

SELECTED FEATURES OF A UNIQUE PERSIAN  
MANUAL ON ISLAMIC ADMINISTRATION FROM LATE  
ŞAFAVID IRAN: MĪRZĀ RAFĪ'Ā'S *DASTŪR AL-MULŪK*\*

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*It is for kings to observe His pleasure (His name be glorified) and the pleasure of the Truth is in the charity which is done to His creatures and in the justice which is spread among them. A kingdom which is blessed by its people will endure and increase from day to day, while its king will enjoy power and prosperity; in this world he will acquire good fame, in the next world salvation, and his reckoning will be easier. Great men have said, 'A kingdom may last while there is irreligion, but it will not endure when there is oppression.'*

Nizām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), *Siyāsatnāmah*<sup>1</sup>

To my teacher Professor Bert Fragner, Bamberg, with  
gratitude

*Introduction*

The principal purpose of this paper is to direct attention of readers to the significance of Şafavid studies on the history of Islamic civilization. *Dastūr al-Mulūk* (henceforth *Dastūr*), a vital doc-

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\* Based on the introductory chapter of my Ph.D. thesis, "Mīrzā Rafī'ā's *Dastūr al-Mulūk*: A Manual of Later Şafavid Administration. Annotated English Translation, Commentary on the Offices and Services, and Facsimile of the Unique Persian Manuscript" (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1998), which is going to be published soon by ISTAC, and will be the first comprehensive study on the work in English. Throughout this article, references to the thesis will be abbreviated as DM (Mar.); square brackets therein refer to the corresponding numbered paragraphs of both the Persian text and the English translation of *Dastūr al-Mulūk* in DM (Mar.).

<sup>1</sup> Nizām al-Mulk [al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Ṭūsī], *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, trans. Hubert Darke, 2d ed. (London, Henley, and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 12.

ument originating from the end of the Ṣafavid period, shall be introduced to a wider circle of readers than those directly concerned with Iranian studies.

Professor Roger Savory, a contemporary leading scholar in the field of Ṣafavid studies, once expressed his amazement over the fact that "interest in Ṣafawid history, whether on the part of Western or Iranian scholars, is of recent provenance."<sup>2</sup> This is rather surprising considering Iran's Ṣafavid Empire (907–1145/1501–1722) was one of the major later dominions of the Muslims—alongside with those of the Ottomans and Mughals or Bāburids of India. Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn Abū'l-Faṭḥ Ishāq al-Ardabilī (650–735/1252–1334),<sup>3</sup> an ancestor of the Ṣafavids, was the eponymous founder of the *Ṣafaviyyah* sufi-order which, in the course of the 9th/15th century, turned openly Shī'ite.<sup>4</sup> It should be mentioned in this regard that in 1991, Ghulām-Rizā Ṭabaṭabā'i-Majd published his excellent critical edition of the

<sup>2</sup> Roger M. Savory, *Studies on the History of Ṣafavid Iran* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), ix (preface). Refer also to John Emerson, "Some General Accounts of the Safavid and Afsharid Period, Primarily in English," *History and Literature in Iran. Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P. W. Avery* (Pembroke Papers 1), ed. Charles Melville (London: The University of Cambridge Centre of Middle Eastern Studies, 1990), 27–41. For some interesting comments on *Pembroke Papers 1* see 'Abbās Milānī, "Kārnāmah-yi ḥalqah-yi ṣafavī" (a review article), *Īrān-Shenasi Journal of Iranian Studies* (Rockville, Maryland: Keyvan Foundation) 8, no. 4 (Winter 1997/1375 solar): 811–20. Abbās Milānī also included in his article a review of another, similar work, namely Jean Calmard, ed., *Études Safavides* (Bibliothèque Iranienne 39) (Paris & Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1993). Thanks are due to Professor Kazemi-Moussavi for directing my attention to Milānī's contribution.

<sup>3</sup> On some aspects of Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn's spiritual ancestry, see Jean Aubin, "Shaykh Ibrāhīm Zāhid Gīlānī (1218?–1301)," *Turcica* 21–23 (1991): 41, and Vladimir Minorsky, "A Mongol Decree of 720/1320 to the Family of Shaykh Zāhid," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, henceforth cited as *BSOAS* 16 (1954): 517–18.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this study the term "Shī'ite" exclusively refers to the Twelver Shī'ite denomination of Islām (*al-Shī'ah al-Imāmiyyah al-Ithnā'ashariyyah*).