



EŠĪK-ĀQĀSĪ-BĀŠĪ

EŠĪK-ĀQĀSĪ-BĀŠĪ (or *Īšik-āqāsī-bāšī*), the title of two officials in the Safavid central administration, namely *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e dīvān*, and *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e ḥaram*. The jurisdiction of the latter, as his title implies, lay only within the harem, and he was of less importance than the former and subordinate to him. Their respective annual salaries indicate their relative importance; the *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e dīvān* received 2,675 tomans and 1,503 dinars, plus a regular subvention (*moqarrarī*) of 975 tomans and 1,503 dinars, in addition to a sum of 1,700 tomans for the expense of the 150 retainers who accompanied him on journeys; by contrast, the salary of the *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e ḥaram* was 300 tomans. The office of *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e dīvān* seems to have been first held, at the time of the death of Shah Ṭahmāsb (984/1576), by Solṭān-Ebrāhīm Mīrzā, the shah's nephew and son-in-law (Eskandar Beg, I, p. 136, tr. Savory, I, p. 220). Ebrāhīm Mīrzā was dismissed by Shah Esmā'īl II the same year, and thereafter this office was usually, but not always, held by a *qezelbāš* amir. The *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e dīvān* was one of the four pillars (*arkān*) of the state. He belonged to the council of great amirs (*omarā-yejānqī*) and yielded extensive powers in both political and financial affairs. Described by Kaempfer as "grand marshall of the court," by Du Mans as "master of ceremonies," and by Chardin as "chief courtier," (apud Minorsky in *Tadkerat al-molūk*, p. 34 n. 1, and p. 118), the *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e dīvān*'s jurisdiction covered the outer part of the palace as far as the harem gate. Under his orders were numerous aides-de-camp (*yasāvolān-e šoḥbat*), ushers (*ešik-āqāsīs*), door-keepers (*qāpūčīān*), etc., and he had full and sole authority over court protocol. Also under his command were the *jazā'eri* guards (*kešīkčī*), who were permanently stationed at the gate of the palace. He



was stationed in the hall of the main entrance to the palace. Reports from the amirs of the marches directed to him were routed via the *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e ḥaram*, who conveyed to the *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e dīvān* the shah's orders for any necessary action. In financial affairs, documents (*raqam*) issued by the vizier regarding the payment of salaries, assignments (*toyūl*), annuities (*hama-sāla*), sums payable by drafts (*tanḳ^vāh-e barātī*), and honoraria (*en'ām*), came to him for approval; during the reign of Shah Solṭān-Ḥosayn (1105-35/1694-1722), he additionally affixed his seal to such documents (Mīrzā Rafī'ā, p. 82). Like most Safavid administrators, the *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī-e dīvān* had a number of prerequisites in addition to his salary and regular subvention. The tithe which was levied on all gifts (*pīškaš*) presented to the shah was divided between him and the *pīškašnevīs*, and he was entitled to one camel out of every fifty branded for the use of the royal household, and to one out of fifty of all sheep and lambs or lambs and kids earmarked for the royal household. In addition, his appointee, together with officials from the departments of the master of the royal stables (*amīr-ākōr-bāšī*), the superintendent of the animals (*nāẓer-e dawābb*), and the overseer of the royal stud (*mošref-e ilḳī*), was involved on branding and keeping a tally of the horses selected for the royal stud, and annually visited the stud farms in the provinces for this purpose.

The power of *ešik-āqāsī-bāšī* was reduced under the Qajars. He was the master of ceremonies and the chief of protocol (*ešik-ḳāna*), presided over public and private audiences of the king and supervised the attendants at public audiences.

See also [COURTS AND COURTIERS vi](#) and [vii](#).

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Doerfer, *Elemente* II, pp. 183-84.

E'temād-al-Salṭāna, *al-Ma'āter wa'l-ātār*, pp. 44, 388, 425.



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