

former MP. Besides this, there are a number of archives which were obtained by the special efforts and demands of the archive department of the Women's Library. One of the best examples is the comprehensive archive of Süreyya Ağaoğlu (1903-1989), one of the first woman jurists in Turkey. The Library also has organized a considerable amount of cultural activities such as lectures, panel discussions, celebrations, concerts since its opening date. In addition to these activities, the Library has carried out many projects. Among these, Turkey's European Women's Thesaurus, the FRAGEN Project, and the "Ottoman Women's Memories" Publication Series must be highlighted since they are very significant to expand the visibility of women both locally and internationally. Turkey's European Women's Thesaurus is a result of the 4 year collective study in which many experts and academics took part in order to provide a tool for indexing and retrieving women's information in databases, on internet and in the collections of libraries and archives for researchers. As a result of the project, the newly translated 2687 terms have been adapted to Turkish language's structure. In 20 different research areas such as politics, law, economy, education, religion, culture etc., many new terms are uniquely generated for Turkey. The FRAGEN Project is a European Union project that aims to bring the feminist movement's important texts from the late 20th century into one unified platform. Along with 28 European countries, the Library has participated in the project as the representative of Turkey. Only for the project, the Library with the contributions from all over the country chose 10 texts out of all the books, the declarations, the periodicals, and the campaigns that represent the milestones of Turkey's women's movement from 1960 to these days. Furthermore, the Library has transliterated 8 women's periodicals published between 1850 and 1928 for the 20th anniversary of its foundation.

The Library also publishes an annual thematic calendar. In addition to its visual content and many functions, the calendars are crucial for promoting the Library and the inspiring women of Turkey; they are also a fundamental source of income for the Library.

The bibliographies, the catalogues, the annotated catalogues, the women's private papers' catalogues, and Turkey's European Women's Thesaurus are some of the publications of the Library. The Library is open on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also support the Library by sending your donations to Vakıflar Bankası, Etiler, account number 2009197, IBAN: TR44 0001 5001 5800 7286 1371 75. Moreover, we also need assistance of persons who will voluntarily work at the Library in their spare time. ●

📍 Fener Mahallesi, Mürsel Paşa Caddesi No:8, Fener Vapur İskelesi Karşısı (Tarihi Bina) Haliç - İstanbul

☎ (0212)534 95 50 - (0212) 621 81 34

✉ kadineserleri@gmail.com

🌐 www.kadineserleri.org

📘 /KadinEserleri

📷 /KadinEserleri

🐦 /kadineserleri



Date of publication: 2018, İstanbul

Cover Photo: The buildings of the Women's Library and Information Centre Foundation in Fener by the Golden Horn in Istanbul. The building that belongs to the Byzantine period has been restored by the architect Cengiz Bektaş and funded by the City Council of Istanbul.

# The Women's Library and Information Centre Foundation

Istanbul, Turkey



The Women's Library and Information Centre Foundation (WLICF) is the first and only women-centred library and archive in Turkey. It was founded in Istanbul by Aslı Davaz, Füsün Akatlı, Füsün Ertuğ, Jale Baysal, and Şirin Tekeli; and opened to the public on 14 April, 1990. At that time, the women's movement in Turkey had already gathered a wealth of documents related to the struggle for women's rights. These documents concerned issues such as equal pay for equal work, equality in civil rights, ending all kinds of violence against women and equal representation in parliament. The collections of the Women's Library in Istanbul are organized in eleven main sections: Books, Periodicals, Ephemera, Theses and Dissertations, Newspaper Clippings, Audio-Visual Material, Women Artists, Women's Oral History, Women Writers, Women's Private Papers and Women's Organizations.

The Library's book collection comprises mainly studies on gender issues, women's writing and the translation of the classics of feminism into Turkish. The periodical section has around 10,474 issues of the 413 women's periodicals published between 1869 and 2016; these are the periodicals of the late Ottoman era and the Republican period. The ephemeral collection consists of 200 archival boxes of contemporary material on women's issues. For example, it holds the originals of signature campaigns and a wide range of material on the activities of women for International Women's Day (8 March) in Turkey. 600 M.A. thesis and PhD dissertations focusing on gender issues and 5300 articles written in several languages are among the holdings of the Library. The newspaper clippings collection contains articles, interviews and clippings mainly from Turkish daily newspapers published since 1990. The material has been classified under many headings, such as: violence against women, women and religion, education, immigration, women's rights, feminism, and women and art. The audio-visual material holds photographs, posters, video recordings, slides, documentaries and films produced by and about women. This section also has a rich postcard collection starting from the 1850s and representing the life, work and struggle of women.



The women artists' collection holds over 1000 women artists' biographical dossiers and an art collection created through the donation of women artists. The records of women's organizations are preserved as a special collection and cover a century of women's organizations and struggles. The documents preserved in this collection cannot be found in any other institution in Turkey. Another important section is the women writers' collection which holds information about 800 women writers. Women's private papers preserved in the Foundation consist of tens of thousands of documents belonging to a wide range of women who are social activists and women's rights activists, writers, pioneers and politicians. These documents are unique and cannot be found elsewhere. Because libraries and archives centres in general do not have an acquisition policy regarding the women's movement documents in Turkey, large quantities of ephemeral material regarding the women's movement is only kept by the Women's Library. The institution frames and constitutes the memory of women and the women's movement, and the growth of our collection is parallel to the development of the feminist consciousness in Turkey.

Since its foundation, the WLICF has acquired valuable primary sources, such as Ottoman women's periodicals. These include, for instance, the valuable journal *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Newspaper for Ladies; 1895-1908) in its original bindings. Its 612 issues retrace many aspects of the life, the work and the aspirations of late Ottoman women in a total of 3672 pages. Among other important documents are the issues of *Hay Gin* (Armenian Women), an Armenian women's periodical published from 1919 to 1933 by Armenian feminist writer and journalist, Hayganuş Mark (1885-1966). The art collection of the Women's Library holds paintings and sculptures by Turkish women artists, such as Aliye Berger (1903-1974), Füreyâ Koral (1910-1994) and Gülsün Karamustafa, covering a period between 1951 and 2017. A rich collection of posters including a unique lithography from the period of the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1922), calling women to join the Liberation Army Corps, reflects many aspects of women's history in Turkey.

2



A thesis entitled *The World of Müeyyet Selim* by Hanife Karasu from Bilgi University's History Department is a good example of the use of the primary sources in our collection. The thesis focuses on the life and thought of Müeyyet Selim, an Albanian Muslim woman who migrated from Macedonia to Istanbul through the 1923 Population Exchange Treaty between Greece and Turkey. The research is based on Müeyyet Selim's diaries, which are a part of her private papers, also preserved in the Foundation.

Interesting primary sources related to the history of the international women's movement are also kept in our holdings. Among these, for example, is *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World; 1913-1921), an Ottoman feminist periodical with eight issues published entirely in French, partly to inform the foreign press of the situation, the struggle and the claims of Ottoman women, and partly to create a dialogue with their European counterparts. *Türk Kadın Yolu* (The Turkish Women's Path; 1925-1927), the official journal of the Union of Turkish Women, the last women's periodical published in Ottoman script, is the only journal of the first wave feminist movement in Turkey at that time. It also sheds light on the international relations of early republican feminists. A section of this journal entitled *World Women's Post* published writings and correspondence between Turkish feminists and their Western counterparts.

When defining the issues surrounding gender and archiving in the collections of the Women's Library, we have to underline that the women's archives movement is at the beginning of this historical process. Although individual efforts to preserve the private papers of women and organizational documents started long ago, a systematic preservation movement started only twenty-eight years ago with the foundation of the Women's Library in Istanbul. It is important to keep in mind that the donation of private archives by women is rather a new concept in Turkey; and the donation of documents before passing away is particularly rare. The first woman who donated her private papers to the Women's Library and Information Centre Foundation was Hasene Ilgaz (1902-2000),

3