

DONALD OSTROWSKI (Cambridge, MA, U.S.A.)

THE MILITARY LAND GRANT ALONG THE MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN FRONTIER

The Christian-Muslim frontier frequently acted as a barrier that separated religions, cultures, and societies from one another. But it was a permeable barrier in that ideas, commodities, and technology often passed through it. To demonstrate the precise mechanism of that permeability can be difficult to do. As Lynn White has remarked: "No medieval text documents with explicit words the amazing openness of the medieval European mind to borrowings from alien cultures..."¹ It is fair to say that the prevailing historiography has tended to concentrate on the frontier as barrier and has tended to ignore its permeability.

The issues I am exploring in this paper are the antecedents and parallels to the Muscovite *pomest'e* system. The question I am asking is: did the grand princes, or whoever originated the program of military land grants in Muscovy, think it up on their own or did they have an already existing model in mind? That is, was it an indigenous Muscovite development or was it the result of outside influence? Trying to determine 500 years after the event what was in the minds of those who did something may be futile. But, the exercise itself may be helpful in terms of gaining more understanding of Muscovite sources in relationship to those of the rest of the world.

When I began this research, I thought I understood what I was about to study. I found, instead, that my former understanding of Western "feudalism" was not a coherent one, that my former understanding of the difference between *votchina* and *pomest'e* did not correspond to the evidence, and that the Muslim

¹ Lynn White, Jr., "Cultural Climates and Technological Advance in the Middle Ages," in *Medieval Religion and Technology: Collected Essays* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986), p. 230; originally published in *Viator* vol. 2, 1971, pp. 171-201. For example, see Mozarabic art as well as the various arguments concerning the Muslim influence on Gothic architecture. Lynn White, Jr., "Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages," in *Medieval Religion and Technology*, pp. 6-7, n. 23. The Muslim influence on Gaelic manuscript illustrations of the ninth century, such as the Lindisfarne Gospels and Book of Kells, is unmistakable. Yet, precisely how arabesque design reached the British Isles is unknown. In addition, (Gregorian) Chant owes much to the Islamic call to prayer.

military land grant practice called *iqṭā'* is remarkably similar, both structurally and functionally, to our more recent concepts of what landholding in Muscovy was like. What is the reason for this similarity? Is it possible (likely) that concepts of landholding spread in the same way that technological innovations, such as paper and gunpowder, did? Or are the similarities merely superficial?

My hypothesis is that, when Muscovy acquired an empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, just as when the Muslims acquired their empire in the seventh and eighth centuries, the influx of new lands to be governed created an overload on the central state administration. Military land grants that incorporated administration of the frontier regions along with maintenance of military personnel was the answer in both cases. But I propose that the Muscovites did not arrive at that solution independently. They borrowed the concepts and techniques of the Muslim *iqṭā'*. I do not have an exact description of how this borrowing occurred, but the similarities between the systems are too striking for us to accept the presupposition that the Muscovite system developed in a cultural vacuum or even that it was somehow borrowed from the West. Furthermore, I hypothesize that the various systems of military land grants found in medieval Europe, Byzantium, and the Ottoman Empire were but variants of *iqṭā'*, borrowed and modified to fit local needs.

* * *

But, first, let us clarify what we are trying to compare. *Pomest'e* is generally regarded as a form of conditional land tenure that was introduced into Muscovy in the late fifteenth century. It provided the basis for the system of serfdom, which in turn held the autocratic system and the Russian ruling class together until 1861.² Our understanding of exactly what *pomest'e* was is still changing. The traditional view of *pomest'e* was summed up by V. O. Kliuchevskii who contrasted it with *votchina*. Kliuchevskii saw *pomest'e* as being personal, conditional, and temporary as opposed to *votchina*, which he saw as being hereditary, non-conditional, and permanent.³ To these criteria, we might add the English legal distinction between possession and ownership, i.e., holding or occupancy vs. legal right of proprietorship.

Historians often cite the Testament of Ivan I from the early fourteenth century as the first example of conditional land tenure in Muscovy. Ivan I grants a

² John P. LeDonne, *Absolutism and Ruling Class: The Formation of the Russian Political Order, 1700–1825* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. x.

³ V. O. Kliuchevskii, *A History of Russia*, trans. C. J. Hogarth, 5 vols. (New York: Russel & Russel, 1960), vol. 2, p. 121.

village to a certain Borisko Vor"kov "if he serves one of my [Ivan's] sons."⁴ Jerome Blum stated that "[l]ater sources make it clear that the granting of land on conditional tenure became fairly common in the later fourteenth century and increasingly so in the fifteenth century..."⁵ Blum does not state what those sources are.⁶ If it did become fairly common during that time, then one wonders why is there no mention of conditional land tenure in any other grand princely testament before Ivan III. In addition, it is not clear there is any reciprocity between Vor"kov and Ivan I's sons. What we may have here is merely an attempt to establish the same relationship between Vor"kov and Ivan's sons as between Ivan's servitors and Ivan himself. That is, once a servitor left the service of the grand prince, his land reverted to the grand prince. This principle of the grand prince's being the ultimate owner of the land ("initial carrier" in airline terms) is a significant difference from Kievan Rus' where a servitor who switched allegiances maintained ownership of his land. Ivan may have been expanding the principle of grand princely ownership to include his sons. Further research would tell us at what point we have evidence of the grand prince's claim of ownership of all land under his control.

The Testament of Ivan III from 1504 states:

And the boyars and *deti boiarskie* of Iaroslavl, along with their *votchinas* and goods, are never to leave my son Vasiliu to go to anybody. If any leave, their lands go to my son; but if they serve him he will not transgress their lands nor those of their wives or children. . . . And the servitor princes in the Moscow and Tver' territories who serve my son Vasiliu will retain their *votchinas* as they did under me. But if any of those servitor princes leave my son Vasiliu for my younger children or anyone else, the *votchinas* of those princes go to my son Vasiliu.⁷

⁴ *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh i udel'nykh kniazei XIV–XVI vv. (DDG)*, ed. L. V. Cherepnin and S. V. Bakhrushin (Moscow: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1950), p. 10. Robert Craig Howes, trans. and ed., *The Testaments of the Grand Princes of Moscow* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 186–187. The concept of treason that Howes uses in discussing this document (Howes, *Testaments*, p. 107) can be corrected by two articles: Orest Subtelny, "Mazepa, Peter I, and the Question of Treason," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 2, 1978, pp. 158–183; and Horace W. Dewey, "Political *Poruka* in Muscovite Rus'," *Russian Review*, vol. 46, 1987, pp. 117–133. David Goldfrank has suggested that this village was under the jurisdiction of another prince.

⁵ Jerome Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia: From the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 84–85.

⁶ Thornton Anderson refers to two boyars, one in 1374 and the other in 1433 who had their lands confiscated, but he does not name them or his source. Thornton Anderson, *Russian Political Thought: An Introduction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 58.

⁷ *Pamiatniki Russkogo prava (PRP)*, 8 vols., ed. L. V. Cherepnin (Moscow: Gosizirizdat, 1955), vol. 3, pp. 294, 296 (trans. Norman Henley in Anderson, *Russian Political Thought*, p. 54; see Howe, *Testaments*, pp. 276, 280).

It is not clear why only Vasilii is mentioned. Also we should not assume that, because land could be taken away for lack of service, it could be held as long as service was proffered. Other evidence indicates that land could be taken for any, or no articulated, reason. We should consider the possibility that the Iaroslavl' boyars, the Tver' *votchina* holders, and Vasilii constitute a special case. Here *votchina* is treated as though it were conditional.

It is important to define what we mean by "*pomest'e*" based on the direct testimony of primary sources rather than on what we suppose them to say or what we want them to say. The characteristics of a *votchina* seem to be less in doubt than those of *pomest'e*. But recent research by Alekseev and Kopanev, Degtiarev, Hammond, and Kobrin suggests more similarities than historians have traditionally acknowledged.⁸ For example, both kinds of land reverted to the grand prince when there were no male heirs. Both could be confiscated for lack of service or for any reason. Neither was "conditional" in the sense that, as long as service was proffered, it could not be taken away. *Pomest'e* could remain with a non-servitor. Both could be donated to monasteries (alienation). Both could be exchanged for the same type of land (in unequal amounts), that is, *pomest'e* for *pomest'e* and *votchina* for *votchina*. Besides that, *pomest'e* could be exchanged for *votchina* and *votchina* for *pomest'e* on condition that the *pomest'e* would become *votchina* and the *votchina* would become *pomest'e*.⁹ Both could be bequeathed to one's sons, brothers, and cousins, and both were considered familial lands.¹⁰ In other words, as Hammond argues, *pomest'e* was hereditary from the beginning. But what does "hereditary" mean? Could a non-servitor "inherit" the *pomest'e* of a deceased relative? Did a servitor's son have the option of first refusal on claiming the land if he proffered service? It may be that *pomest'e* could be inherited but needed the approval of the ruler. The inheritance of *votchina* may not have needed such approval at first.

It is also not clear that a *pomeshchik*'s son could receive a *pomest'e* when he was 15 years old or if he had to wait until he had proven himself in battle first. A *pomeshchik*'s son who had received a *pomest'e* while his father lived

⁸ Iu. G. Alekseev and A. I. Kopanev, "Razvitie pomestnoi sistemy v XVI v.," in *Dvorianstvo i krepostnei stroi Rossii XVI–XVIII vv. Sbornik statei posviashchennyi pamiati Alekseia Andreevicha Novosel'skogo*, ed. N. F. Demidova (Moscow: Nauka, 1975), pp. 57–69; Iu. Degtiarev, "O mobilizatsii pomestnykh zemel' v XVI v.," in *Iz istorii feodal'noi Rossii. Stat'i i ocherki k 70-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia prof. V. V. Mavrodina* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1978), pp. 85–91; V. B. Kobrin, "Stanovlenie pomestnoi sistemy," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 1980, no. 105, pp. [168–171]??; V. B. Kobrin, *Vlast' i sobstvennost' v srednekovoi Rossii* (Moscow: Mysl', 1985), pp. 90–135; Vincent Hammond, "The History of the Novgorodian Pomest'e: 1480–1550," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1987).

⁹ *1649 Ulozhenie* 16:5 Hellie.

¹⁰ Hammond, "The History of the Novgorodian Pomest'e," p. 48.

would not have his father's *pomest'e* added to his when his father died. Hammond goes on to point out that, when *pomest'e* estates began to show a relatively high rate of turnover and confiscation in the second half of the sixteenth century, *votchina* also showed an increase in its rate of turnover and confiscation.¹¹ Since the change in the rates of turnover for *pomest'e* corresponds with the change in rates of turnover for *votchina*, this means that they were probably being treated by the central state administration in pretty much the same way. In addition, we should also consider the testimony of Richard Chancellor from the late sixteenth century:

If any man behave himself valiantly in the field to the contention of the emperor, he bestoweth upon him in recompense of his service some farm or so much ground as he and his may live upon, which notwithstanding after his death returneth again to the emperor if he die without a male issue. For although his daughters be never so many, yet no part of that inheritance comes to them, except peradventure the emperor of his goodness give some portion of the land amongst them to bestow them withal. As for the man, whosoever he be, that is in this sort rewarded by the emperor's liberality, he is bound in a great sum to maintain so many soldiers for the war, when need shall require, as that land in the opinion of the emperor is able to maintain. And all those to whom any land falls by inheritance are in no better condition, for if they die without any male issue all their lands falls into the hands of the emperor.¹²

Several significant points stand out. First, the tsar gives the land (*pomest'e*) as a reward for service, not to acquire the service of the individual. Second, the tsar at that time was under no obligation to grant any part of the land to female descendents. Third, although Chancellor states the *pomeshchik* is obliged to provide soldiers, he does not explicitly state that the land will be forfeit if the *pomeshchik* does not provide soldiers. The Military Service Decree of 1556 does state that the size of the *pomest'e* will be reduced to correspond more closely to the amount of service proffered. Significantly, the penalty for no service is not confiscation of the *pomest'e* but a monetary payment to provide an equivalent number of men with full equipment and horses.¹³ Finally, *votchina* is treated the same way *pomest'e* is when there is no male heir.

Differences did exist between *pomest'e* and *votchina* in practice. A *votchina* could be given away by the holder to anyone else in service of the

¹¹ Hammond, "The History of the Novgorodian Pomest'e," pp. 48–49.

¹² Richard Chancellor, "The First Voyage to Russia," in *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers*, eds. Lloyd E. Berry and Robert O. Crummey (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), pp. 28–29.

¹³ *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei [PSRL]*, 38 vols. (St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad and Moscow: Arkheograficheskaia komissiia and Nauka, 1843–1989), vol. 13, pp. 267–269.

Muscovite prince, whereas *pomest'e* could only be given to monasteries. This difference may have been the origin of the idea that monasteries had to contribute cavalymen to the tsar's army. And a *votchina* could be sold for cash, whereas a *pomest'e* could only be exchanged for other *pomest'e* land. Initially, land transactions did not have to be registered with the secular authorities. *Pomest'e* lands signified a greater degree of regulation by the central state administration. As the state began to expand its regulatory powers over land transactions, the Church challenged the state's right to regulate land gifts to monasteries. Significantly, donation of *votchina* lands was an issue but donation of *pomest'e* lands was not. The reason for this is that donation of *pomest'e* lands was allowed, except in explicitly specific cases.¹⁴

* * *

As one might imagine, historians have advanced several theories on the origins of the *pomest'e* system. Those who argue that it is an indigenous phenomenon see it as a specific solution to a specific problem. Jerome Blum, although stating that "conditional tenure became fairly common in the later fourteenth century," asserted that "[s]ervice tenure did not become widespread, however, until the sixteenth century." It is unclear what distinction, if any, he was making between "fairly common" and "widespread." Nor is it clear whether he saw "conditional tenure" as being different from "service tenure." Blum rejected the idea that service tenure existed in Kievan Rus' and saw it as originating during the period of Mongol overlordship. But he also rejected the idea that service tenure was borrowed from outside Muscovy: "It is, of course, entirely conceivable that the idea could have been borrowed from abroad, but it seems most probable that it was an indigenous phenomenon, rising out of the needs of the time." Blum does not say why he thinks it is "most probable." He went on to state: "Given the problems of contemporary political and economic life, it seems a natural sort of solution for the princes and great landlords to adopt."¹⁵ Blum does not attempt to explain further what he means by "a natural sort of solution" nor how it relates to the evidence of the time.

Marc Szeftel, in 1956, stated that "[e]ach prince, settling population in his territory, faced the task of administering it and providing for its defense." But since "money was scarce and trade was poor... he could not... attract administrative and fighting men by offering money or a share in commercial profit; [so] the only thing he could offer them was possession of land—land was indeed

¹⁴ See, e.g., Donald Ostrowski, "Church Polemics and Monastic Land Acquisition in Sixteenth-Century Muscovy," *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 64, 1986, pp. 371–377.

¹⁵ Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, p. 85.

inexhaustible.”¹⁶ Further on in the same article, Szeftel asserted that “[t]here was not enough money to insure the existence of this numerous militia... [so] the Grand Prince of Moscow created the *pomest’e*...”¹⁷ Szeftel seems to have been influenced by Western conceptions of feudalism as existing within a barter economy. Yet, the large amount of trade along the Volga route throughout this period would seem to belie assertions that the Muscovite grand prince had no money.¹⁸ The tribute to the Tatar khan, for example, was apparently paid in silver.¹⁹ Besides not pointing to any evidence that the scarcity of money was the cause of bestowing *pomest’e*, Szeftel, in effect, seems to be saying this: the grand prince did not have enough money to pay military service men to administer and defend new lands, so he paid them by allowing them to administer and defend those same lands that he did not have the money to pay them for administering and defending in the first place.

In relation to service tenure, Richard Hellie has written: “The assumption has usually been that the Russians could not have come up with the idea themselves and so must have borrowed it from some place else.”²⁰ If this has been the assumption, then we should discard it. On the other hand, we should not assume that, just because the Russians could have, they did in fact come up with

¹⁶ Marc Szeftel, “Aspects of Feudalism in Russian History,” in *Feudalism in History*, ed. Rushton Coulborn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 170.

¹⁷ Szeftel, “Aspects of Feudalism,” p. 175.

¹⁸ See Th[omas] S. Noonan, “Russia’s Eastern Trade, 1150–1350: The Archaeological Evidence,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, vol. 3, 1983, pp. 201–264, where he provides evidence there was no diminishing of the trade with Asian markets from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries. See also Artur Attman, who in the chapter “Russia and the Asian Markets,” provides evidence that “[d]uring the 15th century Moscow became a commercial centre of ever increasing importance...” Artur Attman, *The Bullion Flow Between Europe and the East 1000–1750*, trans. Eva Green and Allan Green (Göteborg: Kungl. Vetenskaps- och Vitterhets-Samhället, 1981), p. 104.

¹⁹ For an analysis of this issue, see George Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), pp. 228–231. Roublev criticized Vernadsky for not demonstrating any extensive Russian trade with Europe, which is where the silver would have to come. Michel Roublev, “The Mongol Tribute According to the Wills and Agreements of the Russian Princes,” in *The Structure of Russian History: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Michael Cherniavsky (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 31. Since then, Attman has documented the extensiveness of that trade from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries: “the sources clearly show a continuous flow of precious metals, above all silver, from Western Europe to Russia.” Artur Attman, *The Russian and Polish Markets in International Trade 1500–1650*, trans. Eva Green and Allan Green (Göteborg: Kungsböcker, 1973), p. 110. See also Attman, *The Bullion Flow*, pp. 104–127; Charles J. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 83–84; and S. M. Kashtanov, *Finansy srednevekovoi Rusi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), pp. 7–13.

²⁰ Richard Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 285 n. 37.

the idea on their own. We need to set up some ground rules for how we determine what is foreign influence and what is indigenous development.

Cherepnin provided a class struggle explanation when he argued that *pomest'e* was the result of the conflict between the boyars, on the one side, and the grand prince and the *dvorianstvo*, on the other. According to this view, the *dvoriane* were paid with *pomest'e* estates taken away from boyar *votchiny*.²¹ The consensus view of Soviet historiography saw *pomest'e* created by the confiscation of princely holdings and the giving of them as *pomest'ia* to the former servitors of these princes.²² However, N. E. Nosov argues against the idea of “democratization” of landholding.²³ The need of Russian historians during the Soviet period to encode their research in conformity with the Marxist views of the Party elite makes much of their discussion of service land tenure irrelevant for our purposes. Many of their generalizations simply do not correspond to the available source evidence.²⁴

There have been numerous attempts to tie in developments in Muscovy with those in Western Europe of the time or earlier. In regard to service land tenure, perhaps the most sustained argument was provided by N. P. Pavlov-Silvanskii. He tried to refute the idea that the medieval Russian social structure was different from that which prevailed in the medieval West or that it was unique in any way.²⁵ As I will attempt to show below, much of Pavlov-Silvanskii's comparison is based on an erroneous understanding of medieval “feudalism.” Thus, his argument and those of others who see a connection of it with Muscovite land tenure fall by default.

Other historians, as Blum pointed out, see a Mongol connection for Muscovite service land tenure. In 1953, George Vernadsky asserted:

When the political independence of the boyars was broken by Tsar Ivan IV in the second half of the 16th century, the status of the *dvoriane* of the Mongol period

²¹ L. V. Cherepnin, “Osnovny etapy razvitiia feodal'noi sobstvennosti na Rusi (do XVII v.),” *Voprosy istorii* 1953, no. 4, pp. 59–60.

²² On this point, see Hellie, *Enserfment*, p. 286 n. 44.

²³ N. E. Nosov, “Mnogotemnaia ‘istoriia SSSR,’” *Voprosy istorii* 1968, no. 3, pp. 133–155.

²⁴ On why Marxist historians can override the evidence of the sources and resort to “non-source-based knowledge,” see Jerzy Topolski, *Metodologia historii*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1973), pp. 200–201, 355, 370–371; and idem, “O roli vneistochnikovogo znaniia v istoricheskom issledovanii,” *Voprosy filosofii* 1973, no. 5, pp. 76–82.

²⁵ N. P. Pavlov-Silvanskii, *Feodalizm v drevnei Rusi* (Moscow-Leningrad: Brokgauz-Efron, 1907); N. P. Pavlov-Silvanskii, *Feodalizm v udel'noi Rusi* (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1910). See also N. P. Pavlov-Silvanskii, *Gosudarevy sluzhilnye liudi*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1898). For a discussion of his views, see A[natole] G[regory] Mazour, *Modern Russian Historiography*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1958), pp. 173–174.

became the pattern for the subsequent relationship between the tsar and the nobility at large. An important source of the power of the Moscow tsar was his control of the landed estates of the army officers through the *pomestie* system. And as has been said, it is in the landholdings of the grand ducal *dvoriane* of the Mongol period that at least some of the roots of the *pomestie* system may be discerned. Thus, while that system assumed definite shape only in the post-Mongol period—in the 16th century—the Mongol age may be called its incubation period.²⁶

Fourteen years earlier, Vernadsky described what seems to be a different influence: “The institution of *ikta*... might have been partly instrumental for the growth of the *pomestie* régime in Russia.”²⁷ But, in the footnote, he modified that statement: “Both the Byzantine *πρόνοια* and the Ottoman *timar* might also have served as patterns for the Russian *pomestie*.”²⁸ If we choose to think that Vernadsky was not contradicting himself between text and footnote, and between 1939 and 1953, then we would have to conclude that Vernadsky sees at least four possible influences on the development of Muscovite *pomest'e*: earlier *dvoriane* landholding under the Mongols, Persian *iqṭā'*, Byzantine *pronoia*, and Ottoman *timar*.

The idea that *pomest'e* derived from Byzantine *pronoia* has been expressed in the historiography at least since the mid-nineteenth century. K. A. Nevolin argued that the resemblance of *pomest'e* to Byzantine *pronoia* (*topion*) showed Sophia's influence on Ivan III.²⁹ Miliukov noted the seeming simultaneous appearance of Ottoman *timar* and Muscovite *pomest'e*, and he also noted their similarity with Byzantine *pronoia*.³⁰ But Miliukov is not clear about how the system entered the Ottoman Empire, South Slavic areas, and Muscovy at the same time. Subsequently, Miliukov argued against Pavlov-Silvanskii's view that *pomest'e* was similar to western European feudalism. Instead, he pointed out the similarity with both Byzantine *pronoia* and Muslim *iqṭā'*.³¹ He did not speculate on the mechanism of its entry.

²⁶ Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia*, p. 372.

²⁷ George Vernadsky, “Feudalism in Russia,” *Speculum*, vol. 14, 1939, p. 312.

²⁸ Vernadsky, “Feudalism in Russia,” p. 312, fn. 4.

²⁹ K. A. Nevolin, *Istoriia Rossiiskikh grazhdanskikh zakonov*, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1851), vol. 2, p. 195. El'iashevich accepted Nevolin's suggestion that the word “*pomest'e*” was a direct translation of the Greek “*topion*.” V. B. El'iashevich, *Istoriia prava pozemel'noi sobstvennosti v Rossii*, 2 vols. (Paris, n.p., 1948–1951), vol. 1, p. 369.

³⁰ P. N. Miliukov, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi kul'tury*, 3 vols., 6th ed. (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. A. Aleksandrova, 1909), vol. 1, p. 147.

³¹ P. N. Miliukov, “Feodalizm v Rossii (v severo-vostochnoi Rusi),” *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, ed. I. E. Andreevskii, 42 vols. (St. Petersburg: Tip. Brokgauz-Efron, 1890–1907), vol. 35, pp. 548–550.

Other historians have pointed out the similarity of *pomest'e* with the already existing system of *kormlenie*.³² A comparison of the following two charters, one for *kormlenie*, the other for *pomest'e*, shows their similarity:

Kormlenie Charter

I, Grand Prince Ivan Vasil'evich of all Rus', have granted to Ivan son of Andrei Plemiannikov [the villages of] Pushka and Osintsovo as a *kormlenie* with the right to administer justice [*pravda*] and to collect taxes on the purchase, sale, and branding of horses [*piatno*]. And you, all the people of this *volost'*, honor him and obey him, and he will govern you and judge you and will conduct your affairs in every way as they were conducted heretofore.³³

Pomest'e Charter (January 12, 1546)

I, Ivan Vasil'evich, grand prince of all Rus', grant to Grisha, son of Ivan Zhedrinskii, of Nizhnii-Novgorod, a third portion of the village of Frolovskoe in the Berezopolskii *stan* of the Nizhnii-Novgorod *uezd*, which formerly belonged to Eremai, son of Matfei Pagozskii; and also the *obrok*-paying hamlet of Kuchino in Strelitsa, which belonged to Rodia Kuchin. Since—[omission in original] this *syn boiarskii* died leaving behind no wife or children, and his land was not given as a *pomest'e* to anyone, thus I, the grand prince, grant it as a *pomest'e* with everything that belonged to this third of the village and to the hamlet as of old. As for the peasants who shall live on his land, in that third of the village and in the hamlet, our *namestniki* in Nizhnii-Novgorod and the *volosteli* and their *tiuny* shall not sit in judgment over them for anything except murder and robbery with material evidence; Grisha himself or whoever he designates shall administer and judge his own peasants. And if there should be a mixed trial between his peasants and the inhabitants of the town or *volost'*, then our Nizhnii-Novgorod *namestniki* and *volosti* and their *tiuny* shall sit in judgment over his peasants together with Grisha or his manager; and the court fees shall be equally divided between them. If anyone lodges a complaint against Grisha or his manager, then I myself, the grand prince, or my *boiarin vvedenoi* [commissioned boyar] will sit in judgment. And the *obrok* from his *obrok*-paying hamlet shall be paid according to the books [*po knigam*] to [my] *kliuchnik* [steward] in Novgorod. Written in Moscow, on the twelfth day of January in the year 7054 [1546].³⁴

Halperin, perhaps influenced by Orthodox Church sources, has asserted that Tatar *namestniki* were not allowed to administer Christian subjects, only gather

³² For a discussion of the points of similarity, see Hellie, *Enserfment*, pp. 27–28.

³³ *PRP*, vol. 3, p. 156; trans. based on *A Source Book for Russian History from Early Times*, 3 vols., eds. George Vernadsky et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), vol. 1: *Early Times to the Late Seventeenth Century*, p. 120. Dated only to the reign of Ivan III (1462–1505).

³⁴ *Akty otnosiashchiesia do iuridicheskogo byta drevnei Rossii*, ed. Nikolai Kalachev, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg: Arkheograficheskaiia komissiia, 1857–1884), vol. 1, pp. 139–140; trans. based on *A Source Book for Russian History*, vol. 1, p. 162.

revenue from them.³⁵ But, as is clear from existing *kormlenie* charters, the *namestnik*, whether Christian or Muslim, had full power of administration within the *kormlenie* area. The *pomeshchik*, like the *namestnik*, was to administer the territory, but there is no mention of his providing military service as a condition of the grant. This charter delineates the administrative duties of the *pomeshchik* from that of the prince's men, the *namestniki*, *volosteli*, and *tiuny*. The *pomeshchik* was to judge all matters involving his peasants except murder and robbery, which were the only two crimes the prince's men would judge. It may be significant that here we see an example of the dual administration characteristic of Mongol-dominated lands. Are there examples of such dual administration in the West, or in Byzantium, or in the pre-Mongol Middle East?³⁶ Do we have a charter that stipulates military service as a condition of the grant? Or is the amount of military service imposed afterward?

Other historians have pointed to the abuses under the *kormlenie* system. But Crummey, following Dewey, questioned the extent of such abuses.³⁷ Dewey asserted that the *namestniki* maintained their power at least until the 1555 military reform, and then even after as *voevody*. He disagreed with those who argue that the *namestniki* had their power stripped from them due to corruption. Instead, Dewey argued that the need for more efficient revenue collection was the decisive reason for the reforms.³⁸ It would appear then that the responsibilities of the *namestniki* declined as those of the *pomeshchiki* rose.

* * *

When we make a comparison of Muscovite service land tenure with that in other realms, we get some very interesting results. First, let us compare it with west European "feudalism." Historians have proposed many theories about the origins of feudalism in the West. Montesquieu saw feudalism as deriving from the German tribal comitatus.³⁹ George Waitz, in contrast, saw feudalism as

³⁵ Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, p. 109.

³⁶ Mottahedeh pointed to an example of dual administration under the Buyids and explained it as a characteristic of decentralized government: "In a decentralized government, it was desirable to have alternate wires to pull in case any wire (as so easily and frequently happened) disappeared." Roy P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 36–37.

³⁷ Robert O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy 1304–1613* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 107; Horace W. Dewey, "The Decline of the Muscovite *Namestnik*," *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, vol. 12, 1965, pp. 28–29, 33–39. See also A. A. Zimin, *Rossiia na poroge novogo vremeni. Ocherki politicheskoi istorii Rossii pervoi treti XVI v.* (Moscow: Mysl', 1972), pp. 415–417.

³⁸ See Dewey, "The Decline of the Muscovite *Namestnik*," pp. 34, 37, and 39.

³⁹ Baron de Montesquieu (Charles de Secondat), *The Spirit of Laws*, 2 vols., trans. Thomas Nugent (New York: Colonial Press, 1900), vol. 2, pp. 171–267 (bks. 30–31).

deriving from Imperial Roman institutions of clientage and patronage.⁴⁰ Heinrich Brunner saw its origins in the intrusion of the Muslims north of the Pyrenees, which precipitated a fusion of the German and Roman institutions. His argument is that Charles Martel had to raise a fighting force to meet the Muslim attack. Martel confiscated church and monastic lands and gave them to military men for service.⁴¹ Another theory suggests that Norse invasions required armored knights to protect villages.⁴² Yet another theory was proposed by Lynn White who argued for the significance of the importation of the stirrup from Central Asia. According to White, the stirrup was a technological innovation introduced to the Franks in the early eighth century that gave an advantage to the armored knight on horseback. But the knight needed land to maintain his armor, horse, and stirrup; thus, feudalism was invented.⁴³ Finally, other historians have seen feudalism as an evolutionary phase in the natural development of all societies.⁴⁴ One notable characteristic of all theories about the origins of feudalism is the presumption that it was an indigenous development free from practices outside Europe. For example, Donald Kelley phrased the question of feudalism's origins this way: "was 'feudalism' a peculiarly European institution, or is it a stage in the development of every nation?"⁴⁵

The variety of descriptions of "feudalism" is legion and generally reflect the prefigurations of the describer. At the beginning of this century, Maitland summed up the vagueness of definitions of "feudalism":

Now were an examiner to ask who introduced the feudal system into England? one very good answer, if properly explained, would be Henry Spelman, and if there followed the question, what was the feudal system? a good answer to that would

⁴⁰ Georg Waitz, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 8 vols., 3rd ed., (Kiel: Ernst Homann, 1882), vol. 2, pt. 1 pp. 330–383 and 2nd ed. (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1885), vol. 4, pp. 176–365.

⁴¹ Heinrich Brunner, "Der Reiterdienst und die Anfänge des Lehnwesens," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanistische Abteilung*, vol. 8, 1887, pp. 1–38; reprinted in Heinrich Brunner, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des deutschen und französischen Rechts* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1894), pp. 39–74.

⁴² Edward McNall Burns, *Western Civilizations*, 6th ed. (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 313.

⁴³ Lynn White, Jr., *Medieval Technological and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 14–28.

⁴⁴ Marc Bloch, *La société féodale: les classes et le gouvernement des hommes* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1940), pp. 249–252; Otto Hintze, "Wesen und Verbreitung des Feudalismus," *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. 20, 1929, pp. 320–325; "Feodal'nyi stroi," *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, 2nd ed., 1956, vol. 44, pp. 608–612; B. F. Porshnev, *Ocherk politicheskoi ekonomii feodalizma* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1956), pp. 9–13. The Marxist view, of course, derives from the *Communist Manifesto*.

⁴⁵ Donald R. Kelley, "De origine feudorum: The Beginnings of an Historical Problem," *Speculum*, vol. 39, 1964, p. 207.

be, an early essay in comparative jurisprudence. . . . If my examiner went on with his questions and asked me, when did the feudal system attain its most perfect development? I should answer, about the middle of the last century.⁴⁶

The phrase [feudal system] has thus become for us so large and vague that it is quite possible to maintain that of all countries England was the most, or for the matter of that the least, feudalized; that William the Conqueror introduced, or for the matter of that suppressed, the feudal system.⁴⁷

More recently, Richardson and Sayles have suggested that “feudalism” is little “more than an arbitrary pattern imposed by modern writers upon men long dead and events long past” and they advise that “[a]n adjective so ambiguous and so misleading is best avoided.”⁴⁸ In no uncertain terms, Elizabeth A. R. Brown pilloried those who try to use their own concepts of “feudalism” to explain the source testimony:

The variety of definitions of feudalism and the limitations imposed on their relevance are confusing. Equally disconcerting is the pervasive tendency on the part of those who use the word to personify, reify, and, to coin two words, occasionally ‘bacterialize,’ and even ‘lunarize’ the abstractions. How often does one read that feudalism, like a virus, spread from one area to another, or that, later on, it slowly waned. In a single study feudalism is assigned a dazzling array of roles. It is found giving birth, being extremely virile, having vitality, being strong, knowing a long tradition, being successfully transplanted, surviving, being replaced, teetering, being routed, declining and falling, and finally dead and in its grave.⁴⁹

One of the points Brown makes is that, while there seems to be a consensus about “feudalism” when using it as a pedagogical device to teach students, there is no consensus when it comes to using “feudalism” as “an intellectual tool” in studying society.⁵⁰

Nonetheless, Maitland and other historians seem to go through a revolving door of castigating definitions of feudalism that imply a system, then of proceeding to formulate their own systemic definitions. Maitland used his assessment of the inadequacies of previous definitions to advance his own: “a state of society in which all or a great part of public rights and duties are inextricably interwoven with the tenure of land, in which the whole government system—financial,

⁴⁶ Frederic William Maitland, *The Constitutional History of England*, ed. H. A. L. Fisher (Cambridge: The University Press, 1908), p. 142.

⁴⁷ Maitland, *Constitutional History*, p. 143.

⁴⁸ H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, *The Governance of Mediaeval England from the Conquest to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1963), pp. 92, 118.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth A. R. Brown, “The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 79, 1974, p. 1075.

⁵⁰ Brown, “The Tyranny of a Construct,” p. 1070.

military, judicial—is part of the law of private property.”⁵¹ Yet, that definition is also so vague that it could, with some modification, be applied to almost any sedentary society, including the present-day United States.

One of the leading scholars of feudalism, Carl Stephenson, has presented his own model this way:

Ignoring for the moment all possible exceptions, we may say that a vassal was pre-eminently a gentleman and a warrior, pledged as such to support his lord on the battlefield and in other honorable ways. This was a personal obligation which feudal tenure could modify but never set aside. The fact that, by the eleventh century, a vassal normally lived on his own estate meant only that his attendance upon his lord was restricted to particular occasions—when, thanks to his enhanced position, his service would be especially valuable. Nor did the concession of a fief relieve the lord of personal responsibility towards his vassal. The faithless lord, as well as the faithless vassal, was known as a felon, and felony of one sort or another remained prominent in all systems of feudal law...⁵²

Could a lord be a felon in Rus’? Could the grand prince, as lord, be a felon? Here seems to be a place where Muscovy under the Daniilovichs differed from Stephenson’s model of western European “feudalism.” As long as a grand prince was considered legitimate, he could not be considered a felon.⁵³ The grand princes determined their own law by following the precedents of their predecessors or by establishing a new precedent in agreement with the Church and the boyars.⁵⁴

Stephenson goes on to claim:

In actual practice we know that, even before the close of the ninth century, it was customary for fiefs to pass from father to son; and that, within another hundred years or so, a fief was regularly described as hereditary. For reasons stated above, however, such inheritance is found to have been merely the renewal of a feudal contract, to which each of the parties, the lord and the vassal, had to give personal assent. When a vassal died, his fief reverted to the lord and really ceased to be a fief at all until another vassal had been invested with it. In case the vassal had no heir, the reversion was called escheat, and the lord was free to keep the dead man’s estate or to regrant it to whomsoever he pleased. In case the vassal had an heir, the lord was legally obliged to accept his as the new holder. Yet even then a regrant

⁵¹ Maitland, *Constitutional History*, pp. 23–24.

⁵² Carl Stephenson, *Medieval Feudalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1942), pp. 22–23.

⁵³ Daniel Rowland, “Towards an Understanding of the Political Ideas in Ivan Timofeyev’s *Vremennik*,” *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 62, 1984, p. 396.

⁵⁴ Marc Szeftel, “The Form of Government of the Russian Empire Prior to the Constitutional Reforms of 1905–06,” *Essays in Russian and Soviet History in Honor of Geroid Tanquary Robinson*, ed. John Shelton Curtiss (Leiden: Brill, 1963), p. 106.

was necessary through formal investiture; and in recognition of this fact the heir very commonly paid the lord a sum of money called relief.⁵⁵

Do we have any evidence of “relief” in Muscovy? Did a *pomest’e* remain a *pomest’e* although “escheated” to the grand prince until regranted? Furthermore, Stephenson asserts:

Another striking peculiarity of feudal tenure was primogeniture, the rule that a fief should pass intact to the eldest son. No such form of inheritance was known either to Roman or to Germanic law, and allodial property continued to be shared by the children of a deceased owner. The fact that a fief was legally indivisible seems to prove that it was considered a public office rather than a piece of land.⁵⁶

Here there is another crucial difference with Muscovy. What Stephenson is describing are political arrangements between independent contractors. The vassal entered the service of the lord by virtue of an agreement, sometimes reciprocal. In Muscovy, servitors were already in the service of the grand prince—no independent agreement or reciprocity was involved. The grand prince could take the land back or leave the land with the servitor as he desired. But not all lord-vassal relationships in the West were between such independent contractors as Stephenson describes.

Clearly, things are not as they appear in this category. Somewhere along the line historians have made the assumption that “conditional” land tenure in Muscovy must conform to the “feudal” model, whatever that historian understood by it. But service land tenure neither in western Europe nor in Muscovy conforms to any such model. Even Stephenson admitted:

Although men in the Middle Ages were quite familiar with vassals and fiefs and with vassalage and feudal tenure, they apparently did not think in terms of a broad feudal theory—a set of feudal principles by which to construct a social and political framework.⁵⁷

Furthermore, Stephenson warned against accepting the conventional wisdom about feudalism: “I am inclined to agree with those scholars who find the ordinary remarks about feudalism in the abstract either so vague as to be historically useless or so inaccurate as to be historically dangerous.”⁵⁸ For example, the conventional wisdom states that vassals received land from the lord in return for

⁵⁵ Stephenson, *Medieval Feudalism*, p. 24.

⁵⁶ Stephenson, *Medieval Feudalism*, pp. 24–25.

⁵⁷ Carl Stephenson, “The Origin and Significance of Feudalism,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 46, 1941, p. 797.

⁵⁸ Stephenson, “Origin and Significance,” p. 797, fn. 36.

military service. This is the way textbooks present it: “The relationship between lord (suzerain) and vassal, between the bestower and receiver of the fief, is the heart of the medieval feudal system.”⁵⁹ Yet, Stephenson writes:

The status of vassal... could always be acquired, with or without the prospect of a fief, merely by performing homage and swearing fealty. And solely in this way could one become a vassal. Although fiefs might be declared hereditary, vassalage was never inherited.⁶⁰

Such a formulation also would distinguish Western lord-vassal relations from relations in Muscovy where service obligations were hereditary. Furthermore, according to Stephenson, swearing fealty was not enough to indicate vassalage:

The primary and decisive element in the ceremony was homage, for in the twelfth century, as in the Frankish periods it was always possible for one man to swear fealty to another without becoming his vassal. In other words, although any vassal could properly be styled a *fidelis*, all *fideles* were not vassals.⁶¹

In short, there does not appear to be such a thing as a “typical” feudal grant. But, we can say this. There are at least three components that often show up in western European medieval political relations: (1) homage; (2) vassalage; and (3) land granted for the maintenance of a cavalryman (horse, armor, shield, weapons, etc.). Of these components, only the first, homage, is necessary to what Stephenson calls “feudalism.” But Richardson and Sayles concluded that homage was not typical, or even a significant part, of grants in England.⁶² Stephenson himself admitted that the other two components, vassalage and land grant, are optional and that they also appear in non-“feudal” relations. For example, a king could hire a knight (vassal) for a particular battle, thus, treating the knight as a soldier of fortune who owed no homage and received no land (a straight “cash” for service deal). And there were kings who would grant land for the maintenance of a cavalryman, although the king claimed the cavalryman owed service as a matter of fact, not as the result of homage extended by an independent contractor. For example, Carolingian edicts frequently refer to the fact that all freemen owe military service.⁶³ In this aspect, the Carolingian situa-

⁵⁹ Stewart C. Easton, *The Heritage of the Past: Earliest Times to 1500*, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 525.

⁶⁰ Stephenson, “Origin and Significance,” p. 798.

⁶¹ Stephenson, “Origin and Significance,” p. 798, fn. 38.

⁶² Richardson and Sayles, *The Governance of Mediaeval England*, p. 112.

⁶³ White, *Medieval Technology*, p. 6.

tion seems to be similar to that in Muscovy under the Daniilovichs.⁶⁴ Yet, if all three components of political relations in the medieval West were optional, then in what sense does the term “feudal” have any meaning?

Basically, we should take the advice of Richardson and Sayles and disregard all definitions of “feudalism,” including Marxist, as well as the views of all historians who see it as a single system. There was no “system” of lord-vassal relations as such in the West. Each lord had his own individual relationship with each of his vassals. These “feudal” relationships were at times little more than the relationships that members of a street gang in any large American city have to the gang leader. In addition, the terms “feudal” and “feudalism” are redolent with negative connotations. They are often used in the same sense that terms like “Caesaropapism,” “Oriental Despotism,” and “totalitarian,” are used—to categorize what is being described as something that should be disliked. As a result, I propose that any statements about Western “feudal” practice be accompanied by specific reference to when and where one thinks such a practice existed and according to what documents one is basing one’s statements on.

The comparison with Byzantine *pronoia* likewise yields little in the way of direct influence. Vasiliev rejected the comparison of *pronoia* with *kormlenie* because, according to him, “*kormlenie* was not connected with the possession of a territory and meant only the administration of a town or province with the right to collect revenues for the profit of the administrator.” Instead, Vasiliev saw a closer connection between *pronoia* and *pomest’e*, which he defined as “an estate held temporarily on condition of discharging military service, which speedily assumed an hereditary character.”⁶⁵ Vasiliev did not have the advantage of recent research that we have, so he was operating under the prevailing assumption that *pomest’e* was not hereditary from the beginning. But this is not the only point on which his comparison may be faulty. Ensslin defined *pronoia* by comparing it with “feudalism”: “By the *pronoia* (provision) landed property, to which was attached the obligation of supplying soldiers, was granted to superior officers, and the income from these estates belonged to them during their lifetime, but could not be inherited; this arrangement bears a certain resemblance to the Western feudal system.”⁶⁶ Ensslin seems to be in disagreement with Vasiliev when he says *pronoia* was not hereditary. The resemblance he thought he saw

⁶⁴ For a comparison of Muscovy with the empire of Charlemagne, see Daniel Rowland, “Ivan IV as a Carolingian Renaissance Prince” (unpublished paper).

⁶⁵ A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, 2nd Eng. ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p. 569.

⁶⁶ Wilhelm Ensslin, “The Emperor and the Imperial Administration,” in *Byzantium: An Introduction to East Roman Civilization*, eds. H. N. Baynes and H. St. L. B. Moss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, 1948), p. 300.

with Western “feudalism” is faulty because grants of land in the West at the time were frequently inherited.

According to Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *pronoia* was introduced in the mid-eleventh century. It was a result of the Ducas dynasty’s beginning “to build up a civilian aristocracy of scholars and great officials within the capital... and to play off that new aristocracy against the military aristocracy,” the *strategoï*, who were “provincial commanders and governors of the themes...”⁶⁷ In order to reduce the power of the military aristocracy, the *pronoia* “estates were given both to high officers of the state or army and to monasteries and private persons also. They were given in permanent administration as a reward for services. The grants differed from simple donations in that the *pronoia* land was absolutely bound to the recipient, the *pronoetes*; that he received it for a definite period only, usually for life; that he could not sell the *pronoia* estate; and that it was not hereditary.”⁶⁸ Kantorowicz saw *pronoia* as being used to end the power of the provincial generals, which was based on a peasant militia, and to regain central, civilian control of the military. Thus, both the circumstances and the goals of the military land grant in Byzantium differed from such grants elsewhere in that it was directed against the existing military leaders and often was given to non-military personages. The claim by some historians is that *pomest’e* was directed against the boyars with their hereditary estates. Whether or not we accept that conjecture, we must acknowledge that “civilians” were not given *pomest’e*. And it was not an attempt by a civilian elite of scholars and great officials to break the power of the provincial military. This strong non-military aspect of *pronoia* would seem to refute the contention of those who assert that Ottoman *timar* was based on it.⁶⁹

When we compare *pomest’e* with Ottoman *timar*, we find some significant points of similarity. Inalcik described *timar* this way:

Above all else the timar system was intended to provide troops for the sultan’s army, by maintaining a large, centrally controlled cavalry force. The timar-holding sipahî kept his own horse; he was armed with a bow, sword, shield, lance and mace, and if his timar income exceeded a certain sum he wore armour. For each three thousand akçes of timar income, a sipahî had to provide one *cebelü*—a fully armed horseman; beys provided a *cebelü* for each five thousand akçes....⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, “‘Feudalism’ in the Byzantine Empire,” in *Feudalism in History*, p. 160.

⁶⁸ Kantorowicz, “‘Feudalism’ in the Byzantine Empire,” p. 161.

⁶⁹ See, e.g., Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 469–470. For references to other proponents of this view, see *ibid.*, p. 470 n. 94.

⁷⁰ Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 113.

The main points described here—of serving to maintain a cavalry force on the income of the estate and a certain set number of horsemen to be provided according to the size of the estate—correspond with the evidence we have for *pomest'e*. We do not have enough evidence to say whether some aspects of *timar* that Inalcik describes also occurred under *pomest'e*, including: the granting of land to a servitor after a petition by his commanding officer to the ruler (Sultan); the giving of a first-time applicant for a land grant a certificate (*tezkere*), which he presented to the ruler; and the authority of beylerbeyis to grant subsequent diplomas.⁷¹ A *timar*-holder, like a *pomeshchik* could not be dispossessed without the order of the ruler. Also, like *pomest'e*, the Ottoman *timar* system was highly centralized. Inalcik contrasts this centralization with the tendency for Western medieval political-military relations to be decentralized.

In the following passage Inalcik describes certain other aspects of *timar* that we could argue correspond with *pomest'e*:

To be eligible for a *timar* a man had to be from the military class; it was absolutely forbidden to grant *timars* to the *reâyâ*. A son inherited military status if his father were of military class or the *kul* of a sultan or bey. The Ottomans also accepted as military class the members of the equivalent caste in newly conquered states, and in this way many Christian fief-holders became *timar*-holding *sipâhîs*. In time, they or their sons accepted Islam. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a large part of the *timar*-holding cavalry was, like the Janissary corps, composed of slaves. Only those Muslim Turks who had volunteered and performed outstanding services on campaign or on the frontier, or else the Turkish followers of frontier beys, could receive *timars*.⁷²

As with *timar*, a *pomest'e*-holder had to be from the military class. The son of a *pomeshchik* could inherit the *pomest'e* and *mutatis mutandis* non-Christians (usually Muslims) could hold military land grants in Muscovy just as Christians could hold them in the Ottoman Empire.⁷³ In time, the sons of the Muslim *pomeshchiki* became Christian just as the sons of Christian *sipahîs* became

⁷¹ Lambton pointed out that under the Buyids “a provincial governor could distribute the area under his jurisdiction as *iqṭā*’s, but he did this as an official of the state, and not because the area formed part of his private domain.” Ann K. S. Lambton, “Reflections on the *Iqṭā*’,” in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 367.

⁷² Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, p. 114.

⁷³ We have direct evidence that Crusader knights who remained in Palestine held *iqṭā*’s granted by the Mamluk sultan. Robert Irwin, “*Iqṭā*’ and the End of the Crusader States,” in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed. P. M. Holt (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1977), pp. 68–69.

Muslim in the Ottoman Empire. And a number of slaves became *pomeshchiki*⁷⁴ just as many *timar*-holders were.

Timar seems to be related to *iqṭā'*, but, as Cahen pointed out, "in the present state of our knowledge we do not know how the transition from the old *iqṭā'* to the new *tīmār* was made."⁷⁵ In comparing *timar* with *iqṭā'*, Douglas A. Howard argued that *timar* differs from *iqṭā'* in that the main purpose of the latter was revenue collection while the main purpose of the former "was more specifically designed to be primarily a salary substitution for state servants."⁷⁶ What Howard seems to be ignoring is that both *timar* and *iqṭā'* were primarily meant for cavalry maintenance and administration of recently acquired frontier areas, as was *pomest'e*.

These primary purposes of the military land grant become clear when we compare *pomest'e* with various forms of Muslim *iqṭā'*. First, let us look at *iqṭā'* under the Ilkhans. According to Morgan, the Turco-Mongols of the Ilkhanate gave up the nomadic life in the early fourteenth century for agricultural estates in the form of *iqṭā'*.⁷⁷ Previously, Mongol soldiers lived off booty. The introduction of the *iqṭā'* system in the Ilkhanate by Khan Ghazan coincided with his conversion to Islam and the sedentarization and assimilation of the Mongol horse archers.⁷⁸ Lambton, following Minorsky, made a distinction between two kinds of landholding in the Ilkhanate: "hereditary grants, known as *soyūrghāl*, carrying certain immunities, and *tuyūl*, the holders of which enjoyed the temporary right to collect government taxes for their own benefit."⁷⁹ She traced *soyūrghāl* back to administrative *iqṭā'* and *tuyūl* to personal *iqṭā'* under the Seljūqs. But between the fall of the Mongols and the rise of the Safavids, according to Lambton, a merging of all kinds of land assignment occurred such that they came more and more "to represent grants of 'immunity' to the holders from all interference by government officials." Along with this merging there was "a tendency to regard all land as subject to the exercise of full proprietary rights

⁷⁴ See, e.g., Hellie, *Enserfment*, p. 27. Lambton pointed out that in medieval Persia "the dominant military class, from the ninth century A.D. onwards, was composed, to a great extent, of slaves and freedmen." Lambton, "Reflections," pp. 358–359.

⁷⁵ Claude Cahen, "Iḳṭā'," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954–), vol. 3, p. 1089.

⁷⁶ Douglas A. Howard, "The Ottoman *Timar* System and Its Transformation, 1563–1656" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1987), p. 13.

⁷⁷ David O. Morgan, "The Mongol Armies in Persia," *Der Islam*, vol. 56, 1979, pp. 94–96. See also David Nicolle, *The Mongol Warlords: Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, Hülegü, Tamerlane* (Poole, Dorset: Firebird Books, 1990), p. 123.

⁷⁸ See Rashid al-Din, *TGK*, p. 310; Alizade, pp. 517–518.

⁷⁹ Ann K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study in Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969 [reprint from 1953 ed.]), pp. 101–102.

over it by the petty territorial princes, who were the *de facto* holders of the land. This conception began to supersede both the earlier Islamic theory, which regarded all land which had no owner as the property of all Muslims and permitted its alienation by the *imām* only in the interests of the community, and the theory of the steppe, which regarded the ruling *Khān* as holding the land as the representative of his people.”⁸⁰ If *pomest’e* developed from *kormlenie*, then this pattern of development coincides with the pattern of development of *iqṭā’* in the Ilkhanate—that is, from a temporary, personal grant to a permanent, familial (i.e., hereditary) grant. The Ilkhanate’s two forms of *iqṭā’*, i.e., *soyūrghāl* (or administrative) and *tuyūl* (or personal) seem to correspond to *kormlenie*, and *pomest’e* respectively. These are correlations that require further exploration.

If we look at *iqṭā’* under the Seljūks, we again see similarities with Muscovite practice. Fragner pointed out that “[t]he most widespread forms of beneficium—already under the Buyids and particularly from the Saljūk period onwards—consisted of the various types of *iqṭā’*.”⁸¹ For him, *iqṭā’* represented “the state’s yielding the right of tax collection to individual persons. In those cases where this procedure represented a substitute for salary, this right was attached to the performance of certain administrative or military duties within the framework of the state.” This meant in legal theory that the land was not transferable or inheritable, but practice, especially in regard to military *iqṭā’*, was quite different. Then Fragner describes something that sounds familiar to those who have studied the system of *mestnichestvo* in Muscovy: “The army of the Great Saljūq state was based on nomadic Turkish tribal formations, and every tribal unit was at the same time also a military unit. Just as the leader’s rank was hereditary within the hierarchy of the tribe, so also his state function (as a military leader) passed to his heir, and thus the *iqṭā’* in question became *de facto* the basis of subsistence for several generations of tribal leaders.” If we substitute “clan” for “tribe,” we have an important aspect of *mestnichestvo* in Muscovy, that is an individual is ranked in society according to his clan’s rank and the individual’s rank within the clan. Fragner goes on to describe how under Nizām al-Mulk the *iqṭā’-dār* or *muṭṭā’*, that is, the holder of an *iqṭā’* “should have no direct contact with the peasants of his *iqṭā’* and should confine himself exclusively to collecting the dues.”⁸² This is the way *kormlenie* is often presented although *kormlenie* had administrative and juridical components.

⁸⁰ Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, p. 102.

⁸¹ Bert Fragner, “Social and Internal Economic Affairs,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6: *The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, eds. Peter J. Jackson and Laurence Lockhart (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 500.

⁸² Fragner, “Social and Internal Economic Affairs,” p. 501.

Lambton pointed out that besides *iqṭā'* granted to members of the ruling family, there was also military, administrative, and personal estate *iqṭā'*. She described the administrative *iqṭā'* as “in effect a provincial government” and saw a resemblance between it and the “the earlier assignments made by the Arabs and known as *tu'ma*.” The distinction between administrative and military *iqṭā'* “tended to be obscured because the ‘administrative’ *iqṭā'* had by Seljūq times become militarized.”⁸³ In Muscovy, the progression may have been from administrative *iqṭā'* (*kormlenie*) to a combination of military and administrative *iqṭā'* (*pomest'e*), if we can speak in those terms. However, we should keep in mind that the *namestnik* could also perform military service.

David Morgan described four types of *iqṭā'* during the Seljūq period:

There was, first, the grant by the sulṭān of a private estate, a pension or an allowance to an individual; secondly, a grant made to a member of the Seljūq family for his or her proper maintenance; thirdly, a grant of land or the revenue of land to an *amīr* in lieu of salary or in return for specified military service (the ‘military’ *iqṭā'*); fourthly, a grant which was in effect equivalent to appointment as a provincial governor (the ‘administrative’ *iqṭā'*).⁸⁴

Not only do we have examples of all four of these same types of land grants in Muscovy—1. grants to members of ruling family for their maintenance 2. personal immunities 3. administrative (*kormlenie*) 4. military—but we also see the merger of administrative and military grants within *pomest'e*.

A comparison of *pomest'e* with *iqṭā'* under the Mamluks would also be useful, but I cannot go into details here. For a discussion of *iqṭā'* under the Mamluks, see the articles by Tsugitaka Satō,⁸⁵ Robert Irwin,⁸⁶ and David Ayalon.⁸⁷

A comparison of *pomest'e* with *iqṭā'* under the Ayyubids is particularly telling. After pointing out the significance of *iqṭā'* (“[n]o institution played a more critical role in the political structure of the Islamic world from the eleventh to the thirteenth century”), Humphreys defined five categories of *iqṭā'* but

⁸³ Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, p. 6. See also Lambton, “Reflections,” pp. 369–373, where she describes six types of *iqṭā'*.

⁸⁴ David Morgan, *Medieval Persia 1040–1797* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 38.

⁸⁵ Tsugitaka Satō “The Evolution of the *Iqṭā'* System under the Mamlūks—An Analysis of al-Rawk al-Ḥusāmī and al-Rawk al-Nāṣirī,” *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, vol. 37, 1979, pp. 99–131.

⁸⁶ Irwin, “*Iqṭā'* and the End of the Crusader States,” pp. 62–77.

⁸⁷ David Ayalon, “Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 15, 1953, pp. 203–228, 448–476, and vol. 16, 1954, pp. 57–90; and David Ayalon, “The System of Payment in Mamluk Military Society,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 1, 1958, pp. 37–65, 257–296.

discussed mainly the second category—those having “a predominantly military character and which usually conferred upon their holders powers of local government—because these constituted the basic element in Ayyubid provincial administration.”⁸⁸ Humphreys stressed that *iqṭāʿ*

did not establish a tie of personal fealty between man and man. There is no evidence of any kind to suggest that the sovereign and his *muqtaʿ* formally undertook a body of mutual obligations to each other, nor did the latter swear a specific oath of fidelity to the prince on the occasion of his receiving an *iqṭaʿ*. It is of course true that when a new prince ascended the throne, he had his amirs and officials swear allegiance to him, but that is a different institution altogether. An *iqṭaʿ* was conceded through a decree (*manshur*) issued by the prince, in the same manner as any other office of state would be conceded. The *muqtaʿ*, for all that he often appeared to be and behaved like a western feudatory, was in reality simply another official, a delegate of the prince with no legal status of his own. Among the Ayyubids of Syria, as among their Seljukid and Zangid predecessors, the *iqṭaʿ* was understood simply as an administrative mechanism aimed at ensuring an adequate financial basis for an effective military machine. In essence it was as impersonal as any other arrangement for provincial government and military administration might have been.⁸⁹

Humphreys' point here should confirm for us that *pomestʿe* arrangements were closer to *iqṭāʿ* than either were to medieval western European landholding arrangements.

As with *iqṭāʿ* under the Mamluks, I cannot go into *iqṭāʿ* under the Buyids. But for discussions of *iqṭāʿ* under the Buyids, see articles by Tsugitaka Satō⁹⁰ and C. E. Bosworth.⁹¹ The more important question for our purposes is: Do we have evidence of pre-Buyid forms of *iqṭāʿ*?⁹² Claims were made by those who instituted *iqṭāʿ* under the Buyids in the second half of the tenth century that the practice originated with Muhammed.⁹³ We might try to dismiss such claims out of hand as merely an attempt to justify an innovation with an appeal to tradition (in this case, the Prophet himself). However, Frede Lókkegaard found evidence

⁸⁸ R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193–1260* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), p. 371.

⁸⁹ Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, p. 375.

⁹⁰ Tsugitaka Satō, “The Iqṭāʿ System of Iraq Under the Buwayhids,” *Orient*, vol. 18, 1982, pp. 83–105.

⁹¹ C. E. Bosworth, “Military Organization Under the Buyids of Persia and Iraq,” *Oriens*, vol. 18/19, 1967, pp. 143–167.

⁹² According to Mottahedeh, the Buyids were the first to use *iqṭāʿ* in an extensive way. He suggests that this “system may have had its origins in the monetary crisis” of the tenth century. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 36–37.

⁹³ Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, p. 28.

to support the assertion that Muhammed may indeed have been the originator of *iqṭā'*.⁹⁴ But the sources Løkkegaard cites indicate that any land granted by Muhammed could be sold by the receiver as personal property. This is not our military land grant. Cahen asserted that *iqṭā'* derived from a type of land grant called *qaṭ'a*, which had been used to remunerate Arab troops involved in the conquests of the seventh century.⁹⁵ If so, then we might suggest, and the source evidence would seem to support such an idea, that the military land grant that we know as a form of *iqṭā'* was an innovation of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (Caliph from 634 to 644) who established the manner in which the newly vanquished territories would be governed, namely to divide them among his military.⁹⁶ 'Umar may have derived the idea of *iqṭā'* from the *qaṭ'a*. Bernard Lewis has asserted that *qaṭ'a* was based on Byzantine *emphyteus*.⁹⁷ But neither *qaṭ'a* nor *emphyteus* was intended as a measure to support a cavalry or to administer newly vanquished territories. 'Abd al-'Azīz Dūrī accepts the idea that 'Umar introduced *iqṭā'* as a means of dealing with newly acquired land while at the same time maintaining the Muslim military.⁹⁸ Løkkegaard also compared early Islamic *iqṭā'* with Western "feudalism" and asserted that both had a common origin in Roman taxfarming (*locatio*).⁹⁹ Yet, he does not discuss any "mechanism" by which *locatio* could have reemerged in the two areas almost simultaneously after a hiatus of several hundred years.

Significantly the military land grant shows up early in Muslim Spain. According to Joseph O'Callaghan: "Early in the eighth century the Syrian *junds* were authorized to settle in certain districts of al-Andulus where they had the usufruct of agricultural properties on condition that they perform military service when summoned. These rights and obligations passed by hereditary right

⁹⁴ Frede Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation in the Classic Period: With Special Reference to Circumstances in Iraq* (Copenhagen: Brunner and Korch, 1950), pp. 14–17.

⁹⁵ Claude Cahen, "L'évolution de l'*iqṭā'* du IXe au XIIIe siècle: Contribution à une histoire comparée des sociétés médiévales," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, vol. 8, 1953, p. 26; Cahen, "Iḳṭā'," p. 1088; and Claude Cahen, "Day'a," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. 2, p. 187. See also Lambton, "Reflections," pp. 360–361.

⁹⁶ J. J. Saunders, *A History of Medieval Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 45; Laura Veccia Vaglieri, "The Patriarchal and Umayyad Caliphates," in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, eds. P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, vol. 1A: *The Central Islamic Lands from pre-Islamic Times to the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 64–65.

⁹⁷ Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1966), p. 68.

⁹⁸ 'Abd al-'Azīz Dūrī, "Landlord and Peasant in Early Islam: A Critical Study," *Der Islam*, vol. 56, 1979, pp. 99–100.

⁹⁹ Løkkegaard, *Islamic Taxation*, pp. 66–67.

to their descendants.”¹⁰⁰ Bernard Lewis described these military land grants given to the Syrian soldiers this way:

In 741 the Berbers were strong enough to stage a general revolt in Spain against the Arabs. The Caliph sent an Arab and largely Syrian army which arrived in 742 after a long and adventurous journey, under the command of Balj ibn Bishr. It soon defeated the Berbers and in reward received the Mediterranean coastlands of Spain in fief. These new colonists from Syria were settled on the same plan as in Syria itself, and a Spanish district was allocated to the men of each of the Syrian *Junds* (military districts)—Damascus in Elvira, the Jordan at Malaga, Palestine in Sidonia, Hims in Seville, Qinnasrin in Jaen. The army of Egypt held Beja and Murcia. These Arab fief-holders were liable for military service on the summons of the government in Cordova, the Arab capital. Otherwise they were supposed to live on their lands. But the Arabs had not yet taken to agriculture, and the fief-holders for the most part preferred to settle in the chief towns of the districts in which their lands were situated and to live on the revenues they drew from Spanish serfs or sharecroppers who cultivated their estates. They formed a new town population, an Arab warrior caste living on their revenues and known as *Shāmīs*, or Syrians, to distinguish them from the older settlers who had come with the first invasion.¹⁰¹

Yet Collins pointed to an even earlier example that relates to our question. In 713, ‘Abd al-Azīz ibn Mūsā made a treaty “with a certain Theodemis, lord of seven towns and their associated lands in the south-east of the peninsula.” Collins writes: “The same process, which allowed for the maximizing of the military potential of the Arab armies and the greatest rapidity of expansion, was also applied in Spain,” and that process is evident in the text of the treaty. Among the stipulations was the payment of a tribute. Collins states that this was a yearly per capita tribute: “This consisted of one dinar (the Arab silver coin, though probably here indicating a weight of precious metal), four measures of wheat, four of barley, four jugsful of grapejuice, four of vinegar, ten of honey and two of oil per head.”¹⁰² Collins disagreed with Joaquin Vallvé who stated that the stipulated amounts were to be paid to each member of the Arab army.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Joseph O’Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 147–148.

¹⁰¹ Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, pp. 121–122. Whether this army that helped put down the Berber revolt was in fact made up of Syrians has been challenged by Collins who suggests that the names were merely labels. Roger Collins, *The Arab Conquest of Spain 710–797* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 101–102. See also Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 42–48.

¹⁰² Collins, *The Arab Conquest*, p. 40.

¹⁰³ Joaquin Vallvé, *La Division territorial de la España musulmana* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto de Filología, Departamento de Estudios Arabes, 1986), pp. 189–191.

If, however, Vallvé is correct that the allotment is per soldier, then we find parallel cases in Muscovy. The *White Lake Charter* of 1488 stipulates the amount of subsistence payments for *namestniki*. Each tax unit was to provide: a half carcass of meat or two *altyns*; ten loaves of bread or ten *dengi*; a cartload of hay or two *altyns*. And on St. Peter's Day (June 29 O.S.), *namestniki* were to receive a ram or eight *dengi*; ten loaves of bread or ten *dengi*.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, an administrative charter of June 4, 1536, stipulates similar allotments for the *namestnik* on the three feast days of Christmas, Easter, and St. Peter's Day.¹⁰⁵ So the comparison of Muscovite practice with pre-Buyid *iqṭā'* seems to hold up. This suggests that *iqṭā'*, as practiced by the Muslims from the eighth through at least the fifteenth century had certain consistent characteristics, and these same characteristics show up in Muscovite military land grant practices.

How then does *iqṭā'* compare with western European landholding? Morgan has pointed out that there are superficial similarities between the two institutions. For example, both "provided a means whereby the ruler could raise a military force of substantial size without the unacceptable expense of maintaining a large standing army." But he finds the differences between the two to be "more striking." Morgan differed from Humphreys and other scholars in that he saw *iqṭā'* as "simply a bureaucratic device" and that it was not "basic to the whole structure of society." This seems to be true only in certain isolated cases, whereas the importance of *iqṭā'* to the social structure of the majority of Muslim societies, as *pomest'e* was in Muscovy, has been well established. But Morgan reminds us that medieval western European internal political relations "arose... at a time when central government was weak and it seems to have developed out of the need for protection..." In contrast, *iqṭā'* "was utilized, initially, by a strong government, not created because of the absence of such a government." Finally, Morgan wrote that "[t]here was no element of protection or dependence involved... There was no relationship of mutual obligation between sultan and *muṣṭā'*, and no real oath of fealty on the European pattern. An *iqṭā'* was simply a grant, made or withdrawn entirely at the will of the sultan."¹⁰⁶ It would appear that *iqṭā'* differed from the traditional model of "feudalism" in the same way that service land tenure in Muscovy did. It was, to a large extent, not only a military but also an administrative grant and could be taken away at the will of the

¹⁰⁴ Horace W. Dewey, "The White Lake Charter: A Medieval Russian Administrative Statute," *Speculum*, vol. 32, 1957, p. 80.

¹⁰⁵ *A Source Book*, vol. 1, p. 132.

¹⁰⁶ Morgan, *Medieval Persia 1040–1797*, pp. 39–40. See also the remarks of Lambton, "Reflections," *passim*; and Cahen, "Iḳṭā'," pp. 1090–1091.

ruler.¹⁰⁷ It does not seem appropriate to call the grant “conditional” if the grand prince could take away the land for any reason at any time, unless we mean “conditional” on the will of the ruler, not on whether the recipient does or does not do something. When we see land taken away from a *pomeshchik*, we may have been assuming that it was for lack of service.

Both Brunner and White credited Charles Martel with introducing the concept of service land tenure for maintaining cavalrymen into western Europe. This introduction would have occurred over two centuries before we have official documentation that *iqṭāʿ* appeared among the Buyids but 90 to 100 years after ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab was Caliph. White, after investigating various assertions that the stirrup was introduced into Europe earlier, argued that “[w]e must . . . return to the view of the older Germanic archaeologists that stirrups first appeared in the West some time in the early eighth century.”¹⁰⁸ White, furthermore, asserted that “it was the Franks alone—presumably led by Charles Martel’s genius—who fully grasped the possibilities inherent in the stirrup . . .”¹⁰⁹ That is, Charles Martel realized the need for the cavalrymen to maintain their stirrups, etc., through having land to exploit. Thus, he secularized church lands to grant conditionally to his cavalrymen.

However, we know that the Arabs had the stirrup before the Franks. According to al-Mubarrad, a ninth-century author, the first iron stirrups were ordered to be made by al-Muhallab in 694.¹¹⁰ White asserts that al-Muhallab borrowed the concept of the stirrup from the Azraqites of central Persia, against whom he was campaigning: “the Arabs entered Iran without the stirrup for their horses. We may conclude that the Muslims first appropriated it in A.D. 694 in Persia, whither it must recently have come from Turkestan, since it had been unknown in the Sassanian realm.”¹¹¹ But the sources do not support White’s contention that the Arabs did not have the stirrup before 694. For example, the Shroud of St. Carilefus, a seventh-century Syrian fabric, shows a Muslim horse archer utilizing a short stirrup.¹¹² And S. M. Yūsuf, whom White cites, merely stated that al-Muhallab’s innovation was to make the stirrups out of iron instead of wood as they previously had been made. The advantage, Yūsuf surmised, was that wooden stirrups could be cut by the opponent in battle, while iron stirrups

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., Irwin, “*Iqṭāʿ* and the End of the Crusader States,” p. 67.

¹⁰⁸ White, *Medieval Technology*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁹ White, *Medieval Technology*, p. 28.

¹¹⁰ Al-Mubarrad, *The Kāmil*, ed. W. Wright (Leipzig: G. Kreysing, 1864), p. 675.

¹¹¹ White, *Medieval Technology*, p. 19.

¹¹² Robert LaTouche, *Caesar to Charlemagne: The Beginnings of France*, trans. Jennifer Nicholson (London: Phoenix, 1968), p. 314, illus. 170.

could not.¹¹³ Yet it was not the wooden stirrup itself that was vulnerable to being cut in battle, but the leather or cloth strap holding it. However, the difficulty of cutting the strap would seem to far outweigh any advantage this might give the opponent. Instead, the advantage of iron stirrups (or perhaps even a wooden stirrup with an iron band around it) is that they would not give way so easily when the rider stood in them. The Arabs, like the Central Asian nomads, used the short stirrup, which allowed them to stand in the stirrups with their *derriere* free of the saddle's jostlings. Thus, the legs acted as shock absorbers so the horseman's upper body could remain stable while aiming and shooting a bow. Modern-day Mongolian horsemen display mastery of this skill while shooting a rifle at full gallop.¹¹⁴ The long stirrup of western European knights in armor, which allow the rider to stretch his legs to their fullest extent, and thus brace himself in the saddle, does not make for accurate marksmanship even if the horse were moving at slow speed.¹¹⁵

It is possible the stirrup then traversed to Frankish territory via North Africa with the Arabs during the later seventh and early eighth centuries. That route would explain why White could find no appearance of the stirrup in Europe before the early eighth century and then only in Frankish territory. That is, the technological innovation of the stirrup did indeed move from east to west, but across North Africa to western Europe, not across Europe itself. Thus, the Franks could have acquired the idea of the stirrup in the eighth century from the very Muslims from whom they are often credited with saving Western civilization. Yet, the kind of stirrup the Muslims used was not adequate for the heavy shock troops that developed later in Europe. It seems likely that it took many decades, perhaps longer, for the Muslim short stirrup to be turned into the European long stirrup. Brunner had accepted that Martel's forces fought on foot at the Battle of Poitiers but suggested that Martel was frustrated at not being able to follow up the victory and quickly pursue the retreating Muslim army. This frustration led him to decide in favor of cavalry. White accepted that the Franks were on foot in 732/3, but used an account of the battle of the Dyle in 891,

¹¹³ S. M. Yūsuf, "Al-Muhallab-bin-Abī-Sufra: His Strategy and Qualities of Generalship," *Islamic Culture*, vol. 17, 1943, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ See "The Mongol Onslaught 850–1500," *World TV History*, BBC Production, 1985. Tim Severin points out that the Mongol horsemen he encountered usually stand in the stirrups while riding, even as much as 50 miles a day. Tim Severin, *In Search of Genghis Khan* (London: Hutchinson, 1991), p. 50.

¹¹⁵ The feature film *Dances with Wolves* has footage that allows a comparison of bareback riders trying to aim and shoot bows and arrows with a rider on a long-stirruped saddle trying to shoot a rifle. The bareback riders lean over low and close to the target to get accuracy. The cavalry-saddle rider is able to keep his upper body erect, but must gauge the pulling of the trigger to correspond with the downward motion of his body while he is bouncing in the saddle.

which he translated as “the Franks are unused to fighting on foot,” to argue that the military revolution occurred in the interim.¹¹⁶ Bernard A. Bachrach contested White’s translation of “*Francis pedetemptim certare inusitatum est...*” and argued that *pedetemptim* means “to move forward slowly, step by step,” either on foot or on horseback. Thus, it cannot be used as evidence that the Franks no longer fought on foot.¹¹⁷ Bachrach concluded that, even if we were to accept White’s translation here and the other evidence about the use of cavalry that Brunner and White cited, it would not show that Charles Martel had “created a revolution in military tactics,” but “only that Carolingian armies, in the time of Charlemagne and later, occasionally fought and traveled on horseback.”¹¹⁸

Historians have been loath to accept the possibility that the Europeans acquired the stirrup from the Muslims. According to Norman Daniel:

the increasing use of cavalry, deriving from the power of impact which the new device [the stirrup] conferred, and which turned mounted infantry into cavalry, was at least roughly coeval among the Arabs and among the Franks. Probably it originated in eastern Asia, but there is in any case no evidence that it was transmitted to the West through the Mediterranean.¹¹⁹

By the same token, there is no evidence it was transmitted to the West through Europe. But there may be indirect evidence that the stirrup was introduced into Europe from North Africa. One of the earliest pictorial representations of the stirrup found in Europe is from Egypt.¹²⁰

Finally, the main issue is the military land grant that White saw creating a military revolution among the Franks and resulting from the genius of Charles Martel, who, according to White, was the first to understand the military implications of the stirrup. Yet, not only did the Muslims who conquered Spain have the stirrup, they also had military land grants. The archaeological evidence that White used to contend that Martel instigated a full-scale military revolution has been challenged, most notably by Bachrach. Of the 704 graves of fighting men in eastern Francia dated to the period from the late seventh to the early ninth

¹¹⁶ White, *Medieval Technology*, pp. 3–5.

¹¹⁷ Bernard A. Bachrach, “Charles Martel, Mounted Shock Combat, the Stirrup and Feudalism,” *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, vol. 7, 1970, pp. 51–53. See also *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. and trans. Reinhold Rau, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, vol. 7 (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1960), p. 152 (*anno* 891).

¹¹⁸ Bachrach, “Charles Martel, Mounted Shock Combat, the Stirrup and Feudalism,” p. 53 and n. 11. In other words, the revolution that White saw occurring in the early eighth century was more an evolution that may have taken several centuries to complete.

¹¹⁹ Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Mediaeval Europe* (London: Longman, 1975), p. 8.

¹²⁰ The scarcity of pictorial representations of Muslim warriors from this period should not be surprising given Islam’s prohibition against artistic depiction of the human form.

century, only 17% to 18% can be identified as horsemen. Of these, less than 1% have stirrups.¹²¹ Finally, one should remember that the best horses in Europe could be found in Spain as a result of crossbreeding between the indigenous Iberian horses and the Arabians brought in by the Muslims.¹²² They were both fast and strong. In addition, the Spanish continued to use the short stirrup, not the long stirrup, at least until the sixteenth century.¹²³ If Charles Martel was the first who “fully grasped the possibilities inherent in the stirrup,” then one wonders why the short stirrup, which was no good for the heavy-armor warfare that developed further north, continued to be used in Spain.¹²⁴

* * *

It may be useful to look at Muscovite *pomest'e* as a form of *iqṭā'*. In Muscovy, the main force of the army was made up not of the heavy shock cavalry of the late medieval West but of light cavalry, that is horse archers who used the short stirrup. For example, Richard Chancellor reported:

They fight not on foot but altogether on horseback. Their armor is a coat of mail and a helmet; the coat of mail without is gilded or else adorned with silk, although it pertain to a common soldier; they have a great pride in showing their wealth. They use bows and arrows as the Turks do; they carry lances also into the field. They ride with a short stirrup after the manner of the Turks. . . .¹²⁵

Since the Muscovite cavalryman did not need the heavy armor of the Western

¹²¹ Bachrach, “Charles Martel, Mounted Shock Combat, the Stirrup and Feudalism,” pp. 63–65.

¹²² John J. Johnson, “The Introduction of the Horse into the Western Hemisphere,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 23, 1942, p. 589.

¹²³ According to Garcilaso de la Vega, the Spanish used the short stirrup (*á la gineta*), when they conquered the Incas. Quoted in R. B. Cunninghame Graham, *The Horses of the Conquest* (London: William Heinemann, 1930), p. 9. Graham’s book is an especially useful historical reference for different kinds of saddles, bridles, bits, and stirrups. One point he makes is the fact that the American cowboy used the saddle borrowed from the Spanish: “Those who have seen a Mexican, a Western cowboy, or a Gaucho turn his horse, chasing wild cattle, have seen the way in which the conquistadores rode, for Mexicans and cowboys all ride with the high hand and palate bit, on almost the same saddle used by the conquerors” (p. 12). The American cavalry, on the other hand, used the saddle with long stirrups borrowed from northern European warfare.

¹²⁴ In the spirit of complete disclosure of evidence, I should point out an illumination, a photo of which appears in the *Chronicle of the World*, ed. Jerome Burne (London: Ecam, 1989), p. 295. This photo shows Europeans fighting as archers with short stirrups while the Muslims fight as lancers at the Battle of Poitiers. I can only think this illumination is a mistake or a joke. All other evidence that I know of is in opposition to such a representation of the battle.

¹²⁵ Chancellor, “The First Voyage to Russia,” p. 28. On the ease with which a Muscovite horse archer could be knocked from the saddle, see Herberstein, *Commentaries*, p. 56. See also Hellie, *Enserfment*, pp. 30 and 287 nn. 63–64.

type, his equipment was not so expensive. In addition, he was paid wages by the government upon fulfillment of his obligations.¹²⁶ It would appear that the *pomeshchik* did not need to support himself entirely off his estates. Why then was the military land grant introduced into Muscovy? Muscovy in the fourteenth and pre-Ivan III fifteenth century was not a landowning power; it was a tax collector of goods that traversed the trade routes. Under Ivan III, Muscovy acquired more land. The problem in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Muscovy was not too little land or inhabited land, as has often been asserted, but too much. That is, the grand prince was acquiring relatively large amounts of new territory without any way of administering it under the old *kormlenie* system. *Pomest'e*, which gave the holder a permanent and vested interest in the land under his control, may have been the answer. In other words, the problem for the grand prince may not have been to acquire more land to satisfy the "land-hungry" *dvorianstvo* but to find a better way of administering land already held, as well as new land being acquired in increasing amounts.

It is my contention that the institution of military land grants in the medieval West, Byzantium, Seljūq and Ilkhanate Persia, the Ottoman Empire, and Muscovy as well as among the Ayyubids, the Mamluks, the Buyids, and the pre-Buyid Arabs is not an indigenous development in each case, completely independent from each other, but, instead, completely interrelated. If my contention is correct, then it means that service land tenure is not typical of certain kinds of societies at certain stages of development. Rather it is typical of these particular societies because of more or less direct borrowing of one from the other.

The horse archer with a short stirrup was the standard south and east of a line running from Spain in the West, eastward across the Mediterranean, then north along the eastern boundary of the Byzantine Empire, across the Black Sea, and through eastern Europe to the Baltic Sea. The mounted knight with long stirrup was the standard north and west of that line. The battle of Poitiers in 732/3 was fought between Muslim horse archers (unorganized) and European foot soldiers who used their horses only as transportation to the battle site. From the ninth through eleventh centuries, the Turks relied heavily on horse archers to defeat Byzantine armies in Anatolia.¹²⁷ The eleventh-century Crusades saw no

¹²⁶ *PSRL*, vol. 13, pp. 268–269. Likewise, holders of *iqṭā'* were paid wages, or at least were supposed to be, on a regular basis. See Bosworth, "Military Organisation Under the Būyids," pp. 164–165; Satō, "The Iqṭā' System of Iraq," p. 87; Ayalon, "The System of Payment," pp. 49–50.

¹²⁷ Walter Emil Kaegi, Jr., "The Contribution of Archery to the Turkish Conquest of Anatolia," *Speculum*, vol. 39, 1964, pp. 96–108. Kaegi pointed to evidence that Byzantine armies under Justinian in the sixth century had horse archers, but afterwards the Byzantines seem to have neglected that component of their military force.

fundamental improvement on the Muslim side, but the Europeans had now developed a heavy cavalry made up of armored knights. In the thirteenth century, Alexander Nevskii's horse archers met Teutonic mounted knights. When the Mongols came, the battle for Rus' was between horse archers on both sides, but the Mongols held a decided superiority in organization. The battle of Leignitz was between organized horse archers and unorganized mounted knights. Eventually the gunpowder revolution and organized strategy using both cavalry and infantry gave the Europeans the advantage. But the point is that the military land grant to support the cavalry social class and to administer newly acquired regions was the key component of societies on both sides of the Muslim-Christian frontier.

How the Muscovites acquired *iqṭā'* is open to speculation. In the late fifteenth century, the Muscovite principality began developing a bureaucracy and administrative measures to deal with an expanding domain. Edward L. Keenan has suggested that this newly forming bureaucracy was made up partly of Tatar Muslims who had fled the crumbling Kipchak Khanate (Golden Horde). If so, then these administrative consultants could have brought the idea of Muslim *iqṭā'* with them and helped to establish what became the basis of the Russian governmental system. Or the Kipchak Khanate could have acted as a transmitter of concepts of land tenure in the Ilkhanate of the fourteenth century to fourteenth-century Muscovy. It is also possible that the concept of administrative *iqṭā'* in its later Seljūk incarnation could have entered Muscovy as *kormlenie* via the Kipchak Khanate in the fourteenth century. Uli Schamiloglu has argued that the Kipchak Khanate was a society that developed a sedentary elite and a relatively large peasant population engaged in growing grain, in addition to a substantial nomad sector.¹²⁸ If Schamiloglu is right, then the Kipchak Khanate followed the same nomad-to-sedentary line of development that the Ilkhanate followed.¹²⁹ Since *iqṭā'* can be found practiced in Muslim societies from the seventh to the twentieth centuries, and since the Khanate's military was made up of horse archers, we can speculate that it also had *iqṭā'*.¹³⁰ In the late thirteenth century, for example, we have evidence that Nogai issued an *iqṭā'* granting the

¹²⁸ See Uli Schamiloglu, "Reinterpreting the Nomad-Sedentary Relationship in the Golden Horde (13th–14th Centuries)," paper presented at the Conference on the Role of the Frontier in Rus'/Russian History, the Eighth through the Eighteenth Centuries (Chicago, May 29–31, 1992); and idem, *The Golden Horde: Economy, Society and Civilization in Western Eurasia, 13th–14th Centuries*, Chap. 8 (forthcoming).

¹²⁹ See Morgan, "The Mongol Armies in Persia," pp. 81–96.

¹³⁰ For an assertion that the Kipchak Khanate did not have *iqṭā'*, see A. M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. Julia Crookenden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 242.

Crimea to his grandson.¹³¹ Likewise, the transformation of the nomadic Mongol elite to sedentarianism in the Ilkhanate was marked by the establishment of *iqṭā'* by Ghazan in the early fourteenth century.

We historians may have been looking at the question of the medieval military-industrial complex from the wrong end. We have taken western European "feudalism," whatever we understand by that term, as the standard against which the service land tenure in all other societies is to be compared. Instead, the Muslim system of military land grants to support light cavalry (horse archers), characterized by the short stirrup, has a better claim to being the standard from the seventh through the seventeenth centuries. The Muslims borrowed cavalry tactics and the stirrup from Central Asian nomads and added the military land grant to support their version of the horse archer and to administer newly conquered territories.

The western European form of military land grant to support heavy cavalry, characterized by the long stirrup, was an anomaly within this system. The western Europeans acquired the stirrup after the Muslims, and perhaps from them. The military revolution in tactics in western Europe, although we cannot date it precisely, occurred after contact with the Muslims in the West. Western Europeans did not master the horse archer techniques of the Muslims. Instead, they devised another form of military tactic that eventually clashed directly with the Muslims in the Middle East during the Crusades.

Muscovite warriors did master the horse archer techniques, probably as a result of direct contact with the nomads of the steppe. And Muscovy's system of military land grants, *pomest'e*, coincides with that of the Muslim system of *iqṭā'*. *Pomest'e* and *iqṭā'* were institutions that served the same two functions: maintenance of a standing cavalry and administration of newly acquired territories. And the structural similarities between them are too close for us to continue to ignore.

Harvard University

¹³¹ Uli Schamiloglu, "Tribal Politics and Social Organization in the Golden Horde" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1986), pp. 139–140.