



# History of the Manastir kütüphanesi (Library of Bitola) in light of stamps and records found in the Oriental manuscripts of the NUL “St. Clement of Ohrid” in Skopje

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# Starting point

\*Existence of numerous manuscripts in the Oriental collection of the NUL „St. Clement of Ohrid“ in Skopje bearing the stamp:

مناسٹر ڪتبخانه سنه موقوفدر ۱۳۱۴

\* Article on the *Intifa* library, the largest public library in Bitola from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to which the library had been robbed and its manuscripts and printed books sold in the markets of Istanbul (*Sakam da kazham*, 19 August 2017)



## Aim:

- To establish relation between the manuscripts and printed books of Oriental collection of the NUL „St. Clement of Ohrid“ in Skopje and the *Intifa* library
- To shed some light on the history of Monastir library and its connection to one of the oldest libraries in Bitola, that of Ishak Chelebi

## Obstacles:

- Lack of information of books' provenance

## Method:

- acts of endowments, travelogues, modern researches etc.
- stamps and inscriptions found in the manuscripts and printed books

# Bitola / Manastir in Ottoman era (1385-1912)

- Conquered in 1385
  - important military and strategic center
  - Develops into an important trade, administrative and religious center
  - 19<sup>th</sup> century – centre of Rumeli vilayet and headquarters of the Third Army
  - 1912-1913 the end of Ottoman rule
- First mosque built in ca. 1435 by Sungur Bey
  - Arrival of Sefardic Jews from Portugal and Spain
  - Well know center of islamic hanafi jurisprudence:
- 1591: Ivan Cavazza, secretary of Venetian senator Lorenzo Bernardo** : Bitola's school provides sufficient persons capable of doing the judiciary service who are sent as judges to different parts of the Ottoman Empire (Matkovic I, 298).
- 1661: Evli Chelebi:** 70 Muslim places of worship, 9 madrasas

# First Islamic libraries in Bitola, according to the documents

\* 1435: Act of Endowment by Sungur Bey, who built the first mosque in Bitola (erased in the 1960<sup>th</sup>), with accompanying madrasa

Mosque of Sungur Bey on a postcard from 1904

Source: Dimche Najdov, *Bitola niz stari razglednici (Bitola in old postcards)*, p. 146, no. 30



# First Islamic libraries in Bitola, according to the documents

\* 1508 and 1511: Acts of Endowment by Ishaq Chelebi

53 titles in 68 volumes of his private library endowed for the needs of his madrasa

Mosque of Ishaq Chelebi (photo & ed. Ernest Louis Desire le Deley, 1916-18)

Source: Dimche Najdov, *Bitola niz stari razglednici (Bitola in old postcards)*, p. 99, no. 264



# Libraries related to the complex of Ishaq Chelebi Endowment

Mehmed Teufik, *Short history of Bitola vilaet* (Bitola, 1911):

Abdul Kerim Pasha, governor of Bitola (1895-1901), established the first public hospital, orphanage as well as “library just opposite the Ishaq’s mosque”



Visit of the Sultan Mehmet Reshad V to Bitola on 23 June 1911

Source: Dimche Najdov, *Bitola niz stari razglednici* (Bitola in old postcards), p. 55, no. 131

# Libraries related to the complex of Ishaq Chelebi Endowment

1. Library of Ishak Chelebi's madrasa and mosque (1508-????)

Source: Acts of Endowment

1. Library established by Abdul Kerim Pasha, governor of Bitola (1895-1901) as first public library in Bitola (1897-????)

Source: Mehmed Teufik, *Short history of Bitola vilayet*. Bitola, 1911.

1. *Intifa* library (????- sealed in 1936/erased in 1948): "Located in the building build on the same place where once was the library of Ishaq Chelebi"

Source: Aleksandar Sterjovski, *Printing and publishing in Bitola*. Bitola, 1999.



## *Intifa* library (according to Sterjovski)

- The biggest library in Bitola
- *Intifa* meaning “the correct time” After the WW1 - repository library for manuscripts and books brought from other devastated libraries and mosques
- Stopped to work in 1936
- Robbed in 1938
- The library’s building erased in 1948

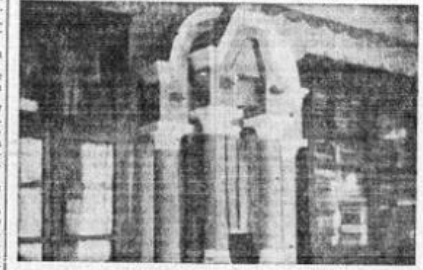
# What happened to the books?

- According to the article in the Serbian newspaper Politika, “from the old library of Bitola, which had been sealed for two years, “the wind” carried away the expensive carpets worth over 100.000 dinars; the manuscript books of old philosophers were not touched”
- In 1940s, according to Sterjovski, the books were taken to the State Archives in Skopje and in 1969 the remaining books were transferred to the National and University Library “St. Clement of Ohrid” - Skopje

Politika, 17 July 1938, p. 13

([https://digitalna.nb.rs/view/URN:NB:RS:SD\\_2F6F6602455A67B1B521D786232CBF4A-1938-07-17](https://digitalna.nb.rs/view/URN:NB:RS:SD_2F6F6602455A67B1B521D786232CBF4A-1938-07-17))

**IZ STARE BITOLJSKE BIBLIOTEKE, ZAPEČATENE  
VEĆ DVE GODINE, „VETAR“ JE ODNEO  
SKUPOCENE SERPADE I FILMOVE U  
VREDNOSTI OD PREKO 100.000 DINARA**  
Ruksimani knjige starih filozofa nisu dirane



Bitola, 17. jula. Sve strane knjige okružene su u Bitoli, posebno u kraljevu Nikolaofskom muzejskom muzeju u Bitoli i još nekoliko zanimljivih muzejskih zbirki koje su se na sebi danes nalaze u najvećoj biblioteci starih rukopisa i turskih filozofskih knjiga u Bitoli.

Ove knjige biblioteke je otvorila za svoje starije kolege koje su preuzeli u svoje muzeje. U Bitoli su se nalazile knjige u vrednosti od preko 100.000 dinara. Sve je to bilo u vreme kada su se u Bitoli nalazile i druge knjige u vrednosti od preko 100.000 dinara. Sve je to bilo u vreme kada su se u Bitoli nalazile i druge knjige u vrednosti od preko 100.000 dinara.

U vreme kada su se u Bitoli nalazile i druge knjige u vrednosti od preko 100.000 dinara. Sve je to bilo u vreme kada su se u Bitoli nalazile i druge knjige u vrednosti od preko 100.000 dinara.

## State of affairs

- No inventory books find in the State Archives
- An important number of manuscripts and printed books bears the stamp or inscriptions relating them to the Manastir / Bitola library

## Assumption

Manastir / Bitola library

= Intifa library

= Public library of Abdel Karim Pasha, established around 1897

= successor of the library of Ishak Chelebi.

# Intifa library = Public library of Abdul Kerim Pasha

The origin of its name related to the public nature of the library, not to the “correct time”

- *intifa* – ar. *intifā* ‘ meaning “usage”, “utilization”
- *manfa* ‘a – usufruct, profit; **(public) institution**

## Public library of Abdul Kerim Pasha = Manastir / Bitola library

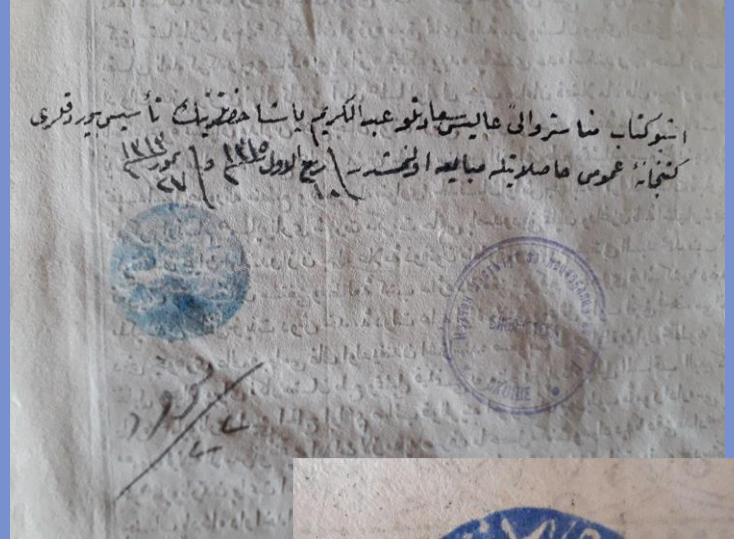
A record found in O. IV 3/I,II, reading:

اشبو كتاب مناستر والي عاليسى سعادتر عبد الكريم باشا حضرتلرينن تأسيس  
بيوردقري كتابخانه عمومي حاصلاتيله مبايعه اولنمشدر ۱۰ ربيع الأول  
۱۳۱۵ / ۲۷ تموز ۱۳۱۳

“This book has been purchased with the general revenue of the library that was built by the Blessed Abdul Kerim Pasha, the governor of Manastir / Bitola, on 10<sup>th</sup> Rabi-ul-evel 1315, i.e. on 27 Temmuz 1313”\*, corresponding to 9 August 1897.

The record is accompanied by the stamp of the Manastir / Bitola library, reading مناستر كتابخانه سنه موقوفدر ۱۳۱۴

\* I express my gratitude to Mr. Ismet Erek from the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul for his assistance in reading the records in Ottoman Turkish



# Stamps / records referring to the Bitola library

## 1. Library's stamp:

مناستر كتبخانه سنه موقوفدر ۱۳۱۴

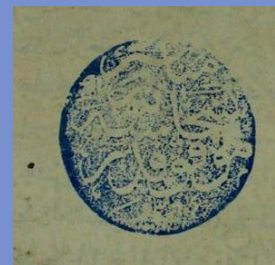
Endowed to the Library of Bitola in 1314 [1896-7]

## 1. Record of endowment accompanied by the Library's stamp

مرحوم مدرس محمد افنديك وقفيدر

Endowment of the late muderis Mehmed efendi  
(70 mss found so far)

1.



NUL "St. Clement of Ohrid" - Skopje,  
MSA I 16

2.



NUL "St. Clement of Ohrid" - Skopje,  
MSA I 180

# Stamps / records referring to the Bitola library

## 3. Record of endowment / donation

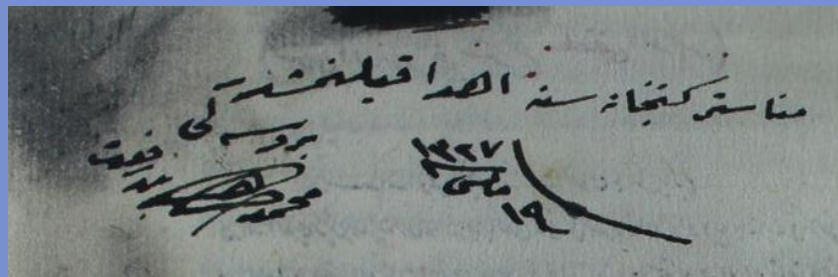
مناسٹر کتب خانہ سنہ اہدا قیلمشدر / پروسہ لی محمد طاهر

بن رفعت / فی ۱۹ مایس سنہ ۱۳۲۷

Donated to the Manastir / Bitola Library by Bursali

Mehmed Tahir bin Rifat on 19 May 1327 [1 June 1911]

3.



Shāh Muḥammad, *Muntahā l-anhur fī sharḥ Multaqā l-abḥur*, an autograph dated 1051/1641

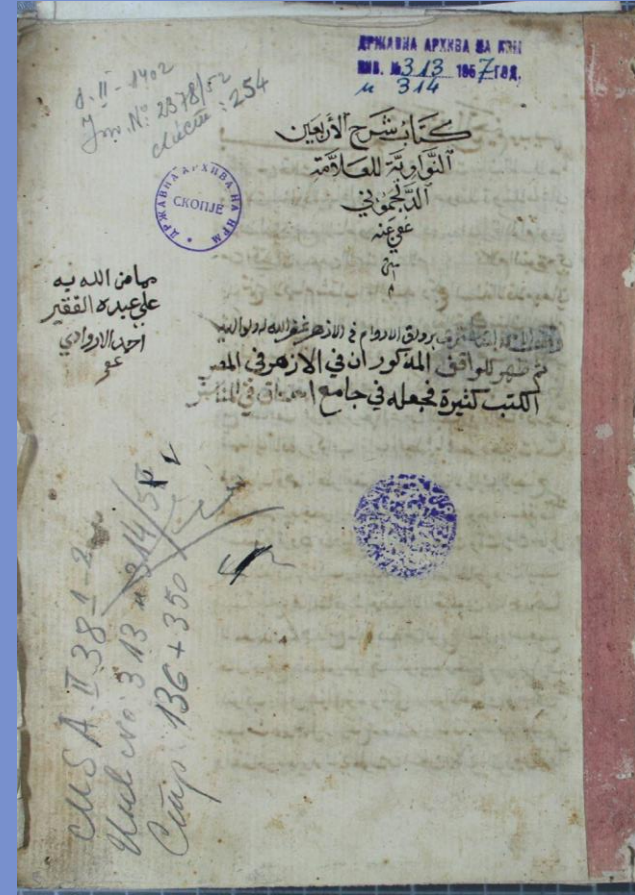
NUL "St. Clement of Ohrid" -  
Skopje, MSA II 480

# Stamps and records containing different data

Record referring to the Ishaqiyya mosque, accompanied by the stamp of Manastir / Bitola library

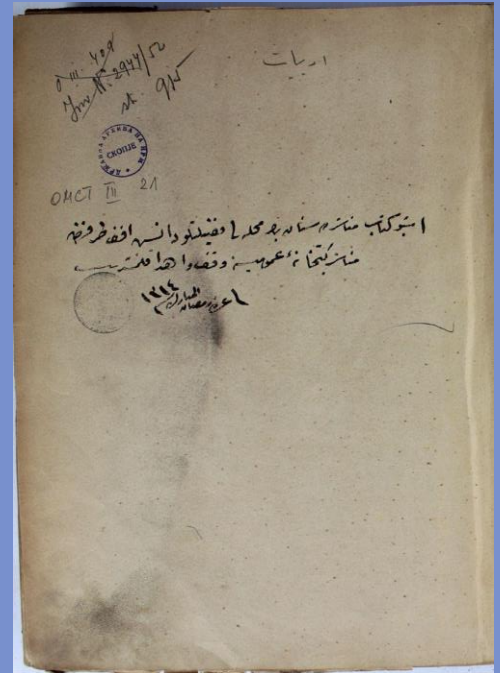
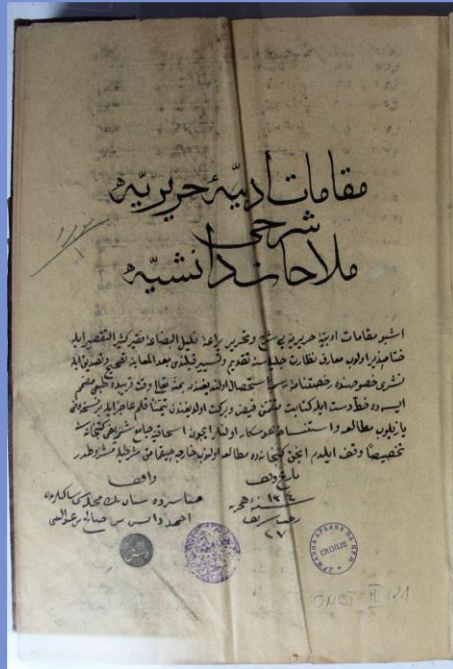
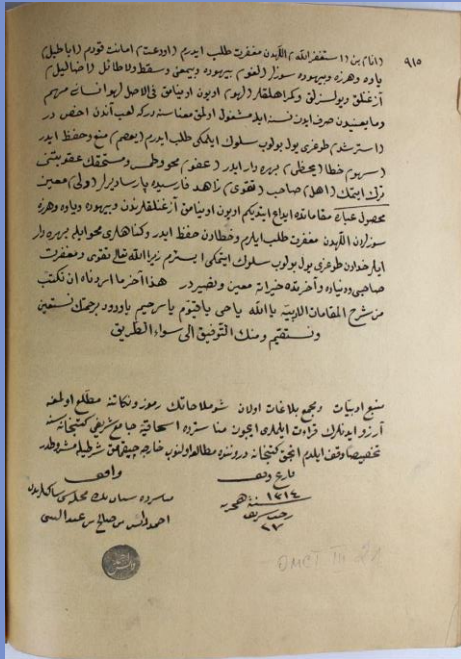
وقف الامم...؟! [المناسيري برونق الادوام في الازهر غفر الله له ولوالديه ثم ظهر للواقف المذكور ان في الازهر في مصر الكتب كثيرة فجعله في جامع اسحاق في المناسير

The endower from Bitola wanted to donate this book to al-Azhar in Cairo, but donated it to the “Ishaq’s mosque” instead.



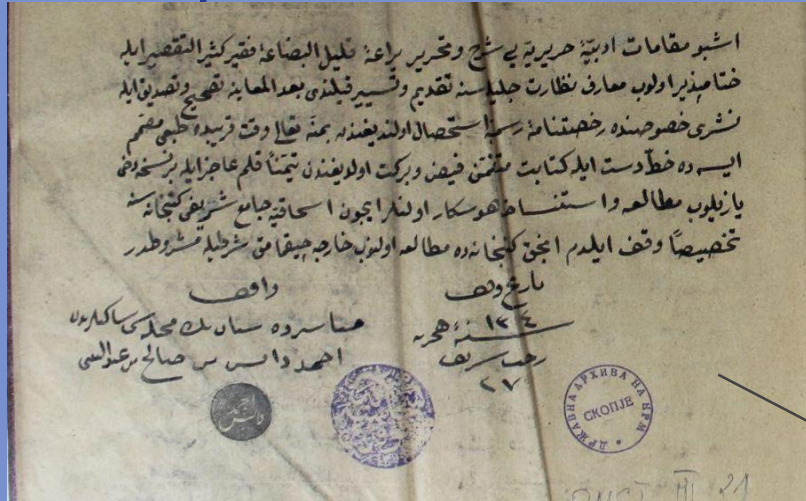


# Stamps and records containing different data

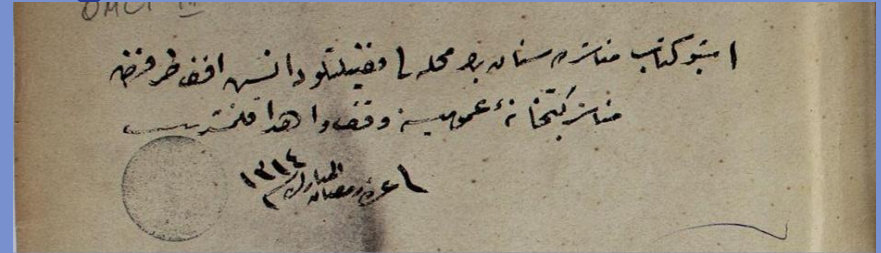


Ahmad Danish, *Makâmât-i Edebiye-i Harûriyye Şerhi*

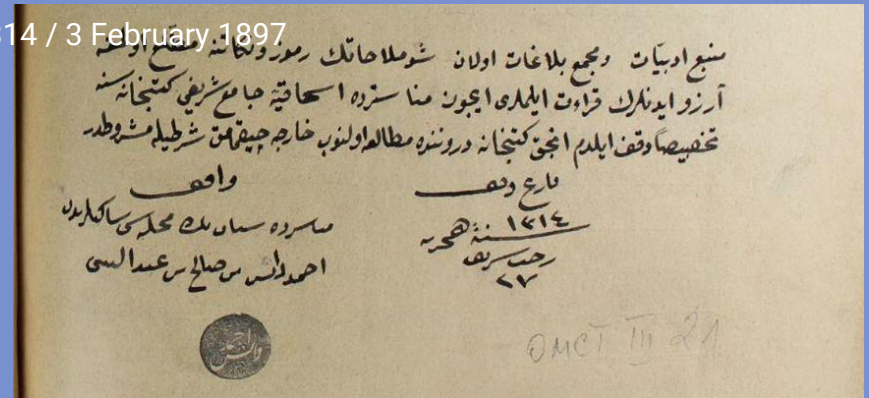
# Stamps and records containing different data



**Title page:** Ahmad Danish ibn Salih ibn Abdullah from the quarter of Sinan Bey in Bitola endowed this book to the library of the Ishaqiyya mosque, on 27 Rajab 1314 / 1st of January 1897; stamp with his name, and stamp of Manastir / Bitola library



**Flyleaf:** Ahmad Danish from Bitola, living in the quarter of Sinan Bey, endowed and presented this book to the Public library of Manastir / Bitola (Manastir Kütüphanesi). 1st Ramadan 1314 / 3 February 1897



**Final page:** same data as on the title page

# Conclusion

- Different names used to denote the same institution which at the time was the largest library in Bitola, situated within the complex of Ishaq Chelebi's endowment
- The name *Intifa*, which is not mentioned in any documents and inscriptions, was probably no more than the library's popular name.
- Library of Ishak Chelebi's madrasa and mosque, established in 1508 continued to exist (as collection of books if not as a building) till 1948
- An important number of its manuscripts and printed books today are part of the Oriental Collection of the National and University library "St. Clement of Ohrid" in Skopje.

The research is continuing!

Thank you for your attention!

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