



BOKĀVOL

BOKĀVOL (Büke'ül), a term used in the Il-khanid period and after for a royal food taster or, later and more commonly, a military commissariat officer. The word is not used in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, but the officials who it tells us were appointed by Jengīz (Čengīz) Khan at the *qūriltāy* of 1206 to act as court overseers of food (called *bāvorčī*, cook or steward) fulfill the same functions (ed. Ligeti, p. 184; tr. Cleaves, p. 154).

In the early Mongol period, *bokāvols* were responsible during the reign of Ögedei (Oktāy) for the distribution to the princes and amirs of game killed during the great royal encircling hunt (*nerga/jerga*) (Rašīd-al-Dīn, II/1, p. 148; tr. Boyle, p. 65). Later their misdeeds were among the reasons for the administrative reform whereby, in 703/1303-04, the Il-khan Ġāzān granted *eqtā's* (assignments) to his army. Ġāzān had previously attempted to meet the soldiers' needs by granting them specific amounts of provisions by means of drafts (*barāt*). This expedient broke down because the *bokāvols* and other commissariat officials took bribes and were negligent in the performance of their duties (Rašīd-al-Dīn, III, pp. 508-09; Morgan, p. 92).

From the end of the Mongol period there is a long account of the *bokāvols*' duties in the *Dostūr al-kāteb* of Moḥammad b. Hendūšāh Naḵjavānī (pp. 53-57). The term continued in use for many centuries after the fall of the Il-khanids, e.g., in the Jalayerid *Resāla-ye falakīya* of Ebn Kīā Māzandarānī (fols. 33b, 34b, 35b, 54a); in the 11th/17th century, according to Chardin (V, p. 349), the *bokāvols* were in charge of the royal kitchens.



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