

Clerks and Record Keeping in State Transactions According to *Kutadgu Bilig*

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Abstract: There are writers who make references to the procedures of registration and the archival practices and even to the subject of clerks who were involved in these procedures, all of which have been a part of the Turkish public administration from the Medieval Ages onwards. One of these writers is Yusuf Has Hâcib (1017-1077). In his work titled *The Kutadgu Bilig* (1070), Yusuf Has Hâcib gives information on the language, literature, social life, culture and the history of organization of the Turks, defines, on the other hand, the qualities that the clerks to be employed in public services should have. Clerks, in this context, are among those referred to in the work in terms of their tasks and functions of registering, document producing and the running the bureaucratic procedures. In this context, the writer gives information on - in addition to many other subjects - the running and the importance of the procedures of registration, document production and bureaucratic practices as recorded and on the qualities of the clerks. The main aim of the work is to analyse Yusuf Has Hâcib's approach (in his work *The Kutadgu Bilig*) to the subjects of the qualities and the working styles of the clerks in the Turkish tradition, document production and the impact of the clerks on the protection of the documents produced, and even to

the subject of the importance of registration-based quality of the procedures from the aspect of public administration. The work has also evaluated whether the subjects of the document practices and the qualities of the clerks as stated in the Kutadgu Bilig have been taken into consideration in the later Turkish states in terms of the continuation of the historical tradition.

Keywords: Yusuf Khas Hacı, Kutadgu Bilig, clerks, bureaucratic transactions, record keeping.

1. Introduction

Record keeping and archival practices, which have formed part of Turkish public administration practices since the Middle Ages, and especially since the Turks as a people had embraced Islam, as well as the scribes who played an active role in these procedures, are mentioned by several writers. Yusuf Khas Hacı is one of the rare writers of the period to mention these topics. Yusuf Khas Hacı, while giving information about topics like the Turks' language, literature, social life, cultural history and administrative history, on the other side also depicts the qualities that officials to be taken into government service should possess. Clerks form one group of those professionals who, alongside with their duties and functions with regard to records keeping and the creation of records, find mention in the work. In this context, the author, alongside a variety of topics, offers information on record keeping and the creation of records in Turkish state traditions, the carrying out of – in wome way or other record-based – bureaucratic transactions, their

importance and the qualifications of clerks. The purpose of the present article is to analyze Yusuf Khas Hajib's approaches (via his work *Kutadgu Bilig*) to topics like the qualities of clerks in Turkish bureaucratic tradition, their working style, its impact upon the creation of records and the keeping of the records thus produced, and even the importance of record-based transactions themselves from the perspective of public administration.

2. Yusuf Khas Hajib and his work *Kutadgu Bilig*

2.1. Yusuf Khas Hajib

Little information is available on Yusuf Khas Hajib's formative years. One can even say that in his poetic work he acted in a rather tight-lipped fashion. What is known about him is limited to the details that can be extracted from two separate short supplements added to his work later on, one of them in verse and the other in prose. According to that, Yusuf Khas Hajib (or simply *Ulu Khas Hajib*) is thought to have been born 58 years after the Balasagun Turks embraced Islam, that is, around the hijri year 408 (1017/1018 CE) (Arat, 1977, p. 1038; Yavuz, 1986, p. 438; Dilaçar, 2003, p. 22). As to the place of his birth, this can be inferred from the preface added to his work to have been Balasagun (Kuz-Ordu) (Arat, 1977, p. 1038). His work also tells us that he was in his fifties when he first started writing his work (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c (couplet) 365; Arat, 1977, p. 1038). Even his name is referred to only once throughout his book, namely in the last part bearing the headline "Kitap Sahibi Yusuf, Büyük Has Hâcib, Kendi Kendine Nasihat Eder" ("The master of the book Yusuf, Büyük Khas Hajib, advises himself") and consisting of 40 couplets (couplets No. 6605-6645), of which the

respective couplet is no. 6627 (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, pp. 474-477; Arat, 1977, p. 1038; Alodalı and Arslan, 2008, p. 833).

It is easily understood from the content of his work that Yusuf of Balasagun received a good education by the standards of the period (Genç, 2002, pp. xvii-xviii), and that he also educated himself well, that he studied the recognized sciences of his time and took a close interest in art and literature (Yavuz, 1986, p. 438; Yavuz, 2008, pp. 143-144). The sound knowledge in these areas that is referred to in his work confirms this. It is for this reason that Yusuf Khass Hajib guided rulers and administrators in state administration and state service and gave them advice, just as the intellectuals, scholars and administrative counselors did for the rulers of their time with the writing political treatises (*Mirrors for Princes / Siyasatnama*), pamphlets (*risale*) and letters (*nâme*) they wrote (Eryılmaz, 1999, pp. 15-16; Aydemir, 2013, pp. 804-805). He sought to do that by relying on the extensive reservoir of the knowledge that he had mastered in the areas of language, literature, theology, folklore, politics, philosophy and mathematics, and, one can even say, by relying on the whole encyclopedic knowledge of the positive sciences of that time (Alodalı ve Arslan, 2008, p. 833).

After having offered his work (*Kutadgu Bilig*), which he finished writing in Kashgar, to the ruler of Kashgar, Tavghach Bughra Khan (Tabgaç Buğra Kara Hakan Ebû Ali Hasan bin Süleyman, † 1058), and as the khan liked his work, Yusuf Khass Hajib gained entrance to the court and was thought worthy of the title of *hâcib* (chamberlain) by the ruler (Barthold, 2006, p. 111; DİA, 2002, p. 478; Eryılmaz, 1999, p. 16; quoted according to Alodalı ve Arslan, 2008, p. 833). In this way he arrived at becoming Ebû Ali Hasan's Khass Hajib; he thus succeeded in

joining the entourage of the ruler (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, p. 1; Genç, 2002, pp. xvii-xviii; Alodalı ve Arslan, 2008, p. 833). Besides, one should also not regard the possibility that he had also been employed in state service in Balasagun or another Karakhanid centre as something out of the way. By this means he was able to offer quite detailed knowledge about Karakhanid state organization, the administrators, bureaucrats and the lower ranks who served within this organization and bore responsibility herein.

It is thought that the lack of accurate information on the date of Yusuf Khass Hajib's death, together with the fact that the section added to the work later on mentions him reaching a fairly old age, allow for the conclusion that he may possibly still have lived for a long time (Yavuz, 1986, p. 438; Alodalı ve Arslan, 2008, p. 833).

2.2. Kutadgu Bilig

Among the important sourcebooks of the period, *Kutadgu Bilig*, written by Yusuf Khass Hajib as a Karakhanid bureaucrat, takes up a place in the front row. The work in question had been begun by its author when he was in his fifties (Yavuz, 2008, p. 143), and was completed in 1069/1070 (Arat, 1977, p. 1038; Yavuz, 1986, p. 438; Alodalı ve Arslan, 2008, p. 833). Yusuf had started writing his work in Balasagun and finished it after coming to Kashgar. He dedicated and presented it to the ruler of Kashgar Tavghach Bughra Khan (Tabgaç Buğra Kara Hakan Ebû Ali Hasan bin Süleyman Arslan) (Arat, 1977, p. 1038; Genç, 2002, pp. xvii-xviii).

Together with its additions *Kutadgu Bilig* consists of 88 captions and concentrates on what the mentality, knowledge and virtues necessary

for the ideal organization of individuals, society and the state as closely connected to each other should consist of, on how these can be obtained and how these can be employed (Arat, 1977, p. 1039). Kutadgu Bilig discusses topics like statesmanship, state administration, rulership, vizierate, commandership, education and knowledge by making four characters representing justice, reason, state and knowledge talk to each other. The work displays performative properties, and ideas are generally presented in the form of dialogues (Yusuf Khas Hajib, 1983, pp. 4-5; Yavuz, 2008, p. 152; Alodalı ve Arslan, 2008, p. 834). Kutadgu Bilig has been set up in an allegorical fashion, that is, as half-story, half-theatre, it carries the characteristics of a poetical *mesnevi* and a disputation (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, p. 2; Dilaçar, 2003, p. 71; quoted according to Alodalı ve Arslan, 2008, p. 834).

The rationale of the work has been founded on four concepts which are presented in a personified way. Yusuf Khas Hajib grounded his story on the conversational exchange of four characters representing the four concepts. In the work, the concepts are represented by the ruler Kün Togdı as “justice”, the vizier Ay Toldı as “state”, the vizier's son Ögdülmiş as “reason” and the vizier's brother Odgurmış as “knowledge”. As to the secondary characters, these are Küsemiş who introduces Ay Toldı to the ruler, Odgurmış’s disciple Kumaru, the herald bringing news from Odgurmış, the man working on Odgurmış’s side. However, these do not participate in the conversations throughout the work (Arat, 1977, pp. 1040-1041; DİA, 2002, p. 478; Alodalı ve Arslan, 2008, p. 834).

Yusuf Khas Hajib was first of all a poet, intellectual and statesman and thus wrote this work with a concern for “organizing anew the principles of morality” in a Central Asia shaken by the consequences

of interior struggles, and for spreading the Islamic faith among the Turks in a wholesome fashion (Barthold, 2006, p. 113; Barthold, 1927, pp. 121-123; quoted according to İnalçık, 2000, p.11; Yavuz, 1986, pp. 438-439; Bıçak, 2009, p. 139; Aydemir, 2013, p. 807). According to Reşit Rahmeti Arat *Kutadgu Bilig* “is a work that is needed by the human for literally becoming a humble servant in both worlds, and which has been written with the intention to show the way.” (Arat, 1977, p. 1039).

According to W. Barthold, *Kutadgu Bilig*, having been written “in order to teach the sovereigns, the officials and the people morals”, can be classified alongside a group of works very widespread in the East, inter alia in Iran (Barthold, 2006, pp. 111, 113; Barthold, 1927, pp. 121-123; quoted according to İnalçık, 2000, s.11). The work was written “*in the spirit of Islam from beginning to end*” (Barthold, 2006, p. 111; Barthold, 1927, pp. 121-123; quoted according to İnalçık, 2000, p. 11) and the possibility of this spirit having been transmitted by correspondence is rather small (İnalçık, 2005, p. 11).

3. Karakhanid State Organization and Methods of Recording Bureaucratic Transactions According to *Kutadgu Bilig*

3.1. About Karakhanid State Organization

In his work *Kutadgu Bilig* Yusuf Khas Hajib gives detailed information about the members of different professions (here also meaning persons assuming various roles inside the community), the qualities they need to possess and the style of behavior and posture they need to keep to.

During the Karakhanid period in which Yusuf Khas Hajib lived, state organization possessed a general bureaucratic character in the form

of court, headquarter, army and provincial organization. The sovereign stood at the very head of this bureaucratic structure, after him came the vizier. Other important members of court were as following: 1) the grand chamberlain and the chamberlains (*hâcib*) (Genç, 2002, pp. 130-138), ministers (*biruk / buyruk*), 2) inspector (gatekeeper / *kapucubaşı*) (Genç, 2002, pp. 138-144), 3) chief of guards (*candâr*) (Genç, 2002, pp. 144-145), 4) chief of armory (*silâhdâr*) (Genç, 2002, p. 145), 5) chiefs of military command and military commanders (*alemdâr*) (Genç, 2002, pp. 145-146). Alongside these one can also mention officials from lower ranks. These officials consisted of the following: 1) head of cooks (*aşbaşcı hânsâlar*) (Genç, 2002, pp. 146-148), 2) master of drinks (*idişçibaşı*) (Genç, 2002, pp. 148-151), 3) county chief (*ilbaşı*),¹ 4) warden of the sultan's robes (*câmedâr*) (Genç, 2002, pp. 152-153) and 5) other court attendants (upholsterers, standard bearers, keeper of birds, “*kişçi*=hunter”, furthermore bowmen-archers, guards (*dûrbâşlar*), “*tartığçı*=weigher” and servants (*yumuşçı*) working under the inspector).

All these demonstrate that Karakhanid state organization had succeeded in forming an extensive administrative apparatus. This administrative organization also indicates bureaucratic structures in which relations between inferiors and superiors and at the same time procedures for promotion in service have become clearly defined. Another important detail these circumstances show us is – however little clerks may have been mentioned among the employees at offices and boards – that clerks were employed at these boards, or at least that part of the staff conducted secretary services in parallel. Therefore the offices in question were, while fulfilling their functions, at the same time also

¹ Official responsible for taking care of the palace's horses (Genç, 2002, pp. 151-152).

occupied with the creation of records and the processing of public transactions.

3.2. Offices, Titles and Responsibilities

Yusuf Khass Hajib and Mahmud al-Kashgari (Kaşgarlı Mahmud) are two important writers offering knowledge about the offices in charge of the provincial and central administration of the Karakhanid state. These two writers described in their works those serving in Karakhanid state organs, starting from the lowest rank up to those serving at the palace doors, and which stages these passed through, that is, they explained the issue of which kind of procedure for promotions was needed for the system of service. Thus, one is also offered an opportunity for gaining insights into secretaryship, that is, into the procedure for the promotion of officials dealing with the processing of correspondence.

In his work *Kutadgu Bilig* Yusuf Khass Hajib sometimes uses the term “*ilçi kişi*” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 5912), sometimes “*işçi*” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2777 and 2808) and sometimes “*tapugçı*” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 203 and 5371) in order to designate statesman, servant or official. On the other hand Yusuf Khass Hajib separates public officials into two general categories:

- 1) those taken into service already at a young age,
- 2) those enrolled into service after having grown up.

Yusuf Khass Hajib also stated that the first group of public officials who entered service at a young age would become better than those passing on by ego and pride. According to him, those enrolled into service at a young age first have to learn manners and customs (*törü ve toku*) and their behavior has to be corrected according to these rules, they have to

know the manners of entering office and withdrawal, their manners and behavior have to be within the range of decency. Such a person has to rise early in order to be ready for service, he has to be modest both in his words and deeds, he has to fulfill every order (*yumuş*) promptly and in good time, he has to do his work in a careful fashion, his eyes and ears have to be attentive every moment, he needs to know how to attend to a senior person, he needs to know how to hold his tongue, he must not speak a word while present among the great. A youth paying attention to these matters will, if he shows accomplishment in service, become close to his master and pass through all the stages (*keçig*) with success (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 4031-4048).

For a youth who has successfully passed all these stages then comes the turn for learning how to enter and leave the sublime presence of the ruler or premises adjacent to him, for learning the way for delivering wishes and requests. When individuals from the lower ranks (*kiçig kur*) have reached that stage, the master (*bey*) will from thereon appoint them to the work they are going to do. Thereupon an individual having reached that stage (*hizmetkâr*) can, if he is of intelligent and honest nature, and if he knows how to offer his services to the master (*bey*), advance quickly and reach the position of favorite. These individuals become bowmen-archers if they are good shooters and brave; those with an accurate character become keepers of the seal (*tamgacı*); he whose manners and movements are neat and whose face is handsome will be made cupbearer (*idişçi*) by the master (*bey*); if he knows how to write and do accounting, he will become treasurer (*ağıcı*), if in addition to his writing his understanding and intelligence are good as well he will become a clerk (*bitigci*) (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 4031-4048).

These individuals have to be reverential at all times, they have to comport themselves excellently in the presence of authority, they must not behold subject matters which should not be seen, when the ruler commands something they should listen to him intently, and again when the ruler asks something he absolutely has to say the truth, and, most important, he has to carry out his order (*yarlıĝ*) with fidelity. Again, those individuals attaining the position of favorite must not drink alcohol, must not roam around needlessly, must abstain from inappropriate business forthwith, behave as if he had not heard the words he heard and had not seen the things he saw (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 4051-4062).

The information given above at the same time also offers important knowledge about which kind of assessment and promotional process those entering service went through, and even about how they could protect the position they found themselves at. The information presented also shows us that, from service boys to the highest ranking state officials, almost all the administrators were trained in the palace. From this point of view the palace educating all sorts of officials carried the properties of a kind of school (Genç, 2002, p. 159).

Yusuf Khas Hajib, while listing all the above information, at the same time also offers information about the hierarchical structure (*silsile-i meratib*) of Karakhanid governance. As a matter of fact the list is as follows:

- 1) ruler (*sultan, khan, terken, ilig, bey*),
- 2) chief magistrate (*er öĝi*),
- 3) provincial governor (*il beyi*),
- 4) vizier or minister (*yuĝruş*)

5) *yabgu*²

6) *çavlı bey, tegin bey, çağrı bey, inanç bey,*

7) major persons of Turkmen (*kök ayuk*),

8) constituent (*öge*) (Genç, 2002, pp. 159-160).

Yusuf Khas Hajib mentions that the principal state officials consist of the officials given in the list, while the others are those working beneath them on the lower level as public servants (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 4147-4149).

According to Yusuf Khas Hajib, three important holders of office must be chosen from among very distinguished persons. These three offices are the judge, the regent (*halîfet, nâib*) and the vizier. Even if not much information is to be found about the office of regency, its responsibilities can be inferred to from later periods (for example from the Great Seljuq Empire). In line with this the *naibs* (regents) are those who in a certain city or area rule as representatives of the sovereign within the position of a general governor. The vizierate with the vizier being called “*ayguçî*”, and the grand vizier “*ulu ayguçî*”, is the head of central state organs conducting the various state affairs in the name of the ruler. This vizier was responsible for conducting and administering the affairs of the *Meclis-i Âlî* (Great Divan) which he presided. Next to him were the judges taking care of judicial affairs, and the military commanders taking care of military affairs (Genç, 2002, pp. 165-166, 168-173, 180-182).

3.3. The System of Advancement in Service According to Merit, Qualification and Trial

² Translator's note: The office of “*yabgu*” is roughly equivalent to that of a viceroy.

Yusuf Khash Hajib does not reveal how long the process of vocational promotion took for someone newly entering officialdom. However, the knowledge he offers for certain is that for someone to climb step by step towards the “doors of service” (“*hizmet kapusu*”) he had to hold merit and qualifications, he had to educate himself well and be knowledgeable. Furthermore it is indubitable that this procedure would be conducted in a way that the superiors deemed fit and by careful monitoring so that it would be in line with specified bureaucratic practices and remain faithful to tradition and its very exercise (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 262-268, 610-642).

What can be understood from this is that anyone at the “door of the state” (“*devlet kapusu*”) first of all had to learn the manners of service and the order of protocol and that later on he could be advanced, provided that he could prove his merit, qualifications, and having stood the trial by serving at various levels and for [specified] timespans. This however is done in a fashion that opens the way for somebody to reach high ranks. It is to be understood from these explanations that the need for personnel, be it for palace services or for state cadres, was met by education starting from the lowest level in the respective state offices and by advancement according to experience, merit and qualification (Genç, 2002, p. 165).

3.4. Correspondence, Financial Affairs and Clerks

For reasons resulting out of a certain workload we can say that at the councils (*dîvân*) as part of the institutions situated within Karakhanid state organization, clerks were present in order to run correspondence, that is, conduct the writing tasks. Furthermore, the clerks serving in these

councils (*dîvân*) also had, according to their place of service, areas of specialization. An official (most commonly a clerk) serving in the Great Divan was for example especially experienced and specialized in the state's systems of correspondence, that is, in procedures of correspondence. Besides, one can say that for example the clerks serving in the financial council possessed sufficient knowledge about the creation of records with financial topics for content, that is, about conducting accounting, and that they had become specialized in their fields. In what concerns clerks employed at judicial institutions, these for their turn can be claimed to have been familiar with judicial correspondence and record keeping and the valid judicial norms of these institutions. As for the clerks serving in the military council, one can say that these possessed experience in military organization and correspondence. Seen from this vantage point one can easily conclude that clerks not only served at the Central Council, but also at the central councils of judicial, financial, religious and military institutions and even throughout the provincial organizations of these councils, that they kept records of the transactions of the institutions they found themselves at, that they arranged these, preserved these and developed ways and procedures for record utilization.

Oral orders of the Karakhanid ruler or, if needed, commands and royal decree (*fermans*) were called “*yarlığ*”. It is also known that these were sealed with the ruler's “*tamga*”. Yusuf Khas Hajib specifies that the ruler's letter sent to the ascetic Odgurmış had first been stamped and afterwards been rolled up and tied (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 3271). This tells us that distribution of records occurred by the ruler's commands, with royal decree (*fermans*) and letters being rolled up and

bound up into “bundles” (Genç, 2002, p. 174). It is also specified within the work that when the ruler wanted to write a letter he would ask for an inkpot (*devat*), paper and a pen (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 3187, 3896). To these a “*divit*”³ can also be added (Genç, 2002, p. 174). This shows us for one thing that with relation to some topics the ruler himself wrote documents straight away, and it also gives us a precise idea about the writing material in use at that period. On the other hand, it should not be understood from that that the ruler always drew up documents himself or that he documented all state affairs himself. However legitimate it may be to conclude herefrom that the ruler would from time to time have drawn up some records himself, it must also be said that a fair part of state affairs was processed by clerks employed at the councils for this very purpose, and that these bureau transactions were conducted in the care of these clerks possessing different specializations.

As for the Kara-Khanid Khanate's interior and foreign correspondence: according to the information provided by Mahmud al-Kashgari (Kaşgarlı Mahmud), clerks drawing up the correspondences between the khans (*merâsil*) in Turkish script (Uyghur alphabet) were called “*ılmğa*” (Genç, 2002, p. 174). Yusuf Khass Hajib for his part renders the hierarchical structure in the office that handled the Karakhanid state correspondence and the designations of the officials working there as follows (starting from the low ranks and proceeding upwards): *tamgaçı* (keeper of the seal) (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 4046), *bitigçi* (clerk) (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 4048)⁴ and *ılmğa* (Yusuf Has

³ Translator's note: historical pen-case with inkwell.

⁴ Among the Karakhanids officials working under the command of the treasurer were also called “*bitigçi*”. (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2780; Can, Karabınar and Küçüker, 2012, pp. 84-85).

Hâcib, 1985, c. 4065). It is furthermore mentioned that the clerk in charge of very important state correspondences was also called “*bitigçi ılmga*”. Even if here the titles “*bitigçi*”, “*ılmga*” and “*bitigçi ılmga*” may seem interchangeable, it can be argued on the other side that “*bitigçi ılmga*” was an official occupied with very important tasks and presiding the office in question (Genç, 2002, p. 175). As a matter of fact, in our days it is also the heads of offices who possess more knowledge about office work than the other officials subordinate to them and who have to see to and assume responsibility for drawing up some state transactions that the other officials under their command will not see and write. As a matter of course, this linkage show us that, with the position occupied by the “*bitigçi ılmga*” (*silsile-i merâtib*), it is even more probable that he is also head of office (Genç, 2002, p. 175). On the other hand the “*bitigçi ılmga*” is also the ruler's “confidant / *mahrem-i esrâr*”, that is, his confidant, his privy secretary. The following words of Yusuf Khass Hajib confirm this in the first case: “Some become clerks (*ılmga*) that the ruler entrusts secrets with” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 4065) and “if you yourself become *bitigçi ılmga*, preserve well the secret of your soul, do not let a word escape from your lips.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 4146). One can thus say that the office correspondences under the presidency of the “*bitigçi ılmga*” were written out by various “*bitigçi*”, and that the *fermans* after having taken their final shape had the ruler's seal attached to them by the “*tamgacı*”. It is nevertheless necessary to state that these circumstances apply to the central state organization. On the other hand there is another expression, that of “*debîr*”, which has been used in parallel with this title (*bitigçi*) and that is generally used as equivalent of clerk (Genç, 2002, p. 176).

Yusuf Khass Hajib mentions that for a good state administration, clerks as good as possible are needed for documentation. According to him, a country is taken by the sword but administrated by the pen. The sword conquers the country and wins the people, the pen organizes the country and assembles riches. If blood drops from the sword then the country will feel resentment, if ink drops from the pen then gold will arrive (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2702, 2711-2715).

The author also stresses that a qualified clerk has to know how to keep a secret. On the other hand the clerk has to be in command of calligraphy (*hat*) and possess eloquence (*belâgat*). It is very important then for state administration to choose someone as “*bitigçi ılımga*” whose writing is good (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2733-2736).

Furthermore, clerks were also participating in the conduct of the treasury's affairs. At the head of this institution presided a titleholder who was called “*ağıcı*”. Under the command of the “*ağıcı*” there were also accountants (*bitigçi=kâtip*) who were responsible for keeping account of the treasury's revenue and expenditures (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2774). Also to be found in this office was a tax collector called “*ımgâ*” who carried out the task of tax collection (Genç, 2002, p. 178). The clerks (throughout the work the members of this profession are now and then also referred to in a sense in parallel with the profession of accountant working under the command of the treasurer (*agıcı*)⁵) employed at the treasury have to note down revenue and expenditures (“*kiriş, çıkış*”) by the very day and date, they must not give cause for any oblivion or confusion in the accounts (Genç, 2002, p. 179).

⁵ Used during this period as equivalent of accountant and clerk (see: Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2494, 2773- 2774, 2780; Can and others, 2012, pp. 74-77).

4. The Importance of Record Keeping in State Affairs

4.1. About the Importance of Knowledge

Yusuf Khass Hajib is aware that knowledge and the assignment of knowledgeable statesmen to service are important for state administration. He relates this condition by way of the couplet “If the ignorant finds a place at the seat of honor, the seat of honor can be considered as threshold and the threshold as seat of honor” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 262). He also says in a comparable fashion that the supervisors have to be intelligent and that those who are to work in state affairs have to be knowledgeable in order to be successful at their work. “In order to be able to choose people well one has to be intelligent and in order to succeed at work one also has to be knowledgeable.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 327). On the other hand he also affirms that not all work can be done by one person alone by stating: “I cannot conduct all the country's affairs by myself, there has to be someone next to me who can deal with those tasks.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 422). He also points out that with regard to state affairs, the ruler has to appoint to office someone who is knowledgeable, intelligent and dexterous by saying “I now need a man who is distinguished, intelligent, knowledgeable and proficient.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 423). He also stresses the importance of intelligence, knowledge and an accurate style of work for maintaining a country by saying “He who takes a country has done so by using a sword, he who holds on to a country has done so by using a pen” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2425), “It is possible to take instant possession of a country by the sword, but if there is no pen, then man cannot hold on to it.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2426), “Any country can be taken by sword and force, but this domination cannot be carried

on by violence and revenge for many years.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2427), “Whichever city and shire are administrated by the pen, everyone there will find his want and his share.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2428), “If man is intelligent, he will never be needy in material goods, if he is knowledgeable, he will never stumble in his work.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2447), “In order to see to the affairs of the lords, a knowledgeable person is needed, a person without knowledge is good for nothing.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 449), “With knowledge man grows and reaches fame, he surpasses everyone and succeeds at any job.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2451), “He has to be clever and know the law well, those things that embellish the world are always the products of intelligence.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2474).

4.2. The Sharing of Authority

Yusuf Khass Hajib realizes that all public tasks cannot be conducted by one person alone, and that in order to conduct these affairs, knowledgeable, experienced and expert representants of the professions are needed. He clarified these viewpoints by his statements: “I cannot conduct all the country's affairs by myself, there has to be someone next to me who can deal with those tasks.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 422), “I now need a man who is distinguished, intelligent, knowledgeable and proficient.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 423), “He has to be someone loyal to me by heart, of reliable, upright and sincere nature, genuine and knowledgeable with regard to his work.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 424), “He has to assist me in the matter of pursuing the country's interior and foreign affairs.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 425) and “Intelligent, knowledgeable and wise administrators are needed for one's help and support.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 426).

4.3. Holding Employees Accountable and Investigating Them

Public employees can naturally make mistakes during their work. This mistake can be deliberate with the purpose of obtaining material gains or in order to show someone a favor, or it can be inadvertent as a consequence of some matter escaping attention. Whatever the reason is, the public employee must not be punished immediately for such mistakes. First of all, the reasons for the mistake must be examined and he must be punished in accordance with that or it must be pointed out to him that the mistake should not be repeated. In order not to break the motivation of the employee he has to be encouraged to atonement and to putting forward a more careful style of work from thereon. Hajib expressed his views in this regard with the following statements: “If the servant is wrong, one has to summon him and ask him why he has been wrong.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 641) and “If there is a sin, it has to be punished, if there is not, one has to placate him with kindness.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 642).

4.4. The Clerk's Properties

As specified above, the officials for keeping records of state transactions have to be reliable, religious, of respectable descent, be noble and possess modesty and kindness, they must not be inclined to infractions of rules, they have to be honest, furthermore, in order to be able to fulfill their professional responsibilities, they also have to have a sufficient background, and Yusuf Khas Hâcib, who emphasizes these, thus recounting the qualities of the clerk, has accorded these detailed treatment in his statements. The chamberlain (*hâcib*) according to him: “The great chamberlain (“*Ulu hâcib*”) must be very trustworthy, sincere,

and, together with this candidness, also a good and pious man.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2436), “In order for him to be of benefit to the people and, together with that, in order for the people to see the sun and moon rise above their heads, his descent and family have to be respectable and his nature has to be kind.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2437), “His eyes have to be satiated, he has to possess modesty and be polite, he has to be intelligent and in command of thousand different kinds of knowledge.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2441), “The man whose eyes are satiated will not accept bribery on his duty, if the chamberlain takes bribes, the lord will be made ridiculous.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2442), “He has to be alert and his knowledge broad, his manners and conduct must be correct, his word and his soul must be one.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2481), “All the virtues must be his and a master of the pen must be found; all kind of work has to be conducted with knowledge about it.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2482), “To implement law, order and customs is a delicate matter, the great chamberlain, by organizing this, opens the way and the doors.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2490).

4.5. The Roles of the Clerk in the Creation of Records

Yusuf Khass Hajib has expressed the following points of view regarding the existence of clerks running the state's system of correspondence and their roles in the creation of records: “However much the lords keep their words secret – let them keep these secret, but they will still have to reveal them to those two individuals.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2678), “One of them is the clerk, the other the vizier, he will be required to hand over his secret to these two figures.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2679), “It is necessary to reveal the secret to these two

persons and he has to pander to their whims.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2680), “All the secrets will be found with these two individuals, if they do not keep them, they will have sabotaged their own work.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2681), “The clerk has to be knowledgeable and intelligent, he has to possess a fine handwriting and have an outstanding eloquence.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2693), “If the beauty of handwriting is combined with eloquence, the written word will have found its perfect expression.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2695), “The individuals of use to the lords consist in these three types of person, o ruler.” “One is a knowledgeable, intelligent and wise individual – one is the clerk who is entrusted with secrets [...]” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2703-2704), “The clerk's eye must be satiated and he must not be greedy, he has to be truthful, devoted and his soul has to be rich.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2721), “The man whose eye is satiated will not feel a desire towards material goods, such a person cannot be deceived by material goods.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2722), “If a clerk is greedy, he will use his knowledge for the worse, he will write out of avarice and distort the writing.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2725), “If the clerk drinks alcohol, he will drift away from knowledge, by drifting away from knowledge he will get confused in his writing.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2730), “The clerk has to stand at the door from morning to evening, he has to hold himself in readiness for when he is needed.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2731), “Choose those two individuals from among the men and give them those two occupations.” “One is the clerk knowing how to write and the other the envoy knowing how to speak.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2732-2733), “He needs to be an expert accountant and he needs to know all types of records; in order to keep

the books well, one has to record with care.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2773), “Listen to what a devoted person says; a servant has to keep sound the account of his work.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2777).

4.6. Keeping Transactions in Order

Yusuf Khass Hajib in his recommendations also says the following about executing public services on time and in their proper place, and in fact about keeping separate accounts according to work items: “He did all tasks in a clear way and with everything in its place; he recorded each one’s account separately.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 1722). Regarding the issue of not letting state affairs fall into neglect, he expressed the following: “If the state neglects its affairs and does not take care of them in time, even if you afterwards keep track of them like an eagle, you will never again be able to catch up with them.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2094). He expressed the prospect of carrying out state affairs by keeping accounts like this: “The vizier’s work revolves around accounting, if he does not know how to calculate, the servant’s work will stay behind.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2219).

4.7. The Preservation of Records and the Permanence of Knowledge

Yusuf Khass Hajib stresses the permanence of writing and its safekeeping by explaining: “Man will write down what he knows by means of writing, if he writes, he will know what he has done.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2223). With his statements “If the wise had not left behind the books they wrote, how could one find a way and the means for calculating.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2226), “Listen to whatever the clerk says; the method of the written word is a beautiful method.”

(Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2696), “All kind of good words can be found in books, the written word is not forgotten, it stays.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2697), “If the authors had not written books, how could we have obtained that wisdom and knowledge.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2698), “ If there had not been writing among the humans, who would believe the spoken word.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2700), “Man always sends news from one place to another, if there was no writing, how could he express his thoughts.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2701), “Writing is a very essential thing, the lords will organize state affairs by writing.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2702), “It is writing which is organizing all state affairs, the intelligent man governs the state income by writing.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2707), “The accountant has to ascertain income and expenditures by writing; all kinds of proceedings have to be recorded.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2774), “If the year, month and day are written down, the date will become certain and the numbers will be known in a clear and distinct way.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2775), “If a word is written, it stays, if it is omitted, it goes, the oblivious clerk will be at great pains when called to account.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2779), “The treasurer has to know all those different methods of recording and accordingly organize his work with reliability.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2780), “Whichever servant acts careless in his accounts will moan and knock his head against the ground.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2781), “The treasurer's arithmetics have to be very good; he has to accustom his mind and soul thoroughly to bookkeeping.” (Yusuf Has Hâcib, 1985, c. 2782), he also stresses the role of writing with regard to the permanence of knowledge, the

provision of reliability, the assurance of the accountability of public employees and the subsequent production of new knowledge.

5. Conclusion

In his work *Kutadgu Bilig* Yusuf Khas Hajib, being a Karakhanid bureaucrat, offers rather detailed knowledge about a range of topics concerning state affairs and, alongside with this, on what is needed for conduction public transactions and which standards these must conform to. Within these informations, he concentrates on important topics like the qualifications needed for those individuals who are to be assigned to carrying out state transactions, how they will be nominated, that they need to be knowledgeable, that they need to exercise diligence in their work and that they need to record transactions on time and neatly separated according to the principle of day, month and year. In this respect, Yusuf Khas Hajib especially dwelt on two main topics, on Karakhanid state organization and methods of recording bureaucratic transactions together with the importance of record keeping in state transactions. In this context Khas Hajib provided information about offices, titles and responsibilities, the system of advancement in service based on merit, qualifications and trial and topics like correspondence, financial affairs and clerks. As to what regards the importance of record keeping in state transactions, he offered information about the importance of knowledge, the sharing of authority by the administrators, holding officials accountable, the properties of the chamberlains (*hâcib*) and their roles in the creation of records, about keeping public transactions in order and the preservation of records. However, in spite

of being a clerk and bureaucrat himself, and in spite of it being certain that he was familiar with the knowledge required for that title and office, Yusuf Khas Hajib in his work does not explicitly touch upon the topics of how the public records thus created should be arranged, preserved and stored in the archives. The reason for the author not offering information on these topics is probably hidden within the writing purpose of the work. That is, in the work with its primary aim of making recommendations for administrators and thus developing the art of administration, the topic of record and archival practices as part of public practices, that is, the arrangement, preservation and storage of the records thus produced, may have been considered a technical detail; it may have been for this reason that the topic was expounded in the work in a rather superficial way or that elucidation was even considered unnecessary. Yet, in a work whose writing purpose was to counsel state employees and administrators and to guide them, the fact of not allowing for – at least some – space for record and archival practices may be considered a shortcoming with regard to the comprehensiveness of the work.

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