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**MANAGEMENT ETHICS AS AN ANCIENT AND MEDIAEVAL PARADIGM:
INSPIRATIONS FROM MIRRORS FOR PRINCE**

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Abstract

During the course of history almost all civilizations contributed to the genre of “book of advice” with different labels; such as ‘sbyt’, ‘astra’, ‘andarz’, ‘mirror for prince’ and ‘siyasatnama’. Even though they were prima facia addressed kings and higher officers, they contain a great deal of universal advices applicable to any management and leadership context. So much so that scholars have realized the relevance of principles offered in these texts to management and especially to the field of business ethics.

Confucius, Kautilya, Plato and Machiavelli have always been accepted as early management thinkers as their ideas inspired modern management from several perspectives. Considering this fact, this work aims to review ‘books of advice’ or ‘mirrors’ produced by different civilizations focusing their relevance to business ethics. What makes this work significant is firstly our focus on Islamic civilization which has been overlooked by scholars and secondly exposing a holistic perspective starting from 2500 BC till 16th century.

Key Words: *Book of Advice, Siyasatnama, Mirror for Prince, Sbyt, Astra, Andarz, Management, Business Ethics*

**KADİM BİR PARADİGMA OLARAK İŞ ETİĞİ: SİYASETNAMELERDEN
ÇIKARIMLAR**

Özet

Devlet adamlarına tavsiyeler içeren Siyasatname türü eserlere tüm kadim medeniyetlerde rastlamak mümkündür. ‘Sbyt’, ‘astra’, ‘andarz’, ‘mirror for prince’ ya da ‘siyasatnama’ gibi isimlerle karşımıza çıkan bu eserler, zaman içerisinde sadece tarihi ve siyasi metinler olarak kabul görmeye başlamış; içerdikleri genel geçer prensiplerle modern yönetim biliminin ve hatta iş etiği sahasının temellerini oluşturmuştur. Öyle ki; eserleri ile modern yönetim alanına pek çok fikir vermiş olan Confucius, Kautilya, Plato ve Machiavelli yönetim biliminin ilk mütefekkirlerinden sayılmaktadırlar.

Bu noktadan hareketle elinizdeki çalışma, birçok farklı medeniyetin ortak ürünü olan ‘Nasihat Kitapları’ literatürünü iş ahlakı ile ilişkisi yönünden taramayı hedeflemektedir. Bu makaleyi öncüllerinden farklı kılan noktalar, bahsi geçen çalışmaları M.Ö. 2500 yılından M.S. 1600’lü yıllara kadar uzanan bir süreçte bütüncül bir bakış açısı ile ele alması ve özelde bilim dünyasının henüz farkına varamadığı İslam medeniyeti kapsamında üretilen çalışmalara odaklanmasıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Nasihat Kitapları, Siyasatname, Sbyt, Astra, Andarz, Yönetim, İş etiği*

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1.INTRODUCTION

Ethics as an ancient phenomenon was firstly discussed in depth by Plato. The Greek word *ethos* which is the root of ethics means character, conduct, and customs. Ethics has a two faceted meaning. On the one side it includes “rules of behavior based on ideas about what is morally good and bad”. On the other side it is “an area of study or a branch of philosophy dealing with what is morally right or wrong”. Interestingly the equivalent of ethics in Islamic civilization is *akhlaq* and it also covers both sides perfectly.

According to De George (1982), ethics can be defined as the study of morality. He states that:

Morality is a term used to cover those practices and activities that are considered importantly right and wrong, the rules which govern those activities and the values that are imbedded, fostered, or pursued by those activities and practices. The morality of a society is related to its mores or the customs accepted by a society or group as being the right and wrong ways to act, as well as to the laws of a society which add legal prohibitions and sanctions to many activities considered to be immoral.

Even though the terms ethics and morality were interchangeably used in the literature, Velasquez (2011) clarifies that confusion in that way:

Ethics is “the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group”. For example; the term “personal ethics” is used to refer “the rules by which an individual lives his or her personal life” or “accounting ethics” refers to “the code that guides the professional conduct of accountants”. The second and more important meaning of ethics is “the study of morality”; like chemists use the term chemistry to refer to a study of the properties of chemical substances. Although ethics deals with morality, it is not quite the same as morality. Ethics is a kind of investigation; and includes both the activity of investigating as well as the results of that investigation; whereas morality is the subject matter that ethics investigates.

While auld civilizations used to accept any kind of human activity including economic efforts and governance as a part of ethics, modern understanding expelled ethics from daily life. For example; economics as a modern science is regarded neither moral nor immoral, yet amoral.

Business ethics has become a popular social and academic issue since the last quarter of the 20th century. Moreover “*the business ethics literature has exploded in both volume and importance*” (Tsalikis & Fritzsche, 1989). Michalos (2008) describes an interesting fact which is simultaneous evolution of “*the most blatant self-consciously self-serving corporate behavior under the general rubric of globalization and the most prolific development of academic and non-academic literature on business ethics*”.

On the other hand, not only debates revolving around business ethics but also literature touching on it are as old as humanity. As Werhane mentions (1999):

The origins of capitalism in the form of commerce and free enterprise can be traced to a prehistoric era when people began trading with each other. Ethical issues in business arose simultaneously or soon after. As early as 1800 BC, for example, we find worries about the ethics of traders and merchants in the Code of Hammurabi.

Our work specifically attempts to analyze the genre of book of advices beside any kind of historical text covering issues related to business ethics. During the course of history, almost all civilizations contributed to the genre of “book of advice” with different labels; such as *sbyt*, *astra*, *andarz*, *siyasatnama* and *mirror for prince*. Even though they were prima facia addressed kings and higher officers, they contain a great deal of universal advices applicable to any management context. Scholars have recently realized the relevance of principles offered in these texts to management and especially to the field of business ethics.

The number of texts which could be classified as book of advice is enormous. The volume and diversity of this literature requires a comprehensive review in order to understand thoroughly the historical interaction of management and ethics.

Briefly this study aims to review the books of advice produced in different periods of time, in various geographies and to show their relevance to the concept of business ethics. What makes our work significant is firstly our focus on Islamic civilization which overlooked by most of modern scholars and secondly exposing a holistic perspective starting from 2500 BC till 16th century.

2. BOOKS OF ADVICE

It has been a prevailing practice to consult a ruler towards what is accepted as “good”. Throughout the history, quite a lot people from very different backgrounds and cultures has advised sultans, kings, emperors, lords whoever have authority over people. In other words, they aimed to synthesize the reality of politics with moral principles. The form used was also wide-ranging: prose, poetic, or fable.

2.1. Ancient Egypt

It is not surprising that first known books in the world composed during the Old Kingdom of Ancient Egypt are relatively advice text (Gunn, 2009). The oldest literary works of mankind survived antiquity are addressing moral instruction passed from parent to child to ensure peace and good governance. The number of such text was so much that all framed an individual genre called *sebajt* within Pharaonic literature. The word literally means “training” or “instructions” and refers to “didactic text” or “treatise” advising ethical code of conduct on the “way of living truly” (Erman & Grapow, 1971).

Among so many instructions, “Instructions of Ptah-Hotep” written by a wise man who was also vizier to King Izezi of the fifth dynasty (CA. 2414-2375 BC) and directed to his son, “Teaching for Merikare” authored by Khety III for his son Merikare who reigned during the first intermediate period (CA. 2130-2040 BC) and “Instructions of Amenemhat” written by a king to his son during the early [Middle Kingdom](#) (CA. 2040-1650 BC) are worth-mentioning (Zulu, 2009).

The vizier of King Izezi emphasized the importance of justice and the relationship between a leader and follower (Zulu, 2009):

“Justice is great, invariable, and assured....

If you as a leader decide on the conduct of a great number of people, seek the most perfect manner of making your decisions so that your conduct may be without blame or fault.

If you are a leader of peace, listen to the discourse of the petitioner.”

Approximately two centuries later, Kethy III was re-emphasizing “justice” and suggesting his son Merikare to seek for advice even in matters he has expertise (Zulu, 2009):

“Do justice so that you may live long on earth.
Justify yourself in the presence of God....

... Even an expert can become one who is instructed.”

2.2.Ancient China and India

The next predecessor of this genre confronts us any time between 500 BC and AD 500 in ancient Chinese and Indian cultures.

Confucius who was a thinker, political figure, and educator lived in 6th and 5th centuries BC, was the founder of the *Ru* School of Chinese thought. After his death his teachings were collected into a book called “The Lunyu” or “The Analects”. Among various subjects, the Lunyu comprises his political philosophy relying “*on the belief that a ruler should learn self-discipline, should govern his subjects by his own example, and should treat them with love and concern.*” He said that “*If your desire is for good, the people will be good. The moral character of the ruler is the wind; the moral character of those beneath him is the grass. When the wind blows, the grass bends*” (Riegel, 2012).

Xunzi, another philosopher considered Confucian lived in the 4th century BC, collected his essays into “The Book of Xunzi”. His philosophy is grounded in his approach to the social and political order. Accordingly he wrote the “The Way of the Sage Kings” in order to instruct kings into the way of the previous rulers of China who developed institutions and practices of “good” governance (Robins, 2008).

Mohism, arisen from the teachings of Mo Di or Mozi, was another influential philosophical, social, and religious system in ancient China. In “The Book of Mozi” he argued the main responsibility of a ruler (Fraser, 2012):

“It was understood that the world was in disorder because the people lacked political leaders to unify the world’s morality. So the most worthy, wise, and intelligent man in the world was selected, established as the Son of Heaven, and commissioned to unify the world’s morality.”

The Lord of Shang was a high officer lived in the 4th century. He could be classified as a follower of the School of Law which is another main philosophy of ancient China. His reforms were always associated with the extraordinary rise of China under the authority of The Ch’in dynasty. In his “The Book of Lord Shang”, besides the importance of law, agriculture, and warfare, he discussed the punishments and rewards given to the officers. In a separate chapter titled “[Prince and Minister](#)” he summarized his view to the government (Yang, 1974).

Ancient India – a cradle of civilization - confronts us with two noteworthy examples of advice texts: “Panchatantra” and “Arthashastra”.

Panchatantra or *Pancatantra* meaning “Five Treatises” or “Five Chapters” is a collection of fables which is known under the name of “The Fables of Bidpai” in Europe and “[Kalilah wa Dimnah](#)” in Islamic literature. The original Sanskrit text includes both prose and verse. It was structured as a frame story; including five different yet interrelated stories (“Panchatantra,” n.d.).

Even though the original text is lost, early translations to Syriac and Arabic are giving us the chance to explore its *raison d’être*. The stories attributed to Vishnusharman, a wise Brahmin, aims to educate the sons of royalty.

Ryder, who translated Panchatantra into English, says in his introduction to the translation (Sharma, n.d.):

“The Panchatantra is a *niti-shastra*, or textbook of *niti*. The word *niti* means roughly “the wise conduct of life.” Western civilization must endure a certain shame in realizing that no precise equivalent of the term is found in English, French, Latin, or Greek. Many words are therefore necessary to explain what *niti* is, though the idea, once grasped, is clear, important, and satisfying... a *śāstra* is a technical or scientific treatise; thus it is considered a treatise on political science and human conduct.”

There is no doubt that it is an ancient version of an ordinary advice text. However the method, making use of cases for teaching, is remarkable. After thousands of years, Harvard Law School was acknowledged as the pioneer in exploiting case studies in teaching and Harvard Business School popularized the method (Chendroyaperumal & Chandramouli, 2011).

The other worth-mentioning Indian advice text is the “Arthasasthra”. *Artha* can be simply translated as “money”; however it refers all material means necessary for survival of human-being. *Sastra* means the treatise or the holy book. Even though a wide variety of translations are available in the literature, Heinrich Zimmer rightly and briefly calls it “timeless laws of politics, economy, diplomacy, and war” (Zimmer, 1953).

“The Arthasasthra” includes fifteen books, each containing several chapters. In the first chapter of the first book there is a detailed table of contents and in one verse it is indicated that the text has 150 chapters, and 6,000 verses. The text is mainly in *slokas* which are Sanskrit verse of two lines, yet prose has occasionally appeared in (Basu, 2011).

“The Arthasasthra” was written by Vishnugupta Chanakya Kautilya, one of the first economists, and labeled as his *magnum opus*. During his early life stages, Kautilya was an *acharya* (professor). Thereafter he became a Prime Minister to Chandragupta Maurya who destroyed Nanda Dynasty and ascended the throne. There was an informal relationship between Kautilya and Emperor. Namely Kautilya was not merely a Prime Minister, though he was a teacher, mentor and adviser to the Emperor (Sihag, 2007).

Kautilya produced a training manual in leadership. His attempt was to attain a welfare state by implementing a two-footed strategy: increasing the prosperity of the state and ensuring its security in terms of politics and economics (Alexander & Buckingham, 2011).

According to Jain and Mukherji, the crucial concern of the book is leadership:

A careful analysis of the contents of the table shows that while talking about the ideal king and his duties and while presenting detailed discussion of how a king should conduct himself, how he should ensure law and order in the society, how he should protect himself and the kingdom from the enemies and how he should look after his people, Kautilya is in fact explaining his concept of leadership. Further, his suggestions to the king on strategic alliances and networking, on crisis management and on communication strategies show that Kautilya is actually elaborating his detailed and comprehensive view of an effective leader.

2.3. Ancient Greece

Approximately in the same historical period, Greek and Roman civilizations were also generating solutions for problems of “ruler”. Plato, the great Athenian philosopher, wrote his most famous and widely read Socratic dialogue “The Republic”. Moreno and Gitlow summarized the dialog as the following (1999):

The Republic represents Plato’s mature thoughts on the just man and the just state and justice. Plato concludes that justice in the individual man means that each element of his nature is performing its proper function, just as each group in the state performs its proper function. Each has brought each element into harmony with the others, like the order of notes in a musical scale.

Based on his utopia “just city” the Kallipolis, Plato attempts to characterize the guardians and rulers, and indicates the vitality of having rulers from among philosophers who have the knowledge of true being and patterns of justice, beauty and truth. Another issue raised by Plato is educational methods and curriculum ought to be applied in an effort to shape personality characteristics of guardians and ruler.

In another masterpiece of Plato, “The Statesman”, he argues that ruling is a kind of craft like sailing or trading, which means two things: ruler require a given nature fitting to govern and they should be practiced in order to advance their expert knowledge in governance. Brooks says (2006):

For Plato, it is a common fact of life that people properly seek counsel solely from experts in a particular field. As a consequence, whenever we discern those who possess expert knowledge in governance , it is right that they should rule as this is the craft they naturally pursue best – just as those with expertise in trade skills ought to work as manual laborers.

In his last dialogue, “The Laws”, the philosopher presents his mature thoughts on issues discussed in earlier works and focuses on a best possible scenario which is more practicable, if not ideal (Smith & Brickhouse, 2009).

Plato’s student Aristotle, a towering figure in [ancient Greek philosophy](#), wrote “The Politics” in the 4th century BC. What evokes admiration about his work is his frequent reference to political events and institutions from different cities based on a research which conducted by his students assigned to collect information on the political organization and history of 158 different cities (Clayton, 2005).

He regards politics and ethics as separate sciences, yet they are strongly interrelated. Ethics is what an individual human being requires for good. However a just society is the prerequisite for accomplishment of individual goods and happiness (Duska, 1993).

“The Cyropaedia”, written by the Athenian Xenophon ca. in the early 4th century BC, is a kind of political romance telling the history of the Elder Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Monarchy. The Cyropaedia, meaning “The Education of Cyrus” has its focus on the author’s approach to training and education of “good” leader, yet in the opposite direction of the Republic (IEP, 2004).

2.4. Persia

Simultaneously with ancient Greek and Indian civilizations, Persian literature originated *andarznama* genre. *Andarz* can be translated as precept, instruction or advice and refers literary works inscribed by a distinguished person with the aim of

counselling. Actually it is a generic name for any kind of advice text in Persian literature. However among various other categories, special manuals written by kings, higher officials or priests for the education of princes are classified as *andarz* (Shaked & Safa, 2011).

According to many scholars, ancient *andarz* texts should have been existed. However the earliest ones which were able to hand down the next generations, are thought to date from the 3rd century AD.

“The letter of Tansar” to Gushnasp, the king of Tabaristan is a governmental correspondence aiming to pursue Gushnasp to accept Sasanian sovereignty. Tansar, was a Zoroastrian priest and sagacious counselor of Ardashir I, the first Sasanian king. In his letter he was articulating his political thoughts by narrating the differences between previous dynasty and Sasanian Empire. He argues also four pillars of a state (clergy, military, scribes, and artisans and tillers) and associates the prosperity with the strategy that no one is allowed to move to another class (Pourshariati, 2008). The maxim of “religion and kingship are brothers” which underlines the importance of moral values in kingship, is attributed to Tansar (Lambton, 1962).

As his wise counselor, Ardashir I wrote an *andarz*, which is a testament addressing his son Shapur. Besides his approaches to good governance, code of ethical conduct is involved in the testament (Yarshater, 2003).

Another wise vizier and philosopher king association in Persia exists between Khosro Anushirvan, also known as Anushirvan the Just, and Buzurgmihr. “The Book of the Testament of Khusro” to his son Ormuz and “The Book of Counsel to Khosro Anushirvan” by his vizier Buzurgmihr, written in the 6th century, are samples of *andarz* genre (Inostranzev, 2004). Moreover, Buzurgmihr has been quoted during centuries in various advice texts through his analogies and maxims. For example; the maxim that “the king is the shadow of the God” (Arjomand, 2009) and the analogy of the king as a gardener are attributed to Buzurgmihr (Amirsoleimani, 2002). Another maxim of wise counselor is emphasizing the importance of justice: *No prosperity accompanies a king's injustice* (Yarshater, 2003).

2.5. Medieval and Early Modern Age of Europe

If we return to the West, middle ages confront us with a literature genre called *speculum* so-called “mirror”. As a matter of fact it was the most pervasive literature genre of middle ages. Nederman (1998) conveys the definition of *speculum* made by Einar Már Jónsson to us: “The medieval “mirror” was, most essentially, a book of advice addressed to an individual or (more commonly) a group, detailing a code of conducts or set of values appropriate to its addressee’s social position or standing”.

Among various subsets of genre addressing courtiers, lawyers or merchants, political advice texts gained popularity. They were devoted to kings or princes, aimed to describe “good” governor, and termed as “mirror for princes” (in Latin: *principum specula*, in German: *Fürstenspiegel*). According to Jónsson’s clear and simple definition (cited in Nederman, 1998): “A *Fürstenspiegel* is a tract written for a prince – and in general dedicated to him in one fashion or another – which has the principal object of describing ideal prince, his comportment, his role, and his situation in the world”.

During the Byzantium period, there had been produced numerous mirror for princes which are partly directed to a throne prince by his father as an experienced

emperor, and partly written by priests, bishops, and archbishop in order to counsel an emperor. In order to avoid niggling, we just itemize a couple of prominent examples of such works (Tural, n.d.) :

- A series of advices in seventy-two short chapters were written by [Agapetus the Deacon](#) in the 6th century, addressing to the emperor [Justinian I](#).
- Two texts written by [Basil I the Macedonian](#) was addressed to his son emperor [Leo VI the Wise](#) in the 9th century.
- Patriarch [Photios I of Constantinople](#)'s epistle was addressed to [Boris I of Bulgaria](#) (9th century).
- Patriarch [Photios I of Constantinople](#) was contributed to the work of [Basil I the Macedonian](#) (9th century).
- Preface and two sections were written by Patriarch [Photios I of Constantinople](#)'s for the book of law "Eisagoge" and declared to the public in 886. What is remarkable is that he discussed the statue of the patriarch against the emperor and made off emperor's supremacy (9th century).
- "Paideia Basilike" (or *Institutio Regia*) of Archbishop [Theophylact of Ohrid](#) was addressed to his pupil [Constantine Doukas](#), son of Emperor [Michael VII Doukas](#) (11th century).
- "Andrias Basilikos" (or *Regia Statua*) which can be translated as "Statue of a King", of [Nicephorus Blemmydes](#), was written for [Theodore II Laskaris](#), the future [Nicaean emperor](#) (13th century).
- "On The Duties of a King" was written by Thomas Magister in the 13th century.
- "Paidea Regia" which can be translated as "Precepts of Kingly Education" was written and a speech "On Virtue and the Goodness of a King" was delivered by [Manuel II Palaiologos](#) in the 15th century.

Naturally mirror for princes had been inscribed not only in Byzantium, but also in Europe. In terms of authorship and content they were identical to Byzantine texts. However the subsequent contributions to the genre were differentiating into having a more secular and pragmatist perspective (Tural, n.d.):

- "Duodecim Abusivis Saeculi" (On the Twelve Abuses of the World) written in the 7th century in Ireland, had been widely spread through the medium of Irish missionary and became one of the most important step stone in the development of the genre *speculum*.
- "Via Regia" (The Royal Pathway) of [Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel](#) addressing to [Louis the Pious](#), King of Aquitania, was accepted as the first true European *principum specula* (9th century).
- "De Institutione Regia" (The Institution of the King) and "De Institutione Laicali" (On the Edification of the Laity) were written by [Jonas of Orléans](#), for [Pepin I of Aquitaine](#) and for Count [Matfrid of Orléans](#), respectively. Worth mentioning facet of his works is his attempt to make use of stories and anecdotes from the

Old Testament such that exemplifying the prophets David and Solomon as ideal rulers (9th century).

- “*De Rectoribus Christianis*” (On Christian Rulers) of [Sedulius Scottus](#) was addressed to King [Lothar II](#) of Lotharingia (9th century).
- “*De Regis Persona*” (The Person of the King) and “*De Ordine Palatii*” (On the Management of the Palace) were written by [Hincmar of Reims](#) (9th century).
- “*Policraticus*” (Statesman’s Book) of [John of Salisbury](#) written in the 12th century had been interpreted as a breaking point. Because “*Unlike his predecessors, who treated the prince as a particular person whose authority rested on fealty, John equated “the prince” with “the public power,” whose authority corresponded to a specific territory*” (Taylor, 2006). He had moved beyond the hierarchy of God, Church and Human, and re-structured government within a secular framework.
- “*De Principis Instructione*” (On the Education of a Monarch) was written by [Gerald of Wales](#) in the 12th century.
- “*De Eruditione Filiorum Regalium*” (The Education of Noble Children) was written by [Vincent of Beauvais](#) in the 13th century.
- “*De Regimine Principum*” (On the Governance of Princes) and “*Speculum Virtutum Moralium*” (The Mirror of Moral Virtues) were written by Engelbert of Admont in the beginning of the 14th century. It was the first mirror for princes written in Germany after plenty of work produced in England, France, Spain and Italy.
- “*De Regimine Principum*” (The Regiment of Princes) was written by [Thomas Occleve](#) for Prince Hal shortly before his accession to the throne (15th century).
- “*Institutio Principis Christiani*” (Education of a Christian Prince) was written by Erasmus as advice to King Charles of Spain in 1516.
- “*Il Principe*” (The Prince) was written by Niccolo Machiavelli in 1513. It is surely beyond doubt that “the Prince” is the most classic example of a mirror for princes produced by Western civilization. He rejected a good number of basic advices offered by previous authors for centuries. According to Machiavelli “*the prince must be bold, resolute, flexible, prepared to break promises and act against charity, truth, religion and humanity. ... When the occasion requires it, the prince must adopt any means necessary*” (Ramsay, 2002). Because of his pragmatic approach to the kingship, he has been criticized roughly.

2.6. Islamic Civilization

In Islamic World, the name of the genre discussed in our work is *siyasatnama*, which means “book of government”. The word *siyasa* has an Arabic origin and literally refers to the training of a horse. It means also the governance of a state, the art of management, penalty and execution. In the narrowest sense, it could be described to maintain the order and safety of a society by using ethical means through the disciplining and instructing them to the “good” (Atmaca, n.d.). The suffix *-nama* which

has a Persian origin means book or treatise. The term “siyasatnama” reflects as well multicolored structure of Islamic civilization; with its partly Persian, partly Arabic origin.

Islam, as a major world religion, showed up in Arabia in the 7th century. Not only “*Quran*”, the sacred scriptures of Islam, but also “*Hadith*”, a collection of sayings attributed to the Prophet, involve various advices addressing anyone who dominates over the people. The coverage is broad in scope, from justice, modesty and advisement to corruption.

After migrating to Medina, the Prophet Muhammad established the first community-state of Islam. Islam was attempting to regulate both relationships to God and to others contacted in social life. Because of its comprehensive approach to the human life, Muslims constructed not only religious rules and institutions but also laws and institutions governing a society (Mahdi, Rahman, & Schimmel, 2012). If we look from this perspective, it is not surprising that there are a myriad of advice texts addressing governors.

Initially advices had been in the form of epistle or testament counseling recipient basic principles of administration briefly. In the course of time, Islam pervaded Iran, Middle Asia, South Africa and Anatolia. It came across with various cultures and attempted to harmonize all. Later and “right” examples of *siyasatnama* were written in the form of bulky book.

The first example is an epistle written by Ali Ibn Abi Talib in the 7th century, the last Rightly-Guided Caliph, to his fellow Malik al-Ashtar, whom he had appointed governor of Egypt. He discusses his conception of legitimate and righteous rule. He outlines as well qualifications and responsibilities of a governor and advices sagaciously to maintain justice and being humble (Ibn Ebi-Talib, 1997). In the “*Nahj al-Balagha*”, a well-known collection of sermons, letters, and other pronouncements of Ali, there are a few more administrative letters addressing officers appointed to various tasks; however the epistle mentioned above has a rightful reputation because of its comprehensive style (Gleave, 2012).

Another example is the introduction part of the “*Kitab al-Kharaj*” written by jurist Abu Yusuf for Harun al-Rashid, [Arab Abbasid Caliph](#) between 786 and 809. Even though the work is a treatise on taxation, “*Abu Yusuf emphasizes the caliph’s accountability before God and his responsibilities towards his subjects. He portrays those placed in authority as God’s deputies (khulafa) on His earth, recipients of a light by which they are able to elucidate for their subjects certain obscure matters and explicate the duties incumbent upon them*” (Marlow, 2012).

As well during the caliphate of al-Ma’mun, the son of Harun al-Rashid, we encounter with a testament written by an experienced father to his son appointed as governor of Egypt and Raqqah. The letter written by Tahir b. Al-Husayn to Abdullah b. Tahir in 822 acquired fame in a short span of time. Al-Ma’mun himself admired it and ordered to send its copies to his governors. Historians quoted the letter and discussed its elegance. Ibn Khaldun praised it as “*the best and most comprehensive treatment of this type of politics that I have found*” (Ibn Khaldun, 2004).

The last short-in-form example, known as “*The Pandnama*”, is a testament written by Sebuktigin, the founder of the [Ghaznavid dynasty](#), addressing his son Amir Mahmud in 987. Rumor has it that Mahmud learnt advices by heart, practiced consistently. After gaining the throne, he was called as Mahmud of Ghazni and became the most notable ruler of his time (Mercil, 1975).

As we mentioned before, starting from the 8th century Islam arrived at its golden age, a civilization enlarging geographically; and pioneering not only in sciences such as physics, medicine, architecture and engineering but also social and political life in terms of justice, legal order, and economics. The bulky books of *siyasatnama* genre were natural fruits of this age.

Ibn al-Muqaffa, “a man of great erudition” (Lambton, 1962), was a secretary in the *diwan* during the first days of the Abbasid Caliphate. He not only translated valuable works from Pahlavi into Arabic, but also contributed to the *siyasatnama* genre actively by his own works.

“*Kalila wa-Dimna*”, “the collection of allegorical fables in which various animals portray the roles of king and courtiers” (Marlow, 2012), is originated from Indian *Panchatantra* texts mentioned previously in our work. The fables had been translated from Sanskrit to Pahlavi by Burzoe, the famous Sasanian King Khosro Anushirvan’s physician. In the 8th century, Ibn al-Muqaffa not only translated it from Pahlavi into Arabic but also adapted to the Islamic culture (“*Kalila Wa-Dimna*,” 2012).

He wrote as well “*Adab al-Kabir*” and intended to construct it as a *siyasatnama* text. The suggested morality in the book was totally practical, and interestingly more suited to a European of Renaissance instead of a mediaeval Muslim (“Ibn al-Muqaffa,” 2012).

Another book-length *siyasatname*, “*The Kitab al-Taj fi Akhlaq al-Muluk*”, was written at the end of the 9th century. The authorship of the book is a highly controversial topic: Al-Jahiz or Muhammad b. Al-Harith al-Taghlibi / Tha’labi or someone else. Topics covered are the conduct of a governor, courtly society and its organization. In each section after counseling how a prudent king acts, related historical anecdotes are stated (Marlow, 2012).

Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad Farabi, lived in the 10th century, was a one of the most prominent Muslim philosopher of Turkish origin. Such that he labeled as “the second teacher”, the first one being Aristotle.

Al-Farabi’s three works manifesting his political philosophy, could be partly regarded as *siyasatnama*: “*Fi Mabadi Ara Ahl al-Madina al-Fadila*”, briefly called “*Al-Madina Al-Fadila*” meaning “Virtuous City”; “*Al-Siyasa Al-Madaniyya*” meaning “On Political Government”; and “*Fusul al-Madani*” meaning “Aphorisms of the Statesman” (“Al Fārābī,” 2012).

Al-Farabi was influenced by the Greek philosophers’ conception of “philosopher-king” and perceived the Prophet Mohammed as the perfect example of it. He discussed the qualifications of a ruler who is the Khalifa of Prophet and claimed that the supreme quality of the ruler of the virtuous city is wisdom. “*The state without a philosopher to whom it may be entrusted will perish in no time*” (Lambton, 1962). Besides, the virtuous city is controlled and maintained by justice that followed upon love (Syed, n.d.).

Muhammad b. Al-Harith al-Taghlibi / Tha’labi, an expert on Arabic literature lived between 961 and 1038, composed two books of advice at the court of the Khwarazm-Shah Ma’mun b. Ma’mun: “*Adab al-Muluk*” (The Conduct of the Kings) and “*Tuhfat al-Wuzara*” (The Gift for the Viziers) addressing his vizier Al-Hamidi (Marlow, 2012).

Al-Mawardi, a religious jurist lived in Basra between 974-1058, contributed to political theory and state administration of Islam through his various works written in

Arabic. His famous work *“Kitab al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya”* (The Laws of Islamic Governance), which could be considered partly law book, partly siyasatnama, discusses the theory of the Caliphate and state institutions. Acknowledged as the first separate book dealing with political theory, distinguishing it from theology, it acquired fame not only in the Islamic world but also in West. Other works of Al-Mawardi are *“Kitab Kawanin al-Wizara wa-Siyasat al-Mulk”*, dealing with the responsibilities and characteristics of viziers; *“Kitab Tashil al-Nazar wa-Ta’djil al-Zafar”*, partly consisting advices addressing ruler; and *“Kitab Nasihat al-Muluk”* (Book of Advice for Ruler), which is a full-blooded siyasatnama (Güner, 2002).

“Kutadgu Bilig”, *“the oldest monument of Islamic Turkish literature”*, was written by Yusuf Khas Hajib of Balasagun in 1070 and presented to the reigning prince of Kashghar. It was written in Karakhanid, or Middle Turkish which is at the same time the language of the Orkhon inscriptions and verbally means “the wisdom which brings happiness”. Kutadgu Bilig, a long didactic poem consisting of more than 6,500 couplets, is considered as unique among siyasatnama texts with its unexampled style: a narrative unfolding between four principal characters who are “Kun Togdi”, “Ay Toldi”, “Ogdtilmis”, and “Odgurmil”. However the substance of the book is analogous with other texts: how a ruler should govern, how he should treat the various classes of society, which types of qualities are required for various positions. Kun Togdi, meaning “Rising Sun”, is the king and represents “Justice”; Ay Toldi, meaning “Full Moon” is the vizier and represents “Fortune”; Ogdtilmis, meaning “Highly Praised” is the son of Full Moon and represents “Intellect” or “Wisdom”; and Odgurmil, meaning “Wide Awake” is an ascetic and represents “Man’s Last End”. The book allegorically argues that “justice”, to be exercised properly, requires the help of “Fortune”, “Wisdom”, and “The End,” or what we might call “Religion” (Deverux, 1985).

The best-known example of siyasatnama texts is *“Siyasat-Nama”* written in Persian by Nizam al-Mulk, the Seljuk vizier first of Alp Arslan and then of Malik Shah. It is *“a fascinating example”* of the genre, insomuch that the name of the book is identified with “the book of advice” literature of Islamic civilization (Frye, 1964). The book, finished in 1077 and presented to Sultan Malik Shah, consists 50 chapters of advice enriched by historical anecdotes which are not only of Islamic origin but also Persian (Bowen & Bosworth, 2012).

“Kabus-Nama”, another famous Persian siyasatnama, was authored by Kay Kawus b. Iskandar who was the prince of the Ziyarid dynasty in Gurgan and Tabaristan. Based on a Persian tradition, the book was named after Kabus b. Wushmagir, grandfather of author. Kay Kawus finished the book in 1083, when he was 63 years old; and addressed it to Gilan Shah, his favorite son and intended successor. Kabus-Nama, including forty-four chapters, discusses almost any aspect of the life of a prince (*“Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk,”* 2012).

Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, an outstanding religious thinker of medieval Islam, authored *“Nasihat al-Muluk”* (Book of Counsel for Kings) in the beginning of the 12th century. Al-Ghazali who has a Persian origin, wrote his book in Persian. *“Nasihat al-Muluk”* is formed from two main parts. The first part is mostly like a theological text including Islamic religious principles that could not be regarded as common for a siyasatnama. The second part contains various topics: advices relevant to ruler, viziers, and secretaries; the maxims of sages; the importance of intelligence; and women (Inan,

n.d.). He emphasizes the significance of position of kingship with these sentences (Al-Ghazali, 1964):

Know and understand that God Most High chose two categories of mankind, placing them above others: the prophets and the kings (*moluk*). He sent the prophets to His creatures to lead them to Him. As for the kings (*padshahan*), he chose them to protect men from one another and made the prosperity of human life dependent on them. . . . As you hear in the traditions, “the ruler is the shadow of God on earth.

An extremely popular siyasetname from the Maghreb is “*The Siraj al-Muluk*” (Flambeau of Kings). It was written by a Spanish-born Arabic scholar, Ibn Abi Randaqa al-Turtushi. After extensively travelling through Islamic geography, he settled in Alexandria and dedicated himself to teaching. There he completed his most important work, “*The Siraj al-Muluk*”, consisting of sixty-four chapters of anecdotes and moral statements, and presented it to the vizier al-Ma”mun b. Al-Bata’ihi in 1122 (Abdesselem, 2012).

Ibn Taymiyya, who was a theologian and religious jurist, lived between 1263 and 1328. “*The Kitab al-Siyasa al-Shar’iyya*” (On Public and Private Law in Islam) written around 1310, is a treatise on juridical policy. He discusses two main prerequisites for a “right” appointment; eligibility and trust. Besides, he emphasizes the importance of advisement and justice (Ibn Teymiyye, 1999): “*God upholds the just state even if it is unbelieving, but does not uphold the unjust state even if it is believing,*” and that, “*the world can survive with justice and unbelief, but not with injustice and Islam*”.

An exceptional scholar of Islamic civilization, Ibn Khaldun, is an Arabic historian, philosopher and founder of sociology. His magnum opus, “*The Muqaddimah*” finalized in 1377, is an introduction to the history presenting “*an encyclopedic synthesis of the methodological and cultural knowledge necessary to enable the historian to produce a truly scientific work*” (Ibn Khaldun, 2004). It is surely beyond doubt that he did not intend to write a siyasetname, however he focused on social phenomena in general. From that point of view, we will accept the *Muqaddimah* as a siyasetname text to a certain extent.

The Golden age of Islam comes to the conclusion at the beginning of the 14th century. However another civilization, Ottoman Empire, pullulated from its Islamic origins. During the rise and growth phases of the Ottomans, there had been an increasing attention to the siyasetname texts. Most of the books introduced in our work translated from Persian or Arabic to Ottoman Turkish and significantly influenced the concept of Ottoman governance. Nevertheless an Ottoman style of siyasetname emerged (Altay, 2011):

- “*Iskendername*” written by Ahmedi, a fourteenth-century Anatolian Turkish poet, is an epic poem on the life and deeds of Alexander the Great.
- “*Kenz El-Kubera wa Mehekk El-’Ulema*”, written by Şeyhoğlu Sadruddin Mustafa in 1401 consists of four chapters: the qualifications of the kings; their relationships with subjects and officers; type and qualifications of officers; and responsibilities of the *ulama* (scholars).
- “*Nasihah-u Sultan Murad*”, written by Murad II for his son Mehmed II (The Conquer), includes advices on various issues related to governance in plain language.

- “*Enisu’l-Celis*” written by Kasım b. Seydi el-Hafız Ankaravi and dedicated to Murad II, aims to instruct sovereign in justice and ethics.
- “*Tarih-i Ebu’l-Feth*” (History of the Father of Conquest), written by Tursun Bey in 1490 as a panegyric to Mehmed II, narrates the course of history between 1444 and 1488. However, the introduction of the book is accepted as a book of advice.
- “*Kanun-ı Şehinşahi*”, written in the period of Selim I, shows similarities with *Al-Siyasa al-Shar’iyya* or *El-Ahkamu’s-Sultaniye* which have ecclesiastical foundations.
- An incomplete “*Siyasatnama*” was sent by Selim I to his son Shahzada Suleiman.
- “*Kitab-ı Miratu’l-Muluk*” was written by Ahmet b. Husameddin El-Amasi in 1536.
- “*Asafname*” addressing viziers, the highest officers of a state, was written by Lutfi Pasha, a prominent intellectual and grand vizier of Suleyman the Magnificent. This book is a breaking point for the genre. Unlike previous books of advice, Lutfi Pasha’s advices are more practicable. Besides, Persian and Arabic influence on the book - in terms of examples, anecdotes, and style - is little if any.

With the phase of stagnation, Ottoman *siyasatnama* literature changed its direction. “*Islahatnama*” genre focusing on restructuring the state in order to overcome administrative problems, took the place of *siyasatnama* books advising ruler ethical behavior and justice in order to maintain prosperity.

3.DISCUSSION

Throughout the history, quite a lot people from very different backgrounds and cultures has advised whoever have authority over people towards what is accepted as “good”. They aimed to synthesize the reality of politics with moral principles. The whole literature introduced in this work was principally written for statesmen. However they contain a great deal of universal advices applicable to any management context.

Clearly the objective of advice literature is to arrive at “good” in administration. On the other hand business ethics attempts to distinguish what is morally right and wrong in the context of business. Under these circumstances, advice texts could provide us with the inspirations relevant for contemporary business ethics:

- [1] Ethics is strongly interrelated with administration.
- [2] Honesty and integrity are accepted as main traits of an effective leader.
- [3] Almost all advice texts place a paramount importance on maintaining and securing justice in administration. A comprehensive approach to the justice should be maintained, which means justice towards human resources, customers, competitors, suppliers, environment, state, etc. Moreover a just state ruled by a wise sovereign is accepted as utopia.

- [4] Oppression at any level of the organization causes management to fail. Leadership should internally and externally secure the justice in every detail. They need to know transparently right from wrong and to listen to the voice of inner conscience.
- [5] While maintaining justice and showing integrity could be accepted as the basement of a virtuous man and political order, “being benevolent” is one move ahead. Because being just and honest for a leader does not necessarily include showing kindness and inuring to the benefit to his subjects. A leader should treat his subjects with love and concern.
- [6] Decision making as one of the primary management processes is also highlighted by advice texts. Manager should decide on what morally right is.
- [7] Human resources also should be managed based on ethical standards. Making “right” appointment and punishing or rewarding officers appropriately are considered as elements of ethical management.
- [8] Even if in all likelihood it brings good/beneficial results, exercising evil methods could not be seen as permissible. Clearly end does not justify mean.
- [9] Leader should serve as a role model by setting a high value on ethical behavior and direct his subjects to “good”. He is the one who can set and unify moral standards. It should not be forgotten that [a fish rots from the head down](#) or vice versa. Foul water makes nothing but soiled.
- [10] Any delay in implementation of ethical standards is non-excusable. Justice must be secured at once and benevolence should be implemented almost immediately.
- [11] The real stories of previous rulers and advices of experts should be taken into consideration in order to develop a moral administration.

4.CONCLUSION

This paper has investigated historical course of books of advice with a special focus on implications of these works on business ethics. Despite the fact that the whole literature introduced in this work was principally written for statesmen, they contain a great deal of universal advices applicable to any management context. More specifically this work was designed to add a new dimension to the studies investigating philosophical foundations of business ethics; specifically to the researches questioning relevance of historical political-philosophy texts to the modern management and ethics.

As stated in previous section, advice literature aiming to arrive at “good” in administration could be the source of inspiration for the field of business ethics attempting to distinguish what is morally right and wrong in the context of business.

The indispensability of virtues such as honesty and justice for good governance, the significance of treating subjects with love and concern, decision making process based on moral ethics, and refusal of ethically wrong practices even if it brings good results are a few examples of inspirations derived from advice texts reported here.

What makes this study significant is firstly our focus on Islamic civilization which has been overlooked by scholars and secondly exposing a holistic perspective starting from 2500 BC till 16th century.

An issue that was not addressed in this study is more concrete and detailed advices derivable from books of advice concerning business ethics practices. Considerably more work will need to be done to determine the practical value of books of advice for modern business ethic problems.

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