

Political Structures

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In considering the political institutions of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada, we must think about the post-Almohad world that gave rise to state structures in the Islamic West of the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries.¹ These regimes, like their predecessors, strove to distinguish themselves from those that had come before;² they had to confront the politico-religious ideology of the doctrines of *tawhīd*, but did not adopt all the structures associated with the Andalusī tradition. In this they followed earlier historical trends of political and socioeconomic transformation.³

Specifically, the Banū Naṣr established their rule over al-Andalus in accordance with governmental institutions and an administrative organization of a classic Islamic type; different scholars have observed that it obeyed Andalusī political tradition,⁴ but with modifications introduced by more than two and a half centuries of Nasrid experience. Our challenge is to identify those contributions individually while not losing sight of the intrinsic character of states in Western Islam in the late Middle Ages.

The basic politico-administrative organization chart of any Islamic state includes the head of state, a government made up of viziers and secretaries, an advisory council, and officials charged with overseeing the different parts of the territory. In the Nasrid case, the problems inherent in reconstructing this system meet additional obstacles: a large volume of scholarly historical studies that mythify this period,⁵ and the difficulty of even proving the existence of certain individuals.⁶ At the same time, out of intellectual inertia, some social groups or collectives have been treated in a generic fashion.⁷

There has been a tendency to view the Nasrid kingdom of Granada as the decadent period of Andalusī Islam, especially in studies that focus on the fifteenth century. This issue, while not entirely resolved, has been somewhat

1 Dhina, *Les états de l'occident musulman*.

2 Buresi, "L'organisation du pouvoir politique almohade."

3 Guichard, *Les musulmans de Valence*, 2:276.

4 Viguera Molins, "El soberano, visires y secretarios," 320.

5 Peláez and Fosalba, *La Granada nazarí: mitos y realidad*.

6 Salicrú i Lluç, "Nuevos mitos de la frontera."

7 Peláez Rovira, "Dos familias, dos tendencias narrativas."

modified in more careful analyses.⁸ In a welcome development, historians have begun to reject the term “decadence,” which has been such a burden, and to study the Nasrid polity as a separate political entity in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, without comparing it to other Andalusí or Islamic periods that are not of concern to us here.

1 Political Power and Legitimation

The State was organized around the Nasrid sovereign, from whom the functioning of the administration derived. The Head of State and his representatives exercised political power, delegated officials ensured that institutions operated, and equally important in classical Islam, all were conscious of belonging to a *dawla*: in the case of Granada the *dawla naṣriyya*, among other designations.

The exercise of power began with the sovereign’s investiture through the legal-religious mechanism of the *bay‘a*, a term associated with ascent to power since the early days of Islam.⁹ It guaranteed popular support in two ways: recognition of authority through the individual’s adherence to its ideology, and the act of selecting the candidate who would occupy the throne.¹⁰ After the ceremonies, the consent of the pertinent authorities, and the public’s recognition, the Nasrid sovereign, at the pinnacle of power, possessed the right and the duty to exercise his governance over the population.¹¹

The obligations of the Head of State had been compiled and expanded throughout the Islamic political tradition;¹² in the Nasrid kingdom of Granada outstanding intellectuals such as Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Ibn Khaldūn not only played political roles but contributed to political theory through their writings.¹³ While not all Granadan scholars could exercise power themselves,¹⁴ many placed their authorial gifts at the service of local politics, in greater or lesser accord with the politico-religious ideology of the moment. We find such men throughout the Nasrid area in every part of the kingdom.¹⁵

8 Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí de Granada*.

9 Marsham, *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy*.

10 Tyan, “Bay‘a.”

11 Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí de Granada*.

12 Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*.

13 Damaj, “Concepto de Estado en Ibn al-Jatib”; Rabi, *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldun*.

14 Damaj, “El intelectual y el poder político.”

15 Padillo Saoud *et al.*, *El poder y los intelectuales en al-Andalus*.

Aside from the sovereign's internal legitimation within the Nasrid State he also enjoyed external recognition, beginning with the dynasty's founding during the post-Almohad chaos of the thirteenth century.¹⁶ In addition to the initial search for an Islamic political power of higher religious standing¹⁷ there was the Treaty of Jaén signed with Castile in 1246:¹⁸ it was the first recognition of the nascent Islamic state in the Peninsula, and initiated a series of agreements with Castilian monarchs that would mark Nasrid foreign policy.¹⁹ The later effects of the Treaty of Jaén have been viewed in the light of an Islamic state that becomes the vassal of a Christian one.²⁰ One undoubted sign of external legitimation was the "Order of the Band" (*Orden de la Banda*),²¹ to which the founder of the Nasrid dynasty, Muḥammad I, may have belonged.²² The Nasrid escutcheon, clearly influenced by Castilian heraldry, was displayed in public spaces in the Alhambra²³ and on ceremonial objects belonging to the Nasrid family,²⁴ but was absent from those possessed by other members of Granada's elite even if they were related to the emirs.²⁵ Structures of the State associated with the ruling Nasrids, therefore, deployed this dynastic emblem to great communicative effect.

As the Nasrids developed their genealogy throughout the fourteenth century²⁶ the eponym Naṣr coexisted with al-Aḥmar, which was also employed by foreign chancelleries.²⁷ Andalusí authors associated it with the first Nasrid to ascend the throne,²⁸ identifying Muḥammad I as Ibn al-Aḥmar.²⁹ The motto of the Banū Naṣr, "there is no victor but God" or "God alone is victorious" (*wa-lā ghāliba illā Allāh*), as we know from epigraphy, inherited a phraseology that had legitimated Almohad power;³⁰ there are some traces of it in Arabic

16 Molina López, "De nuevo sobre el reconocimiento público del poder político."

17 Boloix Gallardo, *Ibn al-Aḥmar*, 49–52.

18 Vidal Castro, "Historia política."

19 Melo Carrasco, *Las alianzas y negociaciones del sultán*.

20 López de Coca Castañer, "El reino de Granada: ¿un vasallo musulmán?"

21 Albarracín Navarro, "La Orden de la Banda."

22 Boloix Gallardo, *De la Taifa de Arjona al Reino Nazarí*, 196–99.

23 Pavón Maldonado, "Escudos y reyes," "Notas sobre el escudo de la Orden de la Banda," and "La Torre de Abū l-Ḥayyāy."

24 Martínez Enamorado, "La espada de protocolo del sultán nazarí Muḥammad v."

25 Silva Santa-Cruz, "La espada de Aliatar."

26 Vidal Castro, "Historia política," 105 n. 3; Viguera Molins, "El soberano, visires y secretarios," 321–22.

27 *Crónica de Alfonso el Onceno*, in *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla*, 1:205.

28 Ibn 'Idhārī, *Al-Bayān al-mughrib*, 296; trans. Huici Miranda, 1:335.

29 Boloix Gallardo, *Ibn al-Aḥmar*.

30 Martínez Núñez, "El proyecto almohade a través de la documentación epigráfica."

inscriptions from that period that are not yet verified.³¹ There must have been a certain semantic continuity in spite of the historical rupture represented by the Nasrids,³² since according to one of their chief propagandists,³³ “the motto of these emirs” appeared on coins from Granada³⁴ and represented the Nasrid dynasty within the Alhambra.³⁵ The motto is also attested outside the kingdom of Granada.³⁶ Its presence indicates institutions connected with the central authority, especially the Nasrid administration.

2 Political Power and Representation: The Headship of State

In official Nasrid writings and numismatics, the head of State was not given the title of “king” (*malik*) except on very rare occasions, although its Spanish counterpart (*rey*) was the one most often assigned by the Christian chancelleries of the time and is common in the historiography of the Nasrid world. One reason for the extended usage of *rey* may be its connotation of authority transposed from the Christian monarchic tradition, together with its blandness, which avoided associating Nasrid sovereigns with any religious connotation.³⁷ Nonetheless we note that in a laudatory poem inscribed on the Madrasa of Granada, its founder Emir Yūsuf I is called one of the “kings of the Banū Naṣr” (*mulūk Banī Naṣr*). Another title largely absent from official mentions of the Nasrid sovereigns is “commander of the faithful” (*amīr al-muʿminīn*), the highest politico-religious rank in Islam, reserved for caliphs; it appears only occasionally in literature as a way of praising the sovereign’s qualities, but without special religious significance.³⁸ The administrative State functioned independently of this superior rank, which the Nasrid sovereigns did not adopt.

The highest authority in the Nasrid State was called *amīr* from the very beginning.³⁹ The dynasty’s founder, Muḥammad I, also adopted the official title “commander of the Muslims” (*amīr al-muslimīn*), which was continued by later Nasrid monarchs.⁴⁰ From that point on the title appeared on coins

31 Pavón Maldonado, “Arte, símbolo y emblemas,” 447; Peña Martín and Vega Martín, “Epigrafía y traducción.”

32 Martínez Enamorado, “Algunas reflexiones en torno al fin del almohadismo.”

33 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa*, 1:138.

34 Peña Martín and Vega Martín, “Epigrafía y traducción.”

35 Puerta Vilchez, *Los códigos de utopía de la Alhambra*, 97.

36 Martínez Enamorado, “Lema de príncipes.”

37 Viguera Molins, “El soberano, visires y secretarios,” 325.

38 Viguera Molins, “El soberano, visires y secretarios,” 325.

39 Duri, “Amīr.”

40 Boloix Gallardo, *De la Taifa de Arjona al Reino Nazarí*, 176–79.

minted under Muḥammad I, but not as often as one would think under his descendants: those sovereigns' coins tend to display the terms *amīr* alone, "the emir, the servant of God" (*al-amīr ʿabd Allāh*), or the monarch's chosen honorific surname (*laqab*).⁴¹ The rank of "commander of the Muslims" appears on seals of the official correspondence of several sovereigns,⁴² and is ubiquitous in chronicles and laudatory texts about the dynasty. But the Nasrids never adopted the higher title "commander of the faithful" (*amīr al-muʿminīn*); the only post-Almohad rulers to do so were the Ḥafṣids of Tunis.⁴³

The term *amīr* – and even more *amīr al-muslimīn* – applied to the sovereign denotes a politico-religious rank inherent in the head of an Islamic state that contains a Muslim population. In addition it occasionally bears a more restrictive, geographical meaning. *Amīr* is associated with the city of Granada: Muḥammad I, among others, designated himself *amīr Gharnāta* on some surviving dirhams.⁴⁴ At the same time the Castilian chancellery referred to him as "Don Aboabdille Abenasar, rey de Granada,"⁴⁵ making a clear equivalence between "emir" and "king" while associating his position to a territory and including no clear religious connotation; the city of Granada is conceived as the capital of a territorial space ruled by the emir who holds that rank.

The term *sultān* is usually connected to the territory over which a sovereign holds executive power. If we compare the content of Arabic inscriptions on Nasrid sovereigns' official seals with references in texts rendered into Romance, we find this equivalence between "sultan" and "king" in the territorial sphere.⁴⁶ When employed in relation to control over the city of Granada and its territories – or Granada in the sense of capital of its territory – it is not in opposition to *amīr al-muslimīn*; it is as if the two statuses, in a confluence of interests, sought to combine both politico-religious forms of legitimacy, head of State and head of the community, which together imply rule over the territory. A significant clue is a letter from Muḥammad IX "the Left-Handed": after a long recitation of his ancestors, all termed "commander of the Muslims," he styles himself "sultan of Granada and of the lands of the Muslims that depend upon it."⁴⁷ Sometimes use of "sultan" denotes an executive action by the ruler himself in the form of an order, decree, or edict: at the outset of his reign Muḥammad I emitted a "sultan's edict" (*zāhir sultānī*) for Ibn Maḥīb, who

41 Rodríguez Llorente, *Numismática naṣrī*; Rosselló Bordoy, "La moneda," esp. 575–76.

42 Labarta, "Sellos en la documentación nazari."

43 Brunschvig, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Ḥafṣides*, 2:7–17.

44 Arié, *L'Espagne musulmane*, 183.

45 García Gómez, *Ibn Zamrak*, 15.

46 Labarta, "Sellos en la documentación," 148–49.

47 Muriel Morales, "Tres cartas de la Cancillería de Muḥammad IX," 174.

had helped to gain the submission of Ibn al-Ramīmī, lord of Almería,⁴⁸ and later he renewed the privilege.⁴⁹ Note that “lord” (*ṣāhib*) indicates control of a given territory.

On occasion different titles occur together, in narrative contexts that allude to political issues of a strong territorial bent – uprisings, dethronings, legitimations – confusingly and in no particular order. It is worthwhile to examine Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s account of the movements of the pretender to the throne Abū l-Walid Ismā’īl in opposition to Naṣr before he was dethroned.⁵⁰ In the biography of this emir Ibn al-Khaṭīb uses the term *amr* (command, power, authority) at the beginning of Naṣr’s rule, a condition that confers the title of *amīr* even though the text does not explicitly refer to him as such. Still, as first described he is termed “*amīr al-muslimīn* Naṣr b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Naṣr, *amīr* of al-Andalus after his brother and his father,” so there is no doubt about his rank. The father of the pretender to the throne, Abū Sa’īd b. Ismā’īl, boasts the title “lord of Málaga” (*ṣāhib Mālaqa*), making it clear that he belonged to the Nasrid dynasty as a descendant of “al-Ghālib bi-l-lāh,” the honorific (*laqab*) of Muḥammad I. In Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s account the uprising led by rebels from Málaga, to which Abū l-Walid’s father contributed, reached Granada where “the sultan,” after quelling the revolt, “emerged from the gate of the fortress,” clear allusions to Naṣr and the Alhambra. Part of the population expressed support for him but others departed for Málaga, where the *sultān* Abū l-Walid accepted their urging to occupy the court (*al-ḥaḍra*). He marched on Granada, entering through the Albaicín, and “took up residence in the Old Fortress opposite the Alhambra.” Days later he made his entrance into the Royal Palace, *Dār al-Mulk*.⁵¹

In the passages just cited, executive power associated with *amr* inheres in the ranks of (1) *amīr* with respect to government functions and (2) *amīr al-muslimīn* with respect to the politico-religious rank that legitimizes the ruler’s activity at the head of Nasrid leadership. Kingly power (*mulk*) has a seat from which territorial dominion extends, from which the ruler acts not so much as a king (*malik*) as in the role of *sultān* in all its dimensions. This held true from the beginning, when Muḥammad I arrived at the future Nasrid capital intending to seize “the seat of power in Granada” (*ḥaḍrat al-mulk Gharnāṭā*).⁵² Since we have mentioned that “Granada” stood for the entire territory, it is important

48 Boloix Gallardo, *Ibn al-Aḥmar*, 92–93.

49 Vallvé Bermejo, “Un privilegio granadino.”

50 Vidal Castro, “Historia política,” 122.

51 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Lamḥa*, 75–76; trans. *Historia de los Reyes de la Alhambra*, 175–77.

52 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa*, 2:94.

to note that power exerted over a given place conferred on its holder the title of *ṣāhib* regardless of whether he belonged to the Nasrid dynasty, as with Ibn al-Ramīmī of Almería. Ibn al-Khaṭīb's text relates the structures of the State to the physical spaces where power is exerted: gates, castles, fortresses.

Our sources offer conclusive proof that the Nasrid sovereign acted directly in managing the government and administering the State. The founder of the dynasty intervened in justice, finances, and territorial organization after he arrived in Granada, and Ibn al-Khaṭīb praised his accomplishments.⁵³ By his account Muḥammad II organized the State (*dawla*) and established the administrative structures (*alqāb khidma*); among other measures, he increased the funds devoted to administration.⁵⁴ The chronicler also found Yūsuf I to be skilled in handling state documents: "He acquired great experience in examining government documents and reading royal decrees, becoming unmatched [in doing so]."⁵⁵

Aside from specific incidents mentioned in our sources, the role of Nasrid emirs in civil administration was a merely institutional one of presiding over ceremonies, receiving ambassadors, and signing official documents. An emir might also make special decisions on legal, military, or economic issues such as are studied elsewhere in this book. The emir's task was fundamental because it legitimated the actions that resulted from decisions by the head of State; that was why a decision to support a pretender against the ruler on the throne often brought official condemnation by the chief legal and religious authorities. When Boabdil rose up against his father Muley Hacén, the authorities protested his "violation of the oath of fealty (*bay'a*) sworn to our lord Abū l-Ḥasan [Muley Hacén]." His act not only lacked legal standing but affected the very underpinnings of the State, with grave consequences for the people.⁵⁶

3 The Nasrid *Dawla*

The family of the Banū Naṣr became constituted as a *dawla* associated with state sovereignty, as other dynasties of the classical Islamic world had done.⁵⁷ As a *dawla* it exerted power through its collateral branches, sometimes continuously (the *dawla ismā'īliyya naṣriyya* begun by Ismā'īl I, which ruled in the

53 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa*, 2:95.

54 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Lamḥa*, 50; trans. Casciaro, 143.

55 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Lamḥa*, 102; trans., 212.

56 Granja, "Condena de Boabdil."

57 Rosenthal, "Dawla."

middle years of the fourteenth century and made the splendor of the State visible with the Alhambra complex⁵⁸), sometimes more modestly (as with Yūsuf Ibn al-Mawl and his short-lived *dawla mawliyya*⁵⁹). The family motto *wa-lā ghālība illā Allāh* – already present on coins minted under Muḥammad I,⁶⁰ and recognized in the fourteenth century as the official numismatic motto, as Ibn Khaṭīb notes in describing royal symbols⁶¹ – led to the dynasty's being designated also as *dawla ghālībiyya*.⁶² Therefore, the administration of the State must have been closely tied to members of the dynasty even apart from their higher rank as heads of State.

The Nasrid dynasty preserved the prerogatives associated with its founder, Muḥammad I, who as we know held the title *amīr al-muslimīn*; thus began the saga of Nasrid emirs who held it, as we see from the list of the founder's sons, to whom Ibn al-Khaṭīb accords the same rank.⁶³ At the other end of the Nasrid family tree, the ancestry of Emir Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī is set forth in a lengthy *nasab* worth quoting here: "Commander of the Muslims 'Alī al-Ghālīb bi-Allāh, son of our lord commander of the Muslims Abū l-Naṣr, son of the venerable emir Abū l-Ḥasan, son of the commander of the Muslims Abū l-Ḥajjāj, son of the commander of the Muslims Abū 'Abd Allāh, son of the commander of the Muslims Abū l-Ḥajjāj, son of the commander of the Muslims Abū l-Walīd al-Naṣrī."⁶⁴ Every emir who governed bears the title *amīr al-muslimīn*; the third Nasrid in the list, Abū l-Ḥasan, does not because he never ruled, showing how the title was scrupulously reserved for the highest state rank. All male heirs of the dynasty did not merit it, even if they were in the direct line of succession of a collateral branch;⁶⁵ it distinguishes only the ones who reached the throne. We see here the significance of a title that, by all indications, implied legitimation of all acts that issued from the highest rank of the State to its administration.

A dethroned emir could no longer bear the title, as we see in the case of Naṣr. In his correspondence with Christian monarchs we find the Arabic phrase *al-amīr 'Abd Allāh Naṣr* in a letter written in Castilian to James II from his exile in Guadix,⁶⁶ which he governed independently with Emir Ismā'īl I's

58 Fernández Puertas, "The Three Great Sultans of al-Dawla al-Isma'iliyya al-Nasriyya."

59 Vidal Castro, "Historia política," 165–67.

60 Martínez Enamorado, "Lema de príncipes," 534.

61 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa*, 1:138.

62 García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz sobre la Alhambra*, 30.

63 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa*, 2:95.

64 Derenbourg, "Quatre lettres missives," 75–76.

65 Vidal Castro, "Historia política," 244–45.

66 Labarta, "Sellos en la documentación nazari," 131.

permission after being deposed.⁶⁷ The letter, dated 1316, was written two years into his exile,⁶⁸ showing that while he continued to call himself *amīr* outside the administrative bounds of the headship of State, he was no longer *amīr al-muslimīn*. Males of the Nasrid dynasty who had not yet ascended the throne would receive the same treatment, though the title was sometimes extended to an indubitable heir.⁶⁹ In short, *amīr* was reserved for members of the Nasrid dynasty, particularly for the heir to the throne (*walī l-ʿahd*, lit. “associated with the oath,” in Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s term),⁷⁰ who we know was not always the oldest son or even a son;⁷¹ the “commander of the Muslims” was, exclusively, the head of State. Any action by those “lesser” emirs was therefore less important and less legitimate than those performed by their relatives who held the title of maximum political authority.

Membership in the *dawla* legitimized accession to power; that was also accomplished, though *a posteriori*, by titles of a religious nature that we find repeated in many formats, such as the rulers’ lengthy *nasabs*. In the one quoted earlier we find, at the end, the wish for Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī “that God strengthen him with His help and assist him with His favor.”⁷² The phrase follows the classic formula that associates a social collective – a dynasty, in this case – with religious elements that served to legitimize it for a specific function.⁷³ *Amīr al-muslimīn*, therefore, implied legitimizing qualities of a religious character that broadened the strictly political ones of the administrative structure.

Sovereigns also adopted honorific surnames whose religious meaning is expressed by including the name of Allāh, with invocations of the sovereign’s virtues and praises to the divinity.⁷⁴ Some of these *alqāb* (plural of *laqab*) recur, as if Nasrid emirs were forging a link to an ancestor in the dynasty: such was the case with fifteenth-century rulers, for instance the long-lived Muḥammad IX “the Left-Handed”⁷⁵ and three members of the famous House of Abū Naṣr Sa’d: Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī (“Muley Hacén”), Muḥammad XII (“Boabdil”), and Muḥammad “*el Zagal*.”⁷⁶ All three chose the *laqab* “al-Ghālib bi-Allāh” with

67 Vidal Castro, “Historia política,” 122.

68 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa*, 1:340; *al-Lamḥa*, 76, 88, trans. 78, 84.

69 Peláez Rovira, “Noticia sobre los linajes granadinos.”

70 Velázquez Basanta, “Ibn al-Ḥakīm, Abū ‘Abd Allāh.”

71 Viguera Molins, “El soberano, visires y secretarios,” 330.

72 Derenbourg, “Quatre lettres missives,” 76.

73 Kister, “Social and Religious Concepts of Authority.”

74 Viguera Molins, “El soberano, visires y secretarios,” 327–29.

75 Seco de Lucena Paredes, *Muḥammad IX, sultán de Granada*.

76 López de Coca Castañer, “De la frontera a la guerra final.”

the clear intention of associating themselves with the founder of the dynasty, Muḥammad I.

4 Delegated Power and Actions of State

Accession to political power, through the various mechanisms of peaceful succession, force, or delegation, involved the sovereign and all the members of the structures that made up the State.⁷⁷ During this process the institutional transfer of power was set in motion; while not recorded in any political treatise, it was available because state structures remained in place during the sovereign's investiture and prepared to be reactivated. That role fell on the shoulders of viziers, secretaries, and other persons associated with the State who performed their duties as delegates of the emir. From this group arose the act of *bay'ā*, which sanctioned the legitimate accession to power in written form. For the Nasrids, Ibn al-Khaṭīb records the text employed when Muḥammad V ascended the throne in a compilation of his secretarial writings for the dynasty,⁷⁸ proof that during the transition the mechanisms for formalizing the sovereign's legitimacy remained in place.

There are historically significant figures whose activities in service to Nasrid power, and personal careers, offer invaluable information for reconstructing the administrative functions of the State. Prominent among the great viziers and political directors were those who ran the Secretariat of State or Royal Chancellery, *Dīwān al-Inshā'*; one of their duties was to compose epigraphic court poetry, as did Ibn al-Jayyāb,⁷⁹ Ibn al-Khaṭīb,⁸⁰ and Ibn Zamrak.⁸¹ Ibn al-Ḥakīm preceded them at the head of this administrative division.⁸² Ibn al-Khaṭīb's prolific pen best illustrates the blending of political and personal fortunes, public duty and private action, that characterized this collective: he coined the phrase "I am the Juhayna of its information, the pole of its axis, and the archive of its house."⁸³ He meant that those officials assumed all functions delegated by the sovereign for the purpose of issuing propaganda, exercising power, and safeguarding the memory of the dynasty.

77 Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí de Granada*, 22–59.

78 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Rayḥānat al-kuttāb*, 1:116–26.

79 Rubiera Mata and Kalaitzidou, "Ibn al-ʿYayyāb, Abū l-Ḥasan."

80 Lirola *et al.*, "Ibn al-Jaṭīb al-Salmānī, Lisān al-Dīn."

81 Lirola Delgado and Navarro i Ortiz, "Ibn Zamrak, Abū 'Abd Allāh."

82 Velázquez Basanta, "Ibn al-Ḥakīm, Abū 'Abd Allāh."

83 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Lamḥa*, 19; trans. Casciaro, 99 n. 7.

The post of *ḥājib* or chamberlain does not seem to have carried specific administrative functions; rather, it united many responsibilities related to the headship of the government, while including the rank of *dhū l-wizāratayn* (“holder of the two ministries”) as a sign of distinction.⁸⁴ The key figure in the higher administration of the State was the *wazīr*: a public personage named by the emir, delegated to transmit the emir’s orders and ensure they were carried out. He also organized administrative tasks (drawing up official documents, diplomacy, military and fiscal matters, supervising the judiciary) and ensured the smooth functioning of the system.⁸⁵ We still do not possess a complete picture of the Nasrid vizierate; it sometimes assumed particular functions in response to administrative needs of the moment, but did not – as the cliché often has it – merely respond to the emir’s whims and desires.⁸⁶ Some viziers, however, did accumulate real power at certain periods,⁸⁷ sharing responsibilities with members of the central administration.⁸⁸

While any list of viziers is incomplete, the lists we do have indicate persons who possessed a strong power of decision over the fortunes of the emirate. Their duties may not have been divided explicitly between the civilian and the military, and their occupancy of the post varied in length according to their relationships with the sovereigns and other members of the political elite.⁸⁹ Material proof of their activity in foreign affairs is provided by their seals on official correspondence, which were minor versions of those affixed to letters from the emirs.⁹⁰ Viziers were involved in levying, collecting, and managing taxes, according to a notation in the last Nasrid chronicle: Muley Hacén’s vizier “continued to order new tributes [*maghārim*] and increase existing ones” so as to swell the public coffers and pass on the proceeds to the sultan.⁹¹

The *Dīwān al-Inshā’* developed into the secretariat of the central administration: it converted government decisions such as decrees, edicts, appointments, treaties, and safe-conducts into documentary form.⁹² Its members must have worked in the area of the Mexuar (*Mashwar*), where the advisory council (*shūra*) met; it was the site of the scriptorium (*kitāba*) for secretaries, and was sufficient for the administrative needs of the State until Muḥammad v

84 Viguera Molins, “El soberano, visires y secretarios,” 339.

85 Ladero Quesada, *Granada. Historia de un país islámico*, 104–06.

86 Martínez Lumberras, “Instituciones políticas del reino moro de Granada.”

87 Casciari, “El visirato en el reino nazarí.”

88 Seco de Lucena Paredes, “La administración central de los nazaríes.”

89 Viguera Molins, “El soberano, visires y secretarios,” 341–45.

90 Labarta, “Sellos en la documentación nazarí,” 143–46.

91 *Nubdhat al-‘aṣr*, 6; trans. Quirós, *Fragmento de la época*, 7.

92 Viguera Molins, “À propos de la chancellerie et des documents nasrides.”

expanded it greatly during his second reign.⁹³ The importance of the secretary (*kātib*) is suggested by an anecdote from Muḥammad II's time: the emir's faithful secretary was accused of having composed satirical verses against the son and heir, the future Muḥammad III.irate, the heir demanded that the guilty party be brought before him for punishment; the man in question was Ibn al-Ḥākīm, who would become a powerful vizier in later reigns. The secretary thought it prudent to go into hiding for a time before returning to his post.⁹⁴

The Chancellery was directed by an administrator who acted as Secretary of State and whose professional standing allowed him to keep his post amid changes in the monarchy. A good example is Ibn al-Khaṭīb (like his predecessors Ibn al-Ḥākīm and Ibn al-Jayyāb and his pupil Ibn Zamrak): he held the position under Yūsuf II and continued in it after Muḥammad V's accession. His presence in the Secretariat during the transition allowed him to compose the new emir's document of investiture and attend to the Chancellery,⁹⁵ while enlarging considerably the scope of his responsibilities in the government.⁹⁶

The education of the state bureaucracy received its official seal of approval with the founding of the Madrasa Yūsufiyya in the capital city. It was funded by Emir Yūsuf I and carried out under his patronage by the powerful *ḥājib* Riḍwān;⁹⁷ poems inscribed on the building itself praised this royal initiative.⁹⁸ The *madrasa* was not a university as we now understand the term, but was comparable in some ways to a medieval *universitas*.⁹⁹ It was an instrument of power intended to prepare civil servants (bureaucrats) and ensure their loyalty to the prevailing political and religious ideology.¹⁰⁰ Its curriculum focused on legal and religious subjects and allied linguistic disciplines¹⁰¹ in a space appropriate to teaching, and it harbored a residence for students.¹⁰² The school's architectural space, its faculty of teachers from Granada and elsewhere, and the administration of its finances all influenced the intellectual milieu of the capital. There has been speculation about another possible *madrasa* within the Alhambra that would have fulfilled the educational needs of palace

93 Puerta Vilchez, "La Alhambra y el Generalife."

94 Velázquez Basanta, "Ibn al-Ḥākīm, Abū 'Abd Allāh."

95 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Rayḥānat al-kuttāb*, 1:116–26.

96 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Lamḥa*, 115–16; trans. Casciaro, 230.

97 Seco de Lucena Paredes, "El Hayib Ridwan."

98 Cabanelas, "Inscripción poética de la antigua Madraza granadina."

99 Makdisi, "Madrasa and University."

100 Golvin, "La medersa nouvel 'outil' du pouvoir?."

101 Pedersen *et al.*, "Madrasa."

102 Malpica and Mattei, *La Madraza de Yūsuf I.*

employees.¹⁰³ A short-lived *madrasa* in Málaga apparently did not involve the training of civil servants.¹⁰⁴

We must not forget the counselors, “masters of good advice” (*arbāb al-naṣā’ih*) in Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s flowery rhetoric; that author speaks of how Muḥammad I’s audiences brought together the chief figures of the court, the most important judges, and the followers closest to power¹⁰⁵ in a sort of Council of State; these men were, in fact, responsible for its administration. This political elite constituted an oligarchy based on the property they owned in the city and its nearby fertile plain, the Vega;¹⁰⁶ its members acted consciously as a group but one sufficiently permeable to allow other Granadan families to join over time.¹⁰⁷ Some of these developed a stereotyped image: many members of the Abencerrajes (Banū l-Sarrāj) did not live up to the qualities often associated with that name.¹⁰⁸

5 State and Territory

It is common practice to define the territory under Nasrid control as a prolongation of the former provinces (*kūra*, pl. *kuwar*) of Granada, Málaga, Almería, Ronda, and even part of Algeciras, even though there was no continuity whatever between the earlier Andalusi political-administrative structures, whose names come down from the Umayyad period, and the new ones.¹⁰⁹ This was the area administered from the capital as the sovereign delegated his central authority to local agents. Ibn al-Azraq, the last Andalusi intellectual to take an interest in the fundamentals of power,¹¹⁰ enumerated the duties that the sovereign performed through those delegates: protecting the territory to ensure the sustenance and free transit of the people, manning the frontiers against the enemy, choosing loyal and capable civil servants, supervising public affairs, and dealing with any circumstance that affected the community, particularly in defense of religion.¹¹¹

103 Pavón Maldonado, *Tratado de arquitectura*, 4:721.

104 Rubiera Mata, “Datos sobre una *madrasa* en Málaga.”

105 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Lamḥa*, 44; trans. Casciaro, 132.

106 Rodríguez Gómez, “Emires, linajes y colaboradores.”

107 Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí*, 338–82.

108 Peláez Rovira, “La imagen del poder de los Abencerrajes.”

109 Viguera Molins, “El soberano, visires y secretarios,” 319.

110 Delgado Pérez, “Ibn al-Azraq, Abū ‘Abd Allāh”; Isahak, *Ibn al-Azraq’s Political Thought*.

111 Ibn al-Azraq, *Badā’i’ al-silk fī ṭabā’i’ al-mulk*, 1:175 ff.

From the earliest period of the Nasrid emirate there is mention of governors. According to Ibn al-Khaṭīb, when the first Nasrid conquered the capital he needed money, and exerted greater pressure on the governors (‘*ummāl*, sg. *‘āmil*).¹¹² The expanded text also appears in *al-Iḥāṭa*, making clear that the pressure came after he had taken possession of the seat of power (*ḥadra*).¹¹³ Both the collective bureaucracy and the seat of the administration were closely and directly connected to the Head of State, from whom the management of the territory emanated.

To name the leader of a city, the *alcaide* (*qā'id*), the sovereign issued an official document that certified his own membership in the *dawla* and his title *amīr al-muslimīn* as legitimizers of the act. At that moment the post in question was included in the structures of the State. We reproduce here part of the document (in its Romance version) with which Yūsuf IV named the *alcaide* of Almería, proclaiming his right to rule the city, its civil and religious authorities, and its people: “So says the servant of God, the emperor of the Moors who enjoys God’s help, Yuṣaf son of the deceased prince Hamete son of Abulhaxex, emperor of the Moors ... to the judge, sheriffs, preachers, jurists, elders, inspectors, and ordinary people, residents of the city ... we write you this [letter] from the Alhambra in Granada....”¹¹⁴

The presence of “sheriffs” (*alguaziles*, from *wazīr*) and “elders” (*viejos*), especially for local communities, is frequent in extant sources. A document dated 1428 is addressed to the leaders of the fortress of Comares, who include its *qā'id* and its “old men” (*ashyākh*, pl. of *shaykh*).¹¹⁵ The former, who appears first, seems to be the local agent of power, while the latter group would represent the community. It is difficult to determine the exact relationship of the *alcaide* to the locality, area, or district: did his status as a local make his selection by the central authority more likely? It is possible that local populations, especially in rural areas, took the initiative in naming valid interlocutors, who could mediate with local agents of power but still be able to connect directly with the central government. A document from the Mudejar period suggests such an arrangement for the future *alguazil* of the hamlet of Purchil: thirteen local witnesses, presumably men of sufficient local prestige, vouched for him.¹¹⁶

112 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Lamḥa*, 43; trans. Casciaro, 131.

113 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāṭa*, 2:95.

114 “Del siervo de dios el emperador de los moros que se ayuda con dios yuṣaf hijo del infante defunto hamete hijo del emperador de los moros abulhaxex ... al cadī alguaziles predicadores alfaquyes y viejos y alamines y gente comun y llana vezinos del pueblo ... esta os escribimos del alhambra de Granada”: Gaspar y Remiro, “Con motivo del romancero,” 147.

115 Gaspar Remiro, “Documentos árabes de la corte nazari,” 336, trans. 339.

116 Molina López and Jiménez Mata, *Documentos árabes*, 7–8, 43–44.

The rich notarial documentation in which *alcaldes* appear as possessors of real estate may help us to make connections between local agents and the territories they administered,¹¹⁷ though it is still hard to infer from their private interests whether they acted as administrators in districts where they owned property.¹¹⁸ In any case there seem to have been *alcaldes* as titular heads of a district who had a direct connection to the central government; they co-existed with more modest rural officials who might hold more sway in small communities.¹¹⁹

We have seen how the relations between members of a community and the sovereign were conducted through official documents that cemented the central government's control of the territory, especially in rural areas.¹²⁰ However, it is hard to find the sort of written register that would be essential for administration, though local reports to the central government must have existed, even if created after the fact. In a royal edict issued by the chancellery of Muḥammad I in favor of Ibn Maḥīb and his wife, to be extended to their descendants, the colophon ends with an order to governors to obey its clauses (later renewed) regarding exemption from tributes, subsidies, and fines, and treatment of sharecroppers, tenants, and servants; it also confirms earlier privileges.¹²¹ Obviously a property register would be necessary if clauses like these were to be fulfilled.

Central control over rural areas was made manifest and visible through frontier fortresses. The evolution of these fortified structures shows changes associated with the development of Andalusī society, as state power increased its presence by creating specific spaces for representation and control.¹²² These spaces were controlled by the central government through local agents from the surrounding communities or imposition from outside. In the other direction, local communities might show their strength against central authority to the point of controlling the fortresses; this was a rare event, but suggests the complexity of ownership of such structures. We have documents of sale from Cúllar, whose residents bought the fortress in a well-documented process: the existence of a property-transfer list (*Registro de Transmisiones*) for Baza speaks eloquently of the role of the district's chief town in administering its territory.¹²³

117 Rodríguez Gómez and Vidal Castro, "Alcaldes, propiedades y patrimonio real."

118 Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí*, 257, 277–80.

119 Fábregas García, "Presencia del Estado en el mundo rural nazarí."

120 Peláez Rovira, "El registro documental del ejercicio del poder."

121 Vallvé Bermejo, "Un privilegio granadino."

122 García Porras, "La implantación del poder en el medio rural nazarí."

123 Díaz García, *Documentos árabes sobre el Castillo de Cúllar*, 87.

Islamic territories initially controlled by the central government were successively excised beginning in the thirteenth century: these spaces have been called *subtaifas*,¹²⁴ “third *taifas*” at the start of the Nasrid dynasty,¹²⁵ and *poliarquías* for Granada overall in the fifteenth century.¹²⁶ As a result, the governance of Islamic lands in the southern Peninsula was not always linked to the capital in Granada and the administrative seat of power in the Alhambra. That fact does not detract from the capital’s prestige: it was still “the noble, honored, and blessed Nasrid seat” (*al-maqām al-karīm al-sharīf al-mubārak al-naṣrī*),¹²⁷ the goal sought by pretenders to the throne and everyone associated with political power. There is no doubt at all that the Alhambra complex was the natural locus of the Nasrid dynasty, a palatine city at the service of power and all the needs of the administrative State.¹²⁸

From this centralized spot, management of the territory implied contact with the bureaucracy and access to official documents. But power could also be wielded from elsewhere, when struggles over the throne in Granada blocked access to the privileged space of central administration. One such site was Huércal: several *alcaldes* and *alguaciles* were named for it in the course of the fifteenth century, from either the Alhambra or (under Boabdil) from the Old Fortress or *Alcazaba Qadīma* in the Albaicín.¹²⁹ Apparently the name of the site and that of the local official were all that needed to be documented.

There must also have been a double register, both central and local, because otherwise that able and active emir Muḥammad IX could not have issued tax exemptions before he recovered the throne in Granada.¹³⁰ In 1430, while he was disputing the throne with Muḥammad VIII after having returned from exile in Tunis and received the fealty of part of the territory through a *bayʿa*,¹³¹ an order of his was issued outside the central administration in Granada that clearly carried administrative force. It is reflected in several Castilian sources, one of which records: “In this year there were two kings in Granada, one in the city and the other in the Alhambra, and they were fighting each other. And the one in the Alhambra was called the Young King, and he was favored by the king

124 Viguera Molins, “El soberano, visires y secretarios,” 319. *Taifa* (Arabic *ṭāʾifa*, “party, faction”) had designated the small kingdoms that had succeeded the fall of the Umayyad caliphate in al-Andalus in the eleventh century.

125 Vidal Castro, “Historia política,” 62–67.

126 Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí de Granada*, 182–225.

127 Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-aʿshā fī ṣināʿat al-inshāʿ*, 7:412.

128 Malpica Cuello, *La Alhambra*.

129 Espinar Moreno and Grima Cervantes, “Estudio de unas cartas de los reyes nazaríes.”

130 Seco de Lucena Paredes, *Muḥammad IX*, 55.

131 Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí*, 97–106.

of Castile; and the one in the city was nicknamed the Left-Handed.”¹³² From his base in the city the latter, Muḥammad IX, exempted the pious foundation of the mosque of Berja from taxation by writing an order to the elders and *alguaciles* of Capileira, Jurbina, and Pago in that district.¹³³ From this we see that he commanded those towns, that local agents not apparently named by the central power were loyal to him, and that he was able to intervene in the district’s fiscal affairs, related in this case to holdings of religious property.

We have spoken of the processes of legitimation and assumption of government duties through which the emir received the support of the legal and religious authorities in carrying out his responsibilities to the State. In the purely religious sphere, the emir’s dominion was made manifest when he was named during the Friday prayer. Every aspirant to the throne sought that privilege: the lord of Málaga, Abū Saʿīd b. Ismāʿīl, wanted “to speak the public prayer [*duʿāʾ*] in favor of himself.” He sent his son to claim the throne,¹³⁴ with the result that the son ruled instead of his father as Ismāʿīl I after dethroning Emir Naṣr.¹³⁵ It is clear that the religious factor was another indication of territorial control.

6 The Dynamics of the State

The Nasrid State’s intervention in public life was conditioned by the dynamics surrounding political power, in accordance with patterns characteristic of the age. For Ibn Khaldūn, the decisive factors for the proper exercise of power are force, organizational capacity, and a unifying ideology; he affirms that “authority is a natural institution of humankind.”¹³⁶ It can be argued that a legitimate political regime can make its people obey without the use of force, in an institutional and normalized manner in accordance with the State’s organizational capacity.¹³⁷ Therefore, over time the Nasrids developed a full program of political propaganda to socialize power and gain the people’s loyalty to Nasrid ideology.¹³⁸ All of these elements converged on the Alhambra, the dynasty’s

132 “En este año avía dos reyes en Granada, uno en la ciudad y otro en el Alhambra, y guerreábanse el uno al otro. Y el que estaba en el Alhambra llamaban el rey Mozo, y éste auía favor del rey de Castilla; y el que estaba en la ciudad decían el Yzquierdo”: Garci Sánchez, *Anales de Sevilla*, 26.

133 Ribera and Asín, *Manuscritos árabes y aljamiados*, 261–62.

134 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Lamḥa*, 75; trans. Casciaro, 176.

135 Vidal Castro, “Historia política,” 122.

136 Viguera Molins, “El mundo islámico,” 1:362.

137 Murillo Ferrol, *Estudios de sociología política*, 136.

138 Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí*, 106–21.

architectural emblem, a palatine city at the service of the government.¹³⁹ The name of this palace complex, so desired by every Nasrid with aspirations to the throne, was included in the rulers' titles issued by the chancelleries:¹⁴⁰ a document from Tunis spoke of "the lord of the Alhambra of Granada" (*ṣāhib ḥamrā' Gharnāta*), while Castile and Aragon echoed the same formula.

As we learn from Nasrid documents in Arabic, the terms "war" and "peace" were used to define relationships between Granadans and their neighbors, particularly the Castilians; so was "coexistence" (*convivencia*), whether peaceful or warlike.¹⁴¹ While traditional historiography thinks of war first of all, there were also long periods governed by truces;¹⁴² according to extant documents from the frontier, there was a broad range of ambiguous situations between the two extremes.¹⁴³

The continuing reality of the land and sea frontiers weighed on the spirits of intellectuals and emerged in their writings: poets wrote laments when border towns fell to the Christians,¹⁴⁴ and Ibn Hudhayl, in a volume dedicated to Muḥammad VII on his ascent to power, claimed that the sovereign "will free this country from the bonds that restrain it, will bring abundance after sterility, will restore these exhausted lands with his warriors and his embassies, and will place them beyond the abyss, in the orbit of Saturn, thanks to his heroes and his armies."¹⁴⁵ The emirs took some political risk when they allowed the realities of war to be invoked within their palaces in this way.

The sense of being on constant alert was well founded among the legal-religious class and in al-Andalus in general: al-Wansharīsī records a *fatwa* that makes holy war (*jihād*) a higher duty than pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), in a clear allusion to the sense of *jihād* as "holy war."¹⁴⁶ Invocation of this politico-religious instrument is a constant in the history of Granada.¹⁴⁷ The central administration articulated it in government-issued documents that were read aloud in the mosques; from there also, the public was often roused to battle. Ibn al-Khaṭīb himself wrote official speeches that invoked and justified *jihād*: during Muḥammad V's second reign, after his exile in Fez and while attacks

139 Malpica Cuello, *La Alhambra*.

140 Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-a'shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā'*, 7:442.

141 Viguera Molins, "Guerra y paz en la frontera nazarí."

142 Melo Carrasco, *Compendio de Cartas, Tratados y Noticias de Paces y Treguas*, and *Las alianzas y negociaciones del sultán*.

143 Rodríguez Molina, "Relaciones pacíficas en la frontera de Granada."

144 Charouiti Hasnaoui, "Conflictos en la frontera"; Castillo Castillo, "La pérdida de Archidona poetizada," "Más elegías de al-Qaysī," and "La conquista de Gibraltar."

145 Ibn Hudhayl, *Gala de caballeros*, 225–26.

146 Al-Wansharīsī, *al-Mi'yār al-Mu'rib*, 1:432.

147 Peinado Santaella, *Guerra santa, cruzada y yihad*.

by land and sea were feared,¹⁴⁸ the courtier wrote the text to be read in the mosques during Şafar 767/October–November 1365.¹⁴⁹ A report of the siege of Antequera in 1410 shows that Emir Yūsuf III tried to determine who had participated in a bloody battle: “lists of the towns” were requested, and the number of dead added up.¹⁵⁰ Here we see the importance of documentation in managing military affairs, initiated by the State and carried out by the mechanisms of the administration.

With ideological factors ever present, and since the government always had recourse to *jihād*, we should consider the figure of the court preacher (*khaṭīb*) as a bridge between religion and politics. (His close analogues, storytellers and narrators, might arouse distrust in representatives of those areas.)¹⁵¹ The most prominent figure to play that role during our period, Ibn Marzūq, moved in Nasrid circles.¹⁵² A native of Tlemcen, he was a lifelong preacher praised by his pupil Ibn al-Khaṭīb.¹⁵³ Nor was he modest, writing, “I have climbed fifty-one minarets in different parts of the Western and Central Maghreb, al-Andalus, al-Zāb, and Ifrīqiya; there is no capital and no king’s court in these lands where I have not climbed the minaret and offered prayers for its monarch.”¹⁵⁴ Such a figure was obviously a significant element in the dynamics of the State when *jihād* was preached. The Granadan Ibn al-Khaṭīb followed in his footsteps as a powerful preacher to the Nasrid court, while writing texts that even urged the Maghrebis to come to the aid of al-Andalus.¹⁵⁵ Through his close relationship with Ibn Marzūq he may have heard the latter’s sermons and learned his oratorical techniques.¹⁵⁶ The court preacher was so important that the State must have controlled his politico-religious activities, organizing those inspired by his call to *jihād* as another way of displaying the sovereign’s legitimacy.

The government’s role in the actual management of the administration consisted of a series of political actions that emanated from the center of power and were carried out through structures of the State. Here civil authorities came into play by applying the laws: *qānūn* (a Greek term)¹⁵⁷ was a subcategory of broader Islamic law, *fiqh*. Judicial practice (*ʿamal*) included the

148 Vidal Castro, “Historia política,” 138.

149 Gaspar Remiro, “Correspondencia diplomática.”

150 Peláez Rovira, *El emirato nazarí*, 113.

151 Viguera Molins, “Los predicadores de la corte,” 320.

152 Peláez Rovira, “Ibn Marzūq, Abū ‘Abd Allāh.”

153 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Iḥāta*, 3:104.

154 Ibn Marzūq, *El Musnad*, 124v, trans. 403.

155 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭīb*, 4:348.

156 Peláez Rovira, “El viaje íntimo de Ibn Marzūq.”

157 Maḥmasānī, *Falsafat al-tashrīʿ fi l-islām*, 15.

opinions of renowned jurists, the sentences of famous judges, and collections of documents.¹⁵⁸ But aside from judicial acts themselves, we know nothing about how the Nasrid civil administration applied the norms of the State.

The norms of public Islamic law, which already guaranteed great stability and uniformity in Andalusí state structures, would form part of Nasrid state organization, with a certain degree of continuity in governmental and administrative institutions.¹⁵⁹ But we must also bear in mind administrative changes introduced in the pre-Nasrid period.¹⁶⁰ Those norms were present under the Nasrids at least since the state organization carried out by Muḥammad II: these included, among others, those that applied to the exercise of power (*rusūm al-mulk*),¹⁶¹ understood as royal power associated with a given seat – after all, the Royal Palace was known as *Dār al-Mulk*. There were treatises, compilations, and other written reflections on the exercise of administrative duties, but in most cases we cannot be sure how they were reflected in actual practice.¹⁶²

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158 Aguilera Pleguezuelo, *Estudio de las normas e instituciones*, 64–65.

159 Viguera Molins, “El soberano, visires y secretarios,” 319.

160 Viguera Molins, *El retroceso territorial de al-Andalus*.

161 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *al-Lamḥa*, 50; trans. Casciaro, 141.

162 Lirola *et al.*, “Ibn al-Khaṭīb al-Salmānī, Lisān al-Dīn.”

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