

## Ex-Libris in Turkey

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### **ABSTRACT**

Ex-libris has been introduced to Turkey either by Turks going abroad or via books purchased from the West. Ex-librises are found in some books on Turkey bought from auctions conducted in the West. It can be argued that those who have first got ex-librises made in the real sense in Turkey were the expatriate bibliophiles of that period. The number of bibliophiles as well as others, who get ex-librises done as a measure against theft by borrowers of books from their libraries, is increasing every other day.

First established in Ankara in 1997, the Ex-libris Society in our country has continued its activities in Istanbul under the name of the Istanbul Ex-libris Society since 2008. Istanbul Ex-libris Museum was moved to new locality İşık University in Maslak in 2014. The collection of more than 17.000 ex-librises and library has created great opportunities for researchers.

**Keywords:** Ex-libris; Bookplate; Book; Library; Stamps; Society; Collector; FISAE; Congress; Graphic; Art.

## INTRODUCTION



Ex-libris is usually small-sized graphic work with names and pictures on various subjects pasted inside book covers by book lovers. It is either a visiting-card or the deed title of the book. Ex-libris introduces the owner of the book, glorifies and exalts him and warns the borrower of the book to return it. Along with being a discretionary possession, indication of an ownership, it may be said that it functions to protect the book from thieves. Its literal meaning is "...’s book" or "from ...’s library".

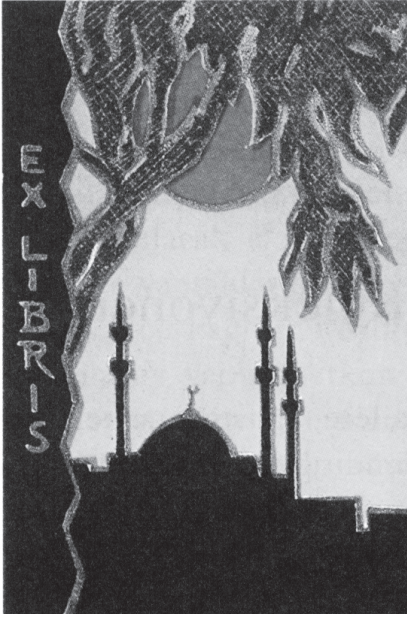
Ex-libris is a significant communication medium. While it is set as the graphic of need, it is a specific master-work that has been designed from aesthetic anxiety. Art from human hands into the books lets others feel its charming warmth. This branch of art which has an older history has become interesting at present time because of its cultural, historical characteristics and has been used by artists and collectors as an important object of issue.

## EXLIBRIS in TURKEY

Ex-libris has been introduced to Turkey either by Turks going abroad or via books purchased from the West. Books containing ex-libris, which are used widely in European countries, have been brought to Turkey through second-hand sales, and when book owners passed away, their relatives either donated those books to libraries or sold them to antiquarian booksellers.

Ex-libris are found in some books on Turkey bought from auctions conducted in the West. For example, it is possible to see an ex-libris in a book, which is in the National Library, on Ottoman History printed in 1777 and bought from Germany in 1954 in exchange of 210 Deutsche Marks. There are ex-libris in some books of the library of Henry M. Blackmer that are related to the Ottomans, purchased by the Ministry of Culture from the Sotheby’s auction in London in 1989. There are ex-libris in some of the books bought from abroad, particularly those in French, and donated from the Cavit Baysun library to the Yapı Kredi Bank Library and from the Sedat Simavi and Şevket Rado libraries to the Press Museum.

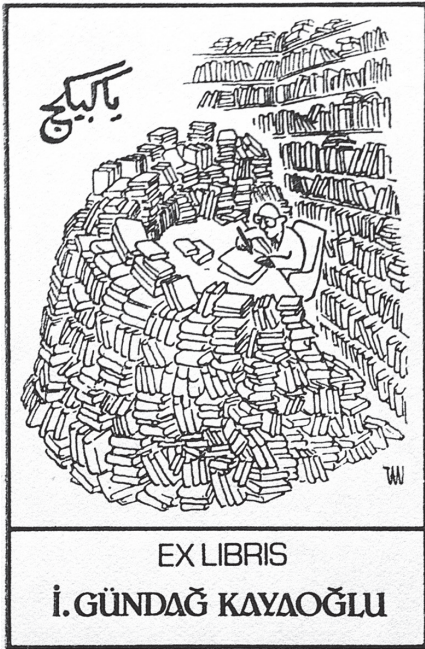
The stamps present on handwritten manuscripts and printed books that date back to the Ottoman era may be recognized as signs of ownership. Although stamps do not belong to the ex-libris type, with their original calligraphic structures, they have functioned as the personal coat of arms or logotype of the person they belong to.



Ex-libris for Students of Robert College



Sealed Book



Ex-libris for İ. Gündâğ Kayaoğlu with Kebikeç

It can be argued that those who have first got ex-libris made in the real sense in Turkey were the expatriate bibliophiles of that period. That the teachers served in such foreign schools as the Üsküdar American Academy and the Robert College has got ex-libris made can be seen when the internal covers of the books donated to the libraries of these schools are examined. In the majority of the books of the Robert College library, which now belongs to the Boğaziçi University, a standard ex-libris is found. Starting from the 1920's, student yearbooks of the Robert College featured ex-libris that also contained blank placeholders for the owner of the yearbook to inscribe their names. Designed and applied by those in charge of the artistic aspects of the yearbook, this tradition was unfortunately suspended by the 1950's.

Neither enthusiasts nor collectors of this recently spreading art are many in Turkey. The number of bibliophiles as well as others, who get ex-libris done as a measure against theft by borrowers of books from their libraries, is increasing every other day. For example, İ. Gündâğ Kayaoğlu, folk-culture expert and researcher-writer, get the ex-libris comprising a cartoon of Tan Oral and the inscription "Yâ Kebikeç" in Arabic on it done in 1985. (In the past, the word "Kebikeç," which was thought to be the "Sultan of the Bugs" was inscribed on handwritten manuscript books to protect them from worms. The bugs were believed to scare from the Kebikeç and avoid approaching the books with this word on them.)

From time to time, persons who have just heard about the existence of such an art are witnessed to get interested in ex-libris with great enthusiasm. Nevertheless, these individuals will first deal with its functional side, and in time, just like the other collectors, they will adopt it and start accumulating



**XXXIII. FISAE  
INTERNATIONAL  
EX-LIBRIS CONGRESS**

**İstanbul**  
2010  
33. FISAE  
ULUSLARARASI  
EKSLİBRİS KONGRESİ

in line with their areas of interest. As long as book owners, collectors, and artists continue to be enamored of ex-libris, I am sure this tradition will be well established in Turkey, as well.

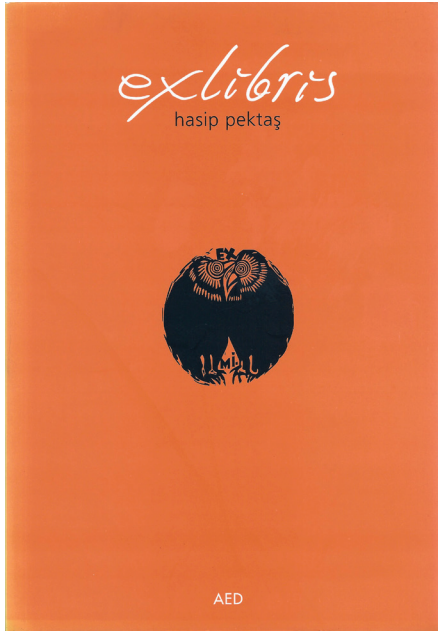
First established in Ankara in 1997, the Ex-libris Society in our country has continued its activities in Istanbul under the name of the Istanbul Ex-libris Society since 2008. As one of the 10 museums all around the World, the Istanbul Exlibris Museum was established under the Istanbul Museum of Graphic Arts (IMOGA) in 2008. But now Museum was moved to Işık University in Maslak. The collection of more than 17.000 ex-libris and library has created great opportunities for researchers.

The Istanbul Ex-libris Society has opened exhibitions in 14 cities in Turkey as well as in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Denmark, China, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Finland, Belarus, Canada, and Russia and thus publicized ex-libris. Numerous conferences have been delivered to promote the art of ex-libris and workshops, particularly in schools, have been conducted. The Istanbul Ex-libris Society also organized 3 international ex-libris competitions in 2003, 2007, and 2010. In 2010, the Society, in cooperation with the Feyziye Schools Foundation and Işık University, organized the FISAE XXXIII International Congress of Ex-libris and welcomed 280 artists and collectors from 40 different countries in Istanbul.



From the FISAE XXXIII International Congress of Ex-libris, 2010

In addition to the III International Ex-libris Competition Exhibition, the Collections of Japanese collector Ichigoro Uchida, Austrian collector Heinrich R. Scheffer, Moscow Ex-libris Museum, China Exlibris Association, and Shanghai Fu Xian Zhai Exlibris Society as well as Stamped Old Book Pages, which reflect our tradition of stamping, a type of ex-libris, were exhibited.

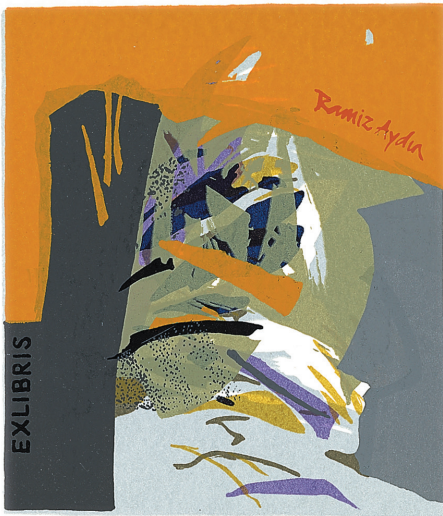


Işık University also organized a national ex-libris competition for high-school students in 2012.

Yapı Kredi Cultural Activities Arts and Publishing Inc. published Hasip Pektaş' book "Ekslibris" in 1996 and the extended Second Edition of the book was printed by the Ankara Ex-libris Society in 2003.

The membership of the Ankara Ex-libris Society was accepted in the FISAE (International Federation of Ex-libris Societies) Congress held in Boston in the year 2000 and Turkey participated to this organization, of which nearly 40 countries are members.

Since the 2000's in Turkey, particularly thanks to encouragement and support from the faculty of establishments that provide fine-arts education, youths that make ex-libris have started to evolve as masters in this field. Our artists are currently claiming awards in exhibitions and competitions organized abroad and have our voice heard among activities carried out in those arenas. In addition, it is also a fact that 13 graduate theses have been already completed so far on ex-libris, a subject matter that is quite new in Turkey.



H. Müjde Ayan

The Istanbul Exlibris Academy Society established in 1998 is also actively working to spread ex-libris. They organized the competitions titled "Exlibris Istanbul" in 2000 and "Exlibris Nazım Hikmet" in 2002 and an exhibition titled "Exlibris Mediteranean" in 2010. However, it should be remembered that ex-libris is not made with tourism purposes or after the name of a deceased person. Ex-libris can only be functional if performed in the name of individuals and organization that are alive.

The number of our artists and designers, who participate in numerous international ex-libris exhibitions in addition to the exhibitions of ex-libris opened in Turkey, claim rewards there, are enamored of ex-libris, conduct serious activities in this field, and extending efforts to spread ex-libris is increasing every day. Those names that come to mind from among those include Güler Akalan, Tülin Aktar, Mine Arasan, Nurgül Arıkan, Hakan Arslan, İsmail Aslan, Mehmet Aslan, H. Müjde Ayan, Mehmet Aydoğdu, Erdal Aygenç, Durmuş Murat Bahar, Lütfiye A Bahar, Tezcan Bahar, Hatice Bengisu, Nurhayat Berker, İrem Çamlıca, Elif Varol Ergen, Hakan Erkam, Erdoğan Ergün, Ayşen Erte, Murat Ertürk, Şükrü Ertürk, İlknur Dedeoğlu, Hakan Demir, Hüseyin Demir, Salih Denli, Ali Doğan, Mine Saraç Doğan, Esra Kızır Gökçen, Yunus Güneş, Mürşide İçmeli, İsmail İlhan, Berran Kancal, Ahmet Aydın Kaptan, Serpil Güvendi Kaptan, Devabil Kara, Erkin Keskin, Yusuf Keş, Hasan Kıran, Emin Koç, Gülbin Koçak, Musa Köksal, Mustafa Okan, Gökhan Okur, Erol N. Olcay, Hatice Öz, Fatih Özdemir, Hasan Pekmezci, Sevgi Can Pekmezci, Hasip Pektaş, Özden Pektaş Turgut, Zülfikar Sayın, Emre Şengün, Nazan Tekbaş Tanyu, Sema Ilgaz Temel, Gözde Eda Tekcan, S. Saim Tekcan,



Şükrü Ertürk

Handan Tepe, Ali Tomak, Ercan Tuna, Serdar Tuna, Arif Ziya Tunç, Ozan Uyanık and Fedail Yılmaz.

We should also mention our artists and young people, who have adopted the art of ex-libris within such a period of time and make us proud of them with their original and successful works. In 2013, Onur Aşkın claimed the First CGD Prize in the Moscow Second International Ex Libris Competition for Young Artists. In 2012, Aytolun Cansu Ece Gür, Eda Gizem Uğur, Esra Diken, Taha Elgün, and Yusuf Ağım claimed Honors awards in the Işık University First National Student Ex-libris Competition; Lütfiye Bahar, Tezcan Bahar, Musa Köksal, Sevgi Koyuncu, Hasip Pektaş, Erhun Şengül, Emre Şengün, Ozan Uyanık, and Fedail Yılmaz claimed the Participant Award in Erotic Exlibris Exhibition Beijing, People's Republic of China; Erkin Keskin claimed the Third Prize in the Shanghai Lajuazui Meiyuancup International Ex-libris Competition; and Tezcan Bahar claimed the IMOGA Special Prize in the Hacettepe University Department of Information Management International Ex-libris Competition. In 2011, Irem Çamlıca won the First CGD Prize in the First International Ex Libris Competition for Young Artists in Russia;



Tezcan Bahar

Murat Ertürk won the Second CDG Prize in the 5th International Ex Libris and Small Graphic Forms Competition in Gdansk, Poland, and Emre Şengün won the Gdansk Community Foundation President's Prize in the same competition. In 2010, Tezcan Bahar won the Mehmet Rafet Atalık Special Prize in the FISAE XXXIII International Congress of Ex-libris organized by the Istanbul Ex-libris Society, Feyziye Schools Foundation and Işık University in cooperation; Burçin Demir and Emre Şengün won the Success Prize in the Northern Cyprus Near East University, Rauf Denктаş International Ex-libris Competition; Tezcan Bahar won the Johan Bosschem Special Prize in



Hasip Pektaş



Nazan Tekbaş Tanyu

the Northern Cyprus Eastern Mediterranean University First International Ex-libris Competition; Tezcan Bahar claimed the First CGD Prize in the 4th International Ex Libris and Small Graphic Forms Competition in Gdansk, Poland and Emre Şengün won the Gdansk Community Foundation President's Prize in the same competition. In 2009, Hasip Pektaş won the Second Prize in the Russia Yaroslavl International Ex-libris Competition; and Yetkin Yağcı won the First Prize in the CGD Ex-libris Competition organized by the Photoshop Magazine. In 2007, Prof. Dr. Sıtkı M. Erinç won a prize with his article titled, "Ex-libris as a Branch of Art" in the competition organized in memory of Italian ex-libris collector and writer Remo Palmirani. In 2007, İsmail Aslan won the Third Prize in the "2'be eu" – Rouse 2007 International Ex-libris Competition in Bulgaria; in the 2nd International Ex-libris Competition of the Hacettepe University and Ankara Ex-libris Society, Mustafa Okan won the Çankaya Municipality Special Prize and Yunus Güneş won the Hüseyin Bilgin Special Prize and Tezcan Bahar won the Ali Şükrü Fidan Special Prize; and Yunus Güneş won the Third Prize in the "Bread-Cultural Heritage" Ex-libris Competition in Serbia. In the 2nd FISAE International CGD Ex-libris Competition held in Belgium in 2006, Nurdan Adıgüzel won the First Prize, Tezcan Bahar won the Second Prize, and Atanur Sevim won the Fifth Prize. In the 1st FISAE International CGD Ex-libris Competition held in 2004, Mine Saraç won the Sint-Niklaas Special Prize and Ozan Ayıtkan won the Best Erotic Ex-libris Award. In 2003, İlknur Dedeoğlu won the Çankaya Municipality Special Prize in the 1st International Ex-libris Competition of the Hacettepe University and Ankara Ex-libris Society. In 2002, Gülbin Koçak won the First Prize and Ali Doğan won the Third Prize in the Istanbul Ex-libris Academy, International Ex-libris Nazım Hikmet Competition; and İlknur Dedeoğlu won the Belgrade Ex-libris Society Special Prize and Ali Doğan won the Joan Records Company Special Prize in the Yugoslavia 1st International Balkan Ex-libris Triennial. In 2001, Erdal Aygenç won the Third Prize in Argentina "Gral. José de San Martín -150" International Exlibris Competition; and in 2000, Sevim Arslan won the First Prize in the Istanbul Exlibris Academy Society International Exlibris Istanbul Competition. In 1997, Sema Ilgaz Temel won the Third Prize in the "Ex Musicis" Ex-libris Competition in Ortona, Italy; and in 1996, Hasip Pektaş won the First Prize and İsmail İlhan won the Second Prize in the "3rd Italy - Turkey Ex-libris Biennial" in Ortona, Italy.

You can follow Turkish Ex-libris from [www.aed.org.tr](http://www.aed.org.tr) of Istanbul Ex-libris Society.

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