



On the 150th Anniversary of the Universal Postal Union: Revisiting Ottoman Empire's Overlooked Position in Global Postal History

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Abstract

On 9 October 2024, the Universal Postal Union (UPU), recognized as the world's second-oldest intergovernmental organization, celebrated its 150th anniversary. Its history is rich, multilayered, and marked by unique milestones. As a founding member, the Ottoman Empire occupied a central position in this historical process, playing a decisive role both in the organization of postal services and in shaping humanity's shared heritage. The bilateral relations between the Ottoman Empire and the UPU, which began with the Bern Congress in 1874 and continued until the proclamation of the Republic, encompassed highly significant phases that have often been overlooked in the literature, with insufficient systematic scholarly attention devoted to them. The scope of this article is limited to an analysis, taking into account the historical significance of postal services, of Western approaches shaped by the attitudes faced and postal realities experienced by the Ottoman Empire at the Bern Congress. Given the international character of the Bern Congress, the study aims to provide a comprehensive background demonstrating how,

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and to what extent, the salient aspects of the Ottoman Empire's engagement within the UPU were addressed in external scholarship.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Universal Postal Union, literature, foreign posts.

UPU'nun 150. Yılında Osmanlı Devleti'nin Küresel Posta Tarihinde Gözden Kaçırılmış Konumuna Yeni Bir Bakış

Öz

9 Ekim 2024 tarihinde 150. kuruluş yıl dönümünü idrak eden ve dünyanın en eski ikinci hükümetler arası kuruluşu olarak bilinen Evrensel Posta Birliği'nin tarihi; zengin, çok katmanlı ve eşsiz dönüm noktalarıyla örölü bir geçmişe sahiptir. Osmanlı Devleti, kurucu üye sıfatıyla, bu tarihî sürecin merkezinde yer almış; posta hizmetlerinin örgütlenmesinde ve insanlığın ortak mirasının şekillenişinde de kilit bir aktör olarak belirleyici rol oynamıştır. 1874 yılında Bern Kongresi ile başlayan ve Cumhuriyet'in ilanına kadar uzanan Osmanlı-Evrensel Posta Birliği ilişkileri, son derece önemli aşamalar barındırmakla birlikte, literatürde çoğu kez göz ardı edilmiş, üzerine sistemli biçimde eğilme ihtiyacı yeterince hissedilmemiş bir alandır. Bu makalenin kapsamı, posta hizmetlerinin tarihsel önemini göz önünde bulundurarak, özellikle Osmanlı Devleti'nin Bern Kongresi'nde maruz kaldığı tutum ve tecrübe ettiği posta gerçekliğinin şekillendirdiği Batılı yaklaşımları tahlil ile sınırlıdır. İkili ilişkilerin başlangıcı olan Bern Kongresi, uluslararası nitelik arz ettiğinden, çalışmanın amacı Osmanlı Devleti'nin Evrensel Posta Birliği bağlamında dikkat çektiği hususların dış literatürde ne şekilde ve hangi ölçüde ele alındığını kapsamlı bir arka planla ortaya koymaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Devleti, Evrensel Posta Birliği, literatür, yabancı postalar.

Introduction

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) was founded to harmonize the diverse practices that had long complicated international mail exchanges, including disparate bilateral agreements, rate structures, dispatch conditions, and charges. Its establishment not only eliminated major operational and legal barriers between postal administrations but also enabled wider public participation and institutional engagement in shaping the course of global postal development.

The inaugural UPU Treaty was drafted during the first international postal congress, convened in Berne between 15 September and 9 October 1874, and formally signed on 9 October by 22 states, among them Ottoman Empire. Widely regarded as one of the foremost institutional achievements of the nineteenth century, the UPU became the cornerstone of both universal values and socioeconomic interaction among nations, while ensuring the orderly circulation of international mail items within a unified framework.

For Ottoman Empire, the Berne Congress represented a historic first step onto the international stage in the field of postal diplomacy, underscoring its recognition of the importance of multilateral cooperation in guaranteeing reliable channels of communication across diverse regions. Ottoman Empire's unique geographic position at the intersection of Asia, Europe, and Africa further enhanced the significance of its participation, facilitating the creation of a standardized postal territory through which communities of varied linguistic, cultural, and political backgrounds could access equivalent levels of postal service. The UPU's vision of a "single postal territory" thus reflected a collective commitment to foster connectivity and mutual engagement across frontiers, with Ottoman Empire serving a vital gateway in this endeavour.

Although Ottoman Empire's initial accession to the UPU in 1874 was driven primarily by the closure of foreign post offices operating on its territory, its subsequent role extended far beyond this context. Over time, Ottoman Empire became an active contributor to the harmonization of international postal standards and the consolidation of the new global postal order.

Despite these longstanding ties, the relationship between Ottoman Empire and the UPU remains understudied. Postal historiography offers limited analysis of Ottoman Empire's role, its accession process, and the institutional politics surrounding the closure of extraterritorial posts. This article seeks to fill this gap by examining a literature research and review, and by assessing the ways in which it strengthened the institutional capacity of the Ottoman Postal Administration within the international postal order.

The Foundational Problematic and Research Significance

Since its accession in 1874, Ottoman Empire has been a founding member state of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), yet its accession and subsequent role have remained largely absent from English- and foreign-language scholarship. Critical questions regarding Ottoman Empire's position within the UPU, the closure of foreign post offices, and the institutional development of its postal administration have yet to be systematically explored. As the 150th anniversary of Ottoman Empire's UPU membership passes, this persistent gap highlights a striking historiographical omission: a crucial chapter of both national postal history and global postal diplomacy has remained underexamined.

This study seeks to address that gap by critically reassessing Ottoman Empire's UPU membership as both a diplomatic milestone and an institutional transformation. While the UPU is widely recognized as one of the most enduring frameworks of international cooperation, Ottoman Empire's participation has received only marginal attention, leaving an incomplete understanding of how its postal sovereignty, geographic position, and negotiations over foreign post offices shaped the emerging global postal order. By situating Ottoman Empire's experience within the broader trajectory of international postal governance, this research provides a corrective to existing scholarship and demonstrates that Ottoman Empire's postal history is not merely a national narrative but also an integral component of the universal project of standardizing and facilitating cross-border communication.

This study is guided by the following research questions.

1. In what ways should Ottoman Empire be situated within the international postal development process that culminated in the UPU's establishment?
2. To what extent is the knowledge generated through PTT's nearly 150 years of engagement with the UPU accessible to researchers, and how might it shape the future of international postal services?
3. What operational and political challenges has the UPU sought to address, and what solutions has it provided?
4. What was the significance of the 1874 Berne Congress and the UPU Convention for Ottoman Postal Administration?
5. Why have Ottoman Empire's UPU membership and its role in congress negotiations received insufficient attention in existing academic literature?

By integrating Ottoman Empire's historical experience with the broader development of the UPU, this article illuminates both the national and global dimensions of postal governance. It provides a nuanced understanding of how Ottoman Empire navigated international negotiations, institutionalized its postal administration, and contributed to the consolidation of a standardized global postal network—offering insights that remain relevant for the study of contemporary international communications systems.

The Inception of the Historic Relations between Ottoman Empire and UPU

The concepts of institutional management and public service that had evolved in Western Europe during the early modern period gradually began to take root within the Ottoman Empire over the course of the nineteenth century. Within this transformative framework, Sultan Selim III (1789–1807), Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839), and Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909) stand out as pivotal figures who guided the Empire's trajectory toward institutionalization and modernization.¹ During the reign of Mahmud II, many of the traditional administrative structures inherited from earlier periods were dismantled, thereby creating the institutional and ideological space necessary for the establishment of European-inspired organizations. Acknowledging the indispensability of a professional and technically proficient bureaucracy, Mahmud II prioritized the training of specialized personnel capable of sustaining and expanding the Empire's economic and commercial engagement with Europe. As preexisting institutions in education, health, and social welfare proved increasingly inadequate to meet the complex and expanding needs of society, the Ottoman state resolved to construct an entirely new bureaucratic apparatus, departing from the conventional patrimonial framework that had characterized earlier governance. This reconfiguration sought to extend state responsibility across multiple spheres of public service and to ensure the systematic delivery of these services according to contemporary standards through institutionalized mechanisms. Within this broader context, a centralized bureaucratic order emerged in Istanbul, exemplified by the establishment of bodies such as the Department of Foreign Affairs (*Hariciye Nezareti*) and the Chamber of Translation (*Tercüme Odası*). A crucial manifestation of this new administrative rationality was the foundation of a modern postal institution in 1840, marking the inception of a structured and state-regulated postal system within the Empire.²

1 Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu 1830-1914*, İstanbul, Timaş Yayınları, 2010, p. 44-80.

2 Karpat, op. cit., p. 196-197.

The institutionalization of postal services within the Ottoman Empire constitutes a distinctive case, informed by a complex historical continuum that spans both the pre- and post-1840 periods. The preceding historical evidence underscores that Ottoman urban centres had long operated as pivotal international postal nodes, mediating exchanges and facilitating communication among diverse cultural and political entities. This historical pattern further demonstrates that the evolution of postal infrastructures in Türkiye developed along both domestic and transnational axes, reflecting a sustained process through which local populations engaged with, adapted to, and internalized formalized postal systems. Consequently, a broad-based familiarity with postal instruments and services emerged, laying the sociotechnical foundations for the Empire's later institutional consolidation of its postal administration.

In other respects, the year 1840 signifies the commencement of a transformative era in Türkiye's communication landscape and the institutionalization of modern postal services. For decades prior, the Ottoman populace had been compelled to depend on post offices operated by various European powers, reflecting both the fragmentation of postal sovereignty and the asymmetrical dynamics of the period. The formal establishment of the Ottoman postal system in 1840, though comparatively belated, marked a decisive institutional turning point. This initiative represented not merely an administrative reform but a strategic endeavour to reclaim postal functions and privileges that had, for political or practical reasons, been conceded to foreign postal authorities. In this context, the reassertion of postal sovereignty emerged as an imperative of state policy—one closely tied to questions of national integrity and international recognition—and the integration of postal services under centralized state administration became a fundamental prerequisite in the Empire's external negotiations.

Following the establishment of the foundations of a modern postal organization in 1840, the Ottoman Empire confronted the formidable challenge of competing with the well-entrenched European postal administrations that had operated within its territory since the early eighteenth century.³ Within this historical and geopolitical context, the prioritization of postal institutionalization and the consolidation of its organizational framework during the initial two decades after 1840 emerged as both a pragmatic necessity and a strategic imperative. Strengthening the national postal apparatus was thus conceived not merely as an administrative reform but as a critical component of state sovereignty and modernization, aimed at asserting control over communication networks that had long been subject to foreign influence.

3 Karpat, *op. cit.*, p. 196-197.

During the 1860s, the Ottoman Empire intensified its efforts to curtail the operations of European postal administrations functioning along its frontiers and within its territorial boundaries—an issue that increasingly occupied a prominent place on both its domestic reform agenda and its diplomatic engagements. From the late 1860s onward, the interrelation between postal services and international politics came under renewed scrutiny, as Ottoman authorities sought to redefine the legal and institutional parameters of foreign postal activity within their jurisdiction. Despite persistent endeavours to establish a unified and sovereign postal system, and despite the Empire's determined participation in bilateral and multilateral negotiations, the recurring infringements by European postal services necessitated the elevation of the issue to international forums.⁴ Nevertheless, the Ottoman state's attempts to restrict or regulate foreign postal operations yielded only limited results. European powers continued to question the administrative reliability and technical competence of the Ottoman postal system, leveraging such claims to justify the perpetuation of their own extraterritorial postal privileges and to cast doubt upon the Empire's capacity for autonomous postal governance.⁵

The Bern Congress, convened in the capital of the Swiss Confederation between 15 September and 9 October 1874, constitutes a seminal milestone in the history of global postal governance, marking the first formal attempt to institutionalize international cooperation in postal affairs. The Ottoman Empire utilized the occasion to draw attention to the persistent violations and systemic irregularities affecting its postal administration, thereby engaging the international community in seeking timely and effective remedies.

The initiative advanced by Heinrich von Stephan, Director General of the German Postal Administration, to negotiate an international postal convention⁶ and to establish a *General Postal Union*—a framework designed to provide a legal and organizational foundation for the standardization of postal services among sovereign states—received broad support from the European delegations.

4 *Journal du Droit International Privé et de la Jurisprudence Comparée*, Nos: VII-X, 1901; *Revue Générale de Droit International Public / Droit des gens – Historie diplomatique – Droit pénal – droit fiscal – droit administratif*, N 3, Mai-Juin 1895.

5 Mehmet Şükrü Yaman, "Avrupa Gazetelerinde Yabancı Posta Meselesi: Evrensel Posta Birliği'nin Yaklaşımı ve Osmanlı Posta Teşkilatı'na İlişkin Haber İçeriklerinin Analizi", *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, no. 22, December 2023, p. 209-41; <https://doi.org/10.16947/fsmia.1408479>.

6 *Documents du Congrès Postal International réuni à Berne du 15 Septembre au 9 Octobre 1874*, Berne, Imprimerie Rieder & Simmen, 1875, p. 3-7.

For the Ottoman Empire, whose bilateral diplomatic efforts to regulate foreign postal operations within its own territory had yielded limited results, the proposed Union represented a unique opportunity to internationalize the issue and to restore the legitimacy of its postal sovereignty. The continued existence of extraterritorial postal privileges not only undermined the Empire's administrative authority and reputation but also impeded the coherent development of its national postal system. By elevating the matter to the agenda of the 1874 Congress, the Ottoman delegation sought to secure international recognition of its grievances and to pursue a definitive resolution to a problem that had long constrained its postal modernization and institutional autonomy.

Most of the states operating postal services within Ottoman territories were also represented at the International Telegraph Congresses and the Paris Postal Conference of 1863—two landmark events that significantly advanced global postal development in the period preceding the establishment of the Universal Postal Union.⁷ The sustained participation of these states through specialized technical and diplomatic representatives enabled them to exercise considerable influence over the evolving international postal agenda. By maintaining an active presence in such multilateral forums, they not only shaped the contours of postal policy and regulatory frameworks but also consolidated their capacity to steer the direction of international negotiations, thereby reinforcing their strategic and institutional dominance within the global communication system.

Conversely, the Ottoman Empire was unable to assume a prominent role in the formative stages of universal postal development, primarily due to the comparatively late institutionalization of its own postal administration. The Empire did not participate in the 1863 Paris Postal Conference—the first international assembly convened to discuss the harmonization of postal systems prior to the establishment of the Universal Postal Union—nor did it take part in the collective postal negotiations that preceded this event. This absence reflected both the structural limitations of its domestic postal apparatus and the broader geopolitical asymmetries that constrained its capacity to engage on equal footing with the established European postal powers.

7 Delegates from the United States, Costa Rica, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ecuador, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Prussia, Spain, Switzerland, Hawaii, and the Hanseatic League participated in the conference. For further information, see *The Constitution, General Regulations, Rules of Procedure, Legal Status of the UPU, With Commentary by the UPU International Bureau, List of Resolutions and Decisions*, Bern, International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union, 2014, p. VIII.

Ottoman Empire's engagement with telegraph-related matters followed a distinct developmental trajectory, markedly earlier than its involvement in postal affairs. The Empire's participation in telegraph negotiations—demonstrated by its presence at the series of telegraph congresses that culminated in the International Telegraph Convention, signed in Paris on 17 May 1865, revised in Vienna on 21 July 1868, and again in Rome on 14 January 1872—indicates a proactive diplomatic and technical engagement in this sector.⁸ This early involvement reflects both the strategic importance attributed to telegraphic communication and the Ottoman administration's recognition of the need to align with emerging international communication standards ahead of its comprehensive integration into the global postal system.

At the Paris Telegraph Congress, convened from 1 March to 17 May 1865 and marking the establishment of the International Telegraph Union, Ottoman Empire was represented by Cemil Pasha as the Sultan's envoy and Agaton Effendi as the delegate of the Ottoman Postal Administration. Subsequently, Serpos Effendi, Director General of the Telegraph Administration, represented the Empire at the second telegraph congress held in Vienna from 12 June to 21 July 1868.⁹ A notable development occurred at the third telegraph congress, convened in Rome from 1 December 1871 to 14 January 1872, immediately preceding the establishment of the Universal Postal Union: Ottoman Empire's delegation comprised Mehmet İzzet Effendi, chief inspector, alongside Yanko Makridi, one of the senior officials of the Post and Telegraph Ministry, who would later participate in the first international postal congress.¹⁰ This consistent representation underscores the Empire's early and sustained engagement in international telegraph diplomacy, which provided both experience and institutional knowledge that would inform its subsequent participation in postal negotiations.

Although the Ottoman Empire was absent from the 1863 Paris Postal Conference—which failed to produce a consensus on the operational issues under consideration—the Empire's sustained engagement in telegraph affairs facilitated the accumulation of substantial experience and technical expertise.

The year 1863 proved pivotal in laying the foundations for the standardization of international postal regulations. In the ensuing years, efforts to achieve greater

8 H. Mamert Gallian, *Dictionnaire Télégraphique, Economique et Secret*, Paris, 1874, p. 2.

9 *Documents de la conférence télégraphique internationale de Vienne*, Vienne, Imprimerie Impériale et Royale de la Cour et de l'Etat, 1868, p. 34.

10 *Documents de la conférence télégraphique internationale de Rome*, Berne, Bureau international des administrations télégraphiques, Imprimerie Rieder & Simmen, 1872, p. 215.

postal uniformity continued; however, ongoing political and military conflicts among Germany, Austria, and France obstructed the convening of a formal postal congress. While these challenges delayed the formal establishment of the Universal Postal Union, they did not diminish Germany's central influence as a leading founding member. Ultimately, between 15 September and 9 October 1874, twenty-two states—including the Ottoman Empire—convened in Bern to deliberate on a draft convention governing international mail, a proposal developed and championed by Heinrich von Stephan, a preeminent architect of postal reform.¹¹

Ottoman Empire's participation in its first international postal congress constitutes a significant historical milestone for several reasons. It marked the first occasion in which the Ottoman Empire formally addressed the challenges posed by foreign mail operations, signalling the emergence of a global postal dispute whose legacies persist to this day. During the congress, the Ottoman Empire not only articulated proposals to resolve issues arising from foreign postal activity but also emphasized the principles of solidarity, dialogue, and multilateral cooperation. Although a cohesive national postal identity was still in the process of formation, Ottoman Empire's accession to the Universal Postal Union represented a transformative turning point, necessitating a careful appraisal of the technical and administrative challenges inherent in the pursuit of a standardized system of universal communication.

Prior to its accession to the Universal Postal Union, the Ottoman Empire undertook extensive diplomatic efforts aimed at curbing the operations of foreign postal services within its territories. Following its membership, these initiatives gained significant traction, reinforced by a comprehensive legal framework that established the institutional and regulatory basis for their effective implementation.¹²

At the Congress, when Yanko Makridi presented the challenges posed by foreign mail operations, European states emphasized that such matters should be addressed through diplomatic channels rather than within the framework of the Congress. They argued that the issue was fundamentally political and fell outside the scope of the postal agenda. Although the Ottoman Empire actively pursued diplomatic avenues to resolve the matter, European delegates maintained a critical stance toward the operational capacity and effectiveness of its postal administration. As a result, the likelihood of a favourable outcome for the Ottoman

11 *Documents du Congrès Postal International réuni à Berne*, p. 4, 164.

12 BOA, İ.HR. 266/15974, 20 March 1875; BOA, HR.TO. 515/8, 17 February 1875.

Empire during the proceedings was minimal. Confronted with strong opposition from European representatives, Switzerland, which presided over the Congress, ultimately removed the issue from the official agenda.¹³

As previously noted, Ottoman Empire's participation in the Bern Congress introduces important nuances that position the Empire at the centre of international postal scholarship from multiple perspectives. The Ottoman Empire was the first state in the world to formally draw attention to the violations that obstructed the proper functioning of mail within a sovereign territory during the foundational UPU negotiations. It called upon participating states to address these global postal distortions and urged prospective members of the Union to collaborate in devising effective solutions. In doing so, the Ottoman Empire foregrounded a shared challenge in the early history of the UPU. Yet, the extent of the Ottoman Empire's engagement in the Bern Congress deliberations and the positions it sought to defend remain underexplored in the academic literature.

Similarly, research on the UPU and its subsequent congresses has paid little attention to Ottoman Empire's strategic approach to foreign mail violations—a strategy first articulated at Bern and consistently raised in the debates of later international postal assemblies.

Framing the Scope of the Ottoman Empire-UPU Historical Engagement

The distinctive character of the Universal Postal Union's global network—collectively established by states diverse in terms of race, religion, ethnicity, language, lifestyle, social organization, culture, economic systems, and forms of governance—is explicitly articulated in the UPU Constitution as a “single postal territory.” This designation encompasses the entirety of the postal infrastructure across all UPU member states, underscoring the Union's foundational principle of integrated, standardized, and universally accessible postal communication.¹⁴

Examining the interplay between the collective aspiration for a universal postal system and the continued presence of foreign mail operations provides critical insights into the postal development of states such as Türkiye, as well as former colonial territories facing analogous challenges. For postal historians and scholars, it is imperative to assess whether the coexistence of multiple violations within a single postal territory constitutes a paradox, a manifestation of systemic injustice, an inevitable outcome of historical circumstances, or a reflection of

13 *Documents du Congrès Postal International réuni à Berne*, p. 22-23.

14 *Les Postes Suisses – Leur Développement jusqu'en 1912*, Berne, Direction générale des Postes suisses, Exposition nationale suisse, Ringier & Cie., 1914, p. 35.

structural power asymmetries, whereby dominant states assert their authority even when doing so contradicts the principles of equity and universality.

In this context, while it is crucial to examine issues such as postal violations, systemic contradictions, conflicts, and disputes through the framework of UPU conventions, it is equally important to evaluate how the UPU has addressed—or failed to address—these challenges over time. Several critical questions arise: had the foreign postal presence been abolished in 1874 or during subsequent UPU congresses, how might Ottoman Empire’s domestic postal development had been reshaped? What are the implications of requiring all Ottoman subjects, including foreign residents, to choose between the national postal administration and European postal service providers? How can one account for the paradox in which sovereign states like the Ottoman Empire were made reliant on European postal networks, while those same European powers maintained exclusive postal monopolies within their own territories? Furthermore, had efforts to close European post offices within the expansive Ottoman domain succeeded, to what extent might this have strengthened the Ottoman Post’s domestic performance, its role in international trade, and its financial sustainability? Finally, to what degree can it be argued that postal services were—and perhaps continue to be—subordinated to the interests of dominant powers during periods of political crisis?

It is well-established that both communication and postal services underwent profound transformations throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁵ The establishment of the Universal Postal Union marked the culmination of centuries of disorder in global postal systems, building upon the revolutionary innovations introduced by the electric telegraph. The increasing involvement of private enterprises in telegraphy, alongside state-run institutions, intensified competition among European powers as they sought to assert monopolistic control over communication infrastructure. The struggle for dominance in postal services, traceable to the seventeenth century, gradually reinforced the principle that postal sovereignty constituted a universally recognized legal prerogative of the state. In pursuit of such monopolization, sovereign powers initially sought to eliminate rival service providers, ultimately asserting full authority over domestic postal operations. By the early nineteenth century, France had consolidated its postal monopoly; Belgium formally delineated the scope of its postal administration in 1830, followed by Switzerland in 1849. This broader European context also

15 Yuan Yao, “Constructing the Ideal River: the 19th Century Origins of the First International Organizations”, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 2016, p. 7-8.

encompassed efforts to unify the German states under a single postal framework, a process mirrored by other nations, many of which had completed comparable centralization by 1830.¹⁶

During this period of European transformation, the Ottoman Post had yet to be institutionally established. To fully understand the dynamics explored in this article, three key points must be emphasized. First, the European states with which the Ottoman Empire would later compete had already completed the internal structuring of their postal systems, encompassing legal frameworks, administrative regulations, and operational infrastructure. Second, having consolidated their national postal networks and regulatory regimes, these states no longer regarded Europe as an open postal market; instead, they engaged in a competitive expansion to extend and entrench their postal presence beyond their own territories, targeting both colonial domains and strategically significant regions such as the Ottoman Empire. Third, from the European perspective, there was substantial resistance to relinquishing operations within Ottoman territories, frequently justified by claims regarding the alleged inefficiencies and inadequacies of the Ottoman Postal Administration.¹⁷

Ottoman Empire's engagement with the Universal Postal Union has historically centred on the issue of foreign mail, a concern that has complicated broader discussions regarding the operational development of its national postal service. As noted earlier, while European member states actively participated in UPU forums to address a wide array of postal matters, Ottoman Empire's involvement was largely defined by its sustained efforts to advocate for the termination of foreign postal operations within its territory.

Conversely, the states that founded the Universal Postal Union, along with those that joined subsequently, were formally recognized as member states. Their postal administrations thereby assumed the role of official agents of their national governments, entrusted with the responsibility of establishing and sustaining relations within the organizational framework of the UPU.

The establishment of the Universal Postal Union affirmed the principle that each member state is entitled to a single, officially designated postal administration responsible for organizing and overseeing national postal operations. In practice, this principle confers exclusive authority upon one postal entity within a

16 Léonard Laborie, *L'Europe mise en réseaux – La France et la coopération internationale dans les postes et les télécommunications (années 1850-années 1950)*, Bruxelles, Peter Lang, 2010, p. 39-47.

17 Yaman, *op. cit.*, p. 209-241.

country's borders, emphasizing the singularity of the administration authorized to conduct international postal exchanges and effectively institutionalizing a de facto monopoly. For the Ottoman Empire, this meant that the Ottoman Post was formally recognized as the sole national postal authority, service provider, and official representative within the UPU framework. Nonetheless, the Ottoman Post continued to face competition and interference from foreign postal administrations operating within its domestic market. Accordingly, a central objective of Ottoman Empire's postal diplomacy was to consolidate the Ottoman Post's exclusive status and to eliminate the presence of foreign mail services within its sovereign territory.

The postal service has long functioned as an inherently international institution, attracting significant attention from states due to its economic, social, cultural, communicative, and logistical dimensions. Historically, it served as the principal conduit through which nations connected with the broader world.¹⁸ In the case of the Ottoman Empire, the evolution of its postal service—anchored in domestic foundations while simultaneously embracing a universal identity—offers a distinctive historical trajectory. Ottoman Empire's membership in the Universal Postal Union must be understood within the broader context of its negotiations with European states over foreign postal operations, as well as the subsequent coverage and responses in the international press.

In addition to the claims frequently propagated by the contemporary press, occasional impartial assessments were also offered; yet these have not been sufficiently incorporated into scholarly research. During the institutionalization of the Ottoman Post, a major challenge arose from the realities of a free market shaped by the capitulations. A thorough and objective examination of the criticisms directed at the Ottoman Post—particularly concerning foreign mail—would substantially enrich the understanding of the historical trajectory of the Ottoman Empire's engagement with the Universal Postal Union.¹⁹

It is well established that the presence of foreign postal services on Ottoman Empire's territory stemmed from the commercial and legal privileges granted to European states.²⁰ These rights enabled major powers—including France, Germany,

18 Francis Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services – The Ancient Near East, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, The Arab Moslem Empires, The Mongol Empire, China, Muscovy*, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1974, p. 3-314.

19 Yaman, op. cit., p. 209-41.

20 Max Kunke, *Die Kapitulationen der Türkei – deren Aufhebung und die neuen deutsch-türkischen Rechtsverträge*, München, J. Schweitzer Verlag, 1918, p. 105.

Italy, Austria, the United Kingdom, and Russia—to establish diplomatic missions within the Empire. As diplomatic engagement expanded, foreign influence extended to commercial enterprises, most notably through the establishment of foreign post offices. In addition to their embassies, these European states capitalized on commercial activity in Ottoman territories by operating post offices that were fully integrated into their respective national postal systems.²¹

It is important to note, however, that foreign post offices were established long after the initial granting of capitulations.²² The first concessions, aimed at strengthening commercial relations with France, were granted in 1535. It was not until 1740 that these privileges were extended to include postal services, thereby permitting the establishment of foreign post offices in Istanbul.²³ In essence, the emergence of these institutions occurred only after the capitulatory system had fully matured.

As noted earlier, the first foreign post offices were established within, or in close proximity to, diplomatic missions. However, as the system evolved, subsequent offices were strategically situated in areas of high commercial activity, operating independently of political institutions.

By that time, European states had developed advanced postal systems that conferred upon them authoritative roles and a prominent voice in postal affairs, both before and after the establishment of the UPU. Moreover, the expansion and consolidation of these foreign postal networks—across both periods—underscore their decisive influence in shaping the structure and operations of the global postal landscape.²⁴

From this perspective, it is noteworthy that the Bern Congress included representatives from Germany, Austria-Hungary, Denmark, Spain, the United

21 Erich Nord, “Rechtverfolgung in der Türkei zur Zeit der Kapitulationen”, *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, Stuttgart, Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1916, p. 381-425.

22 Jacques Thobie, *Intérêts et Impérialisme Français dans l’empire Ottoman (1895-1914)*, Paris, 1977, p. 39.

23 Arthur Leon Horniker, “The First French Capitulations: 1536 or 1569”, *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, vol. 16, issue 2, 1968, p. 168-170; James B. Angell, “The Turkish Capitulations”, *The American Historical Review*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1901, p. 254-259.

24 Sophie Morlot, “A propos du nouveau guide de recherche en histoire postale sous la direction du Comité pour l’histoire de La Poste: la Poste et les correspondances”, *Postes d’Europe XVIIIe-XXIe siècle: Jalons d’une histoire comparée*, sous la direction de Muriel Le Roux, Paris, CHP, 2007, p. 33-46; Olivia Langlois, “L’influence anglaise sur l’adoption de la taxe uniforme en France et dans les autres pays européens”, p. 373-381; Olivier Bataille, “Progrès postal et influence européenne dans la France du XIXe siècle”, p. 361-371.

Kingdom, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, Egypt, and the Ottoman Empire.²⁵ Importantly, 19 of the 22 founding members of the UPU were European states, highlighting the substantial influence exerted by Europe in shaping the early development of international postal governance.

Unsurprisingly, the pre-existing dominance of European states in the Ottoman Empire's postal market presented considerable challenges for the Ottoman Postal Administration. This was particularly evident in the realm of postal competition, where the administration encountered significant obstacles in asserting its authority and expanding its operational influence.²⁶

Ottoman Empire's accession to the Universal Postal Union provided a critical foundation for efforts to indigenize the national postal service, a necessary step for its maintenance and development under state control. With more than ten foreign postal administrations operating within its territory, the drive to assert a sovereign presence and remove external influences from the domestic postal market gained considerable momentum following membership. Ottoman Empire's intensified focus on safeguarding its postal sector within the UPU—the primary international forum for postal affairs—underscores the significance of this accession as a pivotal milestone in the country's postal history.

Efforts to strengthen Ottoman Empire's postal services under state guidance, support, and oversight yielded significant accomplishments. These included the establishment of the Ottoman Post, the initiation of measures to close foreign postal offices during the 1860s, and Ottoman Empire's founding membership in both the International Telegraph Union (ITU) in 1865 and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874.

A Holistic Review of Existing Literature

The primary data for this study were meticulously collected and analysed from a range of authoritative sources, including the Ottoman Archives (BOA), specialized files on the Bern Congress preserved in the Swiss PTT Archives, and the congress records available in the UPU Library. In addition, contemporary journals were incorporated into the analysis. Documents from the Ottoman

25 *Documents du Congrès Postal International réuni à Berne*, p. 148.

26 For further information, see Leopold Neumann - Adolphe De Plason, *Recueil des Traités et Conventions Conclues par l'Autriche avec les Puissances Étrangères, depuis 1763 jusqu'à nos Jours*, Convention Postale entre l'Autriche et la France conclue à Paris – Ratifications échangées le 30 Octobre 1857, Vienne, Imprimerie I. et R. de la Cour et de l'Etat, 1877, p. 303.

Archives provide crucial insights into the development of the Ottoman Postal Administration and its engagement with the UPU, while materials from the Swiss archives offer valuable information regarding the participation of Ottoman delegations in UPU congresses.

Given that this study primarily engages with foreign-language literature, analytical priority was accorded to sources that critically examine the role of the Ottoman Post Office in shaping international postal practices and correspondence.

The majority of documents located in foreign archives were in French and German, highlighting the predominant Western influence in the establishment of the UPU. In addition, materials in Turkish, English, Spanish, and Italian were consulted. These documents were systematically analysed and cross-referenced, with detailed annotations compiled to support and substantiate the arguments presented in this study.

The majority of the documents found in the foreign archives were in French and German, underscoring the predominant influence of France and Germany in the establishment of the UPU. In addition, materials in Turkish, German, English, Spanish, and Italian were consulted. The documents were systematically analysed and cross-compared, with detailed annotations compiled to support and substantiate the arguments presented in this article.

In addition, a wide range of specialized journals focused on postal services and postal history were thoroughly reviewed, with particular emphasis on publications from the period under investigation. These sources provided valuable perspectives and comparative insights into the institutional and operational development of the Ottoman Postal Administration.

Within the Swiss PTT Archives, concerted efforts were made to consolidate all documents pertaining to Türkiye and the Turkish Post into a dedicated collection. Among the most significant materials consulted were the official list of congress participants, which confirmed Ottoman Empire's representation at the 1874 Bern Congress; handwritten session minutes, providing detailed insights into the proceedings; and voting records, which documented Ottoman Empire's involvement and contributions during critical postal negotiations. These documents were primarily sourced from the special file devoted to the 1874 Bern Congress, serving as a foundational resource for reconstructing Ottoman Empire's early engagement with the UPU.²⁷

27 Akten zur internationalen Postkonferenz von 1874 in Bern und zum Beschluss der Gründung des Weltpostvereins: Materialien zum Postverkehr in der Schweiz und mit dem Ausland; Kor-

Extensive archival research was conducted at the UPU Library to identify both primary and secondary sources illuminating Ottoman Empire's UPU membership and its participation in the 1874 Bern Congress. Particular attention was given to foundational documents of international postal cooperation, including the original text of the first comprehensive international postal convention, signed on 9 October 1874. In addition, detailed records of the congress proceedings were examined to trace Ottoman Empire's contributions, its diplomatic positioning, and the broader context of international negotiations that shaped the early framework of the UPU.

To understand the UPU's perception of the international postal crisis and the strategies it employed in response, a comprehensive review of the *Union Postale's* physical collection at the UPU Library was undertaken, with particular emphasis on the period from 1874 to 1920. This investigation sought to identify sources relating to Ottoman Empire's UPU membership, the development of the Ottoman Post, and the operations of foreign postal administrations within its territory. The research revealed an unexpected scarcity of information regarding Ottoman postal services. Nonetheless, four distinct themes emerged from the analysis, which are discussed in detail in the following section:

- "The Turkish Posts", *Union Postale*, Vol. 1, N. 3 (1875): 49-50.
- "Organization of the Posts in Turkey", *Union Postale*, Vol. 1, N. 4 (1876): 66.
- "Reorganization of the Turkish Administration of Posts and Telegraphs", *Union Postale*, Vol. 2, N. 2 (1877): 44-46.
- "The Postal Orders Service in Turkey", *Union Postale*, Vol. 38, N. 8 (1913): 125-126.

The analysis of the examined sources revealed a conspicuous absence of material concerning Ottoman Empire's UPU membership process and the operations of foreign postal services within its territory. Particularly notable is the lack of discussion in *Union Postale* regarding the structure and activities of foreign post offices. This omission may be interpreted as a deliberate editorial choice that curtailed the visibility of the issue on the international agenda. Moreover, it can be seen as reflecting the marginalization or minimization of Ottoman Empire's efforts to address the presence of foreign postal administrations within its borders.

Conversely, the literature review indicates that during the 1890s—a period when the issue of foreign postal services gained increasing prominence—*Union Postale* routinely published comprehensive statistical data and analytical reports on the historical development, structural organization, and reform trajectories of national postal administrations, particularly in Europe.²⁸ Against this backdrop, the conspicuously limited attention afforded to the Ottoman Empire, despite its sustained efforts to contest foreign postal operations within its territory, raises significant questions. This omission may reflect a systematic marginalization of Ottoman Empire's position or an implicit reluctance to acknowledge the concerns of a founding member whose experiences diverged from prevailing narratives of postal progress and international cooperation.

The review further revealed that, in contrast to other founding and subsequent member states of the UPU, the Ottoman Empire received disproportionately limited attention in official UPU publications. While detailed accounts of the postal structures and operations of European states—particularly in their overseas colonies—were routinely featured, the designation of various postal centres within Ottoman territory as extensions of specific European postal administrations, and their implicit treatment as part of UPU territory, has remained largely unexplored in the existing literature.

In an effort to assess whether various dimensions of Türkiye–UPU relations were addressed in *Union Postale*, the scope of the review was extended to cover the period from 1914 through the Republican era. However, this broader inquiry yielded no substantial findings, aside from the limited information summarized below:

- “Postal Statistics of Turkey in 1913 and 1914”, *Union Postale*, Vol. 43, N. 2 (1918): 25-27.

To gain insights into the Ottoman postal services and the broader domestic postal market, the *Operating Reports of the UPU International Bureau (Rapport de Gestion du Bureau de l'Union Postale Universelle)* were also consulted. These reports primarily provided information on the organizational structure and functions of the International Bureau, including its activities, preparations for conferences and congresses, notifications concerning international postal services, statistical data, internal administrative matters, and specific issues such as the principles governing participation in the UPU Convention. In addition, the reports regularly included updates on *Union Postale* derived from subscription data. Within this context, the fluctuating number of subscriptions originating

28 *Union Postale*, vol., n. 1, Janvier 1880; *Union Postale*, vol., n. 3, Mars 1880; *Union Postale*, vol., n. 4, Avril 1880; *Union Postale*, vol., n. 5, Mai 1880.

from Ottoman Empire over the years offers valuable insights into the level of coordination between the UPU and the Ottoman Empire, the frequency with which the Ottoman Postal Administration engaged with international postal literature, and the extent to which information concerning Ottoman Empire's postal sector was disseminated within the global postal community.

The initial data regarding the paid subscriptions of UPU member states appears in the 1886 operational report, which notably omits the Ottoman Empire from the subscription list. In contrast, European nations, particularly Germany, were consistently listed and frequently ranked highly, reflecting substantial subscription numbers.²⁹ To assess Türkiye's engagement, records spanning until 1923—the year when foreign postal administrations were precisely dismantled—were meticulously examined. The findings reveal considerable fluctuations in Ottoman Empire's paid subscriptions over the years: 1 in 1893,³⁰ 1 in 1901,³¹ 1 in 1902,³² 17 in 1910,³³ 54 in 1912,³⁴ 20 in 1912,³⁵ 18 in 1913,³⁶ 23 in 1914,³⁷ 21 in 1915,³⁸ 21 in 1916,³⁹ 1 in 1917,⁴⁰ and 14 in 1918.⁴¹ Notably, the Ottoman Empire

29 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1886*, Berne, 1887, p. 1-14; "Geschäftsbericht des Internationalen Bureaus des Weltpostvereins für das Jahr 1894", *Archiv für Post und Telegraphie*, n. 8, April 1895, p. 245-250.

30 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1893*, 15 Janvier 1894, p. 2.

31 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1901*, 3 Février 1902, p. 2.

32 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1902*, 5 Février 1903, p. 2.

33 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1910*, 16 Février 1911, p. 2.

34 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1911*, 22 Février 1912, p. 2.

35 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1912*, 19 Février 1913, p. 2.

36 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1913*, 17 Mars 1914, p. 2.

37 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1914*, 3 Mars 1915, p. 2.

38 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1915*, 6 Mars 1916, p. 2.

39 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1916*, 8 Février 1917, p. 2.

40 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1917*, 9 Mars 1918, p. 2.

41 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1918*, 31 Mars 1919, p. 2.

did not renew its subscription in the years immediately following World War I, as evidenced by the absence of subscription data in the management reports for 1919, 1920, 1922, and 1923.⁴²

In principle, UPU member states are obliged to inform the International Bureau of any postal incidents or developments of an international nature occurring within their territories. This obligation serves both as a responsibility to other postal administrations and as an opportunity for member states to demonstrate their postal capabilities to the international community. In instances of operational necessity—such as the introduction of new services or shipping routes—or in the event of disruptions caused by natural disasters or political crises affecting mail flow, the relevant postal administration is required to notify the UPU. These notifications are subsequently disseminated to the operational departments of all member states through official communications, known as circulars. Within this framework, the earliest UPU circulars concerning the Ottoman Empire reveal a limited exchange of information, consistent with findings in *Union Postale*. In contrast, substantial attention was devoted to developments related to the postal centres of European states operating within Ottoman territory, with detailed coverage focused primarily on postal operations. Ottoman Empire's contributions to the UPU circulars were minimal, with the sole notifications originating from the Ottoman Postal Administration regarding prohibited consignments that could potentially disrupt postal circulation due to their hazardous nature.⁴³

As part of the literature review, several noteworthy studies examining the Turkish Post from various perspectives were analysed. Among these, Şekip Eşkin's «Posta, Telgraf ve Telefon Rehberi» (Post, Telegraph and Telephone Guide), published in 1942, provides valuable insights into the early organizational structures of Turkish postal services. Similarly, Asaf Tanrıku't's 1984 work, «Türkiye Posta ve Telgraf ve Telefon Tarihi ve Teşkilat ve Mevzuatı (Turkish Post, Telegraph and Telephone History and Organisation and Legislation)», was particularly significant due to its foundation in primary sources. Another critical academic contribution is Nesimi Yazıcı's doctoral dissertation, «Tanzimat

42 *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1919*, 8 Mars 1920, p. 2; *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1920*, 18 Mars 1921, p. 2; *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1921*, 25 Mars 1922, p. 2; *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1922*, 6 Mars 1923, p. 2; *Rapport de Gestion du Bureau International de l'Union Postale Universelle 1923*, 2 Avril 1924, p. 2.

43 «Circularaire N: 2063/104 – Objet: Turquie: Objets Interdits – Berne, le 7 Mai 1904», *Table des Matières des Circulaires du Bureau International*, Berne, Union Postale Universelle, 1904.

Devri Osmanlı Posta ve Telgraf Teşkilatı” (Tanzimat Period Ottoman Post and Telegraph Organisation), which offers an in-depth exploration of the institutional developments during a pivotal era. Additionally, Bahri Ata’s master’s thesis, “The Transfer of Telegraph Technology to the Ottoman Empire in the XIXth Century,” examines Türkiye’s engagement with telegraphy, marking an important technological shift. Tanju Demir’s 2001 doctoral thesis, “Türkiye’de Posta ve Telefon ve Telgraf Örgütünün Tarihsel Gelişimi” (The Historical Development of the Post, Telephone, and Telegraph Organization in Turkey), provides foundational analysis, especially regarding the role of foreign postal services in Türkiye’s postal evolution. Further significant works reviewed include Ayşegül Okan’s “The Ottoman Postal and Telegraph Services in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century” (2003) and Seyfi Toptaş’s “İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Osmanlı Posta ve Telgraf Teşkilatı” (The Committee of Union and Progress and the Ottoman Postal and Telegraph Organization) (2004). The reviewed literature highlighted a gap in scholarly research specifically addressing Türkiye’s accession to the UPU. This gap underscores the motivation behind the author’s doctoral thesis, which aims to fill this void in the academic field.⁴⁴

The research further reveals a pronounced paucity of content in foreign literature concerning the Ottoman Postal Administration. Notably, within the bibliographies of source works compiled by the UPU—which examine various aspects of global postal administrations and the history of postal services—there is a conspicuous absence of references to Turkish scholarly works or information on the Ottoman Post. While contributions from a wide array of countries, including Germany, the United States, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Norway, the Netherlands, Iran, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Salvador, Sweden, Switzerland, and Uruguay, are represented, no Turkish works appear in these bibliographies. This omission highlights a significant gap in Türkiye’s scholarly engagement with the international postal community, underscoring a missed opportunity to transform its 150-year participation in UPU activities—and the complex challenges it faced—into a meaningful corpus of academic knowledge and resources.

44 Mehmet Şükrü Yaman, “Osmanlı Posta Teşkilatının Dünya Posta Birliği ile İlişkileri 1874-1920/The Relations of Ottoman Postal Administration with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) 1874-1920”, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation), Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, Ankara, 2021.

Conclusion

Foreign postal services, which had become deeply embedded in daily life in the Ottoman Empire, were tolerated—and at times even encouraged—by the state for an extended period, primarily due to their capacity to meet pressing communication needs. This tolerance, originating in the 1740s as an unintended consequence of capitulatory privileges granted to European powers, persisted until the 1860s. However, the institutionalization efforts and postal reforms initiated and closely monitored by the Ottoman government signalled that the national postal system had matured to a point where reliance on foreign postal networks was no longer necessary. In contrast, European states resisted the dismantling of the extensive postal infrastructure they had established within Ottoman territory, justifying their continued presence by attributing alleged postal violations to the purported inadequacies of the Ottoman Postal Administration. What initially emerged as a localized administrative issue—commonly referred to as the “foreign posts”—gradually escalated into a significant international dispute, highlighting the intersection of national sovereignty, bureaucratic capacity, and power asymmetries in the early history of international postal governance.

The Ottoman Empire emerged as a determined advocate for the creation of an intergovernmental postal organization and participated actively as a founding member in the 1874 Bern Congress of the UPU. Its engagement was driven by the expectation that the UPU would serve as an institutional platform to address postal violations within its borders and provide a durable, multilateral solution to the longstanding challenge posed by foreign postal operations.

Within the UPU, the Ottoman Empire consistently articulated its concerns, emphasizing that the continued operation of foreign postal services on its territory impeded the development of its national postal system and contravened the universal principles underpinning the Union. Despite these persistent efforts, the Ottoman Empire was ultimately unable to prevent the formal recognition of these foreign postal centres as legitimate entities within the UPU framework. This episode serves as an early example of the politicization of postal services, offering valuable insight into the competing interests and diplomatic negotiations that shaped the Union’s formative years, and illuminating the broader tensions between national sovereignty and international postal cooperation.

Throughout its 150-year history, there are strikingly few academic studies that have examined Türkiye’s engagement with the UPU in a systematic or critical manner. This absence in the literature is particularly notable given the country’s

long-standing involvement in international postal diplomacy, its persistent efforts to assert national postal sovereignty, and the challenges it faced from the presence of foreign postal administrations on its territory. The lack of scholarly attention has resulted in an incomplete understanding of both Ottoman Empire's domestic postal development and its role in shaping the early international postal order. Moreover, this gap reflects broader patterns of marginalization within global postal historiography, whereby the experiences of non-Western member states—despite their active participation and unique challenges—have been consistently underrepresented or overlooked in favour of European-centric narratives. Consequently, Türkiye's 150-year participation in the UPU, along with the complexities and contestations inherent in its postal history, remains an underexplored and critically important domain for future research.

This article offers a critical examination of the complex and multifaceted historical evolution of Ottoman Empire's relations with the UPU, situating the analysis within the broader landscape of existing academic literature. It seeks to establish a solid foundation for future scholarly inquiry in this relatively underexplored domain. Significantly, the study underscores the conspicuous absence of comprehensive research specifically addressing Türkiye-UPU relations, arguing that this lacuna has materially influenced both the effectiveness and broader dynamics of their institutional engagement. By highlighting this scholarly gap, the article aims to stimulate further academic interest and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the historical, diplomatic, and institutional dimensions that have shaped Türkiye's long-standing interaction with the UPU.

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