



DAWĀTDĀR

DAWĀ(T)DĀR (lit., “keeper, bearer of [the royal] inkwell or inkstand”), title of various officials in medieval Islamic states.

At an early stage in the development of the vizierate under the ‘Abbasid caliphs the vizier bore an inkstand (*dawāt*) as emblem of his office; it was usually suspended from the wrist on a chain and carried in a sleeve or, in a slimmer version (*dawāt laṭīfa*), in his boot (Helāl Şābe’, pp. 66-68; tr. pp. 55-56; cf. Mez, pp. 91-92). The *dawāt-e wezārat* was still one of the insignia of the viziers of the Saljuq sultan of Anatolia (Ebn Bībī, apud Uzunçarşılı, pp. 96, 98-99).

From the ‘Abbasids the emblem and associated functions must have passed to the provincial successor dynasties of the Iranian world, though the process is barely documented. Sīmjūr, the prominent Turkish slave commander of the Samanid Esmā’īl b. Aḥmad (279-95/892-907), is designated in the sources *dawātī* (Gardīzī, ed. Ḥabībī, p. 149: *davītdār/divītdār*), probably because of some civil function that he exercised as a tax collector in the Herat region (Merçil, p. 73). In the Ghaznavid administration one of the responsibilities of the *dawātdār*, an official of the Dīvān-e wezārat, seems to have been keeping records of important official documents (Nāẓim, p. 131).

Under the Great Saljuqs the *dawātdār* was at first a civilian official, but, as with many household and some nominally administrative posts (e.g., custodianship of the royal wardrobe, the washing bowls, etc.), it tended to fall into the hands of the Turkish military. Hence Żiā’-al-Dīn Qara Arslān is



mentioned as *amīr-e dawāt* for the Saljuq sultan ‘Ezz-al-Dīn Keykāvūs I (607-16/1210-19; Ebn Bībī, apud Uzunçarşılı, p. 91). When the office was developed to its full extent under the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria, the *dawādār* was invariably a Turkish and later a Circassian *mamlūk* and one of the principal commanders of the state, functioning, inter alia, as master of ceremonies at court (Maqrīzī, I/1, p. 118; Ebn Ẕaldūn, II, pp. 12, 24; tr., II, pp. 15-16, 28).

The title was continued under the Ottomans; in Safavid Persia, however, the *dawātdārs* were officials of only moderate rank and emoluments. According to *Taḏkerat al-molūk* (tr. Minorsky, pp. 63, 89, 133), there were both a *dawātdār-e mohr-e angoštar* (or *dawātdār-e aḥkām*) and a *dawātdār-e arqām*, whose duties included affixing seals to official documents.

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