

This is a reference work listing known collections and catalogues, published and unpublished. Yugoslavia, pp. 343–345.

CYPRUS

by

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of Islam, wherever Muslims have penetrated they have produced manuscripts or preserved the legacy of MSS they have found from previous generations. Cyprus is an example of this tendency. During the 300 years of Turkish rule in Cyprus, Islam spread throughout the island, and manuscripts from that time have been preserved until now.

Since 1974, the Turkish population, which was previously scattered all over Cyprus, has moved to the northern part of the island and the majority of the Islamic manuscripts can be found in that area. They are held mainly in mosque libraries and endowment institutions.

The number of Islamic manuscripts in the southern, mainly Greek, part of Cyprus do not amount to more than a dozen or so, which are mainly in private hands. It is interesting to note, however, that in this part of the island there are several thousand Islamic documents written in Ottoman Turkish. Most of these documents are held in monasteries, for example the Kykkos monastery, which has more than 1,000 Ottoman documents. The reason for this phenomenon is that the church authorities in the Ottoman period were the main literate elite who dealt in correspondence with the Turks in, for example, disputes over land and other matters. (Although this worldwide survey deals generally only with Islamic codices, in the case of Cyprus the most important collections of Islamic documents have also been indicated.)

Since the events of 1974, the names of cities and towns in the north of Cyprus have become a matter of contention. For the purpose of this survey the names in current usage have been given, with the Turkish names in brackets where necessary.

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KYRENIA (Girne)

National Archive and Research Centre

Date of establishment: 1972
Status: Public
Total number of Islamic MSS: ca. 200 (Arabic; Persian; Turkish).
Description of collection: The majority of the MSS were copied in the 17th and 18th centuries. They cover the fields of fiqh, tasvir, hadith, history, Sufism, poetry, lexicography, astrology and belief. The MSS are kept on shelves. Some of them are in poor condition and in need of restoration.
Unpublished catalogues: All the MSS have been catalogued in detail. The descriptions of the MSS are ready to be edited and published. The cataloguing of this collection was done as part of a cataloguing project which also covered the collections of the Laleli Mosque, Selimiye Mosque, and the Sultan Mahmud II and Vakıflar Archive (all in Nicosia—see below). This catalogue is due for publication in 1992.

NICOSIA

Costas P. Kyrrri (Dr) Collection

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 7 (Arabic).
Description of collection: This collection includes 1 Qur'an MS. which is in need of restoration. The date of copying of the Qur'an could not be established because the first and last pages were missing. It appeared to have been copied in the 17th or 18th century. There are also 6 parts (juz') of a Qur'an copied in 1227 for religious use.

Demetrios Michaelides (Dr) Collection

Status: Private
Total number of Islamic MSS: 2 (1 Arabic; 1 Persian and Turkish).
Description of collection: The Arabic MS. is on fiqh and was copied in 707 AH and the Persian MS. is on lexicography and was written in 951 AH. The first page of this latter MS. is missing.

Laléli Mosque Collection

Status: Public/Endowment
Total number of Islamic MSS: ca. 160 (Arabic; Turkish).
Description of collection: It covers the fields of fiqh, tasvir, hadith, history and Sufism.
Unpublished catalogues: The collection has been catalogued and will be published in the aforementioned Union catalogue in 1992 (see under KYRENIA above).

Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia

Status: Public
Total number of Islamic MSS: 1 (Arabic).
Description of collection: The only MS. in this Museum is a complete, decorated Qur'an, copied by Al-Sayyid Hâfiz Ahmadbrushî in 1280 AH.

Public Records Office

Status: Public
There are 6 documents written in Ottoman Turkish.

Research Centre of Kykkos Monastery

Status: Public/Religious
There are over 1,000 documents written in Ottoman Turkish at this centre. They have been catalogued and will be published by the centre during 1992.
Selimiye Mosque Library

Status: Public/Endowment
Total number of Islamic MSS: ca. 230 (Arabic; Turkish; Persian).
Description of collection: The main fields of fiqh, hadith, tafsir and history are represented in this collection.
Unpublished catalogues: The collection has been catalogued and will be published in the Union catalogue mentioned above (see under KYRENIA).

Sultan Mahmut II Library

Date of establishment: 1244 AH/1828–29 CE
Status: Public/Endowment
Total number of Islamic MSS: ca. 2,000 (Arabic; Turkish; Persian).
Description of collection: This is the most important collection of Islamic manuscripts in Cyprus. There are some old, important and valuable MSS in this collection. The oldest go back to the 5th and 6th centuries AH. The MSS cover the fields of tafsir, hadith, fiqh, Sufism, poetry, divans, lexicography, history and astrology.
Published catalogues:
Unpublished catalogues: The MSS have been further catalogued in detail and will be included in the Union catalogue (see above under KYRENIA).

Vakıflar Archive Collection

Status: Endowment
Total number of Islamic MSS: ca. 70 (Arabic; Turkish).
Description of collection: The fields of hadith, fiqh, tafsir and history are represented in this collection.
Unpublished catalogues: All the MSS of this collection have been described in detail and will be included in the aforementioned Union catalogue in 1992 (see under KYRENIA above).

TROODOS

Kykkos Monastery Library

There are 1,058 documents written in Ottoman Turkish in this collection.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

Cyprus, p. 502, no. 35.
Kibris, p. 214, no. 186.