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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *History and Anthropology***Mecca Al-Mukarramah and its development during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566 CE): An analytical study based on the Ottoman Daftar al-Mahāmm**Ehab Mohammad Zahir^{1*} & Anas Nayef Al-Omouh¹¹Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Al al-Bayt University, Jordan*Correspondence: ehabzahir@aabu.edu.jo**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to demonstrate that the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566 CE) marked a decisive shift in Mecca's governance from symbolic suzerainty to a systematized religio-imperial administration. Drawing on Ottoman archival sources, particularly the Daftar al-Mahāmm (Registers of Imperial Decrees), it reconstructs how Mecca was integrated into the Ottoman administrative framework through decrees regulating pilgrimage logistics, fiscal endowments, and Sharifian authority. The findings reveal Suleiman's interventions in curbing corruption among Egyptian pilgrimage commanders, financing major urban projects such as the 'Ayn 'Arafah water canal and public housing, and standardizing the judiciary to ensure accountability. These reforms transformed the Hijaz from a peripheral sanctuary into a governed province, balancing Ottoman central control with local elites. The study concludes that this structured governance reinforced the Sultan's legitimacy as Khādim al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn and established a foundational model for uniting religious authority with bureaucratic centralization in early modern Islamic rule.

KEYWORDS: administrative history, Mecca Al-Mukarramah, Ottoman Archives, Ottoman Empire, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent

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Introduction

This study examines the history of Makkah al-Mukarramah in the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566 CE) and shows how the city grew after the Ottoman Empire conquered Egypt in 1517. This study investigates the economic, urban, and social conditions in Makkah and the way in which the Sultan tried to enact Ottoman authority in the Hijaz by “serving the Two Holy Mosques” (Khidmat al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn) and involvement in public life. The present study examines the recent productive period of Makkah’s administration, characterized by significant infrastructure improvements, water supply, health, education, and the regulation of judicial and administrative systems, including Jeddah. The Ottoman Empire underwent a number of hardships, including corruption and abuse by the officials and commanders of the pilgrimage, which forced the Sultan and Dīwān al-Humayūn to intervene directly in order to restore order and justice. These changes are described in depth in archives, revealing Ottoman governance systems and the relationship between religious, political and economic administration in a city of particular significance. The purpose of this research is to uncover and make an academic account of the history of Makkah al-Mukarramah from 1520 to 1566 CE through the lenses of official Ottoman documents. It will try to clarify the administrative and fiscal aspects that determined the connection between the Ottoman Sultan and Sharif of Makkah, while at the same time, recording urban development, judicial systems, pilgrim conditions, and the place of Hijaz in the Ottoman hierarchy changes. Also, the study will try to show how Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent was instrumental in safeguarding the Two Holy Mosques and in the allocation of state resources for their stability and service to pilgrims, and thus, increase the academic comprehension of the Ottoman-era Hijaz history by relying on original documentation instead of later narrative histories.

Literature Review

In 1517 CE, after Sultan Selim I had conquered Egypt, the Hijaz together with Makkah al-Mukarramah was put under Ottoman rule. The Sharif of Makkah, Barakat ibn Muhammad ibn Barakat, asked his son Abu Numayy to take the keys of the two mosques to Cairo as a sign of loyalty and allegiance to the Ottomans. Makkah and Madinah were thus promptly linked to the Ottoman Province of Egypt administratively which managed their religious and financial affairs (Numan, 2006: 33). In the year 960 of the Islamic calendar (1554 AD), Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent wrote a letter to Sharif Abu Numayy that described Makkah’s administrative functions and the necessity of obeying Ottoman law. The decree stipulated consultations with the Emir on governance issues and emphasized the point that the Sultan was the ultimate authority in appointing the Emir (Fereydun Bey: 613-614). Moreover, the letter listed among the duties keeping peace, securing the pilgrims, monitoring paths and water stations, and administering justice according to Sharia and state law.

The Sultan emphasized continuity with earlier practices while demanding obedience from all residents. Emir Abu Numayy was to uphold justice and goodwill toward all social groups—scholars, nobles, and tribes—and be respected as the Sultan’s representative, while residents were urged to pray for the Empire’s prosperity (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 376, p. 1). The decree, addressed to the Governor of Egypt, confirmed Makkah’s subordination to the Egyptian Province. Under Sharif Ahmad ibn Abu Numayy, Makkah became a district (Liwa’) under Egypt, and later the districts of Makkah and Jeddah were attached to the Province of Habasha, itself under Egyptian authority (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 249). To maintain harmony, Sultan Suleiman ordered Ali Pasha, Governor of Egypt, to cooperate with the Sharifs and avoid interference, and to complete shipbuilding projects at the Egyptian shipyard to secure Red Sea pilgrimage routes from Yemen, India, Oman, Bahrain, and other regions (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 249).

The Sharif of Makkah was appointed by the Sultan through coordination among the Governors of Egypt and Damascus and the Qadi of Makkah. The finances were managed by the Egyptian governor who, every year, sent the Imperial Purse (al-Surra al-Sultaniyya) to pay for mosques, their staff, and upkeep, at the same time, the Islamic endowments (awqāf) of Egypt were used to support the Holy Makkah’s religious and educational institutions, thus, strengthening the commercial links between the two areas (Numan, 2006: 33). Sultan Suleiman ruled from 1520 to 1566 CE and although he was able to keep the peace and order by developing the cities and organizing the pilgrimages, the sanctity of Makkah was still preserved. The Ottoman Empire’s power was recognized by Sultan Selim I’s title Khādīm al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn (Kashmiri, 2018: 93, 104). It is stated in naval records that in the year 1526 CE, Admiral Suleiman al-Ra’is was leading 400 soldiers

from Jeddah to Yemen under Ibrahim Pasha (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., p. 1).

The improvement of the economy of Makkah became a pressing necessity during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. The turmoil that struck the city's economy was mainly caused by the Egyptian Emirs of the Pilgrimage (Umara' al-Ḥajj), who mismanaged grain supplies transported from Egypt for their personal use. Their actions led to conflicts with merchants, camel drivers, and the Sharifs, disrupting both trade and pilgrimage routes (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., pp. 249–250). These Emirs exploited merchants by imposing unfair terms, underpaying transporters, and manipulating grain weights, resulting in severe food shortages in Makkah and Madinah. To counter this, Sultan Suleiman restored the Sharif's authority, limited the Emirs' jurisdiction to pilgrimage affairs only, and ordered investigations into their misconduct. Meanwhile, port officials worsened the crisis through illegal fees, confiscations, and bribery, delaying shipments and contributing to famine. Sultan Suleiman's decrees of 959 AH / 1552 CE prohibited coercion, enforced accountability, and instructed the Emir of Jeddah to report corruption directly (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., pp. 249–250). The Ports of Makkah.

Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent gave a royal order that the Port of Jeddah would be under Makkah's management. His words were: "You are not going to be charged anything at all; the khuṭbah and sikkah are ours, but the bandar will be under the control of Sharif Barakat." This order not only made Makkah the legal owner but also recognized Ottoman rule by means of the khuṭbah and sikkah. Jeddah was during this time engaged in active maritime trade with the frequent attendance of Indian ships, some giving the inspection a miss even though they were technically under the legal 'ushr. The Indian trader Muḥtaram Khūn brought in high-end textiles from his home country, but he did not give the full tithe. Sultans' treasury shipments were thoroughly examined by the Treasury Emir, guardian, scribe, and inspector. At the same time, however, the investigation uncovered Muḥtaram Khūn's goods that had been irregularly taxed, not appraised or taxed according to the official standards (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., p. 229). The provision of security and the collection of taxes under Sharif Barakat, the Emir of Makkah, illustrate the complex balance between governance and exploitation during his tenure. He issued security permits to pilgrims, including members of the Banu Jabr family, authorizing fifty armed guards with muskets for protection (Bayat, 2011: 16). However, reports emerged that coastal houses were being used for looting ships, prompting the Sharif to demolish high-risk buildings—some rented for up to 500 gold pieces annually—and preserve only the safer ones (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., pp. 3–4). He imposed a tax of one ashrafi per camel entering Makkah and half an ashrafi on his own camels, leaving owners with only two and a half ashrafis per load. In Jeddah, a Makkah-run warehouse storing weapons and Indian goods faced frequent theft and embezzlement (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., pp. 4–5). Moreover, Indian traders suffered harassment from Sharifian officials who demanded bribes and unfairly reduced prices, severely diminishing merchant profits (Topkapi Palace Archives: 5–6). The Financial Resources Allocated by Sultan Suleiman to The Emir of Makkah. Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, during his reign, kept the economic resources that were allotted to the Sharif of Makkah secure from interferences of other powers such as the Ottoman governors in Egypt. This was a statement of the Sultan's determination to allow the Sharif to handle the Holy Sanctum (al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf), control pilgrimage matters, and guarantee pilgrims' safety and welfare (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., p. 225).

The following table presents the financial resources allocated by the Ottoman state to Emir Barakat, the Sharif of Makkah, to support his governance of the city (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., pp. 7, 225, 256). (Insert Table 1 here)

Table 1. Financial Resources Allocated by Sultan Suleiman to the Emir of Makkah

No.	Financial Resource	Amount (in Gold Liras)
1	Fixed salary for the Emir of Makkah	1,000
2	Tax collected from the Emir of Yanbu'	7,000
3	Date tax	33,000
4	Share of revenues from the Port of Jeddah	5,000

Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent's financial allocations, depicted in Table 1, were the fixed salary of 1,000 gold liras and revenues from Yanbu' and Jeddah taxes, among others. The city's status as a political and religious

center in the Ottoman Empire was thus confirmed. The administration in the region was steady, and the Emir was granted power over both civil and religious matters. The origin of the income was varied; it was founded on agriculture, trade, and port taxes, exactly the same as the Hijaz, where the date tax (33,000 gold liras) was the biggest agricultural revenue and Jeddah's port share (5,000 gold liras) was showing its economic power. All in all, the agreements represent an Ottoman financial policy that was neutral, strengthening the Sharifian rule, and at the same time, maintaining a steady revenue stream to the imperial treasury. The Makkah al-Mukarramah development projects were a further example of Sultan Suleiman's strategic approach to urban and administrative reform. The Ottoman state decided to prioritize improving the supply of water in Makkah, due to its enormous religious and strategic importance. A major canal project was initiated with a budget of 298,200 paras, under the supervision of superintendent Mustafa, who employed two skilled Janissaries to oversee canal operations (Al-Ḥanafī, 1957, p. 284). Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent personally contributed more than 1,000 florins daily to sustain Makkah's water needs and appointed Muṣliḥ al-Dīn as nāẓir al-mā' (water superintendent) to ensure fair distribution of water resources without receiving any salary from the state treasury (Al-Ḥanafī, 1957, p. 284).

Orders were issued to the Bekler Bey of Egypt and the defterdār to construct a canal linking Mount 'Arafāt to Makkah, reducing the city's reliance on rainwater (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register nos. 202, 213). Sultan Suleiman also restored the Zamzam Well in 933 AH / 1526 CE, adorning it with the inscription "The Victorious King, Suleiman ibn 'Uthmān" (Al-Jazīrī, 1983: 103). When severe drought struck in 940 AH / 1533 CE, the Sultan ordered defterdār Ibrahim to clean and deepen the 'Ayn 'Arafah canal and drill new wells in al-Misfalah and al-Zāhir (Al-Quṭbī, 1983: 112). The Imperial Council sent five expert engineers from Istanbul and mobilized masons and materials from Egypt and Syria to support construction (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 545). Master mason Nasr al-Dīn, Aleppo was appointed chief overseer to ensure efficiency and coordinate guilds and craftsmen. The Council banned the export of skilled labor to private projects and ordered the Egyptian and Syrian authorities to provide materials such as stone, gypsum, and timber in due course (Daftar al-Mamiyyah:603). Together, these measures reflect the Ottoman commitment to securing a reliable supply of water to Makkah in order to improve living conditions for pilgrims and residents alike.

School construction in Makkah was a reflection of the general attention paid to religious and educational matters by the Ottoman Empire. Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent ordered the Sharif of Makkah to complete the construction of madrasahs for students of the Islamic sciences, which formed an essential part of the spiritual identity of the city (Daftar al-Maḥmiyyah: 603). Ibrahim, the supervisor of the water canal project, was also tasked with overseeing this construction, linking educational progress to urban development. The Sultan financed the new madrasahs and authorized the exchange of a Makkah endowment with one in Egypt to support the initiative, appointing Qāsim, Emir of Jeddah, as supervisor. The selected site near the Sacred Mosque included Dār 'Aṭīyyah, an endowment owned by Khātūnah Fāṭimah of Egypt, who exchanged it for her ancestral village, Judayyah (Daftar al-Maḥmiyyah: 197). The Imperial Council approved the exchange on condition that the new property remain perpetually endowed, issuing an official ḥujjah shar'īyyah to formalize the agreement (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 197). Construction of Housing for The Poor.

In order to help poor pilgrims, the Ottoman state provided housing for them in Makkah al-Mukarramah which was seen as an attempt to stop overcrowding and maintain the purity of the Holy Sanctuary (al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf). A royal command was enacted for the building of the houses on the estate acquired by Sultan Suleiman's father, a move that was part of the general social welfare (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 368). The Qadi of Makkah mentioned that destitute pilgrims were taking refuge in the Holy Mosque and causing disturbances during prayer, thus the Imperial Council made a decision to allow the building of houses while also enforcing a very strict protection of the Sanctuary's sanctity (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 368). The Turkish government, through its initiatives that included water, education, and housing, revealed its determination not only to make Makkah a better place to live but also to keep up the dignity of the pilgrims (Ḍuyūf al-Raḥmān) and the holiness of the Sacred Mosque. Among the most important religious conservation projects the Ottoman Empire did was the reconstruction of holy locations and shrines in Makkah. Since many hallowed sites had fallen to ruin as a result of extended neglect, the Empire gave their restoration top priority in order to preserve the city's spiritual past. Among other locations, the Maqām of Sharif al-Ḥamzah needed immediate repair in 183. Instead of waiting for a cover from Istanbul, Emir of Makkah Barakat ordered a new

one, masterfully made – locally. The Emir of Makkah also renovated the surroundings, including the Maqām al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Maqām of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) and the tomb of Sharif al-Khalīfah ‘Uthmān all of which were severely damaged structurally (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 368, pp. 7–8).

The Ottoman administration in Makkah al-Mukarramah faced the challenge of maintaining justice, security, and general stability in this spiritually blessed but politically turbulent city. The ruler of Makkah, Sharif Barakat, was reported to have grabbed a farm from an Ottoman citizen named Zaytūn. This farm, worth 31 units, was partially paid for after 200 gold pieces were received, but the remaining price was withheld, effectively amounting to confiscation (Topkapi Palace Archives, no date, pp. 7–8). At this time, Bedouin attacks caused significant pillaging and abduction incidents, leading citizens to pleas for the construction of a tower and garrisons at ‘Arafāt to defend the city from marauders (Topkapi Palace Archives, no date, pp. 7–8). In response, the rulers of Makkah fortified Jeddah by building a major fortress on the coast with towers, cannons, and warehouses. The Emir oversaw tax collection and port security, ensuring the protection of trade and maritime routes connecting India, Yemen, and East Africa (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., pp. 7–8). The Supervisory and Security Role of the Emir of Makkah.

Sharif Ḥasan, the Emir of Makkah, told Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent that the Hajj had been peaceful and he had handover his duty to protect the holy places, to make pilgrims’ safety, and to organize the rituals and visits to the Prophet’s Mosque (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 194). He also informed the case of the Madinah Governor who had taken a private house and had expelled its owner. The Imperial Council decided to remove the governor, to return the property, and to arrange alternative accommodation (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 335). As a gesture of goodwill towards the Sharif’s honesty, the Council passed a resolution commending his watchfulness and reiterating that the violation of private property would not be allowed, no matter who the person was (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 335). The Ottoman steps for managing the hajj to Makkah show the Empire’s great devotion to making sure pilgrims going to the Holy Cities were safe and well. Apart from supplying food, tents, and rations, the Ottoman state compensated local tribes for their defense of pilgrim caravans traveling along the roads. Originally fifty Sabā’iyya cavalymen made up the security escort, but this number was eventually increased to fend off Bedouin attacks and protect the Hajj seasons (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 75). Organizing Hajj operations inside the Sacred Mosque (al-Ḥaram al-Makkī al-Sharīf) also received administrative focus. Though this quantity proved inadequate, leaving sections of the sanctuary dimly lit, Egypt gave about fifty tons of wax annually for the Ka‘bah’s lighting as well as the four madhhab shrines. With 212 of them positioned near the Ka‘bah—102 of which burned until dawn—historical documents list 387 total lamps. Poor oil quality led to insufficient illumination, which spurred several requests for better supplies (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register nos. 46–47).

In reaction, the water canal director requested 150 more quintals of oil. Upon the recommendation of the Imperial Council, Sultan Suleiman ordered the Bekler Bey of Egypt to send yearly shipments of tengiant candelabras, six quintals of beeswax candles, and 150 containers of virgin olive oil. These measures reflected the continuous commitment of the Empire to improving the conditions of worship and maintaining the sanctity and accessibility of the Holy Mosque (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register nos. 46–47).

The cleanliness and washhouse arrangement of the Sacred Mosque of Makkah (al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf) reflect the sincerity of the Ottoman government in ensuring cleanliness and holyness at Islam’s holy site. It was noted that there was a washhouse nearby the Zamzam. Well had become infected with fecal material, polluting the sacred space and allowing entry without proper purification. The Qadi responded by ordering the demolition of the defiled building and by proposing new washhouses in an area of non-sacredness to protect the sanctity of the mosque. It was a royal decree signed by the Imperial Council (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 76) to emphasis the importance of hygiene, reverence, and proper rituals in the Holy Mosque.

The Ottoman administration was obsessed with accessing both the inner and outer borders of trade and pilgrimage. The state put great effort into maintaining safe passages for merchants and pilgrims coming and going from Makkah. Prior to the Ottoman expansion, the Portuguese had controlled the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, attacked Indian merchant vessels and disrupted trade (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 122). When the Hijaz entered the Ottoman Empire, the Emir of Makkah transmitted these maritime threats to the Imperial Council, and the Empire took direct responsibility for keeping both the sea and landways secure.

This comprehensive system restored regional stability, revived merchants and made the Holy Cities safer for pilgrims. To secure the sea routes, the Ottomans appointed Şaffar as naval commander and ordered the Bekler Bey of Egypt to supply ten warships with crews (including prisoner rowers), twenty-five musketeers and twenty-five archers, and commanded the Bekler Bey of Yemen to supply additional resources (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 122).

On land, the Basra–Makkah route was closed due to Bedouin raids and to prevent conflict with the Safavid state. Iranian and Iraqī pilgrims were required to join the safer Syrian caravans (Ḥajj al-Shām). Despite repeated orders from the Imperial Council, some groups continued using the direct route and suffered tribal attacks, prompting the Ottomans to reinforce the closure through the Sharif of Makkah and regional governors (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 355). The renewal of the Kiswa of the Holy Ka‘bah was one of the Ottoman Empire’s most sacred duties, symbolizing the Sultan’s devotion to preserving the sanctity of the Sacred Mosque (al-Masjid al-Ḥarām). Viewed as a spiritual obligation of the Khādim al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn (Servant of the Two Holy Sanctuaries), the Kiswa—its fabric, embroidery, and structure—was periodically replaced using the finest materials and expert craftsmanship from across the Empire (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 320). This renewal maintained the Ka‘bah’s dignity and affirmed the Sultan’s religious authority throughout the Islamic world.

The Bekler Bey of Egypt, ‘Alī Pasha, presided over the preparation, transport, and installation of the Kiswa, thus making sure that it was befittingly placed as per the Holy Ka‘bah’s (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register nos. 113–114) reverence. To help the Two Holy Mosques, the Ottoman Empire set up a large network of awqāf (religious endowments) which provided the Hajj and its auxiliary services with the financial support (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register nos. 113–114). The Khān al-Qabbān waqf in Ḥimş was subject to some violations that included imposing illegal taxes and changing shops into coffeehouses; the Imperial Council denounced these as bid‘a and revived the waqf’s legal standing (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register nos. 113–114). The daftardar of al-Shām, ‘Abd al-Karīm, was asked to get the registers from Aleppo for examination. Reforms changed the position of nadhārah (superintendency) to tawliyyah (trusteeship) thus increasing the control over the funds and the examinations of the records of the trustee Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn guaranteed the proper allocation of the money (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 307).

The surra, a yearly financial grant provided by the Ottoman Empire, held great significance in supporting the people of the Two Holy Mosques and the tribes responsible for securing the pilgrimage routes from Damascus to the Ḥaramayn. The Emir of Makkah, the Shaykh of the Haram, the Amīn al-Surra, and the Qadi of Makkah oversaw its distribution. Official records noted beneficiaries, and although the addition of new recipients was greatly limited, some people appealed directly to the Dīwān al-Humayūn. In answer, the Imperial Council directed the Qadi to check applicants’ eligibility before release, hence guaranteeing fairness and openness in handling these funds (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 396). Challenges Confronting the Ottoman Administration in Managing the Affairs of the Ḥaramayn and the Pilgrimage. The Qadi of Makkah’s reports to the Imperial Council with detailed accounts of financial and logistical requirements for sanitation and comfort can be found in the archives (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 368).

Overcrowding during the Hajj period in the Sacred Mosque required proper management in order to keep the place holy and clean. One of the main issues was the ordinance that was placed near the mosque, which not only annoyed the pilgrims but also disturbed the religious atmosphere of the place. New toilets were erected outside the mosque, but the Qadi still insisted on closing the latrine and enlarging the cleaning area. The Imperial Council not only gave its approval but also budgeted to maintain cleanliness and ward off desecration (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 368). In addition, the Council had to consider the dangers on the pilgrimage routes and created a safe travel guarantee by investigating along the Syrian and Egyptian caravan paths where the pits had been dug and applying al-shar‘ al-sharīf so that no obstructions occurred and pilgrims would be safe (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Register no. 549).

The judiciary in Makkah under the Ottomans was rooted in an institutionalized system tasked with the implementation of Sharia as the basis for justice and rights of citizens. The Sharia courts, which adjudicated both civil and criminal matters, were open to the public and individuals could bring complaints against government officials. In cases where the issue could not be settled locally, petitioners had the right to appeal down to the Imperial Council (Dīwān al-Humayūn) for further judgment (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Mīhimmah Register

no. 1). The Supreme Court in Makkah under the Hanafi Qadi was supplemented by de facto independent tribunals for the Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali madhahib. The state mandated the recording of all cases and decisions, and a regulation was passed requiring the magistrates to present the case logs to the Supreme Court every three months so there would be no records lost (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Mīhimmah Register no. 1). Despite the existence of this system, Sharif Barakat meddled in the appointments of judges and installed loyalists over qualified scholars.

This move led to Meccan jurists' discontent (Bayat, 2011: 7). In turn, the Ottoman Empire sent al-Sayyid Hasan, the Qadi of Aleppo to restore judicial order who was famous for his fairness and strict observance of Sharia (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Mīhimmah Register no. 1). Sultan Suleiman commanded Qadi Hasan to fight against injustice, corruption, and the like in the Holy Mosque, and to scrutinize the officials of the Egyptian pilgrimage who had been taking merchants' money and wasting waqf funds. He was also given the job of controlling the subashis and Meccan nobles who were accused of taking advantage of the revenue collection in Jeddah (Topkapi Palace Archives, n.d., Mīhimmah Register no. 148). The Sultan mandated the new Qadi to stay in the office, quickly settle conflicts, and directly notify Istanbul about any violations if the Sharifs did not intervene. The royal order underlined honesty, justness, and openness in the legal and administrative matters to safeguard justice and stability in the Hijaz.

Materials and Methods

The study employs a historical-documentary research design as its primary method, to scrutinize and interpret Ottoman archives about the development of Makkah al-Mukarramah under Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566 CE). The historical method was chosen for its effectiveness in going back to the Past and reconstructing the phenomena of administration, economy, and society by means of original and verifiable documents as the proof. The present inquiry utilizes major registers (daftars) from the Topkapi Palace Archives in Istanbul, which have been printed in *Al-Bilād al-'Arabiyyah fī al-Wathā'iq al-'Uthmāniyyah* by Fāḍil Bayāt, as a basis for the analysis. These vital primary documents, belonging to the Ottoman Imperial Council (Dīwān al-Humayūn), hold more than 2000 decrees, which were issued to different provinces during the period of 961–1333 AH (1553–1905 CE) (Iqtāsh, 1996: 43). They serve as the much-needed proof for the re-establishment of the connection between the Sharif of Makkah and the Ottoman Empire and also for the examination of Makkah's political, economic, and cultural growth in this period.

Representative samples of the original Ottoman decrees examined in this study are reproduced in Appendix A to illustrate the script, format, and administrative structure of the *Daftar al-Maḥāmm* and *Daftar Mīhimmah* used in the analysis.

All files were subjected to source criticism for authenticity, provenance, and consistency with chronicles (for instance, *al-Ḥanafī*, *al-Jazīrī*, *al-'Iṣāmī*) verification. The political and temporal context of each decree was examined the political and temporal context of each decree to uncover patterns of administration, fiscal policy, and urban growth. The cross-reference of the registers not only confirmed these themes, but was organized into governance, economy, pilgrimage, and infrastructure. The results were then compiled using a comparison of historiographical sources with the published archives (Bayat, 2011; Numan, 2006; Kashmr, 2018), in order to see similarities and differences between Ottoman policy and modern historical interpretations. This methodological triangulation ensures academic rigor, reliability of inference, and an objective analysis of the development of Mecca under Ottoman rule.

Results

After 1517 CE he entered the Empire. Mecca came under Ottoman authority with a carefully planned institutional reorganization. In Ottoman documents, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and Sharif Abu Numayy maintained a form of bipartite sovereignty – the Sultan had political and financial power, while the Sharif was guardian of the Holy City. Earlier in 961 AH / 1554 CE, Letters of 961 AH / 1554 CE linked Mecca with the Ottoman Province of Egypt under the command of the Beylerbey, which maintained revenues and the annual *urra*. This meant centralized control and preserving local autonomy, and safeguarding the religious legitimacy of the Sharif within the Ottoman administrative sphere. To maintain trade fairness and stability, the Ottoman Empire was doing its best to regulate the economy and regulate markets in Makkah. A number of papers in

archive records speak of disputes with Egyptian Umara al-ajj and Meccan merchants over grain imports and taxation. In 959 AH/ 1552 CE and 961 AH/ 1554 CE Emperor Suleiman also prohibited the collection of forced taxes and reinvigorated the Sharif's authority to control the markets independently, showing that Sultan Suleiman committed to restoring justice and preventing bribery in pilgrimage trade. Besides agricultural, port, and commercial taxes, the date tax (93000 gold liras) and the port revenue (5,000 gold liras) were directly distributed to the Sharif, as confirmed by the archives. These measures constituted a transparent and balanced fiscal system, ensuring imperial control and promoting local economic sustainability.

Under the Ottoman Empire, Makkah's urban and infrastructural development brought together religious and administrative modernization. On the large scale, the construction of Ayn Arafah water canal (969 AH/ 1561 CE) and renovation of poor housing and madrasahs near the Holy Mosque followed. The Beylerbey of Egypt managed a total of 298,000 Ottoman paras and engineers from both Aleppo and Damascus contributed to the works, showing that the Empire was committed to modernization that focused on religious service. The Zamzam was also rebuilt by Sultan Suleiman, and reopened. By 933 CE / 1526 CE the work was completed and restored the bodies of Al-Abbs and Al-'amzah, symbolising a combination of political power and spiritual duty that enhanced Ottoman control of the Haramayn. Judicial Reform and Administrative Oversight. In the Daftar Mhimmah documents, these documents claim that the Mecca judicial system was built by the Qadi al-anaf and the deputies from the Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali schools. Sultan Suleiman demanded every three months that the central court be given case registers. To do so, Qadi Hasan of Aleppo was selected to be appointed outside judge to prevent bias and neutrality. These reforms not only legitimized the Ottoman power but also preserve Mecca's pluralistic Islamic law of Islam.

This unified defense and religious service was the basis of security and administration of the pilgrimage under the Ottoman Empire. In archives, documents show the Ottoman government spent heavily on protecting pilgrims by building forts in Jeddah, patrolling units, and maintaining naval defenses against Portuguese aggression in the Red Sea. Additionally, the Imperial Council ensured that wax, oil, and lighting for night prayer in the aram of the pilgrimage were provided and did so knowing that it was important to guard the physical and spiritual dimensions of pilgrimage. Thus, Sultan Suleiman produced an extremely well-organized system that integrated defense, route security, and religious administration into a coherent model of Ottoman management over holy cities.

Discussion

Sullivan Suleiman's role in establishing power, legitimacy, and religious authority was a combination of political governance and spiritual power associated with the Ottoman Empire. Historical evidence demonstrates the Christian and political roles that the Ottoman control of Mecca served both religious and political purposes. The Sultan, as guardian of the aramayn during Suleiman's reign, legitimized his dominion by his role as guardian of the aramayn (Bayt, 2011, 2014). In contrast to the temporary crusader and Mamluk presence, the Ottomans maintained a continuous administrative and service-based (khidmah) network, taxation and efficient governance, as Kashmir saw Mecca's transition into an integrated imperial province in 1818. During the Abbasid and mamluk centuries, Suleiman applied the principle of bureaucratic enlargement to produce the stable system of correspondence, endowments, and inspections between Istanbul, Cairo and Mecca, from continuing patronage to imperial control. This seemingly paradoxical atmosphere of progress and setbacks that digital Ottoman rule in Mecca illustrates is an illusion of constant barriers. While significant agricultural and infrastructure improvements provided benefits to Mecca under Ottoman rule, corruption between pilgrimage associations and Sharifian elites continued to plague the administration. Bayat (2011) and Numan (2006) highlight that local autonomy was a built-in and troublesome feature of governance. Archival data suggest that imperial directives were at times clouded by local desires to preserve independence. But, Sultan Suleiman's tenacious pursuit of investigations, audits, and consequences for wrongdoers demonstrate his dedication to Ottoman system reform, openness, and answerability.

Ottoman economic and infrastructure development at Mecca was suffused to a unique combination of happiness, spirituality, and authority, but there was nothing in these developments to suggest an association between religion and development. Ottoman water supplies and housing investments at Mecca pale in comparison to Damascus' and Cairo's welfare policies. For instance, the Ayn Arafah water canal demonstrated

a hybrid culture in which sacred structures labored in a continuous process of negotiating the particulars of their spiritual and administrative needs. Yet it was precisely in this mode that Sultan Suleiman's Mecca came to exemplify the promise of earlier Ottoman government policies for urban renewal, for the Holy City emerged as a promising model of imperial reform featuring its own central idea that faith, governance, and the public good were in sync. The Ottomans modernized the courts, and Mecca served as an early test ground for imperial reform. Early in his administration, Sultan Suleiman, by merit, elected the celebrated Qadi Hasan of Aleppo to his position, a marked change from traditional patterns of patronage. This change, and the spiritual intent of the Empire's legislative pronouncements (Fereydun, 1848), reflected a new and more advanced version of government that brought principles of Sharia to the surface of administrative rationalization. By the seventeenth century, the evolution of Mecca's legal system mirrored the institution of the *kanun* system, and the very reforms Suleiman set in place became the basis for later Ottoman codifications of justice.

And this work may also inform and help scholarship as to the dynamics of Ottoman centralization in the Hijaz through monetary transparency, infrastructure planning, and the integration of religious services. While Bayt, Kashmr and Numan focus on micro-level legitimacy, this paper relies on micro-historical evidence to understand the practical tenets of Ottoman authority in Mecca. The religious symbolism of Sultan Suleiman's religious reform added to administrative rationalization by restructuring the city. In these reforms, the Sultan shaped an institutional configuration that promoted the independence of pilgrimage, institutional balance, and consolidation of his legitimacy as *Khdim al-'aramayn al-Sharfayn*, bringing together faith, power, and bureaucracy in the early modern Islamic world.

Conclusions

This research depicts the influence and role of the Ottoman Empire over Mecca during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Great as a combination of religious legitimacy and political power through the bureaucratic process. The Sultan-Shrief partnership that administered the sacred guardianship established as an administrative model of balancing between the imperial power and local sanctity. The order and administration of endowments, pilgrimage, and urban development in the *Daftar al-Mahāmm* demonstrated a type of governance fused with devotion and discipline. The position of the Sultan as *Khedive of the Two Holy Places* was reinforced through the corruption of the officials, but the administration's adaptability-maintained stability and thus increased the Sultan's legitimacy. The research article examines Ottoman centralization as a type of sacred governance where piety made imperial integration possible and suggests comparative studies on similar models in Madinah, Jerusalem, and Cairo.

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Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted independently, and no financial, personal, or institutional relationships influenced the design, execution, interpretation, or reporting of the study.

Disclaimer Statement

This work is not part of any thesis or dissertation submitted for the award of an academic degree.

Glossary of Terms

Daftar al-Maḥāmm (Daftar al-Mahāmm) – Registers of important affairs; official Ottoman Imperial Council records containing administrative decrees.

Daftar Mīhimah – Registers of imperial orders issued by the Ottoman Imperial Council (Dīwān al-Humayūn).

Dīwān al-Humayūn – The Ottoman Imperial Council responsible for central administration and state decrees.

Khādim al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn – “Servant of the Two Holy Sanctuaries,” an honorific title adopted by Ottoman sultans.

Al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf / Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām – The Sacred Mosque in Mecca.

Sharif – The hereditary ruler of Mecca from the Prophet’s lineage.

Surra (al-Surra al-Sultāniyya) – Annual financial grant sent by the Ottoman state to the Holy Cities.

Waqf (Awqāf) – Religious endowment established for charitable or religious purposes.

Nāẓir – Superintendent or overseer, particularly of waqf or public works.

Defterdār – Ottoman treasury official responsible for financial administration.

Beylerbey (Bekler Bey) – Provincial governor-general in the Ottoman administrative system.

Kanun – Secular administrative law issued by the Ottoman Sultan alongside Sharia.

Biographies

Dr. Ehab Mohammad Zahir

Dr. Ehab Mohammad Zahir is a full-time Lecturer in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Al al-Bayt University, Jordan. He specializes in Modern Arab History and Ottoman History in Bilad al-Sham and the Arabian Gulf. His research focuses on Ottoman administrative history, pilgrimage routes, financial administration, and regional political developments. He is a member of the Jordanian Committee for Writing the National Historical Narrative (2024–2025) and serves as a reviewer for historical research. His published work addresses Ottoman governance, Transjordan’s financial administration, and regional urban history.

Dr. Anas Nayef Al-Omouh

Dr. Anas Nayef Al-Omouh is a full-time Lecturer in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Al al-Bayt University, Jordan. He specializes in Modern Arab History and Ottoman History in Bilad al-Sham and the Arabian Gulf. His research interests include the history of the Hijaz and Mecca, particularly during the Ottoman and Hashemite periods. He has published studies examining political and administrative developments in the Hijaz, with a focus on Meccan historical transformations within broader regional contexts.

Authorship and Level of Contribution

Dr. Ehab Mohammad Zahir (Principal Researcher) contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, archival investigation, data analysis, and drafting of the original manuscript. He led the interpretation of the Ottoman archival materials and supervised the overall structure and academic direction of the research.

Dr. Anas Nayef Al-Omouh contributed to the analytical development of the study, review of historical sources, and critical revision of the manuscript. He participated in refining the historical interpretation and ensuring coherence between archival evidence and historiographical discussion.

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