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Methods of Reading And Writing Ottoman Archival Documents, Through The Science of Diplomatics:A Case Study of Registers of Important Affairs and Imperial Firmans

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Abstract:

This research paper focuses on methods of writing and documenting Ottoman materials, such as archival records and registers of important affairs. These documents are distributed across various archives and repositories around the world, most notably the Ottoman Prime Ministry Archive in Istanbul, which is considered one of the richest collections in the world, along with the Topkapi Palace Archive.

In this article, we will attempt to examine ways of dealing with archival materials as primary sources for historical research and explain the aspects they cover, including political, military, economic, and social contexts, as they represent great scientific value in historical writing.

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Introduction

Specialists in Ottoman document science have classified Ottoman archives into two main stages of writing:

The first stage encompasses the 16th and 17th centuries, during which Ottoman documents were relatively few and rare in the history of the Ottoman Empire. By the middle of the 16th century, Ottoman documents began to be systematically classified, organized, and catalogued.

The second stage spans the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and continues until the fall of the Ottoman Empire, marked by the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in Switzerland in 1923 by the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk(Ali Orhan, 1987, pp. 228–234), During this period, Ottoman documents became more widely produced and officially recognized.

When comparing the two stages in terms of the script used for writing Ottoman documents, it is evident that the first stage is more challenging due to the use of the Diwaniyah font(al-Khattat's, 1986, p.p. 01-07) and the driving font, also known as the Ottoman font or "linear context." This font was especially employed in writings about various regions of the state. In contrast, the second stage saw the adoption of the Naskh font, which is simpler and easier to read than its predecessor. The complexity of the font in the first stage often discouraged researchers from studying this period, leading many to focus on the more accessible second period, where the abundance of documents facilitated their research.

The intricate challenge of interpreting the stage's symbols and unearthing its historical secrets is underscored by the trajectory of archival materials within the Ottoman state. Initially housed in the Hamouni Diwan, these crucial documents were relocated post the catastrophic fire of 1754 AD to a warehouse adjacent to the Mahtrakhana prison. Unfortunately, this new repository experienced multiple incidents of fire in subsequent years (1755-1839 AD 1887-1987-1911-1926 AD), further jeopardizing the preservation of these records.

A significant advancement in the organization of Ottoman records, aligning with modern state bureaucratic practices, is attributed to Grand Vizier Rashid Pasha (Yilmaz Rajab, 1999, p.p. 318-322) In 1846 AD, he commissioned the construction of a dedicated building for Ottoman documents at the Grand Vizier's headquarters. This initiative facilitated the transport of a substantial collection of documents that were previously archived loosely in packages or boxes. The new office, referred to in Turkish as the "Treasury of my Papers," comprised two principal categories of documents: those from the Hamayuni Diwan (the Royal Circle) and the Sublime Porte documents (Pasha Qabi Si), representing the administrative records of the Grand Vizier's office.

The scholarly discipline of diplomatics, concerning the study and classification of documents, maintained its significance from the time of the Seljuk Empire in Anatolia, particularly during the Seljuk capital in Konya. It was established under Suleiman ibn Qalamish and his son Arslan Kalaj (1064-1307 AD), and continued to evolve during the

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Ilkhanid dynasty's supremacy in Persia and its surrounding regions like Iraq, the Caucasus, and various Turkish emirates [2], The expansion of the Ottoman Empire into Anatolia and Europe facilitated the assimilation of legal frameworks and administrative practices derived from both Asia Minor and Byzantine sources. This historical context raises essential inquiries regarding the evolution and regulation of these archival practices.

The question raised is: **What are the Registers of Important Affairs (Mühimme Defterleri or Registers)? Who writes them? And what is the purpose behind the Ottoman documentation of all these political, military, economic, and religious events?.**

Previous Studies

A number of studies have addressed Ottoman archival and documentary traditions from different perspectives. Works such as Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı (1985) and M. Tayyib Gökbilgin (1979) have contributed significantly to the understanding of Ottoman archival organization, paleography, and diplomatic writing systems. Muhammad Ali Orhan (1987) provides a historical contextualization of the late Ottoman period and its administrative transformations, while Najati Aktash and Ismat Binraq (1986) offer a systematic index of Ottoman archival collections preserved in the Ottoman State Archives in Istanbul.

Furthermore, Mohamad Mahmoud Abbas (1979) and Abdul Rahman Al-Muzan and Abdul Rahim bin Sharah have contributed studies on Ottoman documentary heritage through regional and institutional archival perspectives. These works collectively highlight the importance of Ottoman documents as both administrative instruments and historical sources, while also emphasizing the evolution of archival classification and bureaucratic practices.

Despite these valuable contributions, most previous studies tend to focus either on the descriptive cataloguing of archives or on isolated aspects such as paleography or administrative history. Few have attempted to provide an integrated analytical framework that connects the evolution of Ottoman documentary practices with broader institutional and political transformations. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by offering a more comprehensive reading of Ottoman diplomatics as a dynamic system reflecting the administrative and historical development of the empire.

1. Ottoman Archival Documents: Classification and Types

Research into Ottoman archival documents has been robust since 1909, significantly advanced by the Ottoman Historical Society's initiatives post-1914. Among their contributions was the publication of "Tarihi OSMANI ENCUMENI MECMUASI" (T O E M), which helped in systematically classifying Ottoman documents into two primary categories:

1.1.Ottoman Civil Documents

Ottoman civil documents refer to the administrative and political records produced by the central institutions of the Ottoman state in the course of governance and public

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administration. These documents were issued either directly by the Sultan or by senior governmental authorities such as the Grand Vizier, the Imperial Council (Diwan-i Humayun), and provincial officials. They include imperial decrees (Firmans), patents, treaties, diplomatic correspondence, military reports, taxation records, official registers, and administrative memoranda. Their primary function was to regulate state affairs, maintain communication between administrative bodies, and preserve the legal and political authority of the empire (Al-Kandari, 2000, pp. 17–18).

1.2 .Ottoman Religious Documents

Ottoman religious documents comprise records associated with Islamic judicial, religious, and charitable institutions operating under Ottoman rule. These documents were generally produced by Sharia courts, religious scholars, waqf administrations, and muftis responsible for issuing legal opinions (fatwas). This category includes court registers (Sijillat), waqf deeds, judicial rulings, fatwas, inheritance records, marriage contracts, and other documents related to the application of Islamic law and religious administration. Such records played a central role in regulating social relations, preserving religious endowments, and documenting legal practices within Ottoman society (Najati Aktash and Ismat Binraq, 1986, pp. 87–89).

The classification of these documents was initiated by committees such as the Ali Amiri Committee(Najati Aktash and Ismat Binraq, 1986, p. 88), focusing on Sharia records, judicial orders, endowments, and fatwas. The Ali Amiri Committee (1918-1922) played a crucial role in organizing these records, which amounted to 180800 archival documents, categorized according to the reign of each Sultan from Osman I through Abdul Majeed II. (Najati Aktash and Ismat Binraq, 1986, p. 89) Are-archiving initiative in 1922, led by Mahmoud Kamal Enal (known as IBN-UL Emin), (Topkapi Sarayi Muzesi Kutuphanesi, Koguslar, p. 888) classified 47145 documents from the early 15th century through the 19th century, creating 23 archival groups based on thematic and temporal criteria.

Under the Turkish Republic, the Ottoman Archive Office was integrated into the Prime Minister's Office (Bashbakan Bashokel), and the previous "paper treasury" was rebranded as the "Bashokalt Archive." A significant reorganization occurred under the Jawdat Committee (1932-1937)(Najati Qutash and Ismat Binariq, 1986, p. 91) which classified 225506 archival documents into 16 categories, supported by a comprehensive index spanning thirty-four volumes.

2. Methods of Writing and Reading Ottoman Archival Documents Through the Science of Diplomatics

2.1. Definition of Diplomatic Science

Diplomatics, in Arabic, refers to the science of studying, verifying, and critically analyzing documents. It examines documents to establish general rules that differentiate between genuine and forged documents. This science also explores how to draft documents from the first letter to the end of the text. Documents serve as the original and primary sources upon which historians or researchers rely, forming the raw material from which they write.(Mahmoud Abbas, 1979, p. 221).

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In Arabic, the term is derived from the word for trust, indicating that a document is a binding agreement or covenant, and is therefore considered "trusted." Any document issued was considered cautious and trustworthy if it was documented officially.

The term "document" itself originates from the Latin "DOCERE," meaning "to know." The science of documents, or diplomatics, provides the rules necessary to distinguish The science of diplomatics distinguishes between authentic and forged documents by examining official records across different historical periods in order to identify changes in their form, structure, and content over time.

It also investigates the various institutions and administrative bodies involved in the production of archival documents, whether they belong to state agencies, government departments, judicial authorities, or individuals.

The role of the documentalist precedes that of the historian. The documentalist is responsible for describing the document and determining its date and historical context, Once the document is authenticated, the historian proceeds to analyze its content, verify the information it contains, and construct a historical interpretation based on it, There fore, diplomatics is fundamental to historical research, as historians rely on it to critically evaluate their sources and assess their historical reliability (Mahmoud Abbas, 1979, p. 223).

Ultimately, the main objective of diplomatics is to ensure that documents are free from falsification, forgery or fabrication, and that they are accurately attributed to their proper historical context and original source.

As a result of this close relationship, diplomatics has developed in parallel with historical studies, Documents constitute essential sources for writing history, as they can either confirm or challenge historical narratives, The origin of this discipline is traditionally attributed to the French Benedictine monk Dom Jean Mabillon (1632–1707 AD), who published the first major work on the subject in 1681 AD, His contribution is considered foundational in establishing diplomatics as a scientific discipline, as he formulated the critical principles used to assess the authenticity of historical documents (Mahmoud Abbas, 1979, p. 223).

2.2 Definition of Archives

The term “archive” originates from the Greek root arche, meaning administrative or governmental authority, and is also associated with high-ranking officials (magistracy). Over time, it came to denote a collection of records, files, and documents accumulated within administrative offices, Its usage became widespread during the Middle Ages, particularly in reference to ancient or historical documents (Mahmoud Abbas, 1979, p. 226).

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According to the French researcher Charles Samaran, an archive is defined as "all written records and documents produced by an individual or collective activity," provided that they are systematically organized for consultation and properly preserved within an institution (Mahmoud Abbas, 1979, p. 226).

3. Registers of Important Affairs and Methods of Writing and Indexing in the Ottoman Archives

The Registers of Important Affairs, known in Turkish as Mühimme Defterleri, consist of collections of documents compiled from various papers organized into official registers, These registers represent one of the most significant categories within the Ottoman archival system due to the valuable information they contain regarding state affairs across different periods. They also include imperial orders (firmans) issued by the central government in Istanbul, (Binraq, 2000, p. 146).

which serve as responses to reports and correspondence submitted to it previously. The Registers of Important Affairs are affiliated with the Divan-i Humayun (Imperial Council), (Al-Buqami, 2015, p. 23) and the oldest among them is Göchler No. 888 (Koguslar), housed in the Topkapi Palace Museum (TSMK), dating back to 1551-1552 AD. There are many lost volumes that were kept by former high-ranking state officials who stored related documents, similar to the KubriKopri (KOULU), which chronicles events in Istanbul from 1834 AD (Arsivi Osmanli, N. 364).

These Registers are organized chronologically, with some exceptions. For instance, there may be repeated events documented in both Volume V and Volume VI, despite differing addressees and subjects.

The reader may find similar events recorded on page 117 of both volumes concerning Basra, Al-Ahsa, and Bursa. The Topkapi Palace archive contains a wide variety of firman assets, and an index compiled by Prof. Dr. Ismail Hakki Uzzun Garshli categorizes these materials chronologically from 1348 to 1920 AD, (Ottoman Archive, M 03, p.117) This archive also holds various judgments (hukümler) and patents as well as reports sent from Istanbul to different Ottoman provinces in the Levant, (Hakki Uzuncarsili, 1985, p. 26)Europe, the East, and Asia, which are available for internal review only. (Hakki Uzuncarsili, 1985, p. 27)

4. The Ottoman Firman: Methods of Writing and Reading in the Ottoman Archives

4.1. Definition of Firman

A firman is a term of Persian origin meaning an order, ruling, or decree. It refers to any ruling issued by the Ottoman Sultan to individuals within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, When a ruling is issued by someone of high rank to a subordinate, it is called "buyuruldu." (Shamsuddin Sami, 1317, p. 992).

Firman can be granted by the Grand Vizier, ministers, the Head of the Imperial Treasury (Defterdar), military judges (Qadi al-Asker), admirals (Kapudan Pasha), princes, and other

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officials within the Ottoman Empire. At the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century, the firman used in Ottoman documents was referred to as Hakam, a collection of rulings or Hakmaler, meaning Firmanler, often accompanied by honorary titles such as Sharif or Humayun (Hakam Sharif or Humayun), indicating the authority of the Ottoman Sultan.(Hakki Uzuncasili, p. 29)

4.2. Writing the Ottoman Firman

To write an Imperial or Ottoman Firman, the following elements must be included:

4.3. Preface (Temhid)

The firman typically starts with a preface known as Temhid or glorification (Temcid), similar to the Latin Invocatio. This section mentions the names of God Almighty and may begin with "he," (Turkish Documents, 1980, p. 81) referencing God, along with additional names or phrases like "He is the Almighty" or "He is the All-Hearing." The preface is usually written in black ink, sometimes incorporating multiple colors, aesthetic aspects, and linear decorations, with specific points often highlighted in gold. (Turkish Documents, 1980, p. 188)

4.4. The Tughra (Tugra)

This is the seal and signature of the Ottoman Sultan used to authorize official documents such as patents, judgments, and announcements. The Tughra is placed in the center of the firman or decree. It is also referred to as "Nishan Humayun," meaning "the royal signature" in Arabic. The word Tughra is similar to the origin of "Tugrai" (Tugrag), which comes from the Oghuz language (Oğuzca) and refers to a type of falcon used for hunting, symbolizing the king's signature in Oghuz civilization (Feridun Bey, 1288, p. 369).

There is a great similarity between the word Tugra and the origin of the word Tugrai(Tugrag**)**, which appeared in the Oghuz language (OGUZCA**)(** Fouad Quirili, 1993, p. 118), a type of falcon used for hunting, which is the sign of the king's signature in the Oghuz civilization, one of the major Turkish tribes that appeared in Anatolia and is attributed to the legendary grandfather of the Turks, "Oghuzkhan**",** to distort this word and become**"Tughra" (**Ismail Hakki, 1985, p.50) and the Tughra were not invented by the Ottomans, but were quoted from their predecessors from the Islamic nations that preceded them in the Anatolia region, such as: the state of the Seljuqs of Rum and the various emirates that emerged after the defeat of the state of the Seljuqs of Rum as well.(Al-Kandari, 2000, p.28)

The first appearance of Tughra was on the official correspondence of the Sultan, then it appeared on Ottoman Coins and Currency, then on postage stamps, flags, commercial and military naval vessels as well, and later appeared on official buildings and gates to become a symbol of the Ottoman state. Ottoman archival documents indicate the emergence of Tughra in several different forms and compositions, including: **a high signature, the signature of Humayun, Nishan Sharif, Alishan Soltani, Taghrai Sami, Makhan Khakani, Nishan Humayuni, Maimun, Alamat Sharifa, and Taghrai...etc**

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Each Sultan of the Ottoman Empire used his own tughra bearing his name, and this is what we have mentioned in the annexes to show the difference and differences between them (Gokbilgini, 1979, p.50). After the Ottoman Sultan sits on the throne, calligraphers design his own tughra, which bears his name and his father's name as well, such as: **Sultan Mustafa Khan bin Ahmed**.(Al-Kandari, 2000, p. 29) It is used in official and government departments until his death or his removal from power, After installing the form of tughra, specialists make three or four copies of the seal and dowry of the Sultan in its final form. The first is delivered to the Sultan for his personal use, and this is called the **Sheriff's Seal** HATEM-I SERIF. The second is delivered to the Grand Vizier, who represents the second figure after the Ottoman Sultan in the administrative, military and financial aspects. The third seal of the Tughra is granted **to: Udeh Bashi** Has ODABASI, who is the person responsible for the Sultan's tool.

The fourth seal is delivered to: Harem Dairesi HAZINEDARI, or the treasurer of the Haramlik Department, as it is called. The Sultan's personal seal is made of emerald material. The rest of the seal is made of special gold material in the form of an oval or angles Some of them are also made in the form of a ring, and it is worth noting here that the specialist in Ottoman documentary science must distinguish between the drawing of the tughra and the drawing of the penge, as the first belongs to the Ottoman Sultan and the second belongs to the Grand Vizier, ministers and princes. The second difference is that the tughra contains two internal and external eggs and the tughra contains only one egg. (Hakki Uzuncasili,1985, p.143)

5. The Tughra parts: theTughra has four parts, which are.

5.1. Secret Chair(Sere Kursu)

This is the base of the Tughra, which contains the name of the Ottoman Sultan. Each Sultan embellished the design over time until it reached its final form. (Al-Kandari, 2000, p. 29).

5.2. Egg Levr(The Two Egg-Shapes)

These shapes form the left side of the Tughra, with one internal and the other external. Typically, the letters "N" (from "bin" and "khan") and "Dal" shape these eggs. Adding the word "Muzaffar" incorporates the letter "RA" into one egg, while the word "Dima" is placed in the inner egg. (Al-Kandari, 2000, p. 30)

5.3. Tail / Tug / Tuğ:

This is the upper part of the Tughra, adorned with three flags or columns (FLAMA)(Suha Umur, p.p.27-139), These features extend from the letters "A" and "L" and sometimes add aesthetic appeal, twisting at the upper end, a feature known as "Zuluf."

6. Arm (Kol):

The right side of the Tughra, depicted as two parallel lines extending from the eggs, is sometimes called the HANCERE. (Suha Umur, p.p.25-26)

7. The Art of the Tughra

The artist who paints the Tughra on Ottoman documents is referred to as a "Nishangi," (Shamsuddin Sami, 1317, p. 884) a term derived from the Persian word "Nişan," meaning "my signature." The earliest known Tughra dates back to Sultan Orhan bin Othman in

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1324 AD, and the Tughra of Sultan Osman I, the founder of the Ottoman Empire, has not yet been discovered. By the early 18th century, the title of the Tughra painter changed to "TUGRAKES" (or "TUGRANUVIS"), signifying both a calligrapher and writer responsible for placing the Tughra at the center of the document and drawing it according to the document's dimensions. (al-Kandari, 2000,p. 32)Notable observations about the Tughra of the 37 Ottoman Sultans who reigned from 1299 to 1922 include:

Among the most important observations found in the drawing of the Ottoman Tughra through the succession of 37 sultans to rule the Ottoman Empire, from 1299 to 1922 in the archival documents are the following:

- The appearance of the word "Ben" in Arabic instead of "Oglu" in Turkish in the Tughra of Sultan Orkhan I.

- The use of "Khan" during Sultan Bayezid I's reign, as his name, Bayezid bin Murad, required additional letters for aesthetic balance in the Tughra.

- The introduction of "Muzaffar Shah" by Sultan Murad II in his Tughra.

- Sultan Selim I was the first to use "Shah" and added "the" to "Muzaffar," resulting in "Muzaffar Shah."

- Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent included "Shah" twice in his Tughra.

- Sultan Mahmud I removed the surname "Khan" from the Tughra.

- The addition of aesthetic elements, such as roses and flowers, to the arm of the Tughra. Some sultans included titles like "Adli" and "Ghazi," with notable examples being Mahmud II and Abdul Hamid II. Following a fatwa from the Sheikh of Islam, Mohammed V replaced the title "Rashad" with "Ghazi" after the Battle of "Jinnah Qala" (Çanakkale).

Additionally, it's important to note that the text of the Tughra in Ottoman documents is completely devoid of points. Among the notable calligraphers of the Tughra, particularly during the organizational era in 1839, were Raqim Effendi, Hashim Effendi, Sami Effendi, and Ismail Haqqi Bey, whose skills contributed to the utmost beauty and creativity of the Tughra. (Al-Kandari, 1997, p.p. 127-180).

8. The imperialtitlesused for writing Ottoman decrees and Imperial Firman (Hümayun Firman(INTITULATIO)

Here, the Sultan begins to mention histitles and epithets, especially when it comes to rulers and kings of other countries and governments, All thesetitlesthat are written are derivedfrom the culture and civilization of threelanguages: Turkish, Persian and Arabic. The Turkish historianFereydoun Bey, the lawyer, mentioned to us in his book "The Establishments of the Sultans"sixteen (16) differenttitles in which the Imperial Firman are written, including the following: (...Sitting in the bed of the Sultanate, dressed in the clothes of justice and piety, guardian of the holes of Islam, a warrior of revenge...The Great Sultan Khakan Al-Adl...Sultan of Al-Barin and Bahrain, Ruler of the Two Holy Mosques...ShahmanAzam Badshah, most of Faridun Jah Siyah...The author of the Qur 'an, the kingdoms of Rum, Ajam and the Arabs ...).(Feridun Bey, 1288, p.p. 02,03)

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It should also be noted that the multiplication of epithets and honorific titles in Ottoman imperial documents and correspondence aimed to emphasize the authority, prestige, and political strength of the Ottoman sultans, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Ottomans rarely used the hamza (glottal stop) in its standard Arabic form and often employed orthographic variations in their writing system, for example writing "Qaim" in different simplified forms, and in some cases omitting final elements in words such as "Tughra," which was rendered in a standardized imperial calligraphic form. Moreover, Ottoman documents including imperial firmans, waqf deeds, and official registers generally did not include numbering systems. Instead, classification and numbering were later introduced by specialists in diplomatics, archival science, and research institutions to facilitate access and scholarly study (Feridun Bey, 1288, p. 09)

9. Directive (INSCRIPTIO): Imperial Address in Firman Documents

The "inscriptio" refers to the directive section in imperial correspondence, where the message is formally addressed to its recipient. Different formulas were used depending on the administrative or military rank of the addressee. Ottoman diplomatic language distinguished between external correspondence and internal correspondence. External correspondence was directed to foreign rulers, such as European monarchs, Persian shahs, and other sovereigns, using highly elaborate honorific expressions that emphasized grandeur, legitimacy, and political hierarchy (Tayyib Gökbilgin, p.p. 59–67).

Internal correspondence, by contrast, was addressed to Ottoman officials such as grand viziers, ministers, governors, tribal leaders, scholars, judges, and members of the royal household. These formulas also contained elaborate titles and honorifics reflecting administrative rank and social status (Tayyib Gökbilgin, p. 67).

10. Supplication (SALUTATIO)

The "salutatio" follows the address and titles of the recipient and includes a formal invocation or supplicatory phrase appropriate to the recipient's rank and position. It typically follows a structured formula combining titles, position, name, and a respectful invocation. Many of these diplomatic conventions became more systematized during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (Mehmed the Conqueror), who issued regulatory legal-administrative frameworks known as *Kanunname* to organize state affairs. These regulations were later further developed during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, particularly in relation to the drafting and standardization of imperial documents and decrees.

This tradition is discussed in the works of the Turkish historian Halil Sahillioğlu, who analyzed and translated these legal-administrative texts into Arabic (Halil Sahillioğlu, 1986, pp. 107–193), The commonly used academic term for the Ottoman administrative registers referenced in this context is **"Mühimme Defterleri" (Mühimme Registers)**.

11. The reporting (NARRATIO) or the notification

It is one of the most important paragraphs of the document. If anyone wants an order or a request, he sends a letter, a report or a petition to the capital of the state in Istanbul, in which he clarifies what is requested in a paragraph, which isusually concluded with the

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words "notification" or "Presentation of a case", a case presentation is a document thatisedited by one or several persons explaining a specific matter to the Ottoman administration.It begins with the following phrase: (...the refuge of justice and the seat of happiness... and the matter entrusted to your exalted threshold), and ends with: (...your humble or poor servant...). Afterthat, the person who made the the petitioner signs the document, mentioning their name at the end. (The task of my book, c 03, No. 02, p.p.p. 258-263-266).

12.The ruling and the order(DISPOSITIO)

It isusually addressed to a specific individual or a group of individuals, and itcontainsclear and preciserulings and instructions on how the order should beexecuted or what actions should betaken, In some cases, the Ottoman Sultan uses the first-person pronoun to refer to himself, Often, the ruling begins with the phrase **"Amdi"**, which can be interpreted as " **now is the time**," " **thus it shall be**," or "therefore.

13.The alert(SANCTIO)

Here, the sender of the message and the decree warns the recipient of the necessity of implementing the ruling without delay or postponement or doing anything that contradicts or conflicts with the ruling. The name of the person sending the message or the messenger who conveys the message is written between parentheses, for example. (The task of my book, c 03, No. 02, p.139).

14.The date (DATTATIO)

At the end of the document, the Ottoman Sultan would record the date of issuance of the decree issued by him, the exact day was not written. Instead, the Hijri month was divided into three parts: at the beginning of the month, at the middle of the month and at the end of the month, Each part generally represented a ten-day period, This may be due to the long period of time required to draft the decree and for the DIWAN to meet in order to make the appropriate decision.

The date of the document or the decree was written using phrases such as (written on…) or (issued on…). In some documents dating back to the 16th century, the name of the Hijrimonthappears in an abbreviated form, often using only the initial letter or syllable of the month. For example: M(Muharram), R(Safar), Ra(Rabi 'al-Awwal)....etc.(Fereydoun Bey, p. 411).

15. The location(LOCUS)

After the Ottoman Sultan wrote the date of a document, he would indicate the place where the decree or document was issued by using the phrase "at the station of," followed by the name of the city where it was written, such as Istanbul, Edirne, Izmir, Aqsaray, etc. In many cases, the name of the city was accompanied by honorific titles or descriptive epithets, such as "protected Istanbul," "guarded Algeria," or "the honored Makkah," reflecting the qualities and titles recognized in these countries. When the Sultan was outside the city walls or on military campaigns, the place of issuance would be noted as "Qalaa camp" or "Piort Castle."(Fereydoun Bey. P. 473).

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CONCLUSION

Based on what has been discussed in this research paper regarding the writing and reading of Ottoman archival documents through the science of diplomatics, we can conclude the following:

Archival materials are primary sources for historical writing, encompassing political, military, economic, and social aspects. They are crucial for all academic work focused on historical studies in general, and Ottoman studies specifically.

The preference of many researchers for archival documents written in Naskh and Ruq'ah scripts because these scripts are easier to read—has resulted in a neglect of studying Ottoman history during the earlier periods when Diwani script was commonly used. Consequently, many scholars have shifted their focus to the later period of Ottoman history due to the greater availability of documents and the ease of reading the scripts from that time.

The Ali Amiri Committee, Ibn al-Amin Mahmud Kemal Inal, and the Cevdet Committee played significant roles in classifying, arranging, indexing, and archiving Ottoman documents over the six centuries preceding the establishment of the state (1299-1923 AD).

The work of an archivist (or document specialist) precedes that of the historian. The archivist describes the document, determines its date and historical context, and verifies its authenticity. Only after this does the historian study the content of the document, validate the information, and construct a well-founded historical narrative based on the archival material.

The science of diplomatics, or the study of documents, is among the most important disciplines that aids historical research. Historians use it to understand, critique, and assess the historical value of sources. The main goal of documentation is to present the document free from deception, forgery, and fabrication, ensuring its accuracy concerning its origin and time period.

The Registers of Important Affairs represent one of the most significant collections in the Ottoman archive, as they contain valuable information about the state and its various provinces, alongside a variety of orders or firmanas issued by the central government in Istanbul.

The extensive use of titles, honorifics, emblems, decorations, and colors in the imperial correspondence of the Ottoman sultans aimed to emphasize their status and power, particularly during the periods of conquests and victories in the 16th and 17th centuries.

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