

Diplomatic Actors During the Seljuk Period: Envoys

Hasan YENİDOĞAN 

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi, Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü, Kilis, Türkiye
hsnyenidogan@gmail.com (Sorumlu Yazar/Corresponding Author)

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ABSTRACT

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Although many researches have been done on the Seljuk history, there has not been enough study on the Seljuk diplomacy, which is of such importance, until today. Although many studies have been conducted on the Seljuk history, it is thought that not enough studies have been done on the Seljuk diplomacy, which is of such importance, until today. As a result of the examinations made on the main sources, it was understood that the biggest actors in diplomacy, which are carried out as the art of negotiation, is the envoys. In this study, it was discussed whether there was an institution where envoys of great importance were trained. In this article, which aims to understand the characteristics of the envoys appointed during the Seljuk period, it is discussed who the envoys were chosen from, what kind of qualifications they had, and what their duties and powers were. In addition, due to the interest shown in gift-giving in diplomacy, what kind of gifts the envoys presented were discussed. In the last part of this study, what kind of welcoming ceremony was held for the envoys and the points that were considered in this process were given.

Selçuklular Döneminde Diplomatik Aktörler: Elçiler

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ÖZ

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Diploması, günümüzde olduğu gibi Orta Çağ'da da iç meselelerin ve uluslararası ilişkilerin yürütülmesine, barışın tahsisine ve savaşların sona erdirilmesine katkı sağlamaktaydı. Selçuklu tarihi üzerine birçok araştırma yapılsa da böylesine önem arz eden Selçuklu diplomasisi hakkında günümüze kadar yeterli çalışma yapılmadığı düşünülmektedir. Ana kaynaklar üzerinde yapılan incelemeler neticesinde Selçuklularda müzakere sanatı olarak yürütülen diplomasının en büyük aktörünün elçiler olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Çalışmada büyük öneme sahip olan elçilerin yetiştirildiği bir kurumun mevcut olup olmadığı ele alınmıştır. Selçuklular zamanında görevlendirilen elçileri tanıma amacı taşıyan bu çalışmada elçilerin kimler arasından seçildiği ve ne tür özelliklere sahip oldukları üzerinde durulmuştur. Selçuklu elçileri, iç ve dış barışın oluşması için çeşitli görevlere sahipti. Çalışmada elçilerin bu görevlerinin neler olduğu dönemden verilen örneklerle anlatılmıştır. Selçuklu sultanlarının diplomasi hediyeleşmeye gösterdiği ilgiden ötürü çalışmada hediyeleşmenin önemi ve hediyeleşme eşyalarının neler olduğu etraflıca ele alınmıştır. Çalışmanın son kısmında elçilerin karşılanması sırasında nasıl bir seremoninin gerçekleştiğine, karşılama ekibinde görevli memurların kimler olduğuna ve bu süreçte dikkat edilen hususların neler olduğuna yer verilmiştir.

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INTRODUCTION

In the pre-Islamic Turkish states, the embassy was an important institution where political affairs were carried out. China was at the forefront of the states with which the Turks had diplomatic contacts. Then, the Byzantine and Sāssānīd empires can be listed. In the First Turkic Khaganate (Göktürks) and Uyghurs, foreign contacts were carried out by officials called *bitigçi* (bitigchi), *ılımgacı*, and *tamgacı*. The equivalent of the word envoy in old Turkish is *elçi*. This word is derived from the word *el* (il), meaning people, state, and country. It is possible to encounter the word *alci/alchi* as a proper noun in Uyghur texts. The following example can be given in this regard: Kandan alci keldi/an envoy came from the Khan/Ruler. It is thought that this word also means representative. The Arabic equivalents of this word are *rasul* and *safir*.¹ It has been seen that the word *rasul* was used in Persian works written during the Seljuks and close to this period. The works of Nizām al-Mulk and Fakhr-i Mudabbīr are examples of this issue.²

In the Asian Hun State, the envoys carried a sign of reliability, representing the khan. Chinese envoys were kept under constant surveillance for their spying. When Mete Han went on the Great China Campaign, the Chinese Emperor sent him an embassy. The purpose of this delegation was to determine Mete's power by carrying out espionage work. Mete, who was aware of this situation, misled them and made his army look weak.³ Envoys from Byzantium and Rome were sent to the Western Hun Empire for various purposes. The Pope learned through envoys that Attila was afraid of magic and sorcerers.⁴

It is understood that the first embassy activities among the First Turkic Khaganate took place during the time of Bumin Qaghan. The envoy coming from China in 545 was welcomed with great excitement, as it was the first time that political relations were established with another state. The following year, Bumin sent an envoy to China and presented them with gifts from his own country's goods.⁵ The first official delegation from Central Asia to Eastern Rome was sent by Istemi Yabghu in late 567. Byzantine Emperor Justinus II welcomed the Turkish envoys with interest and read the letter written in Scythian Turkish sent by Istemi.⁶ During the time of the First Turkic Khaganate, envoys performed important duties in commercial relations as well as in political relations.⁷

In the second half of the 8th century, the Otuken Uyghurs were superior to China. Uyghur envoys were greeted by the Chinese with ceremonies and even seated on the same level as the emperor. On the other hand, Chinese envoys were greeted coldly by the Uyghurs. When China needed

¹ Mehmet İpşirli, "Elçi", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1995), 11/3, 5; Emine Uyumaz, *Türkiye Selçuklu Devleti'ne Gelen ve Giden Elçiler* (İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınlar, 2011), 11; Lev N. Gumilev, *Eski Türkler* (İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları, 2003), 513; Nurdan Vardan, *İslâm Öncesi Türk Kültüründe Elçi ve Elçilik Müessesesi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2012), 30-31.

² Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, ed. Ca'fer Şi'âr (Tahran: 1375/1996), 152, 153, 154; trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), 67, 68, 69, 70; Fakhr-i Mudabbīr, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā'a*, ed. Ahmed Suheyli-yi Hānsārī (Tahran: 1346/1967), 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 149, 150, 159, 160, 161, 169, 170, 171, 172, 180, 311, 374, 380, 497.

³ Salim Koca, "Büyük Hun Devleti" *Türkler Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: Semih Ofset, 2002), 1/697-698.

⁴ Yavuz Delibalta, *Selçuklularda İstihbarat* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 2019), 24.

⁵ Ahmet Taşağıl, *Göktürkler I* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2003), 16; İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü* (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınları, 1998), 76; Lev N. Gumilev, *Eski Türkler*, 41, 42.

⁶ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, 100, 101.

⁷ Liu Mau-Tsai, *Çin Kaynaklarına Göre Doğu Türkleri* (İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları, 2011), 501-502. For information about the treatment of envoys in Eastern Turks and the Chinese ceremony applied to envoys of foreign countries, see Liu Mau-Tsai, *Çin Kaynaklarına Göre Doğu Türkleri* (İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları, 2011), 523-550.

military support against its enemies, it requested help from the Uyghurs through envoys. For example, when T'ai Tsung came to the throne, he sent his eunuch to the Uyghurs in 762 to request help against Shih Ch'ao-i, who rebelled.⁸ It is known that the tradition of sending *fetihnāme* (victory letter), which was seen during the Seljuk period, existed among the Uyghurs. Foreign envoys would bring congratulatory messages during throne changes. For example, when Bilge Kul Qaghan ascended the throne, envoys came from China to congratulate him.⁹ Among the Uyghurs, a ceremony was held when envoys were welcomed and both parties presented gifts to each other.¹⁰

The Byzantine Empire established intense relations with the Pechenegs as well as with other Turkish states. These relations were usually carried out through envoys and merchants. When Byzantine envoys arrived in the north of the Black Sea to negotiate, they would ask for hostages and guides from the Pechenegs, leave the hostages in the castle, and set off with the guides. During this visit, the Pechenegs received various gifts from the envoys.¹¹

The first embassy activities during the reign of His Holiness the Prophet Mohammed took place after the migration to Medina. Prophet sent letters of invitation to Islam to six of the influential rulers of the period after the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah with the Meccan polytheists in the 6th year of the Hijra (628). They can be considered the first messengers of Islam who carried these letters.¹² It has been a matter of serious concern by states before and after Islam, among whom the envoys who had an important mission would be chosen. After the period of His Holiness Muhammad, attention was paid to the selection of the envoys by important people. For example, it is known that the envoy sent by 'Alī b. Abī Tālīb to Mu'āwīya b. Abī Sufyān was brave, knowledgeable, quick-witted, tall and imposing.¹³

In many sections of *Kutadgu Bilig*, written by Yūsuf Khās Hājib and dedicated to Sultan Tamgach Ulug Bughra Khan (1069-1103), during the time of the Karakhanids, who were contemporary with the Seljuks, it is stated that the envoy was called *yalawach*.¹⁴ Hājib (Ulug Hājib), who worked in the Karakhanid and Great Seljuk palaces, organized the arrival and departure of envoys and provided the gifts to be given to them.¹⁵

In the Ghaznavids, the person who dealt with embassy affairs was called *rasūldār*. The *rasūldār*'s assistants were called *martebedār*.¹⁶ He was responsible for welcoming the envoys, taking them to their residences, and presenting them to the sultan. During the struggle between the two sons of Mahmud of Ghaznī, Mesud and Muhammad, the envoy of the Abbasid Caliph Kādir-Billāh, Abu Muhammad, was welcomed with a ceremony when he came to the capital of Ghaznī. The messenger

⁸ Gülçin Çandarlıoğlu, "Uygurların Çinlilere Yaptıkları Yardımlar ve Bunların İçyüzü", *Tarih Dergisi* 0/31, 42 (Haziran 2011): 38; İpşirli, "Elçi", 5.

⁹ Gülçin Çandarlıoğlu, *Uygur Devletleri Tarihi ve Kültürü: Çin Kaynakları ve Uygur Kitabelerine Göre*, İstanbul: Türk dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 2004), 13.

¹⁰ Edouard Chavannes, *Çin Kaynaklarına Göre Batı Türkleri*, trans. Mustafa Koç (İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları, 2013), 138, 149.

¹¹ İpşirli, "Elçi", 3-6.

¹² İpşirli, "Elçi", 3.

¹³ Fakhr-i Mudabbir, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā'a*, 142, 144-145.

¹⁴ Yūsuf Khās Hājib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, ed. Mustafa S. Kaçalın (Ankara: Kabcacı Yayınları, 2020), 11, 12, 129, 135, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144.

¹⁵ Yūsuf Khās Hājib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 132, 133; Reşat Genç, *Karahanlı Devlet Teşkilatı (XI. Yüzyıl)*, (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981), 203; Uyumaz, *Türkiye Selçuklu Devleti'ne Gelen ve Giden Elçiler*, 12; Aydın Taneri, "Hâcib", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1996), 14/509.

¹⁶ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Saīd Nefīsī (Tahran: 1319/1940), 151, 256, 347, 445-446, 517-518; Uyumaz, *Türkiye Selçuklu Devleti'ne Gelen ve Giden Elçiler*, 13.

took the envoy to his residence, took care of him, and then brought the envoy before the sultan in a certain ceremony.¹⁷

As in other Turkish states, there were envoys who played an important role in the conduct of diplomatic relations during the Seljuk period and were active.¹⁸ In the study, it is explained what was taken into consideration when selecting envoys during the Seljuk period. In addition, what the duties of the envoys were, what kind of gifts were given during the gift exchange, and how the ceremony was organized for the envoys were discussed. When various academic studies on the envoys of the Seljuk period were examined, it was understood that primary sources were not utilized sufficiently. It is thought that this study, which was created as a result of research on chronicles, will contribute to the field.

1. Qualification of Envoys

Although the presence of envoys in the Seljuks is known, there has been no information obtained so far about the existence of an embassy institution or permanent embassies with which diplomatic relations are carried out. Besides, the existence of specially trained envoys is also unknown. On the other hand, according to the main sources, state employees working in various titles such as *tashtdār* (دار طشت) in the Seljuks could be appointed as envoys.¹⁹

In the Seljuks, as in other states, envoys were chosen from among men. It was noted that they had various characteristics. These features can be listed in light of the data obtained from the main sources as follows: The envoys were distinguished, intelligent, and very brave people. Because the best solutions to the problems between states were obtained through envoys. In addition to being very smart and cautious, the envoys had to be knowledgeable in order to be able to express their words well. Even before the Seljuks became a state (431/1040), they took care that the envoys were skilled in the art of speech.²⁰ For example, al-Bayhaqī stated that the Seljuks sent two envoys to the Ghaznī camp on 19 Muharram 428 (12 November 1036) during the struggle for homeland against the Ghaznavids, and the one from Bukhara had a very good speaking skill.²¹ Mīr-khānd's work titled *Rawzat as-safā'*, which contains important information about the Seljuks, states that when the Seljuks achieved success against the Ghaznavids, Chaghri Beg sent a wordsmith envoy to Nishapur.²² Ibn Bībī, one of the Iranian writers and historians, says that his father, Maqd ad-Dīn Mohammad, was appointed as the council clerk and was constantly with the Seljuk sultans. He also states that his father

¹⁷ Erdoğan Merçil, "Resuldarlık", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2007), 34/588; İpşirli, "Elçi", 6.

¹⁸ Hasan b. Abdulmumin al-Hōyī, *Hasan b. Abdülmü'min el-Hōyī'nin Kaleminden Selçuklu İnşa Sanatı*, ed. Cevdet Yakupoğlu-Namık Musalı (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2018), 87.

¹⁹ 'Atā Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, trans. Mürsel Öztürk (First Edition in 3 volumes combined) (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2013), 361. When Sultan Jalal al-Dīn Kharezmshah (1220-1231) went on an expedition to Georgia, he appointed emīr tashtdār as an envoy to the ruler of Georgia. Bk. 'Atā Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, ed. Mohammed b. Abd al-Wahhāb Qazwīnī, Vol. 2 (Leyden: 1329/1911), 160; trans. Mürsel Öztürk, 361.

²⁰ Yūsuf Khās Hājib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 140; al-Mawardī, *Nasīhat al-Mulk*, ed. Hazar Muhammed Hazar (Kuveyt: 1983/1403), 266-267; Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-'alā'īya fī'l-omūr al-'alā'īya*, trans. Mürsel Öztürk (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 214.

²¹ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Ganī-Feyyāz (Tahran: 1324/1945), 505; trans. Necati Lügāl (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2019), 470.

²² Mīr-khānd, *Rawzat as-safā' fī sīrat al-anbiyā' w-al-mulūk w-al-khulafā'*, ed. Jamshid Kiyānfer (Tahran: 1385/2006) 4/3139.

fulfilled his duty as an envoy many times and that there is no limit to the clarity of his language, and the beauty of his expression.²³

Unimaginable methods were tried to obtain information from the envoys. One of the best examples that can be given of this was experienced during the time of the Seljuk atabeg Nūr ad-Dīn Zengī (1146-1174). He besieged the fort of Jaber²⁴ in Syria (437/1146) and continued to besiege until those in the fort were thirsty. The ruler of the castle, Abi b. Mālik, offered him to lift the siege in exchange for 30,000 gold. Zengī said to one of his servants, “Leave water next to the horse of the envoy, and if the horse drinks water, come and let me know.” When the horse drank water, it was reported to Zengī. Thereupon, Atabeg said, “Indeed, they had very little water.” Later, Atabeg told the envoy, “Go and tell them they have no choice but to surrender the castle.”²⁵

In the works written during the Seljuks and around this period, the characteristics that envoys should have are listed as follows:

Envoys know the subject, which they will cover in detail. It is preferred that the person who will be the envoy be old and knowledgeable. They must be whole-hearted, loyal, trustworthy, honest, and friendly people. Since they should not give important information to the enemy, they should also know how to lie when necessary.²⁶ Greedy and ambitious people who cannot control themselves are not worthy of being envoys. Envoys are chaste, very calm, and kind people. They have all kinds of knowledge along with their dignity. It is deemed appropriate that the envoys be chosen from the Prophet’s family, as they are more respected. The envoys are people who are familiar with official correspondence. People who are familiar with official correspondence are considered intelligent. In addition, envoys must be literate, have memorized the Qur’an, understand poetry, geometry, tides, and medicine, and know how to interpret dreams. Apart from this, they are also people who know how to play backgammon and chess very well and how to pressure their opponents. Care is taken to ensure that the person sent as an envoy is brave, a gunfighter, and able to ride a horse well. The envoys, who are good at riding horses, are also skilled in the game of javelin. They know how to shoot arrows well and are also skilled in birding and hunting. Envoys are not expected to be warriors, but it is believed that this will give them an extra feature. They speak and write all languages. They listen to and understand what people from all nations say, but they do not reveal it. It is believed that when the envoys had all kinds of virtues, the sultan’s prestige towards them would increase. They do not drink wine and control themselves. It is believed that a person who controls himself has the power to make himself happy. Facetious, gamblers, talkers, shy, money lovers, and unknown people are not sent as envoys. The envoys have beautiful faces, neat hair, and beards, and stand out with their tall and well-formed appearance. They have strong memories, and they do not forget what they hear.²⁷

²³ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-‘alā’iya fi’l-omūr al-‘alā’iya*, trans. Mürsel Öztürk (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 430.

²⁴ It is located on the left bank of the middle course of the Euphrates River in Northern Syria. Bk. Aydın Taneri, “Ca’ber Kalesi”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1992), 6/525.

²⁵ Ibn al-‘Adīm, *Bughyat al-Talab fi Tārīkh Halab: Biyografilerle Selçuklular Tarihi*, trans. Ali Sevim (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), 169; Erdoğan Merçil, Ali Sevim, *Selçuklu Devletleri Tarihi: Siyaset, Teşkilat ve Kültür* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), 257.

²⁶ Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, 70; Yūsuf Khās Hājib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 140-141; al-Mawardī, *Nasīhat al-Mulk*, 267.

²⁷ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Ganī-Feyyāz (Tahran: 1324/1945), 505; trans. Necati Lügal (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2019), 470; al-Mawardī, *Nasīhat al-Mulk*, ed. Hazar Muhammed Hazar (Kuveyt: 1983/1403), 266-267; al-Rāwandī, *Rāhat al-sudūr wa-āyat al-surūr*, ed. Muhammad Iqbāl (Tahran: 1364/1985), 218; trans. Ahmed Atesh (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), 1/209; Ibn al-‘Adīm, *Bughyat al-Talab fi Tārīkh Halab: Biyografilerle Selçuklular Tarihi*, trans. Ali Sevim (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), 169; Ibn Bībī, *al-*

It is considered appropriate that the man who will be an envoy should be composed of tongue and heart. In other words, it was believed that they should have strong feelings and good speaking skills. If someone has these two, flesh, blood, and bone are seen as useless in that person. If the envoy starts a word softly, he must end it harshly; if he starts harshly, he must end it softly. They are both divisive and unifying, constructive and destructive. They speak their words firmly and bravely, and they do not speak weakly. If they are asked about the situation of the sultan, the country, and the people, they do not forget to prioritize the greatness and majesty of what they represent. Under no circumstances do they express what they have to say in a veiled, exaggerated way or with humor. If they do this, they will face betrayal and humiliation. In addition, if they shout or speak loudly in a meeting, they will be humiliating their people and their sultan with this behavior, so they pay attention to this issue. They speak to the greats²⁸ in a mild, soft, and sweet way. The envoys get along well with people and give them interesting gifts, as they may need everyone's support or help one day.²⁹

As can be understood from the information provided above, people who will be appointed as envoys must have various qualifications. If a person does not have many of these features and has not proven his reliability, it is finally tested whether that person is reliable or not. Someone from the state officials or the commander tests the person who will be appointed as the envoy without his knowledge. If there is no doubt about his reliability, there is no harm in his appointment as an envoy.³⁰

It is known that Seljuk envoys knew various languages. To meet the need for multilingual envoys, the Seljuks assigned translators who could speak multiple languages as envoys.³¹

In the sources, it is stated that the greatest feature of the envoys is intelligence. Before and after the Seljuks established a state, they had political and military contacts with powerful states such as the Karakhanids, Ghaznavids and Samanids. The role of the envoys in these relations was as important as the quick wit displayed by the army commanders on the battlefield. Among the envoys who visited the Seljuk sultans, there were also people with agile intelligence and sophistication. Sometimes these people could end the war before the two armies came face-to-face and even make the relationship stronger than before. One of the best examples that can be given of this was experienced during the reign of Sultan Malikshāh. The Sultan gathered a large army from Khwarazm, Khorasan, and Iraq and intended to march on Ghaznī. Ibrahim, the sultan of Ghaznī, sent an envoy named Mehter Rashid, who was known for his respect, majesty, bravery, and generosity, to Malikshāh with a few camel loads of assorted expensive dresses. Also, the envoy took a few camel-loads of souvenirs with him to use when necessary because the distance was great.³² Sultan Malikshāh was surprised by the abundance of gifts. The next day, the Sultan sent a thousand Nishapur dinars (gold currency), a gold basin, a mug, and a horse with a golden saddle to show his generosity to Mehter Rashid. Because sultans used to send gifts to envoys for various reasons as a gesture. Rashid gave the gold, horse, basin, mug, and some extra gold given to him to the bather, and a lot of clothes to the dignitaries,

Awāmer al-'alā'īya fi'l-omūr al-'alā'īya, trans. Mürsel Öztürk (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 214, 281, 308; Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, 70; Yūsuf Khās Hājib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 140-143.

²⁸ It is an expression used for people who work at the upper levels of the state. They were also called high officials or state officers. See İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilâtına Medhal* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 33, 212.

²⁹ Fakhr-i Mudabbir, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā'a*, 146.

³⁰ al-Ansārī, *Tefrīj al-kurūb fī tadbīr al-hurūb (A Muslim Manual of War)*, trans. George T. Scanlon (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1961), 58.

³¹ Osman Turan, *Türkiye Selçukluları Hakkında Resmi Vesikalar: Metin, Tercüme ve Araştırmalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1958), 19, 71, 73.

³² Fakhr-i Mudabbir, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā'a*, 149.

statesmen, and senior eunuchs. Thus, it had an effect on them.³³ One day, Malikshāh went for a walk and asked Rashid to join him. The Sultan showed the envoy to the encampment composed of soldiers from all corners of the country and asked, Is your camp larger than ours? Rashid said, “The crowd of tents of those who come to Ghaznī every year from Lengan for cupping is bigger than your camp.” Malikshāh regretted the question he asked. The Sultan was trying to embarrass him. He arranged a fine banquet and invited the envoy as well. This time, the Sultan showed the envoy a pear, which is famous for its size in the region, among the fruits on the table and asked if there was such a pear in Ghaznī. He said that in his country there are pears weighing between 375 and 750 grams, of which a thousand were carried by an elephant. He also stated that this elephant did whatever he was told, like humans. Sultan Malikshāh said that you are uttering such words that almost such things do not exist in the world. Mehter Rashid was angry at these words of the Sultan and said that what is available in his own country is not available in other countries.³⁴ Malikshāh asked him what else was available in his country. Mehter said, “There is a bird in our country that eats fire and does not burn and does not speak; there is a bird that talks like humans; there is a bird that sounds like a cat and flirts; there is a monkey with a black face and a white body; and there is another monkey with a white face and a black body.” When Malikshāh heard these, he said that what you said could not be anything but a lie. The envoy stood up in anger and asked, If I could prove what I said to you, would you do whatever I asked? Malikshāh said, “If you prove everything you say, I will accept whatever you decide.” Thereupon, Mehter wrote to the Sultan of Ganze and demanded a large pear, a female elephant, two ostriches, a pair of male and female peacocks, a pair of parrots, a pair of talking and reciting Qur’an birds, and a pair of black and white monkeys.³⁵ When the envoy proved what he had said to the sultan at a feast, he ordered the sultan’s army to stop advancing to Ghaznī and to marry a girl to his princes, as per the agreement. The Sultan kept his word and accepted.³⁶ The envoy made an agreement with Malikshāh by using his quick wit, which even strengthened the bond between them.

2. Missions of the Envoys

During the Seljuk period, embassy activities were generally concentrated during wartime. In this process, the envoys had duties such as intimidating the enemy, waging war and offering peace, ensuring the surrender of the enemy without a fight, recruiting soldiers, eliminating the expenses of the expedition, resolving the conflicts between the dynasties, and preventing wars in the struggle for the throne. Especially when war was declared and peace was offered, the sultan’s edicts were sent through envoys. When the Sultan believed that he would win the war, he would order his army to be armed immediately. If the enemy was strong, they would send envoys to settle the dispute between them.³⁷ In this regard, it would be appropriate to give an example from the time of Alparslan. The Sultan set up camp between Manzikert and Rahve on August 24, 1071 (25 Zu al-Qa’dah 463) to fight the army of Romanos Diogenes. Since the number of the Sultan’s army was very small against the Byzantine Emperor, who came to Anatolia with a huge army, he appointed Ebū’l-Ganāim Ibnū’l Mahleban and Savtegin as envoys to hold peace negotiations. The Sultan said the following to the

³³ Fakhr-i Mudabbīr, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā’a*, 150.

³⁴ Fakhr-i Mudabbīr, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā’a*, 151.

³⁵ Fakhr-i Mudabbīr, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā’a*, 153-154.

³⁶ Fakhr-i Mudabbīr, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā’a*, 156.

³⁷ al-Bundārī, *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları Tarihi*, trans. Kıvameddin Burslan (İstanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1943), 234; ‘Atā Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, 352; Hasan-i Yazdī, *Jāmi’ at-tawārīkh-i Ḥasanī*, (Part of the Seljuks), trans. Bülent Özkuzgüdenli, (İstanbul: Marmara University, PhD, 2014), 260; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kāmil fi al-Tārīkh*, trans. Abdülkerim Özeydin (İstanbul: Bahar Yayınları, 1987) 11/72, 449; Mīr-khānd, *Rawzat as-safā*, 4/2908; trans. Erkan Göksu (Ankara: Kronik Kitap Yayınları, 2017), 49. Yūsuf Khās Hājib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 129.

emperor through his envoys: “Even though you have many soldiers, think carefully. Because you have appeared before such a Sultan, that there is no need for words or evidence for the outcome of his wars. However, if you regret your boldness, agree to pay taxes as required, abandon hostilities, and approach an agreement, I will ask the Sultan to give you all the towns and to prevent any harm to you and those who are subject to you. If you do not heed my advice, you will break your own tree of success and try to lose your country and your property.”³⁸

If the envoy was sent to make peace, he would strive for it. If the two sides were in favor of peace, a treaty text called *savgendnāma* would be prepared. In this text, the borders between the two countries were determined and highlighted. All clauses that would ensure peace were underlined. Then it was read aloud so that both sides could hear it easily. After all the judges, imams, sayyids, sheikhs, scholars, and army commanders approved the decisions taken, the statesmen of both sides would indicate in handwriting that they had approved this contract. The text of the treaty was made into two copies and given to the parties. Both sides were expected to abide by the decisions. The one who broke the deal was considered disreputable and defeated.³⁹ Anatolian Seljuk Sultan ‘Izz ad-Dīn Kaykaūs (1211-1220) came in front of Tell Bashīr Castle when he went on an expedition to Damascus. When the Sultan saw that his army was unsuccessful after a ten-day siege, he threatened the people of the castle to cut down the surrounding trees. As a result, the people wanted to surrender the castle to the Sultan. The owner of the castle told the Sultan that he would surrender the castle on the condition that he was given an iqtā. When the Sultan accepted the condition, he had a manshūr and savgendnāme prepared and sent to the castle via envoys.⁴⁰

Out of respect, the envoys would kiss the treaties they signed in the enemy territory or the letter of the ruler of the enemy country, and then hand them over to the authorized persons to be read to the sultan. That person would read the letter aloud, standing up after kissing it. The envoys conveyed verbal requests as well as written requests.⁴¹ The process we mentioned above took place when Sultan ‘Izz ad-Dīn Kaykaūs sent an envoy to Malik with a delegation of distinguished people to convey that he wanted to marry the daughter of the Malik of Erzincan.⁴²

Since the envoys were accepted as guests, their lives and property were not subjected to any attempts. If the sultan gave the order to kill the envoy, the vizier or someone among the state officials would make the sultan reverse his decision. For example, during the struggle for the throne between Sultan Malikshāh and his brother Tekish (473/1080), Tekish sent an envoy to the Sultan and demanded that Harran be given to him. The Sultan was very angry with this offer and wanted to kill the envoy, but Nizām al-Mulk prevented this by kissing the Sultan’s knee.⁴³

Sultans, who left the battlefield victorious, would send *zafarnāmas* describing their success to every corner of the country and to the rulers of the surrounding countries. For example, after the Battle of Manzikert, Sultan Alparslan announced his victory to everyone through envoys. In addition, the envoys from the surrounding countries and emirs conveyed the congratulatory letters they brought with them to the sultan. The great vizier Nizām al-Mulk wrote replies to these letters one by one.⁴⁴

³⁸ Mīr-khānd, *Rawzat as-safā’*, trans. Erkan Göksu, 93-94.

³⁹ Fakhr-i Mudabbīr, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā’a*, 148.

⁴⁰ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-‘alā’iyya fi’l-omūr al-‘alā’iyya*, 212-213.

⁴¹ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, 347, 517-518; trans. Necati Lügal, 271.

⁴² Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-‘alā’iyya fi’l-omūr al-‘alā’iyya*, 281.

⁴³ Ahmad b. Mahmūd, *Saljūq-Nāma*, ed. Erdogan Merçil (İstanbul: 1001 Temel Eser, 1977), 148-149.

⁴⁴ Hasan-i Yazdī. *Jāmi’ at-tawārīkh-i Hasanī*, 267; Mīr-khānd, *Rawzat as-safā’*, 4/3162; trans. Erkan Göksu, 101.

Edicts containing the message of the sultans, or *zafarnāmas* were prepared according to the rank and office of the person to whom they were to be given. The edicts were prepared by the council clerks and the council munshis. Edicts contained the sultan's *tawqī*, or signature.⁴⁵ These signatures were called *tawqī-i 'alī* (توقی عالی).⁴⁶ For example, Sultan Tughril Beg's *tawqī* was *e'tezedtu bi'illāhi wahdehu* (اعتضدت بالله وحده), and it was in the form of a stick.⁴⁷ Also, Alparslan's *tawqī* was *yensurullāh* (ينصر الله).⁴⁸ Sultans would never sign the edicts without *wudu*.⁴⁹

In peacetime, various diplomatic activities were carried out through envoys. Some of these are the times when the sultans were enthroned, funerals, recruitment, weddings, and festive ceremonies, as well as diplomacy with the caliphs and other states.⁵⁰ For example, Sultan Malikshāh sent his envoy to Samarkand to ask for the daughter of the Turkestan Khan.⁵¹ Sultan Berkyaruq sent his other uncle, Bori Bars, over his uncle Arslan Arghūn. When Arslan lost the war between them, he sent envoys all over the country and gathered soldiers.⁵² The reign of Sultan Alā ad-Dīn Kayqubād was announced through ambassadors.⁵³

Sometimes, vassal states would send envoys to the sultan to beg for safety because they were afraid of the wrath of the sultans. For example, when Sultan Sencer learned that Bahramshah, the Sultan of Ghaznī, disobeyed him, persecuted the people, and usurped their property, he set out on an expedition to Ghaznī, even though it was winter. When the Seljuk army approached Ghaznī, Bahramshah begged and pleaded with the Sultan and asked for his forgiveness for his mistakes through envoys.⁵⁴

The reason why the sultans sent envoys to each other was not only diplomatic. Envoys were sent to gather information about the political, military, economic, social, and geographical situation of a country and to learn the peaceful or hostile thoughts of the enemy or rival countries. The great vizier Nizām al-Mulk states that there are hundreds of secrets and different reasons for sending envoys. Especially during the war, the roads, the amount of water in the rivers, whether the geography was suitable for the dispatch of soldiers, where the pastures were, the number of soldiers, their equipment and ability in shooting, and how the sultan's assembly was would be determined. The envoys would also pay attention to the layout of the palace, what the customs were, the sultan's fondness for *chovgān* (a game played on horses) and hunting, and whether he was good-natured. They looked at people's generosity, industriousness, and vigilance. They paid attention to whether the people were cruel or just, young or old. They tried to understand the zoning status of the cities, the satisfaction of the soldiers with the ruler, the welfare of the people, and their generosity. They paid attention to whether the vizier was a wise person and whether he lived according to religious rules. They would determine the experience of their commanders, whether they conducted war or not, and their weaknesses. They would try to understand how commanders take precautions against a good or bad situation they encounter. In order to gather information about the commanders, they tried to find

⁴⁵ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-'alā'īya fi'l-omūr al-'alā'īya*, 243, 252.

⁴⁶ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Saīd Nefīsī, 7.

⁴⁷ al-Rāwandī, *Rāhat al-sudūr wa-āyat al-surūr*, 98; trans. Ahmed Ateş. I/96; Zahīr al-Dīn Nishāpūrī, *Saljūq-Nāma*, ed. A. H. Morton (London: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1425/2004), 19, 73.

⁴⁸ Zahīr al-Dīn Nishāpūrī, *Saljūq-Nāma*, 24, 25.

⁴⁹ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-'alā'īya fi'l-omūr al-'alā'īya*, 252.

⁵⁰ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Saīd Nefīsī, 328-29, 347, 424; trans. Necati Lügal, 256, 271, 321; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi al-Tārīkh*, 10/118; Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-'alā'īya fi'l-omūr al-'alā'īya*, 243; Mīr-khānd, *Rawzat as-safā'*, 4/3164, 3165; trans. Erkan Göksu, 104-105.

⁵¹ Mīr-khānd, *Rawzat as-safā'*, 4/3164-3165.

⁵² al-Bundārī, *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları Tarihi*, 234;

⁵³ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-'alā'īya fi'l-omūr al-'alā'īya*, 243.

⁵⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi al-Tārīkh*, 11/36.

answers to the following questions: Are the assistants of the commanders elegant and worthy? What do they like and hate about alcohol? Are they good-natured, benevolent, watchful, witty, and philandering? Do they obey the rules?⁵⁵ Sultans were careful to have information about the enemy. Otherwise, the country would become defenseless against the enemy. al-Rāwandī says, “Sultans should be aware of the enemy’s situation, just as the chess player follows the moves of his opponent.” For this reason, it was among the duties of the envoys to learn the skill of the enemy in shooting arrows, to know their strength, to be aware of all their states, and to know their customs.⁵⁶ Ibn al-‘Adīm states that the purpose of Sultan Alparslan sending envoys to the Roman Emperor before the Battle of Manzikert was to determine the strength of the Byzantine army.⁵⁷

When a city was besieged, no one could enter the castle. It was not known what effect the arrows or catapult balls fired at the castle had or whether the people had enough supplies to withstand the siege. However, the answers to these questions could be reached through an envoy sent inside. Information from the envoy could open the gate of the castle. Messengers or postmen were also used for this task.⁵⁸

In the siege wars, a document called amānnāme was sent for the surrender of the city. Communication between the Sultan and the people was carried out by envoys. When the people of the city decided to surrender the city, they would convey the amānnāme, which was the guarantee of the safety of their lives and property, to the Sultan with an envoy. It was customary to be kind to the envoy. The Sultan would send a sealed reply letter, written with polite expressions, through the envoy. He would send his ring along with the letter to gain the trust of the people. This ring was called the “amān ring”.⁵⁹ When Sultan ‘Izz ad-Dīn besieged Ankara, his brother Malik Alā ad-Dīn was defending the castle. Unable to bear the pressure, Malik asked for mercy (amān) through a messenger. After the Sultan swore that no one would harm him, he gave the ahidnāme (covenant) to the envoy and sent it to Malik. Sultan ‘Izz ad-Dīn moved towards Damascus, and on the way, the people of Raban were horrified when they saw the Sultan’s flags. An amānnāme was prepared for them by the sultanate council. That amānnāme was decorated with the holy coat of arms (tawqī‘) and sent to them. When the edict was read, the castle was surrendered. When Sultan Alā ad-Dīn captured Erzurum in 621/1230, he gave an amān ring to the owner of the city, Malik Rukneddin, stating that he forgave him.⁶⁰

There are various narratives in the sources that the Seljuks sent envoys to gather intelligence about the enemy army. For example, Tughril and Chaghri begs sent envoys from the Kınık tribe to learn what kind of preparations were made by the Ghaznavids before the Dandanaqan war (431/1040).⁶¹ It is possible to give another example from the Battle of Manzikert. Sultan Alparslan sent Ebū’l-Ganāim Ibnū’l Mahleban and Savtegin, who had the text of the question and agreement, to

⁵⁵ al-Hōyī, *Hasan b. Abdūlmū’min el-Hōyī’nin Kaleminden*. 87; Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, 68.

⁵⁶ al-Rāwandī, *Rāhat al-sudūr wa-āyat al-surūr*, 217; trans. Ahmed Ateş. I/208.

⁵⁷ Ibn al-‘Adīm, *Zubdat al-Halab fi ta’arikh Halab*, (Part of Seljuks), trans. Ali Sevim (Ankara Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 28; Ali Sevim, Erdoğan Merçil, *Selçulu Devletleri Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), 61-69.

⁵⁸ al-Ansārī, *Tefrīj al-kurūb fi tadbīr al-hurūb*, 116; Minhāj-al-Dīn Jūzjānī, *Tabaqāt-i Nāsiri*, ed. Abdul Hai Habībi (Kabil: Puhni Matbaası, 1342/1963), 252; trans. Erkan Göksu (Part of Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Atabeglik and Khwarazmshahs) (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2015), 78.

⁵⁹ Hasan Yenidoğan, *Büyük Selçuklu Ordusunda Sefer Organizasyonu*, 56, 57.

⁶⁰ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-‘alā’iya fi’l-omūr al-‘alā’iya*, 165-166, 212, 403.

⁶¹ Rashīd al-Dīn Fadlullāh Hamadānī, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, ed. Ahmed Ateş (Tahran: 1362/1983), 1-2/262; trans. Erkan Göksu and H. Hüseyin Güneş (İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları, 2010), 89.

Romanos Diogenes, who took action with a large army, both to offer peace and to determine the war power of the emperor.⁶²

3. Sending Gifts with Envoys

The Persian word *pīshkesh* (پیش کش) means gift. *Pīshkesh kerdn* (پیش کش کردن) is the verb form of *pīshkesh*.⁶³ The Seljuk sultans would demand peace by sending precious gifts to their opponents through envoys. Then, when needed, they went on expeditions against them. Communicating with the enemy through envoys revealed the importance that sultans gave to diplomacy.⁶⁴

Sending gifts with envoys was thought to have a great impact on society. Thus, the secrets of the sultan would not be revealed, and people would not try to find the shortcomings of the country represented by the envoy. The state officials, who were aware of the role of gifts, paid attention to the beauty and quality of the gifts sent by envoys.⁶⁵ When the Anatolian Seljuks sent an envoy to Sultan Jalal al-Dīn, the Sultan ordered the delegation to be welcomed by musicians, emirs and warriors. The Seljuks brought with them two hundred camels loaded with treasure, a kitchen, a winery, and tents. They brought a hundred mules, herds of sheep and cattle, gold, clothes, gold objects, gold-handled Indian swords, glamorous belts, various kinds of jewellery and exquisite ornaments. The people of Khwarazm were astonished by this wealth.⁶⁶ Even if the enemy was not impressed by the precious gifts, the generosity and valour of the gift sender stood out because the gift was a manifestation of their magnificence. Care was taken to ensure that the gift sent was not in that country. In this way, these gifts attracted the attention of the public, and the generosity of the sender was praised.⁶⁷

Gift giving through envoys could also be done when the army went on a campaign. Before and during the expedition, items such as money, goods, and animals needed in the expedition could be obtained through gifts from the towns that were subject to the state, from neighbouring states, and even from countries that were considered enemies. In this way, it was possible to contribute to the expedition budget and obtain the items needed for the expedition. For example, the Merwānids, who became the governor of Armenia in 440/1048, sent many valuable items to Sultan Tughril Beg, along with tent materials.⁶⁸

Gift giving continued even after the expedition. Especially when the army was victorious, the vassal rulers or their envoys who came to celebrate the victory would congratulate the sultan on his success with various gifts.⁶⁹

Gifts were also sent when there was a change of throne. When Sultan Berkyaruq ascended the throne, Nizām al-Mulk had gifted the Sultan many tools, ornaments, and jewellery, including a

⁶² al-Bundārī, *Irak ve Horasan Selçukluları Tarihi*, 234; ‘Atā Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, 353; Ali Sevīm- Erdoğan Merçil, *Selçuklu Devletleri Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), 61-69; Hasan-i Yazdī. *Jāmi’ at-tawārīkh-i Ḥasanī*, 260; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, 11/72, 449; Mīr-khānd, *Rawzat as-safā’*, 4/2908; Yūsuf Khās Hājib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 129; Carole Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: The Battle of Manzikert* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 75-76; trans. Mehmet Moralı (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2012), 100.

⁶³ ‘Atā Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, ed. Mīrzā Muhammad-i Qazwīnī, 2/252.

⁶⁴ Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, 70.

⁶⁵ Fakhr-i Mudabbīr, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā’a*, 146.

⁶⁶ Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-‘alā’iyya fī l-omūr al-‘alā’iyya*, 380.

⁶⁷ Fakhr-i Mudabbīr, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā’a*, 147-148.

⁶⁸ Gregory Abu’l-Faraj (Bar Hebraeus), *Abu’l-Farac Tarihi*, trans. Ömer Rıza Doğrul (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), 1/304.

⁶⁹ Salim Koca, *Selçuklularda Ordu ve Askeri Kültür* (Ankara: Berikan Yayınevi, 2005), 236.

sultanate tent (چهرمی سراپرده), an atlas⁷⁰ tent, and beautiful weapons, as well as harnesses decorated with precious stones.⁷¹

The variety of gifts the envoys brought with them was immense. Some of these gifts can be listed as follows: Beautifully translated Qur'an, rare books, clear and embellished Qur'an, various books, *slaves* (servants) and concubines of Turkish, Roman, Ethiopian, and Indian origin, gold and silver embroidered clothes, horse, camel, Bactrian camel, mule, saddle, delicate embroidered halter and sword, *iron kullāb* (hook), shields, bows, arrows, armour, helmets, various and special war armours, clothing protecting the wrist and elbow, masks to protect the face of horses, knives made of rhino and ox horn, fragrant sticks, sandals, ebony wood, fish and ivory, ruby, pearl, coral, turquoise, agate, jade, onyx, shiny narwhal horn, expensive dresses and linen, fine summer dresses, velvet knitwear prayer rugs, evil eye bead, gold-embroidered woollen dresses, gloves, trousers, *musk* (fragrant substance from a cloth under the skin of a gazelle's abdomen), camphor wood, all kinds of amber, rings, various accessories, carpets, *pillows* (possibly handcrafted rugs and embroidered pillows), beaver, squirrel, fox, sable, fish, sea dog, aurochs, lion, tiger, barbarian panther, leopard, jaguar, hunting dog, hawk, eagle, kestrel, porcelain wine jugs, black solid wood arrows, glossy Mecca or Yemen leather, fountain, tent, food, basin, *lengerī* (large tray), *faghfūrī*⁷² (فغفوری), pan, bowl, plate, large bowl, large and small tile cubes, kitchen utensils⁷³ and other similar gifts.⁷⁴

4. Initiation Ceremonies for Envoys

Hacibs and viziers took care of the arrival and departure of foreign envoys. For example, they determined what the envoys would eat, where they would stay, and what gifts would be given to them. If there was a lack of gifts to be given to them, they would provide them. In the ceremonies, they took care to fulfill the customs and traditions completely.⁷⁵ Because when the envoys from the enemy countries returned to their countries, they would give information to the ruler about their opponents, and they would especially talk about the faults they saw. One of the best examples that can be given in this regard was experienced during the reign of Sultan Alparslan: While Sultan was making preparations for an expedition to Transoxiana, the Khan of Samarkand did not bow to him and started recruiting soldiers. Meanwhile, he sent an envoy to the Sultan, asking him to gather information about the power of the state. When the envoy returned, he gave the following information to the Khan: "Sir, there is no deficiency in the appearance, beauty, courage, politics, majesty, edict, and sultanate of the Sultan. God knows the number of his soldiers; their weapons, tools, and equipment cannot be compared to any soldier's. The layout of their palaces, reception halls, and divans are very good. There is nothing to embarrass them in their country."⁷⁶

⁷⁰ It is a type of densely woven, solid-colored, hard, and shiny fabric made of fine silk. See Sargon Erdem, "Atlas", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1991), 4/80-81.

⁷¹ Rashīd al-Dīn Fadlullāh Hamadānī, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, trans. Erkan Göksu, 145.

⁷² Faghfūrī is a kind of Chinese porcelain.

⁷³ In the Seljuk Empire, it was customary to give kitchen utensils as gifts. See Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-'alā'īya fi'l-omūr al-'alā'īya*, 85.

⁷⁴ Abu'l-Faraj, *Abu'l-Farac Tarihi*, 1/305; al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Ganī-Feyyāz, 553; al-Rāwandī, *Rāhat al-sudūr wa-āyat al-surūr*, 170; trans. Ahmed Ateş, I/166; al-Huseynī, *Ahbāru'd-devleti's-Seljūqiyye*, ed. Muhammad Iqbāl (Lahor: 1352/1933), 3; trans. Necatī Lūgal (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), 3; Ibn Bībī, *al-Awāmer al-'alā'īya fi'l-omūr al-'alā'īya*, 186; Fakhr-i Mudabbīr, *Ādāb al-harb wa-l-shajā'a*, 147-148; 'Atā Malik Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, ed. Mīrzā Muhammad-i Qazwīnī, 2/150; trans. Mürsel Öztürk, 354; Mīr-khānd, *Rawzat as-safā*, 4/2910, 3153; Utbī, *Tārīkhü'l-Yamīnī*, trans. Corfādakānī, ed. Ca'fer Shiār (Tahran:1334/1955), 72, 142; Yenidoğan, *Büyük Selçuklu Ordusunda Sefer Organizasyonu*, 61.

⁷⁵ Yūsuf Khās Hājib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 135.

⁷⁶ Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, 69.

The Seljuk sultans occasionally hosted envoys from countries such as Byzantium, India, China, Syria, Sindh, Yemen, and Fars.⁷⁷ In order not to face any negative situation during the visits of the envoys from all over the world, these visits were kept secret until the envoys came to the palace.⁷⁸

In the Seljuks, there was a team responsible for meeting the envoys, and the officials in this team were called *tashrifātjī* (تشریفاتچی), *martebedār* (مرتبہ دار), *rasūldār* (رسولدار) and *mihmāndār* (مهماندان).⁷⁹ These officials, with a horseman they sent ahead, would learn who the envoy was, how many horsemen and pedestrians were in his entourage, the amount of their belongings, and the purpose of their arrival. The welcoming team would take spare horses and mules with them. There were rarely a few elephants among the animals. Sometimes, some of the spare horses were adorned with gold saddles and shod with golden horseshoes. A group of mounted guards accompanied the welcoming team. This unit consisted of fifty people and was headed by a senior military officer. The welcoming team was proceeding in a certain order: the commander-in-chief, called *sipahsālār* (سپهسالار), would advance ahead. He was followed by kadis, grooms, scholars, jurists, and notables of the dervish lodge. During the march, the sounds of trumpets and drums and people's yells would rise to the sky. Sometimes an officer would guide the envoy so that he would come to the palace accompanied by the officials. The envoys who visited the palace were accompanied by *tashrifātjīs* when they went to their homes to rest.⁸⁰ In the Abbasid State, there was also a custom of welcoming important people and envoy delegations with musicians. For example, when Sultan Malikshāh went to Baghdad in 480/1087, a procession was prepared to welcome him. They welcomed the Sultan with drums and trumpets.⁸¹

Care was taken to ensure that the cities that the envoys would visit were well-developed. The officials, agents, and *muqata'a* owners (treasury officials) working there were told to take good care of them.⁸² Extra sensitivity was shown to welcome envoys from friendly countries. It was a result of this sensitivity that the whole city was fully equipped and decorated everywhere. When the inhabitants saw the envoys, they would scatter dinars, dirhams, candy, and other valuables on them in certain squares and bazaars. In addition, when the envoys dismounted, they were presented with food.⁸³ When the envoys approached the palace or tent of the sultan, twenty soldiers would put on their weapons, wear armour and clothes of various kinds, and line up around the sultan. The places where the envoys will pass were decorated with flags. While the envoys were passing by, drums and trumpets were played, and people would yell. The reason for this was to make the envoy, who saw this atmosphere, astonished. The envoy who came into the presence of the sultan would greet him and wait, standing. The vizier sitting next to the sultan would respond to the greeting. Others stood and waited. *Hacib* would hold the vizier's arm and make him sit. The envoys attended various meetings and feasts during their visits. Meanwhile, tables were set on rumi and silk carpets, and food was served on gold and silver plates and bowls decorated with precious stones. Sometimes a barbecue was placed at the corner of these tables, and tables of four, six, eight, and circles were set around it. Each table was decorated with a variety of jewels that were astonishing to those who saw them. While all this was going on, diplomatic meetings were held with the envoys. The decisions taken were written down and even

⁷⁷ Ahmad b. Mahmūd, *Saljūq-Nāma*, 2/22.

⁷⁸ Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, 68.

⁷⁹ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Saīd Nefīsī, 151, 256.

⁸⁰ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Saīd Nefīsī, 151, 256, 445, 446, 517-518; trans. Necati Lügal, 38, 208, 338; Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, 338; Mīr-khānd, *Rawzat as-safā*, 4/2922.

⁸¹ Ibn al-Javzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī at-Tārīkh wa al-Mulūk*, (Part of Seljuks), trans. Ali Sevim (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 139-140.

⁸² Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, 68.

⁸³ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Saīd Nefīsī, 445-446.

translated into the relevant languages, and a copy was given to the envoy. After the envoy reviewed the text, the head of the Dīwān-i Risālet would read the text aloud. After all the negotiations were over, preparations were made to send them off the day before the envoys would return. The same treatment was applied to the envoys when they were leaving. The good or bad treatment done to them was considered to have been done to the sultan who sent them. Since the sultans always respected each other, they also showed respect to the envoys. Even when there was war and disagreement among them, the hearts of the envoys were not broken, the tradition of respect that should be shown to them was maintained, and no unpleasant treatment was given.⁸⁴

CONCLUSION

The Seljuks, as in the Turkish states before them, carried out communication in domestic and foreign policy mostly through envoys. As a result of this research, it was concluded that there were no permanent embassies during the Seljuk period. In addition, no information could be obtained about the existence of an institution where envoys were trained. Sultans, who were aware of the importance of the role of envoys in solving internal and external issues, paid attention to the selection of envoys from among qualified people. Envoys were expected to be brave, intelligent, well-versed in rhetoric, calm, polite, and religious. The envoys had duties such as intimidating the enemy, waging war and offering peace, ensuring the surrender of the enemy without a fight, recruiting soldiers, covering the expenses of the expedition, resolving the conflicts between the dynasties, preventing the struggle for the throne, and gathering intelligence. During the Seljuk period, it was believed that sending gifts with envoys had positive effects on both the state and society. In addition, sending gifts was a sign of the sultan's generosity. The Qur'an, rare books, precious stones and metals, gold and silver embroidered clothes, valuable animals, defence and attack tools, and various weapons were among the items given as gifts. In the welcoming ceremonies held for the envoys, care was taken to fulfil the customs and traditions completely. Hacibs and viziers were appointed for this work. Those who worked in the team responsible for the reception of the envoys were called *tashrifājī*, *martebedār*, *rasūldār* and *mihmāndār*. This team would accompany the envoys throughout their travels, preventing any negativity that would embarrass the state. As a result, in this study, it was understood that the envoys were important diplomatic actors during the Seljuk period, and these roles of the envoys were revealed in different aspects in the light of the chronicles.

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⁸⁴ al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Saīd Nefīsī, 347, 445-446, 517-18; trans. Necati Lügal, 271, 338; Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsāt-nāma*, trans. Mehmet Altay Köymen, 67-68; Turan, *Türkiye Selçukluları Hakkında Resmî Vesikalar*, 38.

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