



## EQṬĀ'

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The *eqṭā'* in its various forms is one of the most persistent and important tenurial, economic and social institutions of medieval Persia. It was also found in the Mamluk sultanate, the Ottoman empire, under the Omayyads of Spain, in the Delhi sultanate, and the Mughal empire. It survived in a modified form as an institution until the 20th century in Persia but under a different nomenclature. From the 14th century the term *soyūrḡāl* was used to designate certain types of *eqṭā'*; in the 15th century the term *toyūl* (or *teyūl*) came to be used interchangeably with *soyūrḡāl*, but by the 16th century the two terms designated different aspects of the institution. In the 19th century the term *soyūrḡāl* became obsolete. The *toyūl* was an institution finally abolished by the National Consultative Assembly (Majles-e šūrā-ye mellī), which was convened in 1907. The evolution of the *eqṭā'*, *soyūrḡāl*, and *toyūl* in Persia will be discussed below.

Essentially the *eqṭā'* was a concession of revenue or land, but there were many different aspects to the institution and these varied in time and space. It also came to be associated with the performance of military duties and, from the 11th century onwards, often with the provision of troops also and the grant of governmental functions and immunities. In its financial or fiscal aspect it was a draft on the revenue, but so far as it had an administrative aspect it was a delegation of authority. It was always a matter of grace, always an arbitrary grant revocable at the will or whim of the issuing authority. As an institution it was regularized and widely extended in the Great Saljuq period. Its roots, however, go back beyond that period.



*Origins.* The early Islamic jurists regard the *eqṭā'* as a development of the grants known as *qaṭāye'* (sing. *qaṭī'a*). These were hereditary grants of crown lands (*ṣawāfi*) with full rights of disposal by sale, gift or inheritance made by the caliphs to their supporters. They were subject to tithe (*'oṣr*). The size of the grants varied. They were distinguished from private property (*melk*) which could be held by non-Muslims and was subject to taxation (*karāj*). Tax grants made to members of the Arab *jonds* or citizen armies tended to be assimilated to the *qaṭāye'*. These grants were usually small. Their purpose was to assure the livelihood of deserving members of the community, especially the seasoned fighters of Islam, to pay for their services, and to encourage them to further deeds of valor by the prospect of reward. The cultivation of the land was the concern of the conquered peasants, who were liable to tribute (Tischendorf, pp. 20-21). As Muslims increasingly acquired *karāj* land and non-Muslims were converted to Islam, attempts were made because of fiscal pressures, to maintain, or restore, the status of *karāj* land through the legal fiction that the land belonged to the community; and a new type of concession, known as *eqṭā'* (derived from the same root as *qaṭī'a*) came to be found alongside the *qaṭī'a*. Under this fiscal rights of the state over *karāj* land were ceded to the grantee, the *moqṭa'*, while the land remained juridically in the hands of its former owners. The grantee collected the *karāj* and paid tithe to the state, keeping for himself the difference between the two. The *eqṭā'*, therefore, is not in origin to be identified with the *qaṭī'a*, although *qaṭī'a* grants in the course of time also came to be known as *eqṭā's*.

*The spread of tax-farming: the zamān and qabāla.* During the 9th century with the progressive deterioration in the financial stability of the 'Abbasid caliphate various devices were adopted to obtain the money needed to finance the operations of the state and its civil and military officers. These included tax-farming, the sale of crown lands, and the confiscation of private fortunes. In particular it was the tax-farm (*zamān* and *qabāla*) that this need seized upon and transformed. The *zamān* often involved the putting up to auction the right to collect the taxes of a given district, usually annually. By the beginning of the 10th century tax-farming was widespread and sometimes whole provinces were involved and the tax-farmers were often exceedingly powerful. The *qabāla* differed from the *zamān* in that it was an undertaking by a local notable to pay the tax quota of the local community, which would be assessed by the *moqāṭa'a* method, i.e. in a lump sum payable according to the lunar year as opposed to assessment by a share of the crop (*moqāsama*) or measurement (*mesāḥa*) payable according to the solar year.



Soon, however, the money received from tax-farming ceased to be sufficient to pay the army leaders and their troops and by the end of the 10th century, if not earlier, the central government had found itself unable to discharge fully its public duties, and so it surrendered certain public rights in connection with taxation and the land to powerful individuals. At first the right to collect revenue, mainly in the form of *tasbībāt* and *eqṭā'āt*, was surrendered, and then increasingly the land itself was alienated from the control of the central government. The term *tasbībāt* designated both provincial revenues which, for whatever reason, were not sent to the capital and “extraordinary” assignments of revenue to individuals made on provincial tax offices and also on tax offices in the capital. Such “extraordinary” assignments became widespread under the Buyids (320-447 /932-1055; see Mottahedeh, pp. 347-51). The term *eqṭā'āt* was applied to other grants and assignments including grants of land earlier known as *qaṭāye'*.

There is, however, a certain confusion over the terms by which these various grants were designated. Qodāma (apud Ben Shemesh, pp. 123-24), writing in the 10th century uses the term *eqṭā'* to mean a hereditary grant subject to tithe, while he calls a non-hereditary grant *ṭo'ma*. K̄vārazmī, on the other hand, defines *ṭo'ma* as an estate given as a life grant on which the holder paid tithe and which was transmitted on his death to his heirs (p. 60). Qodāma also mentions two other types of grant made on *karāj* land, namely *īgār*, i.e., land which paid a fixed sum to the treasury and was immune from the entry of the tax collector, and *taswīj*, an annual but renewal tax-free grant (Ben Shemesh, pp. 123-24).

Although the law distinguished between *oṣrī* and *karājī* land and between different types of grant, the use of the term *eqṭā'* was extended in practice in the course of the 10th century to cover any form of concession whether of land or revenue, irrespective of whether this was *oṣrī* or *karājī* land, and to be associated with the performance of military duties and immunities.

*The eqṭā' under the Buyids.* The Buyids (320-447/932-1055) made a practice of assigning *eqṭā's* to their amirs and soldiers. These were assignments of the usufruct of the land and their purpose remuneration for service. They were not hereditary or granted on a life rent, and were subject to periodic redistribution. Control of the *eqṭā's* was transferred to the *dīwān-al-jayš*, the office in charge of military pay, over which the *'ārezū* (q.v.) presided. The main task of the office was to determine the fiscal value (*'ebra*) of the *eqṭā's* and to reallocate them when they fell vacant. The grant of this type of *eqṭā'* did not



carry with it any rights of jurisdiction over the inhabitants of the district granted as an *eqṭā'*; it was simply an assignment of salary, which the beneficiary could exchange for another assignment at his or the government's wish, if the revenue was no longer equal to the balance due to him, or for any other expedient cause. He had no permanent tie with the district and therefore no interest in its long-term development. In theory those who held *eqṭā'*s were subject to detailed regulations and inspection. In practice this proved difficult to enforce and the grant of *eqṭā'*s by the Buyids was accompanied by widespread acts of usurpation (see Cahen, 1953, pp. 25-52; idem, "Buwayhids," *EI2* I, pp. 1350-57). Further, the tendency for the functions of the provincial military commander, the tax collector, the tax farmer, and the *moqṭa'* to be united in one person, led to the emergence of large properties virtually independent of the central government, and eventually to the transformation of the provincial governorate, which had already undergone various vicissitudes. Originally the keystone of the system was the separation of military and civil affairs, and in many respects the provincial governorate was a replica of the central government. Its somewhat cumbrous nature was aggravated first by the fact that officials were not, even in theory, the servants of the public – they were the servants of the caliph (and later of the sultan), partaking according to their degree, of his absolute authority – and secondly by the existence of factions. Each important official had his own supporters who rose and fell with him. Already under the Buyids there were cases of a *moqṭa'* exercising the administrative duties and obligations of a provincial governor (*wālī*) in addition to his obligations as *moqṭa'* (Cahen, 1953, pp. 246-47).

According to Meskawayh Mo'ezz-al-Dawla (r. 320-56/932-67) made a practice of giving land to the soldiery. He writes, "in 334[945-46] the Daylamites mutinied against Mo'ezz-al-Dawla Aḥmad violently and indulged in fierce abuse and vituperation of him. He promised to remit their pay to them by a fixed term and was compelled to oppress the citizens and to exhort money from improper sources. He assigned to his officers, his household, and his Turks the estates of the caliph, the estates of persons who had gone into hiding, i.e., those of Šīrzād, and the rights of the treasury on the estates of the people. Thus most of the Sawād became alienated from the treasury and inaccessible to the revenue officers . . . most of the *dīvāns* became superfluous . . . and all offices were united in one" (Margoliouth and Amedroz, *Eclipse*, II, p. 96; Ebn-al-Aṭīr, VIII, p. 342). There were repeated disputes in the reign of Bahā'al-Dawla Fīrūz (379-403 /989-1012) concerning the allocation of *eqṭā'*s as between Turks and



Daylamites (Margoliouth and Amedroz, *Eclipse* III, 323) and also between the revenue officers and the soldiery over their *eqtā'*s. The Daylamites with Fakr-al-Dawla are recorded as holding *eqtā'*s ranging in value from 20-30,000 dirhams in Ray and the Jebāl, whereas the *eqtā'*s of the military in Kūzestān ranged from 200-300,000 dirhams, a situation which led to much jealousy and heartburning (*ibid.*, III, pp. 165-66). After Bahā'-al-Dawla established his rule in Fārs and Kermān in 389/998-99 the Daylamites of Fārs assembled in Shiraz to discuss the question of assignments, what should be resumed and what should be retained by the existing holders. It was agreed that the original grants should be converted at the rate of 300 dirhams to the dinar (qq.v.). The original grant of each man was then checked and he was given out of what was in his possession what would produce the new amount. The remainder was to be resumed and the grants made at the end of Şamşām-al-Dawla Marzbān's reign (380-88 /990-98) were declared null and void (*ibid.*, III, p. 327).

*The theory of Māwardī.* By the end of the Buyid period discrepancies between theory and practice were considerable. Māwardī (d. 450/1058), attempting to rationalize historic precedent, recognized two types of *eqtā'*, which he called the *eqtā'-al-tamlīk*, an assignment of land, and the *eqtā'-al-estēglāl*, an assignment of usufruct. He held that it was legal to assign dead lands dating from pre-Islamic or Islamic times and cultivated lands either in Islamic or infidel territory as *eqtā'-al-tamlīk*. Lands in infidel territory could be assigned before conquest to Muslims, the taking possession of them by the assignee being contingent upon their conquest. Māwardī also considered the assignment of both *karāj* land and 'oşr land as *eqtā'-al-esteğlāl* to be legal and members of the army to be among those to whom it was most fitting to make assignments of *karāj* land. He stipulates that such grants should not be hereditary (Māwardī, pp. 190-98). He was right to distinguish between these two types of *eqtā'* and his exposition brought them within the purview of the law, but discrepancies between theory and practice continued.

*The Saljuq period.* Under the Saljuqs the general tendency was for the "military" *eqtā'* which had characterized the Buyid period to be assimilated to the provincial government, leading to the emergence of what I have called the "administrative" *eqtā'*. The exact estimate of the fiscal value of the *eqtā'* was replaced by an approximate estimate and the *eqtā'* came to be defined by service not by fiscal value and often to be associated with immunities. There was also a tendency for the *eqtā'* to become, by usurpation, a hereditary domain over which the *moqta'* had governmental prerogatives (e.g., Lambton,



1965, pp. 369-71).

In a sense, the purpose of the original *eqṭā' al-tamlīk*, the extension of cultivation, and the purpose of the *eqṭā' al-esteḡlāl*, remuneration for services, were combined in the “administrative” *eqṭā'*. It can, therefore, perhaps be seen ideally as offering a practical basis in the new circumstances for the well-being of the kingdom in accordance with one of the favorite axioms of Islamic writers: “Religion depends on kingship, kingship depends on the army, the army depends on agricultural development, and agricultural development depends on justice” (Ebn al-Balkī, p. 5; cf. Ġazālī, p. 48).

The sources for the Saljuq period use the term *eqṭā'* to cover a variety of grants. The distinction between them was not, however, absolute and all *eqṭā's* in the broad category did not necessarily conform exactly to the same pattern; and there is a further complication in interpreting the texts owing to the fact that the same person might hold more than one type of *eqṭā'*. Almost all grants had a fiscal or financial aspect in that they concerned either the right to collect some form of tax or due. Most grants involved a delegation of authority either in the matter of the collection of taxes or of the administration generally. The grants were essentially *ad hoc* and subject to renewal at irregular intervals. Because the grant was tied to a district either as a draft on the revenue or as a grant of immunity in a particular district, the practice grew of referring to such and such a district as the *eqṭā'* of the assignee, thus equating the word *eqṭā'* with the district itself. Grants might vary from a small district to a whole region which might include villages and towns.

‘Emād-al-Dīn Moḥammad Eṣfahānī (in Bondārī’s recension) uses the term *eqṭā'* primarily in the sense of a “military” *eqṭā'*. He attributes its introduction to the vizier Neẓām-al-Molk, but in this he is manifestly wrong, though it may be that Neẓām-al-Molk attempted to regularize the *eqṭā'* in practice in the circumstances prevailing in the reign of Malekšāh (465-85/1027-92) just as Māwardī rather earlier had attempted to do in theory. ‘Emād-al-Dīn states that the troops (*ajnād*) did not have *eqṭā's* before this. He continues, “Neẓām-al-Molk saw that the revenues were not coming in from the regions (*belād*) because they were in a state of disorder and their produce was uncertain because they were in bad condition. Therefore he divided them into *eqṭā's* for the troops and assigned to them their revenue and produce, so that they had the greatest interest in the prosperity of their *eqṭā's* and in the shortest time the regions were again in very good condition” (Bondārī, p. 55).



Nezām-al-Molk seems to have regarded the *eqṭā'* as an assignment of revenue and to have held that the *moqṭā'* had no rights over the people who lived on the land on which an *eqṭā'* had been granted. He writes, “Let those who hold *eqṭā'*s know that they have no authority (*farmān*) over the subjects (*ra'āyā*) beyond this that they should take the due amount which has been assigned to them from the subjects with civility. When they have taken this, the subjects shall be secure in their persons, money, wives, children, goods, and estates, and the *moqṭā'* shall have no claim over them. Any *moqṭā'* who acts in a contrary fashion shall be restrained and his *eqṭā'* taken away from him and he shall be reprimanded so that others may take warning. Let the *moqṭā'*s know that the kingdom (*molk*) and the subjects (*ra'īyat*) in truth belong to the sultan. The *moqṭā'*s who are set over them and the governors (*wālīān*) also are like *šehnas*. Let them treat the subjects [in their *eqṭā'*s] as the king treats other subjects [on land which has not been assigned]” (ed. H. Darke, p. 43, ed. Schefer, p. 28, with slight difference in the final passage). Nezām-al-Molk further states, “Every two or three years the king must change the tax collectors (*ommāl*) and *moqṭās* so that they do not strike [local] roots (*pāy saḳt nakonand*) or make strongholds (*heṣn-ī nasāzand*) or [by their actions] give rise to anxiety. They shall treat the people well so that the province remains prosperous” (ed. Darke, p. 55; ed. Schefer, p. 37). In a passage discussing the need to hold liquid the pay of the army (which suggests that Nezām-al-Molk had in mind primarily the “military” *eqṭā'* or a modification thereof), he states, “Money (*māl*) for the army must be held liquid. That which belongs to those holding *eqṭā'*s (*ahl-e eqṭā'*) shall be absolutely at their disposal (*moṭlaq wa moqarrar bāyad dāšt*) and what belongs to the military slaves (*@golāmān*) who have no *eqṭā'*s must be made available . . . and those who hold *eqṭā'*s (*eqṭā'dārān*) must be told that they are to report immediately whoever is absent from their troop (*kayl*) by reason of death or for some other cause and must not hide the fact; and the leader of the troop must be told that when they (the *@golāmān*) have received their pay (*māl*) they are all to be ready for whatever matter may arise” (ed. Darke, pp. 134-35; ed. Schefer, pp. 91-92). However, in practice, as we know from documents and the evidence of historians, the *moqṭā'* was often granted full jurisdiction in the district which he held as an *eqṭā'*.

In the early period of Saljuq expansion the sultan sometimes granted a district or region to a member of his family, much as the ruling khan of a nomadic tribe might allocate to his family and followers pastures and camping grounds. These grants differed from the earlier *qaṭāye'* given to the Arab tribes who



needed pastures for their flocks in that they were not specifically on 'oṣr land and were not hereditary, although a tendency developed for different branches of the family to regard certain districts as their own *eqṭā'* in which they exercised full control. In due course this type of *eqṭā'* became indistinguishable from the "administrative" *eqṭā'*, which was the dominant type of *eqṭā'* under the Saljuqs.

*The "administrative" eqṭā'.* The characteristic feature of the "administrative" *eqṭā'* was the delegation to the *moqṭa'* of some aspect of the authority of the sultan. In many cases he was given complete control of the administration of his *eqṭā'* and had freedom of choice in the appointment of administrative officials. He was also able to assign districts within his *eqṭā'* to his own followers. These powers he exercised by a simple delegation of authority and not because the *eqṭā'* was his private domain. Such functions as he carried out were the normal functions of a Muslim ruler, which had been delegated to him by the sultan in the area under his control. The source of all grants was the absolute sovereignty of the sultan. All grants were an act of grace by him and revocable at his will. The *moqṭa'* had no rights. He merely held the area granted to him as an *eqṭā'* at the will of the sultan and there was no obligation of protection upon the latter. The *moqṭa'* was not normally required to remit surplus revenue to the central government, as it had been the duty of provincial governors in earlier times. He was expected to join the sultan on military campaigns when called upon to do so, and sometimes to support him with material resources. He was probably expected to make a payment to the sultan in the event of his making fresh conquests, but in practice this was difficult to enforce. He could not, except by abuse, transmit his *eqṭā'* by inheritance, sale or gift.

The population living in a district granted as an *eqṭā'* were normally enjoined in the *moqṭa'*'s grant of appointment to obey him. Sometimes they were specifically ordered to pay their taxes promptly and in full. Their obligation to obey the *moqṭa'* derived from the fact that the sultan had delegated his authority, or some aspect of it, to the *moqṭa'* in that particular district. Their allegiance in the first instance was due to him simply in his capacity as the sultan's delegate, though in some cases "protection" may have given an added dimension to their allegiance.

Private property (*melk*) continued to exist in administrative *eqṭā'*s. But there was a tendency, especially when the control of the central government weakened, for the *moqṭa'* to usurp possession of private estates (cf. two



undated documents ordering the return to their rightful owners of estates in a village in the Mosul district which had been usurped by the *moqta'* in *Moḳtārāt*, pp. 262-63). The relationship of the *moqta'* to the landowners in his *eqtā'* was presumably much like that of the sultan to landowners in districts that had not been assigned. In other words the *moqta'* was interposed between the sultan and the population living on or off those districts which had been assigned to him.

The administrative *eqtā'* had a number of advantages for the central government, but for these to be realized secure conditions were necessary. It enabled the government to dispense with a provincial bureaucracy, for the payment of which they often did not have adequate funds, and to avoid the transfer of funds to and from provincial districts to the capital, which in view of indifferent communications and frequent insecurity on the roads was often hazardous. Its major disadvantage was that it led to the growth of private armies. It was not without some benefit for the provinces in that. Political control was to some extent localized and local resources, even if they were not under local control since the *moqta'* was not usually a local man (though he might strike roots in his *eqtā'*), were for the most part spent locally. Responsibility for security was placed on the *moqta'* and, on the whole, satisfactorily maintained. His diploma of appointment normally enjoined him to maintain good husbandry and good government, though no means were devised of ensuring that he did so; the only sanction was the assignment of his *eqtā'* to another amir. Nevertheless, except when the *moqta'* assumed that his tenure was short and therefore extorted as much as he could from his *eqtā'*, self-interest demanded that he should exercise a modicum of good government and good husbandry, and this was so even when the control of the central government declined. Moreover, a strong *moqta'*, although he might himself commit extortion, would prevent outsiders from acting with violence against those living in his *eqtā'*. The major disadvantage at the local level, which perhaps outweighed any advantages the system may have had, was that it fostered the growth of a subject peasantry. Theoretically the possibility of a demand for redress from the sultan against the malpractices of a *moqta'* remained open, but was largely illusory partly because of the great distances often involved.

The administrative *eqtā'* was a means by which the sultan retained the support of powerful amirs. But the balance was a delicate one. Later sultans fell under the influence of amirs and the control of their atabegs. The grant of an *eqtā'*



tended increasingly to become merely official recognition of the possession of a given district by an amir. Sometimes the sultan would attempt to play one amir off against another, assigning them each other's domains, and it was not unknown for the same district to be assigned simultaneously to two persons. Often the *moqta'* had to take possession of his *eqtā'* by force and to turn out the previous holder. With the weakening of the central government a hereditary tendency appeared in the administrative *eqtā'*. Cases are recorded of *moqta'*s transmitting their *eqtā'* by inheritance or disposing of them by testament, but this was by usurpation and not by right. (see, e.g., Ebn al-Aṭīr, X, pp. 236, 520)

Rāvandī draws attention to some of the abuses which occurred after the break-up of the Great Saljuq empire. He states that Moḥammad b. Eldigüz, who, though nominally the atabeg of Ṭoḡrel b. Arslān, was the real ruler of north-western Persia from 570/1175 to 581/1186, appointed sixty or seventy of his own slaves over the country, nominating each one to a town or district "in the hope that since they were slaves they would secure his children from enemies." But, Rāvandī continues, "these same slaves created a state of disturbance in the kingdom to the detriment of his sons and their authority vanished from the provinces and cities by reason of the country being held as *eqtā's*" (Rāvandī, p. 335).

*The "military" eqtā'.* To what extent the military *eqtā'* continued to exist as a separate category in the western provinces of Persia is open to question (though it is well attested in Mosul). In the eastern provinces under Sanjar (d. 552/1557), the last of the Great Saljuqs, certain features of the military *eqtā'* were apparently more clearly retained than in the western provinces. In theory, if not in practice, the system was highly centralized under Sanjar. From the documents recorded by Montajab-al-Dīn Jovaynī, it would appear that records of *eqtā's* were kept in the *dīvān-e arz* and that they were granted both to the great amirs and army commanders and to the lesser amirs. Grants might be related to past as well as to future services. An *eqtā'* for 3,000 *nīšāpūrī dīnārs* on Māzandarān for the Esfahsālār Serāj-al-Dīn Najm-al-Eslām, the Esfahbad of Māzandarān, was primarily a reward for services he had performed both at court and on military expeditions (Montajab-al-Dīn Jovaynī, p. 84; Horst, p. 138). The pay of the soldiers, as distinct from the amirs, was also laid down by the *dīvān-e arz* (see further Lambton, 1953, pp. 374-75). As in the case of the administrative *eqtā'*, a hereditary tendency appeared in the military *eqtā'*, and may even have been normal practice in some of the succession states, notably under the Zangids of Mosul and the K̄vārazmšāhs



(Houtsma, *Receuil* II, pt. 2, ed. and tr. Mac Guckin de Slane, Paris 1872, p. 308; cf. Maqrīzī, II, p. 216. On the Kh̄arazmian soldiery see below).

Under the Saljuqs of Kermān it appears that the grant of *eqtā*'s to the army was associated with frontier defense. Afzal-al-Dīn Kermānī (p. 7) states that the *eqtā*'s of the army were in Sīrjān. This was district situated on the frontier of the kingdom of Kermān and subject to frequent attack from the direction of Fārs.

In the reign of Malekšāh it seems that a number of *eqtā*'s, or parcels of land, were set aside in different parts of the empire and their produce reserved for the use of the army when on campaigns (Rāvandī, p. 13; Mostawfī, p. 449; Ebn-al-Nezām, p. 60). Zahir-al-Dīn Nišāpūrī (p. 32) states that the *eqtā'āt* of the army were scattered throughout the empire so that wherever it went fodder and provisions were available. The logistic problem of moving an army in many parts of Persia was formidable, and this was an administrative device to ensure that provisions and fodder and what the army needed for its immediate expenses should be available as it marched through the country. *Eqtā*'s granted to officials. *Eqtā*'s were also granted to officials of the court and bureaucracy. These differed from the administrative *eqtā*'s in that the *moqta'*, although he may have been an amir, did not normally reside in his *eqtā'*. In the reign of Malekšāh K̄arazm belonged to the *tašt-kāna* (the royal pantry) and when Anūštegīn became *tašt-dār* (keeper of the washing vessels) the governorship of K̄arazm devolved upon him (Mostawfī, p. 449). He did not apparently actually rule the province, though his son Qoṭb-al-Dīn Moḥammad was later entrusted with the administration of the province by Barkīāroq's (q.v.) governor, Dād Ḥabašī b. Altūntāq (Barthold, *Turkistan*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 323-24). This type of *eqtā'* differed also from the military *eqtā'* in that its purpose was to provide for the upkeep of the official to whom it was granted and not specifically for the provision of troops. Similar *eqtā*'s were also found under the atabegs of Azarbaijan. Kiš Kātūn, one of the Eldigüzid princesses, mentions in a letter that a certain *amīr ḥājeb*, who had served the former atabeg (Eldigüz), had been for some time without an *eqtā'* and was without equipment (*bī barg*). If no suitable *eqtā'* fell due, her instructions were that he should be given a money draft (*barāt*; *Moktārāt*, pp. 143-44).

The usual *eqtā'* granted to viziers under the Saljuqs was, according to Ebn Kallekān (tr. de Slane, III, p. 297), one tenth of the produce of the soil. This is clearly something different from both the administrative and the military *eqtā'*, though whether such *eqtā*'s were regularly granted is doubtful and, if



they were, they were presumably granted only from land under the direct control of the central administration. The foundation of Ebn Ḳallekān's statement may have been Neẓām-al-Molk's admission when he was accused before Malekšāh by Sayyed-al-Ro'asā' Abu'l-Maḥāsen b. Kamāl-al-Molk of misappropriating the revenue, that he had taken one-tenth of Malekšāh's wealth, which he claimed to have spent upon the standing army, alms, gifts and *awqāf* (Ebn al-Aṭīr, X, pp. 84-85; Bondārī, p. 57). However, Ebn Ḳallekān also records (III, p. 297) that Jamāl-al-Dīn Jawād Eṣfahānī, vizier first to Zangī, the ruler of Mosul, and then to his son Sayf-al-Dīn Ġāzī, had one tenth of the produce of the soil as an *eqṭā'*. The vizier often held assignments of land also. Among the *eqṭā'*s held by Neẓām-al-Molk was land in Ṭūs, which had been assigned to him in 456/1064 by Malekšāh (Ebn al-Aṭīr, X, p. 54). Similarly Abu'l-Maḥāsen Sa'd-al-Molk was enriched by *eqṭā'*s when Moḥammad b. Malekšāh made him vizier in 498/1104-5 (Ebn al-Aṭīr, X, p. 304).

*“Personal” eqṭā's.* There was lastly a kind of “personal” *eqṭā'*, which was in the nature of a pension in the form of either a private estate on a life or hereditary tenure or a money grant. The *eqṭā'*s granted to Saljuq women and to the caliphs for their maintainance belonged to this category of *eqṭā'*. They were not normally hereditary.

There is no clear evidence to show that the grant of *eqṭā'*s was confined to particular categories of land. Administrative *eqṭā'*s were granted on most types of land, regardless of whether it was state land, private property, or *waqf* land. The amount of land alienated from the control of the central government as *eqṭā'*s varied. It seems to have increased after the death of Malekšāh. Certain districts, notably Isfahan, which for much of the period was the capital, do not appear to have granted as *eqṭā'*s. From the documents in the *Mokṭārāt al-rasā'el* (e.g., pp. 261, 265) it would appear that in the late Saljuq period some of the land round Isfahan belonged to the *dīvān* and that some was in private hands. Marv, at least during the reign of Sanjar, was not granted as an *eqṭā'*. After the death of Moḥammad b. Malekšāh the amount of land alienated from the control of the central government, at least in central, western, and south-western Persia, appears to have reached the point at which the revenue at the disposal of the central government ceased to be sufficient to maintain a standing army more powerful than the forces of the individual amirs.

*Under the Ḳvārazmšāhs.* The Ḳvārazmšāhs continued the practice of allocating *eqṭā'*s to amirs and officials and there are examples of both administrative and military *eqṭā'*s (see the documents in Bahā'-al-Dīn Ḳvārazmī, pp. 30-38, 90-95,



95-100, 118-19; see also Lambton, 1988, pp. 112-13). It would appear that there was a strong hereditary tendency in the *eqtā*'s granted to the military. 'Omarī (text, p. 83) states that when K̅vārazm fell to the Mongols the K̅vārazmī troops (*asāker*) retained their *eqtā*'s and each one held what had been held by his father.

From Rāvandī's account it would seem that the term *eqtā*' covered a variety of irregular practices in the K̅vārazmšāhī period. He alleges that "In Iraq because of irreligious imams and tyrannical Turks, apart from the fact that [the regulations for] the offices of the *dīvān* were not observed, *šar'ī* offices, such as those of *qāzī*, *modarres*, *motawallī*, and *nāẓer* of *awqāf* were made into *eqtā*'s" (p. 386), but what precisely is implied by this statement is not clear.

*The Mongol invasions.* Major changes in land tenure and land administration resulted from the Mongol invasions. Administrative *eqtā*'s could neither provide for the military forces or the administration of the country, occupied as it was by a horde organized for war. Temporarily the administrative *eqtā*' disappeared, though there is some evidence that it continued in some of the outlying provinces. Awliā'-Allāh Āmolī (p. 170) records that villages and *eqtā'āt* were made into *waqf* by Šams-al-Molūk Moḥammad, who succeeded the Ostāndār Shah Kay K̅osrow in Rūyān in 712/1312-13. This would seem to be a reversal of the more usual practice, namely for *waqf* to be usurped and made into *eqtā*'. The following case recorded by Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn Kāteb (p. 82) is also somewhat unusual. He states that the Sultan Abū Sa'īd (probably shortly after his accession in 716/1316; q.v.) allocated to Moḥammad b. Moẓaffar wages (*marsūm*) and made the town of Meybod into his *eqtā*' and appointed 200 men to be in attendance upon him. The grantee was thus not only given an *eqtā*' but also men, instead of being required to produce men.

There are also instances of the term *eqtā*' being applied to the grant of a pension. The Qarā Khitay ruler of Kermān Rokn-al-Dīn Abū Moẓaffar Qotloḡ Sultan K̅vāja Jūq, who ascended the throne in 633/1236, gave to the princes and princesses (*molūk va malekāt*) among his relatives the revenue of places as *eqtā*'s (Nāšer-al-Dīn Monšī, p. 29). A grant from Öljeitü (Üljāytü) to Shah Jahān b. Soyorḡatmeš, the last of the Qara Khitay rulers, is also clearly in the nature of a pension. Shah Jahān had withheld revenue from Öljeitü and when he came to Solṭānīya in or about 703/1013, Öljeitü forbore from fining him because of his youth, but deposed him and gave him an *eqtā*' from the *inḡū* (state lands) of Fārs. Shah Jahān set out with his family for those regions and lived there, respected and in comfort, to the end of his life (Wazīrī, p. 174).



Waṣṣāf refers to an *eqṭā'* granted by Öljeitü to Amīr Sultan b. Ḥosām-al-Dīn Mohannā' in 712/1312-13. This was for over 40 *tūmāns* on Ḥella, Kūfa, and Šafāta with its tax districts (*a'māl*; *Tārīk-e Waṣṣāf*, p. 553). Mo'īn-al-Dīn Naṭanzī (pp. 115 ff.) mentions a similar grant by Abaqa to the Atabeg Yūsufšāh of Lorestān, but he calls it a *soyūrḡāl* (see below).

*The grant of eqṭā's by Ġāzān.* Once the Mongols in Persia were faced by the problems of administering a settled empire, they found growing difficulty in obtaining the necessary financial resources. To an increasing extent drafts were made on the provincial revenues to meet the needs of the state; farming of the provincial revenues was also widespread. By the reign of Bāydū (k. 694/1295, q.v.) the usual practice was for the military to go to the provinces to collect by force the drafts drawn in their favor; they also laid many additional contributions on the population. Concerned for the efficiency of his army and in the hope of halting the decline in his revenues and in agriculture, which had resulted from the Mongol invasions and the subsequent maladministration, Ġāzān, Bāydū's successor, undertook various measures of reform, including an attempt to curtail revenue farming. Finally in 703/1303-4 he determined to revive the old system of *eqṭā's* for the military in a somewhat modified form, so that they would consider the land their own and collect the taxes from it themselves and thus be provided with money and provisions (Rašīd-al-Dīn, *Tārīk-e ġāzānī*, p. 301). Rašīd-al-Dīn alleges that a further reason inducing Ġāzān to take this step was that the soldiers themselves wanted at this time to own estates and engage in agriculture (p. 302, cf. p. 241). He decided to give to the army as *eqṭā's* those provinces through which the army's lines of communication lay or in which its *yaylāq* (summer quarters) or *qešlāq* (winter quarters) were situated. Non-Mongol (*tāzīk*) soldiers were also given *eqṭā's* (*ibid.*, p. 310). The new *eqṭā's* were allocated to the commanders of thousands (*hazāra*) from state and crown lands (*īnjū* and *dālāy*) and dead lands, in all of which there had been an enormous increase under the Il-khans, and from other cultivated lands. The commanders of thousands were to divide the land among the commanders of hundreds, who were charged with the distribution of the individual *eqṭā's*. This distribution was then to be communicated to the central government. The land was to be distributed by lot and a share of good land and wasteland was to be entered in the register against the name of each holder. Dead lands in the district assigned in this way were to be cultivated by the new holders by the labor of captives and slaves. A *bītekčī* (revenue official) was to be sent annually to investigate the state of cultivation in the *eqṭā's*. Those who had improved cultivation were to be



singled out by a special mark of favor while those who had failed to do so were to be punished. No drafts were to be written on the lands granted as *eqtā's*. The whole of the produce was to go to the holders. In return the soldiers were to pay 50 *tabrizī mans* of grain (ca. 3,251, lbs.) annually to the royal storehouses. The grant were not alienable by sale or gift. If the holder died, a near relative was to be appointed in his stead, or failing a relative one of his slaves, and if he had no slaves one of his hundred. The *yarlīg* setting out the conditions for the grant of *eqtā's* is not entirely clear in all its details. The intention was not to transform the soldiers into agriculturists. They were still to remain a military class—the difference was that they were actually to live on the land from which they drew their pay. The holder of one of the new *eqtā's* was forbidden to accept peasants from other provinces or to transfer peasants from one village to another even if he held both villages. Any peasants who had left within fifty years were to be returned. The peasants were therefore tied to the soil to a greater extent than formerly. The force of governmental decree was now given to what had previously been permitted only by custom (Rašīd-al-Dīn, *Tārīk-e ġāzānī*, pp. 303-10; for the terms of the *yarlīg*, see Lambton, 1988, pp. 125-28).

Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfī mentions various places in Azarbaijan, Arrān, Šīrvān, and Khorasan as being *eqtā's* for the army (*Nozhat-al-qolūb*, ed. Le Strange, pp. 83, 92-93, 147). These were all in north-western and north-eastern Persia, districts through which the Mongol forces frequently passed on their military campaigns. However, since the decision to grant *eqtā's* to the army was not taken until the year of Ġāzān's death, it is debatable how far the terms of the *yarlīg* were carried out. On the other hand, it would seem from the *Dastūr-al-kāteb* (I, pt. 2, p. 187) of Moḥammad b. Hendūšāh Naḵjavānī, written just after the end of the Il-khanid, that the amirs of ten thousands, thousands, and hundreds held *eqtā's* in the provinces.

*The post-Mongol period.* Referring to the 14th century the sources use the term *eqtā'* mainly in the sense of a military *eqtā'*. Moḥammad b. Hendūšāh (I, pt. 1, p. 306; cf. I, pt. 2, pp. 187, 200) states that the armies of kings were composed of amirs and soldiers, who took from the king wages and allowances (*marsūm wa jāmagī*) or in place of these *eqtā's*. The accountancy manual of 'Abd-Allāh Māzandarānī, the *Resāla-ye falakīya* (comp. ca. 865/1460-61), refers to the *eqtā's* of the soldiers (*eqtā'āt-e 'asāker*) and to *eqtā's* for provisions (*'olūfa*) for the amirs and pillars of the state (pp. 112, 165).

A document issued by Rostam b. Maqṣūd, the Āq Qoyunlū ruler, dated



902/1496-97, records the grant of property in the Qohāb district of Isfahan as an *eqṭā'-e tamlīk* to Sayyed Shah Taqī Moḥammad and states that the property had become the grantee's legal and absolute property (*melk-e ṭelq-e šar'ī 'alā janāb-e moqṭa' lah; Barrasīhā*, pp. 213-17, see also Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, pp. 132 ff.).

In the late Safavid administrative manuals, the *Dastūr-al-molūk* and the *Tadkerat al-molūk*, the terms *eqṭā'* and *eqṭā' al-tamlīk* are occasionally used but it is not possible to decide from the context their exact meaning. It may be that the former was a grant of usufruct (known from the 9th/15th century onwards usually as *toyūl*) and the latter a grant of ownership. Very occasionally the term *eqṭā'* is used in the 10th/16th century in the sense of an administrative *eqṭā'* instead of the, by then, more usual term *toyūl*. Shah Ṭahmāsb is recorded by 'Abd-al-Fattāḥ Fūmanī (p. 42) as writing to Khan Aḥmad, the governor (*wālī*) of Lāhījān, who appears to have held Beyapas as an administrative *eqṭā'*, in the following terms: "Until now (974/1566-67) we established as your *eqṭā'* Gīlān Beyapas, Gaskar, and Kahdom, but now the royal zeal requires that we should entrust the province of Beyapas to Shah Jamšīd Khan, the grandson of Moẓaffar Sultan, Gaskar to Amīra Sāsān, and Kahdom to Kāmṛān Ḳalīfa. You must relinquish possession of the aforementioned *olkā* and leave it to their deputies and avoid giving them any cause of complaint." Predictably Khan Aḥmad did not comply with this demand and the matter ended in war and his capture (pp. 45-49). 'Abd-al-Fattāḥ also uses the term *eqṭā'* in the sense of an assignment of revenue. The same Jamšīd Khan later allocated the taxes (*māl wa jehāt wa wojūhāt*) of the *olkā* of Tūlam as an *eqṭā'* and annual grant (*hama-sāla*) to his *wakīl* Kāmṛān Mīrzā Kahdomī (probably the same person as Kāmṛān Ḳalīfa mentioned above; 'Abd-al-Fattāḥ, p. 70).

Eskandar Beg records (II, p. 821) that the *qezelbāš* had estates (*amlāk*) and *eqṭā'āt* in Marāḡa. He (or Moḥammad Yūsof) also mentions that Shah 'Abbās gave the *olkā* of Marāḡa to the Moqaddam tribe as an *eqṭā'* (*Dayl*, p. 286). Occasionally it is clear from the text that the term *eqṭā'* is used in the sense of a grant of a district and not merely a grant of revenue. Thus, Eskandar Beg states, "the amirs went to their *eqṭā's*" (I, p. 279), "they went to their tribal district (*olkā*) and *eqṭā'*" (I, p. 322), and "they hastened to their *eqṭā's*" (I, p. 352).

*The evolution of the soyūrgāl.* By the 14th century the term *soyūrgāl* came to designate something very like the administrative *eqṭā'*. In the following century it tended to be replaced in this sense by the term *toyūl*, though the two



terms continued to be used synonymously into the 17th century (see below). The word *soyūrgāl* originally meant “favor” or “reward.” Moʿīn-al-Dīn Naṭanzī (pp. 115 ff.) states that Abaqa (663-80/1265-81) gave Fārs, Kūzestān, Kūh Gilūya, Firūzān, and Golpāyagān to Yūsof Shah, the Atabeg of Lorestān, as a *soyūrgāl* in return for the bravery he had shown while on a military expedition with Abaqa in Gilān. Yūsof Shah then, according to Naṭanzī, “sought to take possession of the *welāyāt-e soyūrgālī*.”

Tīmūr (d. 807/1405) granted *soyūrgāls* to his relatives and military leaders. ʿAbd-al-Razzāq Samarqandī (d. 887/1482) appears to use the term *soyūrgāl* in the sense of a provincial grant (though it could still mean “favor”). He states that when Tīmūr set out for Khorasan in 812/1409-10 he gave Ḥeṣār-e Šādmān to Mīrzā Jahāngīr b. Moḥammad Sultan as a *soyūrgāl* and put his deputies in charge of the province (*Maṭlaʿ-e saʿdayn*, ed. Šafiʿī, II, pt. 1, p. 148). Malekšah Ḥosayn (p. 107), who lived in the reign of Shah ʿAbbās (996-1038 /1587-1629), states that Tīmūr summoned Malek Qoṭb-al-Dīn on the death of his grandfather Šahšahān in 805/1402-3 and gave him Sīstān and all his late grandfather’s *soyūrgāls*. Under Šāhroḡ (807-50/1404-47) the *soyūrgāl* was a *de facto* grant of territory, sometimes embracing whole provinces, virtually indistinguishable from the Saljuq administrative *eqṭāʿ* (see Roemer, in *Cambr. Hist. Iran* VI, pp. 94-95, 131). In the *Ketāb dīārbakrīya* of Abū Bakr Ṭehrānī, written in the latter part of the 15th century, there is a statement (p. 90) to the effect that Qarā Ḥeṣār was made part of Yaʿqūb Beg’s *soyūrgāl* and the Tarjanāt was given to his brother as a *soyūrgāl*. From the text it is not clear whether these were grants of the district or only of its revenues.

In post-Timurid times the term *soyūrgāl* was occasionally used in the sense of a provincial grant. A *soyūrgāl* issued by Jahānšāh Qarā Qoyunlū, dated 857/1453 in favor of Shaikh Dārāʿī, instructs the *kalāntars*, *kadkodās*, and people (*raʿāyā*) of Jūlāh to consider him their governor (*ḥākem wa dārūḡa*) and to pay their taxes (*māl wa motawajjahāt*) to him and he was, on the royal command, to present himself with equipment and men (*yarāq wa nawkar*) at the royal camp (Busse, pp. 149-50). A *soyūrgāl* issued by Uzun Ḥasan, dated 875/1471, in favor of Sayyed ʿAbd-al-Ġaffār grants him the village of Anbad, near Tabrīz, with its taxes (*māl wa motawajjahāt-e dīvānī*) together with immunity from all other divan dues. The *kadkodā* and people (*raʿāyā*) of the village were to pay their taxes to his representatives (*wokalāʿ*). The grant was permanent and a new decree was not to be demanded every year (Busse, pp. 151-53).



The *soyūrḡāl* granted to Esfandīār Beg by Qāsem b. Jahāngīr, the Āq Qoyunlū ruler, dated 903/1498, a similar example. It conferred upon him the district ('*olkā*) of Egīl, which was his home (*ojāq*), Bāḡīn and Henī as a perpetual *soyūrḡāl* coupled with immunity from payment of the taxes (*māl wa jehāt*) and all *dīvān* dues of the aforementioned places. The grant was to be registered and no drafts whatsoever (a long list of which is mentioned) were to be made on it (Minorsky, pp. 927 ff.). The grant is described as *darbasta*. This probably means that the districts granted to the beneficiary were immune from all interference by government officials.

Many *soyūrḡāls* were granted to members of the religious classes, and took the form of pensions or immunities from taxation. Sultan Moḥammad Mīrzā Bāysonḡor (q.v.), when he took possession of Isfahan in 850/1446-47, gave *soyūrḡāls* to the sayyeds of Isfahan, the *qāzīs*, and other notables (Abū Bakr Ṭehrānī, p. 287). Jahānšāh the Qarā Qoyunlū ruler granted a *soyūrḡāl* for an annual sum of 10,000 *kopekī dīnārs*, which was to be spent on food for the poor, to the *motawallī* of the *kānqāh* of Meybod in or about 861/1456 (Moḥammad-Mofīd Bāfḡī, p. 166). A document dated 966/1559, reaffirming a *soyūrḡāl* held by the Zāhedī *sayyeds* would appear to have been a grant of immunity with regard to the taxes (*māl wa jehāt*) of certain districts in Moḡānāt (apud Minorsky, pp. 956-58).

In the Safavid period the term *soyūrḡāl* designated mainly grants to the religious classes (cf. Eskandar Beg, I, pp. 145, 153, II, p. 882) and to officials of the bureaucracy (cf. Ḥasan Rūmlū, ed. Seddon, I, p. 376; *Ḥabīb al-sīar* [Tehran], IV, p. 565). In the reign of Shah 'Abbās these grants came under the supervision of the *ṣadr*, who was an official of the religious hierarchy (Qāzī Aḥmad, text, p. 16). Whereas the grants to the religious classes were probably usually hereditary, those to officials were not (cf. the ad hoc grant to Qāzī Jahān in Ḥasan Rūmlū, i, p. 375). Sometimes the grant was made on a specific fund (cf. the grant on the poll-tax of the protected communities of Azarbaijan to Mīr Ne'mat-Allāh 'Abd-al-Wahhābī in 1047/1638 and the redistribution of the grant among his heirs in 1067/1656; see Lambton, *BSO(A)S* 14/4, pp. 44 ff.).

If a *soyūrḡāl* was granted on the revenue of property held by the grantee, it amounted in effect to an immunity. Thus, Mīr 'Abd-al-Wahhāb was granted (by Shah Ṭahmāsb or Shah 'Abbās) the taxes (*māl wa jehāt*) of the properties he had revived and inherited and of new properties in 'Aqīlī and elsewhere and they were to be immune from all interference by the governors (Šūštārī, p. 37).



*Soyūrḡāls* were also granted for the expenses of an institution such as a shrine (cf. Eskandar Beg, p. 149) or *madrasa*. For example, Shah Sultan Ḥosayn constituted six villages in Barāʾān into *waqf* for the Solṭānī Madrasa (Madrasye mādar-e šāh) in Isfahan and made their taxes (*māl wa jehāt wa kārej al-māl wa sāyer-e jehāt*) into a permanent *soyūrḡāl* for the administration of the *madrasa* (Sepantā, p. 223).

However, *soyūrḡāls* were also sometimes granted to members of the military classes and to provincial governors as had been the case in the Timurid period. Shah Sultan Ḥosayn, in a document dated 1113/1702, granted a sum of 6 *tūmāns*, 3,096 1/2 *dīnārs* from the taxes (*māl wa jehāt wa wojūhāt*) of the Dezmār district to Amīr Bāyandor Sultan, governor of Qarāja Dāḡ. The headman and peasants of Dezmār were instructed to remit the taxes and government dues annually to the new beneficiary of the *soyūrḡāl* and in return he was to provide seven armed men (Minorsky, pp. 958-59). Such a provision is unusual in a *soyūrḡāl* of this period, though common in a *toyūl*.

Under the Qajars, the term *soyūrḡāl* became obsolete, although it is occasionally found until about the middle of the 19th century. Āqā Moḥammad Khan (q.v.), after defeating Mortazāqolī Khan in 1781, gave Beštām as a *toyūl* to Jaʿfarqolī Khan and Semnān as a *soyūrḡāl* to ʿAlīqolī Khan (Brydges, p. 15). It is not clear what the distinction between these two grants was. Possibly the terms were loosely used synonymously. Reżāqolī Khan states (*Rawzat al-ṣafā*, IX, p. 704) that Faṭḥ-ʿAlī Shah, when he visited Solṭānābād in 1244/1828-29, conferred upon Yūsof Khan Gorjī, the governor and commander of Persian ʿErāq, his estates (*raqabāt*) as a “permanent *toyūl* and everlasting *soyūrḡāl*.” In the early Qajar period the term *soyūrḡāl* was sometimes applied to grants to Qājār women, which were, to some extent, reminiscent of the *eqṭāʿ*’s granted to Saljuq women. When Āḡā Bājī, the daughter of Ebrāhīm Khan Šīšaʿī, came to join Faṭḥ-ʿAlī Shah’s harem, she brought with her 200 personal servants (*ʿamalajāt-e šakṣī*) from Qarābāḡ and they were given a sum from the revenue of Qom as a *soyūrḡāl* (*ʿAzod-al-Dawla*, p. 14). Similar grants were later called *toyūls*. For example, the divan dues of Nīāsar and its hamlets in the province of Kāšān were the *toyūl* of Moḥammad Shah’s sister and were alienated from the control of the governor of the province (Kalāntar Żarrābī, p. 100).

*The toyūl.* A *toyūl* was initially a temporary grant in return for service, but, like the Saljuq *eqṭāʿ*, it carried the right to collect (as well as to receive) the taxes of a district; and the grantee (*toyūldār*) was expected, like the *moqṭaʿ* of the



administrative *eqṭa'*, to concern himself with the development of the district in which, or on which, he held a *toyūl*. In return for the grant he was usually required to provide a military contingent. A Timurid document, dated 804/1401, for the grant of the revenues of various districts in Naḵjavān and Azarbaijan as a *toyūl* to Shaikh Dorsūn illustrates the nature of the *toyūl*. It states that, according to the register (*daftar*) of Sayyed Zayn-al-'Ābedīn, the taxes of these districts amounted to 1333 silver currency *dīnārs* and 235 *karvārs* of grain, which, on the basis of what was allotted to each soldier (*'olūfaḵvār*) by the *dīvān*, was sufficient to provide 25 men. Financial officials (*bītekčān wa 'amaldārān*) had inspected the register and reduced the tax demand, but Shaikh Dorsūn undertook in return for the *dīvān* taxes of these districts to provide, and to bring to the army, 50 armed and fully equipped men, each 10 men having 15 horses and 2 camels, and to each of whom he would give allowances in cash and kind as laid down by the *dīvān*. Accordingly the divan taxes (*māl wa motawajjahāt-e dīvānī*) of the districts in question, whether from *kāleša* or *'ošrī* land, *tamgā*, *mawāšī*, *marā'ī*, *qobčūr* or other sums, were granted to him as a *toyūl*. No drafts were to be made on the taxes of the district or demands upon the inhabitants for military service (*čerīk-e tāzīk*) or any kind of due; and the tax officials (*ḥazzārān wa 'āšerān wa bītekčān*) were forbidden to enter the districts. The inhabitants of the districts were to pay their *dīvān* taxes to him and he was enjoined to treat them well and to act in such a way that the districts would flourish and the people would be at ease, happy and grateful. A new decree was not to be demanded every year (Fekete, p. 72).

The Safavid *toyūl* contained similar features and both it and the Timurid *toyūl* resembled the Saljuq administrative *eqṭā'*. A document, dated 942/1535, issued by Shah Ṭahmāsb for the grant of the district (*'olkā*) of Kerend as a *toyūl* to Morād Beg Koroḡlī enjoins the grantee to attend to the development (*ma'mūrī*) of the region and its defence. The local tribal leaders and headmen (*kalāntarān wa kadḵodāyān*) and peasants (*ra'āyā*) were to pay their *dīvān* taxes and dues to him and to refer any disputes which might occur among them to him for decision. The peasants of the district of Kerend who had scattered, wherever they might be or with whomsoever they might be, were to return to their homes (*yort wa maqām-e ḵod*) and to occupy themselves in making the place flourishing and in cultivating the land (Fekete, p. 380, cf. p. 350).

In theory *toyūls* had to be regranted on the accession of a new ruler, but often



in practice and sometimes in name, they were hereditary. Shah 'Abbās granted to Borhān-al-Dīn, who was appointed *kalīfa* (i.e. the leader of a section of the Safavid order) of the district of Dezmār in 1019/1611 in succession to his father, thirty-four *tūmāns* 7,938 *tabrīzī* dinars on the taxes (*māl wa jehāt wa wojūhāt*) of Dezmār, as had been granted to his father, as his *toyūl* and *soyūrḡāl* from the date of the death of his father. The *kadkodās* and peasants of Dezmār were to recognize him as the holder of the *soyūrḡāl* and their *toyūldār* and to pay to him their taxes year by year and to refer to him their affairs, apart from cases of murder (*sevā-ye qazīya-ye kūn*). The Sufis (i.e., the *qezelbāš*) of Dezmār and Ozomdel were to serve him when summoned (*be jār wa yāsāk*) as they had served his father. The governors (*ḥokkām*), *dārūḡas*, *toyūldārs* and tax-collectors (*'ommāl*) of Azarbaijan in general and Dezmār in particular were not to interfere in any way in his *soyūrḡāl* or *toyūl* or to make any drafts or allocations on it on account of expenses (*eḵrājāt*) or dues (*'avārezāt*), especially the dues (*rosūm*) of the *dārūḡa*, the vizier, or the *kalāntar*, etc., which, according to the decree of the late sultan (Ṭahmāsb), were not levied on the *soyūrḡāls* of the Sufis (Bāybūrdī, pp. 160-61).

There was a close connection between the grant of a *toyūl* and the provision of troops as the following accounts show. The first is by Qāzī Aḥmad, who states that the amirs, leaders (*sardārān*), and other military men (*laškarīān*) came to Shah 'Abbās' camp at the New Year (Nowrūz) in 996/1588. After they had paid obeisance there was a great celebration and for fifteen days Shah 'Abbās delayed so that the army might assemble. He then went to Qarābāḡ and halted at Bīdestān. The amirs of the region were dismissed so that they could go to those places where they had *toyūls* (*maḥall-e toyūl-e ḵod*) and prepare for the coming expedition to Khorasan and from each amir a document was taken stating how many calvary and riflemen (*tofangčī*) and men with spades (*bīldār wa qūmeš*) he could make ready for the expedition (pp. 31-32). The second is by Moḥammad-Mofīd (III, p. 276), who states that Shah 'Abbās ordered Faḵr-al-Dīn Bāfqī to provide 300 men from Bāfq and Yazd to take part with the royal army in battle. Accordingly, Faḵr-al-Dīn, who had been at court, went back to Bāfq and Yazd, collected 300 riflemen and returned with them to the capital. Shah 'Abbās then ordered that the provinces (*welāyāt*) of Bāfq, Sar Yazd, and Fahraj and some of the districts in the environs (*ḥawma*) of the town of Kermān, and the districts bordering on the central desert, Jandaq and Nūqāt, etc. should be his *toyūl*. Shah 'Abbas also allotted *soyūrḡāls* to Faḵr-al-Dīn's children. In this case Moḥammad-Mofīd is clearly using the terms *toyūl* and *soyūrḡāl* in different senses.



It seems that *toyūls* were normally granted on the *mamālek* (i.e., those provinces which were not directly administered from the center) and not on *kāṣṣa* districts (i.e., districts directly administered by the central government). Thus in 1006/1597-98 a decree was issued for the dismissal of the *toyūldārs* of Gīlānāt and the conversion of Gīlānāt into *kāṣṣa* (‘Abd-al-Fattāḥ, pp. 171-72). Some years later Gaskar and Āstārā were taken away from the *toyūl* of Du’l-Faqār Khan and made into *kāṣṣa* (p. 181). In the same year Shah ‘Abbās issued an order (*raqam*) that Mīrzā Moḥammad-Šafī’ (Mīrzā ‘Ālamīānī), the vizier of Gīlān, should give the revenue (*madākel*) of the district (*olkā*) of Tūlam as a permanent *toyūl* to Kāmṛān Beg Tūlamī. Mīrzā Šāfī’, however, told the shah that Beyapas was *kāṣṣa* and belonged to the royal treasury and that the holding of a *toyūl* in a district which was *kāṣṣa* was out of place (*toyūl-dārī ma’nī nadārad*) and that he would instead give Kāmṛān Beg an annual grant of 400 *tūmāns* in cash and that Kāmṛān should not interfere in the township of Tūlam. Shah ‘Abbās agreed and summoned Kāmṛān Beg should not interfere in the township of Tūlam. Shah ‘Abbās agreed and summoned Kāmṛān Beg and said to him, “I have, on your behalf, accepted 400 *tūmāns*. What do you say to this?” Kāmṛān Beg expressed his gratitude in return for this favor and Shāh ‘Abbās issued a *raqam* to the effect that the tax collectors (*‘ommāl*) of Gīlān Beyapas should pay annually the sum of 400 *tūmāns* from the taxes of that district (*olkā*) as the annual wages (*mawājeb*) of Kāmṛān Beg, the *mostawfīs* to charge the aforesaid sum against the tax collectors of Beyapas. A new decree was not to be demanded every year (‘Abd-al-Fattāḥ, pp. 231-32). This account suggests that the *toyūldār* was normally concerned with the administration of the district on which he held a *toyūl* while those receiving annual (*hama sāla, har sāla*) grants merely received the money without visiting the district or districts on which they were drawn. It also shows the close control by the center over the allocation of *toyūls*.

Although the *toyūldār* was often given immunity from the entry of government officials into the district which he held as a *toyūl*, he had no authority to change the rates of taxation any more than had the *moqta’* in an “administrative” *eqṭā’*. Under Shah ‘Abbās there would appear to have been some attempt to control financial abuse by *toyūldārs*. In 1014/1605 Shah ‘Abbās sent Mīrzā ‘Ālamīān as chief provincial vizier (*wazīr-e koll*) to Khorasan because of reports of speculation and extortion. Full powers were given to the vizier and orders issued that the levy of taxes even in *toyūls* should be under his supervision and that “the great amirs and big and small *toyūldārs* and *dārūgas* of every district (*maḥall*) and the landowners (*arbābs*) and people and



great men and *kadkodās* of the province (*mamlakat*) of Khorasan shall not undertake any transaction, large or small, or allocate one *dīnār* or one *man* of produce in any circumstances without informing him or his appointees” (Ivagli Ḥaydar, “*Ūlū’l-bāb*, B.M., Add. 7688, fol. 200b, quoted by Rohrborn, pp. 106-7).

The documents for *toyūls* and *soyūrḡāls* were registered and then passed through the *dīvān* and sealed by the keeper of the royal seal (Mīrzā Rafī‘ā, 16/3, pp. 310-11). The procedure for keeping tax assessments up to date, however, was less satisfactory. There were no regular cadastral surveys and by the end of the Safavid period, if not earlier, the assessments were often out of date. Chardin alleges that the revenue from the districts which were assigned was generally three to four times the estimated amount (Chardin, V, p. 417).

*The toyūl under the Qajars.* In the Qajar period the term *toyūl* covered the grant of a sum of money drawn on some fund, the realization of which was usually, though not necessarily, entrusted to a beneficiary, a grant of money with or without immunities and territorial jurisdiction in lieu of salary or as a pension, or simply the grant of an immunity, and, by extension, the land on which such a grant was made. Sir Justin Sheil, writing in 1854, describes the system as follows: “Every village in the kingdom pays a fixed tax on the land appertaining to it. It is customary to make a grant of this revenue in payment of salaries and pension, sinecures, etc. This is called *Tiool*, and the holder of it becomes lord of the village, especially if he is a person of rank and position.” Sheil seems, thus, to have believed that a *toyūl* was, in theory at least, simply a grant of the revenue of a district. He goes on to describe it “as a most pernicious system: whether in recompense for services or in remuneration for salary. The *toyūldār* being only a holder of land for a period usually short and always uncertain, has no object but to levy all the contributions he possibly can during his tenure. By some means not very intelligible he makes himself the temporary owner of the land to the complete exclusion of the real proprietor.” Almost everyone holding a position at court, from the prime minister downwards, was, he states, a *toyūldār*. In theory the *toyūldār* had no authority to alter the tax assessment but in practice, as Sheil states, he often levied contributions in excess of the basic assessment (United Kingdom, Public Record Office, F.O. 60. 194, Sheil to the Shah, n.d.).

*Toyūls*, like *eqtā’s*, were resumable at will. In theory they fell with the death of the ruler who had granted them unless confirmed by his successor. There was considerable variety in the matter of the payment of relief by the *toyūldār* on



his institution and on the regrant of his *toyūl*. Probably no uniform practice prevailed. Such payments were not normal practice in the case of the grant of *eqṭā's* by the Saljuqs as far as is known but there is evidence of such payments under the Safavids. On the death of a *toyūldār* his heirs were frequently able to secure a regrant of the *toyūl* and there was a marked tendency for *toyūls* to become hereditary and to be assimilated to private property.

The obligations of the *toyūldār* varied. If the *toyūl* was in lieu of a pension, they were minimal. In the case of a *toyūl* granting fiscal and judicial immunity, the holder's obligation was, in effect, to carry out the functions of government locally and, in some cases, especially in frontier districts, to provide troops. James Fraser (p. 211), writing in 1821-22, states that land held in *toyūl* for the payment of the military and other services paid nothing to the government. The holder took the proprietor's share of the crop, all government dues and anything else he could get when the land belonged to the government; if, however, the assignment was on the estate of a third person, the grant only extended to the government's dues. The Maḥāll-e Kamsa, for example, with its hundred villages and capital Zanjān, was, according to James Morier (pp. 261-62), by the gift of Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah, the property of the governor Faraj-Allāh Khan, the *nasaqčī-bāšī* (the chief executioner). It paid no revenue but furnished the king with 5,000 horsemen, who were paid, fed, and clothed by its produce. Those *toyūldārs* who held extensive regions were probably expected to give the shah presents (*pīškaš*) at Nowrūz and, in the event of a royal "progress" through, or in the neighborhood of, their *toyūls*, to offer extraordinary presents and entertainment, but these were ad hoc levies to which any person of substance might be subjected.

Traces are to be found in the Qajar period of a grant comparable to the *eqṭā'* given to soldiers in earlier times, but it is not clear what these grants were called (Morier, p. 110; S. Waring, p. 87). Various tribal groups also received grants in return for frontier defense (see *Gazetteer of Persia*, Calcutta, 1892, IV, p. 27; *Collection of Journals*, pp. 286-87, 303-4, quoted in Lambton, 1991, pp. 163-64; *Gazetteer of Persia*, Simla, 1902, pp. 92, 373).

Much crown land was alienated from the control of the central government as *toyūl*. For example, the greater part of the Šāhsevan country in Azarbaijan was granted towards the middle of the 19th century in *toyūl* to the family of Abu'l-Faṭḥ Khan, a Qarābāḡ chief of consequence (Rawlinson, pp. 5, 7). It was, however, not only crown land or state land that was so granted. Grants were made on private property and *waqf* land also. If a *toyūl* drawn on a tax or



taxes of a district was granted to the owner of the district, this amounted, as it had earlier, virtually to the grant of fiscal and judicial immunity. In fact, it was often stated in the document granting the *toyūl* that government officials should not enter the district (cf. the grant of a tax immunity for Amīr Dizaj in Dehḳvāraqān in 1827-28, and also the grant issued by Moḥammad Shah, dated 1252/1836, to Ḥasan Khan Baybūrdī Qarajadāgī; see Nāder Mīrzā, p. 255; Bāybūrdī, p. 264). Rawlinson (p. 5 note), who traveled widely in Persia in the first half of the 19th century, when writing in 1838, thought that about one-fifth of the land revenue was alienated from the government in *toyūl*. One of the factors which contributed, albeit to a minor extent, to the extension of *toyūls* was “protection.” This was similar to the practice of *talje’a*, found in early Islamic times, by which a man placed himself under the protection of another by ceding his land to him. Small landowners or peasant proprietors would sometimes request a neighboring landowner or powerful individual to ask for their land as a *toyūl* so that they might obtain his protection against the government (cf. Aubin, p. 466).

While the evidence so far available for the history of the *eqṭā’*, the *soyūrḡāl*, and the *toyūl* is fragmentary, it shows that there was a marked similarity between them. It is probably largely because the *eqṭā’* and the *toyūl* were often associated with the existence of a subject peasantry and with the fragmentation of authority, whether or not leading to disorder, coupled with the fact that the assessment of taxes and the levy of troops were closely connected that the *eqṭā’* system has often been described as feudalism and the *moqṭa’* as a feudal lord. This is to misunderstand the two systems. A subject peasantry and the fragmentation of authority are not essential to either Anglo-Norman feudalism or to the *eqṭā’* system, though they may be associated with both. The crucial difference between them is that the *eqṭā’* was not held by a tenure similar to tenure by knight service by which the Anglo-Norman fief was held. There was no vassallic commendation and no mutual bond between the grantor and the *moqṭa’* or *toyūldār*. The relations between them were personal and not reciprocal. It is therefore inaccurate and misleading to describe the *eqṭā’*, the *soyūrḡāl*, or the *toyūl* as a feudal grant or fief and the *moqṭa’* and *toyūldār* as a feudal lord. The *eqṭā’*, the *soyūrḡāl* (in its Timurid form) and the *toyūl* were essentially bureaucratic institutions devised to provide for the payment of the army and the government of the provinces, and, to a lesser extent, to reward supporters and favorites of the government.

The Saljuq *eqṭā’* and the Timurid *soyūrḡāl* worked reasonably well as long as



the central government was strong. Under the Safavids there was a reassertion of the provincial government. As a result the *toyūl* began to lose its importance as a device for administering the country, though the central government continued to make assignments of land and revenue in the form of *toyūls* and *soyūrḡāls*. The Qajar government, partly because it was unable to make its writ run effectively throughout the country or to provide the financial means to meet its bureaucratic or military needs, continued to grant *toyūls*; but it failed to exercise control over the system. In the changing circumstances of the 19th century the system ceased to provide a satisfactory solution to the financial, administrative, and military problems of the state and finally disappeared.

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