

Ketebe

In the manuscript tradition of the Ottoman Empire, the *kitab* (book) was not merely a vessel of textual content, but a carefully produced cultural artifact. Each manuscript bore the traces of its making—physical, intellectual, and devotional. Among these traces, the *ketebe*, in this usage a quasi-colophon, stands as a distinct and revealing marker of a manuscript’s completion. Typically situated at the end of a codex, the *ketebe* represents the scribe’s formal statement, documenting both the act and the context of copying. Etymologically derived from the Semitic triliteral root K-T-B, which conveys meanings related to writing, inscribing, or recording, *ketebe* performs both practical and expressive functions. It generally includes the name of the copyist, the date, and occassionally the place of production. In some rare cases, it may reference the patron of the manuscript or the setting in which it was produced, such as an endowed library, a madrasa, a dervish lodge, or a palace workshop. Beyond these essential data, colophons often incorporate formulaic invocations reflecting the humility and piety commonly associated with scribal labor. While concise, the *ketebe* plays a critical role in contextualizing the manuscript as a historical object.

Through this paratext, the otherwise anonymous act of transmission acquires an authorial signature. The presence of personal remarks, poetic fragments, or expressions of physical or spiritual fatigue occasionally found in *ketebe* inscriptions also reveal the scribe’s lived experience, rendering each manuscript unique. From a codicological perspective, the *ketebe* is of considerable value. It offers concrete information that enables scholars to date and localize manuscripts, reconstruct networks of scribes and patrons, and chart the movement of texts within the empire. The cumulative analysis of *ketebe* entries across collections opens pathways for understanding broader dynamics of manuscript production, including regional practices, affiliations with libraries, madrasas or waqfs, and stylistic conventions.



Printing & Binding

12.Matbaa
34396 Sarıyer - Istanbul

Text block

Goričane - Sora Matt - 90 gsm

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The Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library was declared a historical monument in 1948 by decree of the General Administration of the Dodecanese, as an integral component of the cultural heritage of the Old Town of Rhodes and as an asset meriting preservation. In 1960, the Ministry of Culture extended this protective framework through the designation of the entire Old Town as a historical monumental complex.

In 1988, the Medieval City of Rhodes was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Subsequently, in 2009, a ministerial decree classified the Old Town as an archaeological site under Article 14 of Archaeological Law 3028/2002, concerning the safeguarding of antiquities and cultural heritage. At present, its protection is regulated by Law 4858/2021, which consolidates and modernizes the national legislative framework for the protection of antiquities and cultural heritage.

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