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Libraries in the Middle East During the Ottoman Empire (1517–1918)

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The region known as the Middle East today is an important historical, strategic area where many of the very first scientific and cultural creations of mankind flourished. The Middle East came under 400 years of domination by the Ottoman Empire beginning in the sixteenth century. Under Ottoman rule the region developed important foundation institutions. These institutions helped develop cities like Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Mecca and Medina. Among these foundation institutions were libraries serving as scientific and cultural centres. These libraries were founded within the mosques and madrasas towards the end of the sixteenth century and played an important role for the scientific and cultural development of the region. According to archival documents and foreign sources the sultan and renowned persons of the region established libraries because they believed in their important role. This study is intended to provide information on their foundation, distribution and development through statistical data about libraries in the region and the specialties of their collections. Furthermore it attempts to clarify the general status of the hitherto unknown foundation libraries of the Ottoman Empire in the region.

Development of Middle East libraries in the period of the Ottoman Empire

The region that is today described as the Middle East included, in the sixteenth century, Iraq, Syria, Israel, Palestine, Hedjaz [1], Necid [2], Oman, Yemen and Hadramut [3]. The region covered the entire Arabian Peninsula and west Iran. However, as far as the period that this study focuses on is concerned, the foundation libraries of the Ottoman Empire [4] according to official archival documents were mostly established in Syria, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Iraq; for this reason, in this study only these places have been chosen for the geographic area.

A great part of the Middle East had been dominated by the Mamluks, until in the first quarter of the sixteenth century the area was captured by the Ottoman Turks who had struggled for sovereignty of especially Syria, Iraq and Egypt since the fifteenth century. As a result of the Ridaniye War (1516) and Mercidabık War (1517) with the Mamluks, the lands from the western border of Egypt to Mosul were added to Ottoman domination by expeditions arranged during the reign of Selim I (1512–1520) for securing the western borders, controlling the Silk Road and Spice Road completely, avoiding the Akkoyunlu threat, capturing Egypt and controlling the Mediterranean trade road. Iraq, Syria and Egypt already had a great cultural, scientific and literary accumulation. Utilizing this accumulation was inevitable for the Ottomans. Firstly, many books in the palaces and big libraries were carried to İstanbul as war spoils. Another important reason for carrying the books to the capital of the empire is the book collecting and library-forming tradition of almost all padishahs (the superlative royal title adopted by the Great Sultans of Turkey) (Ünver 1952). The books taken from these libraries formed the palace library Hizâne-i Amire founded by Selim I after the expeditions. The books from the libraries of Cairo,

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Alexandria and Baghdad are especially important among these works of art (Erünsal 1991; Ergin 1939). Middle-eastern libraries are very rich because of valuable books acquired from Egypt, Syria and Iran, but the same thing cannot be said for books obtained from India, Spain, North Africa and Turkistan. Works from Iran had been brought to Anatolia only until the period of the Safevids in the sixteenth and seventeen centuries, but after that the Iranian works brought to Anatolia were mostly destroyed because of some sect problems.

After 1520, after the death of Selim I, Kanuni Sultan Süleyman [5] ruled over the Ottoman Empire for the longest period of time. The reign of Suleiman I (1520–1566) is a rising period of the Ottoman Empire and the period until 1579 was called the rising period. The reign of Suleiman I is the period during which the Ottoman Empire's political, economical, judicial, military and scientific fields reached the highest level, and the situation allowed for support for cultural, scientific and artistic activities. For this reason it is during this period that the *waqf* system [6] showed the greatest development.

The first libraries founded in the region in the period of Suleiman I were Asitane-i Hz. Ali and the libraries in the Musa Kazım Tombs in Baghdad. Most of the libraries founded in the Ottoman Empire were in the capital, Istanbul, in the period of Suleiman I. Moreover, there is not enough certain information about the foundation of libraries in the Ottoman cities of Middle East. It is, however, known that libraries of various types were founded in Bozcaada, Bursa, Kastamonu, Kayseri, and Merzifon in Turkey, as well as in Mostar (Bosnia), Girit (Crete), and Midilli (Lesbos) before end of the seventeenth century.

The period 1566–1699 [7] was an unproductive period of the Ottoman Empire. The Empire preserved the system founded by Suleiman I until middle of the seventeenth century. An important development then took place in the tradition of the Ottoman librarianship. This development occurred in the architecture and services of the libraries. Until this time, libraries in the Ottoman Empire generally were built in madrasas, mosques and tombs. But the Köprülü Library, founded in Istanbul in 1678, was the first library which was built to utilize classical library services as an independent building. A new architectural type for library buildings emerged in the Ottoman Empire and it was continued with further developments until the collapse of the empire.

The Ottoman Empire's defeats by European united powers [8] caused great economical, social and political crisis in the Empire from the seventeenth century. The economic problems beginning in the country negatively affected the waqfs which had been providing the basic financial sources for libraries. In this period, instead of hospitals and imarets (hospices) which had great annual expenses, libraries and public fountains were in greater demand. It is ironic that the economical crisis of the Ottoman Empire in this period affected education and libraries positively and caused the increase of these institutions which lived on grants and *waqf* system.

As understood from documents in the archives, there were libraries among the waqfs institutions founded by Merzifonlu Kara Mustapha Pasha who was the grand vizier between 1676–1683, but when and where these libraries were founded are not clear (İstanbul (a), (b)) [9]. However, the first library recorded in the charters of the waqfs and yearbooks for the period of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East is the library which was founded by Nuri Pasha al-Kilani (Geylani-zade) in Hama (in modern Syria) in 1722 (Emsen 1970; Erünsal 1991; Sibai 1987).

Information regarding the libraries established after the above-mentioned can be found in Table 1, which has been compiled with the help of indigenous and archival records.

As can be seen in Table 1, the date of establishment of many of the libraries cannot be establidhed. Most of these libraries were created with the collections of private owners of books and/or smaller collections according to the information obtained from a study of archival records. The known shortage of books and the inability to ascertain the sites of these libraries strengthen the likelihood that the libraries were created from such collections. From archival documents used in this study and Sibai's work (1987), we can see that some of the libraries, however, were opened in the madrasas, which were the main educational institutions in the Ottoman Empire, as well as in the mosques, which were both worshipping and educational institutions. It is apparent that some of the libraries listed in Table 1 began in buildings erected as foundation buildings. Although the authors failed to access to any information about these foundations' buildings or when they were estab-

Table 1: The libraries founded in Akka, Aleppo, Baghdad, Hama, Mecca, and Medina

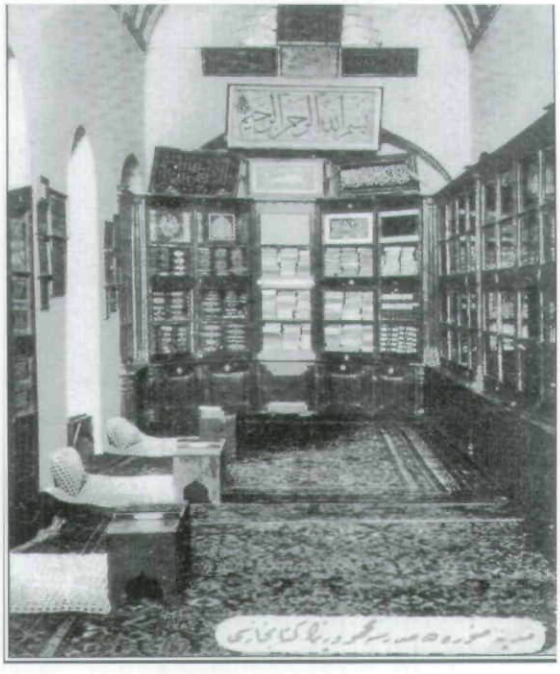
Location	Name of Library	Founder	Date of Foundation	Book Number
Hama	Nuriya	Nuri Pasha al-Kilani	1134/1722	600
Aleppo	Osmaniye Madrasa Lib.	Osman Pasha	1142/1730–31	1242
Medina Lib.	Hajj Bashir Agha Madrasa	Hajj Bashir Agha	1152/1739	1000*
Aleppo	Ahmediye	Tahazade Ahmed Afandi	1165/1752	1467
Baghdad	Ahmed Kahya Mosque	Ahmed Kahya	1209/1795	53
Jerusalem/Yafa	in Great Mosque	Mehmed Pasha	1227–8/1813–14	263
Baghdad	Nazende Khatun	Nazende Khatun	1237/1822	91
Medina	Mahmudiya	Mahmud II	1237/1822	1500*
Aleppo	İsmailiyye	İsmail Pasha	1255/1839	51
Aleppo	Bahaiyye	Baha al-Din Afandi	1262/1846	70
Mecca	Mahmudiya	Abd al-Majid	1264–65/1848–49	Unknown
Medina	Arif Hikmet Bey	Ahmed Arif Hikmet Bey	1271–72/1855	5000
Damascus	Kütübhane-i Umumi	Unknown	1295/1878	1295
Baghdad	Maarif Library	Admin. of Education	1297/1880	1244
Aleppo	Vakfiye	Sheikh Yemani	1300/1883	120
Aleppo	Sheikh Abdurrahman	Sheikh Abdurrahman	1303/1885–86	50
Jerusalem/Gaza	El-Mektebu'l Khalidiya	Hajj Ragıb Khalidi Afandi	1304/1886–87	2168
Aleppo	in Great Mosque	Hajj Mahmud Afandi	1305/1887–88	807
Aleppo/Bab	Saidiy Abdullahzade e	Sheikh Mehmet Afandi	1311/1894–95	165
Taif	Ibn Abbas Madrasa Lib.	Ibn Abbas	1318–19/1901–02	Unknown
Akka (Acre)	Akka	Mehmet Bey	Unknown	Unknown
Baghdad	Naile Khatun	Naile Khatun	Unknown	205
Badhdad	Davud Pasha	Davud Pasha	Unknown	655
Baghdad	Tabakçı Mehmet Afandi	Mehmed Afandi	Unknown	470
Baghdad	Mustafa Selim	Mustafa Selim	Unknown	93
Baghdad	Adile Khatun	Adile Khatun	Unknown	57
Baghdad	Seyyid Suleiman	Nakib Seyyid Suleiman Afandi	Unknown	1635
Baghdad	Azamiya	Admin. of Foundations	Unknown	243
Baghdad	Suleiman Pasha	Suleiman Pasha	Unknown	178
Aleppo	Mevelviya	Unknown	Unknown	228
Aleppo	Kurnahiya	Unknown	Unknown	21
Aleppo	Şehabiye/Şahabiye	Hajj Bekir Shahab	Unknown	77
Aleppo	Kiyalizade	Kiyalizade	Unknown	350
Aleppo /İdlip	Murtenizade	Murtenizade	Unknown	350
Aleppo /İdlip	Mufti Afandi	Ayaşzade	Unknown	600
Aleppo /İdlip	Fenarizade	Yusuf Afandi	Unknown	1200
Aleppo /İdlip	Cevheri	Cevherizade	Unknown	300
Aleppo /İdlip	Sheikh Abd al-Fettah	Sheikh Abd al-Fettah	Unknown	300
Aleppo /İdlip	Hamidanizade	Hamidanizade	Unknown	350
Aleppo /İdlip	Sheikh Dipzade (Deribzade)	Sheikh Dipzade (Deribzade)	Unknown	650
Aleppo /İdlip	Abdülkerimzade	Hajj Ahmed Agha	Unknown	350
Aleppo /İdlip	Keyalizade	Keyalizade	Unknown	350
Jerusalem/Gaza	Mufti	Mufti Muh al-Din Afandi	Unknown	210

* The libraries whose number of books is not explicit.

lished, it can be concluded from various archival records that those who set up the libraries were the owners of the foundations, and libraries were housed in these foundation institutions.

Although we have a little information about the libraries in Table 1 that is unclear, we can note the Mekteb-i Umumiye Library in Damascus, and, in Saudi Arabia, the Arif Hikmet Bey Library and Ravzai Mutahhare Library in Medina, and Ibn Abbas Mosque and Madrasa Libraries in Taif (Ünver 1973). These libraries began to be established during the reign of Ahmed III (1703–1730). For the great majority of the libraries shown in the Table 1, we have some information regarding the

Fig. 1 Mahmudiye Madrasa Library was found by Mahmut II in 1822 in Medina. Note on picture *"Medine-i Münevvere'de Medrese-i Mahmudiye'nin Kitabhanesi"*



libraries establishment, and the number and the list of the books donated to the library. In the waqfiyye (endowment deeds) of the mosque, madrasa and library established by Osman Pasha between the years 1730 and 1731 in Aleppo, there is a list of the books donated to the library (Vezir 1730/31). In the waqfiyye of the Hajj Bashir Agha's Madrasa in Medina dated 1739 there is a list of the books that he donated to the library. Hajj Bashir Agha had also foundation buildings in Baghdad and İstanbul (Hacı Beşir 1739). The period of Ahmed III had a different determinant role in the development of libraries. In this period, the first formal printing house was founded by İbrahim Müteferrika and Mehmet Sait Afandi in 1726. But there were some limitations about the books which would be printed in the decree and fatwa obtained from the Sultan Ahmed III and Sheikh-ul-Islam Abdullah Afandi in order to start and run the printing house. Of course, these limitations were carried out in all the regions the Ottoman Empire dominated. With the start of the use of the printing press, library collections also included printed works along with traditional manuscripts.

As seen in Table 1, libraries in the Middle East developed in the beginning of the eighteenth century. However, there is a possibility that the establishment of Maarif Library and Azamiye Library in Baghdad and Kütüphane-i Umumi in Damascus might be sponsored by governmental institutions. The other two libraries in the region were the libraries established by Mahmud II (1808–1839) on his name both in Mecca and Medina (1822, see Figure 1). However, the opening year of the Mahmudiya Library in Mecca coincides with the Abd al-Majid's period (1839–1861). According to two documents in the Ottoman Archives, the construction of the complex in Mecca started in 1847. It was constructed in the name of Mahmud II and included a madrasa, a library and a fountain. In two documents dated 8 February, 1848 and 14 May, 1848 it was reported that the construction work was underway (Mekke 1847; Müberat 1848; Mekke-i 1848).

In an archival record regarding the library which belonged to the old Representative of the Sherif of Mecca at İstanbul (Nakibü'l-eşraf) Seyyid Ali Afandi's foundation in Baghdad, the library which was established by his wife Ulviye Atike Hanim in 1848 was confiscated by Seyyid Ali Afandi, but it was later returned to the owner with a decree (Merhum 1848). This document shows that the library was established in the first half of nineteenth century.

Arif Hikmet Bey (1786–1859) served as the Chief Religious Official (Sheikh-ul-islam) between the years 1846–1854 and had some foundation buildings built in various regions of the Ottoman State. Among these there is a library bearing his name and constructed in Medina in 1855. Of the libraries established by the Ottoman State in its Middle East states, the Arif Hikmet Bey Library had the largest collection. As we understand from the archive documents Arif Hikmet Bey was restored on 1 December, 1895 (Sabık 1895). According to the archive documents it was still functioning in 1943, and the last catalogue was prepared in 1984 (Medine'de; Aydın 1990).

Apart from the libraries shown in Table 1, we need to examine the libraries established inside such foundation institutions as mosques and caravanserais in other cities in the Middle East. In the formation of these libraries in the mosques two basic approaches were observed. The first one was the owners of these foundation donated books to the libraries, and the other one is the collection of the books in the library was augmented through donations after the libraries were established.

According to Sibai (1987), in Sheikh İbrahim Mosque in Hama there were many books belonging

to Nuri Pasha al-Kilani. In the same way, Abu al-Fida, the governor of the time, donated a great number of books to Dahsha Mosque, which was in Hama and contained one of the oldest collections.

The most important mosque library in the region was the Library of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. The library of the mosque contained valuable books through the donations of various people over the years. The library evolved in time through donations, but the arrangement of the books remained chaotic. Attempts to arrange the books were made several times, but to no avail. Thus, the books in the mosque were transferred to the treasure of the city known as bayt al-mal (beyt-ül-mal). It resisted threats from natural disasters and wars that occurred through the eighteenth century and it remained closed until the end of nineteenth century. In the Ottoman period the library of the mosque came to the fore with an interesting event. During the German Emperor Wilhelm II's visit to the Holy Land, as a result of a plea to Abd al-Hamid II, khizana al-kutub (hizane-i kütüb) in Umayyad Mosque was opened. This library contained sections of the Holy Quran written on parchment, theology, and literary works related to Christianity, Homer's poems, and other books written in various languages. Some of the books found here were given to Wilhelm II as presents, some of them were shared among the dignitaries in İstanbul and Damascus, and a small portion of them were dispatched to the National Archives in Damascus (Sibai 1987).

One of the important libraries in the region is the Sharawani Library, which was opened by Sharawani-zade Mehmed Rushdu Pasha (1829–1874), the Hedjaz governor, in 1874. This library contained mainly grammar, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), literature and history books written in Urdu, Javanese, Persian, and Turkish (Sibai 1987). The library known as Suleimaniya opened in Mecca Sacred Mosque is one of the most renowned and well-known libraries in the region. Abd al-Majid sent scores of books to this library from Istanbul. However, as a result of a flood that occurred in 1861, the library in the mosque was damaged extensively. The damaged books storage section was repaired and re-opened in 1881 (Sibai 1987).

According to Sibai (1987), Ottoman Sultans Mahmud I (1730–1754) and Abd al-Hamid I (1774–1789) established libraries bearing their names in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. The Mahmudiya Library contains about 4.600 books sent by Mahmud I, and Hamidiya Library contains about 1.700 books. In the same way, the existence of Hajj Bashir Agha Madrasa Library is verified in Ottoman archive documents (Sibai 1987). Among the libraries in Baghdad, one of the important cities of the region, is Qablaniya Mosque Library, which was built on a site, where a former madrasa building stood, by Qablan Mustapha Pasha, who was the Baghdad governor between the years 1676–1681. This library contains 600 works (Sibai 1987).

Some of the libraries founded in the region in the Ottoman Empire are in Jerusalem, which is an important centre. In Table 1, it is seen that there are three libraries in Jerusalem. The most important and the biggest one is the Khalidiye Library which also relates to the scientific and intellectual life in Jerusalem, as Al-Khalidi (2000), Schidovsky (1998), Lawrence (2000) and Al-Asali (2000) mention. There are mostly books on history, religion and literature in the library of the madrasa called with the same name. This library is also the library which has continued its existence for the longest time. The first formal catalogue of this library was prepared in 1900 and its first waqfiyya was prepared in 1904 (Lawrence 2000).

Another important special (private) library in Jerusalem is the Aksa Library. The Aksa Library consists of three main collections; Dar al- Kutub al-Masjid al-Aksa, a part of Sheikh Muhammad al-Khalili Library and a part of Sheikh Khalil al-Khalidi Library. The Aksa Library is one of the examples of mosque libraries which are frequently found in the region. The library has a rich collection on Islamic sciences, Arabic language, history, mathematics and astronomy. The foundation date of the library is not known. Like Aksa Library, other libraries received important grants from Ottoman statesmen (Al-Asali 2000; Pedersen 1984).

Besides these libraries, there are libraries founded in the basic educational institutions of the Ottoman Empire. These are: the Library of Ashrafiya Madrasa which kept its existence from the XVth century to the XVIIth century and the Library of Kadiriye Madrasa which received book grants from Shahab al-Din Antaki in 1538 (Al-Khalidi 2000).

Important administrative changes happened to the Ottoman libraries in the reign of Tanzimat (1839–1876). Management of those libraries founded mostly as *waqf* libraries – especially Sultans'- were left to Grand Viziers, *sheikh-ul-islams*, and *kadis*. But these processes were done in a quite

Table 2: Libraries founded in Vilayat-ı Şahane (in all of Ottoman cities/provinces): the number of libraries and books in the centres of the Ottoman Empire outside Istanbul between 1894–1896.

Place	No. of libraries	No. of printed books	No. of manuscripts
Aleppo	12	5035	562
Baghdad	11	2804	3009
Damascus	1	2530	748
Hama	1	11	5
Jerusalem	1	473	—
Kirkuk	13	3140	2330
Mosul	21	2099	533
Sulaymaniyah	2	1100	300
Total	62	17192	7487

complex and difficult way. For this reason, a management department was organized for running and controlling every kind of library in the reign of Mahmud II, and in 1826 Evkaf-ı Hümayun Nezareti (Ministry of Foundations) was established. After that the waqf managements of Mecca and Medina were united, and Haremeyn-i Hümayun Nezareti (Ministry Reponsible for Mecca and Medina) was founded and in 1838 it was joined to Evkaf-ı Hümayun Nezareti. This ministry continued until 1921. In 1857 Maarif Nezareti (Ministry of Education) was founded; in 1869, after publishing Maarif-i Umumi Nizamnamesi (Regulations of General Education) by Maarif Nezareti, the libraries were turned over to Maarif Nezareti. In 1885 management of libraries and supervision of librarians were turned over to Kütüphaneler Müfettişliği (Inspectorship of Libraries) in Maarif Nezareti.

The foundation dates, founders, location and the numbers of books of libraries in the states/regions shown in Table 2 reveal some interesting differences. The most important studies containing numerical information about Ottoman libraries, including number of libraries, books, and names of libraries erected in different Ottoman cities in the Middle East provinces, are the reports with statistical figures for the various schools and libraries under the control of Maarif-i Umumi Nezareti in 1894/1895 and 1895/1896 in the reign of Abd al-Hamid II (1876–1908). The information about the libraries and number of the books in Middle East provinces of the Ottoman Empire that appears in Table 2 has been taken from these studies.

There are interesting similarities and also important differences seen between Table 1 and Table 2. There are 43 libraries listed in Table 1 between 1722 and 1900 (including those whose foundation dates are not known). But this same number in Table 2 is 26 for the libraries in Table 1. The number of the libraries in Mosul, Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah in Table 2 differs from Table 1 (Maarif-i 1901a, 1901b).

We can see that interest in the region increased in the reign of Mahmud II. Libraries attracted their fair share of support due to this interest. It is possible to see explicitly in some archive documents. For example, the incomes of the mulberry and olive gardens of Sheikh-ul-islam Arif Hikmet Bey were reserved for the library he founded in Medina (Şeyhülislam 1854). Various civil servants were appointed to the libraries in the region, various arrangements and regulations were prepared, and some money was allocated for the foundation and / or repair of the libraries: on 10 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1300 (19 March, 1883) a librarian [10] and a *bevvab* [11] were appointed to a library founded in Syria province (Suriye 1883); on 12 Zilhicce 1252 (20 March, 1837) Mehmed Emin Afandi was appointed as *hafız-ı kütüb* to the Mahmudiya Madrasa Library founded in Medina by Hatt-ı Hümayun of Mahmud II (Medine-i 1837); in a document dated 12 Şaban 1298 (10 July, 1881) a regulations book was sent to the library founded in Damascus (Şam 1881); and, on 26 Cemaziü'l-evvel 1333 (11 April, 1915) appropriating funds from the budget of 1332 (1914) for founding Kütüphane-i Umumi (Public Province Library) in Kastamonu, Trabzon, Hedjaz, Kale-i Sultaniye (Çanakkale-Dardanelles) and Urfa were requested by Dahiliye Nezareti Umur-ı Mahalliye ve Vilayat Müdürlüğü (Directorate of Municipality of Ministry of Internal Affairs) (Kastamonu 1914).

Establishing a research committee that would be charged with the duty of repairing the library belonging to the Kaba, which had been ignored during the repair and arrangement of the Kaba, and founding a new library by Hedjaz Province and Mecca Emirate was agreeded and it was requested that the results should be sent to Istanbul (Kabe-i 1873). The libraries of the region were affected by the missionary activities which started to increase in the end of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1893, a regulation was issued to close the libraries opened by American and English missionaries in Basra and forbid the delivery of harmful books and other publications (Basra 1893). Another document states that the books about Syria and Palestine in the educational institutions, which were confiscated by Maarif Nezareti (Ministry of Education), should be sent to Police Headquarters whenever asked for (Beyrut'ta 1916).

During the period of the Ottoman Empire, most of the libraries in different regions were usually established in the *madrasas*, that is in the basic educational institutions of the Ottoman Empire and the whole Islamic World, where they functioned as research libraries. Furthermore, the libraries founded in mosques, mescids and other places of worship functioned as public libraries. The religious books in the libraries were usually in Arabic or Turkish (Ottoman); the variety of subjects included *fiqh* (Muslim canonical jurisprudence), the *Quran*, *hadith* (doctrines based on interpretations of the Prophet Muhammad's sayings), mathematics, astronomy, literature, history, geography and geometry. From the reign of Tanzimat (from the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century), sources about sciences such as botany, veterinary, pharmacy, medicine, agriculture, geology started to be acquired by the libraries in addition to the religious subjects as an effect of the westernization process. There were about 500 library collections found in the last serious study carried out between 1894 and 1896. According to documents in the Ottoman Archives, the last library founded in the region was the Library of Ibn Abbas Madrasa (Taif 1902).

An important influence in the history of librarianship was the concept of Turkism, formed by the İttihat ve Terakki Fırkası (Union and Progress Society), which dominated political life during the late Ottoman period. The political parties of the period – especially İttihat ve Terakki Fırkası – stated in their party programmes that they would attempt to found a national library. İttihat ve Terakki Fırkası, which had an important place in Ottoman political life between 1908 and 1918, took the work of founding, managing, developing and widening libraries in their political programmes of social and cultural fields in the IVth Congress in 1911; they proposed this to the government and so they formalised these processes (Soysal 1981). The need for founding a national library was stated in the 44th article of the section titled Kısm-ı Maarif (Education Section) in the political programme accepted in 1913: "Formation of a Encümen-i Daniş (Advisory Council) for developing our national life of knowledge healthily, appointment of a Committee for compiling various books for teaching, formation of a translation council for translating important works of foreigners into our language, improvements and continuation of order of all libraries and foundation of a perfect national library in the capital city will be suggested" (Tunaya 1984, vol 2, 110; Soysal 1981, 1117). Furthermore, foundation of a national library was emphasized again among the desired changes wanted in the political programme in the VIIIth Congress of 1917 (Tunaya 1984). Other parties founded in that period included this matter in their political programmes and by-laws, and the newspapers and magazines with different political views published articles on this matter.

The Middle East became a region in which major conflict occurred during the First World War, 1914–1918. Important battles were fought between Britain and the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1918. Of course, after four violent years of war in the region, most of the above mentioned libraries and buildings were destroyed, and their collections were scattered or disappeared. However, no source has been found revealing how the libraries in the region were affected by these battles. The last sources about the libraries in the region are the Salname (yearbooks) recording formal processes, important events and various statistics relating to a particular city, region and/or province in a year, that were were prepared by Memurin-i Mülkiye Komisyonu Sicill-i Ahval Daire-i Umumiyesi (Comission for Civil Servants, General Directorate of Registration) and Maarif Nezareti (Ministry of Education). The last of these was prepared in 1918. Moreover, the important centres in the region such as Mosul, Basra, Baghdad, Beirut and Aleppo published their

own yearbooks [12]. After the end of the First World War in 1918, the Ottoman Empire lost the whole Middle East, and Great Britain and France replaced her following the Armistice of Mudros (Mondros) on 30 October, 1918.

Conclusion

In that part of the Middle East dominated by the Ottoman Empire for almost 400 years, the tradition of libraries lived through *waqfs* and with the Turkish, Arab and Ottoman citizens who had *waqf* lands, all of whom tried to continue and develop libraries. The libraries which had continued their existences as *waqf* institutions until the nineteenth century began to become rich libraries supporting education besides other *waqf* works, reflecting the interests of the Ottoman padishahs during the nineteenth century. As the Ministries were established in the Ottoman Empire, libraries started to be founded with state aid but they would not become as effective or as many in number as the *waqf* libraries.

The Middle East had had a determinant role in almost every period of history until 1918. While the Middle East had become a nurturing place for many developments and innovations guiding the history of the world, the libraries in this region played another valuable role in the history of the region. The Ottoman Empire carried this responsibility between 1517 and 1918. The support for founding a library, especially a public province library *(kütübhane-i umumi)*, in the region, even in the years of the First World War, is proof of the strength of this tradition.

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Notes

1. Today, the Hedjaz would be described as the area covered by the west and south-west of Arabian Peninsula.
2. Today, the Necid would be described as the area covered by the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain.
3. Today, the Hadramaut would be described as the area covered by Yemen and Oman.
4. In the Ottoman Empire, the libraries founded were in Dersaadet (İstanbul), Avrupa-yı Osmani (Rumelia), Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid (Aegean Islands), Anatolia (Turkey), Hedjaz (Saudi Arabia), Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Necid provinces.
5. Suleiman I. He is known as Suleiman the Magnificent in the European sources. After this, Suleiman I will use instead of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman in this paper.
6. *Waqf* is an inalienable religious endowment in Islam, typically devoting a building or plot of land for Muslim religious or charitable purposes. The *waqfs* which have had profound effects upon the socio-economic life of Islamic societies especially the Ottoman Empire were organized as religious and legal institutions. According to Ottoman state politics the sultan and his men were primarily responsible for the security of life and property of the citizens. They set up a system which would provide justice and socio-economic regulations for the goodness of the Ottoman citizens. The affairs of education, culture, health and social services were executed by the organizations that influenced every fields of social life under the name of *waqf*. The social order was provided by founding and building structures like hospital, bridge, fountain, madrasa, and so on. As a result the *waqf* institutions extended to the furthest village in the empire became an important factor determining religious, social and economic structures of the state. See. *Vakfiye Tuğraları: The Tughras of Vaqfiyya*, Edited by İsmet Keten and Mehmet Nuri Şahin, Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü, Ankara, 2004, pp. 13–15.
7. It includes the years between the death of Suleiman I and Karlofça Teaty (Karlowitz).
8. The wars and Karlofça (1699), İstanbul (1700) treaties made with Austria, Venice, Poland and Russia.
9. DAGM. OADB. EV. HMH. d.:-1/-1/8664; DAGM. OADB. EV. HMH. d.:-1/-1/7432.
10. *Hafız-ı kütüb* was the term used in that period.
11. Doorkeeper or watchman responsible for security of the libraries.
12. The last yearbooks were published in 1896 in Basra, in 1907 in Mosul, in 1908 in Aleppo, in 1911 in Baghdad, and in 1918 in Beirut.

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İstanbul, Merzifon, Halep, İzmir, Mudanya, Edirne ve İncesu'da bulunan Vezir Merzifoni Kara Mustafa Paşa camileri, mescitleri, darülhadis, mektep ve kütüphane evkafı mahsulat ve ihracat muhasebesi [Cumulative incomes and outgoings accounts codex of foundations of Grandvizier Merzifoni Kara Mustafa Pasha including mosques, masdjits, darulhadiths, schools and libraries in İstanbul, Merzifon, Aleppo, İzmir, Mudanya, Edirne and İncesu]. DAGM. OADB. EV.HMH. d.:-1/-1/8664. (b)

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List of abreviations

DAGM: Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü – General Directorate of Turkish State Archives (GDTSA)

DH..UMVM.: Dahiliye Nezareti Umur-ı Mahalliye ve Vilayat Müdürlüğü – Ministry of Domestic Affairs, General Directorate of Municipalities

EV..HMH.: Evkaf Defterleri – Foundation Records

HAT.: Hatt-ı Hümayun – Fermans of the Sultans

İ..DH.: İradeler / Dahiliye Nezareti – Decrees / Ministry of Internal Affairs

İ..MVL.: İradeler / Meclis-i Vala – Decrees / Parliament

OADB: Osmanlı Arşivleri Daire Başkanlığı – Directorate of Ottoman Archives

VGMA: Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi – Archive of General Directorate of Foundations

Y.. EE.: Yıldız Esas Evrakı – Records of Yıldız Palace (A kind of fund in GDTSA)

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