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## The ceremonies and honors in the Era of the Hafsidi state (625–675 AH/1227-1277 AD)

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### Abstract

After the fall of the Almohad State, the Maghreb region experienced a period of weakness and fragmentation, resulting in three independent states: the Marinid State in the western Maghreb, the Zayyanid State in the central Maghreb, and the Hafsidi State in the eastern Maghreb.

We chose the topic "The Ceremonies and Honors in the Era of the Hafsidi State (625-675 AH/1227-1277 AD)," focusing on the Hafsidi State in the eastern Maghreb, which corresponds to present-day Tunisia and parts of eastern Algeria. This study covers a specific timeframe during the reigns of the state's founder, Abu Zakariya Yahya, and his son, Muhammad al-Mustansir Billah. They excelled in establishing a political, administrative, and judicial system that ensured stability and prolonged their rule over the Maghreb.

Ceremonies and honors are considered a sign of a nation's sophistication and advancement. This research provides a brief overview of ceremonies and honors in terms of their linguistic and terminological meanings, their origin and development. It discusses royal ceremonies and court customs, the factors contributing to the emergence of ceremonies and honors in the Hafsidi State, and the significance of specific ceremonies for the Hafsidi sultans, including the accession to the throne, private and public allegiance ceremonies, the sultan's duties and administrative powers, the appointment of city governors, the appointment ceremonies for judges and high-ranking officials, and the various types of ceremonial documents for delegations and embassies, as well as the sultans' distinctive titles and honorifics.

**Keywords:** Ceremonies, honors, Hafsidi state

### Introductions

#### The Origin and Formation of Ceremonies and Honors

**First:** Ceremonies and Honors, Linguistically and Terminologically

**Ceremonies:** The term "ceremony" is derived from "I drew for him such and such, so he followed it," meaning to obey, or from "He wrote on such and such," indicating it could be from both usages (Al-Qalqashandi, p. 107\_1) [8]. A decree is a printed document, and the plural is decrees. To observe something closely is to "teras" it. The verb "to draw" conjugates to "yarsum," and "rasama," with the plural being decrees, which is the plural form of the passive participle "drawn" from the verb "to draw" (Al-Hameed, 2008, p. 290\2) [11]. The terms "ceremonies" and "decrees" are ultimate plurals of "drawings", the plural of "drawing". Linguistically, "drawing" means "trace" (Al-Jawhari, 1987, p. 932\5) [6] (Al-Nuaimi, 1973, p. 157) [25].

A decree is a written order issued by the head of state or sultan concerning a matter of governance. It holds the force of law with a legislative format issued by the head of state.

#### Ceremonies in Terminology

The terminological meaning of ceremonies does not diverge from the linguistic concept. Ceremonies refer to the orders of a sultan or emir, particularly written orders, as well as permissions and approvals for departure. Ceremonies also denote religious commands and Islamic teachings, signifying refined customs. Ceremonies are categorized into three types:

1. Royal Ceremonies: Court customs and traditions.
2. Service Ceremonies: Country functions and court positions.
3. Jihad Ceremonies: Military roles (Dozy, 2000, pp. 140-141\5) [21].

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The term "ceremonies" became widespread in the late third century AH (Al-Nuaimi, p. 157) <sup>[25]</sup> and evolved to signify three meanings:

- The set of customs observed in interactions with people and their conduct in life, known in French as "etiquette."
- The customs followed in honoring dignitaries in political matters and during meetings with kings and high officials, known as "protocol."
- The written orders issued by caliphs and kings for appointing princes, governors, judges, and other state officials (Al-Nuaimi, p. 157) <sup>[25]</sup>.

Al-Qalqashandi described the third type of ceremonies, stating that ceremonies come from "I drew for him such and such, so he followed it," meaning to obey (Al-Qalqashandi, pp. 107-112\11) <sup>[8]</sup>. The concept of ceremonies encompasses the customs and traditions followed in assuming administrative responsibilities and their impact on political, military, and social events. Administration and its system reflect the political thought governing society using tools and means like institutions and staff. Thus, ceremonies became the set of rules regulating relationships between societal groups and between society and the authority (Al-Janabi, 2021, p. 35) <sup>[36]</sup>.

From the above, it is evident that the general framework for the figurative meaning of "drawing" is extensive, with some terms relatively distant from its core but still within the general scope. Therefore, "drawings," "ceremonies," or "decrees" are a collection of customs, traditions, norms, and laws (Al-Bawi, 2018, p. 61) <sup>[45]</sup>. These customs and traditions did not exist during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs but developed during the Umayyad period (41-132 AH), with Damascus being a significant commercial and cultural center. Its commercial and political connections with neighboring states, especially the Byzantine Empire, which controlled the Levant, made it necessary for the Umayyad Caliphate to adopt the prevailing cultural heritage after liberating the Levant from foreign control (Aqil, 1969, p. 98) <sup>[47]</sup>. Damascus then became the political and cultural center (Bartold, 1958, p. 63) <sup>[37]</sup>, and the Umayyad Caliphate in the Levant had to embrace the cultural heritage that prevailed at that time (Al-Sultani, 1990, p. 2) <sup>[35]</sup>.

## Second: The Concept of Honors, Linguistically and Terminologically

### Honors in Language

The root of the word "honor" is derived from (sh-r-f), which signifies elevation and high status. "Sharf" means elevation, and a "sharif" is a person of high status. The word "honors" is the plural form of "honor, derived from "sharafa", meaning to become noble. It can also refer to special garments or ceremonial clothing (Al-Nuaimi, p. 59) <sup>[25]</sup>.

### Honors in Terminology:

Al-Qalqashandi defined the term "honors" as "the ceremonial robes of sword bearers, classified into levels, the highest of which is reserved for leading princes and deputies" (Al-Qalqashandi, p. 54/4) <sup>[8]</sup>. During the Mamluk era in Egypt, the term "honors" referred to a type of clothing worn by officials such as princes, commanders, and senior scribes during formal occasions and major events (Al-Janabi, 2021, p. 37) <sup>[36]</sup>. When a person was appointed as a prince or to an official position, they would wear ceremonial

garments suitable for their rank, reflecting their level of authority (Al-Qalqashandi, p. 55/4) <sup>[8]</sup>.

In later periods, the term "honors" was used interchangeably with the term "protocol," and it applied to clothing and other contexts (Al-Bawi, 2018, p. 161) <sup>[45]</sup>. During the late Ottoman period, the Turks used the term to mean "protocol," and the official responsible for protocol was called (Al-Nuaimi, 1973, pp. 159-160) <sup>[25]</sup>. Since the late third century AH, the term "ceremonies" had been used to signify what the French word "protocol" conveys, whereas the term "honors" only came to be used in this sense during the late Ottoman period. Thus, despite its Arabic origins, the concept of "honors" acquired a Turkish character (Al-Janabi, 2021, p. 38) <sup>[36]</sup>.

## Chapter Two: Factors in the Emergence of Ceremonies and Honors in the Hafsid State

The emergence of ceremonies and honors did not originate in the 7th century AH/13th century AD, coinciding with the rise of the Hafsid State in the same century after the fall of the Almohad State (541-668 AH/1164-1269 AD). The origins of these ceremonies and honors date back to an earlier period, specifically the late 3rd century AH/9th century AD.

The initial roots of these traditions trace back to the end of the Emirate period and the beginning of the Umayyad Caliphate in Andalusia. This connection is linked to the Umayyad Caliphate in the East, which paid close attention to ceremonies and honors due to their interactions with neighboring nations like the Byzantine Empire, known for its elaborate ceremonies for emperors and kings (Al-Nuaimi, 1973, p. 157) <sup>[25]</sup>. Additionally, the historical ties between the Maghreb and Spain have been strong since ancient times, with Andalusia, during most of the era of the governors, being administratively subordinate to the Emir of the Maghreb (Al-Abadi, n.d., pp. 91-93) <sup>[9-10]</sup>.

The Hafsid State was the fourth state in Ifriqiya (modern-day Tunisia) after the Aghlabid, Fatimid Caliphate, and Zirid states. The Hafsids inherited the origins of these ceremonies and honors after gaining independence in Ifriqiya and establishing their state under the leadership of Emir Abu Zakariya Yahya, the founder of the Hafsid State in Tunisia in 625 AH/1227 AD. Several factors influenced the emergence of ceremonies and honors in the Hafsid State, including:

### 1. The Political Factor

The Hafsid state was established in the Maghreb, specifically in Ifriqiya (modern-day Tunisia), stretching from the city of Tripoli in the east to the city of Bejaia in Algeria in the west. The capital of this region was Tunis, which also served as the capital of the Hafsid state (Al-Qaisi, 2011, p. 11) <sup>[17]</sup>. Tunis has long been renowned for its advantageous geographic location on the Mediterranean Sea, situated centrally in North Africa between the Mediterranean to the north and east, Libya to the southeast, the desert to the southwest, and Algeria to the west.

The Hafsid state is considered a continuation of the Almohad state, which was based in the Maghreb. Abu Hafs Umar ibn Yahya al-Hintati, a close associate of Ibn Tumart and a leading figure in the Almohad movement, played a significant role in this transition (Al-Marakkeshi, 2006, p. 149) <sup>[34]</sup> (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p. 309/6) <sup>[33]</sup>. Abu Hafs Umar, along with his large tribe, supported Mahdi Ibn Tumart and

Abd al-Mu'min Ibn Ali al-Kumi, playing crucial roles within the Almohad state both in the Maghreb and in jihad in Andalusia against the Spanish Christian kingdoms (Al-Qaisi, 2011, p. 52)<sup>[17]</sup>.

The circumstances of the Almohad state, including numerous uprisings such as Ibn Ghania's revolt, facilitated the emergence of the Hafsid as an independent emirate in Ifriqiya. Emir Abu Zakariya Yahya proclaimed the Hafsid state in 625 AH/1227 AD, organizing the affairs of Ifriqiya and treating the populace well, thereby gaining their loyalty and love (Ibn Al-Qunfudh, 1968, p. 107)<sup>[2]</sup>. Abu Zakariya also expanded the Hafsid territory at the expense of the Almohads, bringing most cities of the Maghreb under Hafsid control. Thus, he quickly established dominion over the Maghreb, becoming the Almohads' successor and extending his rule to several cities in Andalusia (Al-Khulani, 2021, p. 24)<sup>[40]</sup>. This marked the beginning of a new era in the Islamic Maghreb, represented by the Hafsid state.

## 2. The Social Factor

The population of the Maghreb during the Hafsid period consisted of various groups, primarily Berbers and Arabs, united by the Islamic religion and the Arabic language, and intermingled through marriage (Ibn Amer, n.d., p. 74)<sup>[7]</sup>. Additionally, there were dhimmis (non-Muslim citizens), including Jews and Christians, who had been paying the jizya tax since the Sanhaja era. Jews lived in neighborhoods called "harat" and enjoyed the freedom to practice their religion in their synagogues (Ibn Amer, n.d., p. 74)<sup>[7]</sup>. Jews primarily spoke Arabic, using Hebrew for religious rituals and diplomatic correspondence, and were subject to Islamic courts for personal matters, where Jewish law (Talmud) was applied (Brunschvig, 1988, p. 441/2)<sup>[20]</sup>.

Christians, on the other hand, enjoyed more freedom. There are references to Christian elements (al-Uluj) who were favored by Emir Abu Zakariya (625 AH/1227 AD). It is noted that the mother of Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah was a Christian who converted to Islam and was a mother of noble birth. Christians were also employed as mercenary soldiers, continuing this role after Abu Zakariya, residing in designated areas called "Hawmat al-Uluj" (Brunschvig, 1988, p. 470/1)<sup>[20]</sup> (Al-Dawlatli, 1981, p. 90)<sup>[32]</sup>. Dhimmis (Jews and Christians) enjoyed freedom and tolerance under the Hafsid state, enabling them to pursue various professions such as doctors, merchants, and bankers, enjoying equality with Muslims.

Additionally, Andalusian elements spread throughout the Maghreb, particularly in Ifriqiya, as Hafsid rulers opened their capital, Tunis, to Andalusian refugees. A strong relationship existed between Emir Abu Zakariya and the Nasrid rulers of Granada, as evidenced by the poet Ibn al-Abbar's appeal to the Hafsid state on behalf of Valencia (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 60)<sup>[42]</sup>.

Tunis, like other major Islamic cities in the East and West, maintained certain customs and traditions. One significant tradition was the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, which held great importance for the Maghrebians. Sultans and emirs prepared extensively for this celebration, spending considerable sums on decorations, lighting candles in mosques and homes, and reciting poetry in praise of the Prophet. Another tradition among the Hafsid sultans was to take a different route to and from the Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha prayers, as well as for Friday prayers, with the sultan

going alone to pray with the people (Brunschvig, 1988, p. 37-315/2)<sup>[20]</sup>.

## 3. The Intellectual Factor

The encouragement of the Hafsid sultans played a significant role in the spread of knowledge and the development of intellectual movements. It is reported that Emir Abu Zakariya Yahya (625-647 AH/1227-1249 AD), described as "one of the righteous, scholars, and practitioners," had completed studies under Sheikh Al-Raini Al-Sousi, covering works like Al-Ghazali's "Al-Mustasfa" and other beneficial books. He also engaged in grammar discussions with Ibn Asfour, was a jurist, a poet, and counted among scholars and poets. He focused on building schools in Tunis, acquiring books on various sciences, and gathering renowned scholars and poets in his state (Ibn Al-Shamma, 1984, p. 56-57)<sup>[4]</sup>.

During the reign of Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah Al-Hafsi (637-675 AH/1249-1277 AD), he gathered around him prominent figures such as the hadith scholar and memorizer Abu Bakr Ibn Sayyid Al-Nas (d. 658 AH), Ibn Asfour (d. 669 AH), the eloquent writer Abu Abdullah Ibn Al-Abar (d. 658 AH), the jurist Abu Al-Mutarrif Ibn Amira (d. 658 AH), and other notable figures (Ibn Al-Qunfudh, 1968, p. 123)<sup>[2]</sup>. This indicates the Hafsid sultans' commitment to supporting scholars and literati, granting them prestigious positions in their courts.

The intellectual movement gained momentum within African society, influenced by the culture of Andalusian immigrants. The Hafsid sultans welcomed Andalusian scholars and intellectuals warmly, encouraging them to work in Hafsid state institutions (Al-Qaisi, 2011, p. 81-82)<sup>[17]</sup>.

## 4. The Economic Factor

Despite the political events that took place, Ifriqiya experienced an economic renaissance in various sectors, including agriculture, commerce, and industry. During the reign of Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah (647-675 AH/1249-1277 AD) and following the Crusade against Tunis in 669 AH/1271 AD, there was a focus on agricultural activities. It is noted that he "ordered plowing throughout the country" (Ibn Al-Qunfudh, 1968, p. 132)<sup>[2]</sup>. He also stored forty thousand bushels of wheat and an equal amount of barley during the Crusade against Tunis in 668-669 AH/1270-1271 AD (Ibn Al-Qunfudh, 1968, p. 132)<sup>[2]</sup>.

Additionally, he worked on repairing the Roman-era aqueducts of Zaghuan, which transported water from Zaghuan springs south of Tunis to Carthage, completing the repairs in 666 AH/1267 AD. He also extended the water supply to the palace and garden of Abu Fahl (the Sultan's palace) (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p. 404/6)<sup>[33]</sup>.

In commerce, Hafsid sultans made significant efforts to develop trade, promoting local products by organizing markets and taking care of them (Ibn Amer, p. 98)<sup>[7]</sup>. For example, Emir Abu Zakariya Yahya built the perfumers' market in 629 AH (Ibn Al-Shamma, 1984, p. 56)<sup>[4]</sup>. They also engaged in external trade via land caravans and maritime fleets, continuously renewing their fleets and signing trade agreements with other cities and countries (Ibn Amer, p. 99)<sup>[7]</sup>.

Emir Abu Zakariya Al-Hafsi (625-647 AH/1227-1249 AD) minted a coin bearing his name, circular with a square in the center, at the Tunis mint, and it was used throughout Ifriqiya

(Abdelwahab, 1964, p. 455-456/1) <sup>[15]</sup>. Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah (647-675 AH/1249-1277 AD) introduced copper coins called "Handous" to facilitate trade transactions (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 80) <sup>[42]</sup>.

The state's economic resources included the sultan's private estates, land taxes, duties on crafts and goods, and tributes paid by tribes. Industry, particularly textile manufacturing, was significant, with Tunis known for producing large quantities of high-quality fabrics sold at high prices throughout Ifriqiya. The Hafsid sultans encouraged and supported factories, with Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah (647-675 AH/1249-1277 AD) ordering the establishment of textile factories, especially for silk fabrics, upon his ascension to the throne (Al-Dawlati, 1981, p. 67) <sup>[32]</sup>.

### **Chapter Three: Ceremonies and Honors in the Hafsid State**

#### **First: Ceremonies and Honors for the Sultan**

##### **1. The Sultan's Ascension**

The throne of Ifriqiya did not come to the Hafsid sultans through inheritance. Instead, it was Emir Abu Zakariya Yahya (625-647 AH/1227-1249 AD) who founded the Hafsid state in Tunis. This family continued to rule and inherit authority and sovereignty for nearly three and a half centuries. The Hafsid sultans ensured that the monarchy remained hereditary within a single royal family, meaning the system of governance was an absolute monarchy confined to the Hafsid family (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 61) <sup>[42]</sup>. The rule remained within the Hafsid family from the time of Emir Abu Zakariya Yahya (625-647 AH/1227-1249 AD), the founder of the state, until its fall to the Ottoman Turks in 981 AH/1573 AD. The sultan's ascension to the throne was conducted through the act of allegiance.

#### **The procedures for allegiance were of two types**

##### **A. Private Allegiance Ceremonies**

The Hafsid sultan received his private allegiance from the elite and notables known as the decision-makers, including state elders, scholars, judges, and the sultan's influential relatives and military leaders, who were responsible for protecting the emir until he assumed power (Brunschvig, 1988, p. 54) <sup>[20]</sup>. Emir Abu Zakariya Al-Hafsi received two allegiances: the first was private, following the establishment of the state in 625 AH/1227 AD (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p. 380/6) <sup>[33]</sup>. The second was public, following the elimination of external threats to his state in 634 AH/1236 AD, after which his name was mentioned in sermons and coinage, and many cities in Morocco and Andalusia joined him. The location for taking the private allegiance was not fixed. For instance, Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah received his private allegiance in the city of Bône in 647 AH/1249 AD (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, pp. 54-69) <sup>[42]</sup>.

##### **The special allegiance of the Sultan**

Those who pledged the special allegiance to the Sultan had their testimony recorded in a register indicating what they pledged (Ibn al-Qunfudh, 1968, p. 110) <sup>[2]</sup>. Thus, Prince Abu Zakariya Yahya established the system and succession of the throne, which the later Hafsid sultans followed. It was common for one of his sons to assume power directly after the Sultan's death, following both the special and general allegiance (Al-Mutawi, 1986, p. 173) <sup>[41]</sup>. This way, Prince Abu Zakariya Yahya aimed to prevent any disputes over succession that could lead to the downfall of the state.

##### **b. The General Allegiance Procedures**

After completing the special allegiance procedures, the Sultan would present himself to the general public to receive their general allegiance for obedience and loyalty. This was announced by the sound of drums, and preachers would pray for him in the Friday sermon on all the state's mosques' pulpits (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p. 398/6) <sup>[33]</sup>. This stage occurred after the Sultan's death, as the heir apparent became the official and legitimate Sultan of the country. For example, after Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah Hafsid entered Tunis in 647 AH/1249 CE, his general allegiance was renewed. Similarly, his general allegiance was renewed after he received the title of "Commander of the Faithful" in 650 AH/1252 CE (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 71) <sup>[42]</sup>.

For cities, regions, and provinces far from Tunis, where the allegiance was conducted, the allegiance was sent to the new Sultan through the city governors and tribal leaders, who presented evidence of their allegiance and obedience (Brenchevik, 1988, p. 19/2). Most of the general allegiance took place in Tunis, with the presence of the subjects who had sworn an oath of obedience and loyalty to the Sultanate.

##### **The Sultan's Administrative Procedures**

The Hafsid sultans in Tunis followed the practices of other Islamic kings and sultans in both the East and West regarding the roles and authorities of the sultans. They adhered to the principle of absolute rule, as did the founder of the Hafsid state, Abu Zakariya Yahya. He personally managed the affairs, selected his state officials, and assigned them to various administrative positions based on their qualifications and abilities (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, pp. 59-64) <sup>[42]</sup>.

One of the Sultan's most important tasks was to appoint officials to key positions in the state, with the minister being at the top of these roles. The minister acted as the Sultan's advisor and had significant influence within the political and administrative system and was titled "Head of State" or "Lord of the State" (Al-Abadi, pp. 182-185) <sup>[9-10]</sup>. The Hafsid Sultan had three ministers: the Minister of War, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Grace, who was the Secretary. The Minister of War was often the leader of the Almohads and was considered the Prime Minister, the second person after the Hafsid Sultan (Ibn Fadlallah al-Omari, 2003, p. 150/4) <sup>[27]</sup>. The Minister of War was frequently a relative of the Sultan. For instance, Sheikh Abu Said Osman ibn Muhammad al-Hintati (d. 673 AH/1274 CE), known as "the moist stick," and members of the Banu Hilal Hintati family also held this position (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 72) <sup>[42]</sup>. The Hafsid sultans were keen to appoint a Minister of War from their relatives due to the importance of this position, as he accompanied the Sultan in all his movements and was the closest minister to him.

The Minister of Grace, or Secretary, was typically chosen from among the most skilled scribes, as they were the voice and pen of the state, responsible for writing correspondence and royal orders, and entrusted with keeping secrets, which is why they were called "the Secretary" (Ibn Fadlallah al-Omari, p. 150/4) <sup>[27]</sup>. The Hafsid sultans often employed Andalusians in this role; many of them, who were proficient in this art of writing and correspondence, held this position (Brenchevik, 1988, p. 64/2). The Secretary, or the Secretary of the Bureau of Penmanship, was responsible for drafting decrees, letters, and royal orders, which were then authenticated by the Sultan before being sent to governors,

judges, and state leaders (Al-Abadi, p. 188)<sup>[9-10]</sup>.

The Hafsid sultans also placed great importance on the judicial aspect, aiming to promote justice among the subjects. Judges were appointed by the Sultan after consulting with experts and scholars of the time, and were selected from among the best jurists of that era (Maqdisi, 1988, p. 561/1). For instance, during the reign of Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah, an advisory session was held to select a candidate for the judiciary, resulting in the appointment of Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Mahdawi, known as Ibn al-Khabbaz (d. 693 AH/1293 CE). Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah remarked, "I will not be questioned by Allah about the affairs of the nation after appointing Ibn al-Khabbaz" (Ibn al-Qunfudh, 1968, p. 125)<sup>[2]</sup>. This illustrates the meticulousness in selecting a judge and ensuring their qualifications for the position, with appointments made through a decree issued by the Sultan.

Due to the importance of this role, the Hafsids adopted a policy of not appointing judges for more than two years. They believed that if a judge remained in office for an extended period, he might use his position to gain friends and pursue personal interests. This practice was maintained throughout the Hafsid rule (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, pp. 81-115)<sup>[42]</sup>. Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah Hafsid, for example, did not keep a judge for more than two years before replacing him with another. This was the case with Judge Ibn al-Khabbaz, who was appointed, then removed, and had his position changed three times (Ibn al-Qunfudh, 1968, p. 125)<sup>[2]</sup>. Additionally, the Sultan would also appoint the Judge of the Community, the highest judicial office, equivalent to the Judge of the Community in the East (Ibn Amer, n.d., p. 34)<sup>[7]</sup>. The position of Judge of the Community was established from the founding of the Hafsid state by Prince Abu Zakariya Yahya.

Regarding the selection of governors, the Hafsid sultans always preferred appointing their sons and relatives to manage the provinces. Tunis was the capital from the beginning of the state's establishment and was considered the administrative headquarters (Brenchevick, 1988, p. 111-112). Among the sultan's duties and powers was also the issuance of decrees, which are laws, charters, and privileges granted to high-ranking officials such as ministers, judges, and various other positions (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 61)<sup>[42]</sup>.

The sultan also had the responsibility of signing or sealing all documents and records issued by the Chancellery. During the reign of Prince Abu Zakariya Yahya (625–647 AH/1227–1249 CE), the seal included the title of Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah (647–675 AH/1249–1271 CE) as Commander of the Faithful, and his seal bore the phrase "Praise be to God and thanks" (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 71; Brenchevick, 1988, p. 63-64)<sup>[42]</sup>.

Regarding military leadership, it was also one of the sultan's responsibilities to lead the army himself most of the time, as was the case with Prince Abu Zakariya Yahya (625–647 AH/1227–1249 CE), and he personally oversaw military operations. Most Hafsid sultans were military leaders (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 53)<sup>[42]</sup>. The Hafsid sultan was the supreme commander of the army and appointed a deputy, the Minister of War, who was responsible for managing the army and sometimes replacing the sultan in military operations. As for addressing grievances, the sultans were concerned with this matter and would handle it themselves. It became one of the sultan's duties to hold public sessions to receive and respond to complaints from their subjects.

Grievance councils were held since the establishment of the Hafsid state, with Prince Abu Zakariya (225–647 AH) sitting every Saturday in a large dome at the palace to address grievances (Ibn Abi Dinâr, 1993, p. 154)<sup>[3]</sup>. These sessions were held with a degree of grandeur, attended by the judge of the community, senior state officials, and others. The opening of these councils involved reading the Quran and some Hadiths, after which grievances were presented. The review of grievances was not limited to Saturdays but also took place during the sultan's tours of the emirate, where he would hear complaints even during his processions. After completing his tour, the sultan would convene a council to review the grievances in the presence of state officials, judges, and advisors, who would deliberate on issuing judgments according to religious principles, ensuring justice for the oppressed and holding the oppressors accountable.

## **Second: Types of Chancery Decrees (Delegations and Embassies, Sultan's Insignia, Titles and Honors) Delegations and Embassies**

Councils were held on the occasion of receiving envoys and ambassadors, who could come from neighboring Islamic states or from hostile neighboring countries. The ambassador would be received with formal ceremonies and allowed to enter and negotiate with the sultan, carrying a letter of authorization as an official document for recognition by the sultan for the embassy in Tunis. The Hafsid court received numerous messages and embassies from Andalusian emirates. For example, when the Christians attacked and besieged Valencia, an embassy led by Judge Abu Abdullah bin al-Abar al-Qudai was sent to seek aid and pledge allegiance. The Hafsid prince Abu Zakariya Yahya composed a famous and lengthy poem consisting of sixty-six verses in response (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p. 386; Al-Maqri, 1997, p. 457)<sup>[33, 26]</sup>. Additionally, Ibn Mardanis sent a letter to Prince Abu Zakariya Hafsid informing him of the embassy of Sheikh Abu Abdullah bin al-Rais Abu al-Harith, who carried the pledge of the people of Murcia and eastern Andalusia.

The Hafsid state reached its zenith during the reign of Prince Abu Zakariya Yahya and his successor, Al-Mustansir Billah, which led many rulers to establish friendly relations with them, exchanging ambassadors and gifts. Diplomatic missions between the Islamic states and the Hafsids, especially during the reign of Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah, expanded significantly. Ambassadors were sent from distant lands such as Sudan (655 AH/1257 CE) and Northern Europe (Norway) in 661 AH/1262 CE, making Tunis a prominent center for Muslims in the western Islamic world (Mamdouh, 1998, p. 277)<sup>[16]</sup>. Diplomatic relations between the Christian world and the Maghreb were focused on commercial activity in the region, and thus efforts were made to protect their trade through treaties that outlined the relations between the two parties.

The embassy from the Sharif of Mecca occurred in 657 AH/1259 CE, with a letter containing the text of the pledge to Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah, sent by Abu Muhammad bin Bartala al-Ishbili (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 69-71)<sup>[42]</sup>. This Meccan pledge enhanced the status of the Hafsid state, but this period did not last long due to the state's weakening and division after the death of Sultan Al-Mustansir in 675 AH/1271 CE.

## 2. Sultan's Insignia

These are the ceremonies that are unique to the Hafsid sultan and are considered among his exclusive privileges, distinguishing him from his subjects and senior state officials. No one else has the right to participate in these ceremonies; they are exclusively for the sultan. Among these insignia are:

- The Sermon (Khutbah): Invoking prayers for the sultan on the pulpits is a sultanic insignia that has been used since the early Islamic eras and adopted by the rulers of the Maghreb (Fawzi, 1987, p. 40) <sup>[38]</sup>. The khutbah refers to mentioning the sultan's name and praying for him from the pulpits in all lands and provinces under his rule (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p. 398) <sup>[33]</sup>.
- The Throne, Chair, and Bed: These are elevated seats or couches on which the sultan sits, set apart from his councilors (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p. 322) <sup>[33]</sup>.
- The Mint (Sikka): This is a manifestation of the state's sovereignty and power, and is a sign of the king and sultan. The Hafsid sultans were keen to establish their own mint upon assuming power (Hussein, 1983, p. 119-125) <sup>[30]</sup>. The mint is exclusive to the sultan, and no one else is allowed to mint new coins or inscribe their name on any currency. The Hafsids paid great attention to the role of the mint, particularly the one in Tunis, which was active in minting Hafsid coins. The name of Tunis was inscribed on the coins minted there (Al-Nabrawi, 2003, p. 302-305) <sup>[18]</sup>, along with verses from the Quran, and the names of the Almohad caliph Abdul-Mu'min bin Ali al-Kumi and Prince Abu Zakariya Yahya, who ensured his name was mentioned and also adopted the same Quranic verses used by the Almohads (Hussein, 1983, p. 117-118) <sup>[30]</sup>. These included: "Your God is One God; there is no deity except Him, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:163) and "There is no deity except Allah" (Surah Al-Imran, 3:62) (Al-Nabrawi, 2003, p. 290) <sup>[18]</sup>. The founder of the state, Prince Abu Zakariya (625-647 AH/1227-1249 CE), aimed to avoid provoking his subjects who were still attached to the Almohad ideas and practices. During the reign of Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah Hafsid (647-675 AH/1249-1276 CE), some differences appeared on the coins, with inscriptions such as "Thanks to God," "Grace to God," and "Strength and power are with God." These inscriptions were known as "al-'Alamah" in the Maghreb and "al-Sharah" in the Mashreq. The Hafsids continued to include their names and titles on the coins, which became a customary practice on currency from the beginning of Al-Mustansir Billah's reign until the end of the Hafsid state (981 AH/1573 CE), with specific titles and the designation "Commander of the Faithful" for each sultan (Abdul-Wahab, 1964, p. 456-457) <sup>[15]</sup>.
- The Standard Bearers: Among the royal insignia was the use of standard bearers, which consisted of a group of drums, trumpets, and banners accompanying the sultan's procession during festivals, events, and victories. These were symbols of grandeur and luxury that added prestige to the sultan's procession (Ibn Khaldun, 1988, p. 319) <sup>[33]</sup>. Their use varied; sometimes they were beaten during the sultan's departure or arrival, also when rallying people for participation and mobilization in military combat or jihad, and when announcing victory over enemies (Al-Janabi, 2021, p.

85) <sup>[36]</sup>. They were also used during the coronation of the heir apparent after receiving the general pledge of allegiance from the people, as seen with Sultan Al-Mustansir Billah Hafsid, where drums were beaten in celebration (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 71) <sup>[42]</sup>.

Regarding flags and banners, the official symbol of Hafsid sovereignty was the use of a white flag, which they carried during their ceremonies and official occasions. One side of the flag bore the inscription "There is no deity but God" or "The Kingdom belongs to God". This was the same emblem previously used by the Almohads, with the white flag being their symbol in official ceremonies and wars. Over time, the Hafsids adopted other colors alongside the white flag, including red, green, and yellow, and each tribe had its own distinct flag. The Hafsid state flags were raised on specific occasions, including during the reception of the sultan's procession in various African provinces, on days of war, and during military victories. They were displayed in various colors.

## 3. Titles and Honors

The Hafsid sultans adopted a variety of honorary titles. For instance, Abu Zakariya Hafsid, the founder of the state, used the title "Prince" along with "Imam" and "Mawla," which were both sultanic titles (Ajlan, 2017, p. 126) <sup>[31]</sup>. In the year 634 AH/1237 CE, Abu Zakariya renewed his allegiance to himself and mentioned his name in the sermon after mentioning the Imam, limiting himself to the title "Prince" and not adopting the title "Commander of the Faithful." Some poets commented on this by saying:

"Originally, the title 'Commander of the Faithful' belongs to you... So you are more deserving of it than anyone else."

When this reached him, he disapproved and said: "What do poets have to do with this excess?" (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 59) <sup>[42]</sup>. Similarly, Prince Abu Zakariya had his coins minted with the title "The Esteemed Prince," and this title was also found on some tombstones (Hussein, 1983, p. 120) <sup>[30]</sup>.

When Abu Abdullah Muhammad Al-Mustansir succeeded his father, he only used the title "Prince" on his coins and in official correspondences and was also referred to as "Sultan" (Ajlan, 2017, p. 126) <sup>[31]</sup>. However, after the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad in 656 AH/1258 CE and the pledge of allegiance from Mecca in 567 AH/1161 CE, Abu Abdullah Al-Mustansir Billah declared the re-establishment of the Caliphate. He and his successors adopted the title "Commander of the Faithful" (Al-Zarkashi, 1998, p. 70) <sup>[42]</sup>. They included their grand royal titles on their coins and in official correspondences and were prayed for from the Hijaz in the east to the Maghreb and Andalusia in the west (Ibn Abi Dinâr, 1993, p. 158) <sup>[3]</sup>. This title was officially accepted by some neighboring Islamic states.

The Hafsid caliphs also used other titles to distinguish themselves from one another, as the title "Commander of the Faithful" was shared among them. Each sultan adopted a set of specific titles, such as princely, sultanic, caliphal, and jihadist titles like Al-Mustansir Billah and Al-Mu'ayyad bi-Nasr Allah, among others (Ajlan, 2017, p. 126) <sup>[31]</sup>.

## Conclusion and Results

1. The Hafsid state emerged from the ruins of the Almohad state. Prince Abu Zakariya Yahya established his state in Tunis, making it one of the most powerful and long-lasting states on the Maghreb stage. He set up

- a comprehensive administrative system that ensured control over all of Africa, with a hereditary system of governance where sons inherit from their fathers. This system was established by the founder of the state, Abu Zakariya Hafsid, and was followed by all subsequent sultans.
2. When the Hafsid sultan ascended the throne, an inauguration ceremony was held involving members of the royal family, state elders, and military leaders, known as the special pledge of allegiance. After completing the special pledge of allegiance, a general pledge of allegiance from the subjects was held, with drums beaten to announce it and preachers praying for the new sultan on all the state's pulpits.
  3. The research reveals that the Hafsid sultan followed official procedures for managing and controlling the institution of governance. As the supreme authority and highest commander in the country, he appointed his heir apparent, as did the founder of the state, Abu Zakariya, who wrote a will for his son Muhammad Al-Mustansir Billah. The sultan also appointed ministers, scribes, judges, and provincial governors under specific conditions and issued decrees for them, which included laws, honors, and privileges for high-ranking officials.
  4. The ceremonies and honors were not limited to political life but also extended to social life. Celebrations included festivals, wedding ceremonies, and moon sightings. Drums were beaten to celebrate the night of Eid and the Prophet's birthday, and when the new moon of Ramadan was sighted, announcements were made to the people. The sultan would lead a procession to perform the Eid prayer, and after the prayer, senior state officials and the general public would congratulate the sultan.
  5. Diplomatic missions were also part of the established procedures. Ambassadors were sent to the Maghreb to conclude treaties with the Hafsid state. Official delegations were received with ceremonies and honors, reflecting the civilization and refinement that the sultans of the state enjoyed.

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