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[continued in Volume 3]

[32] *The ranks of royal and governmental authority
and the titles that go with those ranks.*

II, 1

It ⁴³³ should be known that, by himself, the ruler is weak, and he carries a heavy load. He must look for help from his fellow men. He needs their help for the necessities of life and for all his other requirements. How much more, then, does he need it to exercise political leadership over his own species, over the creatures and servants of God whom God entrusted to him as subjects. He must defend and protect the community from its enemies. He must enforce restraining laws among the people, in order to prevent mutual hostility and attacks upon property. This includes improving the safety of the roads.⁴³⁴ He must cause the people to act in their own best interests, and he must supervise such general matters involving their livelihood and mutual dealings as food-stuffs and weights and measures, in order to prevent cheating.⁴³⁵ He must look after the mint, in order to protect the currency used by the people in their mutual dealings, against fraud.⁴³⁶ He must exercise political leadership and get people to submit to him to the degree he desires and be satisfied, both with his intentions regarding them and with the fact that he alone has all the glory and they have none. This requires an extraordinary measure of psychology.⁴³⁷ A noble sage has said: "Moving mountains from their places is easier for me than to influence people psychologically."^{437a}

II, 2

It is better that such help be sought from persons close

⁴³³ Cf. Issawi, p. 115; G. Surdon and L. Bercher, *Recueil de textes de sociologie* (Algiers, 1951), pp. 86-96, translating our pp. 3-19 and 35-37.

⁴³⁴ Cf. also p. 199, below.

⁴³⁵ Cf. 1:463, above.

⁴³⁶ Cf. 1:464, above.

⁴³⁷ Lit., "caring for (influencing) the hearts . . ."

^{437a} Cf. the similar saying ascribed to Luqmân in al-Mubashshir, *Mukhtâr al-ḥikam*, Spanish tr. H. Knust, *Mittheilungen aus dem Eskurial* (Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, No. 141) (Tübingen, 1879), pp. 339 f. Cf. also al-Jâhiz, *Kitâb Kitmân as-sirr*, in *Majmû' Rasâ'il al-Jâhiz*, ed. P. Kraus and M. Ṭ. al-Ḥâjirî (Cairo, 1943), p. 41.

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to the ruler through common descent, common upbringing, or old attachment to the dynasty. This makes such persons and the ruler work together in the same spirit. God said: "Give me my brother Aaron as helper (wazir) from my family. Give me strength through him and let him participate in my business."⁴³⁸

The person from whom the ruler seeks help may help him with the sword, or with the pen, or with advice and knowledge, or by keeping the people from crowding upon him and diverting him from the supervision of their affairs. (The ruler may) also entrust the supervision of the whole realm to him and rely upon his competence and ability for the task. Therefore, the help the ruler seeks may be given by one man, or it may be distributed among several individuals.

Each of the different (instruments) through which help may be given has many different subdivisions. "The pen" has such subdivisions, for instance, as "the pen of letters and correspondence," "the pen of diplomas"⁴³⁹ and fiefs," and "the pen of bookkeeping," which means the offices of chief of tax collections and allowances and of minister of the army. II, 3 "The sword" includes such subdivisions, for instance, as the offices of chief of military operations, chief of police, chief of the postal service,⁴⁴⁰ and administration of the border regions.

It should further be known that governmental positions in Islam fell under the caliphate, because the institution of the caliphate was both religious and worldly, as we have mentioned before.⁴⁴¹ The religious laws govern all (governmental positions) and apply to each one of them in all its aspects, because the religious law governs all the actions of human beings.

⁴³⁸ Qur'ân 20.28-32 (30-33).

⁴³⁹ *Şakk* means both diplomas conferring privileges and checks, i.e., notes entitling the bearer to some kind of payment.

⁴⁴⁰ The postal service (*barîd*) includes the intelligence service.

⁴⁴¹ Cf. 1:387, above.

Government Offices

Jurists,⁴⁴² therefore, are concerned with the rank of ruler or sultan and with the conditions under which it is assumed, whether by gaining control over the caliphate⁴⁴³—this is what is meant by sultan—⁴⁴⁴ or by the caliph delegating (power)—that is what they mean by wazir, as will be mentioned. (They are also concerned with) the extent of (the ruler's) jurisdiction over legal, financial, and other political matters, which may be either absolute or circumscribed. Furthermore, (they are concerned with the causes) that necessitate (the ruler's) removal, should (such causes) present themselves, and with other things connected with the ruler or sultan. Jurists are likewise concerned with all the positions under the ruler and sultan, such as the wazirate, the tax collector's office, and the administrative functions.⁴⁴⁵ Jurists must concern themselves with all these things, because, as we have mentioned before, in Islam the caliphate is an institution of the Muslim religious law, and as such determines the position of the ruler or sultan.

However, when we discuss royal and governmental positions, it will be as something required by the nature of civilization and human existence. It will not be under the aspect of particular religious laws. This, one knows, is not our intention in this book. There is no need to go into details with regard to the religious laws governing these positions. The subject is fully treated in the books on administration

⁴⁴² The function of the *faqîh* belongs to the religious law, but, in view of the preceding remarks, Ibn Khaldûn argues that he is legitimately concerned with the laws and conditions of worldly politics, both theoretically and practically.

⁴⁴³ Surdon and Bercher: "independently of the caliphate." Ibn Khaldûn has in the mind the situation in which the Sultan usurps some power that belongs *de iure* to the caliphate.

⁴⁴⁴ The parenthesis is found in the older texts, but appears in the margin of C and is omitted in D.

⁴⁴⁵ *Wilâyah* may mean the appointive power, like *tawliyah*. Cf. below, p. 16, l. 4, and p. 19, l. 9. It may also refer to provincial administration. Here, however, it must be understood in the sense in which it is employed in the chapter headings of al-Mâwardî's *Aḥkâm as-sultânîyah*, as "taking charge of" various administrative functions.

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II, 4 (*al-Aḥkām as-sultānīyah*), such as the work (of that title) by Judge Abū l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī and the works of other distinguished jurists. Those who want to know the details should look them up there. If we discuss the caliphal positions and treat them individually, it is only in order to make the distinction between them and the governmental (*sultān*) positions clear, and not in order to make a thorough study of their legal status. This is not the purpose of our book. Thus, we shall discuss those matters only as the necessary result of the nature of civilization in human existence.

God gives success.

The wazirate

The wazirate is the mother of governmental functions and royal ranks. The name itself simply means “help.” *Wizārah* (wazirate) is derived either from *mu’āzarah* “help,” or from *wizr* “load,” as if the wazir were helping the person whom he supports to carry his burdens and charges. Thus, the meaning comes down to no more than “help.”⁴⁴⁶

We mentioned before, at the beginning of this section,⁴⁴⁷ that the conditions and activities of the ruler are restricted to four fields:

(1) (His activities) may concern ways and means of protecting the community, such as the supervision of soldiers, armaments, war operations, and other matters concerned with military protection and aggression. The person in charge is the wazir, as the term was customarily used in the old dynasties in the East, and as it is still used at this time in the West.

(2) Or, they may concern correspondence with persons far away from the ruler in place or in time,⁴⁴⁸ and the execution of orders concerning persons with whom the ruler has

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. S. D. Goitein, “The Origin of the Vizierate and Its True Character,” in *Islamic Culture*, XVI (1942), 380–92.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibn Khaldūn presumably refers here to his remarks on p. 3, above.

⁴⁴⁸ Writing is always praised in Arabic literature as a means of bridging distances in space and time. This explains the rather inappropriate reference to time in this context. Cf. also, pp. 356 and 377, below.

The Wazirate

no direct contact. The man in charge is the secretary (*kâtib*).

(3) Or, they may concern matters of tax collection and expenditures, and the safe handling of these things in all their aspects. The man in charge is the chief of tax and financial matters. In the contemporary East, he is called the wazir.

(4) Or, they may concern ways to keep petitioners away from the ruler, so that they do not crowd upon him and divert him from his affairs. This task reverts to the doorkeeper (*hâjib*), who guards the door.

The (ruler's) activities do not extend beyond these four fields. Each royal and governmental function belongs to one of them. However, the most important field is the one that requires giving general assistance in connection with everything under the ruler's direct control. This means constant contact with the ruler and participation in all his governmental activities. (All the activities) that concern some particular group of people or some particular department are of lower rank. (Among such activities are) the (military) leadership of a border region, the administration of some special tax, or the supervision of some particular matter, such as surveillance (*hisbah*) of foodstuffs, or supervision of the mint.⁴⁴⁹ All these activities are concerned with particular conditions. The persons in charge are, therefore, subordinate to those in general supervision, and the latter outrank them. II, 5

It was this way throughout the whole pre-Islamic period. When Islam appeared on the scene and power was vested in the caliph, the forms of royal authority no longer existed, and all its functions disappeared, except for some advisory and consultative ones that were natural and continued to exist because they were unavoidable. The Prophet used to ask the men around him for advice and to consult them on both general and special (private) matters. In addition, he discussed other very special affairs with Abû Bakr. Certain Arabs familiar with the situation in the Persian, Byzantine,

⁴⁴⁹ Cf. 1:462 ff., above.

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and Abyssinian dynasties, called Abû Bakr, therefore, Muḥammad's "wazir." The word *wazîr* was not known (originally) among the Muslims, because the simplicity of Islam had done away with royal ranks. The same relationship (as that between Muḥammad and Abû Bakr) existed between 'Umar and Abû Bakr, and between 'Alî and 'Umar, and 'Uthmân and 'Umar.

11, 6 No specific ranks existed among the (early Muslims) in the fields of tax collection, expenditures, and bookkeeping. The Muslims were illiterate Arabs who did not know how to write and keep books. For bookkeeping they employed Jews, Christians, or certain non-Arab clients versed in it. (Bookkeeping) was little known among them. Their nobles did not know it well, because illiteracy was their distinctive characteristic.

Likewise, no specific rank existed among (the early Muslims) in the field of (official) correspondence and (the transmission in writing) of orders to be executed. They were illiterate, and everyone could be trusted to keep a statement secret and to forward it safely (to its destination). Also, there were no political matters that would have required the use of (confidential secretaries), because the caliphate was a religious matter and had nothing to do with power politics. Furthermore, secretarial skill had not yet become a craft, its best (products or representatives) recommended to the caliph. Every individual was capable of explaining what he wanted in the most eloquent manner. The only thing lacking was the (technical ability to) write. (For this,) the caliph always appointed someone who knew how to write well, to do such writing as there was occasion for.

Keeping petitioners away from the gates (of the caliph's court) was something that the religious law forbade (the caliphs) to do, and they did not do it. However, when the caliphate changed to royal authority and when royal forms and titles made their appearance, the first thing the dynasty did was to bar the masses from access (to the ruler). The rulers feared that their lives were in danger from attacks by

The Wazirate

rebels and others, such as had happened to 'Umar, to 'Alî, to Mu'âwiyah, to 'Amr b. al-'Âṣ, and to others. Furthermore, were the people given free access (to the ruler), they would crowd upon him and divert him from state affairs. Therefore, the ruler appointed some person to take care of this for him and called him "doorkeeper" (*hâjib*). It has already been mentioned that 'Abd-al-Malik said to a doorkeeper whom he was appointing: "I have given you the office of keeper of my door, (and you are entitled to turn away anyone) save these three persons: the muezzin, because he is the missionary of God; the person in charge of the mails, for it (always) is something (important) that he brings; and the person in charge of food, lest it spoil."⁴⁵⁰

11, 7

Afterwards, royal authority flourished. The (official) councilor and assistant for tribal and group affairs and good relations (with the various tribes and groups) made his appearance. For him, the name of wazir was used. Book-keeping remained in the hands of clients, Jews, and Christians. For (official) documents, a special secretary was appointed, as a precaution against possible publication of the ruler's secrets, something that would be disastrous to his role as political leader. This secretary was not as important as the wazir, because he was needed only for written matters, and not for matters that could be discussed orally. At that time, speech still preserved its old position and was uncorrupted.⁴⁵¹ Therefore, the wazirate was the highest rank throughout the Umayyad dynasty. The wazir had general supervision of all matters delegated to him⁴⁵² and in which he acted in a consultative capacity, as well as all other matters of a defensive or offensive nature. This also entailed the supervision of the ministry (*dîwân*) of the army,⁴⁵³ the as-

⁴⁵⁰ Cf. 1:451, above.

⁴⁵¹ Cf. p. 11, below.

⁴⁵² Bulaq: "matters of administration."

⁴⁵³ It should be kept in mind that actual direction of military operations did not come under the jurisdiction of the *dîwân al-jaysh*, which was mainly concerned with fiscal matters concerning the army. It might be called "bureau of army rolls." Cf. pp. 20 ff., below.

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signment of military allowances at the beginning of each month, and other matters.

Then the 'Abbâsid dynasty made its appearance. Royal authority flourished. The royal ranks were many and high ones. At that time, the position of wazir assumed an added importance. He became the delegate (of the caliph) as executive authority. His rank in the dynasty became conspicuous. Everyone looked toward the wazirate and submitted to it. Supervision of the bookkeeping office was entrusted to (the wazir), because his function required him to distribute the military allowances. Thus, he had to supervise the collection and distribution of (the money), and the supervision of (that task) was added to his (duties). Furthermore, supervision of "the pen" and (official) correspondence was entrusted to him, in order to protect the ruler's secrets and to preserve good style, since the language of the great mass had (by that time) become corrupt. A seal was made to be placed upon the documents of the ruler, in order to preserve them from becoming public. (That seal) was entrusted to (the wazir).

11, 8

Thus, the name of wazir came to include the functions of both "the sword" and "the pen," in addition to all the other things for which the wazirate stood and in addition to its function of giving assistance (to the ruler). In the days of ar-Rashîd, Ja'far b. Yaḥyâ was actually called "sultan," an indication of the general extent of his supervising power and control of the dynasty. The only governmental rank that he did not hold was the office of doorkeeper, and he did not hold it because he disdained to accept such an office.

Then the 'Abbâsid dynasty entered the period when control over the caliphs ⁴⁵⁴ was exercised (by others). That control was at times in the hands of the wazir. At other times, it was in the hands of the ruler. When the wazir gained control, it was necessary for him to be appointed the caliph's delegate to comply fully with the religious laws, as mentioned

⁴⁵⁴ *Sic* C and D. The earlier text had "ruler."

The Wazirate

before.⁴⁵⁵ At that time, the wazirate was divided into an “executive wazirate”—this happened when the ruler was in control of his affairs and the wazir executed his decisions—and a “delegated wazirate”—which happened when the wazir controlled the ruler and the caliph⁴⁵⁶ delegated all the affairs of the caliphate, leaving them to his supervision and independent judgment. This has caused a difference of opinion as to whether two wazirs could be appointed at the same time to the “delegated wazirate.” The same difference of opinion has existed with regard to the appointment of two imams at the same time, as was mentioned before in connection with the laws governing the caliphate.

(The ruler) continued to be controlled in this way. Non-Arab rulers seized power. The identity of the caliphate was lost. The usurpers were not interested in adopting the caliphal titles,⁴⁵⁷ and they disdained to share the same title with the wazirs, because the wazirs were their servants. Therefore, they used the names “amir” and “sultan.” Those in control of the dynasty were called *amîr al-umarâ*’ or *sultân*, in addition to the ornamental titles which the caliph used to give them, as can be seen in their surnames.⁴⁵⁸ They left the name wazir to those who held the office (of wazir) in the private retinue of the caliph. So remained the case down to the end of the (‘Abbâsid) dynasty.

II, 9

In the course of this long period, language had become corrupt.⁴⁵⁹ It became a craft practiced by certain people. Thus, it came to occupy an inferior position, and the wazirs were too proud to bother with it. Also, the wazirs were non-Arab,

⁴⁵⁵ Cf., for instance, 1:470 f., above.

⁴⁵⁶ The passage from here to the end of the paragraph is not found in the earlier text of the *Muqaddimah*. It appears in the margin of B and C and in the text of D. The reference to an earlier passage (above, 1:393 f.) is to one of the later additions which were not yet found in the earlier text.

The problem of the possibility of appointing two men to the *wizârat al-tafwid* is discussed by al-Mâwardî, *al-Ahkâm as-sultâniyah* (Cairo, 1298/1881), p. 27.

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. 1:379 and 469, above.

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. 1:469 f., above.

⁴⁵⁹ Cf. esp., 3:346, below.

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and neither eloquence (nor good style) could be expected of their language. People from other classes were chosen for (matters requiring Arabic eloquence and a good style). It was their specialty, and it came to be something that was at the service of (and subordinate to) the wazir.

The name *amîr* was restricted to the men in charge of war operations and the army and related matters, although (the amir) had power over the other ranks and exercised control over everything, either as (the ruler's) delegate or through being in control (of the government). This remained the situation.

Very recently, the Turkish dynasty has made its appearance in Egypt. (The Turkish rulers) noticed that the wazirate had lost its identity, because the (amirs) had been too proud to accept it and had left it to men who were inclined to hold it in the service of the secluded (and powerless) caliph. The authority of the wazir had become secondary to that of the amir. (The wazirate) had become a subordinate, ineffectual office. Consequently, the persons who held high rank in the (Turkish) dynasty (as, for example, the amirs), disdained to use the name of wazir. The person in charge of legal decisions and supervision of the army at the present time, they call "deputy" (*nâ'ib*).⁴⁶⁰ They used the name wazir to designate (the person in charge of) tax collection.

II, 10 The Umayyads in Spain at first continued to use the name wazir in its original meaning. Later, they subdivided the functions of the wazir into several parts. For each function, they appointed a special wazir. They appointed a wazir to furnish an accounting of (government) finances; another for (official) correspondence; another to take care of the needs of those who had suffered wrongs; and another to supervise the situation of people in the border regions. A (special) house was prepared for (all these wazirs). There, they sat upon carpets spread out for them and executed the orders of

⁴⁶⁰ Bulaq adds: "The name doorkeeper continued to be used in its original meaning."

The Wazirate

the ruler, each in the field entrusted to him. One of the wazirs was appointed liaison officer between the wazirs and the caliph. He had a higher position than the others, because he had constant contact with the ruler. His seat was higher than that of the other wazirs. He was distinguished by the title of “doorkeeper” (*ḥâjib*). So it continued down to the end of the (Umayyad) dynasty. The function and rank of *ḥâjib* took precedence over the other ranks. Eventually, the *reyes de taïfas* came to adopt the title. The most important among them at that time was called “doorkeeper” (*ḥâjib*), as we shall mention.⁴⁶¹

Then, the Shî‘ah dynasty (the ‘Ubaydid-Fâṭimids) made its appearance in Ifrîqiyah and al-Qayrawân. The people who supported it were firmly rooted in desert life. Therefore, they at first neglected such functions and did not use the proper names for them. Eventually, however, the dynasty reached the stage of sedentary culture, and (people) came to follow the tradition of the two preceding dynasties (the Umayyads and the ‘Abbâsids) with regard to the use of titles, as the history of the (‘Ubaydid-Fâṭimid dynasty) reveals.

When, later on, the Almohad dynasty made its appearance, it at first neglected the matter because of its desert attitude, but eventually it, too, adopted names and titles. The name wazir was used in its original meaning. Later the tradition of the (Spanish) Umayyad dynasty was followed with regard to government matters and the name wazir was used for the person who guarded the ruler in his court and saw to it that embassies and visitors to the ruler used the proper forms of greeting and address, and that the requisite manners were observed in his presence. The office of doorkeeper was considered by (the later Almohads) a much higher one.⁴⁶² It has continued to be this way down to the present time.

In the Turkish dynasty in the East, the (official) who sees to it that people use the proper modes of address and

⁴⁶¹ Cf. p. 14, below.

⁴⁶² This seems to be the meaning of the Arabic words which usually signify “was taken away from him . . .”

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greeting at court and when embassies are presented to the ruler, is called the *dawâddâr*.⁴⁶³ His office includes control of the “private secretary” (*kâtib as-sirr*) and of the postmasters (intelligence agents) who are active in the ruler’s interest both far and near. Such is the condition of the Turkish dynasty at this time.

God takes charge of affairs.

*The office of doorkeeper (ḥijâbah)*⁴⁶⁴

We have already mentioned⁴⁶⁵ that in the Umayyad and ‘Abbâsid dynasties the title of doorkeeper (*ḥâjib*) was restricted to the person who guarded the ruler from the common people and would not give them access to him, or only in such ways, and at such times, as he determined. (The office of doorkeeper) was lower in rank at that time than the other functions and subordinate to them, because the wazir could intervene whenever he saw fit. This was the situation during the whole ‘Abbâsid period, and the situation still persists at this time. In Egypt, (the office of doorkeeper) is subordinate to the person in charge of the highest function there, who is called “deputy” (*nâ’ib*).

In the Umayyad dynasty in Spain, the office of doorkeeper was that of the person who guarded the ruler from his entourage and from the common people. He was the liaison officer between the ruler and the wazirs and lower (officials). In the (Umayyad) dynasty, the office of doorkeeper was an extremely high position, as (Umayyad) history shows. Men like Ibn Ḥudayr⁴⁶⁶ and others held the office of doorkeeper in (the Umayyad dynasty).

Later, when the (Umayyad) dynasty came under the control of others, the person in control was called doorkeeper (*ḥâjib*), because the office of doorkeeper had been such a distinguished one. Al-Manṣûr b. Abî ‘Âmir, as well as his

⁴⁶³ Or *dawîdâr*; cf. p. 28, below.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. also pp. 111 ff., below.

⁴⁶⁵ Cf. pp. 8 f., above.

⁴⁶⁶ Abû l-Aṣṣbagh b. Muḥammad, d. 320 [A.D. 932]. Cf. also R. Dozy in *Journal asiatique*, XIV⁶ (1869), 158.

The Office of Doorkeeper

two sons,⁴⁶⁷ were *hājibs*. After they had openly adopted the external forms of royal authority, they were succeeded by the *reyes de taïfas*. The latter, also, did not fail to use the title of *hājib*. It was considered an honor to possess it. The most powerful of (the *reyes de taïfas*) used the royal style and titles, and then inevitably mentioned the titles *hājib* and *dhû l-wizâratayn* (Holder of the Two Wazirates), meaning the wazirates of “the sword” and “the pen.” The title of *hājib* referred to the office that guarded the ruler from the common people and from his entourage. *Dhû l-wizâratayn* referred to the fact that (the holder of the title) combined the functions of “the sword” and “the pen.”

II, 12

In the dynasties of the Maghrib and Ifrîqiyah, no mention was made of the title of (doorkeeper), on account of their Bedouin attitude. Occasionally, but rarely, it is found in the ‘Ubaydid(-Fâtimid) dynasty in Egypt. That was at the time when (the ‘Ubaydid-Fâtimids) had become powerful and used to sedentary culture.

In the Almohad dynasty which made its appearance (subsequently), sedentary culture, which calls for the use of titles and the separation of government functions with distinctive names, only became firmly established late (in the dynasty). The only rank they had at first was that of wazir, which they used for the secretary who participated with the ruler in the administration of his special (private) affairs. Men such as Ibn ‘Aṭīyah⁴⁶⁸ and ‘Abd-as-Salâm al-Kûmî⁴⁶⁹ held the position. (Such a wazir) had, in addition to his main duty, to take care of bookkeeping and all the financial business. Later on, the name of wazir was given to relatives of the (Almohad) dynasty, such as Ibn Jâmi’⁴⁷⁰ and others. The name of doorkeeper (*hājib*) was not known at that time in the (Almohad) dynasty.

⁴⁶⁷ Cf. 1:380, above.

⁴⁶⁸ He died in 559 [1158]. Cf. H. Pérès in *Hespèris*, XVIII (1934), 25 ff.

⁴⁶⁹ He was active in the latter part of the twelfth century. Cf. ‘Ibar, VI, 237; de Slane (tr.), II, 193.

⁴⁷⁰ He was active in the early thirteenth century. Cf. ‘Ibar, VI, 250 f.; de Slane (tr.), II, 225, 227 ff.

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In the Ḥafṣid dynasty of Ifrîqiyah, the top position was at first in the hands of a wazir who gave advice and counsel. He was called “*Shaykh* of the Almohads.” He had to take care of appointments and dismissals, the leadership of the army, and war operations. Bookkeeping and the ministry (*dîwân* of tax collection) were another, separate rank. The person in charge of it was called *Şâhib al-ashghâl* (Manager of Financial Affairs).⁴⁷¹ He had complete charge of income and expenditures. He audited the finances, collected payments, and punished defaulters. One condition was that he be an Almohad. “The pen” was also a separate office under (the Almohads). It was only entrusted to a person with good knowledge of (official) correspondence and who could be trusted with secrets. Since people (of consequence in the dynasty) had no professional knowledge of writing and the proper use of their language for (official) correspondence, a particular descent was not a condition of appointment to that office.

II, 13

The royal authority of the (Ḥafṣid) ruler was very far-flung, and a great number of dependents lived in his house. Therefore, he needed a steward to be in charge of his house. (That steward had the duty) properly to apportion and fix the salaries, allowances, garments, kitchen and stable expenditures, and other things. He was in control of the stores (in the treasuries) and had the duty of telling the tax collectors to provide for (the quantities and amounts of money) needed. He was called doorkeeper (*hâjib*). Occasionally, the function of signing (official) documents⁴⁷² was added to his duties, if he happened to have a good knowledge of writing. However, that function was occasionally given to somebody else. It continued to be this way. The ruler stayed in seclusion,⁴⁷³ and the doorkeeper (*hâjib*) became the liaison officer between the people and all the officials. In the later (years)

⁴⁷¹ Cf. I:xxxvii, above, and p. 24, below; R. Brunschvig, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Ḥafṣides* (Publications de l'Institut d'Etudes Orientales d'Alger, Vols. VIII and XI) (Paris, 1940-47), II, 56 ff., 66.

⁴⁷² On the office of the *'alâmah*, cf. I:xli, above.

⁴⁷³ Cf. R. Dozy in *Journal asiatique*, XIV⁶ (1869), 158.

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of the dynasty, the offices of “the sword” and of war operations were added to his duties. At this time it also became his duty to give advice and counsel. Thus, his office became the highest in rank and included all government functions. For some time after (the reign of) the twelfth ruler⁴⁷⁴ of the (Ḥafṣids), the government was controlled by others, and the ruler kept in seclusion. Afterwards, his grandson Sultan Abû l-‘Abbâs, regained control of his affairs. He removed the vestiges of seclusion and (outside) control by abolishing the office of doorkeeper (*ḥâjib*), which had been the stepping stone toward (control of the government).⁴⁷⁵ He handled all his affairs himself without asking anyone else for help. This is the situation at the present time.

There is no trace of the title of doorkeeper (*ḥâjib*) among the Zanâtah dynasties in the Maghrib, of which the most important is the dynasty of the Merinids. Leadership of war operations and of the army belongs to the wazir. The rank of “the pen,” as far as it is concerned with bookkeeping and (official) correspondence, goes to the person who knows these things well, even though it may be in the private possession of certain houses among followers of the dynasty. Sometimes, (the office) is kept in (the same family), sometimes it is shared with others.

II, 14

They have a separate rank for the office (whose function it is to) guard the ruler’s door and to protect the ruler himself from the common people. The person who holds that office is called by them *mizwâr*,⁴⁷⁶ that is, commandant of the elite troops (*jindâr*) who are employed at the court of the ruler and responsible for executing his orders, enforcing the punishments he metes out, executing the severe measures he takes, and guarding the inmates of his prisons. Their

⁴⁷⁴ Abû Bakr, A.D. 1318–1346. Cf. n. 155 to this chapter, above.

⁴⁷⁵ However, the title was retained for an honorary office. Cf. R. Brunschvig, *La Berbérie orientale*, II, 55.

⁴⁷⁶ A Berber word meaning “first.” R. Brunschvig, II, 59, vocalizes *Mazwâr*. Berber forms, for instance, are *ameçwar* (cf. E. Ibañez, *Diccionario rifeño-español* [Madrid, 1949], p. 28a) and *amzuwar* (? according to G. Mercier in *Journal asiatique*, CCV [1924], 316).

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chief (the *mizwâr*) has charge of the court. He has to see to it that people behave properly in the (reception) hall where the common people (are received). His office is something like a minor wazirate.

The dynasty of the 'Abd-al-Wâdids shows no trace of any of these titles, nor does it have separate (government) functions, because of its Bedouin character and insufficient (power). (The 'Abd-al-Wâdids) occasionally use the name doorkeeper (*ḥâjib*) for the person in charge of the ruler's personal household affairs, as was also the case in the Ḥafṣid dynasty. He is given combined charge of bookkeeping and (official) documents, as also was the case among (the Ḥafṣids). The reason for this is that (the 'Abd-al-Wâdids) simply followed the tradition of the dynasty to which they had been subservient and whose propaganda they had been supporting when they started their career.

Present-day Spaniards call the person in charge of bookkeeping and of the ruler's activities and of all the other financial matters, *wakîl* (manager). The wazir (there) has the same duties as the wazir (usually has), but he is also in charge of (official) correspondence. The ruler (himself) puts his signature to all documents. Thus, the Spaniards do not have a separate office of signer of documents (*'alâmah*) as other dynasties have.

In the Turkish dynasty in Egypt, the name of doorkeeper (*ḥâjib*) is used for persons of authority (*ḥâkim*) among the men who hold power, that is, the Turks. These persons have to enforce the law among the people in the town. There are numerous (*ḥâjibs*). The office of (*ḥâjib*) among (the Turks) is lower than that of *nâ'ib*, which has general jurisdiction over both the ruling class and the common people. The *nâ'ib* has the authority to appoint and remove certain officials at the proper times. He may grant and fix small salaries. His orders and decrees are executed as those of the ruler. He is the ruler's delegate in every respect. The doorkeepers (*ḥâjib*), on the other hand, have jurisdiction over the various classes of common people and over the soldiers only when a com-

The Office of Doorkeeper

plaint (against them) is lodged with them. They can use force against those who do not want to submit to (their) judgment. They rank below the *nâ'ib*.

In the Turkish dynasty, the wazir is the person in charge of collecting all the different kinds of taxes: the land tax, customs duties, and the poll tax. He also (is in charge of) the disposition of (the tax revenue) for government expenditures and the fixed stipends (for soldiers and government employees). In addition, he can appoint or remove all officials, whatever their rank and description, who are concerned with tax collection and disbursement.⁴⁷⁷ It is a custom of (the Turks) that the wazir be appointed from among the Copts in charge of the office of bookkeeping and tax collection, because in Egypt they have been familiar with these matters since ancient times. Occasionally, the ruler appoints to that office a member of the ruling group, one of the Turkish grandees or one of their descendants, as occasion may arise.

God administers and governs all affairs in His wisdom. There is no God but Him.

*The ministry (dîwân) of (financial)
operations and taxation*

The ministry of taxation is an office that is necessary to the royal authority. It is concerned with tax operations. It guards the rights of the dynasty in the matters of income and expenditures. It takes a census of the names of all soldiers, fixes their salaries, and pays out their allowances at the proper times. In this connection recourse is had to rules set up by the chiefs of (tax) operations and the stewards of the dynasty. They are all written down in a book which gives all the details concerning income and expenditures. It is based upon a good deal of accounting, which is mastered only by those who have considerable skill in (tax) operations. The book is called the *dîwân*. At the same time, (the word

ii, 16

⁴⁷⁷ *Tanfîdh* in this sense occurs again, p. 24, l. 3, below.

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dîwân) designates the place where the officials who are concerned with these matters have their offices.

The name is said to have had the following origin. One day, Khosraw looked at the secretaries in his ministry (*dîwân*). They were all engaged in their separate calculations, and it looked as if they were talking to themselves. The king exclaimed: “*Dêwâneh*”—which is Persian for “crazy.”⁴⁷⁸ As a result, the place where they were working was called by that name. The ending *-eh* was dropped, because the word was so much used, and dropping the *-eh* made it easier to pronounce. The word thus became *dîwân*. Later, it came to signify the (tax) book which contained the rules and computations.

Another story is that *dîwân* is the Persian name for the devils. The secretaries were called “devils” because of their quick comprehension, their understanding of both the obvious and the difficult, and their ability to combine random and disparate facts. The name was then extended to designate the offices where they worked. In this sense, the name *dîwân* was taken over by the secretaries in charge of (official) correspondence and used to designate the place where their offices were located in the ruler’s court, as will be mentioned later on.⁴⁷⁹

II, 17 One person is in charge of this office. He supervises all the operations of this kind. Each branch has its own supervisor. In some dynasties supervision of the army, of military fiefs, of keeping count of allowances, and of other (such) things, is constituted as separate offices. (Whether this is done or not) depends on the organization of a given dynasty and the arrangements made by its first rulers.

It should be known that the office of (tax collections) originates in dynasties only when their power and superiority

⁴⁷⁸ Cf. also p. 407, below. For the popular etymologies of the word *dîwân* mentioned here, cf. the beginning of the eighth chapter of al-Mâwardî, *al-Aḥkâm as-sultânîyah*, p. 189. They are often cited; cf., for instance, the old *Kitâb al-Kuttâb* by ‘Abdallâh al-Baghdâdî, ed. D. Sourdel in *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales* (Damascus), XIV (1954), 137.

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. pp. 26 f. and 64, below.

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and their interest in the different aspects of royal authority and in the ways of efficient administration have become firmly established. The first to set up the *dîwân* in the Muslim dynasty was 'Umar.⁴⁸⁰ The reason is said to have been the arrival of Abû Hurayrah with money from al-Baḥrayn. (The Muslims) thought that it was a very large sum, and they had trouble with its distribution. They tried to count the money and to establish how it should be paid out for allowances and claims. On that occasion, Khâlid b. al-Walîd advised the use of the *dîwân*. He said: "I have seen the rulers of Syria keeping a *dîwân*." 'Umar accepted the idea from Khâlid.

It has also been said that the person who advised 'Umar to introduce the *dîwân* was al-Hurmuzân.⁴⁸¹ He noticed that (military) missions were dispatched without a *dîwân* (a muster roll). He asked ('Umar): "Who would know if some of (the soldiers) disappeared? Those who remain behind might leave their places and abscond with the money that had been given to them for their services (if they could assume that their desertion would not be noticed). Such things should be noted down exactly in a book. Therefore, establish a *dîwân* for them." 'Umar asked what the word *dîwân* meant, and it was explained to him. When he agreed to (have a *dîwân*), he ordered 'Aqîl b. Abî Ṭâlib,⁴⁸² Makhramah b. Nawfal,⁴⁸³ and Jubayr b. Muṭ'im,⁴⁸⁴ all of them secretaries of the Quraysh, to write down the *dîwân* of the Muslim army.

⁴⁸⁰ The following stories about the introduction of the *dîwân* were also derived from al-Mâwardî, *loc. cit.* Ibn Khaldûn conflated the stories concerning Abû Hurayrah (cf. I. Goldziher in *EI*, s.v. "Abû Huraira") and Khâlid b. al-Walîd (cf. K. V. Zetterstéen in *EI*, s.v.) and also the stories concerning al-Hurmuzân and the appointment of 'Aqîl, etc. Cf. also F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1952), p. 312.

⁴⁸¹ The ruler of al-Ahwâz, who was captured during the conquest of the 'Irâq.

⁴⁸² 'Aqîl, an older brother of 'Alî, died ca. 680. Cf., for instance, Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhîb* (Hyderabad, 1325-27/1907-9), VII, 254.

⁴⁸³ He died in 54 [674]. Cf. an-Nawawî, *Biographical Dictionary*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1842-47), pp. 543 f.

⁴⁸⁴ He died between 56 and 59 [675/76 and 678/79]. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhîb*, II, 63 f. The correct vocalization Muṭ'im is indicated in MSS. B, C, and D.

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(The *dîwân* was arranged) according to family relationships and began with the relatives of the Prophet and continued according to the degree of relationship. This was the beginning of the ministry (*dîwân*) of the army.

Az-Zuhrî⁴⁸⁵ reported on the authority of Sa'îd b. al-Musayyab⁴⁸⁶ that this took place in al-Muḥarram of the year twenty [December, 640/January, 641].

11, 18 After the advent of Islam, the ministry (*dîwân*) of the land tax and tax collections remained as it had been. The⁴⁸⁷ (*dîwân*) of the 'Irâq used Persian, and that of Syria Byzantine Greek. The secretaries of the *dîwâns* were Muslim subjects of the two groups. Then, with the appearance of 'Abd-al-Malik b. Marwân, the form of the state became that of royal authority. People turned from the low standard of desert life to the splendor of sedentary culture and from the simplicity of illiteracy to the sophistication of literacy. Experts in writing and bookkeeping made their appearance among the Arabs and their clients. Thus, 'Abd-al-Malik ordered Sulaymân b. Sa'd, then governor of the Jordan (province), to introduce the use of Arabic in the *dîwân* of Syria. Sulaymân completed the task in exactly one year to the day. Sarḥûn,⁴⁸⁸ 'Abd-al-Malik's secretary, looked at (the situation) and said to the Byzantine secretaries: "Seek you a living in another craft, because God has taken this one from you."

Al-Ḥajjâj ordered his secretary Şâliḥ b. 'Abd-ar-Raḥmân to introduce the use of Arabic, instead of Persian, in the *dîwân* of the 'Irâq. Şâliḥ knew how to write both Arabic and Persian. He had learned it from Zâdânfarrûkh, his predecessor as secretary to al-Ḥajjâj. When Zâdân was killed in the war against 'Abd-ar-Raḥmân b. al-Ash'ath,⁴⁸⁹ al-Ḥajjâj ap-

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. n. 38 to Ibn Khaldûn's Introduction, above.

⁴⁸⁶ He died around 100 [718/19]. Cf. F. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 224 (n. 1).

⁴⁸⁷ The following two paragraphs are derived from al-Mâwardî, *al-Aḥkâm as-sultânîyah*, pp. 192 f. Cf. also F. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 340 (n. 2).

⁴⁸⁸ The name was read in this form by Ibn Khaldûn. It is thought originally to have been Sarjûn, from Greek Sergios.

⁴⁸⁹ In 85 [704]. Cf. C. Brockelmann, *History of the Islamic Peoples* (New York, 1947), pp. 88 f.

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pointed Ṣâliḥ as his successor. (Ṣâliḥ now carried out al-Ḥajjâj's order and introduced the use of Arabic in the *dîrwân*). He succeeded in doing that and in overcoming the reluctance of the Persian secretaries. 'Abd-al-Ḥamîd b. Yaḥyâ ⁴⁹⁰ used to say: "Ṣâliḥ was an excellent man. He was a great boon to the secretaries."

Later on, in the 'Abbâsîd dynasty, the office was added to the duties of (the wazîr) who supervised the man in charge of it. This was the case under the Barmecides and the Banû Sahl b. Nawbakht and other 'Abbâsîd wazîrs.

Certain religious laws attach to the office. They concern the army, the income and expenditures of the treasury, and the differing tax situations of the different regions, which depend on whether they had surrendered (peacefully) to the Muslim conquerors or had been conquered by force. Then, there is the question as to who makes appointment to the office. There are also the conditions governing the person in charge and the secretaries, as well as the rules according to which the accounts are to be kept. All (these legal problems) belong to the books on administration (*al-Aḥkâm as-sulṭânîyah*) and are written down in them. It is not the purpose of this book to deal with them. We discuss the subject only as it has to do with the nature of royal authority, in the discussion of which we are presently engaged.

II, 19

This office constitutes a large part of all royal authority. In fact, it is the third of its basic pillars. Royal authority requires soldiers, money, and the means to communicate with those who are absent. The ruler, therefore, needs persons to help him in the matters concerned with "the sword," "the pen," and finances. Thus, the person who holds the office (of tax collections) has (a good) part of the royal authority for himself.

This was the case under the Umayyad dynasty in Spain and under its successors, the *reyes de taïfas*. In the Almohad dynasty, the man in charge of (the office) was an Almohad.

⁴⁹⁰ The great secretary, author of the famous *Epistle* quoted below, pp. 29 ff.

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He had complete freedom to levy, collect, and handle money, to control the activities of officials and agents in this connection, and then to make disbursements in the proper amounts and at the proper times. He was known as *Ṣāhib al-ashghâl* (financial affairs manager). Occasionally, in some places, the office was held by persons who had a good understanding of it, but were not Almohads.⁴⁹¹

II, 20 The Ḥafṣids gained control over Ifrîqiyah at the time when the exodus from Spain took place. Exiled (Spanish) notables came to (the Ḥafṣids).⁴⁹² Among them, there were some who had been employed in this (type of work) in Spain, such as the Banû Sa'îd,⁴⁹³ the lords of Alcalá near Granada, who were known as the Banû Abî l-Ḥusayn. (The Ḥafṣids) liked to have them for this (type of work). They entrusted them with the supervision of (tax) affairs, which was what they had been doing in Spain. They employed them and the Almohads alternately for this purpose. Later on, the accountants and secretaries took the office over for themselves, and the Almohads lost it. As the position of door-keeper (*ḥājib*) became more and more important, and as his executive power came to extend over all government affairs, the institution of the *Ṣāhib al-ashghâl* ceased to be influential.⁴⁹⁴ The person in charge of it was dominated by the door-keeper (*ḥājib*) and became (no more than) a mere tax collector. He lost the authority he had formerly had in the dynasty.

In the contemporary Merinid dynasty, the accounting of the land tax and (military) allowances is in the hands of one man. He audits all accounts. Recourse is had to his *dîwân*, and his authority is second (only) to the authority of the ruler or wazir. His signature attests to the correctness of the accounts dealing with the land tax and (military) allowances.

These are the principal governmental ranks and functions. They are high ranks, involving the exercise of general authority and (requiring) direct contact with the ruler.

⁴⁹¹ Cf. I:xxxvii, and p. 16, above.

⁴⁹² Cf. I:xxxvi, above.

⁴⁹³ The family of the famous historian. Cf. n. 80 to Ch. I, above, and 3:445, below. Cf. also *'Ibar*, VI, 294 f.; de Slane (tr.), II, 369 ff.

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. also p. 16, above.

The Ministry of Finance

In the Turkish dynasty, the functions (under discussion) are divided. The person in charge of the *dîwân* of (military) allowances is known as inspector of the army (*nâzir al-jaysh*). The person in charge of finances is called the wazir. He has supervision over the dynasty's *dîwân* of general tax collection. This is the highest rank among the men who are in charge of financial matters. Among (the Turks), supervision of financial matters is spread over many ranks, because the dynasty rules a large (territory) and exercises great powers, and its finances and taxes are too vast to be handled by one man all by himself, however competent. Therefore, for the general supervision of (financial affairs), the man known as wazir is appointed. In spite of his (important position), he is second to one of the clients of the ruler who shares in the ruler's group feeling and belongs to the military (caste) and who is called *Ustâdh-ad-dâr*.⁴⁹⁵ This official outranks the wazir, who does all he can to do his bidding. He is one of the great amirs of the dynasty and belongs to the army and the military (caste).

11, 21

Other functions are subordinate to that of (the wazir) among (the Turks). All of them have reference to financial matters and bookkeeping, and are restricted in their authority to particular matters. There is, for instance, the inspector of the privy purse (*nâzir al-khâṣṣ*)—that is, the person who handles the ruler's private finances, such as concern his fiefs or his shares in the land tax and taxable lands that are not part of the general Muslim fisc.⁴⁹⁶ He is under the control of the amir, the *Ustâdh-ad-dâr*, but if the wazir is an army man, the *Ustâdh-ad-dâr* has no authority over him. The inspector of the privy purse also is under the control of the treasurer of the finances of the ruler, one of the latter's mamelukes, who is called *Khâzindâr* (treasurer), because his office is concerned with the private property of the ruler. Such is the nomenclature⁴⁹⁷ used in connection with the function of (financial

⁴⁹⁵ Or *Ustâdâr*.

⁴⁹⁶ D, and possibly C, add: "which is <not?> under his supervision."

⁴⁹⁷ *Sic* C and D. The older text (and C before correction) had: "This clarifies the function . . ."

Chapter 111: Section 32

administration) in the Turkish dynasty in the East. We have mentioned how it was handled in the Maghrib.

God governs all affairs. There is no Lord except Him.

*The ministry (dîwân) of (official)
correspondence and writing*

This office is not required by the nature of royal authority. Many dynasties were able to dispense with it completely, as, for example, the dynasties rooted in the desert and which were not affected by the refinements of sedentary culture and high development of the crafts.

11, 22 In the Muslim dynasty, the Arabic language situation and (the custom of) expressing what one wanted to express in good form intensified the need for the office. Thus, writing came to convey, as a rule, the essence of a matter in better stylistic form than was possible in oral expression. The secretary to an (Arab) amir was customarily a relative and one of the great of his tribe. This was the case with the caliphs and leading personalities among the men around Muḥammad in Syria and the 'Irâq, because of the great reliability and genuine discretion (of relatives and tribesmen).

When the language became corrupt and a craft (that had to be learned),⁴⁹⁸ (the office) was entrusted to those who knew (Arabic) well. Under the 'Abbâsids, it was a high office. The secretary issued documents freely, and signed his own name to them at the end. He sealed them with the seal of the ruler, which was a signet upon which the name of the ruler or his emblem was engraved. It was impressed on a red clay mixed with water and called sealing clay. The document was folded and glued, and then both sides was sealed with (the seal). Later on, the documents were issued in the name of the ruler, and the secretary (merely) affixed his signature ('*alâmah*)⁴⁹⁹ to them at the beginning or end. He could choose where he wanted to put it as well as its wording.

The office then lost standing through the fact that officials of other government ranks gained in the ruler's esteem or

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. p. 11, above, and 3:346, below.

⁴⁹⁹ Cf. 1:xli, and p. 16, above.

The Ministry of Official Correspondence

because the wazir gained control over (the ruler). The signature of a secretary became ineffective (as a sign of authority) and was replaced by the signature of his superior, and this was now considered decisive. (The secretary) affixed his official signature, but the signature of his superior made the document valid. This happened in the later (years) of the Ḥafṣid dynasty, when the office of doorkeeper (*ḥājib*) gained in esteem and the doorkeeper became the delegate of the ruler and then came to control him. The signature of the secretary became ineffective (as a sign of authority) but was still affixed to documents, in acknowledgment of its former importance. The doorkeeper (*ḥājib*) made it the rule for the secretary to sign letters of his by affixing a handwritten (note) for which he⁵⁰⁰ could choose any formula of ratification he wished. The secretary obeyed him and affixed the usual mark. So long as the ruler was in control of his own affairs, he saw to the matter himself (and made it the rule for the secretary) to affix the signature.

11, 23

One of the functions of the secretary's office is the *tawqī'*. It means that the secretary sits in front of the ruler during his public audiences and notes down (*yuwāqqi'*), in the most concise and stylistically most perfect manner, the decisions he receives from the ruler concerning the petitions presented to him. These decisions are then issued as they are, or they are copied in a document which must be in the possession of the petitioner. The person who formulates a *tawqī'* needs a great deal of stylistic skill, so that the *tawqī'* has the correct form. Ja'far b. Yaḥyâ used to write *tawqī'*s on petitions for ar-Rashîd and to hand the petition (with the *tawqī'*) back to the petitioner. Stylists vied with each other to obtain his *tawqī'*s, in order to learn the different devices and kinds of good style from them. It has even been said that such petitions (with Ja'far's *tawqī'* on them) were sold for a dinar.⁵⁰¹ Things were handled in this manner in (various) dynasties.

⁵⁰⁰ I.e., the secretary rather than the *ḥājib*.

⁵⁰¹ A. Mez, *Die Renaissance des Islâms* (Heidelberg, 1922), p. 71, quotes this statement.

Chapter III: Section 32

It should be known that the person in charge of this function must be selected from among the upper classes and be a refined gentleman of great knowledge and with a good deal of stylistic ability. He will have to concern himself with the principal branches of scholarship, because such things may come up in the gatherings and audiences of the ruler. In addition, to be a companion of kings calls for good manners and the possession of good qualities of character. And he must know all the secrets of good style, to be able to write letters and find the words that conform to the meaning intended.

II, 24 In some dynasties, the rank (of secretary) is entrusted to military men, since (some) dynasties, by their very nature, have no regard for scholarship, on account of the simplicity of group feeling (prevailing in them). The ruler gives his government offices and ranks to men who share in his group feeling. Appointments to the financial administration, to “the sword,” and to the office of secretary, are made from among them. “The sword” requires no learning. But the financial administration and the secretaryship need it, for the latter requires a good style and the former requires accounting skill. Therefore, (rulers) select people from the (learned) class for the office of secretary, when there is need for it, and entrust it to them. However, the secretary is subordinate to the higher authority exercised by the men who share in the ruler’s group feeling, and his authority derives from that of his superior. This is the case with the Turkish dynasty in the East at this time. The office of chief secretary belongs to the “secretary of state” (*Şâhib al-inshâ’*). However, the secretary of state is under the control of an amir from among the men who share in the group feeling of the ruler. This man is known as the *Dawîdâr*.⁵⁰² The ruler usually relies upon him, trusts him, and confides in him, whereas he relies upon the (secretary) for matters that have to do with good style and the conformity (of the expression) to what one wants to express,⁵⁰³ and other, related matters.

⁵⁰² Cf. p. 14, above.

⁵⁰³ Bulaq adds: “and the concealing of secrets.”

'Abd-al-Ḥamīd's Epistle to the Secretaries

The ruler who selects and picks a (secretary) from the rank and file has many conditions to consider. (These conditions governing the secretary) are best and most completely presented in the *Epistle* that the secretary 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd addressed to his fellow secretaries. It runs as follows: ⁵⁰⁴

And now: May God guard you who practice the craft of secretaryship, and may He keep you and give you success and guidance. There are prophets and messengers and highly honored kings. After them come different kinds of men, all of them made by God. They are of different kinds, even if they are all alike in fact. God occupied them with different kinds of crafts and various sorts of businesses, so that they might be able to make a living and earn their sustenance. He gave to you, assembled secretaries, the great opportunity to be men of education and gentlemen, to have knowledge and (good) judgment. ⁵⁰⁵ You bring out whatever is good in the caliphate and straighten out its affairs. Through your advice, God improves the government for the benefit of human beings and makes their countries civilized. The ruler cannot dispense with you. You alone make him a competent ruler. Your position with regard to rulers is that (you

11, 25

⁵⁰⁴ 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd b. Yahyâ perished in the debacle of his Umayyad masters in 132 [750]. Cf. *GAL, Suppl.*, I, 105. His *Epistle* is found in al-Jahshiyârî, *Wuzarâ'*, ed. H. von Mżik (Bibliothek arabischer Historiker und Geographen, No. 1) (Leipzig, 1926), fols. 35b–39b, and in Ibn Ḥamdûn, *Tadhkirah*, MS. Topkapusaray, Ahmet III, 2948, Vol. I, fols. 123a–125b. In both cases the text differs slightly in some passages from what we find in Ibn Khaldûn. The text in al-Qalqashandî, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shâ* (Cairo, 1331–38/1913–19), I, 85–89, is identical with that in Ibn Khaldûn. Ibn Khaldûn and al-Qalqashandî may have used a common source, but it seems rather that al-Qalqashandî copied his text from the *Muqaddimah*, as he also quotes Ibn Khaldûn on another occasion without mentioning his name (cf. n. 546 to this chapter, below). This text was also published, with some unexplained rearrangement, by M. Kurd 'Alî, *Rasâ'il al-bulaghâ'* (2d ed.; Cairo, 1331/1913), pp. 172–75. A separate edition of the *Epistle* (Tunis, 1318), is known to me only from the *GAL* reference, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁰⁵ The MSS have *riwâyah*, which is meaningless in the context. Bulaq, therefore, appears to have corrected *riwâyah* to *razânah* “good judgment.” The original text, as in al-Jahshiyârî, was *rawîyah* “reflection, (good) judgment.”

Chapter III: Section 32

are) the ears through which they hear, the eyes through which they see, the tongues through which they speak, and the hands through which they touch. May God give you, therefore, enjoyment of the excellent craft with which He has distinguished you, and may He not deprive you of the great favors that He has shown unto you.

No craftsman needs more than you to combine all praiseworthy good traits and all memorable and highly regarded excellent qualities, O secretaries, if you aspire to fit the description given of you in this letter. The secretary needs on his own account, and his master, who trusts him with his important affairs, expects him, to be mild where mildness is needed, to be understanding where judgment is needed, to be enterprising where enterprise is needed, to be hesitant where hesitation is needed. He must prefer modesty, justice, and fairness. He must keep secrets. He must be faithful in difficult circumstances. He must know (beforehand) about the calamities that may come. He must be able to put things in their proper places and misfortunes into their proper categories. He must have studied every branch of learning and know it well, and if he does not know it well, he must at least have acquired an adequate amount of it. By virtue of his natural intelligence, good education, and outstanding experience, he must know what is going to happen to him before it happens, and he must know the result of his actions before action starts. He must make the proper preparations for everything, and he must set up everything in its proper, customary form.

11, 26

Therefore, assembled secretaries, vie with each other to acquire the different kinds of education and to gain an understanding of religious matters. Start with knowledge of the Book of God and religious duties. Then, study the Arabic language, as that will give you a cultivated form of speech. Then, learn to write well, as that will be an ornament to your letters. Transmit poetry and acquaint yourselves with the rare expressions and ideas that poems

'Abd-al-Ḥamīd's Epistle to the Secretaries

contain. Acquaint yourselves also with both Arab and non-Arab political events, and with the tales of (both groups) and the biographies describing them, as that will be helpful to you in your endeavors. Do not neglect to study accounting, for it is the mainstay of the land tax register.⁵⁰⁶ Detest prejudices with all your heart, lofty ones as well as low ones, and all idle and contemptible things, for they bring humility and are the ruin of secretaryship. Do not let your craft be a low one. Guard against backbiting and calumny and the actions of stupid people. Beware of haughtiness, foolishness, and pride, for they mean acquiring hostility without (even the excuse of) hatred. Love each other in God in your craft. Advise your colleagues to practice it in a way befitting your virtuous, fair, and gifted predecessors.

If times go hard for one of you, be kind to him and console him, until everything be well with him again. Should old age make one of you unable to get around and pursue his livelihood and meet his friends, visit him and honor him and consult him, and profit from his outstanding experience and mature knowledge. Every one of you should be more concerned for his assistants, who may be useful when needed, than for his own children or brothers. Should some praise come (to one of you) in the course of his work, he should ascribe the merit to his colleague; any blame he should bear all by himself. He should beware of mistakes and slips and of being annoyed when conditions change. For you, assembled secretaries, are more prompt to be blamed than Qur'ân readers,⁵⁰⁷ and

II, 27

⁵⁰⁶ The edition of al-Qalqashandī here, and three lines below, vocalizes *al-kuttāb* "secretaries," instead of *al-kitāb*. Though seemingly possible, the reading *al-kuttāb* is certainly not correct here.

⁵⁰⁷ This is how Ibn Khaldūn read and understood the word used here. The vocalization *al-qurrā'* is expressly indicated in C. He might have had in mind the fact that, since everybody knows the Qur'ân, mistakes made by Qur'ân readers are easily spotted and blame assigned. However, the correct text is certainly that of al-Jahshiyârî and Ibn Ḥamdūn, who have *al-mar'ah* "a woman." The feminine singular also agrees better with the following *lahâ* "to her."

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blame is more detrimental to you than to them. You know that everyone of you has a master, one who gives from his own as much as can be expected, and (every one of you) has the obligation to repay him, since he deserves it, with fidelity, gratefulness, tolerance, patience, good counsel, discretion, and active interest in his affairs, and to show (his good intentions) by his actions whenever his master needs him and his resources. Be conscious of (your obligations) – God give you success – in good and bad circumstances, in privation as in munificence and kindness, in happiness as in misfortune. Any member of this noble craft who has all these qualities has good qualities indeed.

If any one of you be appointed to an office, or if some matter that concerns God’s children be turned over to one of you, he should think of God and choose obedience to Him. He should be kind to the weak and fair to those who have been wronged. All creatures are God’s children. He loves most those who are kindest to His children. Furthermore, he should judge with justice, he should honor the noble (descendants of Muḥammad), augment the booty (gained in wars against infidels), and bring civilization to the country. He should be friendly to the subjects, and refrain from harming them. He should be humble and mild in his office. He should be kind in handling the land tax registers⁵⁰⁸ and in calling in outstanding claims.

11, 28

You should explore the character of him with whom you associate. When his good and bad sides are known, you will be able to help him to do the good things that agree with him, and be able to contrive to keep him from the bad things he desires. You must be able to do that in the subtlest and best manner. You know that a person who is in charge of an animal and understands his job, endeavors to know the character of the animal. If it is

⁵⁰⁸ Instead of *sijillât*, al-Jahshiyârî has what is certainly the more original text: *istiḥlâb* (*sic*, not *istijlâb*) “in milking his land tax.”