



DĪVĀNBEGĪ

DĪVĀNBEGĪ

i. The Timurid period.

ii. The Safavid period.

i. THE TIMURID PERIOD

Dīvānbegī was the designation for the highest-ranking officer in the Timurid office of finance and justice (*dīvān-e a'lā*). The *dīvānbegī* (cf. Pers. *amīr-e dīvān*) was responsible for placing the seal on decrees and was particularly concerned with increasing tax revenues and associated problems (Herrmann, p. 188). The Timurid administration was organized in two main branches, the top personnel of which consisted of *tovāčibegīs* (Pers. *tovāčī*), military inspectors, and of *dīvānbegīs*, respectively. These two amir-/beg-groups together constituted the grand amirs (*omarā'-e 'ezām*), with the title *oloḡ beg*. The chiefs of both branches were called *amīr al-omarā'* (q.v.), which explains why in Timurid sources two *amīr al-omarā'* are sometimes reported as having simultaneously served a single ruler. The office of the *dīvānbegīs*, i.e., *dīvān-e a'lā*, is already attested under Tīmūr (771-807/1370-1405), but the earliest mention of the office of *tovāčibegīs* (i.e., *dīvān-e tovāčī*, *dīvān-e laškar*, or *tork dīvānī*) is after the reign of Šāhroḡ (807-50/1405-47). Other synonyms for *dīvān-e a'lā* were *dīvān-e molk wa māl*, *dīvān-e māl*, and *sart dīvānī* (Mīr 'Alī-Šīr, p. 29;



Ando, pp. 224-27). K̄vāndamīr reported (fols. 20b, 21a) that, according to the Mongol customary law (*yāsā, tūrā*), the *omarāʾ-e dīvān-e māl* ranked second after the *omarāʾ-e dīvān-e tovāčī*. It seems that at the same time several *dīvānbegīs* were attested. For example, in 771/1370 Tīmūr named eight members of his entourage as *tovāčī* and six as *amīr-e dīvān (dīvānbegī; Yazdī, fol. 141b)*. Most *dīvānbegīs* were of Turkish origin, but especially under Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bayqarā (875-912/1470-1506) there were reports of the activities of Persian *dīvānbegīs*. The Timurids tended not to appoint members of tribes considered aristocratic, like the Barlās or the Arlāt, to influential posts as *dīvānbegīs*, but rather only personal intimates of the ruler (Ando, pp. 234-39).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ʿAbd-Allāh Morvārīd, *Šaraf-nāma*, facs. ed. and tr. H. R. Roemer as *Staatschreiben der Timuridenzeit. Das Šaraf-nāmā des ʿAbdallāh Marwārīd*, Wiesbaden, 1952, pp. 169 ff.

Mīr ʿAlī-Šīr Navāʾī, *Waqfiya*, ed. A. Ḥekmat and B. Čübānzāda, Baku, 1926.

S. Ando, *Timuridische Emire nach dem Muʿizz al-ansāb*, Berlin, 1992.

G. Herrmann, *Der historische Gehalt des “Nāmā-ye nāmī” von Ḥāndamīr*, Ph.D. diss., Göttingen University, 1968.

Ġiāṭ-al-Dīn Moḥammad K̄vāndamīr, *Nāmā-ye nāmī*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. Suppl. pers. 1842.

Moʿezz al-ansāb, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. Pers. ancien fonds. 67.

Šaraf-al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, *Zafar-nāma*, ed. A. Urunbayev, Tashkent, 1972.

A. Z. Velidi Togan, “Ali Šīr,” *IA* I, pp. 349-57.

(SHIRO ANDO)

ii. IN THE SAFAVID PERIOD



In the Safavid administrative system, the *dīvānbeḡī* was one of the high-ranking amirs (addressed *‘ālī-jāh*) residing at court (*omarā-ye dawlat-kāna*). From the time of [Shah ‘Abbās I](#) onwards, there were normally seven *‘ālī-jāhamīrs* who together constituted the council of state (*dīvān, jānqī*). As an official of the internal palace administration, the *dīvānbeḡī* had the status of *moqarrab al-kāqān* (*Taḡkerat al-molūk*, ed. Minorsky, pp. 44, 56ff; Savory, p. 355). Minorsky’s designation of the *dīvānbeḡī* as “Lord High Justice” (*Taḡkerat al-molūk*, p. 119) is close to the mark. Although the *dīvānbeḡī* could not rule on cases involving one of the four capital crimes under *šarī‘a* law (murder, rape, the breaking of teeth, and blinding) unless the *šadrs* were present (*Taḡkerat al-molūk*, pp. 42. 50), the *dīvānbeḡī*’s court was the highest appellate court in the land, and received appeals from the courts of the *qāzīs* and from that of the *šayḡ al-eslām* (*Taḡkerat al-molūk*, p. 120, quoting Chardin, ed. Langlès, VI, pp. 54-55).

On four days a week, including Saturdays and Sundays when he was joined by the *šadr-e kāšša*, the *dīvānbeḡī* presided over a court in the *kešīk-kāna* (guard house) at the [‘Ālī Qāpū](#) palace. On other days he heard cases involving customary law (*‘orf*) in his own home. In both courts, if the case concerned *dīvān* revenue, or was a suit brought against an official of the central bureaucracy, the case was sent on to the vizier. If the case concerned *qūrčīs*, *ḡolāms* or members of other military units, or employees of the royal workshops (see [BOYŪTĀT-E SALṬANATĪ](#)), it was referred to the senior official (*rīš-safīd*) of the appropriate department. Cases not involving *dīvān* revenue were decided by the *dīvānbeḡī* himself. Plaintiffs from the provinces who had grievances against provincial governors and other officials and had not presented their cases heard in the vizier’s court, could apply to have their cases heard before the *dīvānbeḡī* (*Mīrzā Rafī‘ā*, p. 88; *Taḡkerat al-molūk*, pp. 42, 50-51). The salary of the *dīvānbeḡī* was set at 500 toman, but could be as much as 1,000 toman; in addition, he received a *toyūl* (assignment; *Taḡkerat al-molūk*, p. 152) officially evaluated at 15 toman but yielding in reality 92 toman, 3,845 *dīnārstoyūl* had “recently” been cancelled.

Although the *dīvānbeḡī* was one of seven *‘ālī-jāh amīrs*, his was not “high-profile” position, and the holders of this office are mentioned relatively rarely in the sources. The first person recorded as holding this office is *Mīrzā ‘Ālī Solṭān Qājār*, who was the *dīvānbeḡī* at the time of the death of *Shah Ṭahmāsb* (984/1576; *Eskandar Beg*, I, p. 140; tr. Savory, I, p. 226). This leads one to suppose that, during the earlier, formative period of the Safavid state, the legal



functions of the *dīvānbegī* were performed by officials such as the *qāzī al-qożāt*, the *qāzī ‘askar*, and the *šayk al-eslām*. Qezelbāšamirs continued to hold the post of *dīvānbegī* until toward the end of the reign of Shah ‘Abbās I, when the appointment is recorded in 1036/1626-27 of the aide-de-champ (*yasāvol-e soḥbat*) Rostam Beg, who continued to hold the office under Shah Şafī (Eskandar Beg, II, p. 1060; tr. Savory, II, p. 1283) and was succeeded in office by his son, Şafīqolī Beg (Waḥīd Qazvīnī, p. 221). Occasionally, the holder of the office of *dīvānbegī* also held that of *ešīk-āqāsī-bāšī* (e.g., ‘Alīqolī Khan Šāmlū and Kalb-‘Alī Khan; see Eskandar Beg, II, pp. 887, 1040, tr. Savory, II, pp. 1104, 1261; Mofīd Bāfqī, III, p. 214). The office of *dīvānbegī* also existed in the Uzbek administrative system in Transoxania in the late 16th and early 17th centuries (e.g., Eskandar Beg, I, pp. 456, 548, 553, II pp. 706, 927; tr. Savory, II, pp. 629, 728, 734, II, p. 898, 1145).

Mīrzā Rafī‘ā, *Dastūr al-molūk*, ed. M.-T. Dānešpażūh, *MDAT*, nos 63-70, 1347-48 Š./1968-69.

Moḥammad Mofīd Mostawfī Bāfqī, *Jāme‘-e mofīdī*, ed. Ī. Afšār, Tehran 1340 Š./1961.

R. M. Savory, “The Safavid Administrative System,” in *Cam. Hist. Iran* VI, 1986.

Moḥammad-Ṭāher Waḥīd Qazvīnī, *‘Abbās-nāma*, ed. E. Dehgān, Arāk, 1329 Š./1950.

(ROGER M. SAVORY)