

Naofumi Abe. *A case of 'property retention' tactics in nineteenth century Iran: based on the analysis of Fath 'Ali Khān Donboli's inventories*

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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/40644>

DOI: 10.4000/abstractairanica.40644

ISSN: 1961-960X

Publisher:

CNRS (UMR 7528 Mondes iraniens et indiens), Éditions de l'IFRI

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 December 2013

ISSN: 0240-8910

Electronic reference

Akihiko Yamaguchi, "Naofumi Abe. *A case of 'property retention' tactics in nineteenth century Iran: based on the analysis of Fath 'Ali Khān Donboli's inventories*", *Abstracta Iranica* [Online], Volume 32-33 | 2013, document 231, Online since 01 July 2016, connection on 31 August 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/40644> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/abstractairanica.40644>

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- 1 In an earlier work (published in 2009; cf. c.r. n°232), Abe showed how an elite family's estate was reorganized from generation to generation in the context of Islamic inheritance law and depending on political and social changes. This well-researched article investigates the tactics adopted by an elite family to transfer its estate to an heir who was to become head of the clan. Drawing on two inheritance inventories related to Ḥājji Faḥ'alī Ḥān Donbolī (d. 1875), a great-great-grandson of Najafqolī Ḥān, Abe shows how the family endeavored to transmit its property to the eldest son over three generations. To avoid subdivision of family holdings, as required under the Islamic equal-inheritance rule, the family adopted various tactics, including lifetime gifts to the heir. Interestingly, a female family member could also play a crucial role in this process. The author concludes that these tactics enabled the family to maintain a *de facto* patrimony for generations.

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