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***Siyāset-nāme* of Niẓām al-Mulk and *Naṣīḥāt al-mulūk* of Al-Ġazālī: two examples of “mirror for princes”**

The 8th century saw the emergence of a new literary genre: handbooks for princes and governors. By that time the Arab empire had expanded over a vast territory. A competent administration was necessary to govern the state. As Arabs themselves had not had any tradition of administration, a great number of functionaries were of Persian origin. They not only took over high offices in the Arab empire, but also instructed the new personnel. They created a new variety of the Arabic language - the language of administration. Persians transferred onto the Arabic ground Persian customs and traditions of administration from the Sasanian empire, including the Muslim tradition. They also transferred to the Arab ground the guides, very popular in Iran, containing advice for rulers on how to reign.¹ The term *adab al-kātib* is used for such guides addressed to officials and secretaries (called *kātib*s). The authors of the most popular and important guides, each of them illustrating the evolution of the theory of government in the 8th and 9th centuries, are ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ibn Yaḥyā (d. 750), the much celebrated Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (d. 757), Abū Yusūf (d. 798) and Ibn Qutayba (d. 889).

The most celebrated of these four writers is Ibn al-Muqaffa‘. He was probably a Manichaean. He adopted Islam in his adulthood. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ had practical experience in administration, having been private secretary to ‘Īsā Ibn ‘Alī, an uncle of caliph Al-Manṣūr. His works are not only guides for the administration, but also a model for this kind of literature. His special interest is the nature of the caliph’s authority. For him, the caliph is a person who must perform a double, secular and religious, function: political power and protection of the principles of the Holy Law—*ṣarī‘a*. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ also advises the caliph to keep himself informed about all which is going on his state, namely all administrative and financial affairs. But the caliph is not

¹ In the Sassanid Iran, *ā’in nāme* (“books of principles”) and *pand-nāme* (“books of advice”) were very popular.

able to rule by himself, he needs a competent administration and an army. Ibn Al-Muqaffa' offers practical advice on how to use of the administration and the army and what responsibilities they have towards the ruler.²

The concept of power presented in guides for the administration and rulers highlights the strong power of the caliph, the first person of the umma, who combines the prerogatives of secular and religious authority, and to whom a competent administration and an army are subordinated. We can see some pragmatism in the theories of the 8th century. Their authors realized that the divine charisma must be supported by temporal authority. Stability was the fundamental need of the state. Rulers were not able to force the obedience by their charisma alone, but obedience was due to the just ruler.

In the 8th century caliphs had real power. At that time they were leaders of the umma and heads of the Muslim community. The two guides or handbooks, which are the subject of my study, were written at the end of the 11th century. First, therefore, it is necessary to review the political situation in this period. The Abbasid caliph as the ruler of the faithful, became only a puppet in the hands of his emirs and he did not possess any real political power any more. The Arab empire had grown too vast to be administered in a competent manner. Step by step, governors coming from local elites had taken over power in all districts of the caliphate, then they founded their own dynasties. Nominally, they were subordinated to the caliph, but in fact they acted independently. Since the end of the 10th century, power in the caliphate had been taken over by magnates of non-Arabic origin. The caliphate was completely broken up.³ The caliph first was subordinated to the Persian Šī'i dynasty of the Buyyids and then to the Turkic dynasty of Seljuks. The Buyyids were of Persian origin and Šī'i by denomination but they did not dare to overthrow the caliph. Those in power in the caliphate had not attempted to obtain the most important position in the state and left religious sovereignty to the Abbasid caliph. According to Muslim tradition, a caliph had to be of Qurayšite origin and it was probably for this reason that nobody attempted to overthrow him, since he was an Abbasid. Each attempt could move the entire Muslim world to protest. Thus the protectors preferred to leave the nominal power to the caliphs reserving for themselves the right to nominate and overthrow them. In 1055, the Buyyids lost their political

² Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Ar-Risāla fī aṣ-ṣaḥāba*, in: M. Kurd 'Alī, in: *Rasā'il al-bulaḡā'*, Cairo 1913.

³ In the year 929, three caliphs reign at the same time: the Abbasid al-Muqtadir, 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī in the Fatimid Egypt and 'Abd al-Raḥmān III in the Umayyad Spain.

power and the Seljuks conquered Baghdad. Their leader Tuğril Bek assumed the title of sultan.⁴ On the 4th of January 1058, he met the Abbasid caliph Al-Qā'im and promised him to care for the glory of the Sunnī dynasty and to keep watch over the Sunnī state. The Seljuk sultan received from the caliph the seal of the caliphate which meant that the caliph accepted the sovereignty of the sultan's power. In return, the sultan obligated himself to wage war in the name and for the glory of the Abbasid caliph.⁵ Thanks to this shrewd gesture, nobody called in question the goodwill of the Seljuks or their good intentions in acting for the Abbasid caliph. At the same time the Seljuks became the only rulers of the caliphate. The caliph was completely subordinated to them, they left him only the appearance of religious sovereignty.

With the establishment of Seljuk power, there emerged the idea that the function of the state was to defend the Muslim community and its purpose was to create a Muslim world. Under the Seljuks two works were written on the subject of my study. Their authors were in close relationship with the Seljuks.

Nizām al-Mulk ("The Order of the State") was a famous and charismatic wazīr of two Seljuk sultans: Alp Arslān (d. 1072) and Malik Šāh (d. 1092). These two sultans conquered a vast territory which stretched from Central Asia to Syria and Palestine. Nizām al-Mulk was not only the organizer of their competent administration but also had excessive influence over both sultans, so that even today it is not clear who was the author of the military triumphs: the sultans themselves or their domineering wazīr. Nizām al-Mulk's hatred of the Ismā'īlis was generally known. He was killed by the Ismā'īlis of Alamut in the year 1092.⁶

Siyāset-nāme won Nizām al-Mulk first prize in a competition for the best work on ruling the state organized by Malik Šāh. However, as the sultan died soon afterwards, he did not have an occasion to practice the new way of rul-

⁴ Sulṭān means power in Arabic. But the Seljuk dynasty put a new construction on this word. Now it means someone who is in power.

⁵ Jerzy Hauziński, *Burzliwe dzieje kalifatu abbasydzkiego*, Warsaw-Cracow 1993, p. 362-363.

⁶ Information about the circumstances of Nizām al-Mulk's death can be found in his biography by Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-'Adīm. This is the best and most competent biography of Nizām al-Mulk. It covers his origins, education, circumstances of becoming a wazīr, his manner of ruling the state and his death. However, Kamāl al-Dīn did not notice that Nizām al-Mulk was the author of *Siyāset-nāme*. For the complete Arabic text of Kamāl al-Dīn, see: Suhayl Zakkār, *Biographie de Nizām al-Mulk de Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-'Adīm*, "Bulletin d'Études Orientales", vol. XXIV, 1971. Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlis. Their history and doctrines*, Cambridge University Press 1990 is also very informative.

ing proposed by the wazīr. Neither could this new style of ruling be pursued by Niẓām al-Mulk himself, since, like his sultan, he also died in 1092. However, it is absolutely certain that *Siyāset-nāme* was based on actual experience in ruling. Niẓām al-Mulk was a practitioner and he registered what had been attempted or what was necessary for him.

The author of the second work—Al-Ġazālī—was an outstanding theologian, mystic, philosopher and politician, the most influential Aš‘arite theologian of his time. He is sometimes called the most eminent Muslim after the Prophet. A fervent guardian of the Sunnī caliphate, he hated Ismā‘īlis all his life. The political theory elaborated by him is the crowning achievement and recapitulation of the theory of his predecessors.⁷ Al-Ġazālī upheld also a close relationship with the Seljuks dynasty. Niẓām al-Mulk was his protector and friend. In 1085 he established contact with the court of Niẓām al-Mulk, who, like himself, was a Šāfi‘ite and an Aš‘arite. Moreover he also was born in Ṭūs. In 1091 he became a teacher (*mudarris*) at the Nizamiyya, a school founded in Baghdad by Niẓām al-Mulk, where he taught Šāfi‘ī law. He taught there until 1095, when he withdrew from public affairs to become a mystic. His decision was probably caused by the tragic death of his protector Niẓām al-Mulk. He came to the conclusion that ultimate truth could not be attained by intellectual means. After leaving Baghdad he spent some time in Damascus, then went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and returned to Ṭūs. At that time he wrote his most famous, monumental work *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm ad-dīn*. This work furthered the triumph of revelation over reason. He also wrote a number of anti-philosophical works *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* (Intentions of the Philosophers) and *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (Incoherence of the Philosophers) where he called on theologians to use philosophical techniques in order to oppose “heretic” arguments. In 1106, he returned from his retirement under the pressure of sultan Faḥr al-Mulk, the son of Niẓām al-Mulk and became a teacher of Nizamiyya in Nishapūr.

Naṣīḥat al-mulūk was written in the period between 1105 and 1111, the year of his death. The authenticity of this treatise is disputable. Originally the work was written in Persian and dedicated either to Muḥammad Ibn Malik Šāh or to Saṅğar.⁸ *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* was first translated into Arabic by ‘Alī

⁷ On Al-Ġazālī’s political theory: H. Laoust, *La politique de Gazālī*, Paris 1971; F. Jabre, *La notion de certitude selon Ghazali*, Paris 1958; A. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, Oxford 1982, p.108-129; J. Danecki, *Polityczne funkcje islamu*, Warsaw 1991, p. 59-64.

⁸ In a review of this work, Ġalāl Humā’ī states that it was written between 1108 and 1110 and was dedicated to Saṅğar, the son of Malik Šāh. In Persian the author states that his work is dedicated to “the king of the east” (*Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, Teheran 1351, p.1). In Arabic translation of the work, in his first sentence we should read that

Ibn Al-Mubārak, a dignitary of Irbil, who lived in the late twelfth century. In its Arabic version, it is known as *Al-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīḥat al-mulūk*. While the authenticity of the work is taken for granted by A. Lambton, H. Laoust, M. Bouyges⁹, it is called in question for instance by G. Hourani.¹⁰

Patricia Crone has taken up the problem of the authenticity of this work in her article entitled *Did al-Ghazālī write a Mirror for Princes? On the authorship of Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*.¹¹ She concludes that the second part of the book is so uncharacteristic for Al-Ġazālī that it must be the work of somebody else. The first part of the treatise was written by a professional theologian, in the same style as that used by Al-Ġazālī when he discussed the same subject in his other works. Thus Al-Ġazālī is unquestionably the author of this part. However, the second part of the treatise is a typical “mirror for princes”. The stylistic contrast between the two parts is striking. In the opinion of Patricia Crone, the second part of the treatise is nothing but a compilation of anecdotes, aphorisms and poetry. The author does not engage in a discussion of the imamate and ignores other questions usually taken up by Al-Ġazālī (for example, there is no reference to the duty of the waging of ḡihād). For Patricia Crone it is clear that the author of the second part was not an ‘ālim. She cites examples of his ignorance on the subject of Islamic law.¹²

In the second part we can find a lot of stories about Greek philosophers who—together with their doctrines—were considered by Al-Ġazālī as infidels and thus rejected. Sometimes opinions presented by the author in the second part are completely at odds with those of Al-Ġazālī. In Patricia Crone’s opinion, the author finds himself in agreement with Ibn al-Muqaffa’, not with Al-Ġazālī. Ideas presented by him are all of Iranian origin, and some of them can be traced back to pre-Islamic Iran.¹³ It may be concluded that the author of the second part was an Iranian and in terms of religion he was probably a Ḥanafī, while by occupation a secretary. P. Crone

it is dedicated to Muḥammad (*At-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, Beirut 1987, p.9). In the Arabic tradition “the king of the east” was identified with Muḥammad, in the Persian tradition with Saṅḡar. This problem was discussed by Ann Lambton, *The theory of the kingship in the Naṣīḥat al-mulūk by Ghazālī*, “Islamic Quarterly”, 1954, pp. 47-55.

⁹ A. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, Oxford, 1981; H. Laoust, *La politique de Ġazālī*, Paris 1970; M. Bouyges, *Essai de chronologie des œuvres de al-Ghazālī*, Cairo 1961.

¹⁰ G. Hourani, *The chronology of Ghazālī’s writings*, “Journal of the American Oriental Society”, 1959.

¹¹ Patricia Crone, *Did al-Ghazālī write a Mirror for Princes? On the authorship of Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, “Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam”, 1987, p. 167-191.

¹² *Ibidem*, s. 178.

¹³ *Ibidem*, s. 181-188.

concludes that the second part of the work is un-Islamic and for this reason it could not have been written by an Islamic thinker such as Al-Ġazālī.

In my opinion it cannot be stated with absolute certainty that Al-Ġazālī had written only the first part of the treatise, while the second one was written by another author and the two parts were subsequently linked in the translation into Arabic. We should remember that Al-Ġazālī wrote his works in Arabic and that he was not as fluent in Persian as in Arabic. The work under discussion had to be written in Persian because Saṅḡar to whom Al-Ġazālī dedicated his work, could not read in Arabic. Al-Ġazālī, who had had the opinion of a “difficult” person, had quarreled with Saṅḡar and, seeking his forgiveness, might have written a “mirror for princes”. It is clear that this work is completely different from his other works and that we cannot find in it Al-Ġazālī’s intellectual stature. But this work was written for a specific person, to serve specific purpose. Al-Ġazālī had no experience in this kind of work nor did he have much experience in writing in Persian. He found an example of such work, written by his former protector Niẓām Al-Mulk and for this reason in the work written by Al-Ġazālī we can find more of the spirit of Niẓām al-Mulk than of Al-Ġazālī himself. Possibly in this case Al-Ġazālī followed Niẓām al-Mulk’s way of thinking.

It should be noted that also in the first part of the treatise we can find anecdotes and aphorisms. From the middle of this part the author adopts an aphoristic style. The author fails to deal with the problem of the imamate. He dedicates his work to the sultan, in fact the work has been written for the sultan, however, he is very interested in the problem of state in general. For the same reason he ignores the questions always taken up by Al-Ġazālī concerning Islamic law etc.

It is true that the doctrine of the Greek philosophers was regarded by Al-Ġazālī as alien but at the same time he encouraged the use of philosophical techniques and employed it himself in his treatises (for example in *Al-Qiṣṭās al-mustaqīm*). Of special value is the fact that similar argumentation about the ruler’s responsibilities is to be found in another work of Al-Ġazālī: *Faḍā’ih al-bāṭiniyya*.¹⁴

It is, however, very difficult to argue that the second part of the work under discussion was also written by Al-Ġazālī. In his authentic works he never supported his arguments by non-Islamic material, nor referred to the heritage of the Sasanian Empire. Usually in his works he drew on anecdotes about Muḡammad, the Companions and from the ḡadīṭ.

The authenticity of the first part is indisputable, the second one may have been composed by an unknown author, but it is also conceivable that the sec-

¹⁴ Al-Ġazālī, *Faḍā’ih al-bāṭiniyya*, Amman 1993, pp.129-143.

ond part was composed by Al-Ġazālī himself, and that its unusual character is due to Al-Ġazālī's desire to move away from the topic of his earliest treatises. Therefore, Naṣīḥat al-mulūk has been included in the canon of Al-Ġazālī's works.

For this reason, I have decided to discuss both works: *Siyāset-nāme* and *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* as two examples of the "mirror for princes" and the most important problem for me is not the authorship of the works, but the concept of the government in the second half of the 11th century. It should be remembered that while I mention the name of Al-Ġazālī as the author discussing the second part of *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, I allow for the possibility of a different authorship of this part of the treatise.

These two works were written at the same time and in the same political and historical circumstances. The author of the first work, Nizām al-Mulk was a practitioner, a wazīr wielding actual power. The second one—Al-Ġazālī—was a theologian, theoretician. In the following we shall see two concepts of ruling, created by two persons, living in the same conditions, but with different experiences (the alleged other author of the second part was also only a theoretician, probably a secretary).

a) The composition of the works

Siyāset-nāme consists of 51 chapters covering the problems of state administration. In each chapter the author presents another problem, but the structure is not clear, in fact it seems a little chaotic. Sometimes the author would return to a problem with which he dealt with several chapters earlier. Each chapter is composed in a similar manner: at the beginning there is the definition of a problem, then a long anecdote (sometimes several) is quoted. In Nizām al-Mulk's work we do not find stories about the Prophet or the first four caliphs. In general, contemporary examples are used, a lot of them concern the author's protectors, the Seljuk sultans (particularly the stories illustrating the right way of ruling).

Al-Ġazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (in particular the first part) is a beautiful allegory composed with great care. At the beginning of the work, he notes that the world was created by God and that faith is the fundamental base for the construction of the state. The image of the state is created by God in the heart and the soul of the ruler while faith is like a tree with ten roots and ten branches. The roots are strengthened by faith and knowledge. Then Al-Ġazālī presents the roots of the tree and its branches, and then he concentrates on the ten roots of justice, which, in his opinion, is the most important attribute of the ruler. Subsequently, he discusses the sources furnishing

knowledge to the tree of faith. These sources assure the competent administration of the state. They are discussed in a few chapters. In contrast to the work by Nizām al-Mulk, the problems of faith, the legitimization of power and religion are treated extensively, however, advice concerning the practice of ruling can only be found in few chapters. Al-Ġazālī quotes a lot of tales (*ḥikāya*), proverbs (*ḥikma*), anecdotes and poetry but his stories are usually little shorter than those quoted in Nizām al-Mulk's work. Many of them concern the Prophet, the first four caliphs and the Companions.

b) Problems of state and legitimization of power.

Nizām al-Mulk is not particularly interested in discussing the necessity of the imamat. In his opinion its existence is natural. According to him, all the power in the world comes from God. Neither is he interested in the circumstances in which the imamate arose and how the ruler is to be chosen. The ruler himself and his administration must act in accordance with divine principles. The state has a simple purpose: executing the principles of the faith and of the sunna. Power and faith are twins.¹⁵ When the state is not managed well, it starts to decline, the faith corrupts and heresies appear. Conversely, when the faith is falling down, the ruler loses his authority.

In the work of Al-Ġazālī the problems of religion occupy more place. The author presents us the roots of the tree of faith. He states that God is the cause of the Universe, everything in the world depends on His will. Al-Ġazālī praises the imageless God. Man was created by Him. God has the supreme power, nobody in both the visible and invisible worlds can compare with Him. He is also the most intelligent of all beings. All affairs of the world depend on His knowledge and capacity. He sees and hears everything. The Holy Qur'ān is His supreme word uttered without a tongue and a mouth.¹⁶ God created everything, apart from evil and injustice on the earth. All bodily creatures on the earth have spirits and during the Last Judgement everyone will see his life and actions and will be punished or rewarded accordingly. The last root of the religion tree is dedicated to The Prophet Muhammad. According to Al-Ġazālī nobody on the earth deserves to know all divine secrets and for this reason God sends prophets from heaven. Muḥammad was the prophet sent to the Muslims.¹⁷ The power, in the opinion of the author, is God's bounty, granted by Himself.¹⁸ For this reason it needs a spe-

¹⁵ Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāset-nāme*, Moscow 1949, p. 62

¹⁶ Al-Ġazālī, *At-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīhat al-mulūk*, Beirut 1987, p. 15.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, s. 18-19.

cial care. The caliph must rule as well as possible. Who will not follow the God's path and obey Him, will be punished. The most important duty of the ruler is to execute the principles of the šarī'a. (Nizām al-Mulk states the same). But who should do it? God chose some people and granted His wisdom to them. They are prophets. Muḥammad was sent by God for the propagation of the principles of the faith. The prophets must cause the world to live in the šarī'a. After them God chose kings (mulūk) to keep watch over the affairs of the community and to protect it. The other people must be obedient.¹⁹ Kingship (mulk) would remain with the person who possessed religion, justice and wisdom. Al-Ġazālī does not use the word "caliph" there. After prophets he mentions kings, but the most frequent word is sultān—the title of the Seljuk ruler or malik—'king, ruler'. It should be remembered that this work had been dedicated to the Seljuk sultan Sanġar or Muḥammad and that the Seljuks were the protectors of the scholar. The caliph was at that time completely powerless which is stressed in other works of Al-Ġazālī, so that writing about legitimization of his power would be a sheer fiction.

Nizām al-Mulk and Al-Ġazālī's opinions about the state and legitimization of power are very similar, but they are expressed in a different way. Al-Ġazālī—a theologian is more interested in the problems of faith than Nizām al-Mulk. In the opinion of both scholars, God had created the world, and then sent good rulers to the earth. Al-Ġazālī also quoted Prophet Muḥammad. For both writers the good ruler is the Seljuk sultan who must keep order in the community and execute the principles of the Holy Law. They are both very discreet and omit the circumstances of the Seljuks' rise to power. Note that in their opinion the power sent by God is also legitimated by the capacity to hold an office and the way in which he manages the affairs of the faith and the state. The theologian Al-Ġazālī expresses this idea in very beautiful words and a long consideration of God's attributes, while wazīr Nizām al-Mulk puts it concisely.

c) Attributes and duties of the ruler

Both authors present the attributes and duties of the ruler. They do it either in a straightforward way or only allude to it. The most important attribute for the authors is justice of the ruler and his functionaries. They both insist that ruling without justice is not possible because it could cause the world to disappear.

Nizām al-Mulk insists that just administration is the duty of the ruler. He must rule rightly because he received his power from God. His functionaries

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 49.

should follow his example.²⁰ When in some district evil people seize power, the nomination of a righteous ruler, a sultan or a wazīr, is the only resource. A righteous ruler thinks not only about worldly life but also about religious affairs and the Last Judgement. One of the ruler's most important duties is upright faith in the Ḥanafī or Šāfi'ī spirit and fighting against heretics and Baṭīnīs (the Ismā'īlis).²¹ A ruler like this knows very well the feeling of compassion.²² In other words, justice is necessary for good administration.

A ruler should notice all injustice in the state, but for this he needs knowledge. He should never stop controlling his functionaries. The next attribute of the ruler is the legality of his power.²³ (I shall present the practical realization of this attribute in the chapter about the organization of the state).

Nizām al-Mulk states that for practical reasons he must listen to all complaints of his people and present himself before them as often as possible.²⁴ When he finds out about some conflict, he should not hurry with the passing of a verdict, but consider what is true or false.²⁵ A ruler must know how to govern and how to burden his administration with duties. He cannot collaborate with evil people who have no respect for him and do not inform him about crimes committed in the state, since it provokes chaos.²⁶ A good ruler is obligated to cooperate with his wazīr—giving good advice—and with other competent officers.²⁷ Nizām al-Mulk once again recapitulates the attributes of the ruler: justice is considered by the author to be the most important one, then he states that a ruler should respect the manners and principles of the state. He should oppose all aspects of evil. The ruler's duties are: to appoint his functionaries, control their activities and supervise all affairs in the state. He should not be too forgiving, nor too proud, too avaricious or too wasteful. He should fight against enemies of the state. The ruler's major concern should be to leave after himself a good memory among his successors and the future generations in general.²⁸

In the work of Al-Ġazālī, presentation of the ruler's attributes takes more space. His approach is different. Nizām al-Mulk is not interested in the problems of the faith or of justice. He stresses repeatedly the importance of these attributes, but at the same time he suggests that the ruler is not obliged to be

²⁰ Nizām al-Mulk, op. cit., p. 44-45.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

²² Ibid., pp. 145-152.

²³ Ibid., pp. 64-73.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 124-125.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 141-142.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 170.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 171-172.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 235-236.

rightful himself. Competent organization of the state and the ruler's respect for good advice help to strengthen his justice. Al-Ġazālī is more idealistic in this regard.

Here are the branches of the faith's tree: five obligations of the Muslim, justice and the avoidance of evil. The most important duty of the ruler is to seek the fulfillment of the branches.²⁹ The ruler must take proper care of his community. It means that he must be sinless and thus his religiousness is very important.³⁰ His righteousness is necessary since he is responsible not only for himself but also for his servants and his administration. A righteous, absolutely honest and corruptless sultan guarantees that the world will be just and the ruler himself will be able to execute his duties. If not, the world will dissolve in wars and the state of Islam will disintegrate. Justice is the most perfect of God's creations. This truth was revealed by Muḥammad and after him by 'Umar.³¹ There are two kinds of mundane evil: the evil of the rulers and their injustice towards the community.³² Justice exerts an influence on the power of the state. They both are the fundamentals of Islam and influence the organization of state affairs and of the army.³³ The ruler gives example to others, his character is reflected in the character of the community and for this reason he must be righteous. Each ruler should read books—guides, advising him how to rule and how to be righteous. In order to avoid evil, the ruler must control his administration and family and not permit them to break the law.³⁴ He must also avoid sinful conceit and all the time he must remember that his actions should reinforce religion. Then Al-Ġazālī explains what justice is: he regards it as a kind of wisdom, the capacity to see the essence of the matters and the knowledge about purposes to be achieved. Knowledge and justice are twins. Who is righteous is also wise.³⁵ The ruler must be proud, because pride is the cause of anger, necessary for vengeance. The author adds a comment that self-depreciation means depreciating one's power. For this reason, the ruler must be proud of his own deeds, but should be careful to not fall into stupidity.³⁶ He must also have mercy on his enemies.³⁷ In Al-

²⁹ Al-Ġazālī, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50. Note that Abū Bakr is omitted by the author. P. Crone and M. Cook (*Hagarism: the Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977) argue that Abū Bakr was never the leader of the umma, but only a friend of the Prophet. Only according to the Muslim tradition he became the first caliph.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-106.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

Ġazālī's opinion, the ruler should realize that being a member of the community he is also a distinguished individual. He cannot permit the Muslims things which are forbidden to himself.³⁸ He is obliged to listen to his people with patience, he can not neglect their needs or live in luxury. Modesty and self-restraint are necessary attributes of the ruler.³⁹ The ruler must be forgiving and give orders kindly, never with severity.⁴⁰ He can never err, his community should follow him in the executing of the principles of the šarī'a. He cannot force someone to oppose the šarī'a. (Al-Ġazālī lists these as the 9th and 10th).⁴¹ The ruler should also separate his family from state affairs.

Al-Ġazālī presents us a long exposition about wisdom and justice. The ruler, in his opinion, is a person with some kind of charisma, who must sustain it. Moreover, the writer is interested in the duties of the ruler. He states that all actions of the ruler are executed only for the good of the Holy Law—the šarī'a. Justice and wisdom are God's bounty. For Nizām al-Mulk attributes like justice and wisdom are also important, but he realizes pragmatically that the condition of the excellence of the spirit is not especially important. Far more important is practice, understood as collaboration with the functionaries. The ruler cannot rule all by himself, he needs a competent administration. Nizām al-Mulk's ruler is not so charismatic like the Al-Ġazālī's one. Nizām al-Mulk's ruler is gifted person, for who a right opportunities for ruling had been created and who rules not only thanks to the God-given attributes, but also thanks to collaboration and the competent organization of his administration. Al-Ġazālī, however, puts in the first place the ruler's charisma. His ruler should also cooperate with administration, but his own qualities are the main issue, the supreme power, stimulated by God for the good of his state. Both authors agree that injustice is the main cause of chaos and give examples of that.

d) The wisdom of the ruler - the position of the scholars.

Both authors insist on the wisdom of the ruler. This wisdom is manifested not only in the capacity to rule but also in appreciating scholars' advice.⁴² Scholars are inherently necessary for good organization of the state and it is the ruler's duty to listen to all what they have to say on the matter of the

³⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 32.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴² In Arabic: 'ulamā'.

state administration. He must consult them.⁴³ Al-Ġazālī is more interested in the role of the scholars than Niẓām al-Mulk. Niẓām al-Mulk states that the ruler should always consult and respect them.⁴⁴ For Al-Ġazālī the problem of wisdom and the necessity to ask them for advice is very important. For him, consulting scholars and collaborating with them in the management of state affairs is the second fundament of justice.⁴⁵ He warns the ruler off luxury and amusement, moreover, the ruler should be always busy with the affairs of the community, consultations with scholars, books etc.⁴⁶ The most important duties of the ruler are therefore: administering the state with the support of wise people (*imārat al-mamlaka bi-taqrīb al-‘uqalā’*), the protection of wisdom and using it in state affairs.⁴⁷ The ruler must also study knowledge and learn it from scholars (*wa-an yakūna ṭāliban li-l-‘ilm li-yu‘alima min al-‘ulamā’*)⁴⁸ because we cannot find a thing more beautiful than wisdom and intellect (*laysa šay’un ḥayran min al-‘aql wa-āl-‘ilm*).⁴⁹ At the end of his work Al-Ġazālī once again glorifies intellect and wisdom. Wisdom is God’s bounty. People should use it to improve the world, because peace is the issue of wisdom.⁵⁰ God created intellect protecting against sin and inclining to good.⁵¹

In the work of Al-Ġazālī, the significance of wisdom and the role of the scholars are emphasised to even a greater extent. Scholarship forms an inseparable part of his political concept. For Niẓām al-Mulk, practical affairs were much more important. For this reason, he also respects the advice of wise men but does not decorate this conclusion with statements about the divine origin of wisdom and knowledge.

⁴³ P. Crone and M. Hinds (*God’s caliph. Religious authority in the first centuries of Islam*, Cambridge University Press 1987) try to prove that in the beginning of the Abbasid period caliphs had more power and authority than it was written later. They had the title *ḥalīfat Allāh*—successor of God, not *ḥalīfat rasūl Allāh*—successors of the messenger of God. They lost their power and authority later on when the scholars gave a different interpretation of the *šarī‘a*.

⁴⁴ Niẓām al-Mulk, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

⁴⁵ Al-Ġazālī, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-26.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-83.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

e) Organization of the state.

The fact that I placed this chapter at the end of my article does not mean that it is the least important one. On the contrary, Niẓām al-Mulk devotes a considerable part of his work to practical advice concerning the organization of state and administration. Religious affairs are presented shortly and pro forma. The author states that the ruler should be righteous, faithful etc., but he realizes that finding such a ruler is not simple, so he prefers to present the circumstances compelling the justice of the ruler and his officers. Niẓām al-Mulk is a realist. Al-Ġazālī is more interested in the personality of the ruler and in religious affairs, thus the practical aspects of political organization are treated marginally. It does not mean that he is not interested in the competent organization of the state, but his conception of strong government is completely different from that of Niẓām al-Mulk.

Niẓām al-Mulk's *Siyāset-nāme* discussed a number of problems. The author presents state functionaries and their responsibilities. Then he discusses the organization of the court and of the army.

The most important person at the court is the wazīr (Niẓām al-Mulk was a wazīr himself). When he rules well, people are also happy, but when he is a bad person, not capable of ruling competently, it causes chaos in the state.⁵² A good wazīr knows his officers very well and he knows how much work he can command to a single person. A bad wazīr commands to do ten things at the same time, which can cause disorder. He commands work to persons whose origin and intentions are not sure. A good wazīr wants success for his ruler. All outstanding rulers in history had good wazīrs. A wazīr should be born in a wazīr family, must be generous, pious and must be a Ḥanafī or the Šāfi'ī.⁵³

Another class of functionaries at the sultan's court are tax-collectors (ʿāmil). They must be honest and in agreement with the God's principles. They cannot steal or raise money for themselves.⁵⁴ They should levy only specified taxes.

Judges must be chosen with great care, know the law and be respected by the people. Judges in legally governed states listen the opinions of both sides.

Secretaries (kātib) should be honest and talented. Their letters ought to be short and written authoritatively to force the people to obey orders.⁵⁵ Orders regarding important matters are to be written clearly and always signed, as

⁵² Niẓām al-Mulk, op. cit., pp. 24-33.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 161-178.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 24-33.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 74-76.

the responsible person must be known.⁵⁶ Police functionaries (*muḥtasib*) must properly control all political affairs, otherwise chaos and lawlessness overcome the state. So that people may even begin to steal food.⁵⁷

Then the author presents us the duties of the man who is an administrator of the sultan's court.⁵⁸ He ought to be honest, loyal and a good organizer. The ruler must always be accompanied by his companion (*nadīm*) who amuses him, plays music and protects him in case of danger.

One of the most important functionaries is a prison governor (*amīr al-ḥaras*) and he must be chosen very carefully.⁵⁹

Al-Mulk does not state that the functionaries will work well by virtue of their excellent attributes alone. It is not enough. He advises how to induce them to work well. First of all, they should be changed every 2-3 years. Otherwise they could consolidate their position, increase their influence, become very rich and treat people badly. It is not recommended to employ whole families.⁶⁰ State functionaries should be paid from the treasury each month. This way the ruler can avoid their discontent, otherwise they steal and defraud money.

The most important subject of Nizām al-Mulk's interests and one of the fundamentals of the state structure is espionage. All functionaries should be spied as carefully as possible. In the author's opinion, a good organization of espionage can be the fundament of government as it keeps the ruler always well informed about what happens around him. In each city one man should be found, faithful and honest, who does not seek material profits. He will be a spy. He must watch the work of the administration and report on it to the ruler. He must be a truthful man, not capable of taking advantage of his position for its personal benefit or for vengeance.⁶¹ Such a man is called *ṣāḥib al-ḥabar*. A righteous ruler must appoint his spies. But Nizām al-Mulk states that the Seljuks did not make use of this institution. He cites a story about Alp Arslān, who stated that he needed not spies because they could report well about his enemies and relate evil things about his friends.⁶² Spies should be sent to all provinces of the state as merchants or Sufis. Messengers should be installed on the roads, so that the ruler could be promptly informed. Pigeons can also be used for mailing messages.⁶³

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 92.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 44-48.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 93.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 143-146.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 49-60.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 65-73.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 78-91.

Nizām al-Mulk is interested in the organization of the army—the basic force of the ruler. The ruler cannot exist without a competent army because without it he cannot fight and defend Islam. The army must consist of representatives of different nations. In such a case they are not able to create coterie because they do not speak the same language. They must be paid very well, the officers should receive land (iqṭā‘).⁶⁴ It is necessary to be careful while purchasing slaves for the army. Slaves must be treated well, so that the ruler can profit from them. A good slave increases the power of the state and for this reason he must be treated very well. A lot of dynasties are founded on ex-slaves.⁶⁵ They spend seven years in the army. In Nizām al-Mulk’s opinion Turkmens make very good soldiers because they are savage.⁶⁶ The army must consist of four thousand of infantry troops. The author suggests also that each officer ought to know his subordinates very well. Petitions and demands of soldiers should be presented through their commanders.⁶⁷ The soldiers who stand guard at the ruler’s court should be of strong character, otherwise they are prone to bribery.⁶⁸

Nizām al-Mulk presents us the organization of the court and gives the ruler some practical advice concerning trivial but important points concerning the make-up of the government system. At the court there should live 500 representatives of different nations submitted to the ruler. Once a year they should be changed, which protects the ruler against conspiracy and rebellion.⁶⁹ The sultan’s court is often visited by legates of other regions. Each legate is a spy and for this reason he must be treated with respect and notice only order and competence.⁷⁰ During the visit the ruler must give orders to take beautiful and precious arms out of the treasury.⁷¹ The ruler must be hospitable and organize banquets for the legate. Nizām al-Mulk states that a table for visitors must be ready all the time.⁷²

He notices that high functionaries make a lot of mistakes, but the ruler’s duty is to warn them against errors.⁷³ At each servant and slave should be paid very well by his ruler.⁷⁴ In each court we can find a lot of people com-

⁶⁴ However the author does not accept a system in which iqṭā‘ could be hereditary. In this cases Nizām al-Mulk warns officers would become landowners not interested in military affairs.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 111.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 109.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 129.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 134.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 108.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 101-104.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 99, 105.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 135-137.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 131-133.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 138-139.

ing with petitions and importunate demands. They should be hidden before legates and foreigners.⁷⁵

Then Nizām al-Mulk states that the more numerous the titles, the lesser their significance. On the one hand, the difference in titles causes conflicts, on the other hand this is necessary, because it is not possible to equalize the good and the evil. He also lists titles used in his time.⁷⁶ The ruler must appreciate competent people and must be surrounded by them, but ought to remember that ordering two things at the same time can lead to chaos. The ruler should not be surrounded by more servants than necessary, and in no case should he have relationship with heretics—the Rāfiḍites (i.e. extremist Šī‘ites).⁷⁷

A problem in itself is the organization of state according to Al-Ġazālī. It should be noted, however, that this issue is not the most important one for the author. He states that the ruler must collaborate with his wazīr. He needs a good and pious wazīr. He should not keep matters secret from his wazīr because a good wazīr would never betray his lord and reveal state secrets. The ruler should not punish him at once. A wazīr must be pious and should protect the faith of his ruler: when he notices that the ruler does not follow the right path, he must check him. It is the duty of the wazīr to protect secrets, realize his obligations and execute of the ruler’s orders. First of all, the wazīr should be loyal toward his ruler and must praise him, unless the ruler commits a sin. The ruler and the wazīr are working together for the people and the state. When God wants to help the ruler He gives him a good wazīr. Al-Ġazālī glorifies the dynasty of his protectors the Seljuks, because they came into power after a period of the chaos and set the state in rights and God has given them good wazīrs (this is a compliment directed to Nizām al-Mulk, who died in 1092).⁷⁸

Al-Ġazālī is not particularly interested in problems of the army. He only states that each soldier should be respected, and when he is taken prisoner, the ruler must deliver him, pray for him in the battle and respect his forces.⁷⁹

A separate chapter concerns secretaries (kātib). He considers their necessary attributes and their duties.⁸⁰

Among the works of Al-Ġazālī, *Naṣiḥat al-mulūk* is the closest to practical affairs. Noteworthy is the difference between the approach of both writers. The theologian is less tempted to offer practical advice, while in Nizām al-Mulk’s work less religious problems can be found.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 232-234.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 153-160.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 161-178.

⁷⁸ Al-Ġazālī, op. cit., pp. 87-92.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 91.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 93-96.

f) Other problems.

Both authors were fervent antagonists of the Ismā'īlis who are consequently called Bāṭiniyya. Nizām al-Mulk presents their activities in several chapters at the end of his treatise. With abomination he describes the origins of the Ismā'īli movement and their heretic revolt.⁸¹ In many other places, he states that the Ismā'īlis are the strongest power and the worst force in the entire world. Al-Ġazālī is less vehement, he does not criticize the Ismā'īlis directly, but the Sunnī spirit is clear in his whole work.

Both authors also address the problem of women. Al-Ġazālī is more friendly toward them. He states that God gives good and pious women to righteous men.⁸² Nizām al-Mulk is rather malicious. In his opinion, the sole purpose of a woman's existence is procreation. Women should not be interested in politics nor allowed to give orders, because they are not sufficiently intelligent, moreover they are usually surrounded by bad people, eunuchs among them, who intrigue with them. A good ruler cannot take women into confidence, he must separate these wicked creatures from state affairs. If a woman says something, the ruler should say something completely different. In Nizām al-Mulk's opinion, the major part of hell will be filled with women. He quotes many tales about bad women and their disastrous influence on state affairs. He is particularly interested in the Prophet's wife, 'Ā'isha, and her behaviour.⁸³ Nizām al-Mulk detests women so much that it is easy to guess that he must have meant a specific evil though prominent woman. He writes about Malik Šāh's wife Turkan Ḥātūn, who was a very important person, influenced her husband's policies and ruled the state from the harem.⁸⁴

Conclusions

I have presented two "mirrors for princes": *Siyāset-nāme* by Nizām al-Mulk and *Naṣiḥat al-mulūk* by Al-Ġazālī. Both works were written in the same period and under similar circumstances. Both writers were Sunnī Muslims, who hated the Ismā'īlis. They worked for Seljuk sultans and hence their

⁸¹ Nizām al-Mulk, *op. cit.*, p. 188-229.

⁸² Al-Ġazālī, *op. cit.*, p. 125-128.

⁸³ Nizām al-Mulk, *op. cit.*, p. 179-187.

⁸⁴ Denise Spelleberg, *Nizām al-Mulk's Manipulation of Tradition 'A'isha and the Role of Women in the Islamic Government*, "The Muslim World", 1988, vol. LXXVIII, No. 2.

works were not written for the Abbasid caliphs but for Seljuks sultans. Their concepts are similar and different at the same time.

Despite the similarities, we still have to do with a theologian and a politician. One work contains philosophical and theological speculations, whereas the other sprang out from practical experience in ruling. Both writers agree that God is the sole source of power and that the ruler's duty is to protect the *šarī'a*. Al-Ġazālī is more interested in religious affairs than Niẓām al-Mulk. For the ruler, justice and wisdom are most important attributes. The ruler must collaborate with scholars. Niẓām al-Mulk presents us the organization of the court and administration. The ruler is the leader of his administration. Niẓām al-Mulk knows human mentality very well and he suggests how to force each man to work for the state. Al-Ġazālī is not so interested in the organization of the state. But they agree on the fact that the ruler cannot rule solely by himself. He needs scholars, *wazīrs*, administration. The ruler is shown not as a charismatic caliph who exercises practical and religious power, but as the best administrator who can act in the different circumstances. The ruler of Al-Ġazālī possesses a certain degree of charisma, while the ruler of Niẓām al-Mulk is able to rule by virtue of his attributes.