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The Book of Government or Rules for Kings



THE SIYAR AL-MULUK OR SIYASAT-NAMA OF
NIZAM AL-MULK
Translated by Hubert Darke

The Book of Government

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of NIZAM AL-MULK*

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Introduction

The author

The book which is here offered to English readers was described by E. G. Browne as 'one of the most valuable and interesting prose works in Persian'. It was written by Ḥasan ibn 'Alī of Ṭūs, entitled Nizām al-Mulk, who for thirty years, first under Sultan Alp Arslan and then under his son Malikshāh, as their chief minister directed the administration of the great empire of the Saljuqs. These Saljuqs were the ruling family of a tribe of wild Turkish nomads who, coming from the steppes of Central Asia, asked permission from Sultān Maḥmūd of Ghazna to cross the Oxus in search of fresh pastures for their flocks in Khurāsān. They came and flourished, and soon became so strong that they were able to take Khurāsān from the Ghaznavids. The rise to power of the Saljuqs and the period of their ascendancy coincided exactly with the lifetime of Nizām al-Mulk. He was born, according to two good authorities, either in 408 A.H./1018 A.D. (*Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*) or in 410 A.H./1019-20 A.D. (*Tārīkh-i Baihaq*); he died, as we know, in 485/1092, murdered by one of the assassins of the Isma'īlīs whom he denounced so fiercely in this book; thus he lived, and remained working, until a ripe old age. After his death, even to some extent because of it, the empire of the Saljuqs went into decline.

Not much is known about his early life. His father was a native of Baihaq, which is the old name for the town and district of Sabzvār; he had come to Ṭūs as a tax-collector in the service of the Ghaznavids. In the *Asrār at-Taḥīd*, which is a collection of anecdotes about the famous mystic, Shaikh Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'l-Khair, there are some glimpses of Ḥasan in his boyhood: on two occasions the Shaikh saw him and prophesied that he would become 'the khwāja of the world'; one was at Ṭūs, when Ḥasan was a small boy, and the other was later when he was on his way to Marv to further his studies and stopped at Maihana to visit the Shaikh. He retained a great faith in the Shaikh and remained a nominal disciple all his life; he used to say that to him he owed all his success. Though not inclined to mysticism himself, in his later life he founded several hospices for the Ṣūfīs, and continued

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to support them financially. Politically more important was his promotion of orthodox religious education; he founded madrasas or colleges of higher learning in several cities; they were known as Nizāmiyyas after him, and the most famous of them were at Baghdad and Nishāpūr.

When Khurāsān fell to the Saljuqs with the defeat of Sulṭān Mas'ūd in 431/1040, Ḥasan's father went to Ghazna, taking his son with him. Ḥasan probably worked in the Ghaznavid administration for a time, but after a few years he left there and went back to Khurāsān to enter the service of the Saljuqs. Meanwhile, the Saljuq brothers, Tughril Beg and Chaghri Beg, had divided the dominion between them, Tughril taking the western half with his seat at Baghdad, and Chaghri remaining in the east with his headquarters at Marv. When Chaghri died in 452/1060 Tughril became paramount ruler and Chaghri's son, Alp Arslan, succeeded him as governor of Khurāsān. Nizām al-Mulk had for some years been adviser to Alp Arslan during the period that the latter had served his father in a subordinate command in eastern Khurāsān; he was now retained by Alp Arslan as his right-hand man, and thus, until the death of Tughril in 455/1063, he was responsible for the administration of the whole of Khurāsān. It was during this period that enmity grew up between him and Tughril's vazir, 'Amīd al-Mulk al-Kundurī. Tughril had no male heir, and Kundurī had persuaded Tughril to designate Sulaimān, Chaghri's younger son, to succeed him, knowing full well that if Alp Arslan, the elder son of Chaghri, became great sultan, it would be Nizām al-Mulk who became 'khwāja of the world' rather than Kundurī himself. Eventually Alp Arslan's succession was secured and Kundurī was sent into exile and a little later executed, no doubt on the orders of Nizām al-Mulk.

During the reigns of Alp Arslan (455-65/1063-73) and his son Malikshāh the Saljuq power reached its zenith and Nizām al-Mulk was at the height of his career. The empire covered a vast territory extending from the borders of Afghanistan to the shores of the Mediterranean, and as head of the administration Nizām al-Mulk acquired great authority and prestige. When Malikshāh came to the throne he was only eighteen years of age and at first he relied heavily on his vazir. Thus Nizām al-Mulk was able to have his own way for a number of years, and there is no doubt that he directed affairs with great skill and efficiency. However, his man-

ner was not without arrogance; his habit of putting his friends and relations into the best posts began to arouse resentment, and his opponents were able to gain the ear of the sultan. As the sultan increased in maturity he asserted himself more vigorously, and there were times when he was on bad terms with his vazir. Perhaps it was at such a moment, when he was dissatisfied with the state of things in his kingdom and tempted to consider ways of replacing him, that he commanded Nizām al-Mulk and several others to compose treatises on the art of government. What the others wrote, if anything, we shall never know; what survives is the book before us – the memorial of a great Iranian statesman.

The Nakhjivāni MS of Tabriz

Until the discovery of this MS it could be said that the text of this book had been badly preserved. Not one of the dozen or so extant MSS gave a satisfactory text; not only did they contain incongruous material which cast doubt upon the authenticity of the whole book, but the copyists had been guilty of every conceivable aberration – interpolation, alteration, omission; and only by comparing a number of these could a readable text be produced. The Nakhjivāni MS, which was used to prepare the text (published by the Royal Institute of Translation and Publication in 1968 and soon to be re-issued with corrections) from which this translation was made, was copied in 673/1274, and not only is it older than all other MSS, but it far surpasses them in correctness. Part of this virtue of credibility and authenticity can be attributed to the fact the scribe, to judge from his manner of writing and the nature of the mistakes he did make, was almost certainly illiterate; letters are sometimes confused, dots are often omitted and misplaced. But the MS is absolutely free of those gratuitous alterations and interpolations which abound in other MSS; erroneous omissions are few and short and can generally be ascribed to lipography. Archaic words and forms and unfamiliar place-names are preserved, which were ruthlessly modernized or changed by later copyists; attention is drawn to some of these in the notes. But the outstanding feature of the text of this MS is that those passages in previous texts (chapter 40, paras 33 and 34, and Chapter 41, para. 22) in which Nizām al-Mulk is referred to in the third person and sultans are mentioned who ruled after Nizām al-Mulk's death are

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completely absent. The author's prologue appears in a form which previously it was possible only to adumbrate, while the epilogue with its reference to 'Muḥammad the copyist' (only in one MS is he called 'Maghribi') is absent altogether. So it seems highly probable that here we have a text closely descended from the author's autograph and that the composition of an epilogue, the adaptation of the prologue and the interpolation of two spurious passages were all the work of 'the copyist'. By extreme good fortune, a single copy of Nizām al-Mulk's original text survived to be copied directly (or at one or two removes) into the Nakhjivānī MS, while all the other extant MSS (except that of the Majlis library in Tehran, which is demonstrably a direct and recent copy of the Nakhjivānī) derive from an edited version. The Nakhjivānī MS is remarkably well preserved, and consists or consisted originally of 147 folios; unfortunately, however, it has a lacuna; folios 29 to 40 are missing; here the previous syncretistic text has been used to fill the gap. With the strong internal evidence of the authorship of the book in chapter 21, para. 5, where in one of his all too few personal reminiscences the author relates a conversation in which other parties refer to him as 'the vazir of Sultan Alp Arslan', we can be more confident overall that the book is the genuine composition and compilation of Nizām al-Mulk.

Title

Since Charles Schefer published the Persian text (1891) and the French translation (1893), this book has been generally known in Europe as the *Siyāsat-nāma*, and accordingly the present translation retains the title 'The Book of Government'. However, all MSS give the title as *Siyar al-Mulūk* (literally 'Manners of the Kings') and the book has been known in Iran and quoted in Persian literature down the centuries by this name. Of early references the one in *Tāriḫ-i Ṭabaristān* is indisputable and that in the *Naṣiḫat al-Mulūk* of Ghazzālī ('Counsel for Kings', 70–71) is virtually certain, for there Ghazzālī quotes the story (our book, chapter 3, paras 19–21), in which 'Amr-i Laith tempts Isma'il ibn Aḥmad with an offer of the Ṣaffārid treasure. The same story is found in *Tāriḫ-i Guzīda* (72) and *Jawāmi' al-Hikāyāt*, in both of which books the *Siyar al-Mulūk* is listed as one of their general sources. An internal allusion to the title comes in chapter 43, para. 6,

where we find the words *dar in kitāb-i siyar*. The only evidence for a name embracing the word *siyāsāt* is to be found in an epilogue (absent in our MS), where some MSS read *in ast kitāb-i siyāsāt*. Indeed Nizām al Mul̄k seems to have set a fashion (himself modelling his title on the *Kitāb at-Tāj fi Akhlāq al-Mulūk* – ‘Le livre de la couronne’) whereby Persian ‘Mirrors for Princes’ were given titles of the style . . . al-Mulūk; Ghazzālī was next in the line, and there were many more after him.

Numbering of chapters

All MSS shew confusion in the numbering of chapters in the body of the text; this is resolved by referring to the list of contents at the beginning of the book. Errors crept into the text when scribes came to the heading of a fresh section within a chapter (such as chapter 27, para. 2) and numbered this as a new chapter. Even our own MS in chapter 40 numbers para. 18 as chapter 41 and para. 19 as chapter 42, and does not come back into line until chapter 47. The corrected numbering agrees very well with the Librarian’s Note at the beginning, which states that Nizām al-Mul̄k first composed thirty-nine chapters, and later ‘because of his anxiety on account of enemies of the dynasty’ added a further eleven chapters. The subject matter of chapter 40 exactly suits the beginning of a new section; so we are justified in indicating the division of the book into two parts accordingly.

Hājji Khalīfa, the great eleventh/seventeenth century Turkish bibliographer, gives a description of the book which is faulty in some details; the entry in his *Kashf az-Zumūn* runs as follows:

Siyar al-Mulūk, Persian, of the vazir, Nizām al-Mul̄k Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī of Tūs (died 485); he composed it during his vazirate in 469 for Malikshāh, the Saljuqid, in 39 chapters; then al-Yamīnī made it 51, and arranged all the chapters in his own order, different from the author’s.

Hājji Khalīfa probably had only inferior MSS at his disposal, and we cannot accept his figures against the evidence of the Nakhjivānī MS.

It is practically as certain that the second part was never seen by Malikshāh; this can be inferred from the Librarian’s Note. The Librarian would hardly have dared to present such outspoken

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criticisms to the sultan, and he had no opportunity to do so anyway, because Malikshāh himself died soon after arriving at Baghdad, just a month or so after Nizām al-Mulk was assassinated on the journey.

Date of composition

According to one group of related, and late, MSS the book was composed, or rather the order for its composition was given, in 484/1091. In our MS (supported by one late MS, not that of Majlis library) the prologue is written in the name of Nizām al-Mulk himself and he says that in 479/1086 Sulṭān Malikshāh invited him and several others to write a book. This does not mean that the book, that is the first part of it, was necessarily written in that year, but composition was probably not delayed as late as 484/1091. Nizām al-Mulk's stories about his own times mostly concern incidents in the reign of Alp Arslan; the only reference in Part One to an event in the time of Malikshāh is in chapter 35, para. 2, where he says – 'on that occasion when we went to Samarqand and Ūzgand'. If, as is historically most likely, the author is referring to the campaign of 481/1058–482/1089, then either Part One was written after 481/1058, or this passage was added at the time of the revision mentioned by the Librarian. So as far as Part One is concerned, we can only say that it was written between the years 479/1086 and 484/1091, sooner rather than later. The date given by Ḥājjī Khalifa must be regarded as a mistake resulting from a misreading of figure 7 as figure 6.

However, it is quite possible that 484/1091 was the year of composition of Part Two. Indeed two things happened in the year 483/1090 which could have prompted Nizām al-Mulk to take up his pen again. One was his quarrel with Sultan Malikshāh, and his fall from favour, if not from office (the *Rāḥat aṣ-Ṣudūr* does say that he was replaced by Tāj al-Mulk); and this would account for the tone of bitterness and frustration which pervades these chapters. The other circumstance, which could have been responsible for his outcry against heretics, the Isma'īlīs in particular, was the return of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ from Egypt in this year, when he occupied Alamut and commenced his activities in Persia.

After the deaths of Nizām al-Mulk and Sulṭān Malikshāh in the year 485/1092, the country was thrown into confusion by the

struggle for power between Berk-yaruq and Muhammad, and we can well believe the Librarian when he says that he did not dare to reveal the book while the troubles lasted. Stability was restored when Muḥammad became undisputed sultan in 498/1105, and it is surely this sultan to whom the Librarian refers in his note. Ghazzali composed his *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* before 505/1112, and since he probably had the *Siyar al-Mulūk* in his hands at the time, we can say that the *Siyar al-Mulūk* was published, bearing in mind the limited circulation of books in those days, between 498/1105 and 505/1112.

Materials and sources

The book is put together like a patchwork from pieces, longer or shorter, gathered from various sources; these materials can be classified as follows:

Advice. Apart from chapters 1 and 2 which are introductory and deal with the theory and theology of kingship, and chapters 44–7 which consist of historical narrative, introduced by chapter 43, every chapter opens with a passage offering practical instruction on some aspect of the functions and duties of the monarch. This advice material is very original, having been written for a particular sultan at a particular time, and it is derived hardly at all from the old *pand-nāma-ha* ('books of counsel') which were the foundation of more abstract treatises. It may be that because the author had no model before him, the advice is sometimes crudely and vaguely expressed; this is particularly the case with some of the very short chapters consisting of only a few lines. A different reason for obscurity is to be seen in those chapters which criticize the royal master or offer unwelcome advice, and here we may imagine that measured words and equivocal language were deliberate.

Quotations, Traditions and Sayings. The material under this head belongs to a great corpus of quotations from the Qur'an, traditions of the Prophet and his Companions and sayings of famous men, generally only a few lines in length, which was drawn upon freely by the composers of Arabic and Persian ethical treatises. Doubtless authors often culled them from the works of their predecessors rather than from original sources – witness the number of consecutive passages from this book (especially chapters 7 and 8) which Ghazzali incorporated into his *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*.

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Anecdotes. In this class are included the numerous short stories, of about one or two pages in length, relating to some historical ruler or minister. The source of these would be earlier books in which writers gave the stories at first hand and the 'Collections of Tales' (see page 25, note 2 and *Counsel for Kings*, 94), which developed later into such a massive collection as the *Jawāmi' al-Hikāyāt*. These anecdotes were common literary property; examples from the *Siyar al-Mulūk* are to be found, sometimes with modifications, in many other books, such as *Counsel for Kings* (lviii, where Bagley lists eighteen parallel items) and of course the *Jawāmi' al-Hikāyāt* (pp. 76–84). Where similar stories are common to *Siyar al-Mulūk* and other books but with different names (e.g. the story about Bahrām Gūr in chapter 4, which appears in *Counsel for Kings*, p. 93, with the name Gushtasb), we may suspect that it was Nizām al-Mulk who made the changes. Here it must be remembered that for Nizām al-Mulk the object of these stories lay in the moral to be drawn from each; they are to be entertaining too, as he says in his prologue, but not scrupulously historical. This book is addressed to an uneducated ex-nomad Turk, who would hardly have been impressed or pleased if many of the stories had been concerned with names unfamiliar to him. So sometimes the author changed the names of characters in traditional stories in order to introduce well-known names and incidentally to glorify his own idols, especially Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazna.

Long stories. The long stories, running to ten or twenty pages are in quite a separate category; they may be called historical romances and as such they represent some of the earliest prose fiction in the Persian language. They tend to be rambling and even tedious, for they contain much repetition and padding; the author's invention is in the main limited to minute details of words and actions, and he introduces several anachronisms. One of these stories, however, is not the author's own composition; in fact it is the only item in the book which can be assigned to a definite source. This is the story about the Barmakids in chapter 41, para. 34. The whole story with scarcely a word changed is taken from the opening pages of the *Tārīkh-i Barāmika*; only the name of the principal character has been changed from Barmak to Ja'far. This 'History of the Barmakids', then, could well have been the model which Nizām al-Mulk had before him in writing these long stories. It is not so much a history as a collection of anecdotes, some of which

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are quite humorous; like those of Niẓām al-Mulk, they contain much conversation, which though partly fictional gives the impression of being based on real life, whereas one cannot conceive that the words of Ya‘qūb-i Laith or Mazdak, as detailed by Niẓām al-Mulk, are other than pure fiction. The fictional element in Niẓām al-Mulk’s stories is greater; he went a stage further than his model.

The following are the long stories in this category:

Isma‘il ibn Aḥmad and the Ṣaffārids	chapter 3, paras 4–21
Bahrām Gūr and Rāst-ravishn	4 5–24
The Just King (Nushirvān)	5 2–15
The Turkish amir and al-Mu‘taṣim	7 9–23
The robbers of Kūch Balūch	10 2–16
‘Aḍud ad-Daula and the unjust judge	13 2–14
Sultan Maḥmūd and the unjust judge	13 15–19
Alptigin and Sabuktigin	27 5–21
Sultan Maḥmūd and his titles	40 21–31
Fakhr ad-Daula	41 21–26
Sulaimān ibn ‘Abd al-Malik and Ja‘far ibn Barmak	41 34–41
The revolt of Mazdak	44 1–26
Naṣr ibn Aḥmad and the Qarmatis	46 8–17

Stories about contemporary events. There are only five stories in the book dealing with contemporary persons or events, most of them pertaining to the reign of Alp Arslan; these are:

- 1 Chapter 10, para. 18. A conversation between Sultan Alp Arslan and Abu’l-Faḍl Sigzī on the subject of intelligence agents.
- 2 Chapter 21, paras 3–5. A story in the first person about the author’s meeting with an envoy of the khan of Samarqand.
- 3 Chapter 35, para. 2. A reference to Sultan Malikshāh’s expedition to Samarqand and Ūzgand.
- 4 Chapter 38, para. 2. A story about the attempt of ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Khāl to convince Alp Arslan that a certain famous man (surely Abd-Allāh Anṣārī) was an idolator.
- 5 Chapter 41, paras 3–17. A story about the displeasure of Alp Arslan on hearing that Ardam was employing a Shi‘ī as his secretary.

Historical narrative. The material of this class is found in chapters 45–7, where in Niẓām al-Mulk sets forth, as a warning for the present, the history of some of the past seceders and heretics who revolted against the religion and the state.

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These are straightforward accounts without any obvious fictional element (except for the story of Naṣr ibn Aḥmad which we have already removed to another category), and they appear to be derived more or less directly from the books which Niẓām al-Mulk used as his sources; some of these are mentioned in the text and they are:

- 1 *Tāriḫ-i Isfahān*. Although the *Maḥāsin Isfahān* of Māfarrūkhī in this original Arabic version could have been available to Niẓām al-Mulk, Browne's survey of the contents of the Persian translation ('Account of a rare manuscript history of Isfahan') shows that it could not have been the major source that Niẓām al-Mulk claims it to have been in chapter 43, para. 6 (p. 189); he names it again in chapter 47, para. 13 (p. 237). Other histories of Isfahan are known to have existed which are now lost.
- 2 *Tāriḫ-i Ṭabarī*; named in chapter 47, para. 13 (p. 237).
- 3 *Tāriḫ-i Khulafā-yi Banī 'Abbās*, named in chapter 47, para. 13 (p. 237); this was probably the *Kitāb al-Aurāq* of aṣ-Ṣūlī.
- 4 *Makḥarīq al-Anbiyā* (*Ḥiyal al-Mutanabbiyīn*) of Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā Rāzī, mentioned in chapter 46, para. 2 (p. 209).

Comments and remarks. Stories long or short are water-tight units and reflections or comments on the part of the author are not admitted in the body of a story, unless they are expressed by means of speeches put into the mouths of the characters. Only at the end of a story or chapter are there often three or four lines of brief comment on what has gone before.

Doctrines

In the first two chapters of the book, and again at the beginning of Part Two, Niẓām al-Mulk, like other writers of mirrors for princes, sets forth the traditional Persian theory of kingship, handed down from the Sasanian period, which holds that kings are selected by God for the good of mankind and endowed by Him with wisdom and justice, and that they are accountable to Him on the resurrection day for the rule they have exercised. Indeed the picture in the first chapter of an evil and godless age being ended by a divinely appointed saviour king is strikingly similar to a passage in the 'Oracles of Hystaspes', king of the Medes, a document which is ascribed to the third or second century B.C. and recorded by the Christian writer Lactantius. When

the author makes another allusion to the doctrine in chapter 6, para. 3, he expressly puts it into a Sasanian context. The parallel teaching that 'religion and kingship are two brothers', given in chapter 8, para. 3, is also Zoroastrian in origin. On the subject of vazirs, Niẓām al-Mulk says in chapter 41, para. 34 that vazirship, like kingship, should be hereditary as it was in the Sasanian period. In this book he does not actually say that vazirs are appointed by God; when he did say that, it cost him his job. For according to *Rāḥat aṣ-Ṣudūr*, pp. 133-4, shortly before their departure from Iṣfahān for Baghdad in 485/1092 relations between Malikshāh and Niẓām al-Mulk became strained to the limit; Tarkan Khatun, who favoured her own protégé Tāj al-Mulk against Niẓām al-Mulk and also wanted her own son Maḥmūd to be declared heir-apparent rather than the elder Berk-yaruq, the child of another wife, had been filling the ears of the sultan with stories of Niẓām al-Mulk's failings; Malikshāh sent a message of rebuke to Niẓām al-Mulk, charging him with doing what he liked without consulting him and giving important posts to his own sons, and threatened to remove the turban from his head, that is dismiss him. Niẓām al-Mulk sent back the answer, 'He who gave you the crown put the turban on my head; the two are interconnected and interdependent'. The people who carried the answer added their own embroidery, making matters worse. Malikshāh was furious and dismissed Niẓām al-Mulk, putting Tāj al-Mulk in his place.

All the subsequent chapters of Part One deal with the practical aspects of rulership; advice is given on what the sultan should do and what his officers should do, in order to run the state efficiently and peacefully, and keep the people contented and under control. The army, of course, is the basis of his power and it must be maintained in a high state of preparedness. Civil officials, especially those concerned with discipline such as judges, censors and prosecutors, are to have wide powers and great prestige; but the people must be dealt with fairly and there must be no oppression otherwise they will become discontented. The orthodox faith must be sustained and promoted, but there is no vehement condemnation of Shī'ism in this part, while 'Ali and his family are mentioned with respect; the only reference to Isma'ilism is the rather unlikely suggestion that Ya'qūb-i Laith was a convert. It can now be seen that Niẓām al-Mulk made a distinction between the Shī'is/Rāfiḍis and the much more formidable Isma'ilis/

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Bāṭinīs; if formerly he appeared to lump them together, this was partly due to the fact that where our MS has Seveners (Sab'iyān), inferior MSS read Shī'īs (Shī'iyān); both words have the same shape in Arabic script and are easily confused. The author warns that nobody can be trusted to be either loyal or honest, so, to ensure that duties are performed and orders carried out, an elaborate intelligence system ought to be organized to obtain secret reports about the conduct of officials, high and low. Meanwhile, the king may sport with his boon-companions, giving parties, maintaining a huge household, and surrounding himself with all kinds of pomp and magnificence; his court is to be thronged with retainers and troops of slaves; his hospitality and generosity are to be on a lavish scale; the Saljuqs are blamed for not giving enough importance to ceremony and protocol. But the king should not issue too many written (chapter 11) or verbal (chapter 15) orders; thus he is tactfully steered away from interfering in routine administration, the preserve of the vazir; his only public function is to give audiences and hold court for listening to complaints and redressing wrongs. Although not everything is perfect in the state in the author's view, the defects are not serious or fundamental; there is criticism of the sultan, but it is gentle and polite.

In Part Two all is different; the times are sick, the evil eye is at work; things are going seriously wrong and disaster is feared. In fact in the opening paragraph of chapter 40 all the ills are specified, but by a masterly piece of dissimulation the whole diagnosis is expressed as a hypothetical case. Evil practices and wrong procedures are threatening the safety of the state; noble families are being weakened and the proletariat are becoming uppish; experienced men are being left idle and unemployed, and economy in the army is jeopardizing security; women are meddling in affairs of state and underlings are overstepping their bounds. Criticism of the sultan becomes more outspoken in chapter 40, para. 18, in chapter 41, paras 1, 2 and 43, and in chapter 42, para. 1; while in chapter 41, paras 18–20, the author is clearly attacking his rival, Tāj al-Mulk. His concern about the misapplication of titles in chapter 40, para. 1 and paras 19–34 may seem trivial, but it is his discreet way of expressing his apprehension at the growth of Turkish military control over the Persian civil service; he seeks to preserve 'the prestige of the administration' (*raumaq-i dīvān*).

His worst fears arise from the spread of Ismaʿilism; the immediate cause for alarm was that in 483/1090 Ḥaṣan-i Šabbāḥ returned to Iran from Egypt, was appointed chief propagandist in Dailamān and occupied the fortress of Alamūt, from which he directed the revolt against the Saljuqs and the deployment of the assassins. Chapters 43–7 are devoted to the history of several heretical sects; at the beginning and end of this part we find the two most poignant passages in the book (chapter 43, para. 3 and chapter 47, para. 15), in which we cannot fail to hear, as Barthold says, ‘the voice of a man of deep convictions going to death for their sake’. Nizām al-Mulk leads up to his long chapter (46) on the origin of Ismaʿilism and the revolts of the Qarmaṭīs, as the early adherents to the sect were called, with two chapters about former heretics, Mazdak (44) and Sinbad (45), and he follows it with an account of Bābak and the Khurrama-dīns. In the last three chapters (48–50) he introduces some more administrative topics in the style of Part One, as if they are afterthoughts; and in the final paragraph of the book he takes leave of his master with the advice that he should pursue the middle course in affairs and practice moderation in all things.

Transliteration, etc.

Diacritical marks have been omitted throughout the text, and have not been rigorously applied in the notes. In the bibliography and index all names are fully pointed. The transliteration system is generally that approved by the Royal Asiatic Society; however, in the notes, where it is important to indicate the exact reading of the MS, the system is modified to avoid digraphs; thus ʾ = alif, θ = *th*, c = *ch*, x = *kh*, δ = *dh*, ǰ = *ǰh*, ś = *sh*, γ = *gh*; while * indicates a letter of the shape of *b, p, t, θ, n, y*, with no distinguishing dots.

Words in round brackets are in the original Persian, but are in some measure superfluous to the English.

Words in square brackets are not in the Persian, but are added by way of amplification or explanation.

Where Persian words are quoted in the notes without comment, the purpose is sometimes to correct the 1968 edition of the Persian text.

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THIS IS THE BOOK OF RULES FOR KINGS
COMPOSED BY THE VAZIR, THE WISE, THE
JUST, THE SUCCESSFUL, THE VICTORIOUS,
NIZAM AL-MULK HASAN¹ OF TUS

*In the name of Allah, The Merciful, The Clement
O my Lord, make easy and do not make difficult*

[*Prologue*]

¹ Thanks and praise be to God (to Him be power and glory) who is the Creator of heaven and earth, the Provider of daily food for His servants, the Knower of the hidden and the open, the Pardoner of sins; and blessings upon the best of mortals, The Chosen One (the prayers of Allah and His peace be upon him), who is the greatest of prophets, the elect of the God of the world, the vehicle of the Qur'an, and the advocate of his people on the day of judgment; blessings too upon his Companions and the people of his house.

² Thus says Hasan² of Tus that in the year 479 [of the Hijra/ 1086 A.D.] Abu'l-Fath Malikshah ibn Muhammad, Glorifier of the World and the Faith, Right Hand of the Commander of the Faithful (may Allah strengthen his helpers and double his power), issued a sublime, imperial command to his servant and to several others, instructing each one of them to give thought to the condition of the country, and to consider – ‘whether there is in our age and time anything out of order either in the divan, the court, the royal palace or the audience-hall – anything whose principles are not being observed by us or are unknown to us; whether there are any functions which kings before us have performed and we are not fulfilling: consider further what have been the laws and customs of kings and kingship, followed in past time by the Saljuq sultans, make a digest of them and present them for our judgment; we shall then reflect upon them and give orders that hereafter affairs religious and worldly should proceed in accordance with their proper rules; what is remediable we shall remedy;

PROLOGUE

we shall see that every duty is discharged correctly and according to God's commands, and that all wrong practices are discontinued; for since God (be He exalted) has given us His consummate grace and bestowed the world and the kingship of the world upon us and subdued all our enemies, henceforward nothing in our empire must exist or happen that is deficient or disordered or contrary to the religious law.' I then, drawing upon what I have found out, seen, experienced and learned from masters, have described what I know of this subject and composed this book in fifty chapters; the following list shews the contents of each chapter; moreover at various points in every chapter I have introduced suitable quotations from the traditions of the Prophet and stories about great men, so that the book may be interesting and not wearisome to read. There is much of profit in this book; if it is read and acted upon, it will yield reward in both worlds. I have written this manuscript for the magnificent Royal Library (may Allah prosper it) and I offer it in service; if Allah wills, it may be approved and accepted.

3 No king or emperor can afford not to possess and know this book, especially in these days, for the more he reads it, the more he will be enlightened upon spiritual and temporal matters, the better he will appreciate the qualities of friends and foes; the way of right conduct and the path of good government will be open to him; the rules for the management of the court, the audience-hall, the divan, the royal palace and the parade ground, and the methods of administering taxes, transacting business and settling the affairs of the people and the army will be clear to him; and nothing in the whole realm whether great or small, far or near, will remain concealed (if Allah wills—be He exalted).

4 This book is composed of fifty chapters in the following order:

[Part One]

- | | |
|---|----|
| I On the turn of Fortune's wheel and in praise of The Master of the World. | 9 |
| II On recognizing the extent of God's grace towards kings. | 12 |
| III On holding court for the redress of wrongs and practising justice and virtue. | 13 |

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IV Concerning tax-collectors and constant enquiry into the affairs of vazirs.	22
V Concerning assignees of land and enquiry into their treatment of the peasantry.	32
VI Concerning judges, preachers and censors and the importance of their activities.	42
VII On obtaining information about the conduct of tax-collectors, judges, prefects of police and mayors, and keeping them in check.	47
VIII On enquiry and investigation into matters of religion, religious law and suchlike.	59
IX Concerning overlords and their emoluments.	63
X Concerning intelligence agents and reporters and [their importance in] administering the affairs of the country.	63
XI On honouring the sublime commands and edicts which are issued from the court.	72
XII On sending pages from the court upon important business.	74
XIII On sending spies and using them for the good of the country and the people.	74
XIV Concerning constant employment of couriers and flyers.	87
XV On being careful about messages in drunkenness and sobriety.	88
XVI Concerning the steward of the household and the importance of his post.	88
XVII Concerning boon-companions and intimates of the king and the conduct of their affairs.	89
XVIII On having consultation with learned and experienced men.	91
XIX Concerning solitaries and their equipment and administration.	93
XX On the provision and use of jewelled weapons.	94
XXI Concerning ambassadors and their treatment.	94
XXII On keeping fodder ready at posting-houses and stopping places.	98
XXIII On settling the dues of all the army.	99
XXIV On having troops of various races.	100

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XXV	On taking hostages and keeping them at the court.	101
XXVI	On keeping Turkmans in service like pages.	102
XXVII	On organizing the work of slaves and not letting them crowd together while serving.	102
	Concerning the training of pages of the palace	103
XXVIII	Concerning the conduct of private and public audiences.	117
XXIX	Concerning the rules and arrangements for drinking parties.	118
XXX	On slaves and servants standing in order when they are on duty.	120
XXXI	Concerning the requests and petitions of soliders, servants and retainers.	120
XXXII	On preparing arms and equipment for wars and expeditions.	121
XXXIII	On reprimanding those in high positions when they are guilty of mistakes or wrongs.	121
XXXIV	With regard to night-watchmen, guards and porters.	123
XXXV	Concerning the arrangements for setting a good table.	124
XXXVI	On acknowledging the merits of worthy servants and slaves.	127
XXXVII	Concerning precautions to be taken with regard to assignments and the condition of the peasants.	128
XXXVIII	On the inadvisability of hastiness in affairs on the part of kings.	129
XXXIX	Concerning commanders of the guard, mace-bearers, and the instruments of punishment.	131

[Part Two]

XL	On shewing mercy to the creatures of God and restoring all lapsed practices and customs to their proper order.	139
	On the subject of titles.	148
XLI	On not giving two appointments to one man; on giving posts to the unemployed and not leaving them destitute; on giving appointments	

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	to men of orthodox faith and good birth, and not employing men of perverse sects and evil doctrines; keeping the latter at a distance.	158
XLII	On the subject of those who wear the veil. Concerning underlings.	179 186
XLIII	Exposing the facts about heretics who are enemies of the state and of Islam.	187
XLIV	On the revolt of Mazdak and the doctrines of his sect; how Nushirvan The Just destroyed him and his followers.	190
XLV	On the emergence of Sinbad the Magian from Nishapur and his rising against the Muslims at Rayy.	206
XLVI	On the risings of the Qarmatis [Carmathians] and Batinis and their evil doctrines (may Allah curse them)	
	in Kuhistan, Iraq and Khurasan	208
	in Khurasan and Transoxiana	212
	in Syria and the West	219
	in Herat and Ghur	220
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XLVII	On the rising of the Khurrama-dins in Isfahan. On the revolt of Babak in Adharbaygan.	231 232
XLVIII	Concerning treasuries and the procedures and arrangements for looking after them.	239
XLIX	On dealing with complainants, giving answers and dispensing justice.	240
L	On keeping account of the revenue of the provinces and the method of doing it.	243

[Librarian's Note].

5 First of all Nizam al-Mulk composed this book ex tempore in thirty-nine chapters and delivered it [to Sultan Malikshah]. Then he revised it, and because of the constant anxiety that was in his mind on account of the enemies of this dynasty he added another eleven chapters, and in each chapter he set forth what was relevant to it. At the time of his departure he gave the book to me. Then