THE celebrated Granadine historian, Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb was also, as is well-known, a prominent man of affairs who, as wazīr, exercised considerable power at the Naṣrī court in the 8th/14th century. In the circumstances it is not surprising that a prolific and versatile author, as Lisān al-Dīn is known to have been, should have written on specifically political subjects. The fact that he did so was drawn attention to by Simonet, who remarks in one place that Lisān al-Dīn wrote learned treatises on the difficult art of government with which he sought to arrest the decadence of the state 1. Yet, in spite of the interest which such works might be supposed to have, as coming from a distinguished literary man with long experience of practical affairs, none of them seems hitherto to have been brought to light and made the object of special study.

In the second part of Maqqārī’s Naḥḥ al-Tib one of these political works is cited in extenso 2. This second part of Maqqārī, less familiar to Western readers than the first part dealing with the general history of Muslim Spain, which alone was printed by the Leiden editors of Maqqārī a century ago, contains, as is gene-

1. Francisco Javier Simonet, Descripción del Reino de Granada, Granada,.
rally known, the personal history of Lisān al-Dīn, at great length and with the citation of many contemporary documents—poems, letters, etc.—referring to him or actually written by him, among which is the work in question. It is written in the rhymed prose (ṣafī) which Lisān al-Dīn made frequent use of in his literary works. The work exists also in Arabic manuscript No. 554 of the Escorial, signalized by Mr. Mohamed Abdullah Enan 3, where but for Mr Enan’s observation it might have continued indefinitely to lurk in obscurity, since, remarkably enough, there is no mention of it in H. Derenbourg’s description of this manuscript 4. In what follows the text as found in the manuscript (fols. 34b to 47b) is referred to as E, while M signifies the printed text in Maqqari.

In M the work is introduced with the words 'And of the prose (nathr) of Lisā al-Dīn—may God Most High have mercy on him', followed by a short preamble (EM): 'And of what (that what E) proceeded from me on politics (siyāsah), and its dictation was in one night (this clause in E only), the tradition (ḥadīth) of him who was distinguished for careful consideration of narratives (E he who was distinguished etc. related, ḥaddatha), and possessed a degree of celebrity for transmitting the events of night and day, and penetrated between the calyces and the flowers, and spared (?) (talaṭṭafa li-M, talaṭṭafa min E) the bashfulness of the rose at the smile of the day'. These somewhat obscure expressions appear to refer to Lisān al-Dīn himself. The statement that the work was dictated in a single night accords with what we know of the waḥīr’s insomnia 5.

His own condition may have suggested the mise-en-scène with which the work begins (see also below). It is night at the court of the Abbasid Caliph, Hārūn al-Rashid, who suffers from sleeplessness, and can find no remedy for his complaint. In search of entertainment and occupation for his mind, he orders his courtiers to go out into the city and bring back any chance comer. This they

---

do, returning with a tall old man in patched garments, who in the sequel turns out to be a sage, capable of instructing the Caliph in the conduct of his empire. The shaikh is a man of mystery. When asked by the Caliph who he is, he replies, «A Persian by origin, an‘ajamī (i.e. foreigner) by race, but an Arab by separation (sc. from his people)». He is from «the city of the Īwan», i.e. presumably the former Sasanid capital, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, called by the Arabs Mada‘īn, where was the celebrated Īwan Kislā (Arch of Khusrau), which survived to Islamic times. Asked what his profession is and why he has left his native place, he replies that he travels for experience, and that his business is hikmah (wisdom, philosophy) and to command great men, quoting the Qur‘ān (Sūr. 60, 0): «And he who is given wisdom hath been given a great good» to emphasize his words.

The Caliph is delighted with all this, and proposes to question the shaikh as to how the burden of government may best be borne. The sage assents, and in some preliminary remarks emphasizes in general the importance of the rule of law (shar‘) and the danger of misplaced leniency (ḥilm), adding the realistic observation «He who is not a ravening beast, wild beasts conspire to devour him» (man lam yakun sāḥi‘an ākilan tadā‘at sībah ila ʿaklihi). The Caliph thereupon urges him to treat the subject of politics systematically (wa‘qṣim al-sīsah ṣūnānan wa‘j‘al li kull laqab philosophy) and to command great men, quoting the Qur‘ān (Sūr. 0, 0): «And he who is given wisdom hath been given a great good» qanūnan and to begin with the subjects of the empire. The main to emphasize his words.

A summary account of the various sections may be given.

1. The subjects (ra‘ūyah) are a trust from God, and God’s help is needed in dealing with them. Each class should be treated differently, so that the leading men of the upper class may learn to recognise your anger. The interests of each class are to be safeguarded, but at the same time none should be allowed to transgress its sphere. Insolence and idleness among the rich are to be checked, and so also religious speculation. The plain sense of the Sharī‘ah (religious law) is to be followed in all matters. Seditious assemblies are to be put down. No group should have the power
to redress their grievances. At most, they may refer these to some one of your trusted servants, whom you have deputed over their affairs (man waqaltahu bi-masāliḥihim min thiğāṭika). Care must be taken to advance the right kind of man. In general, show kindness as far as you can, but in case of open sedition and rebellion never hesitate to adopt strong measures.

2. The wazīr. Since he is your right-hand man, choice of him is very important. While many qualities are desirable (though not always to be found) in a wazīr, such that he should be perfectly loyal, honest, abstemious, high-minded, etc., more important than anything else is that he should fear God. Have nothing to do with the over-ambitious and disloyal.

3. The army (jund). Promotion must be given to those who fulfil their conditions of service. Stipulated pay must be forthcoming in full. The men should be properly trained by officers selected for their competence from those of good family, but care must be taken to avoid tribal and family interests becoming too powerful. The best training is in actual fighting, wherever you conduct the war against unbelievers (jihād). The standard of their arms and equipment must be a first care of the fighting men. They must not engage in business and trade, since they are to live by their profession and are expected to gain booty from the enemy. The ideal commander, for whom they will be willing to lay down their lives, is one who combines fairness and consideration for the men and their dependants with military qualities which inspire confidence, etc.

4. The governors (ummāl)

5. Children (wulad).

6. Servants (khadam). Your servants are like the members of your own body, and must be treated accordingly. They are to be accustomed to accept your wishes as right, and to think that it is wrong to question them. When you make large demands on any of them, he must be suitably recompensed but it is important in dispensing rewards not to render chief men among them insolent or discourage the others. Even the deserving should not be helped with the full extent of your bounty and praise, but means of rewarding those who do better still should always be left. Various characteristics which render men suitable for particular posts are briefly indicated. In general, all must be convinced that they cannot dispense with your favour.
7. Women (ḥurrān). They are at once the mothers of the new generation and the solace of men. They should be present to the thought rather than to the sight, and in their retirement should be looked after by old and reliable female servants. You should be sparing of time spent with them, and they are to be rigorously excluded from all business. When they appear in public, their attendants should not be conspicuous for finery.

Here comes a short break in the exposition. The shaikh relapses into silence before commencing the second part of his lecture, which is now concerned with personal advice to the ruler. He is warned against anger and partiality, and is urged to act at all times with justice, following rational proof (ḥiṣāḥ) and truth (ḥaqqaq) even when they appear to conflict with his interest. He is to listen to advice but not to accept it blindly, and he must seek on every occasion the opportunity for acting virtuously and thus gaining advantage for the future life.

A variety of recommendations on the use of money follows. Different qualities, he tells Ḥārūn, are needed for your public representatives and private advisers (cf. above). Patronage is to be extended to the learned, who will add lustre to your reign and commemorate your good deeds. Maintain the Shari'ah against heretics and trust in God, whose worship affords strength to meet your necessities. Seek peace with all who will be at peace with you, and strive to overcome your adversary in well-doing. In time of peace look to the future, and do not occupy your time with pleasure. Restrain vain prophesyings and rumours, and beware of the undue influence of professors and teachers, theologians, and the 'ulama' in general. Bestow alms, and make mention of the Almighty at the beginning and close of every day. Remember that you are by virtue of your situation exposed to every eye, and so act that what you do will not cause you shame. Guard against treachery, and take firm measures with the beginnings of disaffection.

Avoid placing a former rebel in authority where he revolted. Attend to communications and trade, but do not interfere with the prices. Keep your hands off the money of the people, except in certain specified cases. Proceed against no man on mere suspicion. Look after your sons properly, lest they aspire to rise and crush you.

Having reached the end of his discourse, the shaikh sees that
the night is half gone. Calling for a lute, he strikes its lowest string (*bamm*) and sings moving verses on man's quest for the divine and sense of loss when it eludes him in this life. Then, changing the key, he casts his hearers including the Caliph into a deep sleep, and so leaves them. Whe Harun awakes no trace of the shaikh can be found. Consoling himself as best he can for his loss, the Caliph gives orders that the words which he has spoken should be written down. They are still read and transmitted to the present day, and hearts are gladdened and enlightened by them.

This account of the duties of a ruler, short but fairly systematic, composed, as there is no reason to doubt in the circumstances already mentioned, should afford some light on 14th century Granada under the Nasrids and in particular on the political ideas of Lisan al-Din. At first sight we may be struck by the somewhat conventional character of the work. This type of moralizing appeared in Islam long before the 14th century, and to judge by the present work Lisan al-Din was much more old fashioned in his views than his contemporary Ibn Khaldun, whose new and incisive views on society are matched by nothing here. The fact is, however, that the work has nothing whatever to tell about Granada or the political views of Lisan al-Din, except perhaps indirectly, for it was not originally composed by him.

A work by the Egyptian Ahmad b. Yusuf b. al-Dayah. called *Katib Al Tulfun* (4th/10th century) entitled *Kitab al-Siyasah li-Aflaqtun* or alternatively *Kitab al-Uhudi al-Yunaniyuh al-Mustakhrajah min Rumiq Kitab al-Siyasah li-Afluatun* (Book of the Greek Testaments extracted from the indications of the Politics of Plato) has been printed more than once in recent times, and contains an apologue in the Oriental manner about a certain king of the ancient Greeks (al-Yunaniyun) called Adhriyanus (Hadrianus) li-

6. The musical proclivities of the shaikh recall al-Farahi, who as well as being a philosopher was also a skilled musician. A story is given in the Tatimmah Siwán al-Hikmah of his causing an audience at the court of one of the Buwaihids to fall into a deep sleep. But the shaikh in the story is not to be identified with al-Farahi, who lived a century later than Harun al-Rashid and was of Turkish, not Persian origin.

ving earlier than the time of Mūsā (Moses), whose testament to his son, together with the parallel testaments of other fathers, a wazīr and a commoner, forms the main subject of the work. The testament of Adhriyanus successively deals, like the discourse of the sage to Harūn al-Rashid in Līsān al-Dīn’s work, with the duties of a king in relation to 1) subjects (raṣiyāh), 2) the wazīr, 3) the army (jund), 4) the hājib or chamberlain, 5) the governors (um-māl), 6) children (walād), 7) servants (khādam), 8) women (ḥurūs), and then proceeds to deal with the personal obligations of the ruler. Further inspection shows that Līsān al-Dīn’s treatise often follows the other practically word, especially throughout the first part, i.e. down to the end of the section on women, thus:

(Līsān al-Dīn) raṣiyatūka wadsā’īr Allāh ta’alā qablaka, wa-ma-rā al-adhī llaḍābi ʿalaihi jabalaka, wa-lā tāṣil ilā ḏabṭiḥim ilā biʿeṣānatillāh ta’alā llaṭī wahaba laka, wa-afḍālu ma ʿsta-dʿaita bihi ʿaunahu fiḥim, wa-kifāyatuhu llaṭī takfihim, taqwim nafsika ʿinda qaṣd taqwīmihim, wa-riḍāka biʿl-sahar li-tanwīmihim, wa-ḥirāsah kahlīhim wa-raʿīṭīhim, wa-l-taraffū ʿan taḍyīrīhim, etc.

(Ibn al-Dāyāh) aʿlam annaʿa-raṣiyāh wadsā’īr Allāh qablaka, wa-imānatuhu ʿindakā, wa-ınnaka (annaka) la tāṣil ilā ḏabṭiḥim ilā bi maʿūnatiḥ jella wa-таʿalā, wa-afḍal mà-stadʿaita bihi ʿaunahu laka taqwīm nafsika laḥum, wa-ḥaṣan al-niyan finim, wa-ḥirāsatuhum, wa-l-maṣn min naṣūh, wa-l-ṭarafū ʿan taḍyīrīhim, etc.

or:

(Līsān al-Dīn) waʿl-wazīr ʿal-ṣāliḥ afḍāl ʿudadīka, wa-ausul mada-dika, fa-nuwaʿlmuḍha ṣayūnuka ʿan al-ibtidhāl, wa-mubāsharat al-andhāl, wa-yāthubu laka ʿalā ʿl-fursah, wa-yāṣūbu di tajarrū ʿal-ghusṣah, wa-tṣījlāʿ ʿaṣṣesah, wa-yastaṭḏār mā nasūh min umūrīka, etc.

(Ibn al-Dāyāh) aʿlam annaʿa ʿal-wazīr ʿal-ṣāliḥ afḍal ʿudad al-mamla-kah, liʿannahu ṣayūnuka ʿan al-badhlāh, wa-yaṣūfu bika ilāʿl-fursah wa yaḥṣur (leg yūḥādir) mā ghadartahu min umūrīka, etc.

and in the second part of the work:

(Līsān al-Dīn) waʿlam annaka maʿa kathraḥ ḥuṣṣaṭka, wa-kathāfat ḥiṣṭaṭka, bi-manṣīlal ʿal-ṣāḥīr liʿl-ṣiʿyūn, al-muṣlab biʿl-duyūn, li-shiddat al-baḥṭ ʿan umūrīka, wa-taʿarruf al-sirr al-khaṭī bain amrika wa-maʿumūrika, faʿmal fi sīrrika mā lā tastaqbiḥ an yaktīma ʿāhiran, etc.

(Ibn al-Dāyāh) waʿlam annaka maʿa kathraḥ ḥuṣṣaṭka, wa-
In short, Lisan al-Din's treatise is not an original work, but based on the other. The extent of Lisan al-Din's contribution is to expand, or conversely to abbreviate, to reproduce Ibn al-Dayah's text in a more consistently rhymed prose form, and to provide a new setting. While the work bears no direct relation to Granada and was not conceived originally by Lisan al-Din, we may perhaps tentatively draw conclusions from his refurbishing of it. The section on the chamberlain (hājib) in Ibn al-Dayah was omitted by Lisan al-Din. This may correspond to the fact that at Granada in his time the separate office of hājib no longer existed or was unimportant. Perhaps also when he assigns specifically female servants only to the women, this implies that eunuchs were not now employed for the purpose, as they evidently were in Ibn al-Dayah's time and milieu. These, however, remain speculative points. It is at least clear that Lisan al-Din thought it worth while to take a work several centuries old and recast it in a new form, which he gave out distinctly as his own. The motives which led him to so can only be guessed at. Presumably they included more than the simple desire to while away a few sleepless hours, and it may be suggested that the new work was intended to be placed in the hands of the young king of Granada, the setting in Baghdad being considered by Lisan al-Din more attractive and perhaps more decorous than the pagan court of a more than half mythical Hadrian. However this may be, and however the work came to be written, examination of it appears to make the contrast between Lisan al-Din and his great contemporary Ibn Khaldūn, in the matter of originality, stand out with sufficient clearness.

Douglas Morton Dunlop

8. Muḥammad al-Ghāni bi'llāh.