

A NEW APPROACH TO HANDLING MANUSCRIPTS

Prof. Dr. Sekine KARAKAŞ

ABSTRACT

Automated systems of manuscripts have been used and developed for many years by librarians. However, the size, types, content value and complexity of the materials owned by institutions and libraries effect the size and the technology used in the formulation and implementation of the system. A new software for the manuscript collection of The Library of Faculty of Letters was developed and utilized after a preparatory period.

Introduction

Manuscripts in libraries being very precious information sources for researchers, deserves careful attention for efficient organization, access and maintenance. In today's electronic world there is enormous development and transition toward automated access to manuscripts. The desirable record must be in conformity with the format designed, permitting the computer to process all the available data in a minimum time. It must be easy to maintain, encourage updates, changes and addenda. "It must enable a potential user to grasp the essence of a collection at a glance, to judge whether the collection includes items relevant to that user's research topic, to locate references to those items in the finding aid, and then to identify precisely that portion of the collection that contains them" (Lucas, 1981: 22). Thus researchers would be directed to those books through the automated system.

Faculty of Letters manuscripts had been very far from this ideal approach. There was however, some inventories and card catalogs

to access partly to rare books and manuscripts. With the realization of Faculty of Letters Library and Manuscripts Project, a new period toward sound entry and automation procedures began.

The Library

In Turkey university libraries gained great importance as a result of development that had taken place in social and scientific areas. Faculty of Letters was founded on 14 th of June, 1935 with a new statute accepted by Grand National Assembly of Turkey. According to Kemal Edip Ünsel Kürkçüoğlu (Library Director during the foundation of the library) the library reached to a capacity of 70.000 volumes in eight or nine years time. The manuscript collections in the library were acquired from the national and international bookstores through purchase and donations from wellknown collectors. 100.000.- Turkish liras spent for these collections, which was, really an important amount at that time. In the meantime Turkish Language Institute (Türk Dil Kurumu) and many other organizations presented very precious books to our library. Şükrü Saracoğlu (1942-1946), The Prime Minister, Hasan Ali Yücel, The Minister of Education and well known researchers contributed with valuable manuscripts and incunabela to the library.

Before the central library was opened, there were 15 independant department and institute libraries named: The General Library, The Turkish Language and Literature, The British, German and French Language and Literature, The Russian Language and Literature, The Hungarian Language, The Classical Philology, The Hittitology, The Sumerology, The Indian Language, The Sinology, The History, The Geography, The Philosophy, The Psychology, The Archeology, The Ethnology, The Antropology. Later on seven new department and institute libraries were added to the above number. At the end of 1968, this number reached to 22.

The Faculty of Letters Central Library was built in 1969 as a seperate building which includes areas large enough to accomodate all the institute libraries.

Premises of the Library

- A. Depot. In the basement of library building undergraduate theses, rarely used periodicals before 1970, and other materials, which are not processed yet are located.
- B. First Floor: Near the offices of Administrative, and Technical Services, there is a big reading room for students with a 100 seat capacity. Three computer laboratories equipped with 35 PC 's are for, both for Faculty and students, with Network facilities.
- C. Second Floor (Social Sciences)

Reference books like encyclopedias, bibliographies, abstracts, indexes and dictionaries in social sciences, are in this floor. Also books in general subjects, philosophy, theology, librarianship, history, geography and archeology are arranged according to the Dewey Decimal Classification in open stacks.

- D. Third Floor (Periodicals, Manuscripts, Dissertations)

Frequently used periodicals, dissertations and manuscripts are located in this floor. Dissertations and manuscripts are lend with special permission to researchers.

- E. Fourth Floor. The Language and Literature Department

All materials about language and literature are in this floor arranged as:

The German Language and Literature, The Arabic Language and Literature, The French Language and Literature, The Indian Language and Literature, The English Language and Literature, The Spanish Language and Literature, The Italian Language and Literature, The Korean Language and Literature, The Latin Language and Literature, The Hungarian Language and Literature, The Sinology and Japan, The Turkology, The Indian Language and Literature. In the library nearly 350.000 materials are located. The 34.000 of this collection is periodicals, 45.000 books printed in Arabic letters, 25.000 manuscripts, 15.000 dissertations. The library is open every day except saturday and sunday to students, faculty members and other readers and researchers.

Approximately 52.000 researchers use the library and these users borrow nearly 55.000 books and other library materials a year. Faculty and students must be members of the library to borrow books. Faculty members can reach the library collections from their personel computers .The Library Automation system was started centrally by the Ankara University and each faculty library adopted it when they completed their infrastructure.

Manuscripts

The manuscripts collections purchased during the foundation of the library are:

O. Rescher, Mahmut Zeki, Ahmet Celalettin (Baykara), Hilmi Bayhan, Mustafa Con, İsmail Saib Sencer (Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya; 2000: 2).

The first collection O. Rescher is a very rich one, which belongs to XVII., XVIII. centuries, includes books written by Western Orientalists. The Mahmut Zeki collection contains valuable printed books in the fields of history and literature. Ahmet Celalettin Baykara, the last sheikh of Galata Mevlevihane was the donor of the very valuable manuscripts and printed material collection.

A very well known scholar Hilmi Bayhan is from Yozgat. Bayhan also had a precious collection of books and the Faculty of Letters Library became richer with these books. Mustafa Con being a very distinguished person in Havza collected very rare manuscripts for himself and they were also given to the library.

İsmail Saib Sencer 's books constituted a unique treasure both in quality and quantity, who was an enthusiastic bibliophile with a wide and variable range of interests, he was a well-informed scholar also. This collection was purchased by Hasan Ali Yücel, the Minister of Education in İstanbul. The inventory of these books was made by the librarians of Süleymaniye Library and brought to the Faculty of Letters with 101 big and small chests.

Aside from these, the Muzaffer Ozak collection, another very valuable one was purchased with considerable amount of money. In this collection there are really very precious manuscripts and a collection belonging to Raif Yelkenci.

These rich treasures purchased from very famous collectors are located in the third floor of the library under the names of former owners: Mustafa Con A, B, C, Muzaffer Ozak I, II, İsmail Saib I, II, Üniversite A, B (University), Müteferrik (Miscellaneous).

Hilmi Bayhan's books mentioned above are in the Mustafa Con collection. Ahmet Celalettin Baykan's books constitutes University A and B collections. Miscellaneous I and II are mixed collections which were obtained from different people.

The unique feature of the collections is that, they include some of the rarest examples of books in the fields of literature, history, geography, science, astronomy, philosophy, theology, military dating back to 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries of the Hegira.

Thus the collections reaching totalling nearly 25.000 books tend to be of there basic types: (1) a broad selection of representative books and manuscripts drawn from many subject areas, from different countries and from different centuries and usually containing "high spots" from the history of printing; (2) narrowly defined and sharply focused subject collections, which in many instances because of their depth and the quality of their contents, can be classed as primary research collections of importance, (3) a combination of the two.

These precious books are kept in a locked room in the library. They are available for use only for brief periods and on rare occasions. The collections are available by appointment to scholars. Access to these collections are provided through card catalogue and inventory notebooks. The best access to books were the ones with narrative description, but of course the researcher then had to read the entire inventory, having no way to judge whether it needed or not. The materials in the collections were not all catalogued and

replaced in the card catalogue. Access information include collection number, author, title, date of original writing (telif) and copying date (istinsah).

The Project

It was not easy to initiate the project for these very valuable manuscripts. The immediate reasons were lack of funds, key staff who can read and understand different writings of manuscripts, continuity of management authorities and difficulties in reaching a right automation program that was sufficiently developed for our needs.

After lengthy discussions and briefings about the harmful effects of these treasures to government authorities, the first step had been taken. In order to save all these precious books, which were in a very inconvenient environment and ruined with dust, moisture, oxidation etc. a three year project was planned. The agreement between the Turkish Prime Ministry and Faculty of Letters Deanship signed on 22 nd of May, 1999 with a project cost amounting to 217.500.000.000.-Turkish Liras.

According to the project the bibliographic information of manuscripts would first be written down on the bibliographic forms and then to computers. After completing all the records, a comprehensive catalog would be prepared. The last stage of the project would be conservation and preservation of the collections. Finally, they would all be made available to researchers through Internet.

The initial pace was the heavy work of the bibliographic control of materials. As the automation system needed sound and correct data about manuscripts, they had to be organized first by specialists. Newly developed forms were going to be arranged by faculty members for each book and after all the work done the "building block" approach to inventories would be realized by automation. These processes started at the cataloging stage and carried through the final inventory. "The development of the form

was so important as to gain better intellectual control over the collections 'holdings, there by promoting more effective reference collection development and access" (Bradshaw, 2000: 527).

Forms were prepared with the competence and knowledge of the Faculty, also with an idea of the research needs of the collections ' patrons, For example it is very well known that scope notes, box lists and annotations especially for larger and more homogeneous collections are essential for researchers. A format that uses scope notes and related data to reflect the essence of an old work encourage the manuscript user to view the book as a whole and to develop a concise statement of a vital information that can stand independent of subsequent details. The bibliographic information on the forms would include:

Library number with the collection name of the manuscripts, language of the book, author, title, translator, copier (müstensih), gold-embroiderer (müzehhib), beginning of the book (with original letters), end of the book (with original letters) compilation place, compilation date, volume number, leaf number, line number, column number, miniatures and illustrations, length of the paper, length of text, binding features, ink colour, illumination features, written in verse or prose, pursuing word, type of calligraphy, watermarks of the paper, ketebe note, any information, in the marginal note, information in zahriye (A label or title put on the outside of a document) content, additional information, subject of the book.

If these pieces of information cannot be obtained from the manuscript, several Arabic, Persian Turkish biographic and bibliographic sources is to be used for completing missing information.

A control mechanism is organized by the senior Faculty to ensure that the contents and the full bibliographic data about the manuscript is defined and recorded. Accuracy will be compromised at this stage.

Automation Decision

Although the idea of recording bibliographic data of manuscripts and then to adopt them to an automated system was not the product of recent years, the need to access to such material and development in information community urged us, to make new plans. Intellectual and financial constraints caused some delay as mentioned above, but the project was maintained with right decisions. It is very well known that the most important factor for a sound automation system is an efficient and effective manual system. Though our manual access system or even the primary records were not sufficient for a sound automation program we had to run on parallel lanes. "As automated and manuel systems are not independent entities and they are precisely in extricably linked", (Lucas, 1981: 24) starting to prepare the records of the manuscripts we tried to reach our first target and then to have them on computers would be much more simpler.

One of the most important factors was having enough intellectual access points, desirable and crucial as an aid to the manuscript librarian and researcher reference functions. Beyond this matter, the need to other several features prompt us to search for a special descriptive format, rather than using a standardized software package.

Especially new conceptual, intellectual and technological developments in automation systems, enabled our producer to design, what we need exactly. They planned the whole automation process very carefully as this system would not be restricted with our own repository but all the Ankara University manuscripts may be included. At the beginning of the planning all the technical specifications including computer storage and processing capacity indexing and sorting capability, compatibility and networking requirement (in the near future), upgrading, length of records and fields and format designated and structure of the software determined. The program for our manuscripts is written on a server which is loaded with windows NT system aided with Arabic fonts

and by an access database, which can work on windows NT workstation again supported by Arabic fonts. The query can be done either by studying everyfield of the database or by combining fields using logical expressions such as "and", "or", "or" "not".

Structure of the Software

1. Initial Procedures

A. Entry Section

- a. Library personnel enter the information on bibliographic forms and can change them, using password.
- b. Researchers can use these information except administrative data, but cannot make any alteration.
- c. Administrators can control the entered data by password.

B. Circulation Section

- a. Manuscript librarian can manage all the circulation procedure with password. This software otomatically writes the number, date and hour of the loan and return.
- b. Turkish Librarian can control all the data about circulation.

2. Ottoman, Arabic Persian Language and Transcription Capacity of Software

Software provides the use of transcribed letters written from right to left in Arabic Persian and Ottoman Turkish Language as well as Turkish letters used from left to right in different fields of a database records.

The software also includes fonts of Ottoman transcription and Persian alphabets used in Turkish Republic together with the keyboard maps of these fonts. Turkish keyboard is basicly used in Turkish transcription and Persian keyboard maps and for the sake of compatibility, letters which are found in standard Turkish are placed to keyboard so that fonetic features are completed.

3. Windows Media: Software is compatible with the windows media completely. For this reason all the features of windows like graphics interface design, "cut", "copy", "paste" and multi-tasking is possible.

4. Data Input Monitor: The data input monitor is compatible with the bibliographic forms used for manuscripts.

5. Report Writing Capacity: Software allows the user to select database fields and report these information according to this conception.

6. Search and Query Capacity: Software allows to filter/sort and query procedures in Turkish, Arabic, Persian and transcription letters.

7. Supportive Matters

- a. The interface of the software is in English, but Turkish command guide is also prepared.
- b. A word processor which can process Persian and transcription alphabets is used for the processing of all the records in database.
- c. As Windows NT Server version is developing, Windows 98 based workgroup is used.
- d. The software is also compatible for Internet purposes.

Today there are very different bibliographic networks developed both by the Research Libraries group (RLG) and OCLC; with the National Union Catalog of Manuscripts Collections (NUCMC) poised to enter RLIN and many others recently settled (Hensen, 1988: 539) The research utility of these networks is very important for librarians and researchers. Manuscripts are incomplete research tools without complete bibliographic descriptions. The descriptions of manuscripts are MARC compatible. MARC Format for Archives and Manuscripts Control (AMC) is used in this project. Unique cataloging requirements of manuscripts has been important to librarians and manuscript specialists (Gilliland, 1988: 509).

Manuscript User

Especially in a university library the primary purpose of a manuscript collection should be to serve the world of scholarship. (Bordin, 1966: 14) The manuscript library by its very nature, is

aimed primarily at the scholar rather than at the general reader and this fact should determine its service policies. Especially graduate students of the Faculty and University using rare books and manuscripts generally for preparing their dissertations, scholars either those affiliated with the University or those from other institutions who are doing original research is using the collection frequently. In fact getting all the scholars in contact with rare books and manuscripts not only for their intellectual but also talismanic value is a very important mission for librarians (Antonetti, 1987: 175). In our Faculty the historian will find working with historical manuscripts a meaningful challenge rather than a boring business. The student of Turkish Literature will be stimulated and excited by a collection of literary manuscripts. As well as a librarian must gain the skills necessary to deal with manuscripts.

Conclusion

Today computerized information retrieval systems are widely used in manuscript libraries of developed countries. The kind of system will depend on the nature and amount of the materials, the kinds of users and the specific characteristics of the individual collection. At the same time the administration's approach to the library and other technological and financial opportunities are also important. In our country the examples of such automation systems is very rare. Though the intensive use of the system has'nt began yet, all the procedures up to day, like preparation of bibliographic forms and loading all these information to computerized media is going to be accomplished in the near future. The task from now on will be the preparation of the manuscript catalogs, conservation, preservation and networking. Preparation of the catalogs is planned but networking system configuration is still having financial and technical problems. Our library needs to hire people with special technical skills such as book restoration and binding. These services must be left to outside agencies which specialize in them but in Turkey we dont have such agencies. There is only a college of the Ankara University, Başkent Meslek Yüksek Okulu. Another well-

known institution is Süleymaniye Library Preservation and Restoration Department in İstanbul.

These matters will be taken into consideration during the ensuing years with additional projects. We would like to open our hidden cultural treasures to scholars in Turkey and abroad.

ÖZET

Ülkemizde üniversite kütüphanelerinde bulunan değerli yazma eserler için gerek gelecek kuşaklara aktarılmak üzere korunmaları, gerekse bibliyografik denetimlerinin yapılması ve araştırmacıların hizmetine sunulması yönünden geliştirilmiş yeterli sistemler mevcut değildir. Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Kütüphanesinde O. Rescher, Mahmut Zeki, Ahmet Celalettin (Baykara), Hilmi Bayhan, Mustafa Con, İsmail Saib Sencer gibi çok ünlü koleksiyonculardan satın alınan ve bağışlarla daha da zenginleşen yirmibeşbine yakın el yazmasının yeni bir proje ile gün ışığına çıkarılması çalışmaları son aşamasına gelmiştir. Onbir koleksiyon halinde kilitli kapılar ardında elverişsiz bir ortamda korunan, oksitlenme, nem, toz gibi nedenlerle tahribata uğramış olan hazine değerindeki eserlerin öncelikle fakültenin yetkin öğretim elemanları tarafından hazırlanan bibliyografik künye fişleri, değerli öğretim üyeleri tarafından denetlenmektedir. Projenin ana noktası ise bu fişlerle tespit edilen yazmalara ait bilgilerin bilgisayara aktarılması, ayrıca bakım ve onarımlarının sağlanmasıdır. Eserlerin farklı dillerde olması nedeniyle "yazma", "ödünç verme" ve "iade" ana bölümlerinden oluşan özel bir yazılım hazırlanmıştır. Yazılım Windows ortamına yüzde yüz uygun olduğundan, bütün işlerinde Windows'un yaygın olarak tanınan grafik arayüzü deseni, pano aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilen "kes", "kopyala" ve "yapıştır", işlemleri ve gerçek çok görevli çalışmalar gibi olanaklara sahiptir. En önemli özelliği Osmanlıca (Farsça) ve transkripsiyon kapasitesidir. Yazılım bir veritabanı kayıtlarının çeşitli alanlarında sağdan sola yazılan Arapça, Farsça ve Osmanlı Türkçesi harfleri ve soldan sağa yazılan Tüekçe ve Osmanlıca transkripsiyon harflerin kullanımını sağlamaktadır. Ankara Üniversitesi bünyesindeki tüm yazma koleksiyonları

için de kullanılabilecek bu sistem Türkiye'de bir ilki oluşturması açısından önem taşımaktadır.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Antonetti, Martin. (1987). "The Subtile Symbiosis: Rare books and Manuscripts at Mills College". *Library Trends*, 36(3), 171-178.
- Bordin, Ruth B.- Robert M. Warner. (1966). *The Modern Manuscripts Library*. New York: Scarecrow Press, Inc., p. 151.
- Bradshaw, Elaine Beckley-Stephen C. Wagner. (2000). "A Common Ground: Communication and Alliance between Cataloger and Curator for Improved Access to Rare Books and Special Collections." *College and Research Libraries*, 61(6), 525-534.
- Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Kütüphanesi ve Yazma Eserler Projesi*. (2000). Ankara: Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi, p. 16+15.
- Gilliland, Anne J. (1988). "The Development of Automated Archival Systems: Planning and Managing Change." *Library Trends*, 36(3), 519-537.
- Hensen. Steven L. (1988). "Squaring the Circle:The Reformation of Archival Description in AACR2". *Library Trends*, 36(3), 539-552.
- Lucas, Lydia.(1981). "Efficient Finding Aids: Developing a System for Control of Archives and Manuscripts". *The American Archivist*, 44(1), 21-26.