

## SELJUQ GOVERNMENT

### Overview

According to the 11<sup>th</sup> century work *Diwan Lughat al-Turk* (ديوان لغات الترك, *Compendium of the Language of the Turks*) by Mahmud Kashgari, the Seljuqs were Oghuz Turks from the Qiniq (قنق) tribe. Little can be said with certainty about their early history; some accounts claim that the father of the Seljuqs' eponymous ancestor, Duqaq (also Dokak, Tukuk) was the *su bashi* (military commander) of the Oghuz *yabghu*. Other sources put Duqaq and his son Seljuq in the service of the Khazars. Either way, it appears that Seljuq was forced to flee his master around 985 and settled in the city of Jand, south of the Oghuz capital Yenikent, on the Syr Darya. It was here that Seljuq converted to Islam, and soon Seljuq and his tribesmen were involved in the struggles among the Samanids, Qarakhanids and Ghaznavids for control of Transoxiana.

In 1025 Seljuq's son Arslan Israil was captured by the Ghaznavids and sent into captivity in India as part of a struggle between the Ghaznavids and Qarakhanids. His tribesmen were sent into Khorasan and soon took up raiding to survive the difficult conditions there. These raids combined with the unsettled conditions created by previous Oghuz migrations into the region led to a confrontation with the Ghaznavids in 1040 at Dandanaqan outside of Merv. The Ghaznavids were routed and left all of Khorasan open to the Seljuqs.

The Seljuqs were quick to take advantage of their victory, assigning the conquest of different regions to members of the Seljuq clan. By 1047 the Seljuqs were in control of all lands along the Amu Darya from Tirmiz to Bukhara, and in late 1055 the Seljuq sultan Tughril entered Baghdad. In 1059 the Seljuqs and Ghaznavids agreed to set the border between their territories at the Hindu Kush Mountains.

Following Tughril's death in 1063 Alp Arslan became sultan and continued to expand the Seljuq state. In 1064 he campaigned in the Caucasus, then moved south and took the cities of Kars and Ani. Although there had been sporadic Seljuq raids into Byzantine territory since the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, this was the first conquest of any territory that had recently been under Byzantine rule. In 1071 at the Battle of Malazgirt (Manzikert) Alp Arslan defeated a larger Byzantine army led by the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes, who was taken captive. Although Alp Arslan had had no intentions to conquer Byzantine Anatolia, his victory at Malazgirt opened the way for further Seljuq conquests and Turkmen settlement in Anatolia. Nonetheless, even as Seljuqs and Turkmen expanded their territories in Anatolia at the expense of the Byzantines, the region was of limited interest to the Seljuq rulers in the years immediately after the Battle of Malazgirt.

The history of the Seljuqs in Anatolia distinct from the history of the Great Seljuqs has its origins in disputes within the ruling Seljuq clan, specifically between the descendants of two of Seljuq's sons, Arslan Israil and Mikail. Supreme over the Seljuq clan and its rapidly expanding territory had remained in the hands of Mikail's descendants: Tughril, his brother Chaghri; Chaghri's son Alp Arslan; and then Alp Arslan's son Malik Shah. Arslan Israil and his line had been less fortunate; Arslan Israil had been sent into captivity in India by the Ghaznavids around 1025, and his son Qutlumush was killed in a revolt against Alp Arslan in 1063. It is uncertain what had happened to Qutlumush's sons in this period, but some sources claim that they had been imprisoned by Alp Arslan somewhere along the Euphrates. After Alp Arslan's death they reappear, but whether they were released by Malik Shah as a goodwill gesture, escaped from captivity, or simply came out of hiding is unknown as is the reason for two of the sons, Sulayman and Mansur, to move into Anatolia, or Rum, "the land of the Romans", as they called it. It is possible that Sulayman and Mansur had been sent by Malik Shah to expand the Seljuq conquests in Anatolia; it is equally possible that they simply saw an opportunity for themselves and their Türkmen followers to conquer lands for themselves in the confusion following the Battle of Malazgirt.

The early history of the Seljuqs in Anatolia is not well documented in Muslim sources; as a result most of the information about the events and developments in this period comes from Byzantine sources. What these sources depict is a complex picture of rapid Seljuq and Türkmen conquests of more and

more Byzantine territory on one hand, as well as increasing Seljuq and Türkmen involvement in internal Byzantine conflicts by serving as mercenaries in Byzantine armies on the other. As Seljuq and Türkmen forces became an increasingly important element in these inter-Byzantine disputes, they were able to further their own interests by supporting whoever offered the most for their support for as long as it was to their advantage. This continuous strife among the Byzantines created a power vacuum in Anatolia, an important factor in the Seljuqs' rapid advance across Anatolia in the first years after Alp Arslan's victory at Malazgirt.

In 1075 Sulayman took the city of İznik (Nikaia) and it became his base of operations for the next few years. At this point Sulayman used the title *amir* (امير), "commander, governor", an indication that he must have, in principle at least, still recognized the authority of Malik Shah, the *sultan*. However, it seems that by 1078 Malik Shah wanted to reign in his relatives in Anatolia by sending a military force against them and ordering the Türkmen raiding in Anatolia to join his forces. Although Mansur appears to have been killed in this fighting, Sulayman survived and was able to maintain his hold on his lands. In 1082 Sulayman made a treaty with the new Byzantine emperor, Alexios I Komnenos, that set the border between their territories and was the first recognition of a Seljuq state in Anatolia.

Following this treaty with Alexios I, Sulayman was free to concentrate on expanding his control of Tarsus and the surrounding regions. In late 1084 Sulayman sent his Türkmen to besiege Malatya while he moved against Antioch (Antakya), which he conquered in January 1085. It also appears that it was at this point that Sulayman decided to rule his territories in Anatolia independent of the Great Seljuqs. According to Byzantine sources, prior to his departure for Antioch in 1084 Sulayman began to use the title *sultan* (سلطان), a clear challenge to Malik Shah's claims to be the supreme Seljuq ruler. Although Sulayman was killed near Aleppo in 1086 fighting against Malik Shah's forces and his sons Qilich Arslan I and Qulan Arslan were both captured and imprisoned, the state he established in Anatolia survived.

After Malik Shah's death in 1092 the Great Seljuqs would become occupied with bitter internal rivalries that caused them to forget about Anatolia. Qilich Arslan I (r. 1092-1107) was released or escaped from his captivity, returned to Anatolia, and began to gather his father's supporters around him. Like his father, Qilich Arslan I would make a treaty with Alexios I to regulate the relations between their states, and would have troubles with other Türks, in this case, the newly established Danishmend beylik to their east. However, Qilich Arslan I's attention would be turned to the west and a new, unexpected threat.

In 1095 Qilich Arslan I left his wife and treasury in his capital, İznik, believing that it was secure due to his treaty with Alexios I Komnenos, and set off to conduct campaigns against the Danishmends in the central Toros region where their territories met. The fighting continued into 1096 and kept Qilich Arslan I in the field and away from his capital. In September 1096 the Seljuqs encountered the first wave of westerners from the First Crusade. These were not the knights and foot soldiers who made up the crusader armies, but peasants from the "People's Crusade", followers of a monk, Peter the Hermit, who preached that God would open the road to Jerusalem to the faithful. Ignoring the emperor Alexios' advice to wait outside of Constantinople and not cross over into Anatolia until after the real crusader armies had arrived, Peter led his followers into Anatolia. Shortly after entering Seljuq territory the majority of the People's Crusade were either killed or taken captive; the small number of those who escaped from the Seljuq forces (including Peter the Hermit) returned to Constantinople to await the crusader armies. The fact that Qilich Arslan I was not summoned back to İznik following this incident may indicate that the Seljuqs' first encounter with westerners who were not soldiers may have given them a false sense of security, causing them to underestimate the crusaders' real military capabilities.

In the summer of 1097 the crusader armies crossed into Anatolia, surrounded the Seljuq capital at İznik, and besieged it. Although Qilich Arslan I returned rapidly from Malatya, the combined Byzantine and crusader forces prevented him from relieving İznik, and it was eventually taken. After the capture of İznik the Seljuqs attempted to drive back the crusaders at Dorylaeum, near modern Eskişehir, but were defeated. After this defeat the Seljuqs did not attempt to directly engage the crusader army, but resorted to scorched earth and hit-and-run tactics to harass the crusaders' passage across Anatolia. The crusader army eventually left Seljuq territory, but the Seljuqs' defeats at their hands allowed the Byzantines to retake some territory in northwestern and western Anatolia, evacuate the Christian population from territories that they could not hold, and create a no-man's-land between them and the Seljuqs. On the Seljuq side, Qilich Arslan I decided to move his capital to Konya, and he had gained experience in fighting western armies that would be put to good use. In 1101 Qilich Arslan I destroyed two crusader armies in central Anatolia with minimal losses to his own army.

In the same year Qilich Arslan I and Alexios I Komnenos made a new peace treaty, and Qilich Arslan again turned his attention to the east. In 1103 he went to war against the Danishmends and defeated them. Two years later he took the city of Malatya from the Danishmends, bringing their expansion to a halt. As Qilich Arslan I continued east, he was able to make a number of small Turkic states that had been vassals of the Great Seljuqs, switch allegiance to the Seljuqs of Rum. The result was that the Sultanate of Rum now bordered on the lands of the Great Seljuqs, and conflict between the two was inevitable.

In 1106 the Great Seljuqs took the city of Mosul and replaced the ruler who was loyal to Qilich Arslan I. The following year Qilich Arslan I retook Mosul, but shortly afterwards the Great Seljuqs brought an army to confront Qilich Arslan I. Outnumbered and badly affected by the summer heat in Iraq, Qilich Arslan I's army was defeated and he drowned in the Khabur River.

Qilij Arslān's death in 1107 marks the end of the first phase of the history of the Seljūqs of Rūm. Alp Arslān's victory at Malazgirt in 1071 had opened Anatolia to further conquest and settlement by the Seljūqs and their Türkmen followers. Sulaymān-Shāh had created a state independent of the Great Seljūqs and declared himself *sultan*; Qilij Arslān managed to defend and hold the state despite the First Crusade, Byzantine expansion in western Anatolia, and the Danishmends. In addition, after Qilij Arslān's death there would be no further major waves of Türkmen migration into Anatolia until just before the Mongol conquests in the 13th century.

Following Qilich Arslan I's death the issue of succession was not settled until 1109 when his son Shahanshah (also known as Malik Shah, r. 1109-1116), who had been captured by the Great Seljuqs in the same battle where his father died, was released to rule as Sultan in Konya. Shortly afterwards he began attacking and raiding the Byzantines at various points in western Anatolia. In 1116 Shahanshah was defeated by Alexios I Komnenos, and while making terms with the Emperor Shahanshah's brother Masud begins a revolt that results in Shahanshah's death.

The new ruler, Masud I (r. 1116-1156), in the first part of his reign was forced by circumstances to rely on both the Byzantines and the Danishmends, even marrying the daughter of the Danishmend ruler Gümüshtigin. During a revolt led by his brother in 1124 Masud I took refuge with the Byzantines, and was only able to return to power with help from the Byzantines and his father-in-law. However, after Gümüshtigin's death in 1134 Masud I began to take territory from the Danishmend, beginning the process of Danishmend decline. Later in his reign, in 1147-1148 Masud would confront the armies of the Second Crusade, defeating them at Dorylaeum in the autumn of 1147 and inflicting heavy losses on French forces near Denizli in early 1148.

Following Masud I's death in 1156, his son Qilich Arslan II (r. 1156-1186, d. 1192) took the throne amid internal strife and conflict with the Danishmends, conditions that convinced the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos that he could take a more aggressive approach in his dealings with the Seljuqs. In 1161 Qilich Arslan II's forces were defeated by the Byzantines, and to formalize the agreement made afterwards, the Sultan went to Constantinople in 1162 where he and his entourage were feted for 80 days. Despite this agreement in the following years relations between the two sides deteriorated to the point that Manuel planned a two-pronged attack against the Seljuqs in September of 1176. The first attack against Niksar ended in defeat, but the second, larger attack led by Manuel himself against Konya resulted in the hard-fought Battle of Myriokephalon. The Byzantine army was forced to retreat, and this battle marked the last Byzantine offensive to attempt the reconquest of the interior of Anatolia.

Following his victory at Myriokephalon, Qilich Arslan II concentrated on the east, taking Malatya in 1177-78, effectively putting an end to the Danishmends. In 1188, for reasons that are still not fully understood, Qilich Arslan II divided the Seljuq state among his nine surviving sons, one brother and one nephew, with the capital, Konya, remaining in Qilich Arslan II's control.

Although it was not clear who Qilich Arslan II had intended to be his official heir, his son Kay Khusraw I (r. 1192-1196, 1205-1211) took the throne after his father's death until he was forced to take refuge in Constantinople following a power struggle with his brother Rukn al-Din II (r. 1196-1204). When Rukn al-Din II died unexpectedly in 1204, the Türkmen and other leading elements of Seljuq society called on Kay Khusraw I to take the throne again rather than put Rukn al-Din II's young son Qilich Arslan III in power.

Kay Khusraw I's return to power came at a moment when events would turn dramatically in favor of the Seljuqs. With the sack and occupation of Constantinople by the Venetians and the armies of the Fourth Crusade, and the subsequent establishment of the Latin Empire and Greek successor states (the Empire of Nicaea and the Empire of Trebizond in particular), the Seljuqs would be able to expand the territories dramatically and bring the Sultanate of Rum to its peak. The Empire of Nicaea, located between the Latin Empire the territories of the Seljuqs, was focused on regaining Byzantine territories lost to the Latins, and very early in its existence made a peace treaty with the Seljuqs. With his western borders secure, in 1207 Kay Khusraw I was able to take the city of Antalya, giving the Seljuqs access to the Mediterranean for the first time. The Seljuqs would now be able to exert greater influence over events in Cyprus, conduct direct trade with Egypt, and even make commercial agreements with Venice.

Following Kay Khusraw I's death in 1211, his son Kay Kavus I (r. 1211-1220) became Sultan. He was able to make commercial agreements with the Franks in Cyprus in 1213 and 1216. Another important development in his reign was the capture of Sinop in 1214, giving the Seljuqs access to Black Sea. In the process of taking Sinop, at the western edge of the Empire of Trebizond, the Seljuqs captured the ruler of the empire, Alexios Komnenos, who became a Seljuq vassal. When he died in 1220, Kay Kavus I left the Sultanate of Rum larger and more influential than he had found it at the start of his reign.

Kay Kavus I was followed by his son Kay Qubad I (r. 1220-1237), a well educated and talented man who is generally regarded as the greatest ruler of the Sultanate of Rum and its last fully independent ruler. During his reign the Sultanate of Rum would attain not only its greatest territorial extent, but also its greatest political and commercial influence. In 1221 he conquered the city of Kalonoros on the Mediterranean coast, and renames it Alaiye (today Alanya). The city would soon become a major Seljuq base and the rulers' winter residence. In 1225 Kay Qubad I took the city of Sudak in the Crimea, and established a Seljuq protectorate that may have continued as long as 1239. Five years later Kay Qubad I defended his territories against the incursions of the Khwarazm Shah, successfully defeating their larger army at Yassichemen. However, as a portent of what was on the horizon, shortly after his victory over the Khwarazm Shah, Kay Qubad I received news of the first Mongol raids in his territories. This news prompted him to campaign in Georgia, hoping to make it a buffer between himself and the Mongols. After conquering a number of Georgian towns, the Georgian queen negotiated a treaty with Kay Qubad I.

Kay Qubad I also successfully pushed back the Ayyubids from his lands in 1233, and followed this by taking more cities in northern Syria in 1234. However, two Mongol ambassadors arrived in 1236 to demand the establishment of regular tribute payments. Internal problems within the Mongol state meant that the demand was temporarily forgotten and Kay Qubad I died in 1237 without responding to the Mongol demand.

Kay Qubad I's successor was his son Kay Khusraw II (r. 1237-1246). His relatively short reign was marked by internal conflict, religious revolt and a showdown with the Mongols. The religious revolt, known as the Baba'i Revolt, was the result of the preaching of a local dervish called Baba Ishaq, who began to attract numerous followers among the recently arrived Türkmén who had fled the Mongols. Baba Ishaq's followers began attempting to take control of cities and lands in the Sultanate of Rum in 1240, and the Seljuqs would not completely put down the uprising until 1243. Shortly after the revolt had been put down, Kay Khusraw II received news that the Mongol army was approaching. The Seljuq and Mongol armies clashed at Kösedag in June 1243, with the Mongols the clear victors. Following their victory the Mongols occupied Sivas, sacked Kayseri, and then stopped their advance into Anatolia.

After their defeat at the hands of the Mongols at Kösedag, the Sultanate of Rum would become a Mongol vassal. As time passed the degree of Mongol interference in internal Seljuq affairs increased, eventually resulting in an attempt to break free of the Mongols with help from the Mamluks in Egypt in 1277. This uprising failed and resulted in the Mongols not only reasserting their authority in Rum, but also attempting to drive rebellious Türkmén groups out of Seljuq territory between 1277-1279. The Seljuq state's authority had been reestablished with the help of Mongol arms, but Mongol interference in the day-to-day decisions of the state increased dramatically. As Mongol authority within the Seljuq state became more visible, it was Mongol officials, not members of the Seljuq dynasty that came to be seen as the real holders of power, further weakening the Seljuqs' control over their territories and their ability to collect taxes. Towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the decline of the Mongol Ilkhanid state which controlled Rum added to the instability of the Sultanate. The last Seljuq Sultan of Rum, Masud II (r. 1284-1296, 1303-1306?) disappears from the historical record in 1306, with neither his death nor the appointment of a successor being mentioned in any contemporary source.

## Government Structure - The Seljuqs

Government under the Great Seljuqs combined elements derived from three traditions – Islamic, Iranian and Turkic. As Muslim rulers the Seljuqs were expected to defend both Muslim territories and the Muslim community, to provide stability, and to rule according to the precepts of the *shari'a*. To emphasize their role as guardians of Sunni Islam early Seljuq sultans would receive a document from the Abbasi caliph in Baghdad that recognized and legitimized their position. Older Iranian political influence could be seen in the close relationship between the state and religion, the identification of social order with the state, and an absolute ruler who was the center of the political system. The final influence, Turkic tribal custom, was unwritten but its influence was visible in many aspects of the Seljuq state. The Seljuqs had risen to power with the support of other Oghuz tribes, and had maintained dominance over these tribes through a combination of military power and consultation. Although the majority of the Oghuz tribes acknowledged the authority of the Seljuq sultan, the Seljuqs were never able to bring the Oghuz under full control. Another aspect of Seljuq rule that reflects Turkic custom was the attitude that leadership over the Oghuz and the conquered territories was not the prerogative of an individual, but the Seljuq family as a whole. Initially, the senior ruler in the Seljuq clan was the Sultan, while other members of the family who administered parts of the Seljuq state used the title *malik* (“king”). However, as the Seljuqs evolved from being tribal leaders to being rulers of a territorial empire the character of the Seljuq government also changed. Although the Oghuz (generally referred to as Türkmén after their conversion to Islam) remained an important part of the Seljuqs’ powerbase, the Seljuqs began to create a standing army of freedmen and slaves that would become their primary military force. In addition, there was a shift in the status of the sultan from being the primary ruler among a number of *maliks* who ruled by consultation and consensus to being an absolute monarch in the Persian tradition.

The Seljuq government was eventually organized with the sultan at the top, an absolute ruler whose power was (theoretically) limited only by the *shari'a*, Islamic law which all Muslims were subject to. Most of the various functions of the government were carried out by officials working in two bodies, the *dargah* (درگاه), court, and the *divan* (دیوان). The *dargah* was where ordinary subjects could bring their grievances to the sultan for redress, and was made up primarily of Turks, giving the *dargah* a decidedly military character. The *divan* was bureaucratic in nature, and most of its members were not Turks, but by other, generally indigenous peoples with long administrative experience.

The *dargah* was composed of officials whose duties were generally related to serving the sultan and handling court ceremonial. Seljuq sultans were often on the move, either conducting military campaigns or inspecting their territories, and the *dargah* travelled with the sultan wherever he went. Most of the members of the Seljuq *dargah* came from the military, either *amirs* (امیر) or *askar* (عسکر), members of the standing army.

Originally, the chief official of the *dargah* was the *vakil-i dar* (وکیل در), a bureaucrat who acted as the intermediary between the sultan and the head of the *divan*, the vizier (وزیر), and was higher in rank than the *hajibs* (حاجب), chamberlains. Later the *vakil-i dar* was replaced by a military official, the *amir hajib* (امیر حاجب), who was responsible for both court ceremonial and maintaining military discipline. Specifically, the *amir hajib* carried the sultan’s commands to the vizier and arranged audiences with the sultan. After the *amir hajib*, the two most important positions in the *dargah* were those of the *jandar* (جاندار), chief executioner, and the *amir haras* (امیر حرس), chief of the guard. Two other officials of the *dargah* were the *akhur salar* (خور سالار), and the *khwan salar* (خوان سالار). The *akhur salar*, master of the stable, was in charge the royal stables and care of the sultan’s horses, while the *khwan salar*, master of the table, was responsible for the operation of the royal kitchens and feeding numerous people on a daily basis.

Bureaucratic functions of the Seljuq state were handled by the central *divan*, or *divan-i a’la* (دیوان اعلی), headed by the vizier. Most viziers rose through the ranks of the *divan*, sometimes entering the *divan-i a’la* after service in the *divan* of provincial *amirs* or Seljuq family members. The vizier was a bureaucrat who was not only in charge of the *divan-i a’la*, but also conducted the sultan’s relations with both the caliphate and with foreign rulers. In addition, he was expected to accompany the sultan on his military expeditions. Viziers often acquired great wealth, but also were required to spend large sums to maintain their own courts and private forces, as well as to maintain the position against rivals to keep the sultan’s favor. Although the post of vizier brought its holder great power, wealth and influence, it was extremely insecure. A vizier could be dismissed at any time, and many viziers suffered confiscation of property, imprisonment or even death at the hands of the sultan they served.

The *divan-i a'la* was, in turn, divided into four main branches: the *divan al-insha wa'l tughra* (ديوان الانشاء), also known as the *divan-i rasa'il* (ديوان رسائل) or the *divan-i insha* (ديوان انشاء); the *divan al-zamam wa'l istifa* (ديوان الزمام والاستيفاء), or *divan-i istifa-yi mamalik* (ديوان استيفاء ممالك); the *divan-i ishraf-i mamalik* (ديوان اشرف ممالك); and the *divan-i 'ard* (ديوان عرض).

The first division, the *divan al-insha wa'l tughra*, supervised all incoming and outgoing official correspondence, and all certificates of appointment and was headed by an official with the title *tughra'i* (طغرائي). The *tughra'i* was expected not only to be a skilled calligrapher, but also skilled in the literary styles of different types of official correspondence. This position was clearly of considerable importance, since the *tughra'i* acted as deputy-vizier in his absence and the holder was frequently promoted to the post of vizier.

The responsibilities of both the *divan-i istifa-yi mamalik* and the *divan-i ishraf-i mamalik* were primarily financial. Headed by the *mustaufi al-mamalik* (مستوفى الممالك), the *divan-i istifa-yi mamalik* was responsible for preparing tax assessments, tax collection, revenue accounts, and expenditures. On the other hand, the *divan-i ishraf-i mamalik* had a supervisory role, auditing financial transactions, in particular the collections and distribution of taxes, under the direction of the *mushrif-i mamalik* (مشرف ممالك). This divan's supervisory duties were carried out not only at the level of the *divan-i a'la*, but also at the local level through district or provincial *mushrif*s.

The fourth branch, the *divan-i 'ard* was concerned with military matters and was headed by the *'arid al-jaish* (عارض الجيش), muster master, also called the *sahib-i divan-i 'ard* (صاحب ديوان عرض). This *divan* maintained all military registers, record of military land grants, and all records related to the pay of the *amirs* and the standing army. The *divan-i 'ard* was also responsible for recruiting, mustering and inspecting soldiers before the army set off on an expedition.

Some influential positions in the Seljuq state were outside both the *dargah* and the *divan*. One of these was unique to the Seljuq period, the *atabeg* (اتابك). An *atabeg* was generally an *amir* who was assigned to administer the territories of an underage Seljuq *malik*, and was often married to the mother of the *malik* under his responsibility. The *atabeg* had two primary responsibilities: the first was the education of the *malik*, the second was to prevent the *malik* from revolting against the sultan. Over time numerous *atabegs* were able to use their position to become extremely powerful actors in the politics of the Seljuq empire as well as the actual administrators of provinces in place of the *malik* in their charge.

The government of the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum was similar in many aspects to that of the Great Seljuqs. Although the founder of the independent Seljuq state Rum, Sulayman I initially used the title *amir*, indicating his subordinate status to the Sultan of the Great Seljuqs, according to Byzantine sources he began to use the title *sultan* around the year 1084. Although the use of the title *sultan* shows that Sulayman and subsequent Seljuq rulers in Rum regarded themselves as sovereign rulers of an independent state, it is unclear whether this title was "official", meaning that it had been granted or legitimized by the Abbasi caliph in Baghdad, or whether Sulayman had unilaterally adopted the title. The fact that contemporary Arabic and Persian sources rarely refer to the Seljuq rulers of Rum as *sultan*, preferring instead the title *malik* ("king"), may be an indication that the title was "unofficial".

As in the administration of the Great Seljuqs, there was a division between those officials who served in the Sultan's court in political/military positions, and those who held administrative positions in the bureaucracy, the *divan*. Military/political posts were held by the military class, generally Turkish, and very rarely from any other group. However, among the Seljuqs of Rum administrative posts were initially not held by indigenous peoples. This was due to the fact that in Seljuq Rūm, unlike in most other Muslim states, the majority of the indigenous population was Christian. Although some Christians did hold official posts in Seljuq Rūm, the local people's greatest obstacle was not religion, but their ignorance of Arabic and Persian. As a result, numerous Iranian immigrants from Khorasan came to Rūm to make a career in the bureaucracy. Later, as Turks became part of the native population they began to enter into administrative and judicial careers.

Most positions in the court had Persian titles and were similar to positions in the court of the Great Seljuqs. Among these were the *amir-e jandar* (امير جاندار), the Chief of the Guard; the *amir-e silah* (امير سلاح), the Chief of Arms; and the *amir-e shekar* (امير شكار), the Chief of the Hunt. Like the Great Seljuqs, the court of the Seljuqs of Rum had an *amir-e ahkur* (امير اخور), the Chief of Horses/the Stable. However, perhaps reflecting the Anatolian Seljuqs' interaction with westerners, the *amir-e akhur* was sometimes referred to as the *kundestabl* (كندستابل), from the French *conestable* (Latin *comes stabuli*, English

*constable*). Other positions in the court of the Seljuqs of Rum were the *ustazdar* (استاذدار), Chief of the Palace; *amir-e majles* (امير مجلس), Organizer of audiences, receptions, etc.; *chashnigir* (چاشنيگير), Foodtaster; *sharabsalar* (شرابسالار), Cupbearer; *amir-e alam* (امير علم), Standard bearer; *hajib al-hujjab* (حاجب الحجاب), Head Chamberlain.

However, there were two court positions that had no parallel in the court of the Great Seljuqs, the *na'ib* and the *pervane*. The *na'ib*, or *na'ib al-sultan* (نائب السلطان), was the Sultan's deputy, but it is unclear whether the position of *na'ib* was permanent or temporary, filled only when the Sultan was absent from the capital or ill. The second position, that of *pervane* (پروانه) is known only from the Seljuqs of Rum and the Muslim Mongol states and was not an especially important post. The *pervane's* main duty was to carry the Sultan's messages, in effect, to distribute the Sultan's favors.

Contemporary sources provide much less information regarding the bureaucracy, *divan*, of the Seljuq state in Anatolia than that of the Great Seljuqs. Nevertheless, what information is available suggests that it was likely to have been organized much as the *divan* of the Great Seljuqs. For example, although the subdivisions of the *divan* in Rum are not given in contemporary sources, the existence of officials in the *divan* of the Sultanate of Rum with titles found in the Great Seljuqs' *divan* suggests that both *divans* were organized similarly.

Like the *divan* of the Great Seljuqs, the *divan* in Rum was headed by the *vezir* (وزير), generally referred to by the title *shahib* (صاحب), a post that seems to have existed since the time of Süleyman b. Kutlumuş. Before the Mongol period Seljuq *vezirs* were not very powerful, and were limited to administrative duties.

The one subdivision of the *divan* of the Seljuqs of Rum that is known is the *divan al-insha'* (ديوان الانشاء). This was the office which drafted political correspondence and official documents. It was headed by the *Tughra'i* (طغرانی), the official who put the Sultan's *tuğra* (official seal/signature) on state documents. The *divan al-insha'* normally drafted correspondence and official documents in Persian, but legal documents drafted by a *qađi* were written in Arabic, as were inscriptions on monuments, coins, and fiscal documents. Greek documents were drafted when needed to correspond with states or officials who would not know either Arabic or Persian. The most important source for the history of the Seljuqs of Rum, Ibn Bibi, mentioned officials he called *nūtar* (نوטר votapóioi, *notario*) in the Seljuq *divan*, apparently a reference to Greek clerks.

The existence of a subdivision of the *divan* similar to the Great Seljuqs' *divan-i istifa-yi mamalik*, responsible for taxes and revenues, can be inferred from the mention of an official in Rum with the title *mustawfi*. As chief accountant, the *mustawfi* (مستوفی), or *shahib al-zimam* (صاحب الزمام), checked the returns of taxes and expenses, and was chosen by the *vezir*.

Another official found in both the *divan* of the Great Seljuqs and the Seljuqs of Rum is the *mushrif*. Under the Great Seljuqs the *mushrif-i mamalik* supervised tax and other financial matters as head of the *divan-i ishraf-i mamalik*, while in Rum the *mushrif* seems to have been the supervisor of royal lands. He may have been assisted in his duties by another official called the *nazir* (ناظر). These two positions are only known from the Mongol period and may be a Mongol innovation, or an innovation of Iranians working in the Seljuq state.

A parallel in the *divan* of the Seljuqs of Rum with the fourth division of the Great Seljuqs' *divan*, the *divan-i 'ard*, concerned with military matters, is implied by the existence of the *'arid* (عارض). The *'arid* inspected the army with the Sultan at reviews and distributed army pay at these events, but this office is only known from the period before the Mongols.

Finally, the position of *atabeg* was also found in the Sultanate of Rum. As among the Great Seljuqs, an *atabeg* acted as guardian and regent for an underage ruler. However, in contrast to Great Seljuq *atabegs*, in the lands of Rum no *atabeg* was ever able to use his position as a springboard for greater personal power and influence.

## Policy - The Seljuqs

While the Great Seljuqs did not have an official government policy in the modern sense, there were certain objectives that they sought to achieve. Since the Seljuq sultans ruled predominantly Muslim lands as Muslim rulers they sought to legitimize their rule by having their position recognized by the Abbasi caliph in Baghdad. While such recognition was essentially symbolic, the sultan's allegiance to the caliph indicated that he acknowledged the shari'a as the basis of the Sunni community. In turn, the

caliph acknowledged that as a legitimate Muslim ruler the sultan would defend Muslim territories and the Muslim community, allowing Muslims to live in peace.

Unofficially, territorial expansion was clearly a goal for many Great Seljuq rulers, generally at the expense of other Muslim states. While taking the territories of some states could be more easily justified (the conquest of the Shi'a Buyids' lands in Iran and Iraq, or the later conquests of lands in Byzantine Anatolia), other conquests (such as the Sunni Ghaznavids' lands in Khorasan) were clearly intended to simply expand the Seljuqs' holdings.

The Seljuqs of Rum were faced with different challenges due to the unique conditions of their lands in Anatolia. They too saw themselves as Sunni Muslim rulers, but unlike the Great Seljuqs whose lands were already predominantly Muslim, the Seljuqs of Rum had established their state in lands only recently won from the Byzantine Empire. As a result they ruled over a population that still had a significant number of Christian Greeks and Armenians, and Islamic institutions had to be established in lands where they had never existed.

Another difference was that the Seljuqs of Rum were faced with more complex political relations, since their territories were bordered by the remaining lands of the Byzantine Empire along the coasts of the Black and Mediterranean Seas, and in western Anatolia. To the west and southwest were various Muslim Turkic states, the most important being the Danishmends.

Territorial expansion was a clear aim, and was both opportunistic as well as for specific state goals. For example, the Seljuqs of Rum sought to take the cities of Antalya on the Mediterranean coast, and Sinop on the Black Sea coast from the Byzantines in order to be able to conduct direct maritime trade with other states. Similarly, conquests of territories held by Muslim rulers in eastern Anatolia were carried out in order to expand the Seljuq state to the borders of large, important Muslim states to the east and southeast. Once this had been accomplished the Seljuqs of Rum could play a more important, direct role in the affairs of the larger Muslim world.

Although the Seljuqs' relations with the Byzantines were conditioned by both the relative power at the two states at any given time, the Seljuqs' power relative to other Muslim Turkic states in Anatolia, and the priorities of the ruling sultan, the conquest of Byzantine territory as part of a larger struggle between Christianity and Islam does not seem to have been an element of Seljuq policy. This conclusion appears to be supported by the titles used by Seljuq sultans. While Seljuq rulers employed numerous Islamic titles, they never used the Arabic title *ghazi* (غازی, "fighter for the faith"), although there are examples its use among the official titles of other contemporary Turkish rulers in Anatolia.

## Readings

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## Discussion Questions

How did the governments and policies of the Great Seljuqs and the Seljuqs of Rum differ and what were the reasons for these differences?