



DAFTAR

DAFTAR (Mid. Pers. *daftar* (*dptl*) “register, account book” < Gk. *diphthéra* “(prepared) hide, piece of leather, especially as a writing material”), an administrative office, as well as a notebook or booklet, more especially an account book or correspondence register, used in such an office. In Greek sources the term *diphthéra* was sometimes used to refer to the Persian royal archives (*hai basilikai diphthérai*); the keeping of such records had been the custom since the Achaemenid period (cf. Esther 2:23, 6:1,10:2). [Ctesias](#) (4th century b.c.e.) claimed to have used them in preparing his work on Persia (cf. Diodorus 2.32.4). In about 100 b.c.e. Chinese traders reported that the people of [An-hsi](#) (Parthia) wrote their books on hides (von Gutschmid, p. 65). In the 6th century c.e. the historian Agathias used material from the Sasanian archives supplied to him by his friend Sergius, a leading interpreter who had transcribed and translated excerpts from them on a visit to Persia (Agathias, 2.27.2, 4.30.2-3, 4.30.5). Theophylact Simocatta also mentioned the Persian royal annals.

In the Sasanian administration a daily register of royal decrees was kept, and each month these records were collected in a book and deposited in the archives. Following the Arab conquest *daftars*, patterned after those of the Sasanians, were adopted by the second caliph, ‘Omar b. Kaṭṭāb (13-23/634-44). The terms *daftar* and *dīvān* were generally synonymous in the first Islamic centuries (cf. Mas‘ūdī, *Tanbīh* p. 264; Ebn Kaldūn, I, p. 529; Ebn Ṭeqṭaqā, pp. 112-14; Māwardī, p. 191).

Daftar-dārī (record keeping), an important function of every administrative



department, was briefly interrupted by the Mongol invasion in the mid-13th century, until Şāḥeb(-e) Dīvān K̄vāja Šams-al-Dīn Jovaynī appointed a *daftardār-e dīvān-e mamālek* (chief state archivist). The office was enlarged under Ġāzān Khan (694-703/1295-1304), but after his reign centralized record keeping was discontinued (Naḵjavānī, II, pp. 125-32; cf. Rajabzāda, pp. 201-03).

In the Safavid administration (907-1145/1501-1732) the duties of the archivist of the supreme royal secretariat (*daftardār-e daftar-kāna-ye homāyūn-e alā*) were “to endorse the raqams [letters] and orders of vazirs and mustaufis [accountants], as well as the soyūrghāls [lands immune from tax], exemptions (*mu’āfi*) and [orders for] salary in cash (*tankhwāh-i mavājib*) of the aides-de-camp (*yasāvulān-i šuḥbat*), ushers (*eshīk-āqāsī*), and Āqāyān The files (*dafātir*) of the previous years, which were consulted only occasionally, were kept in the stores (*anbār*) of the Secretariat. The Archivist was in charge (*taḥvīl*) of them and kept them in order (*ḍabṭ*)” (*Taḍkerat al-molūk*, tr. Minorsky, p. 77).

Under the Qajars (1193-1342/1779-1924) the office of *daftardār* seems to have been replaced by the ministry of accounting (*wezārat-e daftar-e estīfā*’; E’temād-al-salṭana, *Montaẓam-e nāṣerī*, ed. Reżwānī, I, p. 503). In contemporary usage the term *daftar-dārī* refers to accounting and bookkeeping.

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