



BOYŪTĀT-E SALṬANATĪ

BOYŪTĀT-E SALṬANATĪ (lit. royal houses), in the Safavid period (907-1145/1501-1732) departments and production workshops within the royal household serving primarily the needs of the court and usually located inside the palace precincts in Isfahan. The following terms have the same meaning: (*kār-kāna-ye*) *boyūtāt-e ma'mūra* (Minorsky, text, fols. 9b, 45b; Dānešpažūh, p. 85), *boyūtāt-e sarkār-e kaṣṣa* or simply *boyūtāt* (Minorsky, text fols. 16b, 54b), and *kār-kānejāt-e sarkār-e kaṣṣa-ye šarīfa* (Minorsky, text, fol. 54b).

The *boyūtāt* included those units of the royal household concerned with supplies and related basic services: larders, storerooms, coalbins, and cellars; essential facilities for food preparation, like cooking, baking, butchering, and roasting coffee; and court apothecary and baths. Another category consisted of magazines and storerooms for furnishings and other household objects, like lamps, firewood, candles, utensils, and carpets, as well as the royal treasury itself. Among workshops in the narrow sense those for weaving, fulling, garment making, shoemaking, cabinetmaking, goldsmithing, minting, and bookbinding have been attested. Finally, the stables were also included among the *boyūtāt* (Kaempfer, pp. 117-25).

History. In the Il-khanid period (7-8th/13th-14th centuries) merchants and artisans in the urban centers were not in a position to supply the daily and luxury needs of the court. To fill these needs two institutions were introduced under the aegis of the crown. On one hand, the *ordū-bāzār* (army *bāzār*) was especially geared to the needs of a mobile court, for it could be set up wherever the court and the army happened to be encamped (Keyvani, p. 165).



Subsequently the Jalayerids, Āq Qoyunlū, Qara Qoyunlū, and Timurids continued this practice. Only under the Safavids did the *ordū-bāzār* lose its significance (Fragner, 1986, pp. 530ff.). On the other hand, the prince maintained manufactories especially to produce weapons and military equipment for the court (Rašīd-al-Dīn, pp. 336-39). Also to be mentioned are the numerous craftsmen and artists whom the Mongols and particularly Tīmūr and his followers forcibly transported as war booty to work under royal auspices, for example, in architecture, architectural decoration, and the arts of the book (Fragner, 1986, p. 531). Court workshops were equally well known under the Mughals and in the Ottoman empire (Minorsky, pp. 29, n. 4, 135, n. 1).

In Iran the *boyūtāt* reached their highest development under the Safavids. The main expansion took place in the reign of Shah ‘Abbās I (996-1038/1587-1629), when the capital was transferred to Isfahan and the royal household became larger, more extravagant, and more pretentious (Keyvani, p. 166).

The number of court departments has been variously given in the sources as thirty-two, thirty-three (Chardin, V, p. 499, VII, p. 329; Minorsky, p. 50), and more than fifty (Kaempfer, p. 117). Lists and descriptions of individual *boyūtāt* are to be found in contemporary documents and the accounts of 17th-century European travelers (Minorsky, pp. 64-69, 95-100; Dānešpažūh, pp. 435f., 553-59; Kaempfer, pp. 117-25; Chardin, V, pp. 349-56; du Mans, pp. 21-24). According to Jean Chardin’s report, each court department consisted of approximately 150 employees varying somewhat according to its function; the total would thus have been about 5,000. He estimated the annual cost at about 5 million *écus* (ca. 350,000 tomans; Chardin, VII, pp. 329f.; Minorsky, p. 30).

Organization and administration. The superintendent of the royal workshops (*nāzer-e boyūytāt*) was responsible for the entire royal household (*sarkār-e kaṣṣa-ye šarīfa*) and supervised the overall operation of its departments (for a somewhat narrower range of responsibility in the early phase, cf. Minorsky, p. 119). He was among the most powerful and influential court amirs, carried the title *‘ālījāh* (highness), and had the right to sit at court gatherings. At first this office could be held only by *qezelbāšes*, but subsequently Shah Solaymān and Shah Solṭān Ḥosayn bestowed it only on white eunuchs (*k^vājagān-e safīd*). The *nāzer-e-boyūtāt* was not only responsible for the purchase, storage, and preparation of all supplies, but he also oversaw the baths and the stables, evaluated the presents (*pīškaš*; Fragner, 1975, pp. 211f.; Papazyan, p. 239), and supervised all the department heads (*šāḥeb-jam‘ān*) within the *boyūtāt*. Once a



year he inspected the personnel of the *boyūtāt*, confirmed salaries, and granted leaves (Minorsky, text., fol. 31b and pp. 48-50, 56, 118f.; Dānešpažūh, pp. 85f.; Kaempfer, pp. 79f.; Chardin, VII, pp. 330ff.). Immediately subordinate to the *nāzer*, or perhaps on the same level, was the *wazīr-e boyūtāt*, who conducted him on his tour of inspection and was responsible for overseeing bureaucratic routine. The control of all financial transactions of the *boyūtāt*—including those conducted by the *nāzer*—fell under the direction of the *mostawfi-e arbāb-e taḥāwīl* (Minorsky, pp. 29f., 70f., 140f.; Dānešpažūh, pp. 547f.).

In each individual department the *šāḥeb-jam'* was responsible for overall operations, while the auditor (*mošref*) handled administrative duties like keeping the accounts (Minorsky, pp. 64-69, 71, 134-40).

The highest-ranking *šāḥeb-jam'*s, because of their importance in the court hierarchy, were the *jabbadārbāšī*, director of the arsenal (at first a *qezelbāš*, later a white eunuch) and the *kazānadārbāšī*, the court treasurer (a black eunuch). As they were members of the inner circle of the palace administration and were close to the shah, they bore the title *moqarrab al-kāqān* and had the right to sit in court assemblies (Minorsky, pp. 65f., 136; Dānešpažūh, pp. 303-06). The chief cook (*tūšmālbāšī*) also had the right to this noble title (Dānešpažūh, p. 319). The next category comprised fifteen to eighteen department heads who must have been called *moqarrab al-ḥažrat* (Minorsky, pp. 64-69, 134-39; Dānešpažūh, p. 319). A few of these men represented manufacturing departments (tailoring, saddlery, book production, painting, etc.), but most were heads of various housekeeping units. Mīrzā Rafī'ā named a dozen additional, clearly low-ranking workshop heads, mostly chiefs of individual manufactories, as well as other representatives of craft activity who obviously occupied a level lower than that of the *šāḥeb-jam'*s; unfortunately, the manuscript has a lacuna in the middle of this list (Dānešpažūh, pp. 553-59). In *Tadkerat al-molūk* a somewhat different organization of this hierarchy is given, and also the sequence of offices does not correspond. Beside those listed under the rubric *moqarrab al-ḥažrat*, a whole series of *šāḥeb-jam'*s is simply listed among the employees (Minorsky, pp. 95-100, 151, 154).

Many though not all of the *šāḥeb-jam'*s bore honorific titles in *bāšī*. Conversely, by no means all *bāšīs* were *šāḥeb-jam'*s, especially if they directed only subdivisions within larger production units. These differences in rank seem secondary in the list of 137 positions of all *bāšīs* in the royal household under



Shah Solṭān Ḥosayn that was preserved in *Rostam al-tawārīk* (pp. 100f.); there employees attached to the *boyūtāt* and to entirely different branches of the court are freely mingled, and the impression given is that they constituted a homogeneous, even uniformly dressed group (Hoffmann, pp. 100ff., 224-31).

Employees in each household department were paid an annual salary (*mawājeb*) in the form of a draft (*barāt*) against tax revenues; as a rule one employee in the department cashed it on behalf of all his colleagues, at a cost of 5-10 percent of the face value. The salary varied according to branch of service and qualifications; and a raise could be expected every three years on the average. In addition, the *ṣāḥeb-jam*'s and *mošrefs* received various bonuses and commissions (*rosūm*, *dūšollok*) in goods and services of the various departments, which were apportioned according to an established ratio (Minorsky, pp. 93-100, 155-59). A further perquisite was an allotment of food (*jīra*), measured by the container (*qāb*), one container being considered adequate for six or seven people. It was always given in whole-, half- or quarter-*qābs*. Also lucrative gifts were sometimes given upon completion of special commissions; it was not rare for such a gift to surpass a year's wages (Fragner, 1986, pp. 532ff.). According to Chardin, employees of the *boyūtāt* enjoyed numerous privileges: They were guaranteed lifetime employment (cf. Kaempfer, pp. 79f.), were allowed to work on private account, and received paid leave in case of illness. Furthermore, their sons could enter the court workshops as apprentices (Chardin, VII, pp. 329-33, 499f., II, pp. 109f.). Occasionally Europeans were also taken into the service of the *boyūtāt*, for example, as clockmakers and painters (Fragner, 1986, p. 533; Keyvani, pp. 166, 170).

That the craftsmen of the *boyūtāt* were organized in "royal guilds" (*aṣnāf-e ṣāhī*; Keyvani, p. 170) is doubtful, for the expression corps used by Chardin, on which this conclusion is based, cannot easily be interpreted as guild; rather, it has the more general sense of work force (Chardin, VII, pp. 331, 333, V, p. 499). Furthermore, the statement that every *bāšī* of a royal workshop was at the same time answerable for the corresponding craft corporation in Isfahan, even in the entire country (Keyvani, pp. 47, 80), also seems correct only in isolated instances.

Not all *boyūtāt* were located in Isfahan. The Safavid rulers also maintained state factories in other cities, for example, in Yazd (silk textiles) and Kāšān (carpets). Such establishments not only served the specific needs of the royal household but also earned considerable profits (Keyvani, pp. 171ff.;



Mankowski, p. 2431). Furthermore, many provincial governors established workshops comparable to *boyūtāt-e salṭanatī*.

The fate of the *boyūtāt* after the siege and conquest of Isfahan by the Afghans (1135/1722) is little known. Isfahan remained the most populous city on the Iranian plateau and a center of craft production, but it never again became the capital or a seat of the court. Nevertheless, at least a few artists and craftsmen (miniature painters, calligraphers, carpet weavers, etc.) were employed for prestige at the courts of the Afsharids, the Zand, and the Qajars, in Mašhad, Shiraz, and Tehran respectively.

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