İBRAHİM MANAV İLE Söyleşi

AN INTERVIEW WITH İBRAHİM MANAV

MEDENİYET
Sayın İbrahim Manav, sahaflık mesleğine ne zaman ve nasıl başladı?

1951 yılında kitap satmaya başladı, ama buna sahaf-
lık dıyemeyiz; çünkü o dönemde ağırlıklar olarak ikinci el ders kitapları satıyordu. 1965 yılında Beyazıt Sa-
laf Çarşısında bu yönden dikkat çekmek rahmetli İsmail Dümener'den devam etti. Benim sahaflık mesleğine başla-
mayı bu danımdan sürdürdüm.

Sahaflık sevgi isteyen bir iş, ders kitabı satışçları bugünü-
zıden daha çok kazanıyor; hakettir bir Naıma Tarihi'ni ka-
rşımıza taşdı, Mitreferr dokuzu bir kitabı incelemek haye-
carlanımda biri beni.

Iyi bir sahafın okuma ve genel eğitimi inançlarınız. Ben me-
rakib bir sahafandır, bu yüzden hem kitapların hem de kit-
ap olmalarını kaydırımı birim.

Bir sahafılığın üstlendiği işi, ben başta Cemalı Şeyhi-
Hacı Musaffer Ozağ'ın Arapça kitapları ve hat sanatını
ögrenmek. Divan şairi Yemşehritli Arını'nın anı taraflar-
dan tutamak ve bir Mevlevi olan Nazımettin Aktun'yu
ustalarımız arasındaydı, "Telal İsmail" lakablı birinin İsm-
mail Dümener'den müazziyedeliği ögrenmek. Kendisine aynı
zamanda Türk kültürünün bir yarısını yabancı diller-

When did you first start working as a second-
hand bookseller?

I started selling books in 1951. However, we cannot re-
ally call it being a seller of secondhand books because I
mostly sold used textbooks. In 1965, I took over a shop
in the Beyazıt Secondhand Bookellers' Bazaar from
the late Ismail Dümener. I only began the profession
of secondhand bookselling after that.

Selling secondhand books requires lots of love and
care. Today, people who sell textbooks make much
more money than we do; however, the idea of turning
the pages of the History of Naıma or studying a Mit-
eterrica edition excites me.

In my opinion, a good seller of secondhand books must
read a lot. I'm a very curious person. That's why I'm
aware of the value of both books and book lovers.

I learned about the subtleties of this profession from
my masters. Jerrahi Şioğlu Musaffer Ozağ taught me about books in Arabic and the art of callig-
raphy. Nazıməttin Aktun, who is a Mevlevi and also
the grandson of the Divan poet Yemşehritli Arını, was
one of my teachers, too. I learned about auctions and
When did you first start working as a secondhand bookdealer?

I started selling books in 1951. However, we cannot really call it being a seller of secondhand books because I mostly sold used textbooks. In 1965, I took over a shop in the Beyazıt Secondhand Bookellers’ Bazaar from the late İsmail Dilmen. I only began the profession of secondhand book dealing after that.

Selling secondhand books requires lots of love and care. Today, people who sell textbooks make much more money than we do; however, the idea of turning the pages of the History of Naima or studying a Mütferkika edition excites me.

In my opinion, a good seller of secondhand books must read a lot. I'm a very curious person. That's why I'm aware of the value of both books and book lovers.

I learned about the subtleties of this profession from my masters. Jervahi Shirk Hadi Mussafer, Ozak taught me about books in Arabic and the art of calligraphy. Nizamettin Akın, who is a Mevlevi and also the grandson of the Divan poet Yenihığır Arefi, was one of my teachers, too. I learned about auctions and auctioneering from İsmail Dilmen, who was known as “Telltal İsmail.” He also knew a lot about books concerning Turkish culture written in foreign languages.

You can even learn from book lovers who frequent your shop. For example, I learned from Münifettin Çavuşoğlu, who taught Divan Literature, that the Bukara printing of the Nabi Divan is more valuable than other versions.

Can you tell us about the people who visit your shop and chat with you?

Let's begin with the old masters. For example, Neyzen Tefik used to visit Nâzim Bera, who was one of my masters in this profession. Meeting him excited me incredibly. He had fluffy hair and was dressed shabbily. He carried a sack and a red flute with him. He always said, “In the mey I’m a Mevlevi, in the mey I’m a Bektâşi.”

I also can’t forget İmamüleyim Mahmud Kemal, who often visited the secondhand book bazaar. Müftümem Halil İnan, Helmut Ritter, Cavid Bayusun, Cengiz Onurolu, Metin Erksan and Yaşar Kemal also came frequently. And of course, there was Orhan Kemal. We used to call him “Brother Rashid.” One day, Erdal Şahı Erding, a literature lover, was bargaining with me. He said, “This is a copy of the first edition of your book.” I realized how observant he was.

I’ve been working in this book bazaar since 1965. I've specialized in the art of calligraphy and Mütferkika books. However, reaching perfection in this profession is really impossible. Although I've been a professional secondhand bookseller for half a century, I still consider myself an apprentice. You see a new book and you learn a new thing every single day.

Which book that you happened to come across in your professional life was the most valuable, and which one you excited you the most?

In 1965, the year I opened my shop, Brother Yavuz, who was also a bookseller brought me a copy of CihanNama. This book really excited me. It included forty maps in color. Yavuz wanted 2000 liras for the book, but that price was too high at the time. I offered him 1500 liras even though the market price of CihanNama kept rising. He refused. Finally, Yavuz agreed to sell me the book for 1500 liras. I was very excited to own such a rare book.

Çarsılıdakı eski konușmalarını anlatan mesnuz


Eski müzayedelerden bahsedebilir miyiz?


1966 yılında Ismail Dîlmen yakalamışa Hacı Muzaffer Orak bana el verdi ve ondan sonra müzayedeleri ben yö- nettim.

1985 yılında böyle bir esraf müzayedesi nosotrosunca Uğur Görüç adeta beni keşfetti Uğur Bey bana müzayedeleri ostellerinin tâmasını teklif etti, ben de kabul ettim.
nima was 1000 in those years. Many sellers, including the late Hadji Muzaffer, offered 1000 liras for the book. Eventually, Brother Yusuf came back to me, but he insisted on a price of 2000 liras. Adding the money I had earned from my sales that day, I counted out 1750 liras and bought the book, which excited me very much. I took good care of it. Since I didn’t want to sell it, I took it home. Later, Hadji Muzaffer asked me why I had ruined the market dynamics by paying 1750 liras for a book that was worth 1000 liras. I apologized and told him that I had fallen in love with the book. He said it was okay because I was young, and he forgave me.

In those days, there was a group of people who took a special interest in Mütferkeris. One of them was Baki Kecamem, who was the grandson of Suphi Pasha, the author of the Suphi History. He wanted to buy Cihanmima from me, but I refused to sell it. He offered me 2000 liras, and in the end, we agreed on 2750 liras.

Can you tell us about your neighbors in the bazaar?

There are many outstanding, sophisticated people in the secondhand book bazaar. Necati Alpas, for instance. He’s right next door. He’s the son-in-law of Raif Efendi, one of the oldest and most noteworthy secondhand booksellers. Mustafa Türkmenoğlu used to be here, too. Now his grandson is managing the shop, but he sells only textbooks. Mustafa Türkmenoğlu had published the Nedin Divan, prepared by Halil Nihat, as a publication of Sadakat Katipnâmesi. Another person in the bazaar was Hadji Muzaffer Özak, who was the sheik of the Cerrah dervish lodge. I learned a lot from him about books in Arabic, as well as the art of calligraphy. Another name I can mention is Ekrem Karadeniz, who was the author of the Theory and the Principles of Turkish Music. When his father Halil Karadeniz lost his eyesight at the age of 35, Ekrem Karadeniz took over the shop and continued his father’s profession. Nizamettin Aktunç was another important secondhand bookseller. Ismail Dîlnman was a master auctioneer, and Karagöz Şarı was his assistant. Karagöz Şarı is the uncle of the famous theater actor Gazanfer Özacan. We used to call him Karagöz because in his spare time, he performed shadow plays at circumcision feasts. Karagöz Şarı was an auction-
Sizin caractarınız oldu mu?

Son olarak, eklemek istediğim bir şey var mı?
Eski bir sohbet geleneğini sürdürürüm, sırı Rabia Hatun'dan bir sürə okuyarak bitirerek istiyorum:

Gül dük shıp bülbül feyıd edıverdi,
Bülbül olı ıhımıl ile borbıl adıverdi;
Dünya döner kınave şark çiley garbi,
Cınan bize haaret çekerek yıld adıverdi!

er, too. The words tellal and mınadı mean the same thing: a person who directs auctions.

Can you tell us about auctions in the old days?
In the past, auctions took place among book-sellers in the bazaar in Hadji Mazaffer Ozak's shop. Few people participated from outside. Ismail Efendi and his assistant Karagöz Şüktü managed the auctions. Hadji Mazaffer's shop was the largest in the bazaar, that's why it served as the auction venue. Hadji Mazaffer used to receive over 1.2 million advanced, and he would sell me there, saying, "You're young, you can present a good price." Then all the newly acquired books would be grouped in lots. For example, thirty different divans would be sold at once as a "divan lot." This was to the advantage of the sellers. We gave the name mızahkefat, or "sweepings," to the lots that included mixed books.

In 1966, Hadji Mazaffer Ozak put me in charge of auctioneering when Ismail Dinmen got too old. After that, I directed the auctions.

During an auction sale in 1985, Ugur Gitaçar "discovered" me. He proposed holding the auctions in hotels, and I accepted his offer.

Did you have apprentices?
My brother Ali Manzar stopped working with me after he opened his own shop. My other brother Ahmet Manzar also worked with me. Ahmet Urus opened his own shop. But I am most proud of Vecchi Terzi. Among all my apprentices, he trained and educated himself the best. But in the end, secondhand book-sellers always complement each other.

Would you like to say anything else?
I'd like to maintain an old tradition and end our conversation by reciting a poem by Rabia Hatun:

If the rose falls in love with the nightingale and cries
If the nightingale neglects the rose and causes sorrow
If the world turns upside down and east becomes west
So that the lover remembers us with yearning