can give a hint on the national economy. However, despite their remarkable features, stamps and other philatelic materials are not as much used as other library materials.

A stamp is a valuable piece of paper. As a work of art, it brings collectors together. As a communication tool, it connects post offices. And as an information source, it networks libraries and museums.

List of acts and regulation

Turkish	English
Basma Yazı ve Resimleri Derleme Kanunu	→ Depository Law
Türk Harflerinin Kabul ve Tatbiki Hakkında Kanun	→ Act on Recognition and Use of the New Turkish Letters
Milli Kütüphane Kullanıcı Hizmetleri Yönetmeliği	→ The National Library of Turkey User Services Regulation
Milli Kütüphane Kuruluşu Hakkında Kanun	→ Act on the Establishment of the National Library of Turkey

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Mrs. Ruşen Anameriç and Mr. Alaattin Ağcaer for their personal contributions.

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