

Elsewhere, a slightly different version of the “circle of justice” (a dynasty needs people to contribute their wealth) has justice replaced by compassion (*şefkat*), giving as an example Mehmed II’s mild policy towards the inhabitants of conquered Istanbul (B81).

It may be noticed that, in Celalzade’s description of the four elements of society, the ulema are absent, as the men of the pen include only viziers and scribes. Indeed, in Celalzade’s work a special place is reserved for praise of the scribal career and the importance of the governmental bureaucracy. Recounting (in his *Selimname*) his own professional options in his youth, he argues that as a *medrese* teacher he would be financially insecure and as a judge prone to falling prey to unfortunate circumstances, while a scribe has peace of mind and ease (*rahat, huzur*). In the *Tabakat* (K, 259b–260b), Celalzade describes his highest office, that of *nişancı*, as

the greatest among all offices and the noblest of all services ... [Because] all great sultans ... needed two types of servants to rule over vast lands: men of the pen and men of the sword (*erbab-ı tiğ ve kalem*). In fact, the sword and the pen are twins, one of them is the soul and the other is the body (*biri ten ve biri can*). But superiority of the pen has been proven. That is because the sword seeks to destroy whereas the pen aims to produce (*biri kati’ biri nabitdir*) ... The rule of the sword devastates a country whereas the rule of the pen causes prosperity.

Furthermore, he goes on to say, it is difficult to find good scribes (unlike good soldiers), and scribes and chancelors busy themselves collecting revenue, while all other servants of the sultan are the cause of expenditure (due to their salaries).¹⁰⁵ In his *Mevâhib ül-hallâk*, Celalzade likens both the grand vizier and the divan scribes to the soul and heart, which give life to the body (B64). Not only is the divan scribe (*debir*) described alongside the grand vizier, but Celalzade even suggests that the grand vizier should be a man of the pen (*ehl-i kalem*) rather than a member of the military class (*ehl-i seyf*). A scribe is “the eye, ear, and hand of a sultan” (*padişahın görür gözü ve işidir kulağı ve tutar elidir*), while, furthermore, *kâtib* means “vizier” in Persian, which implies that the two titles are closely connected and even interchangeable. Celalzade’s eulogy for the scribes shows their importance even in military affairs, as in

¹⁰⁵ Trans. according to Yılmaz 2006, 89–90; cf. Şahin 2013, 222–223. Similar praise of the pen and the scribes can be found in Celalzade’s work on the prophet Yusuf (Joseph): Şahin 2013, 240. Debates between the pen and the sword were quite popular in Arabic literature; see Gelder 1987.

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their hands the pen becomes “an instrument of peace as well as of war”. If there was any doubt which social group is represented by Celalzade’s work, he took great care to dispel it.

5 Lütfi Pasha and the Beginning of the Ottoman “Mirror for Princes”

A possible side-effect of the move from Davvani’s to Kashifi’s influence (or, instead, a probable cause of it) was that Ottoman political treatises began to be more pragmatic. The quest for a unifying theory of human society emphasized the smooth functioning of state institutions. Initially, there were the ready-made models of Iranian “mirror for princes” literature, which emphasized the duty of the ruler to hold court regularly, use of spies, and so forth; until the mid-sixteenth century (and, sporadically, even later), Ottoman translations, adaptations, and original works repeated or expanded these tropes. Until the late sixteenth and even into the early seventeenth century, for instance, texts on using physiognomy as a means to select candidates with the proper moral qualities for posts either at the palace or in the army circulated widely.¹⁰⁶ Yet from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, the Ottoman authors were to develop their own style, focusing on institutions rather than the person of the sultan or the grand vizier. If the authors analyzed up to now had been transmitting the received Persian tradition, and occasionally making their own alterations or additions, this new trend, which began with Lütfi Pasha’s *Âsafnâme*, inaugurated a distinctively Ottoman tradition.

Arguably, in this respect it is not a coincidence that Lütfi Pasha (1488–1563) was a product of the distinctively Ottoman system of recruitment. Of Albanian origin, he was recruited through the *devşirme* system and raised in the sultan’s palace. He was first appointed the governor of Kastamonu, before then serving in various administrative posts and participating in many of Selim I’s and Süleyman’s campaigns, becoming a vizier in 1534/5 and ultimately the grand vizier in 1539 following the death of his predecessor, Ayas Pasha. He only served in this post for two years, as he was dismissed in 1541. He then retired to his farm in Dimetoka, where he died. During his retirement he wrote several books in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, among which was a history of the Ottoman state (*Tevârih-i âl-i Osmân*) and the treatise, examined in detail above, defending the right of the Ottoman sultan to claim the title of caliph. But the work he is most famous for is his *Âsafnâme*, on the duties of a grand vizier, probably

¹⁰⁶ Lelić 2017.