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**A significant and valuable collection of periodicals in the Gazi Husrev-bey digital library**

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**Abstract:**

*A significant place in the overall fund of Gazi Husrev-bey Library is taken by newspapers. Versatile linguistic representation is an essential asset of the Periodicals fund. However, dominant among old newspapers are those in oriental languages. Of European languages, there are newspapers in Bosnian language written in Arabic lettering (known as Bosančica or Arebica), in Latin lettering or in Cyrillic, as well as in German as the language of Austro-Hungarian Empire that took rule of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time.*

*The staff of the Gazi Husrev-bey Library, on the occasion of the 480th anniversary of the existence of this institution, worked on digitizing old periodicals. The goal of this project was primarily to provide researchers with easier access to informations and acces to the large number of rare or unique library units, with as few physical limitations as possible, and to protect original copies from further decay and damage. The digital library was officially opened and started operating in January 2018.*

*Today, this digital library, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, has shown the full significance and value of the project, which is reflected in the fact that almost 400,000 digital documents are used annually, and the users are researchers from all over the world.*

**Keywords:** Digital Library, Periodicals, Magazines, Gazi Husrev-bey's Library, Digitization

# A significant and valuable collection of periodicals in the Gazi Husrev-bey digital library

Gazi Husrev-bey Library in Sarajevo is the first library whose exact date of establishment is known. The endowment charter of Gazi Husrev-bey for his madrasah states that “whatever is left from madrasah construction expenses is to be used for purchase of good books that shall be read in the madrasah and rewritten by readers interested in science”. Therefore, Gazi Husrev-bey Library dates as back as the madrasah, since 1537. Until 1863, the Library existed within Kuršumli madrasah. That year, at the initiative of Topal Osman Pasha, the Governor of Bosnia, large room next to the Gazi Husrev-bey mosque was built to be used for the library. It stayed there until 1935 when, due to enlarged library fund, it was moved to the premises in front of Emperor’s Mosque and remained there until the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992.

Today, Gazi husrev-bey Library is located in the heart of the Old Town. The opening ceremony of the building which was built and equipped with the financial support by the state of Qatar was held on January 15, 2014. The building is located next to the west wall of Kuršumli madrasah. The Library has in this way been brought back to its original home, to the place where it was founded, within the complex of Gazi Husrev-bey’s vakf.

Gazi Husrev-bey Library currently holds around one hundred thousand units including over 10.000 codices of manuscripts in Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Bosnian languages, around 10 thousands individual documents in Ottoman Turkish language, approximately 21.000 printed books in Oriental languages and over 45.000 in European languages, as well as rich collection of periodicals from the end of 19th century to the contemporary magazines that are being published in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the world. The Library also has a valuable museum collection, cartography collection and collection of photographs.

The holdings of the Gazi Husrev-bey Library are multilingual and printed in several letters, and the themes that are processed in the publications contained in its holdings, is much wider than the borders of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result, over the years, the Library has received requests for its use by researchers and users within Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also outside its borders, which prompted the Library staff to start thinking about digitizing valuable and old materials. The goal of the project of digitization of old periodicals was primarily to provide researchers with easier access to information and to a large number of rare or unique library units, with as few physical restrictions as possible, but also to protect original copies from further decay and damage.

During the war, especially in 1995, thanks to a donation from the Institute of Islamic Civilization and Culture (ISTAC) in Malaysia, the Library procured all the essential technical equipment for microfilming, so that by the end of 1996 about 5,000 copies of manuscript had been made. The process of microfilming the old manuscript collection was brought to an end in 2003, after which more attention was paid to the Periodicals Fund.

In 1998, along with the process of microfilming, the process of digitization of the funds of the Gazi Husrev-bey Library began, which was a really complex task at the time, given the insufficient amount of information about this process. Gazi Husrev-bey library was a pioneer in this process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so it was forced to seek advice for many challenges outside the borders of our country.

Towards the end of 2014, a “proposal for the project of digitization of old GHB periodicals” was made. The first phase was completed at the end of 2017 with the formation and commissioning of the GHB Digital Library. This digital repository is divided into eight categories that users can search and whose content they can access.

A significant place in the overall fund of Gazi Husrev-bey Library is taken by newspapers. Versatile linguistic representation is an essential asset of the Periodicals fund. However, dominant among old newspapers are those in oriental languages: Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, and Persian.

The oldest newspaper published in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Ottoman language was Calendar Salname-i vilajet-i Bosna. It was the official newspaper of the Vilayet administration published in the period of 1866-1878. It was initiated again in 1882, this time under the title of Bosna ve Hersek vilajeti salanmesi and continued to be printed until 1892.

Periodicals fund holds the newspaper Gülşeni Saray (Sarajevski cvjetnik), started by Mehmed Šakir Kurtćehajić, one of the first Bosniak journalists. The newspaper was printed bilingually, in both Ottoman Turkish and Bosnian language (in Cyrillic), from 1868 until the death of its founder in 1872.

Among old newspapers in the Periodical fund there are Vatan and Rehber, printed in Ottoman Turkish language and intended primarily for religious officials, but also interesting to wider population.

The Periodicals fund holds many journals and newspapers, published at the beginning of the 20th century: Behar, Musavat, Gajret, Nada, Tarik, Yeni Musavat, Mu’allim and many others. The total number of journals in the digital library is 35.

The following results were achieved with the project designed in this way:

1. A total of 35 titles of serial publications were digitized (the project included editions of publications printed in the period 1868-1945) with a total of 84,528 recordings in two copies - one copy was made in high quality resolution for a digital archive, while the other one is made in a lower resolution to make its use via computer as easy and efficient as possible.

2. Consolidation of individual years and numbers of rare serial publications has been performed. Thanks to this project, various editions of available years of serial publications were collected in one place, missing copies were detected, as well as redundant copies that were subsequently deposited separately.

3. Adequate protection of physical copies of periodicals has been performed. Once the digitization is completed, the use of physical copies is allowed only in exceptional cases.

4. Better quality and easier use of material is enabled. It is also possible for multiple users to search for one title at a time.

It is possible to search most of the posted materials, because the OCR procedure was performed on complete texts, which makes it much easier for users to search for the desired articles and texts, and the word they are looking for will be found anywhere in the text.

Anyone can join the digital library, only registration is required. Exceptionally, the user can log in without registration, as a "guest", but in that case he has limited access to the content. The contents of the Digital Library may only be used for personal use and research, and any type of commercial use requires the special approval of the Gazi Husrev-Bey Library. The design of the Digital Library was done in a way that meets all the needs of individual funds of the Library.

The very principle of searching and working on the digital repository is quite simple and when choosing the basic fund they want to access, users get a list of publications together with a picture and a short description. They can then select the publication they need and proceed to read and research it. Each page is set up separately for easier opening of documents, but also for the protection of the publications themselves, in order to prevent their downloading and use. On each page, and on the photographs and postcards from the photo library, there is a stamp in the middle with the logo of the Gazi Husrev-bey library, as another form of protection of this material. Also, copyright was taken care of, so that none of the posted publications that belong to the European Fund or the Fund of Periodicals are no longer under copyright.

So far, it has been shown how important the digitization process is and how much we are actually working on the protection of the materials itself. Many old publications have been used frequently, and with each use the thin and already damaged pages are further damaged, so that, after a while, only dust would remain from the publication. Now all publications are in optimal conditions in the depos of Gazi Husrev-bey library and are protected from further decay, and in the research reading room or from the comfort of their own home, in a few seconds users can reach the desired publications and thus facilitate their own work process, and make it easier for librarians because books, magazines and manuscripts remain preserved and protected for the future.

The physical closure of about 90% of the world’s cultural institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic has greatly influenced cultural institutions to turn to some alternative methods of presenting the cultural wealth they possess. Now, in these conditions, the significance of the Gazi Husrev-bey digital library is best seen. Information on the use of the digital library in 2020 gives us a clear picture of how important digitization is in the current situation, given that the use of our digital material has almost doubled compared to 2019. In total, it was used three hundred sixty three tousand two hundred six times during 2020, and the most used were serial publications, which showed us the true value of our digital library, especially in these extraordinary conditions.

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