Mîrzâ Rafîʿâ’s Dastûr ol-Molûk
A Prime Source on Administration, Society and Culture in Late Šafavîd Iran

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The Significance of the Dastûr ol-Molûk

Already between 1968 and 1969, the late Iranian scholar Professor Muḥammad Taqî Dânešpazhûh (d. 1997) published an edition of the Dastûr ol-Molûk (henceforth DM),¹ a Persian manual of late Šafavîd administrative practise, written during the second decade of the 18th century. Together with the Taẓkîrat ol-Molûk (henceforth TM),² a closely related work which is similar in character and arrangement, the DM constitutes a vital source for our knowledge of the administrative structures and social conditions prevailing in Iran during that period. Both works contain also important information pertaining to the measures and weights prevailing at that time in Iran.³ DM and TM are in fact the only two surviving administrative manuals from the end of the Šafavîd period, whereas historiographical information is rather sparse.⁴ As shall be argued later, the TM should be considered as a mere derivate of the DM.⁵ It should be mentioned that it was

¹ Dr. Marcinkowski (Associate Professor of History, ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, e-mail: cwm_marcinkowski@yahoo.de) presented an earlier version of the present contribution at the 4th Biennial Conference of the Society for Iranian Studies, Bethesda MD, U.S.A. (24–26 May 2002).
⁴ See on this aspect Marcinkowski 2002b.
⁵ For an overview see Marcinkowski 2002f.

The present contribution contains also material from the introduction of Marcinkowski 2002a, henceforth DM (ed. Marcinkowski). References throughout the present contribution are to the pages of the Persian MS and correspond to my English translation of the DM. An earlier unpublished version won the First Prize (International Category) of the Iranian President’s Award for the the Best Research on Iranian Culture
a bibliographical reference in one of Professor Bert G. Fragner's works which directed the attention of the present writer for the first time to the significance of the DM. 6

The answer to the question for the reasons, as well as the general context, for the compilation of two manuals towards the end of the empire is consequential, as is the issue whether those two handbooks go back to a much earlier, common source. The latter assertion was put forward by Dânespazhûh: contrary to the view which tends to emphasize a supposed need at that particular time for the re-arrangement or ordering of the entire administrative system, he maintained that the DM was just a sample which was rather 'upgraded' from time to time. In his view,

... it seems, that this book 7 was a directive sample. It might be possible, that work on it had been initiated at the beginning of the Šâfâvid period, and that it was constantly updated in the course of time. Its preface was always written anew in the name of the [respective]8 Emperor. Therefore, our author, Muḥammad Raṭi̇-e Anšârî, the Mustofî ol-Mamâlîk, prepared this manuscript in the name of Šâh Sulţân Ḥusain. Since in it he has made mention of that Emperor as someone, who had already passed away, it is obvious, that the text must have been altered. In his book ... mention has been made of the years 1096, 1116, 1117, and 1124 [AH lunar].10

It is difficult to comment further on these assertions, due to the lack of conclusive evidence. However, the degree of accuracy with which some of the European 17th-century observers (among them Kaempfer,11 Du Mans12 and Chardin13) have described the structuring of the later Šâfâvid state during their respective sojourns at the imperial capital of Isfahân, more than half a century before the compilation of the DM and TM, is striking. With regard to Du Mans, who must have had an excellent command of the Persian language, and Kaempfer, who is heavily indebted to him, the present writer cannot help to assume, after a study of their accounts, that they must have had a Persian text similar to our two manuals as a pattern at their disposal.

Award for the Year 1379/2000. Dr. Willem Floor, too, has been working independently on another translation of and commentary on the DM. At the time of writing, his project was said to be in the final stage. 

6 Fragner 1983. I would like to thank Professor Fragner for various comments and suggestions.
7 i.e. the DM.
8 My addition.
9 1684, 1704/1705, 1705 and 1712/1713 CE, respectively.
10 DM (ed. Dânespazhûh), p. 484 (translation from Persian by the present writer).
11 Kaempfer 1940.
12 Du Mans 1890.
13 Chardin 1811 and 1927.
Furthermore, the circumstance that DM and TM refer both to so-called Dastūr ol-'Amals or 'Regulations' of much earlier Šafavid monarchs, such as Tahmāsp I (930–984/1524–1576) and 'Abbās I the Great (r. 996–1038/1588–1629) should be considered in this context. Apparently, Dastūr ol-'Amals existed also in the vassal-state of Georgia.\textsuperscript{14} Interest arises in particular from an administrative manual in Georgian, entitled Dasturlamali, to which the present writer had no access and which was commissioned by king Vakhtang VI of Kartli (r. 1123/1124–1136/1137/1711–1723) in 1118/1706 when he was still functioning as regent. It might be promising to compare this work with the DM and TM,\textsuperscript{15} an expectation which had already been expressed by Minorsky:

The book (= Persian Dastūr al-amal, "Regulations") epitomises the administrative make-up of the Georgian kingdom, strongly influenced by the institutions and terminology of the suzerain Persia. In its object it is identical to, and in its date slightly earlier than the T.M.\textsuperscript{16}

Perhaps much more material pertaining to Šafavid administration than we can think of perished in the course of Iran’s often turbulent history. At any rate, although the above referred to argumentation which surmises a certain necessity for a reformulation of the foundations of the state (for instance by the compilation of the two manuals in question) appears to be rather doubtful, the exorbitant significance of TM and DM as the only two surviving manuals of Šafavid administration should be emphasized. Lastly, the already referred to question of the existence of earlier 'handbooks', for example during the reign of the great Šafavid reformer 'Abbās I, requires certainly further study.

\textsuperscript{14} Significant from the point of view of history of civilization are also the mutual influences between Iran and Georgia at those days. Particular interest with respect to the degree to which themes of classical Persian verse entered Georgian literature arises from a Georgian adaption of the Persian romantic poem Vīs-u Rāmin, namely the manuscript Wısrəmianı which is dated 1729 and kept in the Manuscript-Institute of the Georgian Academy of Sciences in Tiflis. The work had been edited in 1962 by Alexandre Gvakharia and Magali Todua. For a German translation refer to Erb 1991. The German translation contains also the reproductions of seven miniatures which in themselves are worth an investigation with regard to the correlations between Iran and the Caucasus region. The New Persian Vīs-u Rāmin itself, by the way, is ascribed to Fakhr al-Dīn As'ad Gurgānī (fl. 5th/11th century) and based on a Middle Persian original. On Gurgānī’s work see Browne 1928, p. 274, and especially Minorsky 1964. Refer furthermore to Gvakharia 1995.

\textsuperscript{15} Unfortunately, I had no access to this work. For bibliographical informations refer to TM (ed. Minorsky), p. 205, and Lang 1957, p. 46 n. 70 and 71 (see also ibid., pp. 27 and 46).

\textsuperscript{16} TM (ed. Minorsky), p. 205.
A Brief Description of the Dastur ol-Moluk and its Interrelations with the Tazkirat ol-Moluk

As already stated earlier, the TM was made accessible to international scholarship by Professor MINORSKY during the 1940s. With regard to the DM it should be noted that there exists already a Russian translation of it with some annotations by Dr. A.B. VIL'DANova of Tashkent which, unfortunately, has been neglected so far by the international scholarship.17 In addition to this, it has to be admitted that DANEŞPAZHÜH’s edition of the DM appears to be prepared in a rather hasty and often even faulty fashion. In his own forthcoming translation and study the DM, the present writer has therefore refrained from a re-edition the DM and instead added a complete facsimile of the DM-manuscript in order to provide other scholars with a direct access to the text. The apparently only extant manuscript of the DM is preserved in the Sar-Yazdi-Library of the ‘Abdarraḥīm-Ḥān-Madrasa in Yazd, Iran. A microfilm-copy of it is kept in the Central Library of Tehran University.18 As far as can be seen from the reproduced facsimile-version of the DM in the possession of the author (derived from the aforesaid DM-microfilm), no informations about previous owners such as stamps or seals are provided by the manuscript. We also do not know whether the manuscript, which has been written in a somewhat hasty nasta’liq-script,19 is an autograph or a mere copy. All what can be said is that the manuscript consists of 161 pages (1a–81a), 16 lines on each page, with the exception of the first page, which has 11 lines plus a basmala. The text is ending abruptly on the end of page 81a, while describing the responsibilities of the Chief-Architect (Mi’mār-Bāsī). Apparently, the text had been written by one person only. Insertions such as fasl (‘subdivision’) and alike have apparently been written in another colour than the main text (perhaps in red?). In general, the manuscript is in a good and legible condition and contains almost no damages. Contrary to the TM, however, the DM has no colophon, although the proper space for it was provided by the scribe. This particular circumstance is momentous with regard to the conditions of its production which shall be addressed later. The total impression derived from the manuscript is that of a first draft. The TM for that matter is complete and is preceeded by an extremely beautiful colophon which contains the title of the work.

17 Anṣārī 1991. I am indebted to Professor FRAGNER for forwarding to me a copy of it.
19 For a short description of the manuscript see DANEŞPAZHÜH 1344/1966), and 1347/1968.
Both, TM and DM are describing in a succinct and nonchalant style the practical obligations of the offices of the religious, military and civil administration towards the end of Iran’s Ṣafavid period. Both manuals do not only address the responsibilities of the high officials (whether those serving at the imperial capital or in the provinces) but refer also to the lower staff, down to those who had been employed at the imperial palace-kitchens. DM and TM constitute therefore also eminent sources for the social and religious life under Ṣafavid rule, as well as for the provincial administrative system.

Both DM and TM are written in Persian, but in a style which makes them only comprehensible to those initiated into the secrets and mysteries of Ṣafavid administration. Besides, both texts draw heavily on Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and even Mongolian technical administrative terms. John R. Perry considers the DM in terms of its relation to the TM aptly as “very similar in design and wording,” thus letting it generally appear “to be better organized and more accurate.” Perry, who has added to his biography of Karim Ḥān Zand (r. 1163-1193/1750-1779) a valuable appraisal of the relevant historical sources, concluded with regard to DM and TM:

... the Ṣafavid ideal remained the basis for government theory for at least fifty years after its collapse; thus by comparing statements from Zand and early Qajar sources with the guide line laid down in these valuable works, one can gain some idea of the extent to which the Ṣafavid tradition was eroded or replaced by new concepts and practices.

There exist countless similarities and even conformities in the wording between both manuals which cannot referred to here. The DM appears in general more detailed and contains more information on the offices of a somewhat lesser significance, such as the services connected with the kitchens or the supply of the Palace and alike. Some of those minor services do not appear at all in the TM. The DM provides thus some valuable, since otherwise rare information on the daily life of the lower strata of the Iranian society during those days. Interesting with regard to the historical development of the Persian language is also the amount and character of the Turkish and Mongolian loanwords that appear in both manuals. The present writer has referred to them frequently in the course of his annotations to his English translation of the DM.

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20 Refer to the appendix of the present contribution which features a table of contents of the DM.
21 Perry 1979, p. 308.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
The overall number of offices, which appear in individual entries, including the minor ones, totals 171 in the DM. Almost all of those entries consist of a description of the respective office and a statement concerning the amount and source of income of its holder. The TM, in turn, comprises 164 entries. However, some of the entries in the TM appear twice, namely once in their respective chapter, and again for a second time in the ḥātima or ‘epilogue’, but in fact a kind of appendix, which deals for the most part with the salaries and other kinds of income. Also the number of major divisions in the DM is higher than in the TM: whereas the TM consists of a preamble, five chapters (bāb) and a ḥātima, the DM comprises a preamble, six chapters, but no ḥātima. This last mentioned point, i.e. the lack of a ḥātima in the DM, is perhaps the most striking difference between both manuals. The compiler of the TM divided his entire text categorically into (1) description of offices (chapters) and (2) pecuniary matters (‘epilogue’). This kind of stringent separation is not to be found in the DM. However, it should be noted that the ḥātima of the TM contains also considerable information on the provincial revenues. In the light of the present framework, reference to the particularities in terms of style and application of the Persian language in both manuals have been omitted in the present study. The reader is referred in this regard to MINORSKY’s observations concerning the TM, which do also fit perfectly into the context of the DM, since the DM contains countless passages of literal correspondence with the TM. MINORSKY stated:

The language of the T.M. is negligent and approaches the type of an official jargon intelligible to a limited group of initiated. The meaning of many terms which the author takes for granted could be ascertained only through the context, or merely hypothetically. Moreover, some obscurity in the text is attributable to the scatter-brained scribe...

The overall impression with regard to the TM is that it was arranged for a rather ‘practical’ usage, for the benefit of the Sunnite Afghan conquerors of Iran, since it omits any mentioning of those offices with special Shi’ite implications, such as the Motavallis of the various shrines and alike, which had been of no relevance for the Sunnite Afghans. An exception in this regard is the office of Ḥalifat ol-Holafā, which is to be found in both manuals. Therefore, the TM might be considered as a ‘revision’ or ‘modification’ of the DM, which seems again to indicate an earlier date of compilation for the DM compared with the TM.

26 Ibid. Consult furthermore PERRY 1996.
27 MARCINKOWSKI 2003b.
The various geographical and etymological characteristics contained in the DM, as well as the plenty of information on the supposedly less significant offices and services, constitute fascinating features. Besides, the application of a technical terminology in both manuals which is based on four languages, i.e. Persian, Turkish, Mongolian and Arabic, and related to that, the utilization of Turkish as Court language until the very end of the Safavid period, a factor, for which we have doubtless and numerous evidences, cannot be emphasized enough.

Authorship, Historical Context and Date of Compilation of the Dastūr ol-Molūk

Apparently, almost nothing is known about the life of the compiler of the DM. He mentioned himself in his preamble merely as “the least from among the slaves of the Lord Creator, Muhammad Rafi‘-e Anšārī, the Mustoufi al-Maţālik.” Even the chronicle Rustam ol-Tavārīḵ, compiled during the earlier part of the Qājār period and dealing also with the collapse of the Safavids and the subsequent developments, does not contribute anything in this regard. Dāneşpazhūh’s introduction to his Persian edition of the DM, however, provides some valuable information concerning the author’s family background. Initially, he states:


29 DM (ed. Marcinkowski), [2b].
31 1819–1870 CE.
32 Out of the three quoted works, i.e. the [Tabaqāt] A’lām aš-Ṣī‘a, Mu‘alliftn-e Mushār and Isfahān Nim-e Gābān, a local history of Isfahān from the end of the last century, only the first had been available to me. In my following recourse to Dāneşpazhūh for a discussion of the members of the author’s family I had to rely on the to me available editions: Fasāt 1367/1988 (henceforth FNN); Muḥammad Muḥsin Tihrānī [ Ağā Buzurg]: Tabaqāt A’lām aš-Ṣī‘a, 2 vols. Mašhad 1404 AH lunar/1983 (henceforth Tāsh). Unfortunately, Dāneşpazhūh mentioned his sources only incompletely, see DM (ed. Dāneşpazhūh), pp. 484–487.
33 Dāneşpazhūh’s addition.
34 Ibid.

From the nisba ʿḠābirī-Ānṣārī’ follows that the abovementioned family claimed descent from Ḡābir b.ʿAbdallāh (d. 73/692), the celebrated Companion of the Prophet. As we shall see, the family belonged in fact to the notables of Fārs. Dānešpazhūh has made the aforesaid Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Ṣailḥ Ḡābir-e Ānṣārī the starting point for tracing back the lineage of the compiler of the DM. However, the Aʿlām aš-Šīʿa, on which Dānešpazhūh relied, provides much more information than that transmitted by him. It is therefore worthwhile to stay a little bit with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan: SAILḤ Muḥammad Muḥsin Ṭhrānī, known as Āḡā Buzūrg, the compiler of the Aʿlām aš-Šīʿa, or more correctly Ṭabqāt Aʿlām aš-Šīʿa, in dealing with the person in question, mentions him as a member of the ‘ulamāʿ of Isfahān, originating from Šīrāz, the capital of Fārs province. Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan must have been a highly prolific writer. He wrote also at least two works on local history, one of them being the Isfahān Nīm-e Gābān, already mentioned by Dānešpazhūh. Therein he is said to have traced back his lineage in the manner quoted by Dānešpazhūh.

Dānešpazhūh investigated this genealogical chain further. His observations are worthwhile to note in order to realize the significance of the family in question: Mīrzā Mašūd Ḡābirī-Ānṣārī is the last link in the above mentioned chain. He was ṫavīr at the court of Iṣmaʿīl I (r. 907–930/1501–1524), the founder of the Ṣafavid dynasty, and Ṭahmāsp I (r. 930–984/1524–1576).  

From this it becomes obvious that the family must have belonged to the early supporters of the Ṣafavids. According to the Fārsnāma, which in spite of its rather late date of compilation, contains invaluable details that are in many cases not to be found in other, earlier historiographical works, Mīrzā Šāh Ḡābirī-Ānṣārī came from Isfahān and settled down in Šīrāz. This might have happened toward the end of the Türkmen Āq Quyūnlū dynasty or just after the Ṣafavid conquest of Fārs, which took place in 909/1503, since his son, Nizāmulmulk Mīrzā Ḥvāja ʿAlī was made Vazīr of Fārs by Iṣmaʿīl I in 920/1514.  

Indeed, another member of the family, Ḡalāluddīn Ḡābirī, is

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37 DM (ed. Dānešpazhūh), p. 484. Refer also to FNN, 1: 370 and 383 (all following references are according to this edition); Rāft-e Mihrābādī 1352/1973, p. 659.

38 Published (for the first time?) in lithography at Tehran in 1313 AH (apparently lunar)/1895/1896, according to Browne 1984, p. 357 n. 1.


40 Sarwar 1939, pp. 46–47.
reported of having been Vazir under both dynasties, the Šafavids and the Āq Quyūnlū, respectively.\textsuperscript{42}

The third link in the genealogical chain was I‘timāduddoula Mīrzā Salmān, as \emph{Nāzīr of the Imperial Workshops} under Īkāmāsp I, Ismā‘īl II (r. 984–985/1576–1577) and Muḥammad IJa‘ābaDān (r. 985–996/1578–1588), an extremely influential personality, until he was murdered in 991/1583 at Harāt.\textsuperscript{44} was also Grand Vizier under the two last mentioned rulers. Mīrzā ‘Abdullāh and Mīrzā Nīzāmolmulk, two sons of Mīrzā Salmān, were Vazīrs of Fārs.\textsuperscript{45} Both of them were arrested for a short time by ‘Abbas I (996–1038/1588–1629) during the first year of the latter’s reign.\textsuperscript{46} Mīrzā Muḥammad Salmān\textsuperscript{47}, son of Mīrzā ‘Abdullāh, and Mīrzā Husain Beg,\textsuperscript{48} brother of the former, are both reported of having been Vazīrs of Fārs. On the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth links, i.e. on Nīzāmoluddīn, ȘadruddiN, Muḥammad and Ma‘udūd nothing was available, neither to Professor Dāneșpazhūh nor to me.

With the ninth link, however, the family does become again traceable: to Mīrzā Nūruddīn Muḥammad Ǧābirī-Anşārī the construction of the famous \emph{Madrasah ye Nūrīya} in Isfahān is ascribed.\textsuperscript{49} According to Dāneșpazhūh, the person by name of Mīrzā Mahdī appearing in the DM\textsuperscript{50} as ‘Vazīr of the Tribes’ (qarā-ālūs) might be identical with the tenth link in his chain. If this is the case, he must have been the father of the compiler of the DM, since

\begin{footnotes}
\item[43] Refer on those ‘workshops’ to Hoffmann 1990.
\item[45] Consult on both of them DM (ed. Dāneșpazhūh), p. 485, and FNN, vol. 2, p. 1065. For references on Mīrzā ‘Abdullāh see Bernhard: Index, p. 10. In TAAAb (Sav.), vol. 1, p. 493, he is even mentioned as Grand Vizier toward the end of the rule of Muḥammad Ǧudābanda, which was marked by factional struggle. For Mīrzā Nīzāmolmulk refer to TAAAb (Sav.), vol. 1, p. 417 and vol. 2, p. 555.
\item[46] TAAAb (Sav.), 2:555.
\item[50] See DM (ed. Marcinkowski), [72b].
\end{footnotes}
Dānēşpazhūh mentions a certain Mīrzā Ṭabiʿuddin, the eleventh link, as his son. He states:

(11): Mīrzā Ṭabiʿuddin, the Mustoufī ol-Mamālik of Iran, his son. ‘Custodian of the [Imperial] Gardens and Residences. As Mustoufī he had an elegant office and a pavilion at his disposal, whose non-pareil in terms of luxury could be apprehended easily’ (Isfahān Nīm-e Ġahān, page 130). It is he, who must have been the compiler of the Dastūr ol-Molūk.

Unfortunately, no further particulars are provided. However, his son Rabiʿuddin, being the twelfth link, has been mentioned by Dānīshpazhūh as Mustoufī ol-Ḥāssa and in connection with the festivities on the occasion of the inauguration of the Madrasa-ye Sultānī in 1122/1710. Apparently, he saw also the days of the Afqārid Nādir Šāh (r. 1148-1160/1736-1747). Rabiʿuddin, again, had two sons, Mīrzā ‘Alī-Qulī and Ḥāgī Mīrzā Muṣṭafā, who were both still alive at the end of the rule of the Zands and the emergence of that of the Qājārs, that is to say, toward the beginning of the 13th/19th century. The first one was in turn the father of the initially considered Muʿayyadulislām Mīrzā Muhammad Ḥasan Saiḥ Gābir-e Ānşārī, the author of the Isfahān Nīm-e Ġahān. The discussion of other eminent and influential members of the Gābirī-Ānşārī family could thus be easily continued.

However, it is now appropriate to turn the attention to the historical circumstances in order to find thereafter some hints for the date of compilation of the DM, as far as possible. The factors that contributed to the collapse of Ṣafavīd rule in 1135/1722, i.e. the historical background for the composition of the DM, have been dealt with elsewhere and from different angles.

51 DM (ed. Dānīshpazhūh), p. 485. Dānīshpazhūh, as he says himself, relied on p. 139 of the aforesaid Isfahān Nīm-e Ġahān, which was not available to me, and on which he has not given any further bibliographical particulars, such as edition or publisher.
52 My addition.
54 *Ibid.* The Madrasa-ye Sultānī is apparently identical with the Madrasa-ye Chahār-Bāg at Isfahān, which was inaugurated during the same year, see Arjomand 1983, p. 136. Both, Arjomand and Dānīshpazhūh are apparently relying on the same source, namely the Vaqāyiʾ ol-Sanīn, a chronicle written by Sayyid 'Abdulhusain Ḥatūnābādī (d. 1105/1693/1694) and “continued after his death by other members of his family” (Arjomand 1983, p. 136). For a description of the events that surrounded the opening of the said theological college see Ḥatūnābādī 1352/1973 (henceforth VS), pp. 559-560, where a list of the high-ranking participants is given, among them Rabiʿuddin, the Mustoufī ol-Khāṣṣa (VS, p. 560).
57 For further members of the family see *ibid.*, pp. 486-487.
MINORSKY, for instance, in his introduction to the TM, listed up some factors, which, in his view, contributed to the ‘decline’ of Safavid rule and on which other scholars\textsuperscript{59} have subsequently based their views on the subject:

(a) The complete disappearance of the basic theocratic nucleus round with Shah Ismā‘il had built up his state, without the substitution of some other dynamic ideology.
(b) Great opposition between the old and the new elements in the Persian military class.
(c) The disturbance of the equilibrium between the mamālik and khāṣṣa, the expansion of the latter having diminished the interest of the service classes in the cause which they were supporting.
(d) The irresponsible character of the ‘shadow government’ represented by the harem, the Queen Mother and the eunuchs.
(e) The degeneration of the dynasty whose scions were brought up in the atmosphere of the harem, in complete ignorance of the outside world.\textsuperscript{60}

Although this view focusses largely on non-economical factors we should nevertheless bear it in mind when considering briefly in the following some of the immediate causes leading to the disaster of 1135/1722. The loss of the strategically important eastern town of Qandahar (in present-day Afghanistan) to the rebellious Sunnite Galzay Afghāns under their leader Mīr Vais, subjects of the Safavids, in 1121/1709 had revealed dramatically the weakness of the central government at Isfahan.\textsuperscript{61} In 1131/1719 Mīr Vais’ successor was even able to attack and loot the eminent province of Kirmān, including its large capital, situated in the geographical centre of the Iranian mainland, without having been prevented seriously from doing so from the part of Isfahan. Mahmūd and his somewhat less cultured followers took this as an invitation to return with a stronger army, but now heading directly for the Safavid capital. On 20 Ğumāda I 1134 / 3 March 1722 a decisive battle was


\textsuperscript{59} For instance, LOCKHART 1958, pp. 17-18. For single aspects refer to ibid., pp. 35-43, 47, 48.

\textsuperscript{60} TM (ed. MINORSKY), p. 23.

\textsuperscript{61} On Mīr Vais see KRUSINSKI, pp. 32-36. Unfortunately, only this translation of Father Krusinski’s important work had been available to me. On the particular circumstances of the translation which goes back to the early Qāgār period, consult Dr. MĪR-AHMADI’S introduction, especially pp. 11-12. Consult on the Afghan insurgency also HANWAY 1752, pp. 101-156.
fought at Gulnābād, off the gates of Īsfāhān. The Iranian defeat in its course had been considered as the result of disunity and treachery among the imperial troops and the general neglect of the military sector since the days of Šāh Sulaimān I (r. 1077–1105/1666–1694). Maḥmūd’s victorious forces, numerically too weak to risk a general assault on the city, set about for the siege of the vast capital. Finally, in Muharram 1135/October 1722 starvation and the outbreak of epidemics had forced the city, which because of the beauty of its gardens, buildings and cultural achievements was once styled by a still famous Persian saying as ‘half of the world’ (nisf-e jahān), to surrender to the mercy of the Afghans. Šāh Šulṭān Ḥusain (r. 1105–1135/1694–1722) went over to Maḥmūd’s camp in order to declare his abdication and to place his turban-jewel (ḡiqaḥ), the symbol of imperial power, on the headgear of his conqueror.

Nevertheless, the Afghans were unable to attain complete control over the whole country, let alone to get Ṭahmāsp into their hands. The year 1135/1722 saw the Russians invading Iran in large scale from the north, occupying her Caspian coastal regions. They were followed by the Ottomans, who, under the pretext of intervening on behalf of the deposed Šāh Šulṭān Ḥusain, put themselves in the possession of much of Azerbayjan and western Iran, including the strategic cities of Hamadān and Kirmānšāh. This was the signal for Ašraf, the successor of Maḥmūd, to get rid of the unfortunate Šāh Šulṭān Ḥusain by putting him to death. Already Maḥmūd had before his own assassination in 1137/1725 ordered the coldblooded slaughter of almost all the imprisoned imperial princes in one of his outbursts of insanity earlier that year.

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62. Lockhart 1959, p. 97 and passim. Compare this with an account from the end of the reign of Šāh Šulṭān Ḥusain: Mustoufī 1354/1975. Its author gives, ibid., p. 397, 180,000 (sic!) as figure for the ’numerical strength’ of the Safavid army.


64. Krusinski, pp. 60–61.


66. On the circumstances of his accession see Krusinski, pp. 79–80.

Šāh Sultān Husain is said to have declared his third son Tāhmasp Mirzâ heir-apparent prior to the capitulation of the capital. During the siege Tāhmasp Mirzâ was smuggled out of the doomed city and made his way to Qazvīn in the north of the country, where he was proclaimed Emperor under the name of Tāhmasp II (r. 1135–1148/1722–1736). His ‘rule’ was however contested by the advancing Russian and Ottoman forces and he was forced to retreat to Khūrāsān, where he fell under the influence of the Afšārid ‘warlord’ Nādir, whose meteoric rise is, however, beyond the scope of this study.

As usual, in the course of the historical sources the available information on the fate of the ordinary people, the ‘subjects’, is lacking far behind those on the ‘warlords’ and other contestants for power. The ravaging wars on Iranian soil, the ruthless activities of foreign (and local) troops which brought widespread lawlessness and chaos, resulting in murder, rape, epidemics, famine, looting, confiscations and alike must have meant ‘hell on Earth’ to the population. Moreover, under those sad circumstances, which prevailed with short interruptions until the beginning of the 13th/end of the 18th century, a large number of Iran’s intellectual élite had either perished or was forced to leave their homeland. Many of them went to India, among them the celebrated Šaiḥ ‘Alī Ḥāzīn (1104/1105–1180/1181 / 1692–1766), who is predominantly known as a poet.

A so far almost neglected document of the time is the Zain ol-ʿārifin, a kind of memorandum, which, however, does not name a specific addressee or

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68 JGN, p. 16; RT, pp. 77–78. Hanway, vol. 2, p. 222, put the number of the slain members of the imperial household at approximately 100. According to the same source, the order for the killing of the imperial family, in which Mahmūd is said to have taken part personally, was given by him during one of his states of drunkenness. Consult also Šafītdi’s comments in Astarābādī 1366/1987 (henceforth DN), p. 725.


71 Fragner 1975, pp. 177–181, contains an excellent survey of the political situation in Iran’s northwestern provinces. Further informations concerning that turbulent period might be obtained from Zarinebaf-Shahr 1991.

72 On the career of Nādir and the Afšārids refer to Avery 1991. For the circumstances of his birth see JGN, p. 27. For an interesting collection of smaller historical documents pertaining to Nādir, namely the Kitāb-e abvâl-e Nādir-šâbi, the hāditha-ye Nādir-šâbi, the Vāqi’a-ye ḫarâbi-ye Dibī, a ‘dispatch of victory’ (fathnāma), and some correspondence between Nādir Shâh and the Ottomans, see Ša’bānī 2536. Peculiar is also Tūṣī 1339/1960, a metrical composition belonging to the genre of panegyric.

73 Consult on him Ahmad 1976, p. 132; Browne 1924, pp. 117–118 and 277–281; Yarshater 1974), pp. 221–222. For a brief sketch of Persian literature in Safavid times refer also to De Brujn 1995, which contains a useful bibliography.
patron. It constitutes a remarkable since original analysis of the ethical crisis at those times, which had become manifest by the prevailing political chaos. Zain ol-‘Arifin is a work in Persian by Sayyid Muhammad Sabzavārī of Ḥurāsān, a loyalist to the Šafavids and member of the ‘ulama. Apparently, he had certain aḥbārī leanings which becomes obvious from the arrangement of his topics and his argumentation, which mainly rests on sayings of the Prophet and the Imāms of the Twelver Šī‘a. The work was edited and translated into English recently by Dr. Sayyid Ḥasan Amīn, himself a descendant of Sayyid Sabzavārī, who advocates a date before 1145/1733 for its composition. About the general conditions prevalent in Iran after the murder of Šāh Sultān Ḥusain, Sayyid Muhammad Sabzavārī says the following:

The chaotic cycle of destruction and dissipation of religion and worldly affairs is the order of the day. The flames of injustice and corruption have burned down security and fulfillment of Muslims and been sent on the winds of rebellion and disobedience. There is no sign but only the name of the apparent possessor of the power who is responsible for the people’s welfare, to repulse their pain and misery inflicted on them.

Sabzavārī adds to this the lack of pious, capable and learned religious leaders. He blames those of his colleagues who did not encourage righteousness among the believers, thus encouraging others to commit sins and unlawful acts. Furthermore, he condemns those of them who were too closely associated with worldly affairs and dependent on the rulers. He finds fault with their refusal to take advise from those not attached to the Court, rephrasing their disregard for the virtuous scholars. Concerning the degree of responsibility for the prevailing plight he mentioned the clerics, the military commanders and governors, and the subjects, in that order, one being the cause of the fault of the next following one.

It is remarkable that Sabzavārī seems to find no word of criticism concerning the required qualities of the (Šafavid) rulers. His general attitude towards the reasons for the sad situation of his country at the time of his composition of the Zain ol-‘Arifin might therefore be seen as an expression of reverence for the Šafavids prevailing among Iran’s population. Numerous uprisings in favour of supposed scions of that imperial line in the aftermath

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74 On some of the theological issues that were prevailing the discussions among Šī‘ite ‘ulama’ towards the end of the Šafavids see Newman 1992a and 1992b. For a general discussion of the issue compare Scarcia 1958.
75 Sabzavārī 1989 (henceforth ZA), p. 4 (Amīn’s Engl. intro.).
76 ZA, p. 19 (Engl. trans.), p. 40 (Pers. text). The ruler alluded to by Sabzavārī is the Tahmāsp II.
of the capitulation of Isfahān may bear witness to this phenomenon.78 No detailed discussion of the subject of monarchical legitimacy shall be attempted here. However, it is significant to note that even actual potentates and ‘war-lords’ preferred in most cases to rule ‘in the name’ of a ʿṢafavīd (shadow-) ʿṢāḥ. In the light of the lack of (religious) legitimacy of those ‘war-lords’, who had risen to considerable power out of the ruins of the collapsed empire, it is needless to say that in most cases they themselves had placed those ‘puppet-rulers’ on the throne. The earlier referred to Karīm Ḥān Zand,79 for instance, who resided at Sirāz and under whom Iran experienced some periods of rest, never assumed the title ʿṢāḥ for himself, but contented himself with the rather modest address ‘Deputy’ (vakīl).80 PERRY has pointed out that the office of Vakīl does not appear throughout the TM under a special entry.81 He added, that according to the DM the Kalāntar of Isfahān was also considered as Vakīl-e Raʿiyāt, i.e. ‘Advocate of the Subjects’.82

The rule of the already mentioned Nādīr ʿṢāḥ, a military genius, who drew out the Russians and Ottomans, thereby forcing them to agree in peace-treaties under for Iran favourable conditions,83 meant yet again severe sufferings for the civil population similar to those in the aftermath of the capitulation of Isfahān. He had even been in the position to sack Delhi and other cities of neighbouring India.84 However, even he did prefer prior to his own seizure of the imperial throne in 1148/1736 the merely modest

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78 Refer in this regard to PERRY 1971.
79 Refer on him to PERRY 1979. For a briefer account on Karīm Ḥān and the short-lived dynasty founded by him consult IDEM 1991. According to PERRY 1979, p. 218, Karīm Ḥān considered the members of the civil administration, the number of which he tended to keep small, as mere “rubber stamps and companions of his leisure hours rather than colleagues in government.” He relied more often on members of his own family: His trusted brother ʿṢādiq, for instance, was made governor of Fārs (ibid., p. 218).
80 GIFFARD-KÂSHÂNI 1368/1990 (henceforth GM), p. 351; GULISTĀNA 1357/1977 (henceforth MT), p. 517 (index), and in particular p. 460 (for the addresses vākīl ol-raʿāyā and vākīl ol-ḥalāyiq); MŪṢĀVĪ 1366/1987 (henceforth TGG), p. 114 and passim; RT, p. 329. Likewise, the German traveller CARSTEN NIEBUHR, a Danish subject, who visited Sirāz in Spring 1765, mentions with regard to Karīm Ḥān only the address vākīl, which he translated in the course of his account into German with ‘Statthalter’ (i.e., representative, governor). See NIEBUHR, p. 115. On Karīm Ḥān’s self-assertion as vākīl-e raʿāyā and vākīl-e khalāyiq refer furthermore to PERRY 1979, pp. 215–217.
81 PERRY 1979, p. 233.
82 Ibid. However, see the respective entry in DM (ed. MARCINKOWSKI), 53b–54a.
84 On Nādīr’s activities in India refer to FRASER, pp. 152–226. On the atrocities committed by Nādīr’s troops in the city of ʿṢāḥghāhānābād see DN, p. 465.
address ‘Tahmâsp-Quli’, i.e. ‘Slave of Tahmâsp’. Nâdir’s attempts to abolish Twelver Shi‘ism as ‘State religion’ and to replace it with the promotion of its ģa‘fari legal rite as a mere fifth (Sunnite) mazhab has to be seen in the context of his search for a certain legitimation of his rule.

It should be noted here only briefly that the Qâjârs, too, who assumed imperial power toward the beginning of the 13th/14th century and shifted the seat of government to Tehran, faced considerable difficulties in legitimizing their power, similar to their Afšârid and Zand predecessors. But contrary to those two dynasties, and in a sense to the Şafavids as well, the Qâjârs, whose grasp over the country as a whole was in general much weaker, sought toward the beginning of their rule a certain legitimation from the part of the ‘ulamâ’. As seen above, the earlier Şafavids, at least, did consider themselves in their capacity as sayyids and ‘spiritual leaders’ (mursîd-e kâmil) as the legitimate rulers in the name of the hidden Twelfth Imâm. By contrast, the rule of the Afšârids and Zands rested mainly on the support of their troops and was independent from any support from the religious class. As an extreme example in this regard Nâdir may be mentioned again, for he is reported of having ordered the strangulation of the Mullâ-Bâšî Mirzâ Abûl-Hasan because of the latter’s expression of loyalty to the Şafavids at the eve of Nâdir’s ‘election’ as Emperor in 1148/1736. Karîm Hân Zand, for his part, was apparently indifferent to religious matters in general and to the ‘ulamâ’ in particular.

We shall now return from a discussion of the broader historical setting to the DM and its date of composition. At this place we should perhaps recall the statement of Dânishpažhûh in regard to the distinctive character of the DM which had already been quoted above. According to this scholar, the DM served as a “directive sample” which “had been initiated at the beginning of the Şafavid period, and […] which was constantly updated in the course of time” and whose “preface was always written anew in the name of the [respective] Emperor.”

85 Fraser, pp. 96–97; RT, p. 196.
89 Avery 1991, p. 35.
90 Arjomand 1984, p. 217. On his religious policy refer also to the, however, brief information provided by Perry 1979, pp. 220–222 (on the office of Şayh ol-İslâm, ibid., pp. 220–221).
The question of the DM’s date of composition, however, is not that easy to answer as it appears on the first glance. The manuscript lacks any marginal notes or seals and alike which could have provided additional hints in this regard. Related to this is the fact that the epilogue (ḥātima), promised by the author of the DM, is obviously missing. In the light of those obstacles, we have to consider that what Muḥammad Rafī‘-e Anṣārī himself has to tell us about the cause for the compilation of the DM: in his preamble he stated that he set out work on the DM by the order of the Emperor, who is clearly identified by him as Šāh Sultān Ḥusain and alluded to as being still alive at the time of compilation. The preamble, however, presents at the same time a further problem: highly unusual for Safavid Iran, whose rulers saw themselves as the vanguard of Twelver Shi‘ism, is the author’s extensive praise of the four ‘Rightly Guided Caliphs’ (al-Ḥulafā’-e Rāsidūn), who are considered as such only by the Sunnites. It is furthermore difficult to say whether preamble and main text, as well as the preamble in itself, have been laid out and written as one single part and by one and the same writer (author?), or whether, on the contrary, the passage on the four caliphs is a later addition. If we decide in favour of the first option—and there seems to be so far no indication contrary to this—a date of composition after 1135/1722, which marks the collapse of the Safavid Empire under the Afghan onslaught, has to be envisaged. Furthermore, since Šāh Sultān Ḥusain has been spoken of as still alive, a date of composition before his death at the hands of the Afghans, which took place in 1137/1725, has to be considered.

Another feature in this regard is interesting: it is Šāh Sultān Ḥusain who has been mentioned in the preamble of the DM as the Safavid Emperor of the day, not his son Tahmāsp Mīrzā, who, as seen above, had made his way out of the beleaguered capital Isfahān, and who was styled Emperor under the name of Tahmāsp II, while his father Šāh Sultān Ḥusain was still alive and a

91 My addition.
93 DM (ed. Marcinkowski), [2b].
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid. [2a].
96 Ibid. (Engl. trans.): “may Allāh perpetuate his reign and beneficence until the Day of Resurrection”.
97 Le., Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUṯmān and ʿAlī.
98 DM (ed. Marcinkowski), 1b (Engl. trans.): “the Most Excellent Companions (Ashbāb-e Abyār) as long as night and day exist, for they are the Rightly Guided Caliphs (Ḥulafā’-ye Rāsidūn); the four constants of the building; the solid pillars of the palace of certainty; the four towers of the castle of prophethood; the ‘two Easts’ and the ‘two Wests’ of the world of prophethood; the leaders on the path of guidance; the confidants of the secrets of the Seal of the Prophets.”
prisoner of the Afghans. Contrary to the TM, the Afghan usurper Mahmūd is mentioned with no word throughout the DM. Therefore, Perry’s assertion that both, the DM and TM are “two manuals of Safavid administration, written to instruct Aṣraf and the Afghan conquerors in court protocol and imperial government as practiced during the reign of the last Safavid monarch (1694–1722)” cannot be affirmed categorically for the DM. As a further evidence for the presumption that Sāh Sultān Ḥusain might have been still alive at the time of composition the fact may serve, that the in the text appearing names of previous Safavid rulers are usually followed by their respective post-mortem titles, with the exception of that of Sāh Sultān Ḥusain. Frequently in the DM we come across expressions such as “toward of the end of the rule of Sāh Sultān Ḥusain” (dar avāḥir-e zamān-e Sāh Sultān Ḥusain) and alike. This wording could well mean that the ruler in question was not any more in power at the time of the DM’s composition. Among those personalities and dignitaries, who are mentioned by their names in the DM and who had been alive with a high degree of possibility ‘towards the end of the rule Sāh Sultān Ḥusain,’ if not at the time of the DM’s compilation, are Ismāʿīl Āqā, Ibrahim Āqā, and Muhammad Bāqir Ḥatūnābādī. However, the search for chronograms (tāriḥ), in particular in the two poems that appear in the introduction of the DM, in order to determine the DM’s date of composition, proved to be futile.

The above deliberations do not exclude per se the abovementioned possibility that not only the TM, but the DM as well, had been written on the explicit instruction of the Afghans. This conclusion is, however, not compelling. The ultimate answer to the question of the immediate occasion for the composition of the DM remains therefore still open. In accordance

99 Perry 1979, p. 308 (“Appendix: Survey and Assessment of the Sources”).
100 For instance in DM (ed. Marcinkowski), 3a, in connection with the office of Mullā-Bāšī.
101 DM (ed. Marcinkowski), [33b]. White eunuch, Head of the Arsenal (Ḡabbādār-Bāšī) and according to Dānešpazhūh, DM (ed. Dānešpazhūh), p. 498 (intro.), alive in 1115/1703. According to TM (ed. Minorsky), p. 56 n. 3, he was still alive in 1134/1722 during the Afghan siege of the capital, since it was he, who ensured the escape of the heir-apparent Tahmāsp (II.) to the north.
102 DM (ed. Marcinkowski), [35b]. White eunuch and centurion or Yūz-Bāqī of the white gulams, who was alive in 1115/1703 and in 1123/1711 supervisor of the construction of an imperial mansion at Farahābād, outside Isfahān, according to Dānešpazhūh’s notes in DM (ed. Dānešpazhūh), p. 498 (intro.); refer also to TM (ed. Minorsky), p. 56.
103 Mullā-Bāšī, passed away in 1127/1715. Refer on him to DM (ed. Marcinkowski), [3a], and the corresponding notes to the English translation.
104 According to the abjad-reckoning, which attaches a specific numerical value to each of the letters of the Arabo-Persian alphabet.
with the above considerations, a date of composition between 1135/1722 and 1137/1725 might be envisaged. However, even here it is difficult to pronounce a final statement since the preamble of the DM alludes to Șâh Sultân Ӧsain as still being the monarch of the time, regardless the fact that he had been forced to abdicate in 1135/1722 in the aftermath of the Afghan invasion. In any event, further investigations concerning the dating should be made with reference to the manuscript itself and its particularities.

Concluding Remarks

DM and TM constitute the only extant administrative handbooks from the Șafavid period of which we have knowledge today. The manuscript of the DM is apparently unique, and no other copies of it are known to be extant outside Iran. Works on practical aspects of Islamic administration are rather rare to come by. Dominating the field is 'advisory'-literature which dwells on desired states and conditions. Historically utilizable informations with a relation to the actual circumstances are mostly scattered over other genres, such as chronicles or foreign travel-accounts and alike. Among the targets which remain to be pursued in the future – with regard to DM and TM in particular and to Șafavid administration in general – is further comprehensive, inter/multi-disciplinary and comparative research into the offices and services mentioned in both manuals, from the 'high-ranking Amirs' down to the staff of the imperial palace-kitchens and alike. This 'multi-facetted approach' is urgently needed in order to cover all aspects of Șafavid studies equally.

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¹⁰⁸ See MARCINKOWSKI 2000. Of related interest are also MARCINKOWSKI 2003a, 2003c and 2002e.
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MIRZA RAF'I’S DASTUR OL-MOLÜK


Was ist und welchem Zwecke dient Indologie?

Tractatus irae

Von Walter Slaje, Weimar


Die zentrale Frage hierbei wäre allerdings, erschrecken worüber eigentlich ein solcher Akt des Insichgehens in Gang gebracht hätte werden