



‘ARŽ, DĪVĀN-E

‘ARŽ, DĪVĀN(-E), the department of the administration which, in the successor states to the ‘Abbasid caliphate in the Islamic East, looked after military affairs, such as the recruitment and discharge of soldiers, their pay allotments, their training in the military and equestrian skills, the procurement of arms and mounts, the periodic inspection of the troops’ weapons and their preparedness or otherwise for battle (the specific meaning of the term ‘arž), etc. The institution of the ‘arž or inspection of the army (Arabic ‘*araḏa* “lay open, reveal to view”) must be distinguished from the parallel use of ‘arž in the Islamic East in the sense of “presentation of a request, petition,” synonymous with ‘arž–e ḥāl, a procedure which appears at various times, and especially in the post-Saljuq period, at various Iranian and Indo-Muslim courts.

The military ‘arž (the form *este’rāž* is also found) must have its roots in the pre-Islamic past of Iran, very probably in the time of the Sasanians and perhaps in those of the Arsacids and Achaemenids. The early Islamic writers Dīnawarī and Ṭabarī (qq.v.) both give what purport to be accounts of the Sasanian ‘arž procedure, with armored cavalymen who formed the backbone of the army filing past the inspecting official, who scrutinized their mounts, their personal equipment and weapons; even the emperor himself was not exempt from this rigorous parade of inspection (see Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*, pp. 247-49; Nöldeke was probably unduly skeptical about the authenticity of this information).

In the early ‘Abbasid caliphate, it was the *dīvān al-ĵayš* “department of the army” which regulated military affairs and which became increasingly



complex and far-ranging in its operations as the caliphs came to depend on professional and mercenary troops instead of, as earlier, tribal levies. At the ‘Abbasid ‘arż, the caliph or his representative the vizier acted as ‘āreż or inspecting officer. We possess, for instance, an account from Helāl al-Şābī of an ‘arż at Baghdad by the caliph al-Mo‘tażed and his minister ‘Obaydallāh b. Solaymān b. Wahb in 280/893, in which the soldiers had to undergo practical weapon training tests; cf. W. Hoernerbach, “Zur Heeresverwaltung der ‘Abbasiden. Studie über Abulfarağ Qudāma: Dīwān al-ğaiš,” *Der Islam* 29, 1949/50, pp. 257-90, and H. Busse, “Das Hofbudget des Chalifen al-Mu‘tađid billāh (279/892-289/902),” *Der Islam* 43, 1967, pp. 17-20.

As with many other administrative organs and procedures, the autonomous and then independent states which arose in Iran from the 3rd/9th century onwards modeled their military infrastructures and their inspection patterns on those of the ‘Abbasids. Since the basis of these states was essentially military, we note the appearance in many of them of an official— in the cases of such Turkish dominated states as those of the Ghaznavids and Saljuqs, usually a civilian member of the Iranian bureaucracy—with the specific title of ‘āreż. This functionary usually enjoyed a very close relationship with and easy access to the ruler; this intimacy emerges from the *moĵalladāt* or official memoirs of the Ghaznavid chancery official Abu’l- Fażl Bayhaqī (q.v.), in which the author’s personal enemy, the ‘āreż Abū Sahl Zawzanī, is portrayed as in many ways the evil genius of Sultan Mas‘ūd (see M. R. Waldman, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative. A Case Study in Perso-Islamicate Historiography*, Columbus, Ohio, 1980, pp. 92, 96-97).

A department of military affairs under its ‘āreż is mentioned as having been set up by the Saffarid adventurer Ya‘qūb b. Layt when he carved out his vast if transient military empire in Afghanistan and eastern Iran in the second half of the 3rd/9th century. Inspections, ‘orūż, were combined with pay parades, and we find again the Sasanian topos of the emir himself having to submit himself for inspection before the ‘āreż when Ebn Kallekān describes how ‘Amr b. Layt would step forward for scrutiny on these occasions (see C. E. Bosworth, “The Armies of the Saffarids,” *BSOAS* 31, 1968, pp. 544, 549-51 = *The Medieval History of Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia*, London, 1977, no. XVII).

Information is somewhat sparse on the military department of the Samanid emirs of Transoxania and Khorasan, although a special *dīvān* in Bukhara for the Şāḥeb-e Şoraṭ or commander of the guard there is mentioned by Narşakī, tr. R. N. Frye, *The History of Bukhara*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954, p. 26, and the



late Samanid official Abū ‘Abdallāh K̲v̲ārazmī mentions the muster rolls, pay registers, etc. of the *dīvān al-ǧayš* in the capital, see Bosworth, “Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Kwārazmī on the Technical Terms of the Secretary’s Art . . .,” *JESHO* 12, 1969, pp. 125ff., *Medieval Arabic Culture and Administration*, London, 1982, no. XV.

Meanwhile, in western Iran and Iraq the function of *‘ārez* had certainly been carried on from the caliphs into the administration of the Daylami Buyids. The chronic turbulence of the emirs’ military supporters, and the disorders which regularly broke out when the army’s pay fell into arrears, necessitated particular care over military organization, and under the great emir ‘Azod al-dawla (q.v.) there was an expansion of staff in the military department, when we hear of two separate *‘āreẓs*, one for the Daylamis and one for the Arabs, Kurds, and Turks, a reflection of the heterogeneousness of the Buyids’ forces. The Buyid *‘arẓ* was often the occasion for a redistribution of *eqṭā’s* or land grants to the troops and for the weeding-out of sub-standard intruders from the army’s ranks; see Bosworth, “Military Organisation under the Būyids of Persia and Iraq,” *Oriens* 28/29, 1965/66, pp. 162ff., and Busse, *Chalif und Grösskonig. Die Buyiden im Iraq (945-1055)*, Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1969, pp. 314-15, 340-41.

The importance of the *dīvān-e ‘arẓ* under the Turkish Ghaznavids of Afghanistan and eastern Iran has already been noted, the offices of *‘ārez* and chief secretary being next in importance only to the vizierate. The historical sources mention army reviews held on the plain of Šāhbahār outside Ghazna, when men, horses, and war elephants were examined and checked against the muster and payrolls, sometimes in the presence of the sultan himself. It must be the practice of the Ghaznavids, doubtless continued by their successors the Ghurids in the 6th/ 12th century, which the 7th/13th century Ghurid author Faḳr-e Modabber describes in his manual of military practice, the *Ādāb al-ḥarb wa’l-šajā’a* or *Ādāb al-molūk*, claiming to set forth the practice of “former kings;” amongst other things, he stresses the value of the *‘arẓ* as an aid to setting out the troops in battle order on the actual field of war (see Bosworth, “Ghaznevid Military Organisation,” *Der Islam* 36, 1960, pp. 68ff., and idem, *The Ghaznavids*, pp. 122-26).

The Great Saljuqs likewise had a war department as part of their bureaucracy, functioning as part of the *dīvān-e a’lā* and under supreme control of the vizier, but with the *‘ārezal-ǧayš* having a wide range of military and financial duties; tenure of this office was often a stepping-stone to the vizierate itself, as may be



seen in the official career of the historian Anūšervān b. Kāled (d. 532/1137-38 or in the next year [q.v.]), who was ‘*arēz* under Moḥammad b. Malekšāh and the latter’s son Maḥmūd and subsequently vizier for both the Saljuq sultans and the ‘Abbasid caliph.

Despite the break in political and social institutions brought about in the 7th/13th century by the Mongol cataclysms, the long-established administrative arrangements necessary for the mustering, payment, provisioning, and training of a professional army were continued, if in a modified and often somewhat simplified form, by the various Mongol and Turkmen dynasties which controlled the Iranian world till the advent of the Safavids. The Il-khanid ‘*arēz* is especially mentioned in connection with the allocation of *eqṭā*’s, and we possess from the pen of the writer on ethics and political philosophy Jalāl-al-dīn Davānī (d. 908/1502-03) an ‘*arż-nāma* or account of a three-day review of the Āq Qoyunlū army by the ruler Uzun Ḥasan at Band-e Amīr near Persepolis (see V. Minorsky, “A Civil and Military Review in Fārs in 881/1476,” *BSOS* 10, 1940/42, pp. 141-78).

Under the Safavids, the administrative unity of the old *dīvān-e ‘arż* seems to have become divided, or rather, subsumed under the universal authority of the *dīvān-e a’lā*, under the *wakīl* in the earlier part of the 10th/16th century or the *wazīr-e a’zam* or E’temād-al-dawla of subsequent times, who had supreme administrative authority in the military as well as the civil sphere. However, military affairs were channeled from this chief minister through four military departments, corresponding to the four chief corps of the Safavid standing army, the Turkmen tribal cavalry (the *qizil-baš* or *qurčīs*), the slaves (the *gōlāms*), the musketeers (the *tofanğčīs*), and the artillerymen (the *topčīs*). Each of these departments had a staff of *wazīrs*, whose functions seem to have been basically secretarial, and of *mostawfīs*, concerned with auditing and the recording of payments, although the demarcation line between the two sets of functions was not entirely a hard-and-fast one (see *Tadkerat al-molūk*, pars. 56-62, and Minorsky’s commentary, p. 141). With the establishment of the Qajars, the first tentative steps towards the organization of a modern, western-type army and military organization were taken in the 19th century and the ancient administrative forms fell into disuse.

Finally, one should note that in Muslim India, politically and culturally so much an extension of the Irano-Turkish world, the institution of the ‘*arż* and the *dīvān-e ‘arż* flourished in various guises as strongly as in Iran proper up to the end of the Mughal empire and the gradual assertion of British control. It



was naturally the Ghurid, and ultimately the Ghaznavid traditions which were carried into the military institutions of the Slave Kings of Delhi, the Khaljis and the Tughluqids, as information from such contemporary historians as Baranī shows. The head of the military department was known as the *‘arez-e mamālek* or, in the reign of Sultan Balban (664-86/1266-87), by the Hinduized title of *rāwat-e‘arz*. The main army reviews were held in the capital Delhi itself, and the 8th/14th century tower which still survives there and is known as the *Bijay mandal* or “viewing area” was probably designed for the conduct of *‘arzs*. Subsequent dynasties in Delhi and those in the provinces, as far as Mālwa, the Deccan, and Bengal, followed similar practices. Under the Mughals, with their complex military hierarchy of *manṣabdārs*, many of the functions of the older *‘arz* devolved on the *mīr-bakṣī* or chief secretary. The emperor Akbar (963-1014/1556-1605) revived the former practice of the Delhi sultans in requiring accurate muster rolls of warriors and mounts, in order to prevent falsification and financial peculation, and the regular Mughal review process of *dāḡ u taṣḥīḥa* “branding and verification” may be regarded as the direct descendant of the classical *‘arz* (see W. Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls* . . ., London, 1903, pp. 35-56).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

In addition to references given in the article, see for a more exhaustive treatment of the topic (on which no comprehensive work exists), the *EI*² articles “Isti‘rāḡ” (Bosworth) and, for Muslim India, “Lashkar” (S. A. A. Rizvi), and also *EI*², Suppl. art. “Dāḡh u taṣḥīḥa” (M. Athar Ali).

(C. E. Bosworth)