



Shar'iyya Courts Records

Shar'iyya Courts (applying Islamic legislations) represented the main judicial institution in Egypt during the Ottoman era. They were responsible for considering all the civil, trade, criminal and personal status cases. Egypt, at that time, adopted the teachings of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*Al-Mathahib Al-Arba'a*). The Hanafi School, however, had the supremacy because it was the official school of jurisprudence during the Ottoman State. The Chief Justice (*Qadil Qudah*) was appointed by the Sublime Porte in Istanbul, and he, in turn, appointed deputies for him in the courts of Cairo and the other provinces.

Each court kept its records which include minutes, attestations, and certifications. These records were kept later in the Real Estate Registration Office till they were recently transferred to the National Archives of Egypt that keeps now about 55000 records, which plays a major role in depicting the Egyptian judicial system since the Ottoman era. The NAE also provides indispensable historical information for writers who are interested in documenting Egypt's history since the sixteenth century till the middle of the twentieth century.

