



“Literature Museum Libraries” at the Junction of Cultural Heritage, Literature, Museum and Library Concepts¹

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ABSTRACT

This study relates to the literature museum libraries, which are exclusive to Turkey as a library model. One of the essential library applications in Turkey in recent years, literature museum libraries are authentic hybrid institutions. Library, museum, library museum house or museum library are not adequate concepts to define them. The literature museum library is a new library concept after synthesising these concepts. Since having been founded in 2011 by the Libraries and Publications Department of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, literature museum libraries are designed as to offer services to writers, critics, publishers, translators and literary NGOs in particular and the whole public in general; in a fashion to provide a new concept to the society with different content and meaning than traditional libraries and museum librarianship. Literature museum libraries are cultural places where works of local writers and poets, who communed with the region after being born or living for long years there, are exhibited alongside the objects of the writers and the works written about these writers and poets, in addition to books and manuscripts that are suitable for museum librarianship. Students, researchers, and literature lovers are chosen as the fundamental user group, and the presentations and services are designed according to this group. In their collections, there are art and literature works, which are contemporary and aesthetic, as well. Reflecting their cities' written and oral literary culture and cultural heritage where there are educational, cultural, and artistic events in this regard, literature museum libraries are spaces flourishing the city's literary and aesthetic culture. Literature museum libraries perform various missions in regard to preserving, sustaining, exhibiting the cultural heritage and bringing it into the public's service. This study probes library, museum, literary museum home and museum library concepts first before evaluating the literary museum in Turkey in general. The study also includes various examples from the services and events of the seven literature museum libraries in Turkey.

Keywords: Literature Museum Libraries, Library Services, Literature, Cultural Heritage, Turkey.

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I. Introduction

As one of the most important cultural heritage institutions, the main function of libraries is to offer their resources of knowledge to their users after a series of technical procedures. In our age, when the relationship between production and consumption is being reshaped, libraries are also affected by the ongoing changes, as much as other institutions. Especially in recent years, the necessity of creating new library concepts has emerged that

is beyond the traditional library, with different and creative content and meanings. Having started to operate in Turkey since 2011, literature museum libraries is the concept of a library designed with this perspective. Literature museum libraries are synthesising cultural heritage institutions that contain the functions of museums and library institutions. These institutions are museums in one aspect and library in the other.

In this study, an overall assessment of Literature Museum Libraries that are cultural institutions authentic to Turkey is conducted. In this regard, general outlines for the

¹ This paper is a revised unpublished conference paper that was presented in Veliko Tarnovo in 2020 at the National Scientific Conference With International Participation: Libraries – Reading – Communications.

museum, library, museum library and literary museum house concepts are given, which are the components of a literature museum library. This is followed by an examination of the relationship between these concepts and literature museum libraries before the presentation of examples from the seven literature museum libraries operating in Turkey in terms of their services and activities. Document analysis methodology was used in this study and data was obtained through the literature on the subject and a review of the websites of literature museum libraries.

II. Conceptual Framework: Cultural Heritage, Museum, Library, Museum Library, Museum House

Culture is an all-encompassing and broad concept that emerged as a result of the socialisation of human beings. Everything material and spiritual about people and society can be evaluated as the culture. The most important feature that ensures the continuity of culture is that it can be handed down from generation to generation. Societies preserve their cultures in various ways and pass them on to the next generations. Every concrete and abstract element passed on to the next generation is a cultural heritage (Altay, 2018, p. 350). “Memory institutions” play an especially important role in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage to the future. Memory institutions are institutions that ensure the survival and continuity of the platforms where social information is stored, organised and made available for access. In other words, memory institutions are institutions that bear a mission and responsibility for the representation and shaping of the life and experiences (identity) of the society they are in, the organisation and storage of the products produced by the society, the interaction of cultural products with the society and the sustainability of social interaction (Çakmak & Yılmaz, 2017, p. 51). Museums and libraries are the most important memory institutions with great responsibilities in collecting, organising, preserving, making available and transferring cultural elements to future generations.

Libraries are institutions that collect information for the benefit of a certain and limited environment or for everyone in different formats, such as written, printed, linear, visual, auditory, digital, etc., organise it and deliver to those around them by using the tools and methods that will create the most favourable environment for use (Baysal, 1992, s. 7). Museums, on the other hand, are institutions that collect, preserve, examine, exhibit and transmit tangible and intangible cultural heritage to future generations for the purpose of research, training and accumulation (Artun, 2014, p.170). As can be understood from the definitions; museums and libraries have a fundamentally similar mission; both institutions aim to pass on the cultural accumulation of societies to future generations. In addition to the above, both institutions ensure that the phenomena of the arts, sciences, culture, and aesthetics are integrated into and embraced by society (Güneş, 2021, s. 201).

There are literature houses or literature museums opened in the name of well-known writers in various

countries of the world. These buildings, which contain manuscripts or rare printed works as well as contemporary, aesthetic, and literary works, enhance the literary and aesthetic culture of the city they are in (Okumuş Kabar, 2019, p. 19). Literature museums contribute to the cohesion, mutual understanding and increase in cultural development and consciousness, through the communication process, of society. This is made possible through the cultural and educational events and activities that literature museums offer to the public (Güneş, 2021, s. 207). Literature museum libraries, the subject of the study, are projects unique to Turkey, although there are somewhat similar examples across the world, with “literature museum houses”, which have operated in Europe and America for many years. Built for the famous literati in those countries, literature museum houses are also the inspirations for this project to be initiated. Although being inspired by these examples, literature museum libraries differ from literature houses and literature museums with the library service they offer. The concepts of library, museum and museum library are insufficient to define literature museum libraries by themselves. These institutions are important cultural institutions that have melted all the concepts mentioned in their pot, having been designed with a different inspiration from these concepts. In this part of the study, further information about the literature museum libraries is presented.

III. Literature Museum Libraries

The establishment of literature museum libraries began in Turkey from 2011 onwards. Literature museum libraries are cultural institutions serving writers, critics, publishers, translators, non-governmental organisations related to literature as well as all readers, after being equipped with suitable material to the museum librarianship philosophy. Serving as “speciality libraries” with being affiliated to the provincial public libraries of the city they are in; these libraries are cultural venues where the special collections of works of writers and poets who were born or lived in the provinces and surrounding provinces as well as literary works about these poets and writers are exhibited alongside books, manuscripts and writers’ objects that are suitable for a museum librarianship understanding. Literature museum libraries are also places, where social and cultural events, such as conferences, talks, courses, conversations, concerts, etc are held, scientific meetings and exhibitions are conducted, and film screenings and promotions are organised (KYGM, 2012).

Literature museum libraries are local memory institutions that bring the written and oral literary culture of the cities they are located in the future. At the same time, these libraries bring together different people and organisations such as writers, poets, readers, listeners, speakers, critics, researchers, publishers, booksellers, librarians, and museums who are involved in the formation of literary art, as well as raising awareness about the literary accumulation in the city. In other words, these libraries contribute to the literary production in the city and the increase of the literary attraction of the city.

Literature Museum Libraries are critical educational and cultural facilities that bring together the concepts of literature, museum and library (Güneş, 2021, s. 214). Literature and Museum Libraries have both museum and library dimensions. The museum dimension of libraries is firstly the buildings they serve. This is because the places where literature museum libraries serve are generally historical buildings that reflect the cultural heritage and traditional architecture of the city. In addition, the artefacts, items, and objects collected, preserved, exhibited, and tried to be kept alive in libraries constitute the museum dimension of these institutions. Manuscript books, old books, old magazines, special belongings of writers and poets, writers' and poets' costumes, other special items (typewriters, pens, glasses, etc.) are the examples that qualify as a museum object. The library dimension consists of all kinds of novels, stories, poems, essays, critiques, diaries, travel notes, biography, autobiography, which are primary sources that are collected under the heading of Turkish literature. In addition, literary magazines and newspapers are offered to users in the library collection.

It is possible to say that literature museum libraries fulfil many important functions in terms of literary and cultural heritage. Some of these functions are listed below (Okumuş Kabar, 2019, p, 21-22):

- To support literature and literary culture,
- To prevent writers and poets from being forgotten,
- Gathering the works of literary artists and preserving these works in suitable environments,
- Displaying in an easy to understand and easy to reach way,
- To keep the works alive for future generations,
- Working to transfer our Cultural Heritage to future generations.

There are now seven literature museum libraries in Turkey. Each of these libraries is located in one of Turkey's seven regions. Istanbul Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar Literature Museum Library is in the Marmara Region, Ankara Mehmet Akif Ersoy Literature Museum Library is in the Central Anatolia Region, Diyarbakır Ahmet Arif Literature Museum Library is in the South East Anatolia Region, Erzurum Erzurumlu Emrah Literature Museum Library is in the Eastern Anatolia Region, Adana Karacaoğlan Literature Museum Library is in the Mediterranean Region, Kütahya Evliya Çelebi Literature Museum Library is in the Aegean Region, and Trabzon Muhibbi Literature Museum Library is in the Black Sea Region.

Istanbul Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar Literature Museum Library: Turkey's first literature museum library, Istanbul Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar Literature Museum Library serves at Alay Köşkü, one of the historical mansions of Istanbul. Named after Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, a novelist, short story writer and poet and one of the most important figures of Turkish literature, it was opened to visitors on 12 November 2011. There are 9021 books by more than 1000 authors in the library. In addition to those from Istanbul, the works of authors who lived in the provinces of Kırklareli, Edirne, Tekirdağ, Çanakkale,

Kocaeli, Sakarya and Yalova are also included in the library. Current releases of journals in the fields of literature, culture and art come to the library. There is also the Istanbul City Library within the Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar Literature Museum Library. It is possible to reach many old and new sources about the city of Istanbul in the Istanbul City Library. There are also more than one hundred individual belongings-documents of thirty-three different authors.



Figure 1: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar Literature Museum Library²

There are events such as lectures, conferences, panels, concerts, exhibitions, scientific meetings etc. on subjects such as literature, art, culture, history, philosophy, music, and painting at Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar Literature Museum Library. The number of events held in the library in 2018 was eighty-seven, and 3982 people attended these events.



Figure 2: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar Literature Museum Library³

Mehmet Akif Ersoy Literature Museum Library: The building of Mehmet Akif Ersoy Literature Museum Library, which was opened in 2011, is not a historical building. Nevertheless, the building was inspired by the architecture of traditional Ankara houses. In other words, the space of the library building reflects the traditional urban architecture of Ankara. Bearing the name of Turkey's national poet, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, the literature museum exhibits many objects and documents belonging to the national poet. Apart from this, it is possible to come across objects, documents and books of and about other writers and poets raised in the city and the region. In the library, books signed by their authors or translators, books that received literature awards, and facsimiles of the first and

² <https://ahtem.kutuphane.gov.tr/> Retrieved February 21, 2022

³ <https://ahtem.kutuphane.gov.tr/> Retrieved February 21, 2022

last covers of Turkish Literature journals are also exhibited. In Mehmet Akif Ersoy Literature Museum Library, there are also many periodicals, theoretical books, books on grammar and books in the genre of novels, stories, essays, memoirs and poems. There is also the Ankara City Library within the library. There are book talks, autograph sessions, reading days, poetry recitals, held periodically in the library. Additionally, culture and literature meetings are held (Ercan, 2013, p. 530-531).



Figure 3: Mehmet Akif Ersoy Literature Museum Library⁴

Diyarbakır Ahmed Arif Literature Museum Library: The literature museum library, founded in 2011 in the name of Diyarbakır poet Ahmed Arif, is located in Hacı Halit Mansion, one of the important works of Diyarbakır's civil architecture and cultural heritage. In the museum library, as in every other literature museum library, an auditorium, as well as reading and concert halls, were created. While creating these, the necessary equipment is provided to access other libraries and the internet. The museum accessories consist of the works and goods of name bearer Ahmed Arif's and other writers and poets of the region.



Figure 4: Ahmed Arif Literature Museum Library⁵

In the Literature Museum Library, there are 615 books by writers and poets from Diyarbakır, especially by Ahmed Arif. Besides, in the library, there are nearly three thousand publications consisting of books about Diyarbakır, books of writers and poets in the surrounding cities, literary masterpieces, literary sources and periodicals. In the library, there are indoor and outdoor halls, where social and cultural activities can be held. In the Ahmed Arif room inside the Museum Library; there are items belonging to Ahmet Arif, including a typewriter, three pens, two manuscript poems in his handwriting, two envelopes written in the name of the poet, one military discharge certificate, one letter and articles and photographs published about Ahmed Arif in various newspapers and magazines (Müzeasist, 2020).



Figure 5: Ahmed Arif Literature Museum Library⁶

Erzurumlu Emrah Literature Museum Library: The Erzurumlu Emrah Literature Museum Library was opened to the service of students, literature lovers and the public with the opening ceremony held on 29 June 2012 as a result of the repair and furnishing of the old military bath building, which is one of the registered cultural assets. In the Literature Museum Library, named after Erzurumlu Emrah, the great Turkish poet, there are special collections made up of important works of writers who lived or still live in the city and the region, such as Erzurumlu Emrah, who gave the library his name, Erzurumlu Ibrahim Hakki and Nefi. There are approximately five thousand books and non-book materials of nearly one thousand writers and poets in the library. It is possible to have access to eighty-seven periodicals on literature and art. There is also the Erzurum City Library within the library, containing books written about Erzurum. The library also exhibits objects and documents belonging to poets and writers raised in Erzurum and the surrounding provinces. Erzurumlu Emrah Literature Museum Library also hosts social and cultural events periodically.

⁴ <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/ankara/gezilecek-yer/ankara-mehmet-akf-ersoy-edebiyat-muze-kutuphanesi>. Retrieved February 21, 2022

⁵ <https://www.dunyaatlas.com/ahmet-arif-edebiyat-muzesi/>. Retrieved February 21, 2022

⁶ <https://gezilecek-yerler.com/sur/ahmed-arif-edebiyat-muze-kutuphanesi/>. Retrieved February 21, 2022



Figure 5: Erzurumlu Emrah Literature Museum Library⁷

Karacaoğlan Literature Museum Library: Adana Karacaoğlan Literature Museum Library was opened on 27 March 2011 in Dişçi Ethem Mansion and is one of the best examples of the immovable cultural heritage that is in Adana city and a registered cultural asset. In the museum library, which attracts the attention of visitors due to being placed in a historical and interesting building, there are also books and works of writers and poets from Adana and surrounding provinces, in addition to Karacaoğlan. Two other prominent writers from Adana, Yaşar Kemal and Muzaffer İzgü's typewriter and other special items (pen, glasses, watch, etc.) are also in the library. In Karacaoğlan Literature Museum Library, there are also works by distinguished writers and poets such as Yaşar Kemal, Yılmaz Güney, Orhan Kemal, Muzaffer İzgü, İpek Ongun, Ümit Yaşar Oğuzcan (Haberler.com, 2011). Moreover, manuscripts and old written works of writers who lived in the Cukurova region and Adana in the Ottoman period are exhibited as well. In the literature museum library, where social and cultural activities are held periodically, there is also a special section created for folk poets' and bards' organisations (Atınç and Karadeniz, 2011, p. 519).



Figure 6: Karacaoğlan Literature Museum Library⁸

Kütahya Evliya Çelebi Literature Museum Library: Kütahya Evliya Çelebi Literature museum library serves in a building that is one of the traditional civil architecture examples of the region and has the characteristics of old Turkish houses. In the Literature Museum Library, there are approximately five thousand volumes of literary

research, poetry, story, novel, biography, religious work, and manuscripts. The memoirs of writers who lived in Kütahya were also included in the library. Works of writers and poets such as Mehmet Dumlu, Pesendi, Arifi, Şerif Benekçi and Zeynep Avcı are available in the library. In the exhibition room, there are table showcases, Evliya Çelebi books and bibliographic books written by different authors about Evliya Çelebi, as well as the items used by writers and poets from Kütahya are in display. In the room, there are also cassettes and CDs consisting of the works of the poets and bards raised in the city and the region.



Figure 7: Evliya Çelebi Literature Museum Library⁹

Muhibbi Literature Museum Library: Trabzon Muhibbi Literature Museum was founded in 2018 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, bearing the pseudonym used by the Ottoman ruler Kanuni Sultan Süleyman in his poems, who was also a poet himself in his birthplace. The Literature Museum Library serves in a historical Trabzon house in the city centre. In addition to the works and belongings of authors who were born or lived in the Black Sea Region, there are also literary works produced about the Black Sea Region in the museum. Many social and cultural activities are regularly held in the museum library, especially on literary matters.



Figure 8: Muhibbi Literature Museum Library¹⁰

⁷<https://erzurum.ktb.gov.tr/TR-249212/erzurumlu-emrah-edebiyat-muze-kutuphanesi-isiklandirild.html>. Retrieved February 21, 2022

⁸<https://www.kutuphaneci.yiz.com/adana-karacaoğlan-edebiyat-muze-kutuphanesi/>. Retrieved February 21, 2022

⁹<https://www.gidilmeli.com/Evliya-celebi-edebiyat-muze-kutuphanesi/13323/1>. Retrieved February 21, 2022

¹⁰<https://www.ktb.gov.tr/yazdir?2E920BEDA88A480BC4553D00DE227A10>, Retrieved February 21, 2022

IV. Evaluation and Conclusion

Being authentic cultural institutions of Turkey, literature library museums are vital in preserving and passing on the cultural and literary accumulation of their cities and regions. Some details stand out when the services and activities of these institutions are scrutinised. Some of the remarkable details are listed below.

The spaces where all libraries serve are architectural structures that reflect the local cultural heritage. Apart from the Mehmet Akif Ersoy Literature Museum Library, the buildings of six libraries are historical artefacts. All Literature Museum Libraries are one of the important symbols of the city they are located in, even in terms of the buildings they serve.

Literature museum libraries bear the name of literary personalities that are important for both the city and for Turkey. It is observed that the literary personality bearing the name comes to the fore in the services and activities of the libraries. However, the services and activities of literature museum libraries cover a much wider area. When the distribution of the literature museum libraries is probed, it is noteworthy that a literary museum is established in each one of the seven geographical regions in Turkey. This situation obliges the literature museum libraries in each geographical region to undertake important responsibilities in preserving the literary and cultural heritage of the geographical region beyond the city where it was founded and transferring it to the future. In this context, it is noteworthy that literature museum libraries pay special attention to keep the works of poets and writers raised not just in the city they are located in, but also in the region generally. Moreover, objects and documents that belong to the above-mentioned poets and writers are exhibited in libraries. Libraries also fulfil a very important function in terms of revealing the literary potential in the city and the region as well as creating an important awareness in the city. These libraries serve as an important bridge between their users, the local literature and the Turkish Literature with the rich literary collection they have, as well as popularising literature.

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