

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

Deeds of Sultans and Princes

REF N° 2004-02

PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1 SUMMARY

The deeds belonged to the Princes and Sultans who ruled Egypt, starting from the Fatimid era to the end of the Mamluke era. The collection refers to many of the distinguished historical persons in Egypt and Arab countries, thus demonstrating social, economical and political aspects during that era. It consists of four hundred deeds, in total, written on papers and parchments, in roll-form. The longest deed is forty metres long and its width ranges from 34 centimetres to 45 centimetres and they are kept in chemically-treated cardboard cylinders. In fact, this collection is considered as the oldest in the National Archives of Egypt, and does not exist elsewhere in any archives of the world. On this basis alone, the deeds could be considered as an incomparable and unique holding. There are 120 deeds written on parchment, including cultural heritage materials. In view of this, a great care must be given to preserving and maintaining this collection of deeds, which belonged to the Princes and Sultans. Therefore, the National Library and Archives of Egypt strongly nominates this collection of deeds from its own properties of documentary heritage for the Memory of the World Register.

2 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organisation)

The National Library and Archives of Egypt, the Egyptian Ministry of Culture.

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated

The National Library and Archives of Egypt is the official owner and is responsible for all types of documentary materials related to the national heritage and history of Egypt, including the deeds.

The aim of the National Library and Archives of Egypt is to restore, preserve, and maintain its properties of human, cultural, and historical treasures, as well as to make them accessible to researchers from all over the world, through CD-ROMs and the Internet, using the most recent methods of technology, and in cooperation with International organizations, such as UNESCO, which are concerned with the safeguarding the world's culture and documentary heritage, through major cultural projects like Memory of the World.

2.3 Contact person (s)

Prof. Ahmed Morsi, The Chairman of the National Library and Archives of Egypt.

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

Address: Cornish El Nile- Ramlet Boulac, Cairo-Egypt.

P.O.Box: 11938.

Tel.: 2025795149

Fax: 2025765185

E-mail: chairman@darelkotob.org

3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

The Deeds of the Princes and Sultans

The deeds belonged to the Princes and Sultans who ruled Egypt, starting from the Fatimid era to the end of the Mamluke era. The collection refers to many of the distinguished historical persons in Egypt and Arab countries, thus demonstrating social, economical and political aspects during that era. It consists of four hundred deeds, in total, written on papers and parchments, in roll-form. The longest deed is forty metres long and its width ranges from 34 centimetres to 45 centimetres and they are kept

in chemically-treated cardboard cylinders. In fact, this collection is considered as the oldest in the National Archives of Egypt, and does not exist elsewhere in any archives of the world. On this basis alone, the deeds could be considered as an incomparable and unique holding. There are 120 deeds written on parchment, including cultural heritage materials. These deeds reflect the social and political aspects of the Mamluke era, an important and vast period in the history of Egypt, which extended from 979 AD to 1517 AD.

3.2 Description

Longitudinal rolls of parchment, that differ in thickness, since different types of parchment have been used during this era. Every deed consists of a group of drawstrings which differ in length, the drawstrings joined with each other with a special rare type of a thick thread using very small stitches. The width of these deeds range from 34 centimetres to 45 centimetres. The deeds are written in dotless Arabic language and on both sides of the paper.

4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Authenticity

These title deeds are original as they are handwritten, with only one copy of each of them, on parchments and in rare scripts that indicate the era in which they were written.

4.2 World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability

This collection of title deeds are rare, unique, matchless anywhere in the world and are considered a main source of historical studies.

These title deeds deal with the historical period extending from 970 A.D. until 1517 A.D. They cover transactions related to selling, purchasing, endowing and proving ownership and provide the researcher with the information which can't be found in other well-known historical sources. These title deeds contribute to the study of biographies, kinships and lineages of Sultans, Princes and the high-ranking state officials; honorary titles, different occupations and their requirements; methods of appointing employees, their wages, living conditions; the origin of Mamlukes and their national bonds, their divisions and classes; military organization, building industry terms, detailed description of the religious and civil buildings in the ages concerned by this collection, in addition to the social life, military jobs and their titles. This collection of title deeds also deals with measurements, weights, coins and their values, prices of lands and real estates, the types of industries at that time and the trade exchange between countries, etc.

4.3 Criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style

Time: Thus, the above-mentioned facts indicate the extreme importance of these title deeds since they cover a period of time extending over 1000 years and are considered the main source for recording the history of Egypt and Arab countries as well as those countries which had trade, cultural, religious, social and educational ties with Egypt during that period (970 A.D.-1517 A.D.).

Place: These title deeds give a precise description of places in Egypt including streets, hallways, shops, buildings, mosques, churches, learning centres and libraries in addition to a precise description of the places of worship in Syria and Palestine.

Persons: This collection of title deeds deal with the rulers of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Ottoman Sultans, the high-ranking officials in all fields including governors, judges, lawmen, merchants, officers of different ranks, teachers, craftsmen, architects in addition to the most distinguished female personalities and their achievements at that time.

Subject and Theme: This collection of title deeds deal with subjects of trade, living conditions prevalent at that time, education, libraries, the army, military ranks, precise description of architecture and building materials used at that time and a precise description of ornamental inscriptions in the places of worship including mosques, churches, monasteries and synagogues.

Form and Style: These title deeds take the form of rolls of parchment of different lengths, thicknesses, and widths in scrolls. The length of these title deeds ranges from 1.30m, as the title deed of Saad Eddin ibn Mohamed ibn Abdullah, which was written on 19th Shaaban, 694 Hejira corresponding to 22nd October, 1154 A.D., to 38m as the title deed of Sultan Al-Ashraf Shaaban which was recorded on 3rd Jumada Al-Akhera, 777 Hejira corresponding to 30th October, 1375 A.D.

As for the **length** of scrolls, it ranges from 50cm, as in the title deed of Al-Tameri Mohamed ibn Al-Saifi, which was written on 11th Shaaban, 911 Hejira corresponding to 5th January, 1506 A.D. to 82cm as the title deed of Al-Saifi Stigha ibn Abdullah Al-Tabaari which was written on 20th Jumada Al-Akhera, 833 Hejira corresponding to 15th March, 1430 A.D.

As for **width**, it ranges from 28cm as the title deed of Al-Naseri Mohamed ibn Al-Najmi ibn Bedir Al-Abbasi, which was written down on 20th Jumada Al-Akhera, 765 Hejira corresponding to 26 March, 1364 A.D. to 53cm as the title deed of king Al-Muzafar Beibars Al-Mansouri which was written down on 20th Shawal, 708 Hejira corresponding to 4th April, 1308 A.D.

These title deeds are in the form of folded scrolls and are preserved in cylindrical boxes made according to the length and width of each title deed.

As for **style**, they are handwritten in Arabic; dotted, undotted or in *Thuluth* script, using many types of ink which indicate the period of ink industry over 1000 years and they include several terms in different sciences including social, economic, agricultural and educational sciences.

As for **handwriting**, they include many types of handwriting such as the handwriting that has no stops between lines or pauses between phrases, and so is difficult to read.

These title deeds of Princes and Sultans are considered a chief source for researchers and scholars in the fields of archives, history and monuments since these deeds enable them to study the external characteristics of the title deed including the quality of parchment, inks, seals and the style of producing them. As for the internal characteristics, they indicate the styles in which these title deeds were recorded. As for the subjects of these title deeds, a detailed comprehensive statement is provided below.

Other factors

Historic and Monumental

1- This collection of title deeds give precise description of a number of Islamic, Coptic and Roman architectural monuments.

As for the Islamic monuments, this collection precisely describes the big mosques, small mosques (*Zawayea*, plural of *Zaweya*) and domes.

As for the Coptic monuments, some title deeds include information about monasteries, Churches and graveyards, mentioning their names, locations, limits and the endowments of monks and resident pastors in these monasteries such as Tur Sinai Monastery and Al-Shubak Monastery are mentioned in some title deeds among which is a title deed of Sultan Al-Ashraf Shaaban which was recorded on 3th Jumada Al-Akhera 777 Hejira corresponding to 30th October 1375 A.D.

As for Roman monuments, this collection of title deeds includes information about ruined Roman buildings, fully-built churches and walls such as the monuments in the village of Antakia which was one of the villages endowed by Sultan Abu Al-Mahasen in the title deed written on 6th Rajab 760 Hejira corresponding to 4th June 1358 A.D.

*These title deeds also deal with the following monuments:

- Educational monuments such as the pre-elementary schools (*katateeb*, plural of *Kotab*), the aim of which was to teach children the principles of reading and writing.

- The social monuments such as the hospitals (*bemarestanat,plural of bemarestan*), baths (*hammat,plural of hammam*) and the public fountains (*Al-Asbela, plural of Sabeel*).
- Military monuments such as forts, towers, castles and fences.

2-This collection deals with the details of Ottoman architecture and ornamental inscriptions as they contain thousands of architectural terms of building materials such as stones, marble, wood, metals, plaster,etc.

3-This collection also mentions the current coins and species used by people for selling and purchasing at that time.They are considered as a rich material for recording these coins and species,their weights, shapes, values and the date of their mintage.

4-They also contain thousands of the judges' signs since each judge had a distinct sign similar to the official seal,containing phrases of praise to Allah.Studying these signs shows us one of the arts of ornamentation and its form.

Geographic

This collection acquaints us with thousands of places by their names,locations and nature in minute detail,in a way that greatly contributes to highlighting a huge scientific,geographical work to describe Egypt in the Ottoman era,helping researchers to get full plans of cities and to record the geography of countries.

Religious and Linguistic

1-This collection contains several examples of Ottoman vocabulary and obsolete linguistic forms.

2-The texts of this collection include some linguistic and grammatical mistakes that open the door for the linguistcian to evaluate the conditions of language in the Ottoman era.

3-This collection of title deeds acquaints us with the current and common titles in the different eras.

4-This collection immortalizes the names of distinguished personalities of Princes, judges,notaries public and others.Thus it allows researchers to deal with their biographies and to verify them fully.

5-This collection includes numerous introductory and concluding protocols that are replete with religious words and phrases.

6-This collection includes numerous documentations and certifications that really define which school of the four Islamic schools was prevalent and followed during that era.

Calligraphic

1-This collection includes numerous calligraphic styles such as the *Thuluth, Naskh*,signature scripts.

2-This collection includes different types of penmanship such as the one that has no stops or pauses between the sentences of the whole text.

Legal

1-This collection has all the elements of legal management including:

- Defining the personality of the legal actor in detail.
- Stating the eligibility of the managers and their witnesses.
- Describing what is under management.
- Fixing the amount of money spent in management.

- The proper legal form that safeguards the rights of all managers.
- Knowing the witnesses and the date.

2-This collection has a special characteristic since a part of the scroll's width was left as a right margin without writing anything on it, while the left side was fully written to prevent any inclusion or addition that might expose the text to forgery.

Economic

1-This collection includes many title deeds recorded on parchments through which the researcher can define the nature and quality of the leather used at that time.

2-It has provided information on the main inks used at that time and the materials these inks were made of.

3-It includes paragraphs dealing with economic aspects such as trade transactions, wages of employees, the prices of some commodities and the amount of tribute levied on the non-Muslims. So the researcher can learn about the different economic aspects at that time including the prices of land, real estates, etc.

4-This collection includes many forms of management such as endowment, selling, exchanges and gifts.

5-It shows us the current weights and measures used at that time, and so it can enrich the research work in various fields.

Finally, this collection provides benefits in historical, archaeological, geographical, social, political, religious, economic, linguistic and calligraphic studies as it is considered a genuine, rich source for these studies.

**** NB:** The word “**deeds**” in the previous part of our Nomination Form refers to the “**Title Deeds**” of the Princes and Sultans who ruled Egypt from the Fatimid era up to the end of the Mamluke era. This is to clear any misunderstanding that might arise.

4.4 Issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management

There are issues of rarity as the deeds are considered to be the main source for researchers and scholars in the field of deeds and history. The archival aspects of the deeds are represented in their physical characteristics such as the parchment, inks, seals and the methods of producing the deeds.

Regarding the internal characteristics, we can refer to the style of writing used in producing the deeds. As for the historical aspect, the deeds are considered the main source to study the history of this era and all its economical, social and political aspects. Here, we can add that the deeds are considered the main source for the researchers who study Islamic, Coptic and Roman monuments, as the deeds include information and descriptions of these monuments.

5 LEGAL INFORMATION

5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

The owner is The National Library and Archives, The Ministry of Culture, Arab Republic of Egypt.
Address: Address: Cornish El Nile- Ramlet Boulac, Cairo-Egypt.
P.O.Box: 11938.

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)
The Custodian is the owner.(shown above).

5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership

General ownership of the state.

(b) Accessibility

According to the manual indexes and instructions of the National Library and Archives of Egypt for viewing and photocopying, and according to the topic of research or study of the beneficiary.

(c) Copyright status

Researchers and scholars are allowed to publish them according to the regulations and instructions related to study and research.

(d) Responsible administration

The deeds are kept at the National Library and Archives of Egypt's own Stores and Preservation Department, in a separate area allocated to preserving deeds due to their nature and significance.

(e) Other factors

These deeds are preserved in an enclosed place, which is detrimental to their physical condition, with respect to humidity and temperature controls.

6 MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 There is a management plan for legal deeds.

Summary of the plan:

There are special procedures that The National Library and Archives of Egypt impose to control the management of its documentary heritage, such as the following:

An application should be submitted by the researcher to the person in charge at the research hall of The National Library and Archives of Egypt, including his personal data, the subject of the research and its purpose. The approval of a scientific authority concerned of the research should be attached to the application, to get the approval of the Scientific Committee of the National Library and Archives of Egypt, and the approval of the National Security of Egypt.

The National Library and Archives of Egypt forbids access to defective deeds and those in need of restoration. And if the deed is in a proper condition, only a part of it can be photocopied.

7 CONSULTATION

(a) The owner of the heritage:

The Egyptian National Archives is the exclusive owner of the documentary heritage according to the relevant laws and regulations.

(b) The Custodian:

The Egyptian National Archives.

(c) The national or regional Memory of the World committee:

ARBICA (The Arab Regional Branch of The International Council On Archives).

Part B- Subsidiary Information

These include deeds of historical significance such as the deed of the fatimid Caliph Al-Fa'ez al-Badr Ibn Ruzeiq, which is the oldest of the three deeds of the fatimid era (979 A.D. – 1171 A.D.), it is 2.65 cm in length X37cm in width. There is also the deed of Sultan Hassan, which refers to 760h, corresponding to 1360 A.D, it is 34cm in length X32cm in width, and the length of the drawer containing it is about 68cm. It is considered one of the longest deeds at the National Archives of Egypt.

8- Assessment of Risk:

8.1. These deeds are written on very rare, and old parchments which have been exposed to different kinds of damage (chemical and biological damage) that make them appear dusty, dirty, unreadable and decayed, due to micro-organisms, oxidation and acidity. Moreover, inobservance of temperature and humidity controls as well as exposure to atmospheric contaminants has badly affected the papers of the deeds, making it difficult to handle or open some of them for viewing.

Safeguarding this documentary heritage is considered one of the most important missions in preserving the cultural heritage that records the history of the nation and represents the memory of the nation. That is why we selected the deeds for the Memory of the world Register to get the necessary care and maintenance they need and deserve under the supervision of an international specialized organization, that can offer the required financial support and expertise to preserve them by treating, restoring and making them accessible in paper or electronically.

9- Assessment of Preservation:

9.1. As mentioned before in 3/2, 4/1, 4/2 and 4/3. the deeds are written on rare parchments in long rolls that differ in length and shape. They are kept in cylindrical boxes made of chemically-treated carton, according to their length and shape. These boxes are kept on open metal shelves in a separate room which doesn't meet the internationally-recognized specifications for preservation and maintenance, since it costs much more than the National Archives' budget can afford for this purpose.

These deeds are lodged at the Egypt National Archives as it is the exclusive authority in Egypt concerned with holding and preserving all Egyptian documentary heritage. They are nominally lodged by the name of Prof. Dr. Mohammed Saber Arab, in his capacity as the Head of the Egyptian National Archives Sector, at the National Library and Archives of Egypt.

PART C - LODGEMENT

This nomination is lodged by:

(Please print name) **Dr. Mohammed Saber Arab**
Head of The National Archives Sector
At The National Library and Archives of Egypt

(Signature)..... (Date) 03/04/2004