



## Implementing Historical Thinking and Developing Local Genealogical Services

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**Meeting:**

**73. Genealogy and Local History**

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WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS: 76TH IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE AND ASSEMBLY

10-15 August 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden  
<http://www.ifla.org/en/ifla76>

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### Abstract

*The main aim of this research paper is to provide insight into the experience of Turkish librarians and their motivation in the case of genealogical information - contact prints or scrapbooks in the case of newspaper photographs, plus the addition of historical arrangement and content.*

*This paper will present strategies and methods used at information centres in Turkey for genealogical services. Its main focus is on the collaborative planning of archive and library based activities. This study explores the following, concentrating on the Turkish experience: what resources are covered in genealogy and local history information centres; which demands are currently met in library and archive programs to connect with their digital heritage collections; how archivists and librarians are promoted to their experiences; what are archivists' and librarians' experiences in setting up a culture of collaboration. Findings, discussions and interactivity with the IFLA participants will provide an excellent experimental foundation for understanding the users, analysing the context and describing the facilities of information centres - including those within which choices are made about which sources will become increasingly digital.*

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### Introduction

Libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, country courthouses, foundations, and many other locations are organised as information centres. These centres, which include historical and genealogical information in their collections, must strive to understand and support the impact they have on the construction of everyday life. Historical thinking is one

area of genealogical research that leads to deeper historical understanding. Genealogical services encourage the development of better research methods by engaging people in historical thinking.

Genealogy and local history collections will work within public libraries, school libraries, university libraries, special libraries, archives, documentation centres, mosques, churches, museums and all kinds of information centres so as to meet social needs. The common goal of all information centres that include such collections is to improve the scientific, cultural and social life of the society, while, at the same time, offering information services. The goal will be reached by improving these services, which preserve values acquired in the past, and to hand these services down to future generations. This research observes and uncovers the current developments in genealogy and local history studies in Turkey.

## **Review of the Literature**

This literature review explores the relationship between Turkish librarians' motivation regarding genealogical information, and the collaborative planning of archive and library based activities. While exploring the literature, the research results include the many articles that embody the literature review. Because much of the research relevant to this study has occurred in the past 10 years, the searches were not limited to a specific time period. Results from the study may help researchers:

- Today, local culture changes rapidly. This requires prompt measures in the direction of preservation. Developed countries have already started to develop some projects to preserve their original identity
- Önal (2006) created a framework for librarians. She focused not only on collection development but also on ways to improve the use of libraries from an historical perspective. This study has led to support for local historians
- Lucas (2008) reviewed and studied work that focused on genealogists and / or users of institutions that house potential genealogical information. This study investigated how genealogists search for and gather information in contexts rich in genealogical information.
- Standards in Historical Thinking are very important for people gaining an awareness of genealogical surveys. These are: (1) Chronological thinking; (2) Historical comprehension; (3) Historical analysis and interpretation; (4) Historical research capabilities; (5) Historical issues – analysis and decision making (History and Social Science Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework 2001).
- CALIMERA (2005), EUROPEANA (2009) and PULMAN-XT (2002) can be considered as most important projects in the creation of a culture of collaboration for digitising cultural heritage and local history materials.
- UNESCO separates local history as a cultural heritage into two categories - intangible and tangible cultural heritage. The intangible cultural heritage, which is the subject of the study, is categorized under four main topics, again by UNESCO. These are: oral traditions and statements, performance arts, communal activities, and a handicrafts tradition.

- An important study on the digitisation of genealogy and local history resources as cultural heritage is the project EUROPEANA, which aims to build the digital library of Europe. This project intends to provide digital access to all the cultural and scientific resources of Europe. The project, which today provides access to 4.6 million sources, aims to provide access to over 10 million sources in 2010.
- A Symposium on genealogy and local history collections was organised by **Erciyes Üniversitesi Kayseri Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi** – Erciyes University Kayseri Research Centre (2010).
- In 2010 Şahin presented his “*Digitisation of Local Cultural Heritage and Public Libraries: Model of Yalova*”. This study was based on the cultural heritage, local history, digitisation, and the libraries of Yalova province in Turkey

## **Defining and Building the Genealogy and Local History Information Centres**

Genealogy and local history information materials include multiple formats such as paper, printed forms, microforms, computer tapes, and electronic materials. These materials are housed in various types of libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, and other different places. Information centres, including all these materials in their collections, can be defined as public service divisions supported by local authorities. These centres take the local conditions and elements into account, and hold the cultural and historical memory of the city – the place where the centre is located and at the same time where it serves the community. It is observed that in recent years these centres are very common both in Turkey and the world.

It is an undeniable fact that “*genealogy and local history information centres*” are active powers and oversee a very important task in the development and intensification of education, information and local culture. These centres are cultural and educational institutions affecting the implementation of economic, social, educational, cultural and technical developments of the city. They shape a vigorous public opinion by integrating with the people living in the city, by providing lifelong education and free time activity, by offering culture and information through all kinds of library material and various ways of communication, regardless of sex, age, race, nationality, religion, language, education, culture, socio-economic level and political ideology.

The most important aim of these genealogy and local history centres is the collection of information and documents about the local history and the cultural elements of the city - and putting these into the service of the people, as the “*local memory*”. Besides this, one of the basic objectives of these centres to convey all kinds of recorded opinion and views about the city problems to the town people in an impartial way. Another aim of these centres is to contribute to the cultural and artistic life of the city, together with cultural and art activities such as conferences, seminars, meetings, concerts, theatre and cinema.

If we are to list the main tasks of genealogy and local history information centres:

- a- Collecting, organising, classifying the local history collections for the benefit of the users - literary and artistic works such as books, magazines, maps, brochures, notes, records, audio tapes, CDs, VCDs, etc. to supply the reading needs and information acquisition of the population in the local areas

- b- Building a collection consisting of productions about the specific geographic locations in which the centre is located in order to provide opportunities for research
- c- Lending book to the users.
- d- Organising various activities relevant to the building and staff circumstances
- e- Developing services to enable disabled users to use the library and engaging in activities directed to the information and cultural needs of these disabled users.
- f- Developing opportunities for collaboration in the context of library services and cultural services, cooperating with other institutions such as hospital and prison services together with education, art and cultural institutions.
- g- Assistance with genealogical research.
- h- For children using the library - broadening the children's horizons within children's library departments; raising skills in understanding and historical thinking; contributing to the development of intellect and intelligence; and encouraging in children the habit of developing their own knowledge.

Table 1 presents core materials in genealogical and local history collections in Turkey. Institutions such as libraries, archives, museums and the others are accepted as a local gateway for persons and social groups to information, records and materials - providing an environment for their history and development. As stated in this definition, when we look to the reason for the existence of libraries, archives, museums and the others (local gates to information), its aim is to organise, protect and give access to the information which humans have discovered during their lifetimes. Unlike other institutions, these information centres contribute to everyone within the society to which they give a service. As in all libraries, archives, museums and other institutions, the first objective is to become a reference source for essential information and record. However, these information centres are foundations with aims beyond those of other libraries in terms of appealing to the population, its collection and services. A first objective of genealogical and local history collections is to create the national memory, and to become the local memory of the place where they give service. While they aim to develop special collections and services in parallel to the target population, they also bear a responsibility for collection development directed to the economic, technological, social, educational and cultural development of that place. So the aims of genealogical and local history collections in Turkey are related to the aims of all foundations having roles in the cultural development of society.

**Table 1. Core Materials in Genealogical and Local History Collections in Turkey**

<b>Nature of Institutions</b>	<b>Core Materials</b>
<b>Archives</b>	Organisational records, files, indexes, manuscripts, newspapers, scrapbooks, audiovisual materials, personnel records, microforms, photographs, documents, books
<b>Associations</b>	Books about associations, people, places, institutions. Historical newspapers, brochures, broadsides, audio recordings, photographs
<b>Companies</b>	Company catalogs, company records, personal papers, personal letters, memoirs, newspapers, audiovisual materials, microforms, photographs, documents, books, brochures
<b>Libraries</b>	Books, manuscripts, newspapers, scrapbooks, photographs, audiovisual materials
<b>Local Government Units</b>	Organisational records, biographical records, photographs, manuscripts, brochures
<b>Media Broadcast Institutions</b>	Newspapers, scrapbooks, maps, audiovisual materials, photographs, documents
<b>Museums</b>	Ephemera, diaries, photographs, manuscripts
<b>Waqfs</b>	Books, manuscripts, newspapers, scrapbooks, audiovisual materials, photographs, documents
<b>Others</b>	Institutional records, photographs, maps, books

## **The Administration and Digitisation of Genealogy and Local History Collections**

Cultural material created by society is conveyed to future generations as oral or written records. The efficiency of any library arises from taking recorded information related to cultural material for future use by humankind. Today if we connect with and evaluate the written and published knowledge of previous generations and add new information to this, we owe all these accounts to libraries which are information and collection centres.

It is thought that information centres should spearhead the collection, the arrangement, the promotion and the protection of the cultural heritage of the province in which they serve. Since a person searching exclusively for the intangible cultural heritage of a province will go firstly go to an information centre, so libraries and archives must include the intangible

cultural heritage in their collections - not only for personal customers but also for distance researchers to their collections. When it comes to digitising the tangible cultural heritage of the area, public libraries must carry out planning activities more carefully. Digitisation must be implemented using various techniques and equipment together with the opportunities of the day according to the type of the material to be digitised.

The main purpose of the information centres (libraries, archives and other types of providers) is to provide access to information to individuals. Digitisation is a development which increases and accelerates public access to knowledge. With digital material the time and space limit is largely removed and local culture, which is open access on the web sites of information centres, can be easily accessed. Individuals can reach the materials they would like, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, freely from any location.

The access of more individuals to local culture can be provided by digitisation. While only those who go to the information centres can retrieve non-digitised local culture, thanks to digitisation, citizens, who do not or who cannot go to the information centres, will be able to gain access to the local culture. The information centres' function of obtaining and collecting the products of the local culture comes to the forefront in the context of digitisation. The centres can be accepted as being much more functional institutions as compared to the opportunities of individuals or other local private institutions. Information centres, libraries or archives can obtain and digitise the local cultural heritage in a more systematic, regular and comprehensive way.

Digitisation can create important opportunities in terms of update, both for librarian and user, and access to updated local culture. As soon as information centres digitise their local cultural studies, they can make these available to the user. Digitisation provides new opportunities in this respect and can be an important service principle.

Digitisation will decrease those disadvantages which some users have in accessing information. It will also be able to contribute to a more equal information service to all without discrimination.

Offering access to local culture through information centres and through digitization means that local culture can be accessed from abroad. Digitisation can have a significant contribution in the universal representation of local culture. For example, any person living in Germany or Australia will be able listen to a song of Barış Manço (a Turkish troubadour) whenever he/she desires in his/her own house.

Digitisation of local culture will facilitate the building of bibliographical records on the basis of international standards – the definitions made on the basis of international standards will contribute both to the creation of healthier data in terms of access and to the international exchange of this data.

The following Table 2 shows the background in genealogy and local history services in Turkey. Whatever its setting, whether library, archive or museum, the genealogy and local history collection must be administered properly and supported by the public or private organisation as its administrator.

**Table 2. Genealogy and Local History Services in Turkey**

<b>The name of the institution</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Outreach Programs</b>
<b>Adana Kent Kütüphanesi</b> (Adana City Library) Türkocağı Mh, Tarihi Kız Lisesi Binası, Adana	Arranges exhibitions, writes news releases, typing and mailing	Library, newspaper archive, film archive, audiovisual archives, museum
<b>Akdeniz Kent Araştırmaları Merkezi</b> (Mediterranean City Research Center) Mersin Üniversitesi – Mersin	The University Archives contains a wealth of local history information	Library, history museum, archive
<b>Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri</b> (Prime Ministry, Ottoman Archives) İstanbul	Makes archival research focusing on genealogy	Archive, major exhibits and publications, preservation
<b>Bursa Şehir Kütüphanesi ve Müzesi</b> (Bursa City Library and Museum) Bursa	Prepares exhibitions, provide special library services, publishing	Library, museum, mobile library, music archive
<b>Çanakkale Kent Müzesi ve Arşivi</b> (Çanakkale City Museum and Archives) Çanakkale	Produces special project files, put into service the personnel records	Museum, archive, local history collections
<b>Çorum Belediyesi Kent Arşivi</b> (Çorum City Archive) Çorum	Produces special project files	History museum, archive
<b>Dr Rıfkı Kamil Urga Çankırı Araştırmaları Merkezi</b> (Rıfkı Kamil Urga Çankırı Research Centre) Çankırı	Keeps personnel records, service with special collections	Library, museum, archive
<b>Erciyes Üniversitesi Kayseri Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi</b> (Erciyes University Kayseri Research Centre) Kayseri	Produces education and research materials for local history, publishing	Special library, archive, museums
<b>İzmir Milli Kütüphanesi</b> (Izmir National Library) İzmir	Serves as one of the largest historical archives of Turkey	Library, archive, museum, photographic archive
<b>Kocaeli Kent Kültürü ve Araştırma Geliştirme Merkezi</b> (Kocaeli City Culture and Research Centre) Kocaeli	Prepares city directories, arranges reference services	Research library and audiovisual archive
<b>Konya Şehir Müzesi ve Kütüphanesi</b> (Konya City Museum and Library)Konya	Organises reference services, keeps diaries and letters	Library, mobile library, archive, museum
<b>Samsun Kent Müzesi ve Kent Arşivi</b> (Samsun City Museum and Archive) Samsun	Service with photographs, maps, and newspapers	Museum, archive, library, audiovisual archive
<b>Suna ve İnan Kıraç Vakfı, İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Kütüphanesi</b> (Suna ve İnan Kıraç Waqf, İstanbul Research Centre) İstanbul	Arranges conferences and exhibitions, produces special projects files, publishing	Library, archive, genealogy and local history collections, museum, audiovisual archives
<b>Vehbi Koç Vakfı Vehbi Koç ve Ankara Araştırmaları Merkezi</b> (Vehbi Koç Waqf, Vehbi Koç and Ankara Research Centre) Keçiören – Ankara	Organise educational programmes, arrange Conferences and exhibitions, publishing	Library, archive, Genealogy and local history collections, museum, audiovisual archives

## **Managing Change and Experiences**

Librarians and archivists who promote their experiences in helping with genealogy and local history collections and services, positively influence scientific, cultural and social life by offering the following services:

- The concept of science must be introduced into regional works because the encouragement of scientific research must be planned
- The demonstration that knowledge and learning are among the fundamental qualities of life
- A location to offer such services must be chosen, and this location must be prepared to make available information services as a modern library
- Books and all kinds of information materials must be provided
- Librarians must be appointed who are willing to provide improvements in services in addition to having a professional education supported by historical thinking skills
- Services for general and specific groups must be provided
- Rather than a single book method for developing historical thinking skills, other ways, using numerous publications, must be ingrained, at all stages of life beginning in childhood
- Knowledge of collecting publications relevant to the regional culture must be introduced to the local community, within the country and abroad - and information centres must be open to information sharing
- Education programmes must be prepared in order to gain professional expertise; to make good use of free time; to improve special fields of interest; and to increase individual qualifications. Active work must be carried out to implement these programmes
- Plans for the protection, introduction and enrichment of the cultural and folklore heritage must be prepared
- Publishing activities must be improved, supporting the press with information
- Regional historical works, including oral history and real life stories, must be encouraged
- Social communication and information sharing must be provided by using computer-aided communication technologies
- Training for the expert use of library and information sources must be offered
- Social solidarity and the awareness of helping each other must be preserved



- Opportunities for organising seminars and meetings in order to introduce the services provided by libraries and all information centers must be offered through mutual cooperation
- Sources for the sustainability of services must be encouraged

Genealogy and local history collections, using the principle that *'knowledge grows as shared'*, must work eagerly and always aim to strengthen society with knowledge through the services they provide.

## **The Research Experience**

Ensuring the long term continuance of local culture, widespread and rapid access is one of the contemporary functions of modern-day genealogy and local history collections. Libraries and archives, along with other local cultural institutions, shoulder important responsibilities in the collection, organisation, preservation and digitisation of material in the service of local culture. Accordingly, it is thought that digitisation will create opportunities in the update of these sources. Digitisation can create an equalising effect which removes any disadvantage for individuals with regard to access to information. As well as this, libraries can insert local culture into universal culture through digitisation. Libraries and archives can shoulder an important function by defining and opening access to local culture on the basis of standards.

Adana province is a settlement which has a very rich culture and is extremely wealthy, especially in terms of intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, Adana City Library and Archive can preserve and bring into service its wealth of local culture along with its digitisation programme. These efforts will all be realised within the framework of international standards. It is necessary to provide access to the digitised cultural materials both through Adana City Library's own website and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism website.

During the digitisation process Web 2.0 technologies, which do not have software or programming language but are user-centered, can be used. Web 2.0 technologies, which provide freedom of action and ease of use to their users are based on the usage of many techniques at the same time. Some of the Web 2.0 applications, which ensure that everybody communicates with everybody else are: Wikipedia, Youtube, Myspace and Meebo. It will be useful to use Web 2.0 technologies in the following study.

In order to conduct genealogical research, meetings were held with the inhabitants of Adana province, those people interested in folklore and some institutions and organizations such as the Special Provincial Administration, the Public Education Center, and various folklore centres. We gathered as much information as possible, collecting names, dates, and locations for as many family members as we could find. This research focused on finding basic vital records and other sources to build pedigree and family group sheets. In the light of the Standards in Historical Thinking, this research was compiled. Later, digital activity started and some photos were taken from scrapbooks and some videos were recorded for this.

A model genealogical file on the Önal's family photographs which demonstrated historical research in Adana, Turkey is shown below:



1 – *Traditional lady “Miss Önal” and her house:*



2. *Önal’s traditional family:*

*3 – Önal's modern family:*



*4 – The new generation: Önal's children*



### *5 – Two generations of the Önal family:*



### **Findings**

The genealogy and local history libraries and collections in Turkey, which were established fairly regularly over a long period of time, were influenced by the social, cultural, educational, economical and political structures of that time. The major characteristics of these libraries can be divided into several points:

- The genealogy and local history libraries and collections were founded to meet special educational needs
- They were not evenly spread throughout the country, and this situation can be explained by the fact that these libraries were founded according to conditions stipulated by the organisations and individuals who provided the necessary funds for them
- Public libraries, city libraries and archives aiming to serve a fairly large section of the community, were situated either in separate buildings, or, near to other institutions (mosques and churches), or founded within some schools, hospitals, etc. to meet their special needs
- Private collections were housed in palaces and residences of people of high rank for their personal needs;

- The fact that such a change was completely realised, with all the necessary conditions, only after the foundation of the Republic, as part of its new social order, proves the view that the evolution of the traditional Turkish library was guided fundamentally by social forces
- Turkey is a country which carries out projects with the aim of being a EU member and states that EU Public Libraries have a responsibility for digitising local culture. This is a reason why some projects were developed. Among these projects, PULMAN-XT and CALIMERA are the most prominent ones and can be considered as alternate projects. The public libraries in Turkey have to put into practice the principles determined by these projects.
- Another prominent project in digitising information is the EUROPEANA Project. This project aims to digitise the cultural and academic sources of Europe. The website from which metadata comprised by digitised sources can be taken as a model by libraries and archives includes genealogy and local history collections.

## Conclusion

Libraries and archives, thinking of protecting the cultural heritage of any society, have the great responsibility of passing on that cultural heritage to future generations. With this responsibility, they should embrace technological progress. Cultural heritage must be protected and passed on to future generations. For this reason alone historical artifacts should be digitised and put into service.

Genealogy and local history collections can be accessed quite easily. Library collections include the necessary quantity and have the necessary quality for the research activities of users. These features make libraries and archives the indispensable cultural and educational institutions of any city. Genealogy and local history collections in libraries and archives, which integrate with the public and inform them, respond to the social and cultural needs of society and will create an “*Information Society*” composed of the adult readers of the future and persons who think and create in their turn.

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