



KONYA II. PERSIAN MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

The earliest reference to a manuscript collection in Konya is contained in the waqfiya of the amir Altun-Aba dating to 1202, in which provision is made of 100 dinars annually for the purchase of books for the madrasa library and their lending subject to the borrower paying a deposit to the librarian (*kāzen al-kotob*) (Turan, 1947, p. 230). These books were probably mainly in Arabic. On his death in 1274, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qonawī's manuscripts—comprising works on philosophy, medicine, and Sufism—were transferred to the madrasa that was endowed in his name. An inventory of these books dating to 1483 survives, listing 167 titles, the majority Arabic, but with a number specified as Persian, including a Persian tafsir by Astarābādī, a *Taẓkerat al-awliā*, and a work on 'elm-e maṣābiḥ (Erdoğan, pp. 139-42). Qonawī's manuscripts remained in the madrasa until the early 20th century, when they were transferred to the Yusufaga Library, where some of them remain today.

In the late 13th and early 14th centuries, Konya became an important centre for the production of illuminated manuscripts, especially Mevlevi texts such as Rumi's *Maṭnavi* and the works of Solṭān Walad. It is clear that members of the Mevlevi order played an important role in the production of these manuscripts, and copying often took place in both madrasas and Sufi *zawiyas* in the city. The Qur'an, philosophical, and historical works also were copied in Konya, in both Persian and Arabic, for elite patrons elsewhere in Anatolia and beyond (Jackson, Chapters 1 and 2). The later history of manuscript production



in Konya remains largely unresearched, although it seems likely that its central role as a locus of artistic production declined, being replaced by the late 14th century by Ottoman cities such as Bursa and then Edirne (Jackson, pp. 227-29).

Today, manuscripts are held in four principal collections in Konya, in addition to a small number held by Selçuk University. A useful survey of some of the rarer Persian manuscripts in Konya is provided by Ahmet Ateş (1952, pp. 92-119) and in Une liste des manuscrits choisis parmi les bibliothèques de Konya, publiée à l'occasion du XXII. Congrès international des orientalistes (Istanbul, 1951).

Mevlânâ Müzesi.

The most important collection of Persian manuscripts in Konya is held by the Mevlânâ Müzesi. In its current form, the library was founded in 1854 by the head (pust-neşin) of the Mevlevi order, Mehmet Sait Hemdem Çelebi, on the basis of his personal manuscript collection as well as those belonging to the dergâh. It thus contains numerous early Mevlevi manuscripts, including the earliest copy of the Maṭnawî (MS 51, dated 677/1278), itself based on a copy checked by Rumi himself. Other important Persian manuscripts in the collection include copies of works by the poets 'Aṭṭār and Jāmi and the anonymous 'Alî-nāma, a verse epic on the deeds of 'Alî b. Abî Ṭāleb composed in the Seljuk period (see Ateş, 1952, pp. 92-119)

The dergâh's collection became part of the museum that opened in 1927; it comprises approximately 2,500 manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, which are catalogued in the Mevlânâ Müzesi Yazmalar Kataloğu (4 volumes, Ankara, 1967-94). In addition to the historic collections of the dergâh, the library now contains smaller collections of individuals closely associated with it, such as the 228 manuscripts of the noted scholar of the Mevlevîs, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (1900-1982). These are catalogued in Mevlânâ Müzesi Abdülbâkî Gölpınarlı Kütüphanesi Yazma Kitaplar Kataloğu (Ankara, 2003).

Konya Yazma Eserler Bölge Müdürlüğü (Konya Regional Directorate of Manuscripts).

This library was founded in 1984 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and brings together 101 different collections from Konya and other parts of central and southeastern Anatolia. Among the important regional collections which have now been incorporated into this library are the Burdur İl Halk Kütüphanesi (originally containing 1,500 manuscripts) and the Elmalı İl Halk



Kütüphanesi (for some rare Persian manuscripts from these collections, see Ateş, 1947, pp. 180-86). The library is currently the second largest manuscripts library in Turkey (after the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul), and has extensive facilities for the restoration and conservation of manuscripts. While there is no comprehensive printed catalogue, its collections are catalogued digitally at <http://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/katalog-tarama>.

Yûsuf Ağa Kütüphanesi.

Today administratively attached to the Konya Yazma Eserler Bölge Müdürlüğü, but still housed separately in its historic building next to the Sultan Selim mosque (Selimiye Camii), the Yûsuf Ağa Kütüphanesi was established in 1795. Its founder, Yûsuf Ağa, was a prominent Ottoman court official who served as kethüda (steward, see [KADKODĀ](#)) to Mihrişah Sultan, mother of Sultan Selim III. According to its waqfiya, the library and associated madrasa were founded because of the difficulties students in Konya had in finding books, despite the city's historical role as a centre of scholarship and ulema. According to a catalogue prepared in 1898, at that date the library held 904 manuscripts. Over the 20th century, the collection was enlarged by the incorporation of other libraries, such as the collection of Şadr-al-Din Qonawi and the Zincirli and Zaferiye madrasas, bringing the total to between 3,000 and 5,000, according to differing estimates (Bayraktar and Lugal, p. 53, Erünsal p. 8). In 2000, 110 of the library's rarest and most valuable manuscripts were stolen, including parts of the Şadr-al-Din Qonawi collection; a small number have been recovered by the Turkish government from the international art market in the United Kingdom and the United States. In keeping with its origins as a madrasa collection, the contents of the Yusufaga library are overwhelmingly in Arabic, although about 100 Persian manuscripts are recorded there, predominantly in the fields of Sufism and literary classics such as works by [Hafez](#) and [Sa'di](#). However, worthy of note is also an early Persian translation of Qonawi's maqālāt, completed the year after his death, in 1274 (MS 4866, Ateş 1952, pp. 112-13), suggesting the desire to disseminate his works more broadly among the Persian-speaking population of Konya.

Koyunoğlu Şehir Müzesi ve Kütüphanesi.

This museum and library originated as the personal collection of İzzet Koyunoğlu (1900-1973), and includes manuscripts among its collections, which are particularly strong on the ethnography of Konya and the surrounding region. Since 1977, the museum has been run by Konya Municipality. The collection contains 4,468 manuscripts of which some 2,112 are in Turkish,



2,060 in Arabic and 296 are in Persian (Bayraktar and Lugal, p. 56). A partial catalogue has been published (Mehmet Eminoğlu, Koyunoğlu Müze ve Kütüphanesi yazma eserler kataloğu, Konya, 1997).

Selçuk Üniversitesi Merkez Kütüphanesi.

The University Library holds 87 manuscripts of which 5 are in Persian, the rest being in Arabic and Turkish (Bayraktar and Lugal, p. 56).

See also PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS iii. In *Ottoman and Modern Turkish Libraries*.

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