

Book Collection

The historical manuscripts in the library created with great dedication by Sultan Mahmud II and the Cypriots were damaged by dampness and bookworms as of 1951. For this reason, the building was temporarily moved to the Cyprus Museum on 27 May 1955 for repairs and to have the 1,750 books in poor condition maintained (treated with pesticides). However, it is noted that some of the valuable books were not returned to the library.

In the 1989 inventory, the library contained 1,283 manuscripts and 549 printed books. The important manuscripts were transferred to the National Archives Directorate in Girne by a decision of the Council of Ministers in 1996. Today, these works continue to be preserved as part of Cyprus's cultural heritage.



Cyprus Evkaf Administration

phone: +90 392 444 04 94

email: evkaf@evkaf.net

address: 11-13 Kyrenia Street
P.O. Box 118 - Nicosia



For more information, scan the QR code or visit www.evkaf.org.

*“Your compassion
will bring compassion.”*

Ibn Hanbel - Hadith



**Sultan Mahmut II
Library**

History

Located opposite the eastern gate of Selimiye Mosque in Nicosia, the Sultan II. Mahmut Library is one of the prominent examples of 19th century classical Ottoman architecture. It was built in 1829 during the reign of Sultan Mahmut II by the Governor of Cyprus, Ali Ruhi Efendi. It is of great importance as it was the first official 'State Library' established through the cooperation of the state and citizens.



Sultan Mahmut II

The library was officially named 'Kütüphane-i Amire' (State Library), but the Turkish Cypriots referred to it by various names such as Sultan Mahmut II Library and Sultan Mahmut Library in gratitude to the sultan and in reference to the period in which it was built. Sultan Mahmud II donated approximately 200 volumes to the library, and it is known that some of these books belonged to his father, Abdulhamid I, and his ancestors.

Architectural Features

The library consists of a large domed room at the rear, with an arcade with arched sides and covered by two small domes. There are marble slabs with the inscription "*Mâşallah*" on the north, south and west facades of the building. At the entrance to the library room is the verse "*Fihâ kütübün gayyimeh,*" written in Thuluth script, emphasising that the messages contained in the revelations sent by Allah (especially the Qur'an) are unaltered, guiding us to the right path and valuable.

In addition, the seal of Sultan Mahmut dated 1829 is located in the section believed to be the library clerk's office or rest room. The inscriptions and tughra outside the eastern facade of the building belong to the artist of the period, Sheikh Feyzi Dede. The stone inscription by Sheikh Feyzi Dede praises Sultan Mahmut and the library that was built.



Administrative Processes

During the Ottoman period, the library was affiliated with the Waqf Administration, but was transferred to the Ministry of Education under British colonial rule. However, in the 1920s, the library was neglected, books were distributed, and many works were harmed. In 1918, British researcher George Jeffery visited the library and noted that the interior was plain and contained only a few small bookcases.

Following the renovation works carried out around Selimiye Mosque in 1930, it was planned to plant trees in the library garden in 1932, but this could not be implemented due to drought experienced that year. The restoration works initiated by the Cyprus Department of Antiquities in the 1950s were financially supported by the Evkaf Murahhaslığı (Endowment Authority) and completed in 1953.