CHAPTER FOUR

A *NADĪM* FOR THE SULTAN: RĀWANDĪ AND THE ANATOLIAN SELJUKS[1]

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'As long as the world turns, may Khusraw be just! / the sovereign of men and creatures alike, may Khusraw be just.'[2] Thus opens the *qaṣīda* which brings Muḥammad b. 'Alī Rāwandī's *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa-āyāt al-surūr* to a conclusion. The short *qaṣīda* of 30 couplets with the *radīf* (repeating final rhyme) '*Khusraw bā dād bād*' ('may Khusraw be just!') not only associates its addressee, Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusraw I (r. 1192–6, 1205–11), with the quintessential just ruler, the Sasanian king Khusraw Anūshīrwān (r. 531–79) through a play on names, but also exhorts him, as 'the imperial one', to be just – the running theme of the poem – and to live up to the image of world conqueror and generous patron:

> The commander of the world and propitious potentate [that is] Ghiyāth al-Dīn,
> May the realm-conquering blessed *khusraw* [the emperor] be just!

Sarwar-i gītī Ghiyāth al-Dīn wa dawlat-shahriyār
Mulk-gīr u kāmrān Khusraw bā dād bād

He takes tribute from enemies, and bestows crowns
on friends;
May the *khusraw* [the emperor] be just on earth for eternity!
Bāj-gīr az dushmanān wa tāj-bakhsh-i dūstān
dar jahān tā jāwidān Khusraw bā dād bād

The *qaṣīda* urges the sultan, as the 'conqueror of ten lands' (*dah kishwar-gushāy*), ruler of the seven climes and the lord of the auspicious conjunction (*ṣāḥib-qirān*), to dispense justice and be 'clement upon his flock'.[3] The poet likewise portrays Kaykhusraw as a universal monarch reigning over the world: 'the sovereign of Rūm and Rus, of the Turk and the Chinese, Egypt and Syria [ruling] as far as the borders of India'. The poem intimates that, with the demise of the Great Seljuk dynastic house based in western Iran and Mesopotamia ('Irāq-i 'ajam), their traditional claim to the sultanate now reverted to their kin, the Seljuks of Rūm; the sovereign is thus reminded that that he is the inheritor of the Seljuk dynastic legacy: '[Now that] the nest of the sultanate has become barren (*shud 'aqīm īn āshyān-i salṭanat*). Khusraw shall become its auspicious offspring.' Hoping that the sultan be '[generous and bountiful as] the ocean and quarry', and act as 'bestower of riches to his eulogists arriving from surrounding lands', the poet's desire for patronage emerges in the final couplets. The sultan is thus requested to 'disperse gold upon the head of the traveller who has arrived as panegyrist after a journey of two months', 'redeem all of the indignities and injustices suffered by this poor one at the hands of base people', and 'greet, lodge and provide for this poor one, and dispense silver upon him'.[4]

Articulating the desire for Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusraw I's protection and patronage, this *qaṣīda* reveals much about Rāwandī's aspirations as a poet, and the function of compilation, the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, which it concludes. K. A. Luther was the first to propose that, through a display of his literary and rhetorical skills in this

work, Rāwandī hoped to obtain a post at the Seljuk court.[5] I take Luther's argument further by claiming that Rāwandī compiled the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* with the particular goal of gaining employment as *nadīm* ('boon companion') at the Seljuk court.[6] The *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* was thus his showcase of skills, talents and practical knowledge qualifying him for the post of court boon companion. Rāwandī highlights his past intimate association with the Great Seljuk court in Hamadan as a selling point for such a post at the Anatolian Seljuk court; indeed, Rāwandī hoped to convince Kaykhusraw I of his familiarity with Great Seljuk court culture and thus demonstrate his competency in transferring this cultural capital, together with its accompanying dynastic charisma and legacy, to the Seljuk Anatolian court in the capacity as *nadīm*.[7]

This chapter reviews the post of the *nadīm* in Anatolia in conjunction with the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* and its Anatolian Seljuk political and cultural context, including the reception of Rāwandī at the Seljuk court. These topics have been largely overlooked as a result of the predominant scholarly interest in the historical section of Rāwandī's compilation, despite its characterisation as derivative and deficient, lacking in literary merit and marred by extensive verse, heavy rhetoric and 'curious' extraneous material.[8] Indeed, there is very little original material in Rāwandī's *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*. The historical section was copied verbatim from Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī's *Saljūqnāma*, about which much has been said.[9] Likewise, material in the introduction was taken, sometimes word for word, from Muntajab al-Dīn Badī' al-Juwaynī's *'Atabat al-kataba*, a collection of documents from the reign of the Great Seljuk sultan Sanjar (1117–57).[10] In an effort to rescue the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* from its detractors,[11] Julie Meisami has shown us how the work should be understood as a 'hybrid' text, the historical section of which had primarily a morally edifying function.[12] Meisami's analysis of the work, however, remains limited to the historical section. In a detailed study, Dagmar Riedel likewise stresses the didactic aspects of Rāwandī's work yet, unlike Meisami, considers the work holistically. Describing the three interlinking parts of the compilation as a 'coherent text from different sources', Riedel points out that it was designed as a kind of textbook which

served as 'a personalized curriculum of Great Seljuq politics and courtly etiquette'.[13] Framed as it is according to the sections of a Persian panegyric *qaṣīda*, Riedel points out that the tripartite structure of the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* focuses on justice, institutional history and courtly etiquette.[14] Yet despite her careful textual analysis, which illuminates many aspects of the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, Riedel does not connect the author's aspirations at the Anatolian Seljuk court specifically with the boon companionship. Indeed, her characterisation of Rāwandī as 'an obscure calligrapher and theologian' overlooks his vocation as aspiring *nadīm*.[15] It is this gap that I consider in this chapter – the relationship of Rāwandī's text with courtly *adab* literature and the position of the *munādama*, or boon companionship, at the Anatolian Seljuk court.

Rāwandī and the Rāḥat al-ṣudūr

Originally from the small town of Rāwand in the outskirts of Kashan, Abū Bakr Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Rāwandī was born into a family of scholars famed for their calligraphic skills.[16] Rāwandī took up residence in Hamadan at the court of the Seljuk sultan Tughrul III during the years 1181–9, serving as apprentice to his uncle, a renowned court calligrapher. Following the death of Tughrul III in 1194 and the subsequent collapse of Great Seljuk power in 'Irāq-i 'ajam,[17] Rāwandī took up service as tutor to the sons of a family of local notables, the 'Arabshāh. Although trained for imperial court employment, Rāwandī discovered that his career prospects in western Iran remained limited to tutoring the sons of a local Shi'ite household of means. Rāwandī's hopes for a career at court were thus dashed as the sultanate disintegrated into petty warring principalities throughout the 1190s and early 1200s, and Persian Iraq was plundered by the former sultan's *ghulām*s and commanders, the army of the Khwarazmians and the caliphal army under the control of the vizier Mu'ayyid al-Dīn.[18] It was under these straitened circumstances and outbreak of political turmoil that the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* took its final shape, and its author sought the patronage of the Seljuks of Rūm – the formerly hostile cousins of the Great Seljuks and previously obscure branch of the dynastic family.

Although it seems he originally intended the work for Tughrul III,[19] Rāwandī readjusted his text for submission to Kaykhusaw I with added material on the Rūm Seljuk sultan's background, conquests and military exploits against Christian lands, completing the final version of the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* in 1210.[20]

Rāwandī tells us that he learned of Kaykhusraw I's military activities from an Anatolian merchant visiting Hamadan, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Bakr al-Rūmī, who, acting as an agent and propagandist of the sultan, spread the news of Kaykhusraw's conquest of Antalya (1207), his struggle against the 'infidel' Armenians and other deeds (*manāqib*). The merchant also relayed the sultan's injunction to those in 'Irāq-i 'ajam to muster armies and march against the lands of the infidels (perhaps rather than squabble among themselves). This propaganda gained the distant sultan adherents and supporters from among the 'Iraqi amirs, notables and ruling elite.[21] Like many other members of the political elite, through contact with the merchant-agent Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Bakr al-Rūmī, Rāwandī placed hopes in Kaykhusraw I as a possible saviour of his homeland torn apart by political tumult and military strife.[22]

The *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* is divided into three sections: an extensive introduction, a history of the Great Seljuks and an overview of *adab* as the *nadīm*'s requisite repertoire of courtly etiquette, skills and talents. The introduction begins with a fourteen-couplet *mathnawī* with eulogies to the prophets ending with Muḥammad, the Prophet's companions, the *ahl-i bayt* and various other religious figures. Rāwandī then launches into a discourse on the notion of justice as meted out by God, the caliphs and Iranian kings, followed by two long *qaṣīdas*, one by the compiler praising his dedicatee, Kaykhusraw I, and one composed by the famous poet Jamāl al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī on the vicissitudes of fate.[23] The text then turns to the life and circumstances of the author, beginning with how the Great Seljuk sultan Tughrul III received instruction in calligraphy from Rāwandī's uncle. This section is interspersed with *qaṣīdas* praising the author's uncle and associates, as well as the intellectual elite of Hamadan, emphasising their fame as mentors of the Seljuk sultans. The author provides the details of his own education and explains how he came to compile his

work. The introduction concludes with a description of the work's content, the *fihrist*, a discursus on why a sultan should strive to leave behind a good name by doing good deeds, and an exhortation that the sultan should endear himself to his subjects.

The second section, the history of the Great Seljuks of Iran and Iraq up to the invasion of the Khwārazmshāh, comprises the bulk of the work. Based verbatim on Nīshāpūrī's *Saljūqnāma*, this section contains extensive selections of verse inserted into the narrative for illustrative or edifying purposes. *Qaṣīda*s by the author in the praise of the work's dedicatee, Kaykhusraw I, are inserted in between the reigns of sultans, and Arabic and Persian poetic selections, including verses from Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma* as well as Sanā'ī, are also interspersed throughout the text.[24] Poetic selections provide moral and edifying commentary, as well as serve to heighten the reader's emotional response to tragic events. Thus, with verse by the renowned Seljuk poet Mu'izzī, Nishapur, after its destruction by the Ghuzz in 1153, is compared to the desolate remains of a familiar encampment turned into ruins haunted only by birds and wild beasts.[25] The poetic selections from the repertoire of Niẓāmī, Anwarī, 'Imādī, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, and Mujīr al-Dīn Baylaqānī appear to have been drawn by Rāwandī from the illustrated anthology of contemporary poems compiled for Tughrul III by his uncle for entertainment at the sultan's *majlis* (assemblies).[26] The historical section ends with the panegyric composed by Rāwandī for Kaykhusraw I, whom he exhorts to deliver his homeland from Khwarazmian oppression.

The third section of Rāwandī's work focuses on the courtly accomplishments (*ādāb*) of the *nadīm*,[27] in six sections (*faṣl*), ranging from a discussion on the benefits of playing chess and its different forms (*faṣl-i dar dhikr-i ādāb-i nadama* [?] *wa sharḥ-i bākhtan-i shaṭranj wa nard*, pp. 404–15); on the proper way to prepare and drink wine (*faṣl fī 'l-sharāb*, pp. 416–27); on horse-racing and archery (*faṣl dar musābaqat wa tīr-andākht*, pp. 428–31); on hunting (*faṣl dar shikār kardan*, pp. 431–3); on the author's expertise in calligraphy (*faṣl fī ma'rifat uṣūl al-khaṭṭ min al-dā'īra wa 'l-niqā*, pp. 437–47);[28] and, finally, on divination through the numerical values of letters, referred to as the 'conqueror' and the 'conquered' (*faṣl fī 'l-ghālib wa*

'l-maghlūb, pp. 447–56). This method 'of calculating the results of contests between rivals' was a form of divination specifically used for military decisions; it was supposedly of ancient origins going back to Alexander the Great, who learned it from his tutor, Aristotle.[29]

The third part of Rāwandī's work, the section on the arts of the *nadīm*, has received little attention from scholars. Indeed, if one is looking for new information on the practice of these activities one will be disappointed, for this section is as derivative as the other two.[30] This section, however, provides important clues to the author's intent: by concluding his work with this summary excursion through the arts of a *nadīm*, as well as highlighting his special skills in calligraphy, Rāwandī appears to have been alerting his reader to his qualifications for this court position. By stressing his intimate knowledge of and his extensive experience at the Seljuk court in Hamadan under sultan Tughrul III, Rāwandī demonstrates his special qualifications as a *nadīm par excellence*, capable of assisting the Anatolian Seljuk sultan in fulfilling his role as the supreme power in the Turco-Iranian world and inheritor of the entire Seljuk legacy. As an intimate of the sultan, Rāwandī would thus convey the political memory (through his historical narrative), the literary culture (with the verse of Great Seljuk poets) and court practice (with the instruction of *adab*) of the defunct Iranian Seljuks to the Anatolian Seljuk court.

Adab, *Ethics and the* Nadīm

What exactly was the post of *nadīm* to which Rāwandī aspired? Despite the many medieval works on *adab* written by *nadīms*,[31] there is little modern scholarship focusing on the role of the *nadīm* in medieval Islamic polities, and none at all with reference to Anatolia.[32] Although research to date has largely concentrated on the Abbasid *nadīm*, one can draw on this literature for the Seljuk case since court practice of the Great Seljuks was modelled largely on that of the Abbasids (via Ghaznavid and Samanid models).[33] As for the Anatolian context of the Seljuks, however, we have little to go by. Although Ibn Bībī, our main source for the thirteenth-century Anatolian Seljuk

dynasty and author of a work deeply entrenched in court politics, makes mention of this courtly occupation (as will be discussed further below), he provides little specific information to illuminate the Anatolian Seljuk context.

The prestigious and influential post of the boon companion, as *nadīm* is usually translated, developed in the early Abbasid period around the same time as the vizierate, yet in a sphere separate from the administrative offices. The duty of the boon companion required first and foremost 'befriending' the caliph according to a set of rigorous requirements and protocol.[34] The boon companion was to observe proper deportment, and to cultivate the virtues of forbearance, humility, brevity in speech and discretion.[35] The *nadīm* was on duty during the caliph's 'private' time, or as Chejne expresses it 'in his time of solitude, hunting parties, chess games, and drinking and literary sessions'. He was likewise indispensible to the *majlis*, the intellectual or literary assemblies held by the caliph.[36]

Famous poets often served as boon companion to the caliphs and tutor to their sons, as in the case of the celebrated Abū Nuwās (d. c.815). They were often historian–littérateurs and chess experts such as Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Ṣūlī (d. 947), whose work, *Akhbār al-ʿAbbās*, contains valuable information on the institution in reference to literary and drinking sessions.[37] Ibn Iskandar, the eleventh-century author of the *Qābūsnāma*, outlines the skills that the *nadīm* should possess: he should be trained in the epistolary arts in Arabic and Persian so that he may act as personal secretary for the ruler; he should have considerable expertise in poetry, having committed poems to memory both in Arabic and Persian; he should also be able to distinguish good verse from bad; he should know the Qur'an by heart and be able to comment upon it; he should likewise be well versed in the hadith, jurisprudence and the application of the law; he should have some knowledge of medicine and astrology; he should be a talented raconteur and knowledgeable about the lives of monarchs and their character; and finally, he should be able to play a musical instrument, and be skilful in backgammon and chess.[38] It is for this reason that the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* covers this wealth of different topics:

Rāwandī aims in his book to show his mastery of all the appropriate skills for a *nadīm*.

A further important characteristic of the *nadīm* was connected with *adab*, in the sense of 'correct behaviour' as much as 'literature', as is demonstrated by the career of Miskawayh (c.936–1030), who stands out as the exemplary Abbasid boon companion *adīb*.[39] It was during his long and illustrious career of service to the Shi'ite Buyids, a period of flourishing Islamic learning, that Miskawayh brought an intellectual depth to *adab* literature never before witnessed, nor ever to be matched. Critical of the shallowness of the court culture of his time, Miskawayh developed a system known as 'virtue ethics', which permeated much of later *adab* works. As intellectual advisor and companion to the ruler, the *nadīm* was to be well versed in ethics and moral philosophy, and have a good command of the sacred and secular sciences, including divinity, mathematics, alchemy and cooking.[40] To this body of knowledge, one must add history writing, for history facilitated the acquisition of virtues by providing concrete examples of ethical theory with the exposition of the unfolding of the divine plan as manifested by events.[41] Miskawayh thus composed a world history as a model of prudent management of the realm according to the concept of *tadbīr*, or 'sound government'.[42] In the Islamic world this body of general practical knowledge came to be defined as *adab*: the 'manners, culture, the root and substance of *ta'dīb*, education, discipline, culture'.[43]

Miskawayh's ethical framework exerted much influence over subsequent *adab* literature, and in particular over the conceptualisation of the boon-companion. In his *Siyar al-mulūk* ('The Conduct of Kings'), the eleventh-century Seljuk vizier Niẓām al-Mulk points out that, '[a] boon-companion is the reflexion of his ruler. If he is affable, liberal, patient, gracious, the ruler is likely to be so.'[44] The early fourteenth-century author, Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, likewise equates the character of the ruler with that of his *nadīm*.[45] Drawing on the same tradition, Rāwandī elaborates on the ethical qualities of the *nadīm*:

> Boon companionship (*munādamat*) and attending majlis (*mujālasat*) with the *pādishāh* is a grave business (*amrī-yi 'aẓīm-*

> *ast*) and a weighty or dangerous occupation (*kārī-yi khaṭīr-ast*). The boon companion is the manifestation of the intelligence and the proof of the excellence of the *pādishāh*: men take on the qualities of those with whom they spend time.[46]

Thus the *nadīm* was much more than the drinking companion and source of entertainment for the sultan.[47] The *nadīm*'s access to the sultan, as well as his influence on him, made him a participant in court politics, albeit as a member of the imperial entourage rather than of the administrative *dīwān*. It may be illustrative to repeat Matthew Innes's observation that 'the exercise of power was rooted in the everyday, in the give and take of face-to-face relationships of cooperation, patronage, and mutual backscratching, ... and thus, bound up in patterns of movement and meeting'.[48] In other words, social relationships formed the main basis of medieval political power, with informal and fluid ties of personal loyalty, rather than formal structured institutions, lying behind the political and social dynamics of the period. Thus, as Matthew Innes argues, medieval rulers and elites lacked a stable institutional basis for the exercise of power, and thus dominated 'socially rather than administratively'.[49] Indeed, similar to that of other medieval polities, Seljuk political culture – in both Anatolia and Iran – was based on personal rule. Thus, if one views the sultan's drinking parties with the elites of his court and realm as a political practice which was part and parcel of personal rule, then the *nadīm* must likewise been seen as more than an entertainer and drinking partner of the sultan, but also as a political actor.

The Nadīm *at the Seljuk Court of Rūm and the Reception of Rāwandī's* Rāḥat al-ṣudūr

Our major source for the position of the *nadīm* in Seljuk Anatolia is Ibn Bībī. He refers to the *nadīm* in a somewhat stereotypical way, always using the plural form *nudamā'* paired with *ḥurafā'* (intimates), and, in one instance, with *julasā'* (companions).[50] Mention is made of the *nudamā'* in descriptions of enthronement ceremonies during which the recital of panegyric poetry took place,[51] or in references

to the *majlis-i bazmī* (wine symposiums) which followed celebratory feasts.[52] Only once does Ibn Bībī mention the name of a *nadīm*: a certain Nūr al-Dīn pasar-i Shash Ṭalā-yī Akhlāṭī, who appears in the company of the sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Kayqubād I (r. 1219–37).[53] Thus, although Ibn Bībī does not tell us much about the *nadīm*, it is clear it was very much part of Anatolian Seljuk court life.

It is Ibn Bībī's description of the activities and moral probity of Alā' al-Dīn Kayqubād, however, that strikes a chord with Rāwandī's text with regard to the *nadīm*'s role in reinforcing the moral probity of the ruler. Rather than looking to the *nadīm* as the reinforcer of the sacred role of the ruler as dispenser of justice and upholder of ethical behaviour, as we see in Rāwandī, Ibn Bībī portrays the sultan, in this case, Kayqubād I, as fulfilling all ethical requirements of his position as monarch. Ibn Bībī thus presents us with a description of the sultan's activities, both in the official capacity as ruler as well as during his leisure time, which reinforce the notion that justice was the central preoccupation of the monarch, around which all other royal activities gravitated. Thus, in a chapter describing 'the sultan's virtues, love of justice and other attractive features',[54] Ibn Bībī provides a rather detailed description of Kayqubād's daily routine. After the morning prayers (done in accordance to Shafi'i rites, although the Hanafi prescriptions prevailed in all other matters), the sultan would go to the court of justice where petitioners were received. There the sultan carried on the daily business of 'dispensing justice'.[55] So inordinately just was Kayqubād, Ibn Bībī tells us, that the smallest creature such as an ant would not be denied his due. After dispensing justice all day, when night fell the sultan would preside over the magnificent imperial *majlis*.[56] To the accompaniment of music and wine, the exploits of kings (*tawārīkh-i mulūk*) would be recited; indeed, the sultan in particular relished the discussion of praiseworthy *pādishāh*s of old, such as Maḥmūd of Ghazna, whom he held as exemplary models. Sometimes the sultan would recite his own verse. Everyone was expected to conform to a standard of decency at the risk of banishment. As Ibn Bībī explains, 'if one of his intimates or nadims (*ḥurafā' wa nudamā*) transgressed their rank or duty (*birūn-i martaba wa waẓīfa*) with inappropriate speech or behaviour, he would

scold them and distance them from the court, and never allow them entrance to the *majlis* again'.[57] Ibn Bībī likewise informs us that Kayqubād was well versed in Persian edifying and ethical works such as Ghazzālī's *Kīmiyā-yi sa'ādat* and Niẓām al-Mulk's *Siyāsatnāma*. He ends this section with a brief overview of the sultan's abilities in other occupations. Kayqubād was thoroughly trained in various crafts of the artisan, and in particular knew the value of precious stones; he played chess and backgammon well, and was an avid polo (*gūyī*) player and hunter.[58]

In contrast, Kayquabād's son and successor Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusraw II (r. 1237–46) lacked his father's exemplary character and seemed to have little interest in state affairs or ruling his realm with justice. Immediately after the Seljuk defeat at Kösedağ (1243), the landmark battle ushering in the period of Mongol dominance in Anatolia, the elderly Seljuk commander Mubāriz al-Dīn Chavlı chided Kaykhusraw II for bringing disaster on the sultanate. Indeed, the Seljuk hostilities with the Mongols could possibly have been avoided if the sultan had followed a different policy. The young and inexperienced sultan's biggest offence, according to Chavlı, was receiving the wrong counsel. In general, the sultan was guilty of associating with the wrong types – base associates, vulgar boon companions and ignorant intimates (*julasā'-yi arādhīl wa nudamā'-yi asāfil wa ḥurafā'-yi jāhil*).[59] Kaykhusraw II was a wayward sultan in need of rehabilitation.

It has been assumed that Rāwandī never actually travelled to the Seljuk court in Konya, but instead sent his work.[60] The final *qaṣīda*, however, makes specific reference to the poet's arrival at the court with the line 'the traveller who has arrived as panegyrist after a journey of two months'.[61] Rāwandī, for reasons which remain unknown, did not however succeed in entrenching himself at the Seljuk court in Konya. His hopes to gain a position as *nadīm* to Kaykhusraw I may have been dashed when the sultan died in battle against the Byzantines in 1211, the year Rāwandī may possibly have arrived at court. Thus, while we do not know of Rāwandī's subsequent fate – whether he remained in Konya, left for another court or died – we do know that the only extant version of the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* was copied in

mid April 1238 (the beginning of Ramadan 635), by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ḥājjī Ilyās b. 'Abdallāh, as he is named in the manuscript, a member of the *'ulamā'* as his title al-Ḥāfiẓ (memoriser of the Qur'an) indicates.[62] His son, Abū Sa'īd b. Ilyās al-Ḥāfiẓ *mulṭasib al-'asākir*,[63] appears among the ranks of the Seljuk political elite as a religious official, as can be seen in a reference to him among the witnesses of the Seljuk statesman Jalāl al-Dīn Qaratay's *waqfīya* dating from 651/1253–4.[64] The production of this copy of the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* – the single copy to have survived into modern times – coincides with troubled times for the Seljuk sultanate. Shortly after the young Seljuk sultan Kaykhusraw II took the throne in 1237, he remained for approximately a year under the tyrannical hold and dangerous influence of the Seljuk official, Sa'd al-Dīn Köpek. Indeed, Köpek's reign of terror and purging of important generals and statesmen had dire consequences for the Seljuk elite and the stability of the empire on the eve of the Mongol invasions.[65] The situation reminds one of Niẓām al-Mulk's caveat against employing as boon companions those who hold administrative posts; intimates of the sultan should not have additional sources of power or administrative responsibilities, otherwise the manipulation of the sultan through their intimate influence had the potential to upset the balance of power distributed among the members of the court and *dīwān*.[66] The case of Köpek provides a striking example of this dangerous situation. After having isolated Kaykhusraw II from the influence of all other officials and amirs, Köpek seized complete control of the reins of government through his grip over the sultan and proceeded to destroy the empire's ruling elite, until he was murdered some time in the summer of 1238.

How may we interpret the copying of this text during this period of crisis for the Seljuk sultanate? Was it a response to Köpek's regime and manipulation of the sultan and the state apparatus? Did Rāwandī's concluding *qaṣīda* with its exhortation to rule justly (*Khusraw bā dād bād*), originally directed to Kaykhusraw I, have special resonance in 1238? It is possible. Rāwandī's ethically oriented compilation would have been appropriate material for the rehabilitation of the young sultan's ways, especially after the damaging effects of his contact with Köpek. It thus may have been copied by al-Ḥāfiẓ

Ḥājjī Ilyās b. 'Abdallāh as a way to to urge Kaykhusraw II to return to the path of just rule.

Conclusion

The title of Rāwandī's work, *Rāḥāt al-ṣudūr wa-āyāt al-surūr* has been translated in various ways. Jan Rypka renders it as 'Recreation of the Breast and Symbol of Joy',[67] Meisami as 'Ease for Breasts and Marvel of Happiness'[68] and Riedel as 'Comfort of Hearts and Wonder of Delights'.[69] I propose the alternative translation of 'Comfort at the Bosoms (of Leaders) and Delight in the Auspicious Signs'. My translation takes into account the author's intentions in compiling this work, rendering *rāḥat al-ṣudūr* as 'comfort of one's breast', that is, inner peace, in reference to the ease or comfort of living (*rāḥat*) in relation to the power of those at the helm of government (*ṣudūr*, the plural of *ṣadr*, ministers or chiefs). The second part of the title, *āyāt al-surūr* ('signs of joy'), may be interpreted as intimating the bright future of the greater Seljuk world with the auspicious rise to power of Kaykhusraw I. This hybrid work, to use Meisami's term, with its mixture of history, poetry and didactic discussions of justice, as well as its overview of the arts of *adab* at which a *nadīm* should be proficient, was compiled with the symbiotic relationship of the *nadīm* and sultan in mind.

It was likewise the symbiotic relationship of power between courtiers such as the *nadīm* and the sultan that was expressed through *qaṣīdas* such as Rāwandī's *Khusraw bā dād bād*. Just as the *nadīm* was a core member of the *majlis*, or court assembly, the recital of the *qaṣīda* was his ritualistic literary counterpart, reflecting the ideal qualities of rulership. Considered 'the courtly poem par excellence',[70] the *qaṣīda* recited in praise of caliphs, sultans and notables took a central role in the ceremonial ritual of court life in the medieval Islamic world.[71] The fiction of imperial glory based on divine will and dependent upon the exercise of justice was the 'glue' between the sultan and his court officials, whose livelihoods were dependent upon the imperial personage of the ruler. When the ideological fiction of the power and glory of the sultanate was subverted, such as we see under the

brief regime of Köpek, the court, if not the entire sultanate, was endangered. This was particularly important in the case of political structures which lacked a hereditary caste of nobility, but rather were manned by a meritorious aristocracy supporting a hereditary sultan. When a sovereign, such as Kaykhusraw II, was born into a role which may not suit his personal tendencies, it was up to the men of his court to help him fulfil that role. Courtiers such as the *nadīm* thus strove to cast the sultan in the role of 'warrior', decision-maker and power-balancer through their representations of the royal personage, a strategy of subterfuge necessary to justify the continuance of a hereditary dynasty.

The recitation of panegyric *qaṣīda*s is likened by Stefan Sperl to a public ritual of the renewal of faith in the state, which at the same time reminded the sovereign of the duties of his high office. Following their ritualistic recitation at the court assembly, their authors were awarded with *khil'a*, or robes of honour, and large sums of money, as convention dictated.[72] As Sperl points out, 'the sumptuous award of the court poet is part of the ceremony: it is a public demonstration of generosity and symbolizes the life-giving function of the King'.[73] The aspiring *nadīm* Rāwandī, with his compilation of the *Raḥāt al-ṣudūr*, took on the role of agent of cultural continuity through the transfer of literary and other cultural forms. Rāwandī's particular project was the renewal of the Great Seljuk political and cultural legacy in the lands of Rūm under the rising Anatolian Seljuks.

Notes

1. I dedicate this chapter to the memory of K. Allin Luther, whose course on Perso-Islamic civilisation at the University of Michigan inspired me to study the medieval Turco-Iranian world.
2. Muḥammad b. 'Alī Rāwandī, *Raḥāt al-ṣudūr wa-āyāt al-surūr*, ed. Muhammad Iqbal (Leiden and London: E. J. Brill and Luzac and Co., 1921), p. 465. This edition is based on the unique manuscript, Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, MS Suppl. Persan 1314. A Turkish translation has been rendered by Ahmed Ateş, *Râhat-üs-sudûr ve Âyet-üs-sürûr (Gönüllerin Rahatı ve Sevinç Alâmeti*

(Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1960, 2 vols), cited hereafter as Rāwandī, trans. Ateş.

3. *Ṣāḥib-qirān*, a term with pre-Islamic Iranian origins, means world 'conqueror and universal sovereign' (Cornell Fleischer, 'Royal authority, dynastic cyclism, and "Ibn Khaldunism" in sixteenth-century Ottoman letters', *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 18, no. 304 [1983], p. 206); the term is known for its implications of important planetary conjunctions: Naindeep Sigh Chann, 'Lord of the auspicious conjunction: origins of the *Ṣāḥib-Qirān*', *Iran and the Caucasus 13* (2009), pp. 93–4.
4. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, p. 465.
5. K. Allin Luther, 'Islamic rhetoric and the Persian historians, 1100–1300 A.D.', in James A. Bellamy (ed.), *Studies in Near Eastern Culture and History in Memory of Ernest T. Abdel-Massih* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies, 1990), pp. 90–8.
6. For the first in-depth study of the work as a literary composition, see Dagmar A. Riedel's dissertation, 'Searching for the Islamic Episteme: The Status of Historical Information in Medieval Middle-Eastern Anthological Writing' (PhD Dissertation, Indiana University, 2004).
7. For more on the dissolution of the Great Seljuks, see Julie Scott Meisami, 'The collapse of the Great Saljuqs', in Chase F. Robinson (ed.), *Texts. Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D. S. Richards* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 265–300.
8. For a critique of earlier modern reception of Rāwandī, see Julie Scott Meisami, 'Rāvandī's *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*: history or hybrid?', *Edebiyat* 5, no. 2 (1994), pp. 183–5; eadem, *Persian Historiography to the end of the twelfth century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 237; Hillenbrand, 'Rāvandī, the Seljuk court at Konya, and the Persianisation of Anatolian Cities', *Mésogeios* 25–36 (2005), p. 162. Hillenbrand comments that the work ends with 'a rather curious section of miscellaneous items'.
9. For more on Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī's *Saljūq-nāma*, upon which Rāwandī based his historical section, see A.H. Morton, *The Saljūqnāma of Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī. A critical text making use of the*

unique manuscript in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society (London: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 2004).

10. G. M. Curpalidis, 'Selçuklu Devletinın Tarihiyle İlgili Fars Kaynaklarının Tekstolojik Tahlili ("Atebet El-Ketebe" Adlı XII. Yüzyılın. Belge Derlemesi Ve Muhammed Er-Râvendî'nin "Rahat Es-sudûr ve Âyet Es-surûr" Eserinin Kıyaslandırılması Temelinde)', ın *Uluslararası Osmanlı Öncesı Türk Kültürü Kongresi Bildirileri* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, 1997), p. 121. For more on al-Juwaynī's *'Atabat al-kataba*, see A.K.S. Lambton, 'The administration of Sanjar's empire as illustrated in the *'Atabat al-kataba*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 20, no. 1 (1957), pp. 367–88.
11. Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, pp. 237–9; eadem, 'The historian and the poet: Rāvandī, Nizami and the rhetoric of history', in Kamran Talatof, Jerome W. Clinton and K. Allin Luther (eds), *The poetry of Nizami Ganjavi: knowledge, love, and rhetoric* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 97–128; eadem, 'Rāvandī's *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*,' pp. 183–215.
12. Meisami, 'Rāvandī's *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*,' pp. 183–4; eadem 'The historian and the poet', 97 ff.
13. Riedel, 'Searching for the Islamic Epıisteme', pp. iii, 4, 18.
14. Ibid., pp. 224, 259–60.
15. Ibid., p. iii.
16. Rāwandī. *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, p. iv.
17. The Seljuks of Iraq constituted a large appanage under the loose overlordship of the Great Seljuk Sultan Sanjar (d. 1155), and considered themselves to be his heirs and continuators: K. Allin Luther, 'The end of Saljuk dominion in Khurasan', in Louis L. Orlin (ed.), *Michigan Oriental Studies in honor of George C. Cameron* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Michigan, 1976), p. 219.
18. Kenneth Allin Luther, 'Ravandi's report on the administrative changes of Muhammad Jahan Pahlavan', in C.E. Bosworth (ed.), *Iran and Islam: In Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky* (Edinburgh: Edınburgh University Press, 1971), p. 400.
19. Julie Scott Meisami, 'The collapse of the Great Saljuqs', p. 265.

20. Reidel, 'Searching for the Islamic Episteme', pp. xv-xxii, 178, 184
21. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, p. 462: '*wa dar ḫidmat-i umarā'-yi 'Irāq wa ṣudūr u buzurgān sharḥ-i sīrat wa 'adl farmūdan va lashgar ārāstan wa kāfir kāstan wa maṣṣāf {maṣāf} dādan wa bilād-i kufr gushādan mī-dād wa umarā'-yi 'Irāq-rā dūstdār-i khudāwand-i 'ālam karda-ast ...*'
22. Ibid.
23. For more on Jamāl al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, see Michael Glünz, *Die Panegyrische Qaṣīda bei Kamāl al-Dīn Ismā'il aus Isfahan: eine Studie zur persischen Lobdichtung um den Beginn des 7./13. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Steinter, 1993) pp. 8–9.
24. Ateş points out that a total of 2799 verse couplets are found in the work, 511 of which are by the author himself in praise of Kaykhusraw I (Rāwandī, trans. Ateş, i, p. xx).
25. For more on the poet Mu'izzī, see G.E. Tetley, *The Ghaznavid and Seljuq Turks. Poetry as a Source for Iranian History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).
26. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, pp. xv–xxii; 57: '*wa khudāvand-i 'ālam majlis bi-dān mī-ārāst*'.
27. Ibid., p. 404.
28. Ibid., pp. xxvii–xxviii; 64.
29. Ibid., p. xxviii.
30. Iqbal writes: 'The contents of the sundry sections at the end of the book are to my mind not so important as might appear at first sight. Of these the two sections on shooting (with arrows) and horse-racing (pp. 428–434) can be dismissed as entirely uninteresting, for they only discuss the lawfulness or otherwise of these practices under various conditions, from a religious point of view ...' 'The section on chess contains nothing that is extraordinary or instructive ... more or less a repetition of what has been so often told by earlier and later writers on chess in Arabic as well as in Persian ...' (Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, pp. xxvi–xxvii).
31. See Anwar G. Chejne, 'The boon-companion in early 'Abbāsid times', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 85, no. 3 (1965), p. 328.

32. This stagnant state of affairs has begun to change in recent years with the important study by Samer M. Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages: Poetry, Public Performance, and the Presentation of the Past* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).
33. For examples of the institution of the *nadīm* under the Great Seljuks, see Tetley, *The Ghaznavid and Seljuk Turks*, p. 13 and passim, for a survey of Great Seljuk panegyric literature.
34. Chejne, 'The boon-companion', pp. 327–30.
35. Ibid., p. 330.
36. Ibid., p. 335.
37. Ibid. Also see Stefan Leder, 'al-Ṣūlī', *EI*^{2}, ix, pp. 846–8. Reminiscent of Rāwandī, Ṣūlī produced a recension of the *dīwān* of Abū Nūwas and a work on chess. For a study of Ṣūlī at the Abbasid court, see Letizia Osti, 'The wisdom of youth: legitimising the Caliph al-Muqtadir', *Al-Masāq* 19, no. 1 (2007), pp. 17–27. Osti tells us, 'In the *Kitāb al-awrāq*, his major historical work, Ṣūlī mixed accounts of political and military events with anecdotes of life at court and events in his own life'. Al-Ṣūlī expanded and embellished his historical narrative with a prodigious use of verse (Osti, 'The wisdom of youth', pp. 19–20).
38. Chejne, 'The boon-companion', p. 332.
39. Lenn E. Goodman, *Islamic Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 102–3.
40. Ibid., p. 108.
41. Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, p. 81.
42. Goodman, *Islamic Humanism*, pp. 199–200.
43. Ibid., p. 107.
44. Quoted in Chejne, 'The boon-companion', p. 331.
45. Ibid, pp. 331, 331 n. 38.
46. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, p. 405: *Nadīm bayān-i 'aql wa burhān-i faḍl-i pādishāh bāshad*.
47. J. Sadan, 'Nadīm', *EI*^{2}, vi, pp. 849–52.
48. Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 139–40.

49. Ibid., p. 261.
50. Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmir al-ʿalāʾīya fī ʾl-umūr al-ʿalāʾīya*, facsimile edition prepared by Adnan Sadık Erzi as İbn-i Bībī, *El-Evāmirü'l-ʿAlāʾiyye fi'l-Umūri'l-ʿAlāʾiyye* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1956), pp. 218, 228, 237, 273, 504, 526.
51. Ibid., p. 217.
52. Ibid., pp. 218, 237, 504.
53. Ibid., p. 273.
54. Ibid., p. 222.
55. Ibid., pp. 227–8.
56. Ibid., p. 228.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., p. 526.
60. Based on this assumption Riedel theorises: 'Since Rāwandī himself did not travel to Anatolia to plead in person for the patronage of Kay Khusraw, he designed the *Rāḥat* as his representative. The miscellany is a written record of Great Seljuq politics, organized in accordance with oral practices that were indispensible to a Rūm Seljuq identity. The *Rāḥat* therefore illustrates how writing can be employed to adhere to oral practices, even though they were changed by being represented in writing' (Reidel, 'Searching for the Islamic Episteme', p. 262).
61. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, p. 465.
62. Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, p. 439. Riedel's careful description of the manuscript informs us that copyists's *nisba* of al-Qunawī appears to be a later addition (Riedel, 'Searching for the Islamic Episteme', p. 79).
63. I cannot identify with any exactitude the specific post of *muḥtasib al-ʿasākir*. For more on the *muḥtasib* in the Great Seljuk context, see Christian Lange, *Justice. Punishment and the Medieval Muslim Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) and Richard Wittmann, 'The *muḥtasib* in Seljuq times: insights from four chancery manuals', *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 7 (2006), pp. 108–128. In addition to his duties as overseer of commercial transactions, the *muḥtasib* exercised punitive

authority in various ways (Lange, *Justice. Punishment and the Medieval Muslim Imagination*, p. 55). See also Ronald P. Buckley, 'The muhtasib', *Arabica* 39 (1992), pp. 59–117; Wilhelm Floor, 'The office of muhtasib in Iran', *Iranian Studies* 18, no. 1 (1985), pp. 53–74.

64. M. Ferid Uğur and M. Mes'ud Koman, *Selçuk Büyüklerinden Celâlüddin Karatay İle Kardeşlerinin Hayat ve Eserleri* (Konya: Yeni Kitap Basımevi, 1940), p. 82; Osman Turan, 'Selçuk Vakfiyeleri III. Celâleddin Karatay, Vakıfları ve Vakfiyeleri', *Belleten* 12, no. 45 (1948), p. 144.
65. See Sara Nur Yıldız, 'The rise and fall of a tyrant in Seljuk Anatolia: Sa'd al-Din Köpek's reign of terror, 1237–1238', in Robert Hillenbrand, A.C.S. Peacock and Firuza Abdullaeva (eds), *Ferdowsi. the Mongols and Iranian History: Art. Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia* (London: I.B. Tauris, forthcoming).
66. Cheyne, 'The boon-companion', p. 331.
67. Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1968), p. 242.
68. Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, p. 237.
69. Riedel, 'Searching for the Islamic Episteme', p. iii.
70. Julie Meisami, 'Poetic microcosms: The Persian qasida to the end of the twelfth century', in Stefan Sperl and C. Shackle (eds), *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 139.
71. Stefan Sperl, 'Islamic kingship and Arabic panegyric poetry in the early 9th century', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 8 (1977), p. 20.
72. Ibid., p. 20.
73. Ibid., p. 34.