

# SYRIA DURING W.W.I :

## *The origins of a mandate*

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### **A Geographical and Historical Note on Syria Prior to the War**

The name Syria or 'Sha'am' has designated in past history various areas and regions. Geographically greater Syria (as it used to be called) was the region of southwest Asia bordering the Mediterranean. It included modern Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan.

A vast area in a corner of the world inhabited since the early history of mankind, Syria was a mosaic of minorities. People from different religions and different races lived together for ages in the same area sharing the same life of prosperity or subjugation.

The picture of Syria at the eve of World War I is that of a country with a pre-dominant Sunni Muslim population, a sizeable Christian community, and a minority of Jews. Despite the elements that separated the different communities economically and religiously, a common ground united them in thinking along pan-Syrian lines.

By 1914, Syria had been already for about 400 years under Turkish administration. Despite the fact that the country had been ruled for all this time, it had witnessed no discernible material development. This period helped in the creation of a class-based society with a minority of feudal landlords and a majority of poor agriculturalists and herders with no source of income other than that gained through their labor.

This striking phenomenon was a result of maladministration which characterized Turkish rule in the Arab world in general and Syria in particular. High posts in the administration were granted mostly to Turkish people through bribes, and other means.

Given the fact that the post of pasha; or governor, was granted by the Sultan to

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Turks only for short periods, the only concern of the appointed was to gather a fortune as quickly as possible. The imposition of taxes on the locals was the only concern of the horde of voracious Pashas who succeeded each other in Syria.

This race for quick fortunes at the expense of the local population led to a complete indifference by the Pashas of the people's need for social welfare and economic development. No attempt whatsoever was made to invest money to stimulate development of the region. From its very beginning, the Turkish government in Syria was "limited essentially to matters concerned with the preservation of the Ottoman supremacy, the collection of revenue, the performance of the Hajj (pilgrim) to Mecca, and the maintenance of the *status quo*."<sup>1</sup>

The Turkish administrators acted mainly as conquerors enjoying the booty of a military occupation, ignoring completely the right of the locals for services in return for the heavy taxes they were obliged to pay. No new roads were laid and the few that already existed were in bad condition. Cities lacked every aspect of sanitation.

Cultivable land was driven to aridity by extensive use and by the absence of modern techniques such as fertilizers and resting. Justice was not only archaic but also, in many cases, unobtainable.

Despite inefficiency and corruption, the system continued to operate. Its replacement was to prove very difficult during the late nineteenth century when the Ottoman Empire started its emancipation program that took place from 1839 to 1861, and which is known as the period of the *Tanzimat*. During this period and after, the currency was stabilized by the use of gold coins and an adequate silver and copper issue; paper money issued only by the Imperial Ottoman Bank, was almost unknown in Syria before 1914.<sup>2</sup>

The social and economic situation of the Syrians under Turkish rule created a climate of frustration and resentment among some nationalists. The nation was divided into two major nationalist feeling that erupted in 1900 and groups: the first was ready to work with the Turkish administration in order

to gain for Syria autonomy within the framework of the Ottoman Empire, this group, with a reformist platform, was concerned chiefly with the social and economic situation of the masses. The second group advocated complete rupture from Turkey.

The Syrian position vis-à-vis the Ottoman government was made clear just before the outbreak of World War I, when Jamal Pasha was appointed as head of the IVth army stationed in Syria. Because of his fears of Arab nationalism, he purged his army of all Arab officers. The angry officers, as a result, joined the secret Society *Al-Fatat* within which they started to work for the termination of Turkish rule in Syria. But a house search among the papers of the French consulate in Beirut and Damascus by Jamal's agents led to the incrimination of many members of the society. A series of arrests were ordered; the subsequent trial, conducted improperly, resulted in the execution of many of the leading Syrian nationalists.

This behavior on the part of the Turkish government contributed to the widening of the already enormous gap between the governed and their governors. This also determined Arab behavior during the war when they joined the allies in their war against Turkey and Germany. The mentality was "the enemy of my enemy is my friend".

## **II French Position in Syria Before and During World War I**

The first contacts with the west in the life of modern Syria can be traced to the times when French King Francis I started to cultivate the friendship of the Ottoman Sultan to secure himself an ally against his enemy the Emperor Charles V.

In 1535 the Sultan signed the first of a series of capitulistic treaties in which he acknowledged that residents of the Empire of French origin were to be allowed to practice their religion freely. By 1673 all ecclesiastics of the Latin rite within the Empire were considered French subjects.

Ever since that time, France kept on escalating her missionary activities in the Levant throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. French relig-

ious penetration into Syria came through the establishment of clerical schools, hospitals, asylums and orphanages. By the end of the nineteenth century a whole French christian community was established in Syria. we have to note here that the growth of anti-clericalism in France after 1906, the date of separatism of church from state, did not alter the policy of the French government which not only kept on its missionary activities in Syria but tented to expand them.

Investment in railroads by France is another act of presence in the area. In fact, France dominated the lines : Beirut-Damascus, Damascus-Nuzeirib and Rayak-hamah. *Damas-Hamah et prolongements*, a French company, had the monopoly of the railroad system:

However, France, which enjoyed economic supremacy in Syria in the period 1900 to 1912, saw her position threatened by new competitors such as Britain and Germany. With the Baghdad line, the Germans tried to monopolize the railway concessions in the Ottoman Empire. The fear of the French were that Germany "will not only rival the French Lines, but also complete her economic and political strong hold on this region".<sup>3</sup>

During the same period France's commercial exchange with Syria not only did not increase but, in fact, registered decline. France became more than alarmed when she found out that what she was buying from Syria far outweighed what she was able to sell to it. The general feeling in France was that "France was paying for the tremendous gains made by other powers in the area of commercial importation into the Ottoman Empire".<sup>4</sup>

This stagnation in French economic dealings with Syria made the French officials think about a way to make her rivals recognize France's supremacy in Syria.

This plan came to its fulfillment in 1913 when the Turkish government asked France for a loan. The French terms were that Turkey had to recognize the legitimacy of France's cultural and religious rights in Syria. At the same time new railroad concessions were given to her. By 15 February 1914, France secured even German recognition of a French "sphere of influence" in

Syria.

The British response to this Turkish concession to France was very violent. Sir Mark Sykes spoke to the House of Commons on 18 March 1914, denouncing Turkish concessions to France in return for the loan. "Those concessions", he said, "which have been extracted from Turkey in return for this loan... mean monopoly of all Syrian transit... one knows what the defense of this sort of thing is-that all nations have to do it, that they have to protect their interests. But in practice, Loans, kilometric guarantees, monopolies, must, whether the financiers desire it or not, pave the way to annexation."<sup>5</sup> Was it true, as Sir Mark Sykes stated, that French economic penetration of the region was only a step toward *political* domination over Syria? We can answer this question in the positive. Shortly after the great war broke out, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and French claims over Syria were to be acknowledged through the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1915 and the ultimate mandate over Syria given to her by the League of Nations. Therefore this brings us to another fact which is that with or without the Mandate, France had already the fixed idea to take over that part of the world. Political machination added to economic penetration, while war was still at its peak, were tools in the hand of imperialistic France to reach her goals.

### III Syria During the War

When the First World War broke out, new elements appeared in international politics and indicated that the future of Syria was to be determined not by the Syrians themselves but by the Sharif of Mecca and in the European capitals : Paris and London. The general feeling in France was annexing Syria even if it meant disavowing Syrian desire for independence.

By tradition, Mecca and Medina, the two holy cities of Islam, were guarded by a descendant of Muhammad the Prophet. Since 1908 this post had been With the threat of war coming, the held by the Sharif Husayn's son Ali. Sharif Husayn thought of the possibility of independence from the Turkish yoke for all the Arab territories of the East. It was with this idea that, through

his son Faysal, he contacted the British as early as 1914 asking for British help in case of an Arab uprising against Turkey. Lord Kitchner, the British Consul in Egypt, responded very vaguely to the Sharif's approach. But with the outbreak of the war, Sir Henry McMahon, who succeeded Lord Kitchener as High Commissioner in Egypt, was urged by his country to renew the discussion with the Sharif. As a result the two parties engaged in a series of letters known as the Husayn-McMahon Correspondence.

The Husayn-McMahon Correspondence took place between 14 July 1915 to the end of January of 1916. Husayn's request was that in return for an Arab uprising against Turkey, Britain recognizes Arab independence under his caliphate. However, Britain accepted, after many political maneuvers, the principle of Arab independence, but excluded in her pledges to the Sharif certain territories which supposedly were not 'purely Arab'. Ironically, the territories supposedly not 'purely Arab' were those lying to the west of a line drawn from Damascus to Aleppo; the districts of Alexandretta and Mirsin were to be excluded also. Another excuse given by the British for the exclusion of those territories from their pledges was that Britain was fearful to engage herself regarding them 'without detriment to the interests of her ally France.'<sup>6</sup>

The Sharif accepted the exclusion of Mirsin from his demands but not Alexandretta and neither was he ready to make any compromise on the Syrian coast. The British, however, forced by the war to keep him as an ally, offered as a solution that each party would hold its position until the end of the war. On this basis the Sharif assumed the title of "King of the Arab Countries" and declared war on Turkey in October 1916.<sup>7</sup>

While the Sharif was still in correspondence with the British, between May and June 1915, his son Faysal paid a visit to Syria. Faysal was to witness with his own eyes the execution of the nationalists by Jamal Pasha. He, in vain, tried to influence Jamal Pasha to mercy. His visit came also at a time when the nationalists, tired of the Turkish government, met at Damascus and issued what came to be known as the Damascus protocol.

The two leading secret societies of Al-'Ahd and Al-Fatat are the ones

which had drawn the Damascus Protocol in which they defined the terms under which an Arab revolt against Turkey would be undertaken. In this protocol the Nationalists asked the allies for full recognition of Arab independence after the defeat of Turkey and with that "the abolition of all exceptional privileges granted by the Ottoman sultans to foreigners under the 'capitulations'". Alliance with Britain on a mutual benefit was also mentioned in the Protocol. This document is very important in the way that it served as a basis for every negotiation led by Husayn. The Arab leaders asked Husayn to be their spokesman with the allies on this basis.

The Arab forces entered Damascus on October 1, 1918, this was followed by the entry of the city by Amir Faysal on October 3rd. The British forces led by General Allenby, preceded by Arab forces with Faysal as their commander, started to move northward to complete the liberation of Syria from the remaining Turkish troops. On the 30th of October an armistice was signed. France, although not actively participating in the liberation of Syria, began to land small groups of soldiers on October 8th on the Syrian coastline, in order to present Britain with a *fait accompli* of her presence in the area. The British, on the other hand, fearing a quick establishment of a local authority by the Syrians, moved forward and included Syria under the military administration of the Occupied Enemy Territories (O.E.T.) under which the French Colonel Piepape found himself as military governor of Beirut.

Syria was therefore divided into three zones each of which was placed under a specific administration as distinct from the other. The first, known as Occupied Enemy Territory Administration South (O.E.T.A. South), comprised Palestine within its later 1920 borders was placed under British supervision; the second, or O.E.T.A. East, forming interior Syria was Arab; the third, known as O.E.T.A. West, comprised Lebanon and the Syrian seaboard from Tyre to the confines of Cilicia was French.<sup>8</sup>

As a reminder, shortly after the Arabs agreed to revolt against Turkey in accordance with the Husayn-McMahon Correspondence, Britain found herself plunging her head blindly into a new agreement with France that was



completely contrary to her pledges made to the Arabs. This agreement is known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The two powers agreed to share among themselves the territories of the Levant in case of a defeat of Turkey. Britain was to receive Iraq, Syria was to be French and Palestine was to be internationalized under French, British and Russian control. Annexation of these territories was neither mentioned nor excluded, the way was left free to the powers to annex any part they wished. This document is the starting point of a series of shameful measures undertaken by British diplomacy.

The first thing to say about this document is that it was negotiated without the knowledge of the Sharif, and it contains provisions that are in direct contradiction with precedent British pledges to the Arabs. The Arabs came to know about the agreement only after the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917. When the Bolsheviks seized power, the first thing they did was to make public all the secret agreements made by Tsarist Russia. Husayn, who received a copy of the agreement through Turkey which was seeking a separate peace with the Arabs, rushed to ask Britain for clarifications. The answer was never received, at least not as the Sharif expected. Sharif Husayn was informed that the agreement was an exchange of views rather than a formal agreement.

This reply, which was made on February 8, 1918, was followed on November 7, by a joint British-French Declaration that stated that the war aims of the two powers were a complete liberation of the Arab countries from the Turkish yoke and that at the same time their will was to assist the people in setting up national governments.

In general, the situation of the Arabs during World War I was that of hope and deceit. The people who just broke the chains that attached them for centuries to Turkish imperialism and exploitation saw that their future was not that good either. They saw, daily, European imperialism materialize itself. They entered the war as full partners and they ended up by being subjected to claims and rights by their friends. Syria by 1918 was not only a country that suffered from British military presence on its soil, but also a country over



which France claimed to have "rights".

#### **IV Syria and the Post War Settlement**

In 1919 Faysal headed a delegation to the peace Conference at Versailles. The French, however reluctantly, accepted him as a spokesman of the Arab cause. There in Paris, Faysal found himself in the presence of three forces working against Arab aspirations for independence and selfdetermination. Firstly, British imperialist designs over Palestine and Iraq for strategic reasons and others; secondly, French colonial policy for political, cultural and economic control of Syria; and thirdly, Zionism which wanted to create in Palestine a Jewish homeland as promised by Britain in 1917 through the Balfour Declaration.

On January 29, 1919, Faysal was permitted to speak before the delegates at the Conference. He stressed the Wilsonian principles of self-determination and he reminded the British of their pledges to the Arabs as set forth in the Husayn-McMahon Correspondance, who had contributed mightily to the defeat of the central powers. Faysal also proposed that a Commission of Inquiry be sent to the area to study the wishes of the people. This proposal for a Commission for Inquiry was espoused by President Wilson immediately. Mr. Lloyd George accepted it reluctantly while Mr/ Clemenceaux rejected it indirectly.

President Wilson proposed to the delegates in Versailles that a British, French, American and Italian commission be sent to Syria to inquire about the nature of the government the people really desired. France, because of her colonial aims, declined the offer and so did Britain and Italy. The Commission which, therefore, arrived in Syria on June 10, 1919, consisted only of Americans headed by Dr. H.C. King and Mr. Charles Crane. Faysal, who had returned only recently from the Peace Conference, called for the formation of delegates from throughout greater Syria to meet with the Commission. This, however, was done under alarmed eyes of the French. On the 20th of June 1919, representatives from different areas and representing both Arabs

and Christians met in Damascus and created the National Congress. This newly formed body was to be the only recognized representative of all Syria. The political stand of the National Congress was the repudiation of both the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration. It also urged the powers to acknowledge the full independence of Syria and Palestine. As a final statement of independence and defiance, Amir Faysal was elected King of Syria.

The Commission carried out its work for three months during which it received hundreds of petitions and interviewed thousands of people from different backgrounds and religions. The Commission wrote an extensively documented report. The value of this report is that it is the only source to which the Historian can turn for a disinterested and wholly objective analysis of the state of feeling in Arab political circles in the period immediately following the war.<sup>9</sup>

The recommendations of the King-Crane Commission concerning Syria was that "Whatever foreign administration (Whether of one or more powers) is brought into Syria, should come in not at all as a colonizing power in the old sense of that term, but as a Mandatory under the League of Nations, with the clear consciousness that 'the well-being and development' of the Syrian people form for it a 'sacred trust' ".<sup>10</sup> The Commission's report stated also that Iraq should be placed under a separate mandate, and that Lebanon had to preserve its autonomy within Syria. Syria was to be a constitutional monarchy, with Faysal as King. The report also made it clear that the Syrian general feeling was for independence and if mandate had to be applied to the area the choice of the people favored the United States but if the latter declined the offer, it should then be assigned to Great Britain. A French mandate was not recommended because of the objection of the Syrian to such prospect.

The French not only did not like the idea of sending a commission of inquiry to Syria but also rejected all the recommendations made by it. They were very aware that the general opinion in Syria was unfavorable to them. The French were also very suspicious of the British. The fact is that Allenby's victory had raised the British prestige enormously in the area, which added

to French apprehension.

The King-Crane Commission, when its work was extended to Palestine and Iraq, was also the subject of a denigration campaign led by Britain. Britain which was already bound to the World Zionist Movement by the pledges that she had made through the Balfour Declaration did not want the Commission to report to the Peace Conference on the wishes of the people of the area. And so was the case for Iraq which Britain had already made up her mind for its future.

In general the Report of the Commission was pigeonholed and ignored, and was not acted upon even in Washington.<sup>11</sup> By this time, the two powers had already set their plans for the future of Syria and the other Arab countries. On November 1, 1919, Britain, under French pressure, reluctantly withdrew her forces from Western Syria and Cilicia, leaving a free hand for the French to take over. Fresh troops were brought from Africa to Syria to reinforce the already existing French forces in the area. These forces were put under the command of General Gouraud who became the supreme representative of France in the Levant.

The withdrawal of the British troops and their replacement by the French troops antagonized the Nationalists who saw the French plan coming step by step toward its implementation. In the rush, committees for the defense of the homeland were formed in major towns; an economic blockade was established between the inland and the coastal zone in which the French troops were stationed and violent acts of terrorism were carried out against French posts.

On the 25th of April, 1920, the Allied Supreme Council was convened at San Remo, the result was placing Syria under a French Mandate. This decision taken at San Remo and made public on the 5th of May was received with horror rather than surprise in Damascus. "In the eyes of the Arabs, the San Remo decisions were nothing short of a betrayal, and the fact that they violated a compact sealed in blood made the betrayal more hateful and despicable."

<sup>12</sup> Whatever 'legal' form the San Remo decisions presented to history, they

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were a complete violation of the pledges made to the Arabs, particularly those made by Great Britain.

Now I think we can understand why the pledges were made to the Arabs but were never kept. Those pledges were first made under the stress of war. At that time the allies, and especially Britain, badly needed Arab support in their Eastern campaign. The British pledges to different people and different governments were made mainly in order to keep everybody on her side while war was going on. Thus as conflicting were the wishes of the different parties, so were the statements, declaration, proclamations of the British officials contradictory. At the end of the war the British government found itself with commitments not always compatible with one another.

The British were also wrong from the very beginning when they thought that in putting themselves forward as the liberators of the Arab countries from the Turkish oppressors their image would rise in the eyes of the Arabs who would, in return, accept some impediments on their independence. The British can also be reproached for failing to have any proper understanding of the Arabs. Even "specialists" such as T. E. Lawrence and Sir Mark Sykes, did not have enough understanding of the power of Islam, of the Arab desire for unity, or even of the Arab awakening. One cannot help concluding that the Arabs were not taken seriously at all when the Great Powers made their pledges to them.

Soon after the Arabs learned about the San Remo decision, their relations with France worsened still more. Arab Nationalists, eager to preserve the freedom they had just won with force from Turkey, started to put pressure on Faysal to arm the people and lead them in a liberating war against France. On the other hand, the San Remo decisions gave to French colonialist politicians what they had desired for a long time : a free hand in Syria to impose their terms on Faysal.

In Syria, Gouraud was waiting only for such a step to be taken at an international level in order to consolidate his country's claim over Syria. Using the desperate raids made by some angry groups against his troops, on July 14,

Gouraud sent an ultimatum to King Faysal in which he enumerated five conditions : the handing over of the Rayyak Aleppo Railway to French military control, the abolition of conscription for services in the Arab forces, the demobilization of the Arab Army, the adoption of the French currency system, and, finally, the punishment of the people who stood against French occupation.

This ultimatum was only a tactical move, in reality France had made up her mind about occupying not only the Syrian coastline, but also the inland as well. Faysal, to the surprise of the nationalists, accepted the terms of the ultimatum but asked Gouraud for further discussions. Even though the acceptance of the ultimatum was to cost Faysal his popularity, he did so for two reasons. Firstly, he knew that no matter what position he took, France was determined to occupy all of Syria; secondly, he was still counting on the support of the British.

Although Faysal accepted the terms of the ultimatum, that did not stop Gouraud's forces from marching on Damascus and seizing it after having crushed the hasty defense prepared by some volunteers. The French troops, heavily equipped and very well organized, met no strong resistance. Faysal was obliged to leave on the 28th to Palestine and from there to Iraq where a new destiny was awaiting him. 13

Just after receiving Gouraud's ultimatum, Faysal sent his last message as Syrian spokesman to the league of Nations and to the European capitals. In this message he said :

- 1 - We want peace and the preservation of our independence.
- 2 - We reject as unfounded all the accusations against us, intended to embroil our relations with our Allies.
- 3 - We do not refuse to enter into negotiations and we are indeed ready to do so. Our delegation headed by his Majesty the King is ready to leave (for Europe). We accept any solution provided it is not against our independence and our honour.
- 4 - We are fully prepared and fully resolved to defend our honour and our



rights with all the force that God has given us.<sup>14</sup>

This message and another one that he sent to Gouraud were the last statements made by Faysal as King of Syria asserting his sovereign power while still on Syrian soil. The entrance of the French troops into Damascus was a violation of the Peace Conference decisions and very much against the principles of the League of Nations. The French government thus divested King Faysal from an authority invested in him by the Syrian people and recognized by the Allies.

The fall of the Faysal government can be understood in many ways : its existence was in direct conflict with the French imperialist ambitions in the area; its military strength was too weak to ensure its survival; having to choose between her ties with France and her pledges to the Arabs, Britain did not lift a finger to preserve the legitimate government.

#### Footnotes

- 1 - Moshe Ma'oz, *ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine 1840-1861*, London : Clarendon Press, 1960, P.4
- 2 - Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon Under French Mandate*, London : Oxford University Press, 1950, P.18
- 3 - William I. Shorrock, "The Origins of the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon, the Railroad Question, 1901-1914", *International Journal of the Middle East*, Vol. I, April 1970, P.146.
- 4 - Ibid., P. 146.
- 5 - Ibid. P. 153
- 6 - The full text is to be found in J.C. Hureuvitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East : A Documentary Record : 1914-1956*, Princeton 1956, Vol. II, P.66.
- 7 - Sharif Husayn declared himself "King of the Hijaz and the Arab countries, "but the allies recognized him as only "King of the Hijaz" (Western Arabia).
- 8 - George Antonious, *The Arab Awakening*, New York : Capricorn Books 1956, 6th. ed., PP.278-79
- 9 - Ibid., P.296/
- 10 - J.C. Hureuvitz, op. cit., P.66.

11 - George Antonious, op. cit. P.298.

12 - Ibid., P.305.

13 - King Faysal became King of Iraq in 1921.

14 - Zeine N.Zeine, *The Struggle for Arab Independence*, Beirut : Khayat's 1960, P.163.



**Archives et Traduction :**  
*Sources Documentaires Espagnoles Concernant l'Algérie.*

**Archivos y Traducción :**  
*Fuentes Documentables espanolas para Argelia.*

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Les archives constituent des pièces maîtresses dans la reconstitution du passé proche ou lointain et permettent aux futures générations de se reconnaître et de transmettre à leur tour le patrimoine culturel et scientifique acquis. Les archives sont toutes sortes de documents écrits, visuels, archéologiques, oraux, soit sous forme de rapports, lettres, correspondances, presses et journaux, soit sous forme de texte littéraires, historiques, scientifiques, économiques, etc... Elles constituent la mémoire nationale et l'héritage humain du peuple qu'on doit inconditionnellement préserver et conserver précieusement dans le but de servir à tout moment les besoins des citoyens et de la nation. Car un peuple sans mémoire est un peuple sans histoire, autrement dit, s'il n'y a pas d'archives il n'y aura pas d'histoire et par conséquent, tous les repères et les références socio-culturelles se perdent, provoquant ainsi une crise populaire.

Cuando se habla de archivos, se hace referencia obligatoriamente a su conservación y preservación. Pues la conservación de los archivos, es decir cuantos documentos escritos, visuales, arqueológicos u orales sean de tipo informes, cartas, correspondencias, sean de tipo literario, histórico, científico, económico, periodístico, etc, siendo una memoria nacional y un patrimonio humano del pueblo deben ser incondicionalmente preservados y protegidos contra cualquier alteración humana o natural, para poder servir a las futuras generaciones : pues un pueblo sin memoria es un pueblo sin historia como se suele decir.

Dicho de otro modo si no hay archivos, no hay historia y por lo tanto se pierde toda referencia cultural de un pueblo.

Les différents Séminaires nationaux sur les Archives, en l'occurrence, celui qui vient juste d'avoir lieu à l'Institut de bibliothéconomie de notre Université démontre on ne peut mieux, l'importance et la valeur inestimable des archives et fonds documentaires qui doivent à tout prix être préservés, notamment si on fait allusion