



İstanbul Üniversitesi  
Edebiyat Fakültesi  
Bilgi ve Belge Yönetimi Bölümü



## **Bilgi ve Belge Araştırmaları Dergisi**

The Journal of Information and Documentation Studies

Sayı/Number: 4, Sayfa/Pages: 1-19, İstanbul, Kış/Winter 2015

Basılı Nüsha ISSN: 1307-6655

Elektronik Nüsha ISSN: 2148-8975

# **A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS” FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION**

## **Türk Arşivciliği İçin Bir “Mesleki Etik Kuralları” Önerisi**

Sevil PAMUK

İstanbul Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Bilgi ve Belge Yönetimi Bölümü  
sevilmpamuk@gmail.com

Alındığı tarih: 15.02.2016; Kabul tarihi: 10.07.2016

### **Öz**

Mesleklerin, mesleğe ilişkin uygulamalara yön vermek üzere hazırlanmış meslek (ahlaki) etiği kuralları vardır. Meslek etiği kuralları, meslek mensupları ve örgütlerinin meslekle ilgili doğru davranış prensiplerini esas almalarında rehberlik etmekte, mesleğin vazgeçilmez olan sorumluluklarını açıklamakta, mesleki itibar ve saygınlığı güçlendirmektedir. Bu yüzden mesleki etik kurallar ahlaki ilkelerin amaçları esas alınarak hazırlanmalı, uygulamada geçerlilik kazanabilmesi için hukuki kuralların amaçlarına sahip olmalı ve uygulanabilmesi için de mutlak şekilde hukuki bir zemine kavuşturulmalıdır. Mesleki açıdan güçlü geleneğe sahip bazı ülkeler 1930'lu yılların sonlarından itibaren arşivcilik mesleğinin etik kurallarını geliştirmişlerdir. Belge varlığı bakımından önemli bir konuma sahip olan Türkiye’de, -2009 yılında yedi maddeden oluşan bir meslek etiği ilkeleri hazırlanmış olmasına rağmen- arşiv alanında resmi olarak uygulanan ve uygulama niteliği yüksek mesleki etik ilkeleri açıklayan bir metnin bulunmaması bir eksikliklerdir. Bu çalışmanın amacı da, Türkiye’de arşiv alanında etik kuralların eksikliğine dikkat çekmek, bu eksikliği giderecek etik kuralları belirleyerek Türkiye için “Arşivcilik mesleği etik kurallarını açıklayan bir metin önerisi” sunmaktır. Bu

araştırmada betimleme yöntemi kullanılmış ve ulaşılan veriler literatür taraması ile elde edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Etik, etik kurallar, arşiv ve etik, profesyonellik ve etik, Türkiye.

### **Abstract**

Professions have professional codes of ethics that are prepared in order to provide direction for practices related to the profession. Professional ethical rules guide members of the profession and form the basis of an organization's proper principles of behaviour related to that profession. These rules also convey the profession's required responsibilities and strengthen professional esteem and respect. For this reason, professional ethical rules should be prepared by taking the aims of moral principles as their basis, should have the goals of legal rules in order to achieve validity in practice, and should attain certainty in legal grounds so they can be implemented. Certain countries having strong professional traditions, developed ethical rules for the archive profession as of the end of the 1930s. In Turkey, which has an important position with regard to document holdings, there is a lack of any text that might be implemented in the archive field and which would proclaim high professional principles of ethics for implementation – despite the fact that a seven-paragraph professional principles of ethics document was prepared in 2009. The purpose of this study is to draw attention to the lack of ethics rules in the archive field in Turkey, and this presentation of the “proposal announcing the ethics rules for the archivist profession” in Turkey, aims to determine the ethics rules needed to remedy this shortfall. The descriptive method has been used in this research and the acquired data has been obtained by an examination of the literature.

**Keywords:** Ethics, code of ethics, archives and ethics, professionalism and ethics, Turkey.

### **Introduction**

People live in communities and each of these communities has rules for itself. Communities lay the groundwork for the continuation of their common existence in an orderly and healthy manner with these rules.

The first group of these rules, which ensure the existence and continuation of societies, are moral rules and the second are legal rules. The existence of moral rules has been known since the earliest eras. Morality is “the established lifestyle of an individual or a community in a particular period of history, based on particular tendencies, thoughts, beliefs, customs, practices and traditions, and the establishment of related values, norms and prohibitions, which are then sustained in a traditional way” (Özlem, 2004, p. 16-17). Moral rules are those collective rules aimed at characterizing as right or wrong, good or bad, specific actions and behaviours of individuals, according to the values of good and evil in a community that have been developed along general lines (Donay, 1978, p.8). These are rules that determine the proper behaviour of an individual and his or her dealings with others, that are

## A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS” FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

mostly spiritual in nature and that are essentially mandatory (Can & Güner, 1999, p. 88). The other rules that ensure communal order are legal rules, which can be defined as “all the rules that govern relations between individuals and between individuals and the community, that have material sanctions imposed by the state and which must be complied with (Sümer, Atar, Ayan, Karahan, Ulukapı & Arslan, 2003, p.8).

One area where legal rules and moral rules have a common relationship is in the rules for professional ethics (professional morality). This dependent relationship springs from the preparation of codes of ethics based on moral rules and their continuation and validity based on legal rules.

Ethics means thinking morally, being philosophical (Heimsoeth, 1987, p. 14) or engaging in evaluations. To describe professional ethics or professional morality it can be said that they are “the moral rules of and organization” (Keseroğlu, 2007, p. 173) or in a broader sense, “the accumulation of principles and rules based on beliefs regarding what is right, what is wrong, what is fair and what is unjust in relation to professional behaviour” (Selimoğlu, 1988, p. 144). Both moral rules and legal rules ensure communal order and, consequently, they are the norms that exist to set the order of social life. They apply to the general public, whereas rules for professional ethics are rules that are implemented in a more narrow field, based on legal and moral rules that ensure that a profession is practiced with honesty and order. Professions and their professionals are among the important elements that secure unity within the broader communal whole.

Each field of social activity feels the need for moral rules (Durkheim, 1948, p. 22). There is no field of human behaviour without a morality. Every profession has a certain duty within the community it belongs to. Professions can sustain themselves only so long as they are beneficial to the community (Hatemi, 1976, p. 31). For professions to be of benefit to the community a given profession must be practiced in accordance with professional principles. Only in this manner can a profession fulfil what is expected from it. Another way for a profession to sustain its existence in the community and attain its deserved place is for its professional members to gain the confidence of the community. Whether or not the professionals practice in accordance with their professional ethical principles determines the formation of this trust in the community.

The moment a profession begins to be harmful to a community, then that community has the right and the duty to defend itself. There is no profession that is exempt from this rule (Hatemi, 1976, p. 31). Any profession that acts outside ethical codes begins to distance itself from the good of the community and its existence is then subject to question.

All professions have professional codes of ethics and anyone within a particular professional group complies with those codes (Durkheim, 1948, p. 3). Professional ethical codes form the basis for proper behavioural principles that can guide individuals and groups (Ngulube, 2000, p.162) and address the vital responsibilities in professions. For a member of a profession, the pronouncement of accepted guides provides a path forward with regard to professional behaviour (Horn, 1989, p. 65).

Professional codes of ethics are those which interest a particular section of a community. They define only the responsibilities of the members of that profession and they do not apply to the community in general, as moral and legal rules do. But just as no community can survive without moral and legal rules, a profession without professional codes of ethics cannot sustain itself for very long. And even if it does persist, it will not reach a deserved place in the community.

Professional codes of ethics that are formulated based on the aims of moral rules<sup>1</sup> must rest on legal grounds in order to achieve validity in practice and certainly must be prepared in a way that conforms to the goals of legal rules<sup>2</sup>. Otherwise, they are nothing more than words of advice. Therefore, we can list the relationships and differences between legal rules, moral rules and professional ethical codes as follows, based on the characteristics of the field in question:

1. Whereas legal rules are formulated and implemented by the state (Sümer, Atar, Ayan, Karahan, Ulukapı & Arslan, 2003, p. 8) and moral rules are formulated and implemented by the community (Can & Güner, 1999, p. 9), professional codes of ethics are formulated and implemented by professional organizations, based on the expectations of the community from that profession,
2. Legal rules are prepared by those people to whom the state has given authority (Can & Güner, 1999, p. 11). Moral rules are formulated by the community (Aydın, 2009, p. 10) and professional codes of ethics are prepared by experts to whom the professional organization has given authority or by capable professionals of a particular profession (Durkheim, 1948, p. 4),
3. Legal rules are implemented by the state (Sümer, Atar, Ayan, Karahan, Ulukapı & Arslan, 2003, p. 8; Ülgen & Mirze, 2006, s. 449), moral rules are implemented by the community (Can & Güner, 1999, p. 9) and professional codes of ethics are implemented by individuals and organizations of a profession,
4. Legal rules are prepared within a specific period of time, whereas moral rules are formulated over a long period of time by a community. As for professional codes of ethics they are formed either over a long period of time, based on a community's expectations from that profession, or by members of the profession within a specific period of time,
5. Individuals must comply with legal rules. In the event that they do not comply then the state's authorized institutions implement the requisite sanctions (Gözler, 2009, s. 27; Can & Güner, 1999, p. 11). There are no sanctions for moral rules and there is nothing to force an individual to comply (Aydın, 2009, p. 11). The situation for professional codes of ethics is different. The rules are written and if the necessary legal framework has been prepared then the members of the profession must comply. In

---

<sup>1</sup> The goal of morality is to realize the 'good' or to reach the good and the honest (Donay, 1978, p. 8; Can & Güner, 1999, p. 9; Aydın, 2009, p. 10).

<sup>2</sup> The aim of law is to achieve justice (Sümer, Atar, Ayan, Karahan, Ulukapı & Arslan, 2003, p. 8).

A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS”  
FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

the event of non-compliance, the state’s authorized institutions or the professional organization can implement the required sanctions. However, if the necessary legal framework has not been formulated then compliance is not mandatory. But if the inappropriate activity constitutes a crime within the scope of the state’s legal rules then compliance would be mandatory. Outside of this scope, though, professionals make their own decisions,

6. In the event that legal rules are violated then a person is penalized materially. When moral rules are not complied with then the penalty is conscience (Sümer, Atar, Ayan, Karahan, Ulukapı & Arslan, 2003, p. 11; Gözler, 2009, s. 27) or condemnation. When professional ethical codes are not complied with, if the legal framework has been prepared then, as with legal rules, the penalty is material. If, however, the legal framework has not been prepared then, as with moral rules, the penalty is conscience or condemnation. But in this case the penalty would be lighter than with moral rules because professional morality is only evaluated within the structure of that profession. Since it is not an attack against general morality, generally, it would not be considered important by the public (Durkheim, 1948, p. 4-5),
7. Legal rules are written. Moral rules, though, are spoken (Sümer, Atar, Ayan, Karahan, Ulukapı & Arslan, 2003, p.11: Aydın, 2009, p. 12). Professional ethical codes may be spoken and written. Because professional ethics are a special field within morality, the rules have developed orally. However, these rules may eventually be written so that implementation can be effected with certainty. In recent years implementation has developed in this way (Kutlu, 2011, p. 108),
8. Legal rules ensure justice in the community, moral rules indicate what is right and proper (Donay, 1978, p. 8; Can & Güner, 1999, p. 9; Aydın, 2009, p. 10). Professional codes of ethics show what is right and proper and also ensure fairness (Uslu, 1998, p. 26),
9. Because legal rules are fortified with laws, they cover and protect both moral rules (Dinçkol, 2001, p.12) and professional codes of ethics,
10. Legal rules are formal moral rules, whereas moral rules are informal rules (Aydın, 2009, p. 13). If professional ethics/codes are set on a legal framework then they are formal rules. If, on the other hand, they have been prepared simply as advice and recommendations then they are informal rules.

Professional ethics are a place where legal rules and moral rules complement one another. Where there is no morality it is impossible to discuss professional morality and where there is no law justice cannot be discussed. A professional codes of ethics that is prepared without reference to legal and moral rules cannot be expected to completely meet expectations. In order to be able to prepare and implement a professional codes of ethics that will meet these needs, all of the characteristics, similarities and differences of these three kinds of rules must be taken into consideration.

In the preparation of professional ethics for archives, attention must be paid equally to the topics that have been designated. Additionally, examination of valuable studies done previously on this subject and, in fact, using these as guides for future studies is another important aspect. In this regard, first external studies from the outside world, if available, and then domestic studies should be investigated. Before presenting a proposal for professional ethics rules for Turkish archives it would be worthwhile to take a brief look<sup>3</sup> at previously conducted studies from around the world.

In 1939, American historian Robert C. Blinkley was the first to draw attention to the need to fill the vacuum in professional ethics rules for archives (Benedict, 1988, p. 176). The first initiative for the formulation of professional ethics rules for archives came from Wayne C. Grover, an American archivist, in October 1955. The ethics rules that Grover prepared were published in the *American Archivist* under the title *The Archivist's Code*. These written rules were developed for use in training programs for archivists working in the national archives and were comprised of seven paragraphs, which were rather short and simple. These rules were used unofficially until the end of 1979 (Benedict, 2004, p. 1-8, also see; SAA<sup>4</sup>, 2016a). According to the rules that Grover prepared, an archivist's areas of responsibility were based on five fundamental elements: documents, community, researchers, colleagues and one's organization.

Following the above-mentioned personal initiative, the first official draft text of professional ethics rules for archives was prepared by the American Archivists Association Council and approved and published with the authorization of the association in January 1980 (Benedict, 2004, p. 1-10, see also; SAA, 2016b). These ethics rules can be considered to be rather more comprehensive than the rules put forth by Grover and these first official ethics rules went down in the history of archives as an important step in the development and implementation of ethics rules for archivists.

After these first official rules were accepted by the American Archivists Association, professional ethics work expanded and continued and new ethics rules were published as a circular of the association in November 1992 (Boss-Rops, 2004, p. 2-3; see also SAA, 2016c). By means of this revision, an effort was made to essentially establish a single responsible authority for the ethical behaviour of the archivist in every area and the details of each area were announced.

The association's Professional Standards Committee was directed in June, 1993, to look at mistakes in professional ethics publications and in June, 1994, a committee was formed with responsibility for professional ethics and behaviour (Boss-Rops, 2004, p. 4). A book written by Karen Benedict in 2003 and entitled *Ethics and Archival Professionalism: Introduction and Cases* was published by the

---

<sup>3</sup> Our detailed study, which explained the origin and development of professional ethics for archives, can be evaluated as the introductory portion of this article (beginning study) (Pamuk, 2011, pp. 217-229) and was published previously. For more detailed information see; Benedict, 1988, pp. 174-184; Benedict, 2004; Boss-Rops, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Society of American Archivist.

## A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS” FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

afore-mentioned association (Jimerson, 2006, p. 90-91). In 2004, association members were invited to comment for a new revision to the ethics rules that had been revised in 1992 and this revision was approved on 5 February 2005 (SAA, 2016d). The new elements in this revised text were the formulation of standards for the profession and an effort to gain the trust of the public vis-a-vis the profession.

The fact that a need was still felt in the field for comprehensive ethics rules prepared the groundwork for the continuation of work on the matter of ethics. This time, after the American Archivists Association accepted the Core Values of Archivists in May, 2011, -access and use, accountability, advocacy, diversity, history and memory, preservation, professionalism, responsible custody, selection, service, social responsibility- (SAA, 2016e) the newly revised ethics rules for archivists were published in January 2012 (SAA, 2016f). In this revision, the paragraphs of previous ethics rules were given in a more detailed manner. The stress was laid on increasing archivists' professional ethics awareness once they had read and adopted the basic values. Additionally, it was stated that only through the joint acknowledgement of the Archivist's Basic Values and the ethics rules could there be an effective guide for the archivists.

As efforts were underway to establish the boundaries of the subject in the United States, where the first efforts to formulate and develop professional ethics rules in the field of archivists were seen, work began in other countries to formulate professional ethics, taking these initial developments as a model. The rules were approved by the Quebec Archive Association in 1991 (Cook, 2006, p. 2), and by the Canadian Archivists Union in 1992 (the newly revised rules were approved in 1999) (ACA<sup>5</sup>, 2016a). In 2005, the ACA announced the aims of the rules it accepted under the following headings: the counselling relationship, confidential- privileged communication and privacy, professional responsibility, relationship with other professionals, evaluation-assessment and interpretation, supervision-training and teaching, research and publication, resolving ethical issues (ACA, 2016b). In 2014 the ACA again revised and approved the 2005 rules. In the goals portion of these rules distance counselling, technology and social media were added and all of the rules were explained in a more detailed way (ACA, 2016c). Australia (ASA<sup>6</sup>, 2016) and the New Zealand Archivists Unions accepted the professional ethics rules for archivists in 1993 and Ireland and the United Kingdom Archivists Unions did so in 1994 (Cook, 2006, p. 2).

As efforts for the formulation of professional ethics rules in the archivists field broadened, an important study was conducted by the International Council on Archives (ICA) and the international ethics rules for archivists were officially accepted by the International Council of Archives' General Board at the 13th session of the ICA held in Beijing (China) on 6 September 1996 (Boss-Rops, 2004, 1-3; ICA, 2016). There was not much of a difference between the main outlines of the ICA's ethics rules and those that had been prepared for the archivist profession up to that point. The development of the new ethics rules was certainly based on the fact that they

---

<sup>5</sup> American Counselling Association.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Society of Archivists.

were international in scope. These developments included the acceptance of the rules at the international level for the first time, the linkage of the provenance principle for produced documents to archival activities, and the joint working of all professional groups for the protection of the archive-based document heritage of the world.

### **Professional Ethics Efforts in the Archival Field in Turkey**

While efforts to formulate professional codes of ethics for archives continue to be developed around the world, in accordance with ever-evolving technology and legal rights, when we look at efforts underway in Turkey it is hard to say that we can see a very encouraging landscape.

Although there has been significant progress in defining archival professional ethics in many developed countries, related efforts in Turkey only began as of 2004. In his article entitled “The Ethical Concepts and Codes for Archives” Süleymanoğlu (2004, pp. 169-175), conveyed the main thrust of the development of an ethical concept for archives in the United States, where the subject was first opened up for discussion, and she put forth a Turkish translation of the International Council on Archives’s “Ethical Codes” text. In Mehmet Fahri Furat’s article (Furat, 2009, s. pp. 447-458), in which he discussed the subject of ethics and professional ethics, he brought the matter of the evolutionary process for archival professional ethics in light of developments in the United States to the agenda by translating the codes of ethics text of “Grover’s Codes of Ethics” published in 1980 and the text of the ICA’s “Codes of Ethics”. In our own article (Pamuk, 2011, pp. 217-229) the relationship between morality, ethics, professional ethics and professionalism was examined; the reasons that interest archivists on this subject as archival professional codes of ethics are being formed were discussed; details of efforts underway on this subject were put forth; and specifics were provided about Grover’s Codes, which were the first unofficial codes prepared in the United States on this topic, about the first official codes and revisions published in 1980, and about the development process of the ICA’ “Codes of Ethics”, all in an effort to point out the work being done in this field.

In 2009 the Turkish Archivists Association took note of the need for Turkish Archivists Professional codes of ethics to be formulated and published a seven-paragraph text of archivists’ professional codes of ethics on its own website under the title of “Professional codes of ethics” (Türk Arşivciler Derneği, 2016) as follows:

1. “To fulfil all types of work undertaken in the field of archiving, in the framework of professional principles and laws,
2. To follow professional developments and develop proposals on this subject,
3. To protect personal, state and community rights and link to the laws that arrange these,
4. To allow for the use of all kinds of archival materials, by means of research,
5. To refrain from discriminating against any person or group because of reasons such as religion, language, race and sex in enabling the acquisition of knowledge about archival materials and to link to the criteria in this field,
6. To give preference to public and state requests, rather than individual ones, with regard to priority of presenting archival materials for service,



A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS”  
FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

7. To be a participant in all measures and activities related to the prevention of the destruction of national and world archives because of wars, fires, floods, etc. or efforts to loot them.”

The codes of ethics prepared by the Turkish Archivists Association are important from the standpoint of being the first codes prepared in Turkey and in calling attention to the subject, while pointing out to the gap in the field. In this regard, the fact that the Turkish Republic as a major state creates a large number of records and has a rich archive anyway does not have official archivist professional codes of ethics that would address daily needs, is noteworthy. There may be various reasons for this. The first of these reasons is that the importance of the matter is still not understood and the lack of such codes is not considered to be a problem. It is thought that when archival institutions conform to work principles then the application of ethical codes follows in due course.

By means of a serious plan and arrangement made in the State Archives General Directorate, which is the most appropriate organ in this context, the duty definitions of offices and the professionals in them have been formulated and the mandatory adherence to these rules by all personnel has been ensured<sup>7</sup>.

This study, which aims to comprehensively identify the professional standards that will ensure professional work in the field, can be evaluated as a work format appropriate for the professional ethics in an organization, but these are rules that personnel must comply with and which define their duties. They also determine the boundaries of responsibility in a particular unit for personnel working there.

The second reason is that schools for training archivists were opened very late. Departments of Archival Studies within Istanbul University’s Faculty of Letters and Marmara University’s Faculty of Science and Letters were opened in 1987. Since 2002 these departments, which give diplomas under the name of Information and Records Management, have been continuing to provide education at many universities. Because the archival studies departments opened so late, archives were staffed by personnel from other fields. As a result of the requirement for professional training not being realized for this profession (San, 1988, p. 197), the training of professionals who would espouse their profession was prevented. Only those who know every aspect of the profession can prepare professional ethics codes that will address all needs. In any profession only professionals can determine the dimensions of services and the limits of requests.

Thirdly, courses in archival professional ethics have not been taught. No place has been given for professional ethics classes in the archival undergraduate programs neither at universities nor within the training programs of the national archives. The first unofficial professional codes of ethics in the United States were in order to be used in internal professional training courses for personnel in the American national archives. However, such an implementation has not been possible in Turkey.

---

<sup>7</sup> By means of this quality direction system’s organizational effort, Quality Direction Document TS-EN ISO 9001-2000 of the State Archives General Directorate was put in place.

The fourth reason is that the professional organization for archivists was established very late. Throughout the world professional codes of ethics for archivists have been prepared by non-governmental professional organizations because states have legal rules that spell out rights and responsibilities for their workers. In Turkey it was not until 16 April 1998 that archivists gained a professional organization, with the establishment of the *All Archivists Association*. The name was changed to *Turkish Archivists Association* on 11 August 2006 and the first codes of ethics for Turkish archivists were published in 2009 (Türk Arşivciler Derneği, 2016).

The fifth reason is that there is no custom of seeking one's rights and of chastising those who do wrong. The democratic structure in the country has a very significant effect on the formulation of ethics codes. In democratic countries people can more comfortably pursue their rights, report shortfalls and ensure that these shortfalls are corrected. When one has been treated unfairly or unequally, or is faced with discrimination, he or she can complain and obtain redress. Complaints against the behaviour of professionals are one of the reasons that naturally compel institutions and organizations to formulate professional codes of ethics.

These shortcomings that we have cited as reasons why professional codes of ethics have not been formulated in Turkey point to the failings in the field. The rules to be prepared must ensure that these failings are corrected so that needs can be addressed. In addition, the necessary measures must be taken with regard to the codes of ethics to ensure that these failings do not persist.

## **Professional Codes of Ethics for Archivists in Turkey**

**(Draft Text)<sup>8</sup>**

### **Introduction**

There are valuable administrative, financial, legal, historical and research records in archives. Archivists have main duties such as arranging archive records, protecting them and ensuring their access. Archivists help in affording people the chance to use records, thus contributing to the development of the community and culture, while also preserving the national memory. At the same time, archivists guard the rights of those whose names appear in the records. Consequently, the responsibilities of archivists, who work in a broad field, are rather comprehensive. The responsibilities of Turkish archivists are more extensive than in most countries because the records of the Ottoman State and the Turkish Republic periods require them to take upon the records, preserve them, organize them, prepare ways for them to be accessed and enable their use.

---

<sup>8</sup> Taking into consideration the text of the Codes of Ethics for Archivists approved by the ICA, we have taken the Professional Codes of Ethics for Archivists in Catalonia, which we deem to be appropriate for the realities of our country, as our basis in proposing a draft text for professional codes of ethics for archivists in Turkey.

## A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS” FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

The duty of an archivist does not consist merely of professional work that requires a level of proficiency (the need for a license). The archivist must be able to use this professional proficiency in accordance with the structure and needs of the institution when necessary.

The archivist must recognize the definite rules that the administration has approved and comply with them. In the course of performing professional duties an archivist may face moral dilemmas at times that require decisions. There may be developments that put professionals at odds with the community, opening up misunderstandings in the field. The formulation of professional ethics codes can be seen as a bridge in these circumstances, strengthening the freedom and autonomy desired by archivists to solve potential misunderstandings and rescue them from moral dilemmas.

For all these reasons, the Turkish Archivists Association proposes that the professional ethics codes accepted and implemented by Turkish archivists be approved and published and is directing efforts toward their development.

### **General Principles**

The Professional code of ethics for Archivists in Turkey (Draft Text) takes, as its basis, the “Code of Ethics of Catalan Archivists” (Archivists Association of Catalonia (AAC), 2016), and has been formulated unique to Turkey by broadening and adapting the International Archival Professional Ethics Codes (ICA, 2016) approved by the ICA on 6 September 1996 for the social and archival conditions.

### **Goal**

The goal of the professional ethics codes:

1. To implement the general and professional principles of ethics for the archive discipline,
2. To serve as a guide for the implementation of professional ethics principles,
3. To assist archivists in fulfilling their professional duties,
4. To enlighten the public about the duties of archivists,
5. To inform the public on the subject of guaranteed rights,
6. To continually develop the codes based on changing conditions.

### **Scope**

The professional codes of ethics will be implemented for all archivists working in Turkey. These principles are valid for all archivists whether they work in state archives or in the private sector.

### **Definitions**

**Archivist:** someone who determines, defines, preserves, arranges and presents records for use and/or someone who fulfils at least one of these functions in the framework of basic archival principles and who has training as an archivist (Karakaş, Rukancı & Anameriç, 2009, p. 5) and works as a professional (Ataman, 1995, p. 6) with archive administration and/or archive management.

**Archive:** accumulated historic, formatted and recorded documents of any type produced or received in the course of the work of private and corporate individuals, and all elements of public and private institutions (Aren, 1998, p. 523).

**Fonds:** the entire volume of records archives accumulated in the course of operations and activities of a particular individual, institution or organization (Ataman, 1995, p. 40) and which are made up of records that are related to one another, having been formulated according to an organic method with importance historically and with regard to the amount of records involved (Karakas, Rukanci & Anameriç, 2009, p. 22).

**Records:** “recorded information which constitutes evidence for its function based on content, relationship and format, and which has been obtained to fulfil any sort of individual or institutional function or which has been produced as the result of a function” (Kandur, 2004, p. 123).

**Records Management System:** the entirety of practices and theories implemented for the evaluation, arrangement, sorting and, when desired, presentation for service of all records produced as the result of the activities of institutions and establishments, within the framework of criteria taken up and defined as of the time of the production phase (Karakas, Rukanci & Anameriç, 2009, p. 9).

**Structure:** by grouping the Professional Codes of Ethics for Archiving into five sections (AAC, 2016) they provide guidance for the direction of archivists in each area. Each one of these sections addresses the moral principle in that particular field. Additionally, they are helpful in making it easier to understand the elements of the moral principles and in defining collective, individual and professional duties. These five groups of principles have been arranged according to the responsibilities of archivists to community, profession, fonds and records, users, and colleagues, and are given in the following paragraphs.

### **1. Archivists’ Responsibilities toward the Community**

Archivists make a contribution to community development by taking note of human rights and in accordance with basic rights and freedoms. In this regard, the responsibilities of archivists are these:

- a. Act in accordance with existing regulations,
- b. Respect the right to acquire information,
- c. Recognize legal copyrights and respect them,
- d. Ensure that records can be accessed easily; in doing so, conform to moral laws in relations between people and institutions,
- e. When providing access to records, respect the privacy rights of third parties such as states, institutions and individuals that appear in the records,
- f. In order to guarantee cultural values and contribute to the preservation of collective values, ensure the protection and spread of existing records,
- g. Assist researchers so as to enable scholarly research that can contribute to the social and cultural development of the community,
- h. Support and develop the formation of methods and rules favorable to research for the public benefit,

A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS”  
FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

- i. Inform the community about needs related to the management of archives and records,
- j. Cooperate with public institutions to develop policies that will contribute to archiving activities,
- k. Cooperate with the state authority on the matter of archival administration,
- l. Support the preparation and development of laws and regulations related to archiving.

**2. Archivists’ Responsibilities toward Their Profession**

Archivists will conduct their work in accordance with professional criteria, experience and the voice of their conscience. In this way, they will ensure the continuation of their profession, improve its quality and fulfil their responsibilities completely. In this regard, they will do the following in the course of their professional work:

- a. Know and comply with professional standards, methods and principles,
- b. Make efforts for continually updating the requisite technical standards and organizing work, such as standards, management and directives, and professional information for archival practices,
- c. Know about the regulations required for professional practices, be aware of new developments and put these into practice as soon as possible,
- d. Endeavour to increase professional knowledge and experience in order to raise professional productivity to the highest level,
- e. Use all professional experience and knowledge to raise professional productivity to the highest level,
- f. Share experiences and successes so as to increase professional productivity,
- g. Support innovations and research activities with the aim of contributing to the development of archives,
- h. Be prepared to meet the needs of users of the resources being managed,
- i. Ensure that users can avail themselves of the available resources in a way that meets their needs,
- j. Document archival practices with an open, clear, careful and logical attitude,
- k. Ensure the security of information obtained through professional practices and limit access in order to protect this information,
- l. Protect the privacy of information requiring privacy that is obtained while conducting professional work,
- m. Join in efforts to increase respect of the profession and fulfil the responsibilities thereof,
- n. Avoid situations that may open the way to misunderstandings during official and personal work,
- o. Continually cast a critical eye and make observations about one’s own professional work in order to ensure development in professional activities,
- p. Pursue an independent professional position when faced with pressure that runs counter to professional goals,
- q. Avoid behaviour that could damage professional probity, honesty and impartiality,

- r. Refrain from lax attitudes when performing one's profession,
- s. Steer clear of behaviour that could harm professionalism,
- t. Ensure impartiality in the conduct of activities.

### **3. Professional Responsibilities of Archivists toward Archive Fonds and Records**

With the goal of protecting the value of records that will be used to meet various needs of the community, archivists will put all records, their security and the preservation of archive fonds in their trust. In this regard, archivists will do the following in the course of the professional work:

- a. Secure all archive fonds formulated as the result of the institution's activities,
- b. Implement archival operations to ensure the entirety, security and protection of records of archival value,
- c. Ensure that the culling and destruction of records is performed by an organization whose legal limits and responsibilities have been determined,
- d. Perform culling and destruction work in the institution where the records were produced,
- e. Formulate the requisite conditions for those involved in records culling and destruction to conform to technical and legal rules,
- f. Ensure that the organization implementing records culling and destruction is unbiased and impartial,
- g. Make critical comments about and support scholarly work aimed at making it easier to preserve all the records in the archive,
- h. Promote the restoration of records whose original form has been harmed,
- i. Develop policies appropriate for professional and moral criticisms related to the formulation of archive fonds,
- j. Show the utmost respect for the access time related to records in the archive fond,
- k. Reject records which have been obtained through illegal means.

### **4. Professional Responsibilities of Archivists toward Users**

Archivists perform their professional activities by using professional knowledge. The goal is to meet the requests of the users. In this regard, archivists do the following in their professional works:

- a. Steer clear of discrimination and bias in ensuring fair behaviour toward users,
- b. Serve users with honesty, willingness and calmness,
- c. Acknowledge skill and technical limits and do not create expectations that cannot ever be fulfilled and which may give rise to misunderstandings,
- d. Provide advice to users about records,
- e. Inform researchers working on the same subject, with the aim of preventing more than one research on the same subject,
- f. Provide correct information to users in connection with different activities being undertaken in an institution,

A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS”  
FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

- g. Provide the required research means for research services,
- h. Prevent the conveyance of user information obtained by means of archival services to third persons and, similarly, maintain silence with regard to the verbal transmission of information about these types of records to others,
- i. Steer clear of divulging information related to the institution which should be kept private,
- j. Speed up the methods necessary to improve services to the public,
- k. Support policies formulated for the development of services for the public.

**5. Professional Responsibilities of Archivists  
toward Their Colleagues**

Archivists will cooperate with their other colleagues and professionals and conduct their relations with mutual respect and based on principles of solidarity. In this regard, archivists will take note of the following in relations with their colleagues during the performance of their professional duties:

- a. Endeavour to display their profession to the public in the best way possible,
- b. Support and defend professional rights,
- c. Steer clear of anything that could jeopardize confidence in themselves and their profession,
- d. Respect and accept the work of their colleagues,
- e. Avoid negatively influencing colleagues or behaviour that could lead to a loss of personal professional confidence,
- f. Be unbiased in criticism about the scholarly work undertaken by colleagues,
- g. Guide professionals just starting work and make their adjustment easier,
- h. Respond to the professional questions of colleagues in the best way possible,
- i. Speed up teamwork in order to improve quality of service and create an environment of trust,
- j. Be respectful toward internal group behaviour in joint institutional work,
- k. Endeavour to work concurrently with other professionals toward the same goal,
- l. By using the resources of different archive units within the institution in the best way possible, cooperate in the name of ensuring archival unity and effectiveness,
- m. Develop knowledge and experiential exchanges with all colleagues and personnel working in other similar fields in order to increase value,
- n. Cooperate with other professionals who have similar goals, based on mutual training and discipline,
- o. Give importance to internal training to conduct institutional archive services in an effective way,
- p. In order to take better advantage of resources, cooperate with institutions related to archive and records management and share the information and experience obtained with colleagues.

## **Conclusion**

Efforts to formulate professional codes of ethics for archivists began in the beginning of the 1940s in the United States and reached their finality with the acceptance of the International Archive Council's Codes of Ethics in 1996. Conversely, efforts related to the subject began quite late in our country. Unfortunately, professional codes of ethics for archivists that could be implemented professionally for the Turkish Republic, which has well-established state traditions and a rich archival inheritance, have not yet been formulated.

In order to formulate professional codes of ethics for Turkish archivists, and to draw attention to the shortfalls in this regard, professional organizations must first take up the matter in a serious and impartial manner. The scholarly work done on this subject must be evaluated from an attentive and critical perspective. An ethics council comprised of at least five people, chosen from among the capable people of the profession, should be formed. The professional codes of ethics prepared by the Council should first be submitted to the Turkish Archives Association's General Council and, if necessary, opened for discussion by all archivists on the Association's internet site. The effort will certainly make a process necessary that will take time and require hard work. In this regard, the continuation of efforts to develop professional principles of ethics in advanced countries shows how much work this process entails.

In the implementation of codes of ethics, a country's level of development, democratic structure and legal rules in practice must necessarily play a determining role. For the codes of ethics prepared to be valid the legal ground must be formulated and firstly professional solidarity must be ensured in order to prepare this legal structure. In the way that lawyers are members of the bar and doctors are members of the physicians association, archivists are compelled to establish and develop such a structure. It must be remembered that codes of ethics without sanctions will not go beyond advice.

In order to redress the shortfalls in the field, achieve a position worthy of the community's respect by providing the services of the profession in a better way, and to attain the respect they deserve, members of the archive profession and their professional associations should immediately prepare a professional codes of ethics text that will respond to needs and then take the necessary initiatives for it to be implemented.



A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS”  
FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

**Bibliography**

- AAC. (2016). Code of ethics of Catalan archivists. Retrieved from May 20, 2016, [http://www.concernedhistorians.org/content\\_files/file/et/143.pdf](http://www.concernedhistorians.org/content_files/file/et/143.pdf).
- ACA. (2016a). Code of ethics. Retrieved from June 12, 2016, [http://archivists.ca/content/code-ethics\\_](http://archivists.ca/content/code-ethics_).
- ACA. (2016b). Code of ethics. Retrieved from June 13, 2016, <http://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/library-archives/archived-code-of-ethics/codeethics05.pdf?sfvrsn=4>.
- ACA. (2016c). Code of ethics. Retrieved from June 14, 2016, <https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>.
- Aren, T. (1998). Özel arşivler ve kamu arşivleriyle ilişkileri. In R. Erişti, H. O. Yıldırım, V. Atik & Y. Yay (Eds.), *I. Milli Arşiv Şurası 20-21 Nisan 1998 Ankara Tebliğler-Tartışmalar*, (pp. 523-541). Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü.
- ASA. (2016). Code of ethics. Retrieved from May 16, 2016, <https://www.archivists.org.au/documents/item/715>.
- Ataman, B. K. (1995) *Arşivcilik terimleri sözlüğü*. İstanbul: AREM.
- Aydın, N. (2009). *Hukuka giriş*. Ankara: Adalet.
- Benedict, K. (1988). Archival ethics. In J. G. Bradsher (Ed.), *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* (pp. 174-184). London: Mansell Publishing.
- Benedict, K. (2010). An evolution in a code of ethics: the Society of American Archivists. In M. Turner, K. Benedict, Y. Boss-Rops & D. Carlisle (Eds.), *15. International Archivkongress on Archives 23 -29 August*. Retrieved from January 15, 2010, [www.Wien2004.ica.org](http://www.Wien2004.ica.org).
- Boss-Rops, Y. (2010). The ICA of ethics: a challenge for professional organization. M. Turner, K. Benedict, Y. Boss-Rops ve D. Carlisle (Eds.) *15. International Archivkongress on Archives 23 -29 August*. Retrieved from Jen 15, 2010, [www.Wien2004.ica.org](http://www.Wien2004.ica.org).
- Can, H. & Güner, S. (1999). *Hukukun temel kavramları*. Ankara: Siyasal Kitapevi.
- Cook, M. (2006). Professional ethics and practice in archives and records management in a human rights context, *Journl of the Society of Archivists*, 27(1), pp.1-15.
- Dinçkol, A. (2001). *Hukuka giriş*. İstanbul: DER.
- Donay, S. (1978). *Hukuka giriş*, İstanbul: Deniz Harp Okulu Sosyal Bilimler Bölümü.
- Durkheim, E. (1948). *Meslek ahlakı*. (M.Karasan, Trans.). Ankara: MEB.
- Furat, M. F. (2009). Arşivcilik meslek etiği. *EKEV Akademi Dergisi*, 41(1), 447-458.
- Gözler, K. (2009). *Hukukun temel kavramları*. Bursa: Ekin.
- Hatemi, H. (1976) *Basın ahlakı*. İstanbul: Çığır.
- Heimsoeth, H. (1987) *Ahlak denen bilmece beş konuşma*. (N. Uygur, Trans.). İstanbul: İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi.
- Horn, D. E. (1989). The development of ethics in archival practice. *American Archivist*, 52(1), 64-71.
- ICA. (2016). Code of ethics. Retrieved from May 26, 2016, [http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ICA\\_1996-09-06\\_code%20of%20ethics\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ICA_1996-09-06_code%20of%20ethics_EN.pdf).
- Jimerson, R. C. (2006 ). Ethical concerns for archivists, *The Public Historian*, 28(1), 87-92.

## SEVİL PAMUK

- Kandur, H. (2004). Elektronik belgelerin özniteliklerinin elektronik belge yönetimi açısından incelemesi. In B. K. Ataman & M. Yalvaç (Eds.), *Aysel Yontar Armağanı* (pp. 121-131). İstanbul: Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği İstanbul Şubesi.
- Karakaş, H. S., Rukancı, F. & Anameriç, H. (2009). *Belge yönetimi ve arşiv terimleri sözlüğü*. Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü.
- Keseroğlu, H. (2007). Bilgi ve belge yönetimi etiği ve Türkiye’de durumu. In A. Üstün & Ü. Konya (Eds.), *Uluslararası Bilgi Hizmetleri Sempozyumu. İletişim 25-26 Mayıs 2006* (pp. 171-183). İstanbul: Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği İstanbul Şubesi.
- Kutlu, H.A. (2011). *Muhasebe meslek ahlakı*. İstanbul: Nobel.
- Ngulube, P. (2000). Professionalism and ethics in records management in the public sector in Zimbabwe. *Records Management Journal*, 10(3), 161-173.
- Özlem, D. (2004). *Etik-ahlâk felsefesi*. İstanbul: Inkilap.
- Pamuk, S. (2011). Arşivcilikte Meslek Etiğinin Gelişimi. In G. Sarıyıldız, N. Çiçek, İ. Keskin, & S. Pamuk (Eds.), *Prof. Dr. Şevki Nezihî Aykut Armağanı* (pp. 217-229). İstanbul: Etkin.
- SAA. (2016a). The archivist's code. Retrieved from May 28, 2016, <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/professionals/archivist-code.html>.
- SAA. (2016b). A code of ethics for archivists. Retrieved from May 29, 2016, <http://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/1980%20Code.pdf>.
- SAA. (2016c). Code of ethics for archivists. Retrieved from June 01, 2016, <http://ethics.iit.edu/ecodes/node/4559>.
- SAA. (2016d). Code of ethics for archivists. Retrieved from June 02, 2016, [http://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/databases/creative\\_heritage/docs/saa\\_ethics\\_archivists.pdf](http://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/databases/creative_heritage/docs/saa_ethics_archivists.pdf).
- SAA. (2016e). Core values of archivists. Retrieved from June 03, 2016, <http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics#.V5YJyNKyOko>.
- SAA. (2016f). Code of ethics for archivists. Retrieved from June 03, 2016, <http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics#.V5YJyNKyOko>.
- San, A. (1988). Profesyonellik açısından İstanbul kütüphaneleri. In M. Alpay (Ed.), *Türkiye’de Kütüphane Alanında Teori ile Uygulama İlişkisi Sempozyumu 7-8 Mayıs 1987* (pp. 191-207). İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi.
- Selimoğlu, S. K. (1998). Muhasebede meslek ahlakı etik yaklaşımı. *Muhasebe Denetimi Mesleğinde Yetkiler, Sorumluluklar ve Meslek Ahlakı İstanbul İSMMM III. Türkiye Muhasebe Denetimi Sempozyumu 30 Nisan-04 Mayıs 1997* (pp. 144-158). İstanbul: İSMMM.
- Süleymanoğlu, E. F. (2004). Arşivcilikte etik kavramı ve kuralları. In B. K. Ataman & M. Yalvaç (Eds.), *Aysel Yontar Armağanı* (pp. 169-175). İstanbul: Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği İstanbul Şubesi Yay.
- Sümer, H.H., Atar, Y., Ayan, M., Karahan, S., Ulukapı, Ö. & Arslan, İ. (2003). *Temel hukuk bilgisi*. Konya: Mimoza.
- Türk Arşivciler Derneği. (2016). Mesleki etik kurallar. Retrieved from July 18, 2016, <http://www.arsivder.org.tr/yazilar.aspx?id=8>.

A PROPOSAL FOR A “PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS”  
FOR TURKISH ARCHIVAL PROFESSION

Uslu, S. (1998). Muhasebe mesleđi meslek ahlâkı ve moral deđerler. *Muhasebe Denetimi Mesleđinde Yetkiler, Sorumluluklar ve Meslek Ahlakı İstanbul İSMMMÖ III. Türkiye Muhasebe Denetimi Sempozyumu 30 Nisan-04 Mayıs 1997* (pp. 21-31). İstanbul: İSMMMÖ.

Ülgen, H. & Mirze, S.K. (2006). *İşletmelerde stratejik yönetim*. İstanbul: Literetür.