

## **The Plane Tree Turns Fifty: a History of the Department of Librarianship at Ankara University**

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In the years immediately following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in the early 20th century, there were significant developments, including those in the field of librarianship. The emergence of a modern democratic state and way of life included the Act on Unification in Education, which was adopted on March 3, 1924 . Because of this act, books that had been housed in various libraries and foundations were transferred to the Ministry of Education (Ersoy, 1962: 23). John Dewey, who had been invited to Turkey to examine the country's educational system. Dewey prepared a report that also contained some views on the training of librarians in Turkey and the suggestion to select a few to have training in librarianship in the US (Dewey, 1939; Ersoy and Yurdadog, 1963).

### **Initiatives**

#### **"Training courses"**

In the same period, Fehmi Ethem Karatay, who studied librarianship in Paris, can be considered the first representative of modern librarianship in Turkey. While in Paris, Karatay first studied in the *Ecole des Chartes*, which focused on training archivists, and then completed his studies at the *Ecole de Bibliothecaires*, an international school with an excellent reputation, founded in 1923 by the American Library Association. Karatay learned the basics of librarianship at this one-year school (Karatay, 1968: 73-74). Returning to Turkey, he established the library of Istanbul University and began the first

training course in 1925-26 for librarians in the libraries of Istanbul. (Stummvoll, 1962: 45; Ötüken, 1957b: 1; Carnovsky, 1949: 73; Ersoy and Yurdadog, 1963).

Also important is the report on existing public libraries, dated 1926, prepared by Hamit Zübeyr Kosay, who was then the Culture Director in the Ministry of Education, and presented to the Ministry. In his report, Kosay emphasizes the following: the impossibility of having good libraries without first having well-educated librarians; the need for original or translated materials focusing on library management; and the need for introducing courses in librarianship and creating library science programs in universities (Kosay, 1960: 37).

The "Libraries Classification Commission" was set up in 1935 by the Ministry of Education to prepare the printed catalogue of manuscripts in the libraries of Istanbul. The report of this commission comments on the need for educated librarians in Turkey. The commission was first chaired by Prof. Helmut Ritter, and then by M. Cevdet Inançalp. In his report, Ritter states that librarians can be divided into three groups. The first group is "university graduate librarians completing a specific branch in higher education and practicing in a library for some period of time." The second group is librarians who have some of the qualifications of the first group, and the third group consists of others who have had no university education in this field (Ötüken, 1957a: 43). Inançalp states that, "unless special importance is attached to staffing in libraries which, beyond academic posts, serve historians, men of literature, students in philosophy, positive scientists and all faculty staff in short, any method adopted will last at most for three days" (Inançalp, 1955: 192). Ritter also recommends selecting talented young scholars for further education and practice in European libraries.

Following Karatay's program, the second course in librarianship in Turkey was initiated by Dr. Joseph Stummvoll in 1936 at the library of the Higher Institute for Agriculture. Dr. Stummvoll was an expert from the *Deutsche Bücherei* in Leipzig and his mission was to develop a library for the Institute. His course continued for three months and attended by 30-40 participants (Ötüken, 1957b: 6; Stummvoll, 1962: 45). This short-lived course confirmed Inançalp's earlier diagnosis in that our libraries were still trapped by methods effective for only three days.

In 1939 there were significant developments in librarianship in Turkey. The first Education Council convened that year and included Aziz Berker, the Director (a post now called General Director) of Libraries at that time, Mehmet Emin Erisirgil, the Dean of the Faculty of Political Sciences (former head of the Education and Training Department) who described that need to assign a respectable status to librarianship in the country. A draft law for the training of qualified librarians in adequate numbers was prepared in 1941 by a commission working under the Presidency of Istanbul University and sent to the Directorate of Libraries. The draft came at the same time as a proposal to establish an Institute of Librarianship within the Faculty of Literature, Istanbul University (Ersoy, 1966: 21). That proposal did not come to fruition for 13 years, and then it was established in the Faculty of Letters, Ankara University. In years to follow, Berker describes the establishment of the Institute at Ankara University as a promising step forward and also a sign that a significant stage was attained in the overall approach to science (Berker, 1957: 21). Meanwhile Ersoy reminds us of the position of the Minister of Finance on the draft law on the establishment of a National Library in Turkey, which also proposed a school for librarians, stating that, "[t]he rationale behind the suggestion for establishing a school for such a simple service as librarianship could not be perceived." (Ersoy, 1966: 22; Ötüken, 1979b: 13).

The years from 1945-1956 saw the appearance of some short-lived library programs and courses. These include the "course for public servants in the libraries of People's Houses" launched in the spring of 1945; "courses offered by the Directorate of Libraries"; courses for those working in libraries with manuscripts launched in 1952; two courses for "children's libraries" attended by teachers in the period 1954-1956 and the "course in librarianship" given by the Gazi Training College (Ötüken, 1957b: 33-34). These courses played a role in the recognition of librarianship as a distinct profession in Turkey, but the first regular and longer-term education in librarianship began through the initiative of [Adnan Ötüken](#) at Ankara University from 1942 to 1952 (Ötüken, 1957b: 9, 24). Ötüken was then working in the Classification Commission established in 1935. A graduate of the Faculty of Literature, Istanbul University, Ötüken was sent to Germany to conduct further studies in librarianship (Ötüken, 1957a: 37-38).

Ankara's library program continued until 1951 and those who successfully completed these courses were given their certificates. In

1951, Ötüken was officially informed that his program was being cancelled, because its very small budget "had to be transferred to another desk" at the same school. Ötüken requested that the courses continue at least until the end of the term, so that students could complete their courses, adding that he would teach without being paid. His appeal was accepted (Ötüken, 1957b: 23-24).

### **"Elective Course" at Ankara University**

Shortly after, in 1952, through the efforts of few academics who understood the importance of education for librarianship, the Board of Professors reinstated librarianship as an "elective course" under the Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Ankara University (Ötüken, 1957b: 25).

In 1951, Dr. Lawrence Sidney Thompson from the University of Kentucky visited Turkey upon invitation of the Ministry of Education. After conducting observations on libraries in Turkey, Dr. Thompson prepared a report titled "Programme for Library Development in Turkey." His report represents a significant milestone for the history of librarianship in Turkey and is a justification for the establishment of education for librarianship at a higher level of education. Thompson recommended establishing a library school in either of two large Universities (Ankara and Istanbul) or in both. Thompson further administered courses titled "Basics of Librarianship" in Ankara and Istanbul from December 1951 to February 1952 (Thompson, 1952: 99).

The twice-a-week courses, which took place at the National Library, covered the following topics: "library types", "book selection and ordering", "classification", "descriptive cataloguing and subject headings", "loan services and reference services", "library services for children, schools, universities and special user groups". The notes from these courses were translated into Turkish and mimeographed, and were later put together in the first "American style" textbook in Turkey. In addition, courses also covered "music libraries", "problems with serials and public records in research libraries", "publishing and booksellers", "children's libraries" and "hospital libraries", but these were not translated into Turkish. Thompson also identified basic reference sources in Turkish. This work was later published in the *Bulletin of the Turkish Librarians' Association* (now *Turkish Librarianship Association*) (Türk Kütüphaneciligine hizmet

eden., 1952a: 151-152). During Thompson's stay in Turkey, especially while he was in Ankara, he was accompanied by Emily Dean, who was then the librarian of the United States Information Agency.

In 1952, Henri Frederic Raux, one of the managers of the Paris National Library, spent a year in Turkey to set up the Institute of Bibliography and Bibliographic Control Service in the National Library, under a special agreement with the Ministry of National Education and the UNESCO Centre. Raux organised two separate courses in bibliography for the students of librarianship and for professional librarians in Ankara (Ötüken, 1979b: 35).

In 1953, librarianship was introduced as an elective course under the Department of Turkish Language and Literature, and the foundations of the Institute of Librarianship were laid. Prof. Akdes Nimet Kurat, the Dean of the Faculty, and Prof. Afet Inan were important figures who supported the idea, and the project also had financial support from the Ford Foundation (Ötüken, 1957b: 25-26).

### **Institute of Librarianship**

Emily Dean, of the American Library in Ankara, helped establish librarianship as a distinct academic branch. Stressing the need for a library school in Ankara University, Dean stated, "in Turkey librarianship is not classed as a profession, and the librarian is often looked on as a menial who take care of the books. Until well-trained librarians are available in considerable numbers, libraries in Turkey can not be reorganized or improved." (Scepanski, 2004: 4). Dean suggested establishing a librarianship institute in the Faculty of Political Sciences and applied to the Ford Foundation for assistance. Despite the Foundations' positive response, the Faculty of Political Sciences declined, citing other priorities and an inadequate budget. The idea was then proposed to the Faculty of Letters (Altundag , 1960: 7-12).

Because libraries have a role in shaping the future of nations, the US had earlier, while the US army occupied Japan, prepared a Ford Foundation project to establish librarianship as a field of study in higher education in Japan. Following its experience in Tokyo, the Foundation presented its Ankara Project to ALA and ALA then set up a committee in Ankara to carry out the project (Ötüken, 1957b: 25-26; Ersoy and Yurdadog, 1963; Karakas, 1999: 378-379). The Institute of

Librarianship of the Faculty of Letters opened in the first semester of the academic year 1954-1955, with courses taught by Adnan Ötüken.

Prof. Robert Bingham Downs, Director of Libraries at the University of Illinois, as well as a faculty member in the library school there, was sent to Turkey in November 1954 by the Ford Foundation, and began teaching the second semester of that year. Downs describes this school as, "the first to teach librarianship in the Near and Middle East" (Downs, 1956: 260).

Downs returned to the US in 1955 and the Ford Foundation sent Prof. Elmer Mori Grieder, of Stanford University. Grieder remained at the Institute until 1957. Grieder's colleagues included Adnan Ötüken and Berin U. Yurdadog who had been recruited to the Institute as an assistant in 1955 (Ötüken, 1957b: 27-28; Haberler 1955: 165).

Osman Ersoy, who became an assistant professor at the Institute in 1955, was sent to the University of Chicago library school on a scholarship from the Ford Foundation, returning to teach at the Institute in 1956. In 1957 both Grieder and Adnan Ötüken left the Institute, and in September 1957 Dr. Lewis F. Stieg was appointed to the faculty (Haberler, 1957: 131,133), followed in 1958 by Norris McClellan (Ersoy, 1959b: 76).

In 1958 the Institute of Librarianship had its first graduates and an "Emily Dean Thesis Award" was awarded to three students (Haberler, 1958: 182; Ersoy and Yurdadog: 1963) Stieg left the country in June 1959 and Norris McClellan in July of the same year (Ersoy, 1959b: 76, 78).

## **Department of Librarianship**

The most significant event in 1960 was the decision by the Board of Universities to convert the Institute of Librarianship into a "department," on the ground that the Institute was not equipped to for advanced degrees (Haberler, 1960: 81). The new curriculum for the Department of Librarianship was adopted in July 1960 ( Final Report from 1962: 573). In 1960, courses in librarianship began to be offered for the first time at secondary school level (Haberler, 1960: 188).

Dr. Carl Milton White and Prof. Anne Ethelyn Markley, who were the last academic staff visiting Turkey through the Ford Foundation,

began teaching in the academic year 1959-60 and left Turkey in June 1961 (Haberler, 1961: 88-89). The teaching programme that continued with Ford Foundation support until 1961 kept going, after 1961, with the contribution of academic staff sent through the Fulbright Foundation (Ersoy, 1969: 228).

On 23 September 1961, Miss [Nance O'Neill](#) arrived in Ankara through the Fulbright assistance as "specialist" in the Department of Librarianship (Haberler, 1961: 154). She taught "school libraries", "public libraries", "children's literature" and "principles of books selection" and left the country on at the end of the academic year (Haberler, 1963: 73). She was replaced by [Dr. Ralph Hopp](#) (Haberler, 1963a: 73). The next year, [Dr. Arthur Monroe McAnally](#) replaced Hopp (Haberler, 1963b: 239; Haberler, 1963c: 236). Finally, in 1964, McAnally returned to the US at the end of the school year (Sefercioglu, 1969b: 174). Turkish scholars succeeded their American colleagues, and have taught at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels at Ankara University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Librarianship, since 1964.

## **Conclusion**

The profession of librarianship in Turkey now enjoys an educational system that meets international standards, thanks to the efforts of both national and expatriate colleagues, scholars and academic staff. The Department of Librarianship (now called the Department of Information and Records Management) at Ankara University is now a huge plane tree celebrating its 50th year. Skilled and knowledgeable graduates helped establish other programmes: Istanbul University in 1964, Hacettepe University in 1972, and Baskent University in 2002). In 2002 the names of these departments were changed to "Department of Information and Records Management." Cooperation between Ankara University and EU Universities in the [Socrates-Erasmus Programme's](#) "Credit Transfer System" (ECTS) led to programme changes that were introduced in academic year 2004-2005.

Today, with its graduates holding various academic titles, undergraduate, master and doctoral programmes carefully reviewed and updated in line with international developments and norms, young and dynamic teaching staff and bright students who further motivate and feed this staff, the Department stands as a distinct institution

enjoying a legacy of 50 years in strenuous efforts to ensure the recognition of librarianship as a discipline and to educate both theoretically and practically the very needed skilled persons to carry librarianship forward in the country. We hereby express our sincere acknowledgement to all, including the Ford Foundation in the first place and many other colleagues and scholars either Turkish or foreign, who contributed much to the establishment and further development of our Department. We look forward to celebrate further anniversaries too.

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## **Biographical Information**

**Fehmi Ethem Karatay:** Born in Istanbul and completed his primary education in a private school (Burhan-i-Terakki). He enrolled the Galatasaray Sultani (high school) in 1900 and graduated in 1908. He graduated from the Department of Architecture in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Istanbul University. He practiced as an architect, and later taught French in various schools. He began working in the library of Istanbul University ("Darülfünun Kütüphanesi" as it was known then) and was sent to Paris by the Ministry of National Education to study librarianship there. In Paris, he completed a course of study in the Ecole de Chartes, a librarian school founded with support from the US, before going back to his position in Istanbul. He catalogued 140,000 printed books and manuscripts over the course of 15 years. From September 1925 to May 1926 he organised the first librarianship courses in Turkey (in Süleymaniye Medrese), targeting officials in the libraries of Istanbul. Apart from his work in the university library, he also organised the libraries and prepared the catalogues of Dolmabahçe Palace and the Residence of the President of the Republic. He published his notes from the courses he taught in 1925-1926, a three-volume work that was among the first examples of professional library literature in Turkey . The first volume: Librarianship; 2nd volume: Rules of Classification, and 3rd Volume: Bibliography. Karatay also produced a book on the principles of cataloguing and catalogues of books and manuscripts in the library at Istanbul (Cunbur, 1968: 3-7 ; Karatay, 1952: 69-70).

**Adnan Ötüken:** Completed his higher education in 1935 in the Faculty of Literature in Istanbul University, receiving a BA from the Department of Turcology and French Literature. During his university years he taught literature in high schools. The Ministry of National Education sent Ötüken to Germany in 1936 to study librarianship. He stayed in Germany for four years studying librarianship in the Berlin State Library (Preussische Staatsbibliothek) and practicing in librarianship in Berlin University Library and in Deutsche Bücherei in Leipzig. Upon returning to Turkey, he was assigned to the Faculty of Literature (Istanbul University) as assistant in Turcology. He worked at the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications in the Ministry of Education. After working there for five years, in 1946 he joined the effort to establish a national Library. He worked with the Ministry and the Faculty of Letters in Ankara for the initiation of higher education level courses in librarianship. His serious and committed efforts proved successful and in 1943 he began teaching courses in librarianship and continued for ten years. He left many bibliographical works, apart from

others which dealt with the theoretical aspects of librarianship (Ötügen, 1979a: XI-XII; Türk Kütüphaneciligine hizmet ., 1952b: 145-146).

**Lawrence Sidney Thompson:** Graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1943. In 1950, he received a degree in librarianship, an ABLS from the University of Michigan. He worked as an administrator and bibliographer at various university libraries in the US and published widely (Türk Kütüphaneciligine hizmet ., 1952a: 151-152).

**Emily Dean (Heilman):** Came to Turkey in 1948 to work in the American Library. She conducted studies on libraries and the status of librarianship in Turkey. Participated in planning for a 3-year library school in Turkey together with a specialist recruited by the Ford Foundation. (Karakas, 1999: 378-379).

**Robert Bingham Downs:** Graduated from the Library School of Columbia University in 1927. In 1932, he was the director of the Library of the University of North Carolina and a faculty member in the library school there. He later did the same thing at the University of Illinois. In November 1954, the Ford Foundation sent him to Turkey to teach in the Institute of Librarianship of the Faculty of Letters at Ankara University. He was the first professor at the Institute until his departure on 15 August 1955 (Türk Kütüphaneciligine hizmet., 1954b: 214-217).

**Elmer Mori Grieder:** Held degrees from Iowa, Columbia, and Harvard. He began his career as a secondary school teacher. While teaching, he decided to become a librarian and went to library school at Columbia University. He worked in several libraries and also joined the staff of ALA and the California Library Association. He came to Turkey in July 1955 and began lecturing at the Institute of Librarianship at the Faculty of Letters in Ankara in 1956, completing his work there on on 13 June 1957. (Türk kütüphaneciligine hizmet., 1954a: 218-220).

**Berin U. Yurdadog:** Graduated from the Department of English Language and Literature of the Faculty of Letters in 1947. In 1955, she was one of two assistants at the Institute. In 1958-59, she took graduate courses at the University of Chicago Graduate Library School. Yurdadog made significant contributions to the professional literature

and was well-known for her conferences on Atatürk held in various parts of the country. Serving as department head during 1980-1982 and 1990-1993, Yurdadog retired in 1993 (Aslan, 1994: VII-IX).

**Osman Ersoy:** Graduated from the Department of History (Medieval History) at the Faculty of Letters in 1945. From 1945 to 1950 he was an assistant director at the Topkapi Palace Museum where he worked in the archive and library sections. He transferred to the Ethnography Museum in 1950. In 1951-52 he went to England to study archival science. In 1955 he visited the US on a Ford Foundation Scholarship to study librarianship and took courses in the library school at the University of Chicago. Returning to Turkey in 1955, became an assistant in the Department of Medieval History of the Faculty of Letters. From 1955 to 1990 he made significant contributions to both his department and development of the profession in Turkey. With many publications, Ersoy was the head of the Department of Librarianship of the Faculty of Letters during 1964-80 and 1983-90 before his retirement in 1990 (Kütüphanecilikte kim kimdir? 1968: 57-58).

**Lewis Francis Stieg:** Graduated from the University of Buffalo in 1930 and completed his MA in 1931. In 1932 he received an additional MA from the Classics Department of Harvard University and received in 1933. In 1935-36 he was director of the library at Stetson University, Florida, and teaching there as professor. He served as the Director of Hamilton University Library from 1936 to 1943. From 1943 to 1947 he was a library administrator and library school professor at the University of Illinois. He later served as head of the Department of Librarianship at the University of Southern California. He spent 1953 and 1954 in the Philippines as a Fulbright professor, and in 1957 began teaching in the Institute of Librarianship in Turkey, remaining there until 1959 (Ersoy, 1959a: 77-78)

**Norris McClellan:** Graduating from the University of Louisiana in 1925, McClellan taught at Morgan City High School in the same state from 1925 to 1928 and was librarian there from 1928 to 1930. He worked as a librarian at the Columbia Teachers' College (1932-1933); New York Port Washington High School (1933-1935) and New York Scarsdale High School (1935-1939). He taught at the Louisiana State University library school from 1943 to 1951. From February 1958 to July 1959, he was a professor at the Institute of Librarianship of the

Faculty of Letters in Ankara. He lectured on school, children's, and public libraries (Ersoy, 1959b: 75-76).

**Carl Milton White:** Graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University in 1925. From 1934 to 1938, he was a professor of philosophy and librarian at Fisk University. His later services include assistant librarian at the University of Michigan (1938) and teaching at the library school of the University of North Carolina (1938-1940). From 1940 to 1943, he was the library director and professor at the University of Illinois. From 1943 to 1959, he was Director of Libraries and Head of the Library School at Columbia University, New York. White became head of the Institute of Librarianship in Ankara in 1959. From 1960 to 1961 he contributed to the development of librarianship in Turkey as the Director of the Institute and Professor. On 18 June 1961 he returned to Columbia University (Sefercioglu, 1966b1: 58-59).

**Anne Ethelyn Markley:** Graduated from library school at the University of Oklahoma in 1931 and took a position at the University of California in 1946. She taught in the University of California until 1959 when she went to Turkey to teach at the Institute of Librarianship in Ankara. Ms. Markley worked there in the academic years 1959 - 1960 and 1960 -1961 before she left Turkey (Sefercioglu, 1961a: 60-61).

**Nance O'Neall:** Under an agreement with the Fulbright Foundation, O'Neall taught at the Department of Librarianship at the Faculty of Letters from 1961 to 1962. She taught "School Libraries", "Public Libraries", "Childrens' Literature," and "Principles of book Selection" during his stay in Ankara (Haberler, 1961: 154 ; Haberler , 1963: 73).

**Ralph Hopp:** Professor Hopp of the University of Minnesota taught at the Department of Librarianship as a Fulbright professor during the 1962-63 academic year. During his stay he conducted a study on the library resources available to library school students. He submitted a report outlining his findings to the dean in 1963 (Sefercioglu, 1969a: 100). His study was later taken over and completed by Dr. Arthur M. McAnally.

**Arthur Monroe McAnally:** Professor McAnally, the Director of the Library of University of Oklahoma, taught at the Institute of Librarianship as a Fulbright academic from 1963 to 1964. Besides his regular lectures, he also made efforts, upon the suggestion of Dr. Ralph H. Hopp who preceded him, to introduce a separate library

building in the Faculty of Letters. He presented a report on the subject to the dean on 10 February 1964 (Sefercioglu, 1969b: 174). McAnally's views were also considered by Ersen Gmleksizoglu, the architect who designed the library building.

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