

## Library Acquires its 14th Mütferrika Press Title

In March, the library's Department of Rare Books purchased from a French dealer Hasan Şu'uri's *Ferheng*, a Persian-Ottoman dictionary and the seventeenth and final book published by İbrahim Mütferrika on his press in 1155 AH [1742]. With this acquisition, the library



*The hand-colored unvan of vol. 1 of Şu'uri's Ferheng (Lisan ul-Acem). Courtesy of Rare Books Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library)*

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now has fourteen of the seventeen titles published on this first Muslim-owned and operated printing press.

### The Dawn of Ottoman Printing

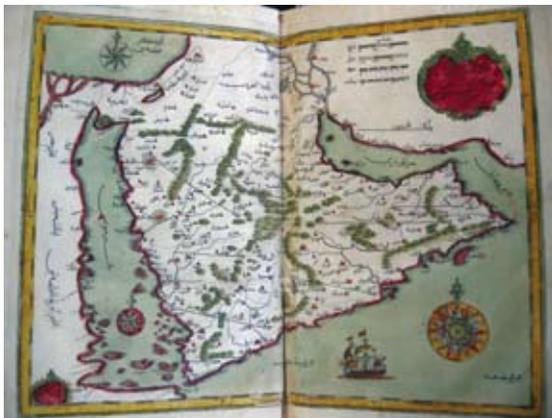
Printing presses were not unknown in the Ottoman Empire prior to the establishment of the Müteferrika Press in the 1720s. A Jewish press, founded in Istanbul by émigrés from the West, was in operation certainly by 1505 and may have printed its first book as early as 1493. An Armenian press was active in the 1560s, also in Istanbul, and a Greek press opened there in 1627, but it was destroyed in January 1628 by Janissaries who objected to the press on the grounds that it was an innovation. There were even short-lived Christian Arabic presses established in Lebanon (1610, one work, a Psalter) and Aleppo (1706–11). What is significant is that all of these presses were established by religious minorities. An official cause of this lack of Muslim printing presses was the issuing of imperial edicts in 1485 and 1515 which banned Muslims from printing Arabic-script works. Religious conservatism, the social and economic interests of calligraphers and other members of the manuscript production trades, the economics of book production, and the esthetic appeal of manuscripts all seem to have played a role in delaying the establishment of a Muslim printing press.

On the other hand, Sultan Murad III issued a *ferman* in 1588 authorizing the importation of Arabic printed books from

Europe, and by the mid-seventeenth century the historian İbrahim Peçevî was able to report that Ottoman society was beginning to accept the printing press, but it was not until after the Treaty of Passarowicz (1719) that there developed a sufficient impetus for reform that a Muslim printing press became a reality. The leading proponent of setting up a press was İbrahim Müteferrika, an Ottoman statesman and reformer. He was supported in his efforts by the grand vezir İbrahim, Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi, a recent ambassador to France, Mehmed's son Sa'id Efendi, and the *şeyhülislâm* Abdullah Efendi, who issued a *fetva*, or religious ruling, permitting the establishment of a press by Muslims. With a *ferman* from Sultan Ahmed III in hand, İbrahim Müteferrika printed his first book in 1729 and a total of seventeen titles before his death in 1745.

### Princeton's Collection of Ottoman "Incunabula"

A highlight among the library's fourteen Müteferrika Press holdings is the very first title published, Mehmed ibn Mustafa el-Vanî's Ottoman translation of *Sihah ül-Cevherî* (1141 AH [1729]), an Arabic dictionary written by Ism'â'îl ibn Hammâd Jawharî'. Other notable holdings are two copies of Kâtib Çelebi's naval history, *Tuhfet ül-kibar fi esfar il-bihar* (1141 AH [1729]), the second book published and the first with illustrations, two copies of the same author's *Cihannüma*, a world geography illustrated with numerous maps, *Tarih ül-Hind il-Garbî e l - m u s e m - m a bi-hadis-i nev* (1142 AH [1730]), a history of the New World illustrated with thirteen woodcuts, and the *Grammaire*



*Caption: Hand-colored map of the Arab Peninsula from the Cihannüma. Courtesy of Rare Books Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library*

of the New World illustrated with thirteen woodcuts, and the *Grammaire*



*A woodcut illustration showing a jaguar, an anteater, and an armadillo from Tarih ül-Hind il-Garbî. Courtesy of Cotsen Children's Library, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library*

*Turque* (1730) of Jean Baptiste Daniel Holdermann, an Ottoman grammar written in French.

Yet to be added are these three Müteferrika Press titles: Ibn Arabshâh's *Tarih-i Timur Gürkân* (1142 [1730]), translated into Ottoman Turkish by Nazmizade Efendi, İbrahim Müteferrika's brief treatise on magnetism, *Füyuzat-ı Miknatsiye*, published in 1144 [1732], and Ömer Bosnavî's *Ahvâl-i Gazavat der diyar-i Bosna* (1154 [1741]). In addition, the press printed four maps, the first dated 1132 (1719 or 1720), none of which Princeton owns.

In addition to the fourteen Müteferrika Press imprints, the library has a number of other Ottoman titles from the eighteenth century. Following İbrahim Müteferrika's death in 1745, his press fell into disuse until 1756, when a second edition of *Sihah ül-Cevherî* was printed. After another lengthy break of seventeen years, the press printed three

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books between 1783 and 1786 and three more between 1792 and 1794, making a total of 24 books printed on Müteferrika's press. Of these additional seven titles, the library has one of the two *Sihah ül-Cevherî* volumes and three other titles. The three titles, *Fenn-i Harb* (art of war), *Fenn-i Lağım* (military mining), and *Fenn-i Muhasara* (science of sieges), that Princeton does not own are very scarce. The online union catalog WorldCat lists just one copy of the first title and two of the second. The third is not listed in WorldCat. Available union catalogs of Turkish libraries list four copies of the *Fenn-i Harb* and only one copy of *Fenn-i Muhasara*.



Plate showing naval maneuvers from *Usûl ül-Maarif fi Vech-i Tasfif-i Sefain-i Donanma ve Fenn-i Tedbir-i Harekâtiha*, Courtesy of Rare Books Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

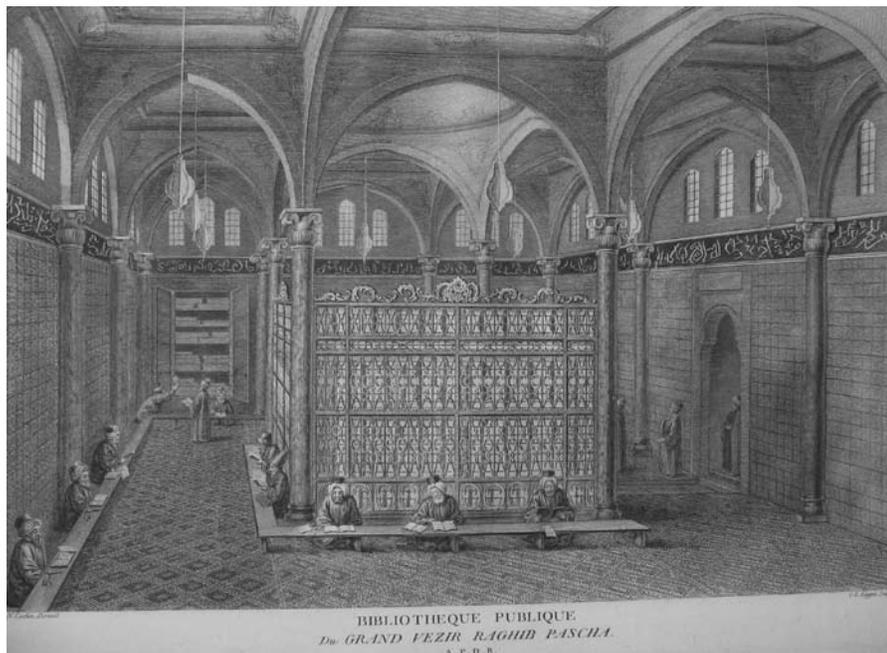
Overlapping in time with the third and final run of the Müteferrika Press is a press established by the French Embassy. This press printed four titles in small print runs. Of these, the library has two titles, Pierre François Viguier's *Éléments de la Langue Turque* (1790), a fairly commonly held work, and Laurent Jean François Truguet's *Usûl ül-Maarif fi Vech-i Tasfif-i Sefain-i Donanma ve Fenn-i Tedbir-i Harekâtiha* (1202 [1787]). This treatise on naval maneuvers is quite rare. WorldCat shows just one other copy, and the union catalogs of Turkish libraries also show only one copy. The remaining two titles, *Usûl ül-Maarif fi Tertib il-Ordu ve Tahsinihi Muvakkaten* (a manual on military organization, 1200 [1786]) by Jean de La Fitte-Clavé and *Risalet fi Kavanin ul Melâhat Ameliyen* (another treatise on naval maneuvers,

1201 [1787]) by Laurent Jean François Truguet, are both as rare. Only one copy of the former title appears in WorldCat and none in the Turkish union catalogs. The second title does not appear in any of these sources (Of course, copies may exist in libraries where the collections have not been added to these union catalogs).

The turn of the nineteenth century saw increased activity in the world of Ottoman printing. New presses opened in 1797 and 1803. Thus for the first time two Ottoman printing presses were in operation at the same time. These two new presses published at least twenty-two titles in just the first ten years of operation as compared to twenty-four titles by the Müteferrika Press in sixty-five years. The lengthy dawn of Ottoman printing had at last ended and book printing began its mainstream existence.

(The library is seeking to complete its collection of Ottoman "incunabula" from the Müteferrika and French Embassy Presses and over the last twenty years has added seven titles, five of the original seventeen imprints, and one each from the revived Müteferrika and French Embassy Presses. These titles rarely appear for sale and are often quite expensive. We live in hope.)

The Library of Grand Vizier Ragib Pasha, from Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire othoman* (1787-1790). Courtesy of Rare Books Division, Department of Rare Books and special Collections, Princeton University Library.



The Library of Grand Vizier Ragib Pasha, from Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire othoman* (1787-1790). Courtesy of Rare Books Division, Department of Rare Books and special Collections, Princeton University Library.