

The Turkish National Library

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National libraries are in charge of collecting all scientific and cultural documents and transferring them from generation to generation. The Turkish National Library (TNL) is also established to assist national cultural studies, to centralize documentation, to support all kinds of scientific and artistic research and to satisfy information requests to be received from within the country and from abroad.

Preparations for the TNL began on April 2, 1946, in a small room of the Directorate of Publications at the Ministry of National Education and 8,000 books accumulated in this room in a short time. In order to house the collection, a new building was provided. After two years of preparation TNL was opened to the public on August 16, 1948.

The TNL was relocated to the new and modern building in 1983 and initiated service to users on August 5, 1983.

The Establishment Law of the TNL concerning the budget, personnel and organization came into force on March 29, 1950. In order to organize the increasing activities, an additional law was validated on May 18, 1955. This law enabled the establishment of a Bibliographical Institute within the framework of the Library.

The duties and functions of the TNL are as follows :

- To procure all kinds of published materials and documents that are produced in Turkey, and that are published abroad and related to Turkey, and manuscripts.
- To complete technical works of all procured materials and provide access to them.
- To develop and publish bibliographies and catalogs.
- To establish an information network to facilitate the fulfillment of information requests to be received from within the country and from abroad.
- To follow closely the developments in the field of library and information science and get to know the library systems abroad through effective coordination with libraries and information centres abroad.
- To become a leader among the Turkish libraries through establishing close links with them.

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Upon completion of relocation and disposition, a reorganization in the management structure has taken place in order to render modern library services. Having been previously run as a General Directorate, now the TNL is operated as a large organization comprising a President, a Vice-President, three Departmental Directorates and sixteen Sectional Directorates under the Ministry of Culture.

The Library is built on a space of 39,000 square meters. It consists of an administration bureau, general and special purpose reading rooms, collective study rooms, staff rooms, study rooms for fine arts and air-circulated stores equipped with fire alarms. The new building also houses an exhibition hall and two multipurpose meeting and concert halls. Furthermore, a Data Processing Center, a Talking Books Department, Atatürk Documentation Center and Biography Archive, and a Map Room which could not be contained in the first building are new in service. A fully equipped printing house which uses the off-set system and a computerized microfilm and photocopying laboratory are also among the facilities offered in the new National Library building. Since the area where the library is built is large enough, the future extensions are easily handleable.

The number of users of the TNL increases each year; in 1994 it was 222.072. They come from different sectors of society, including students, academic staff, public officials, and researchers from both the public and the private sector. Library materials cannot be borrowed for use outside the Library, though they can be borrowed on interlibrary loan.

The number of books written in the old Turkish script amounts to over 50,000. In addition, the TNL has a collection of about 20,000 manuscripts and rare books gathered through donations and purchasing.

The number of periodicals is 233.684 volumes and periodical publications include dailies, magazines, bulletins, annuals, etc. Further, there is also a collection composed of 84.613 non-book materials which cover posters, maps, scores, records, tapes, paintings, etc. stored under special conditions.

The TNL receives a single copy of all publications printed in Turkey according to the Legal Deposit Act dated 1934. Besides, the Library tries to expand its collection by purchasing publications published abroad that concern Turkey and by exchanging with other libraries and institutions abroad in accordance with the international exchange programme and by donations as well.

The TNL has a collection of more than 1,200,000 books, periodicals and non-book materials. This collection is kept in the special stores in good condition.

Regarding personnel, the Library has about 200 staff members. Professional librarians constitute almost one third of all staff members. The rest are subject specialists, technicians and other support personnel.

As already mentioned, the TNL has been preparing and publishing bibliographies, catalogues and union catalogues for the purposes of the national bibliographic control since it was founded. These include:

- Turkish Bibliography, 1955-
- Bibliography of Articles in Turkish Periodicals, 1952-
- Union Catalogue of Manuscripts in Turkey (TÜYATOK), 1978-
- Manuscripts Catalogue of the Turkish National Library, 1987-
- Union Catalogue of Turkish Books in Arabic Script (TÜBATOK), 1990-
- Union Catalogue (Union Catalogue of Foreign Language Books Available in the Turkish Libraries)

The Library has made attempts after relocation to the new building to close the gap that exists between the TNL and other modern national libraries and to solve the problems with respect to funds. The purpose of the TNL is to create a center to provide national and international information network. For the above purpose, the TNL started to work in 1987 on a modern computer-based information system on a national and international basis. The system installed, which is based on a thorough feasibility, systems analysis and design study, uses a DIGITAL VAX 6610. The system's main memory is 128 MB, disk capacity is 8 GB which can be increased to 10 TB if required. There are 56 terminals and 16 Macintoshes and 71 personal computers connected to the system. All the Library hardware and software is integrated to the main system. The system can be upgraded within its configuration and is modular and the services to be offered in the future can easily be introduced.

The ALEPH Program (Automated Library Expandable Program of the Hebrew University) which was installed on the system is a well-known software program used in libraries and data centers alike. This program is in use in more than 150 library and information centers around the world. It can be tailored to various applications and types of materials, such as books, periodicals, maps, stamps, microfiches, etc. The software consists of modules for various library services such as OPAC, cataloguing, circulation, periodicals control, acquisition, etc.

500,000 library materials have been converted to the magnetic media so far. Retrospective conversion of all the Library material is still under way. The TNL computer-based information system was opened to public access on October 18, 1993.

Additionally, the TNL has the infrastructure to be the leader of the information networks of Turkey considering its hardware and software facilities. The task of the TNL for national and international information networks establishment and development is undisputable considering the rich information resources of its collections.