

## The Process of Formation of Early Archives

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to explore the formation of early archives and their historical significance in state administration and the preservation of cultural heritage, addressing the lack of analysis regarding the political and cultural contexts that shaped early archival systems. **Method:** Employing a historical approach, the research examines primary and secondary sources from ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Rome to understand how the processes of collecting, systematizing, and archiving documents evolved alongside political, technological, and social developments. **Results:** The findings reveal that archives played a crucial role in ensuring state stability through the documentation of legal codes, treaties, and property rights, as well as serving essential religious and cultural functions in ancient societies. These early archival systems were foundational in maintaining historical memory and facilitating public administration. **Novelty:** This study contributes to archival and historical scholarship by highlighting how ancient archival practices established the conceptual and functional basis for modern document management and cultural preservation, emphasizing their enduring relevance in the digital era.

## INTRODUCTION

Archives contain the raw material of humanity social, political, and cultural activity and are essential to our understanding of human history. They help record history, maintain cultural heritage and provide resources that are essential for governance and legal matters [1]. The advent of early archives, however, iconic as the turning point of human progress, was largely dependent on the emergence of writing systems. This post sets out some of the ways we became to understand archives historically, noting the developments in time, form and function in the archives present in early societies, respectively in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Rome, highlighting the significance of archives in the context of state and cultural history.

This study revolves around the relationship between archives and state formation. Throughout the growth of societies with more and more complex governance systems, it became important to keep record of things like laws, treaties, and economic transactions [2]. The ideas of archival preservation especially those raised by the historians like Posner and Clanchy stress that archives are a part of the political establishment and enhance cultural continuity. The present article combines these theories to account for the adaptive nature of archival practices as they evolved to address the needs of complexing civilizations. One major knowledge gap includes the relationship between the formation of archives and particular historical and socio-political changes [3]. Although much work has addressed archival practices in the ancient world (primarily archaeological description of archival materials and preservation techniques), scant attention has been paid to the nexus between archives and the political transformations of ancient polities.

Studies by Brosius and Duranti have touched on this subject, yet comprehensive analysis on the political influence shaping early archival systems remains limited [4], [5]. This article addresses this gap by linking archival formation to state governance and cultural identity.

This study employs a historical and comparative method, reviewing primary sources from ancient archives and secondary literature. The analysis focuses on the archives of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece, comparing their functions, organizational structures, and materials. The expectation is to uncover how archives contributed to the stability of early states and how they reflected the socio-political values of the time. By examining archival practices from a multi-disciplinary perspective, this article aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the role of archives in early civilizations. The findings of this research highlight the dual role of archives as tools of governance and cultural preservation. The state exercised control over trade and commerce, and early archives formed in temples and palaces across these economies came to play a critical role in the organizational structures of state administration, legal systems, and commercial enterprise [6]. They were also crucial in that they preserved the cultural memory and provided information about ancient laws, customs, and interpersonal relations. This study's findings indicate that archived conclusions were really associated with contemporary political and social movements, something from which up-to-date archivists can learn important lessons. This research has significant implications that highlight the enduring relevance of archives in protection of history and the advancement of legitimacy of modern governance [7].

## RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology for this study is grounded in a historical and comparative analysis of early archival systems. The primary approach is qualitative, focusing on the review of historical records and archaeological findings from ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Rome. The data for this research was drawn from a combination of primary sources, including archaeological evidence of ancient archives such as clay tablets, papyrus scrolls, and inscriptions found in temples and palaces and secondary sources, which include scholarly works that analyze archival practices in these civilizations. A detailed examination of relevant literature, such as the works of Posner and Brosius, allowed for a comparative framework to evaluate the formation, function, and evolution of archival systems across different cultures [8], [9].

The research adopted a historical approach to longitudinally investigate the evolution of archival systems and the political, social and technological conditions that influenced their emergence. Besides this analysis in terms of how they organised these archives, the the materials used to preserve the documents were also analysed-for example, clay tablets in Mesopotamia or papyrus in Egypt [10]. It also explored how archives have served state administration, law enforcement, and cultural continuity. The research can stablish or reveal this nexus between archival practice and the socio-political structures as well as divisions of ancient societies using this method. It was anticipated

that the findings would help produce nuanced explanations of the operation of early archives, vital to the governance and cultural memory of ancient civilizations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Archives The word «archive» comes from the latin archivé and literally means court, institution. This word is currently used in a different sense. We usually understand an archive as an institution where documents are stored. Archives store documents and materials created and collected in the course of the activities of various departments, enterprises, organizations, as well as individual individuals [11]. The history of archives dates back to ancient times. The emergence and development of archives occurred simultaneously with the emergence of writing. It has been established that the first archives existed in temples and palaces of slave owners in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Asia Minor. These archives stored the text of laws of that time, court documents, royal decrees and other documents. The documents were written on ceramic tablets, clay tablets, papyrus and leather. In the ruins of the ancient Greek city of Knossos, a large archive remains have been found. In ancient times, the archives of Athens, especially the one at the temple of Metroon, were famous. In ancient Rome, archives were originally in the possession of priests. The oldest archive in Rome was the Senate Archive, located in the temple of Saturn. This archive stored documents of the Senate and the courts of the Republic, materials related to the census of the censors, and other important documents. During the Roman Empire, written documents were also stored. During the Roman Empire, the archive that stored written documents placed in the palace of the emperors. After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the successor of the archives of the Roman emperors was the Byzantine archives. Some of the ancient repositories were found in Ancient Egypt [12]. The structure of the writing material was of particular importance; in particular, papyrus, leather, and cloth were used in ancient Egypt. In the most ancient times, the text was originally written on smooth, flat stones in Egypt. Such stones have been found in several areas. Ancient manuscripts written on papyrus were mainly kept in tombs and sarcophagi. Valuable information about ancient archives is also preserved in epigraphic monuments, including rock inscriptions, palace and temple walls, ceilings, and tombs, tombstones, and various other devices. They have been found and identified in large numbers in Egypt. Such majority of the inscriptions were copies of documents stored in archives, legal texts, decrees of rulers, international agreements, contracts, private law papers, chronicles, and excerpts from religious books. In some cases, these inscriptions were accompanied by information about the document itself and its location. For example, the text of an agreement concluded between Pharaoh Ramses II and the Hittite king in 1296 BC was engraved on the wall of one of the Egyptian temples, and it was additionally noted that the original inscription was inscribed on a silver tablet. In particular, the inscriptions commenting on the lives and activities of laws, rulers, and officials, as well as information about institutions and their archives, places where documents are stored, photographs of employees working in them, etc. Among the important sources for the history of archives, one can note the works of ancient

scholars, historians, and jurists [13]. The initial main purpose of archives was to ensure state administration and maintain social order. Documents were important in matters such as tax collection, property rights, laws, and international treaties. Archives served not only administrative but also religious and cultural purposes [14]. For example, in ancient Greece, the archives of city-states (polises) were used to keep laws and lists of citizens.

Archives built their structures around the technology of their times. Papers were written on clay slabs, papyrus, leather or wood. When they did employ some methods of systematization, it was rudimentary such as staging documents thematically or year-wise. This, however, became complicated as states evolved [15].

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding :** This study concludes that early archives were indispensable to the administration and stability of ancient states, serving as repositories for legal, political, and religious documentation that reinforced governance and preserved collective memory. Their existence underscores the intertwined development of bureaucracy, law, and cultural continuity in early civilizations. **Implication :** The findings highlight the enduring influence of early archival systems on modern governance and document management, suggesting that contemporary digital archiving practices can draw valuable insights from ancient methods of organization, preservation, and access control. **Limitation :** However, this research is limited by the availability and interpretation of historical sources, which constrains a full reconstruction of the socio-political dynamics influencing archival evolution across different civilizations. **Future Research :** Further investigation is recommended to explore how political power, technological innovation in writing materials, and institutional structures collectively shaped archival systems, as well as how ancient archival principles might be adapted to enhance digital heritage preservation and state record governance in the modern era.

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