

WHERE DID THE DIHQĀNS GO?

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The *dihqāns*, properly *dahāqīn*, were an important group in early Islamic Iran and Central Asia. The term is mostly rendered as “gentry” in English. *Dahāqīn* in Iran were not among the higher aristocracy, they were part of the lower nobility in the Sasanian world. In Central Asia, the situation was different, and the term came to be used for regional lords as well as for local landowners. In the first centuries of Islam, we think of *dahāqīn* as petty nobles who controlled perhaps a smaller group of villages,¹ perhaps had a residence with a certain amount of fortification, and served higher lords or kings. The history of the *dihqān* stratum has yet to be written.²

The entry *dehqān* in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* gives a good account of the sources for the first centuries of Islam.³ The author, Ahmad Tafazzoli, stresses their role in negotiating the surrender of towns and cities to the conquering Arabs, in particular in more westerly regions of Iran including Iraq; he also articulates their importance in fiscal matters in the first centuries of Muslim rule, and here he insists on Eastern Iran. He notes that *dahāqīn* were able to continue a life of ease and prosperity, even luxury, evidently because they had kept their large landholdings. The entry also remarks upon the fuzzy use of the term, which sometimes occurs interchangeably with *marzbān*, a title which is considerably higher than *dihqān*. Thus, political leadership sometimes was within a *dihqān*’s reach not only on the local, but also on the regional level. In this sense, Tafazzoli

¹ The Persian *dih* or *dīh* at least sometimes seems to denote a territory including more than one settlement.

² de la Vaissière, Etienne, *Samarcande et Samarra. Élités d’Asie centrale dans l’empire abbaside* (Paris: Association pour l’avancement des études iraniennes, 2007): p. 124: «Une étude globale du destin économique et social des héritiers des nobles et des *dihqān* sassanides du VII^e au IX^e siècle reste à mener» – this is true. However, this paper certainly cannot be this all-embracing study, and the focus here is on later periods and on the eastern Iranian world, Khurāsān and Transoxiana. – David Durand-Guédy and Deborah Tor were kind enough to read an earlier version of this paper. Thanks to both for valuable comments. Deborah Tor moreover edited the text for the English, special thanks to her. Needless to say, all mistakes and inaccuracies are my own.

³ Tafazzoli, Ahmad, “Dehqān i: In the Sassanian period”, *Elr* VII (1996): pp. 223a-225b.

concludes, we can understand the term *dihqānas* used in Persian poetry in a way that meant “ruler, amir, lord” until the 12th century, “especially in eastern Persia”.⁴ From a different perspective, Spuler sees their main contribution to Iranian history in the transmission of Iranian culture, including the Iranian epics which were later to become the *Šāhnāma*. He dates the slow demise of the *dihqān* stratum to the Seljuq/Qarakhanid period, that is, into the 11th and 12th centuries CE.⁵ The importance of the *dahāqīn* for the cultural history of early Muslim Iran is evident; they are frequently mentioned in poetry and were praised by poets.⁶

Claude Cahen also gives a good aperçu of what and who the *dahāqīn* were: «[...] prominent persons who lived in the country, close to their estates, the development of which they might or might not undertake themselves. These were the *dihqāns*, literally village chiefs, a name which in fact covered a whole gamut of people, from simple cultivators of the soil, who were scarcely better off than their neighbours and subordinates, to true lords of the manor and founders of dynasties».⁷

In her entry on *dihkān* in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Ann K.S. Lambton outlines the general history of the social group as well as of the term. She theorises that «with the spread of the *ikṭāʿ* system in the 5th/11th century and the depression of the landowning classes the position and influence of the *dihkāns* diminished. With this the term *dihkān* became debased [...] On the other hand under the Saljūqs the *dihkāns* appear to have continued to exist in the eastern part of the empire as village heads or landowners».⁸ Her observations are correct as far as the history of the term is concerned and also the prominence of *dahāqīn* as landowners in Ḥurāsān until the 12th century; the explanation, however, remains subject to debate.

It is important to underline the multiple meanings of the term (on Cahen’s lines), and also the multiple functions *dahāqīn* could hold, in politics, in the economy, and in the military.

⁴ Ibid.: p. 224a.

⁵ Spuler, Bertold, *Iran in frühislamischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1952).

⁶ Dihḥudā, ‘Alī A., s.v. “dihqān”, in *Luḡatnāma*, XIV (Tehran: Dānišgāh-i Tihrān, 1351/1973): pp. 461a-463b. Dihḥudā states that the first meaning of the term is “Iranian” in contrast to “Arab”, “Greek” or “Turk”; the next meanings are “local or regional lord and ruler”, “landowner”, “person knowledgeable in Iranian epics and history” and finally “farmer, tiller of the soil”. This last meaning starts to be evident early on and might be present even in Firdawsī. The importance of the *dihqān* stratum in the conservation of the pre-Islamic Iranian cultural heritage will not concern us further here.

⁷ Cahen, Claude, “Tribes, Cities and Social Organisation”, *Cambridge History of Iran*, IV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1975): pp. 305-28, p. 311.

⁸ Lambton, Ann K.S., “Dihkān”, *EP*: II, pp. 253b-254a, p. 254a.

In the first part of this paper, the *dahāqīn* and their status in society will be analyzed as follows: in a first section, the materials directly related to their status between higher lords and lower subjects will be presented. Then, the different functions pertaining to *dihqān* status will be discussed, in particular the military function. There is not much to say about their role in the collection of taxes, but nevertheless, a kind of economic function could be marked off: *dahāqīn* as (more or less large) landholders. The next section will be devoted to the slow fading out of the *dahāqīn* from the historical record: who is mentioned as a *dihqān* at all after ca. 1100? And can we retrace the transition to the meaning the term has in modern Persian as well as in Tajik (and Uzbek), namely “peasant”? In the second part, some examples for “*dahāqīn* after the *dahāqīn*” will be given, “gentry” present in the sources after the term *dihqān* fell out of use for this group. The thesis is that whereas the term *dihqān* sank, this does not mean that there was no “rural gentry” in eastern Iran and Transoxiana after the mid 12th century.

Dahāqīn between rulers and subjects

The importance of *dahāqīn* in the surrender of towns and cities to the conquering Arabs in the mid-7th century (and later) has been mentioned above. Only a few cases could be added to Tafaẓzoli’s record. For example, in the *History of Sīstān* men from this class conclude a treaty with the military leader of the Arabs,⁹ and later, they were considering a revolt because they thought that the Arabs were violating the terms of that treaty. In Balḥ likewise, we see a *dihqān* negotiating the surrender of the city,¹⁰ and in Bayhaq, a *dihqān* is mentioned as controlling the region, even though he is not shown in contact with the conquering Arabs.¹¹ In all these cases, it is the *dihqān* who holds political responsibility in a city or a larger region (possibly because the higher echelons in the Sassanian hierarchy were no longer available and the hierarchy itself was no longer instrumental). In a story about the Abbasid revolution and its chief architect, Abū Muslim, the man who holds political responsibility in Nīšāpūr is still called the *dihqān-i Nīšāpūr*, and he is given an Iranian name: Fādūspān.¹²

⁹ *Tārīḥ-i Sīstān*, ed. Malik al-Šu‘arā Bahār (Tehran: Ḥāwar, 1314/1935): p. 81; translation: Gold, M., *The Tārīḥ-i Sīstān* (Roma: IsMEO, 1976): p. 64.

¹⁰ ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar al-Balḥī, Persian translation ‘Abdallāh Ḥusaynī Balḥī, *Faḍā’il-i Balḥ*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (Tehran: Intiṣārāt-i bunyād-i farhang-i Īrān: 1350/1971): p. 32.

¹¹ Abū l-Ḥasan Zayd-i Bayhaqī Ibn Funduq, *Tārīḥ-i Bayhaq*, ed. Aḥmad Bahmanyār (Tehran: Čāpḥāna-yi kānūn, 1317/1939): p. 26.

¹² ‘Abdal-Raḥmān Fāmī Harawī (ascribed), *Tārīḥ-i Harāt*, ed. Muḥammad Hasan Mīrḥusaynī and Muḥammad Riḍā Abu’ī Mihrīzī (Tehran: Mīrāt-i maktūb, 1387/2009):

Beyond the Amu Darya, where the Sassanians did not reign, we see *dahāqīn* in a position between the local kings and the subjects in general. This is evident from Naršaḥī's *History of Bukhara*, where they are serving the Ḥātūn, the queen of Bukhara, in large numbers.¹³ The term is also used in parallel with *mihtar* ("elder", "chief"), in the story showing how complaints were processed. The overlord was the Turk *ḥāqān*, and the Bukharans were complaining about an unjust ruler. The *mihtarān* together with the *dahāqīn* formed a delegation to bring the case before the overlord.¹⁴ Thus, the *dihqān* stratum is seen acting between the "ordinary" subjects and the really powerful people, kings and their immediate retainers.

There is a memory of this situation in a rather late source, Juwaynī's account of Marw which serves as a backdrop for the destruction of the city in the Mongol invasion. The description is referred explicitly to the times of Sanjar (r. in Ḥurasan 1097-1157). The city and its oasis, Juwaynī says, were incredibly prosperous, and «the *dahāqīn* were pretending to equal status with the rulers and emirs of the time because they were so wealthy».¹⁵

In short, Cahen was quite justified in stressing that the term «covered a whole gamut of people».¹⁶ The upper end were regional rulers on the periphery of the Muslim world, beyond the boundaries of the Sassanian empire, vassals of the Sāmānids mostly, for whom the sources use a number of titles, among them *dihqān*, as a general rule without being consistent, so that more than one title is used for the same person. This situation is reflected in the books of the Arab geographers, and *dihqān* in these texts overlaps with *mihtar* and with *malik* (the term most frequently used for local or regional ruler)¹⁷ as well as with the older individual titles stemming from the pre-Islamic period, most of them Sogdian such as *aḡšīn*, *iḡšīd*, *šād*.

p. 33. For Fāḏūspān and his possible identification with Sunbād, see Crone, Patricia, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran. Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2012): p. 32-4. Technically, this Fāḏūspān did not come from a *dihqān* family, but was linked to the higher aristocracy; the use of the title here is an example for the fuzziness of the term in Muslim sources.

¹³ Muḥammad Naršaḥī, *Tārīḥ-i Buḥārā*, ed. Riḏawī (Tehran: Kitābfurūšī-yi Sanā'ī, 1939): p. 9; Frye, Richard N., *The History of Bukhara* (Cambridge [Mass.]: Medieval Academy of America, 1954): p. 9.

¹⁴ Bosworth, Clifford Edmund, *The Ghaznavids* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963): p. 207.

¹⁵ 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik al-Juwaynī, *Tārīḥ-i Jahāngūšā*, 2 vols, ed. Muḥammad Qazwīnī (Leiden & London: Brill, 1912, 1916 [Gibb Memorial Series, 16, 1,2]): I, p. 119: «dahāqīn az kaṭrat-i ni'mat bā mulūk wa umarā'-i waqt dam-i muwāzāt mīzadand».

¹⁶ See above note 7.

¹⁷ I have published a detailed study of this question in Paul, J., "Nachrichten arabischer Geographien aus Mittelasien", in Fragner, B. & Hoffmann, B., *Bamberger Mittela-*

Thus, this type of *dihqān* came close to the higher aristocracy, close to regional rule. The paradigmatic representative of this type could be Aḥmad b. Sahl (d. 307/920).¹⁸ Gardīzī introduces him like this: «He was from one of the noble Persian families, a descendant of King Yazdajird. He was one of the *dahāqīn* from Jīranj¹⁹ which is one of the big villages in the Marw oasis. His grandfather was called Kāmgar. The Kāmgarīyān served the Ṭāhirids. Aḥmad's brothers were all clerks and astrologers».²⁰ Aḥmad later was a military leader in the service of the Sāmānids; he revolted in 306/918 because they had made him promises which they then did not keep.²¹

The *dihqān* with whom the poet Farruḥī was staying in the beginning of his career also must have been such a wealthy and powerful figure; he competed with regional lords over the right to act as host for this new star and finally lost out to the rulers of Čagāniyān, the Āl-i Muḥtāj whom Farruḥī joined in 406/1016.²²

Later, in the 1030s, the Ġaznawids tried to use the title in their attempt at integrating the Seljuq leaders into the imperial hierarchies when they had begun making inroads into northern Ḥurāsān. Sulṭān Mas'ūd (r. 1030-40) allotted three large oases at the northern fringe of the Köpet Dağh (Dihistān, Nasā and Farāwa) to the three leaders Dā'ūd (Čagri Beg), Tuğril Beg and Baiğū and conferred the title *dihqān* upon them.²³ However, the

sienstudien (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1994): pp. 179-91, in particular pp. 184-6, with references.

¹⁸ See Barthold, V.V., "Aḥmad b. Sahl", *EF*: I (1960): p. 278a, and Paul, J. "Aḥmad b. Sahl", *EF*: II (2009): pp. 60b-61a.

¹⁹ Jīranj is called a *bulayda* (small town) in Abū 'Abdallāh Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1955-7): II, p. 199a. Yāqūt saw the place in 616 (1219-20) and describes it as very populous, with high walls and well-kept buildings. It was situated on the Marw river (the lower Murgāb), 10 *farsaḥ* (about 60 km) upstream from the city.

²⁰ 'Abd al-Ḥayy Gardīzī, *Zayn al-aḥbār*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī (Tehran: Intiṣārāt-i farhang-i Īrān, 1347/1969): p. 151.

²¹ 'Izz al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-tārīḥ*, ed. Tornberg reprinted (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1965ff): VIII, pp. 117-8, sub anno 306. See also Paul, J., *The State and the Military: The Sāmānid Case* (Bloomington: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1994; Papers on Inner Asia, 26): pp. 26-7.

²² Nizāmī 'Arūḍī Samarqandī, *Čahār maqāla*, ed. Muḥammad Qazwīnī (London & Leiden: Brill, 1910 [Gibb Memorial Series, 11,1]): p. 36. See also de Bruijn, J.T.P., "Farroḡī", *Elr*, IX: pp. 321a-2b.

²³ Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil*, IX, p. 478; the same events in Abū l-Faḍl Bayhaqī, *Tārīḥ-i Bayhaqī*, ed. Ganī/Fayyāḍ (Tehran: Čāphāna-yi bānk-i millī: 1324/1945): p. 492, see also the Russian translation, Arends, A.K., *Istoriya Mas'ūda* (Taškent: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoj SSR, 1962): p. 435. Bayhaqī uses the title for them before that (probably *ex post*), Bayhaqī, *Tārīḥ*: p. 473; Arends, *Istoriya*: p. 418. See Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*: p. 242.

Seljuq leaders were not happy with this solution, one of the reasons probably being that they had aspired to higher titles and positions in the Turkic world, another one that they must have been aware that *dihqān* was not a regular title for a vassal any longer.

Apparently, this is the last time the title *dihqān* was used for a regional lord, vassal of an imperial ruler or a ruler in his own right. But men called *dahāqīn* in the sources continued to wield considerable power, politically and militarily, on the local level.

Dahāqīn as military leaders

Dahāqīn were one of the main supports of the early Samanid army, and scions of *dihqān* families (including princely families, see above) led parts of the Abbasid army.²⁴ At the end of the Sāmānid period in Transoxiana, they apparently got restless and were looking around for new allies, perhaps overlords. At the end, many of them decided to join the Qarakhanids in their conquest of the Sāmānid lands north of the Amu Darya. ‘Utbī (961-1036) writes about a group of *dahāqīn* «who thought that the days of this dynasty [the Samanids] had become long and whose souls were nagging away towards a change».²⁵ We do not learn who exactly they were, but some time later they are shown again in a military enterprise: the Qarakhan mobilised the tents of the Turks and also called upon the *dahāqīn*; a huge army came together.²⁶ It is perhaps significant that ‘Utbī’s translator into Persian, Jurfāzaqānī (wrote around 1200), does not use the term *dihqān* in these cases.²⁷

The people the *dahāqīn* commanded in the Samanid army evidently were rural. In this respect, the Samanids continued earlier practice; in reports on the sectarian uprising of Muqannaʿ in Sogdiana in the 770s, *dahāqīn* are seen as military commanders on either side, commanding

²⁴ For the Abbasid army, see de la Vaissière, *Samarcande et Samarra*, for the Arabic quote, see Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Iṣṭahṛī, *K. al-masālik wal-mamālik*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1870 [Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, 1]): p. 291. For the Sāmānid army, see Paul, *The Samanid Case*.

²⁵ Abū Naṣr ‘Utbī, in the version of Manīnī, *Šarḥ al-yamīnī al-musammā bil-fath al-wahbī ‘alā tārīḫ Abī Naṣr al-‘Utbī* (al-Qāhira: Wahbī, 1268/1869): I, p. 163: «ṭā’ifa min dahāqīn Mā warā’ al-nahr qad amallathum aiyām tilka l-dawla wa-qaramat nufūsum ilā l-istijād».

²⁶ ‘Utbī/Manīnī, *Yamīnī*: II, pp. 82-3. The term is *istanfara dahāqīn Mā warā’ al-nahr*. *Istinfār* could be a technical term for *levée en masse*; the *dahāqīn* would have been responsible for bringing a certain number of men to the army.

²⁷ Abū Naṣr ‘Utbī, Persian translation Jurfāzaqānī, *Tarjuma-yi tārīḫ-i yamīnī* (Tehran: Bungāh-i tarjuma wa naṣr-i kitāb, 1334/1955): p. 92. He has *ma ‘arīf* instead.

rebel troops, but also defending (fortified) villages against them.²⁸ In many places, the Arab geographers mention that from such-and-such a village, so many men go forth to fight. Regularly, these numbers are in the thousands.²⁹ Thus, Muqaddasī explains that in Čagāniyān (southern Tajikistan today), there were 16,000 settlements, and that from there, up to 10,000 men went to fight.³⁰ This very much resembles the way Firdawsī's family is introduced in the *Čahār maqāla*: He was a *dihqān* from the Tūs region, the village was called Bāž, a large village, and “from there, one thousand men go forth”.³¹ It is not stated explicitly who led these men to fight, but if it was not the *dihqān* (or one of the *dahāqīn*), who was it? Likewise, it could be suggested that the popular levies in the Samanid army were led by the local *dahāqīn*, but then, towards the end of Samanid rule, the commanders-in-chief of such foot soldiers were professional military figures coming from a background of military slavery such as the Simjurids. But still, even then, rural men levied out of the “civilian” population were no exception.³² The troops, some three to four thousand men, which the *sālār-i Būzjān* had at his orders when the Seljuqs were approaching Nīšāpūr for the second time, certainly were such a levy.³³ The title by which the source identifies the man no longer is *dihqān* – we will come back to this question later.

Later on, after the middle of the 11th century, military leaders of rural people no longer appear so frequently in the sources under the title *dihqān*. A *dihqān* was expected to lead military operations against an Ismā‘īlī raid

²⁸ Crone, Patricia and Masoud Jafāri Jazi, “The Muqanna‘ narrative in the *Tārīkh-nāma*: Part I, Introduction, edition and translation”, *BSOAS*, LXXIII (2010): pp. 157-77, §§ 8-10.

²⁹ Paul, “Nachrichten”: p. 187, Paul, J., *Herrscher, Gemeinwesen, Vermittler: Ostiran und Transoxanien in vormongolischer Zeit* (Beirut & Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996 [Beiruter Texte und Studien, 59]): pp. 100-2. The Arabic expression for this is *ḥaraja ‘an*, and the military context is quite evident.

³⁰ Šams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Muqaddasī, *K. aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma‘rifat al-aqālīm*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1906 [Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, 8]): p. 273. Other examples are quoted in my previous works, see preceding note.

³¹ Nizāmī ‘Arūḍī, *Čahār maqāla*: p. 47: «az way hazār mard bīrūn āyand». This expression stands in parallel to the Arabic quoted above (note 28), and therefore, even if no military activity is mentioned in this particular context, it seems justified to make this assumption here.

³² They are called *rajjāla* in the sources. I have treated the military capacities of rural people in the 10th and early 11th century in Paul, *Herrscher*, and Paul, J., “The Seljuq Conquest(s) of Nishapur: a Reappraisal”, *IrSt*, XXXVIII/4 (2005): pp. 575-85.

³³ Bayhaqī, *Tārīḥ*: p. 552; Arends, *Istorija*: p. 489; Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*: pp. 262-3, Paul, “Nishapur”, p. 581. Būzjān or Būzgān was one of the districts of Nishapur, see Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam*: I (1955), p. 507a. The number of mobilised men is quite in keeping with other quotes and does not seem to be overly exaggerated.

in the Bayhaq region, but failed to do so. This event is dated 497 in the source (1103-4 CE).³⁴ A faint echo of former military prowess can be heard in Ḥusaynī: He describes Sanjar as a young man hunting, and the Qarakhanid ruler trying to kill him – this attempt failed only because some *dahāqīn* informed the sultan about what was going on. These *dahāqīn* probably were part of the hunting party and therefore possibly part of Sanjar's military retinue.³⁵

Are there other forms of military activity going on, under different leadership? What about the people called *sālār* or otherwise? Some of these questions will be treated in the second part of this contribution.

Dahāqīn as fiscal agents

There is not much evidence for *dahāqīn* as agents in tax collection even at a comparatively early date, around 1000.³⁶ Apparently, the case of Nizām al-Mulk's father stands rather isolated. In this well-known story, Nizām al-Mulk's father was a *dihqān* from a village in the region of Baihaq; this village was prosperous due to the virtues of its *dihqān*. It is not said that he was in charge of collecting the taxes there. Later, however, he got a position as a *bundār* (a kind of tax farmer), but that was for Tūs province, and in this position, he was personally responsible of delivering the *ḥarāj* – when it became more and more difficult to collect any taxes in the 1030s due to the increasing harassment of the region by the Seljuq Turks, the governor had his belongings confiscated.³⁷ There seem to have been local people who were active in the collecting of taxes, but they are not called *dihqān*: a person introduced as Dānišmand Abū l-Qāsim Mūsā was a follower of shaykh Aḥmad-i Jām (1049/50-1141), he had the *'amal* of two or three villages, but he is not among those whom the source knows as a *dihqān*; another man called Ḥwāja *'amīd* Ibrāhīm-i Sāwardī was the one who collected the *ḥarāj* in Nāmaq, the village where Aḥmad-i Jām had his headquarters, but his title does not indicate that he was a *dihqān* or stemmed from such a family.³⁸

³⁴ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 97. Paul, *Herrscher*: p. 121 has to be corrected.

³⁵ Šadr al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī, *Aḥbār al-dawla al-saljūqīya*, ed. Muḥammad Iqbāl (Lahore: no publisher, 1933): p. 90. The *dahāqīn* are not mentioned in Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil*: X, p. 661.

³⁶ I have discussed the thesis that *dahāqīn* had an important part in the levying of taxes in Paul, *Herrscher*: p. 240 note 17, with references to the earlier literature where this thesis was upheld.

³⁷ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: pp. 73, 79-80.

³⁸ Sadīd al-Dīn Muḥammad Ġaznawī, *Maqāmāt-i Žinda-pīl*, ed. Ḥišmat Mu'ayyad (Tehran: Bungāh-i tarjama wa-našr-i kitāb, 1340/1960 [sic]): pp. 102, 110. *'Amīd* is a title for a person in the financial administration up to the highest level.

One of the families on record in Ibn Funduq are the descendants of a *bundār* who had held this position in the district (*nāhiya*) for a long period. Although the *dih* where they originated is identified, the title *dihqān* is not used for any of them.³⁹

The last cases in this section are not really about tax collection, but they show that *dahāqīn* ormen with a *dihqān* background were eligible even for high positions in the state financial administration. A man called al-*dihqān* Abū Ishāq Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusain was appointed as imperial exchequer (*ṣāhib dīwān*) in 401 (1010-11) under Maḥmūd the Ġaznawid; he was *raʾīs* in Balḥ at that point. His main task was to put some order into the state finances because his predecessor had been robbing the royal treasury.⁴⁰ Another example is one Abū l-Ḥasan al-Dihqān who served the Sāmānid Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl (907-14). He was so corrupt that he arranged the ruler to be killed in order to escape punishment.⁴¹ Yet another example is Abū ʿAlī Ḥassān al-Manīʿī who came from a *dihqān* family in Marwarrūd and was an important figure in Nīšāpūr during the later 11th century.⁴²

In summation, there is no systematic link between the *dihqān* stratum and local officials responsible for tax collection in the relevant sources. This link may have existed in the very early period immediately after the conquest, but probably did not survive into the Sāmānid and Ġaznawid periods.

Dahāqīn as landowners and merchants and in the Islamic sciences

The *dahāqīn* were a stratum of landowners. Their landed property often stretched over an entire village, sometimes more than one; sometimes we have the impression that there were several *dahāqīn* in one *dih*. This is evident from early times and continues until the 12th century. The sources coming from the Mongol period no longer employ the term *dihqān* in this meaning (if we take the passage in Juwaynī quoted above as being dictated by a kind of nostalgia). It is thus in the period between the mid-12th century and the Mongol invasion that this stratum of wealthy landed proprietors gets lost in the sources, either because it disappeared from social reality or because the authors of the extant sources no longer used the term for this stratum.⁴³

³⁹ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 115 about the Muḥtāriyān who stemmed from Kiyādaqān in the district of Zamīj. One might speculate whether they had not been *dahāqīn* of that *dih*.

⁴⁰ ʿUtbi-Manīnī, *Yamīnī*: II, p. 160.

⁴¹ Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Isfandiyār, *Tārīḥ-i Ṭabaristān*, ed. ʿAbbās Iqbāl (Tehran: Asāfīr, 1389/2011): pp. 270-1.

⁴² Bulliet, Richard, *The Patricians of Nishapur* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1972): p. 45.

⁴³ See Lambton, “Dihqān”.

This is how Sam‘ānī (1113-66) explains the term *dihqān*: «This is the word for somebody who has precedence in a cluster of villages and for somebody who owns estates and vineyards». ⁴⁴ There still is a memory of socially elite status (*muqaddim*), but the emphasis is rather on property; it is interesting that vineyards are mentioned separately from estates in general. Yāqūt (1179-1229) has the same definition, but “reduced” or adapted in a characteristic way. He says: a *dihqān* is a «merchant, an owner of estates». ⁴⁵ This apparent contradiction can be resolved quite easily: some *dahāqīn* at least were also important grain traders, as we shall see presently. Moreover, as de la Vaissière has shown, the petty Sogdian nobles who were called *dahāqīn* after the conquest had been landlords and merchants all along. ⁴⁶

Dahāqīn were remembered as influential and rich landowners; one of them even acted as host to Hārūn al-Rašīd (786-809) when he travelled to Ṭūs; and from the context it is clear that Ḥamawayh the *dihqān* (or his family) owned at least three villages. He was rich enough to be able to host the caliph and his retinue for four months during Hārūn’s sickness. He is also quoted in a significant dialogue with the Abbasid ruler. Upon being asked how long he would be able to feed the caliphal cortège (this was a year of crop failure and famine was rampant), he answered by saying that as long as it was just (‘*adl*), he would be able to do so as long as the caliph wanted. Asked again what he meant by that, he explained that justice in this case meant that the agricultural activities were not being hindered, in particular not by the military and other retainers. ⁴⁷ One of the central qualities of a good *dihqān* therefore was to improve the conditions for agriculture. This included investments in the irrigation system, in particular the *kārīz* system; a descendant of this Ḥamawayh had done so – this takes us into the 4th/10th century since this descendant died in 344 (955-6). ⁴⁸ Another central quality must have been the storage of large

⁴⁴ Abū Sa‘d ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sam‘ānī, s.v. “*dihqān*. haḍīhi l-lafza liman kāna muqaddima nāhiyatin min al-qurā wa-man kāna šāhib al-ḍiyā‘ wal-kurūm” in *al-Ansāb*, 13 vols, ed. Yamānī (Hyderabad/D.: Majlis dā‘irat al-ma‘ārif al-‘uṣmāniyya, 1962-82): V, p. 423.

⁴⁵ Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam*: II (1956), p. 492a. *al-tājir šāhib al-ḍiyā‘*. Yāqūt is hardly an independent source for eastern Iran and Transoxiana, a large number of his entries are abridgements of Sam‘ānī, and another group comes from the earlier geographers, in particular Iṣṭaḥrī. Only rarely does he mention that he has seen the region in question himself – even if we know that he spent a long period of time in Marw and in eastern Iran in general.

⁴⁶ de la Vaissière, *Samarcande et Samarra*: pp. 32-3, 36-8.

⁴⁷ Ibn Funduq: *Bayhaq*, p. 47. Also used by Tafazzoli, “Dehqān”.

⁴⁸ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 47.

quantities of foodstuffs so that the *dihqān*, his family and also his villagers were more or less protected against famine.

One of the main sources for *dahāqīn* in eastern Iran and Transoxiana are the city histories, in particular the *Histories of Samarqand*.⁴⁹ The *Histories of Samarqand* are interested mostly in scholars of Islam such as transmitters of *ḥadīth*, and this is true of Samʿānī as well. Therefore, *dahāqīn* come into the purview of these sources only if they are also prominent within the Islamic sciences. Exceptions to this rule are very rare, one of them being the report that Abū Muslim's viceregent in Transoxiana was killed by the *dihqān* of Bārkaṭ.⁵⁰

Dahāqīn make their entry in this type of source as large landowners. The first report chronologically is about a man called Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad; he came from Tūban in the region of Nasaf, and we learn that he made his village of Sakdīza into a *waqf*, probably to the profit of his (male) descendants. The document (which the ultimate author of this entry, Mustagfirī, claims to have seen) was dated 278 (891-2).⁵¹ This man is stated to have been the one who first settled in the region, therefore we cannot know whether the family had any pre-Islamic roots in Transoxiana. On the other hand, this entry is particularly interesting because Samʿānī also mentions descendants of this Jaʿfar, among them one Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Dihqān al-Tūbanī, who died in 380 (990), five generations after the founder, and he is still called a *dihqān* (or at least this title is part of his name). Since Samʿānī concentrates on transmitters of *ḥadīth* (and includes hardly anybody in his work who was not somehow engaged in this activity), this is remarkable enough. But more remarkable still is the fact that another *dihqān* striving for merits in the Islamic sciences was linked to Abū Bakr al-Tūbanī,⁵² namely Abū Ṭalḥa b. ʿAlī who is introduced as

⁴⁹ For the *Histories of Samarqand*, see Paul, J., "The Histories of Samarqand", *StIr*, XXII (1993): pp. 69-92. Samʿānī based his compilation in no small measure on the *Kitāb al-qand*; his *al-Ansāb* must be consulted, however, because the *Histories of Samarqand* survive only in fragment and because there is little information there on other parts of the larger region. Samʿānī could be expected to be particularly full on the Marw oasis (since this was where the family lived), but to the best of my knowledge, he does not mention any *dahāqīn* from there. – The *Histories of Samarqand* have been edited, Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *K. al-qand fī ḍikr ʿulamāʾ Samarqand* (Tehran: Āʾīna-yi mīrāt, 1999).

⁵⁰ For all references to the *Histories of Samarqand*, see Paul, "Samarqand": pp. 90-2. – In the Central Asian sources, the practice of naming a *dihqān* together with his village seems to have continued from pre-Islamic times, see de la Vaissière, *Samarqande et Samarra*: p. 29.

⁵¹ Samʿānī, s.v. "Tūban" in *Ansāb*: III, p. 102 – Mustagfirī wrote a city history of Nasaf and Samarqand integrated into the *Histories of Samarqand*, see Paul, "Samarqand".

⁵² But compare another scion of the Tūbanī *dahāqīn* who did not lead such a pious life, below note 61.

“*dihqān* of Bazda”, another village in the Nasaf region.⁵³ On the other hand, Abū Bakr’s son (who died in 416, 1025-6) was no longer known with the title of *dihqān*; Sam’ānī used *amīr* instead. Thus, what we have here is a (paradigmatic) example of a family holding entire villages either as freehold property or as (family) *waqf*; the family was known as a *dihqān* family until the end of the 4th/ 10th century, and then another title came into use. The family held their estates apparently for at least a century and a half; likewise, the family that boasted having had Hārūn al-Rašīd as their guest was also an old family, possibly going back to pre-Islamic times.

There was a certain overlap between landowners and merchants – or a social movement of *dahāqīn* towards urban professions, so that the term came to mean “merchant” as well, something which was not so new in Central Asia as it may have been in Ḥurāsān. Nizām al-Mulk used this as an example of social disorder: If the titles of a *dihqān* and a man from the bazaar are the same, the difference between them will be gone, and likewise between a wise man and an ignoramus, a well-known man and a nobody; all this leads to confusion.⁵⁴ In other sources, the link between landowners and merchants is described without any negative overtones. Sam’ānī adduces a man with the *nisba* ‘Ābidī. He was the son of a *dihqān* from the Samarqand region, and people called him by this *nisba* because he once sold so much grain in a famine that prices did not go up so much. Therefore people said: This man is not a merchant but a servant of God (‘*ābid*), and the *nisba* stayed in the family. He died in 461 (1068-9).⁵⁵ One supposes that this ‘Ābidī was a landowner as well as a grain merchant, thus he would fit into Yāqūt’s definition quoted above.⁵⁶ Another *dihqān* merchant, but this time of cotton cloth, is Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Maṣṣūr [...] al-*dihqān* al-bazzāz al-Buḥārī (who transmitted *ḥadīth* in Samarqand in 461, 1068-9).⁵⁷ In another, very peculiar, case from Samarqand, the term is used for somebody who seems to have worked as a tailor; this man died in

⁵³ Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam*: II (1956), p. 409b; the place was known for its fortress (not unlikely the residence of the *dihqān*).

⁵⁴ Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat-nāma*, ed. Qazwīnī (Tehran: Ṭahūrī, 1955): p. 152; Darke, H., *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1960): p. 148 with a somewhat different translation. It is interesting to see that Nizām al-Mulk insists on a segregation by “estates” along occupational lines.

⁵⁵ Sam’ānī, *Ansāb*: IX, p. 141.

⁵⁶ de la Vaissière states: «La taille des greniers urbains [in Penjikent] montre que les familles nobles qui en disposaient revendaient le grain en ville», de la Vaissière, *Samarcande et Samarra*: p. 33.

⁵⁷ *Histories of Samarqand*, Ms Paris BN Arabe 6284, 57a-b.

541 (1146-7), and his funeral inscription therefore is evidence for the descent of the term in an urban setting.⁵⁸

The last entry to be quoted from Sam‘ānī is undated; it concerns a *dihqān* “from the people of Kāsan” (in the region of Nasaf) who claimed that his village was mentioned in the Quran. Asked to provide the exact quotation, he recited *ka’san dihqān* “cups filled to the brim” [with wine] (78:34 among the rewards awaiting the pious in Paradise).⁵⁹ Of course, this is an example of the not infrequent attempts at linking one’s place of abode to the holy scripture, but could it be more than that? Perhaps it is not entirely a coincidence that the *dihqān* quoted a verse in which (wine) cups are mentioned, and that the Arabic term *dihāq*, which is phonetically so close to *dihqān*, occurs in it. Drinking wine was part of the *dihqān* lifestyle from pre-Islamic times,⁶⁰ and *dahāqīn* are shown as wine-bibbers in later periods as well: In a report about a militant scholar (d. 358, 968-9), it is said that this man once interrupted a drinking party in which (at least) two *dahāqīn* took part. He managed to get into the house by calling to prayer loudly. He then proceeded, shouting *Allāhu akbar*, and when he arrived where the drinkers were sitting, first took out the small knife he used for cutting pens, and cut the strings of the musical instruments; then, he spilled the wine without, however, breaking the jars.⁶¹ *Dahāqīn* are listed among those who will go to Hell: *amīrs* because of their oppression, Arabs because of their factional strife, *dahāqīn* for their haughtiness and pride, merchants for fraud, people from the countryside for their ignorance and the ulama for their envy.⁶²

In all, in Sam‘ānī as well as in the *Histories of Samarqand*, some descendants of *dihqān* families were active in the Islamic sciences and in other Islamic activities such as *ġazwa*. They begin to appear as transmitters of *ḥadīṭ* around 250, and the record gets thicker after 300. One man (d. 300, 912-3) is called *al-dihqān al-ġāzī* as compared to an undated *al-dihqān*

⁵⁸ Dodkhudoeva, Lola, *Ėpigrafičeskie pamjatniki Samarkanda XI-XIV vv.* (Dushanbe: Doniś, 1992): p. 132.

⁵⁹ The translation follows *The Bounteous Koran*: 1984.

⁶⁰ See the anecdote in Tafazzoli, “Dehqān”: p. 224a; banquets also are mentioned frequently in this entry.

⁶¹ *Histories of Samarqand*, Ms Istanbul, Turhan Valide 70, fol. 106b-107a; Paul, “Samarqand”: pp. 91-2. One of the *dahāqīn* is mentioned, it is the *dihqān Tūban* – other representatives of the Tūban *dahāqīn* were accepted as transmitters of *ḥadīṭ*, see above note 52.

⁶² Three occurrences in all in the *Histories of Samarqand*, see Paul, “Samarqand”: p. 91 note 53. It is noteworthy that the only group spared in this list is the urban “ordinary people”.

al-muṭṭawwiʿī who occurs in Samʿānī.⁶³ Later on, there is somebody called “al-dihqān al-raʾīs” (d. 451, 1059-60), and in the chain of transmitters going with somebody who died in 467 (1074-5), the latest transmitter is “al-dihqān al-imām Abū Naṣr Aḥmad [...] b. Šāhmalik al-Margīnānī”.⁶⁴ Another scholar from a *dihqān* background could be ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-dihqān al-Marwazī, who was qadi in Marw (d. 464/1071-2).⁶⁵ Even later, we have somebody who seems to stem from a *dihqān* family which for some generations had produced Islamic scholars: al-dihqān al-imām al-ḥajjāj [somebody who has made the hajj several times] Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr [...] b. al-muftī al-Ḥudfarānī who was born in 483 (1090-1) and, since there is no other information, was probably still alive when Samʿānī was writing.⁶⁶ Other entries in Samʿānī do not yield any particular information about the status of this person.⁶⁷

⁶³ *Histories of Samarqand*, Ms Istanbul, Turhan Valide 70, fol. 3a. He is called Ḥalaf b. Dīwaštij dihqān Ruḥṭīn. The name of the father suggests that this was a recently converted family. Ruḥṭīn is neither in Yāqūt nor in Samʿānī.

⁶⁴ Both quotes: *Histories of Samarqand*, Ms Istanbul, Turhan Valide 70, fol. 82a. Margīnān is a well-known town in the Ferghana Valley.

⁶⁵ Abū l-Ḥasan al-Fārisī, *al-Muḥtaṣar min kitāb al-siyāq li-tārīḥ Naysābūr*, ed. Muḥammad Kāzīm al-Maḥmūdī (Tehran: Mīrāt-i Maktūb, 1384/2006): pp. 299-300 (no. 2126).

⁶⁶ Ḥudfarān is a village in the region of Samarqand.

⁶⁷ Here is a list of the additional quotes from Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, in chronological order: II, p. 186. Abū Yahyā Zakaryā b. Yahyā [...] al-Barnūḡī al-dihqān, d. 313 (925-6) (Nishapur region). – X, p. 494-5 al-dihqān Abū Manṣūr al-Muʿtazz b. ‘Abdallāh al-Qandistānī, d. 340 or 334 (945-6 or 951-2) (probably Nishapur region), with the additional information: «he was from the important people of the old aristocratic families» *kāna min mašāyih ahl al-buyūtāt*. – V, p. 206 Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-dihqān al-Ḥanabī, d. 350 (961-2), the *nisba* refers to an ancestor, not to a place. – I, p. 359 Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥamza al-Dihqānī al-Andāqī, d. after 370 (980-1) (Samarqand region). – VI, p. 113 Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Jābir al-dihqān al-Razmāzī, d. 377 (987-8) (Samarqand region). – IX, p. 369 s.v. “Imrānī”. The man mentioned there died in 513 (1119-20), aged 83 (lunar) years; he heard from al-dihqān Ibn Ismāʿīl Ibrāhīm. This *dihqān* therefore could have died up to 60 or even 70 years earlier, taking us into the mid-5th century. This could be Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-dihqān al-Naḍrawī mentioned (without any further information) in the *Histories of Samarqand*, Ms Paris, BN Arabe 6284, fol. 62a. There are a number of undated entries: V p. 66 Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥudandī al-Muṭṭawwiʿī al-dihqān (Samarqand region). – II, p. 224 Abū Naṣr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad [...] al-Bastī al-dihqān (Samarqand region) – VIII, p. 254 s.v. “Šāgarčī”; here we have somebody who heard from the *ṣāhib al-tarjama*, namely al-dihqān al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Jibrīl al-Šāgarčī (Samarqand region). None of these is in the *Histories of Samarqand* but the one mentioned above.

Finally, in a funeral inscription from Samarqand, a man who died in 516 (1122-3) is styled *al-dihqān* as well as *al-ṣayḥ* – this could be somebody from the (lesser) ulama, but also from the urban population at large.⁶⁸

In the 11th century, thus, the persons who retained the title of *dihqān* were landowners and/or merchants, and were active in the Islamic sciences.⁶⁹ The military activities are no longer prominent, and *dahāqīn* do not seem to have enjoyed particularly enviable positions at court or in the social hierarchy in general. The slow social descent of the title is clearly visible. In some cases, the title *dihqān* seems to have been replaced by other titles such as *amīr*, or to go together with “new” honorifics such as *raʿīs*. A man known as *dihqān* in the sources therefore no longer is some kind of “village headman” or lord of a group of villages. Quite a number of terms are on record for figures who wielded local power, often without being appointed to such a position, and it is difficult to tell to what extent they owned property in the villages they are connected with. *Raʿīs* is one of these titles, but there are others: *zaʿīm*, *dihḥudā*, *mihtar*, *pīšwā*; and the more official figures, sometimes acting as tax collectors also, sometimes linked more to the upkeep of order, can be known as *amīr*, *ṣiḥna*, *wālī*, *ḥākim* and so forth; and in some places, a *muqṭaʿ* is mentioned, who sometimes acts through his representatives or administrators (*nuwwāb* or *wukalā*). It is however beyond the scope of this contribution to expand on this point.

Sources from the 12th century confirm this picture. *Dahāqīn* are still mentioned as well-to-do landowners, but the political weight associated with the term *dihqān* seems much reduced. Memories of earlier greatness, mostly dated to the later Sāmānid or the Ġaznawid period, are quite prominent in some places.

Ibn Funduq offers some examples of *dahāqīn* as sponsors of buildings such as mosques and madrasas, but the title does not always go with the report of such founding and funding.⁷⁰ In his own time, the term seems to be reduced to landholding. One of the families which he traces in some detail, the Anmāṭiyān, are well represented in a specific part of the region, and most of them are pious and *dahāqīn*.⁷¹ The “founding father” of that

⁶⁸ Dodkhudoeva, *Pamjatniki*: p. 116.

⁶⁹ Samʿānī is a source for both the 11th and the 12th century – he has much material from earlier sources such as the *Histories of Samarqand*, but also the *Histories of Nishapur* (Hākim al-Naysābūrī) and a *History of Bukhara* (Gunjār) which are now lost in addition to his own material.

⁷⁰ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 185; a prosperous man, one of the *dahāqīn* of the region, had a madrasa built for a Nishapuri *mufasssīr*, year 418 (1027-8).

⁷¹ Ibid.: p. 125. – In large parts, the book follows a genealogical approach, the scholars and other important people are presented family-wise. None of these families is explicitly called a *dihqān* family or credited with a *dihqān* background; Arab genealogies are much more important than Iranian ones, and many families seem to

family died in Nīšāpūr in 303 (915-6). Since they were certainly not themselves tillers of the soil, this can only mean that they lived off their landholdings and stayed in the countryside – Ibn Funduq not infrequently gives information about where a given man was born, and this in many cases is the village which the family presumably owned.

Not all landholders are called *dahāqīn*. Some examples for such owners of *ḍiyāʿ* (estates) come from Ibn Funduq: the ancestor of the Zakī family had an estate which allowed him an income of 2000 *mann* of grain and ten dinars *per annum*. He was extremely gifted and was better in a number of bureaucratic (and perhaps scholarly) activities than many richer persons, so that people said: «If this man had been rich, what could have been expected?»⁷² Much larger holdings are also on record: One branch of the author's family is said to own large parts of the district of Zamīj.⁷³ Another branch was able to buy estates in the region of Bayhaq (in the times of Maḥmūd the Ġaznawid), but concentrated on the offices they held; many of them were qadis.⁷⁴ In general, people who had made a career elsewhere, in the religious or in the courtly offices, strove to invest in agricultural land; on the other hand, it was something like a precondition for a career, in the religious offices as well as in the bureaucracy, to have a background in a landholding family.

have traced their descent to companions of the Prophet (that is, over more than five centuries) and to have claimed to reside in the region since a very early date, often the days of the conquest. The overall impression is that Ibn Funduq wrote a "Who's who" of the rural gentry – but under the premise that only people with some credentials in Islam deserve to be mentioned.

⁷² Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 126-7. – There is no clear information about the *mann* in use in pre-Mongol Ḥurāsān. Hinz, Walter, *Islamische Maße und Gewichte umgerechnet ins metrische System* (Leiden: Brill, 1970): p. 17 gives 1920 g for the *mann* in northern Iran. The part of the harvest which went to the barns of this *dihqān* would then have been around 3.840 kg or a bit less than four metric tons. In western Iran, the *mann* did not weigh that much, it was the same as in Baġdād, 833 g. Even the larger *mann* would not make this man a rich landowner. – It is interesting to note that the income of about four metric tons would put this man's belongings into the same order of magnitude as the small village of Madm in Central Asia where the residence of the lord had a storage capacity of 4,74 m³, enough for the production of about 15 peasant families, de la Vaissière, *Samarcande et Samarra*: p. 32. – Let it also be noted that the information given in Ġaznawī about grain prices would suggest a price of one dinar for 200 *mann* of grain as a normal price which was good for everybody; Ġaznawī, *Žinda-pīl*: p. 129. If this were the case, this man would get half of his income in grain (2000 *mann* worth ten dinars) and half in coin.

⁷³ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 107. This family also produced men with noted military qualities: p. 108.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: p. 101.

In the two hagiographic monographs from eastern Iran extant from the pre-Mongol period, the term *dihqān* is also used in the meaning of “more or less large landholder”. Ibn Munawwar lets his hero Abū Sa‘īd-i Abū l-Ḥayr use the *dihqān* as an example for a person who is able to command and who administrates his landholdings through a representative. Cultivators come and bring the produce of the village (in this case, cucumbers).⁷⁵

Ġaznawī presents a *dihqān* alongside an *amīr* and *wālī* of a given village. This also points to the “private” character of *dahāqīn* in his time and place (mid-12th century in central Ḥurāsān). A man called Bū l-Faṭḥ-i dihqān was a wealthy landowner in a village called Kārīz where Aḥmad-i Jām’s son also was living. This *dihqān* had a treasure of about one thousand dinar hidden in the walls of his house. Aḥmad-i Jām was visiting the village, and since his son had managed to get into financial difficulties, he said that he would not proceed into the village as long as his son’s debts were not paid for. Bū l-Faṭḥ was present and had the idea that he should volunteer to offer his treasure, but then, he was afraid that his wife might make his life very difficult ever after, so he kept silent. The *amīr wālī* then was informed about what was going on, and he immediately went to see Aḥmad-i Jām to promise payment, but on condition that Aḥmad be his guest that evening. The *amīr*’s wife, on hearing who was going to come, wanted to give the money herself, out of what she had inherited from her father; the *amīr*, in turn, planned to take the sum out of the tax emoluments (*ḥarāj*). Aḥmad found a way to restore the couple’s peace – he accepted the *amīr*’s payment for his son’s debts, and suggested that the *amīr*’s wife take care of his son’s daily expenses. Bū l-Faṭḥ the *dihqān*, in turn, had to confront his wife too – she was angry that he had wasted such a splendid opportunity to make a brilliant investment.⁷⁶ Apart from the spiritual lesson, we see that the *dihqān* does not hold any official position and that there is somebody else who apparently is in charge of collecting the taxes. These two households alone in the village seem to be able to cover the sums needed.

In two specimens of appointment deeds transmitted in Juwaynī’s *‘Atabat al-kataba* as well, we see *dahāqīn* in a row with other rural “elite” persons. In the first document, somebody is appointed to oversee the *awqāf* in the region of Gurgān. All the regional officials and also some of the otherwise important people are told to support the appointee in his work. These groups of people are listed as follows: the notables of Gurgān city

⁷⁵ Muḥammad ibn Munawwar, *Asrār al-tawḥīd fī maqāmāt al-ṣaiḥ Abī Sa‘īd*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā Šafī‘ī Kadkanī, 2 vols (Tehran: Āgāh, 1366/1988): pp. 78, 209 and 248; see also Achena, Mohammed, *Les étapes mystiques du shaykh Abū Sa‘īd* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1974): pp. 95 and 249. It is probably advisable to refer such stories to the times of the author (later 12th century) rather than those of the hero (mid-11th century).

⁷⁶ Ġaznawī, *Žinda-pīl*: pp. 75-7.

and province, namely the sayyids, the imams, the qadis, the headmen, the *dahāqīn*, the representatives (of otherwise absent officials) and the holders of *iqṭāʿ*-allotments are all to support the newcomer.⁷⁷ The *dahāqīn* thus are still among the people who count, but they have fallen back to a middling position; they are still among the notables, but they do not decide any longer. The second document is another version of the same appointment. The list of people who are admonished to cooperate with the appointee runs as follows: The holders of *iqṭāʿ*-allotments, the official local representatives of royal power, the headmen, the tax collectors, the *dahāqīn* and the other notables, viz. the sayyids, the imams and the qadis, are all to cooperate with the appointee.⁷⁸ In both cases, the term cannot possibly mean “peasants” – peasants would not be among the notables. But it is clear that the cooperation of the local well-to-do landowners was an important asset for somebody who needed to reorganise the *awqāf* of a given province.⁷⁹ The separate listing of *dahāqīn* and *ruʿasā* in these documents does not necessarily mean that there was no overlap between both groups; but it seems to indicate a growing distance between *dahāqīn* and positions of local power, official and unofficial influence. The same situation is visible in another appointment deed, a bit later (towards the end of the 12th century). A *miʿmār* (this would be a minister of agriculture in modern terms) is appointed in Ḥwārazm, and all the stakeholders in agriculture are admonished to cooperate, the notables (various expressions), the *waqf* administrators and other estate administrators, the village and regional headmen, the *dahāqīn*, and other people are named.⁸⁰ The *dahāqīn* occupy a place towards the end of the list, which is evidently arranged in a hierarchy of rank. In particular, it is the position of *raʿīs* which by now outranks the *dihqān*. There are more such cases on record in the *inšā*

⁷⁷ Muntajab al-Dīn Badīʿ Atabeg al-Juwaynī, *ʿAtabat al-kataba*, ed. Qazwīnī/Iqbāl (Tehran: Širkat-i siḥāmī-yi čāp, 1324/1950): p. 53: «Sādāt wa aʿimma wa quḍāt wa ruʿasā wa dahāqīn wa nuwwāb wa muqṭaʿān». “Notables” are «maʿrūfān wa mašāhīr wa muʿtabarān». See also Horst, H., *Die Staatsverwaltung der Großseljūken und Ḥōrazmšāhs (1038-1231)* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1964): document U1, p. 142. Durand-Guédy has given a new study of the source: Durand-Guédy, David, “The Türkmen-Saljūq relationship in twelfth-century Iran: new elements based on a contrastive analysis of three *inšā*’-documents”, *ES*, IX (2011): pp. 11-66 (special issue *Nomads in the Political Field* edited by Johann Büssow, David Durand-Guédy, Jürgen Paul).

⁷⁸ Juwaynī, *ʿAtabat al-kataba*: p. 55. The list is: «muqṭaʿān wa šihṇagān wa ruʿasā wa ʿummāl wa dahāqīn wa muʿtabarān wa manzūrān az sādāt wa aʿimma wa quḍāt». Horst, *Staatsverwaltung*: document U2, p. 143.

⁷⁹ The more official power-holders are admonished not to use *ḥimāyat* and thus to contribute to the disorder – probably by “privatising” the *waqf* holdings.

⁸⁰ Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Baḡdādī, *al-Tawassul ilā l-tarassul*, ed. A. Bahmanyār (Tehran: Asāṭir: 1315/1937): p. 114: «jumla-yi aʿyān az manzūrān wa mašhūrān wa mutawalliyān wa mutašarrifān wa ruʿasā wa wukalā wa dahāqīn wa kārkunān wa kāffa-yi ahālī-yi Ḥwārazm». Horst, *Staatsverwaltung*: document R1, p. 137.

literature of the later Seljuq and Ḥwārazmian periods, but they do not add to the picture.⁸¹

In the postscript which ‘Utbī’s translator Jurfādaqānī added to the book, he depicts a brilliant young man in his home town Jurfādaqān (this is in western Iran, but still the case is interesting) who was well suited to the status of *ra’īs*. By his efforts, the situation of the *dahāqīn* and the possibilities of the people of discernment returned to normal, the peasants who had left their homes came back.⁸² The *dahāqīn* are no longer the local decision makers, there is the position of *ra’īs* now, and the *dahāqīn* are objects of his efforts nearly in the same way the peasants are, and both have to offer prayers of gratitude (*du‘ā*) in return for being so well treated.

Towards the very end of the pre-Mongol period, we have a report about the situation in southwestern Iran. Ḥūzistān was part of the caliphal regional state under al-Nāṣir li-dīn Allāh (r. 1180-1225), and one of his viziers had tried to put through the rule that the imam and caliph was the sole owner of land; he had set out to confiscate all the lands where no written deeds of purchase or other written proof of ownership could be produced. This man died in 592 (1196), to the great relief of the *dihqānān* (who evidently did not have such documents since their properties had been inherited over many generations).⁸³

All the *dahāqīn* we have seen so far were landholders, but they evidently did not till the soil themselves. But the transition from wealthy landlords to farmers who had to contribute with their own hands to the agricultural work is evident in the sources, too. A first example comes from Ibn Funduq; he shows a *ḥwāja* (teacher, educated person) in Nīšāpūr towards the end of the 5th/11th century. He had a garden which must have been rather large because he had a bathhouse built in it. Ibn Funduq stresses that this garden provided the *ḥwāja*’s legal income.⁸⁴ Rāwandī uses *dihqān* in parallel with *ra’īyat* (“subjects”, “peasants”) in a passage where he praises the new Seljuq ruler Tuğril III (r. 1176-94): caring for *dahāqīn* and *ra’īyat* was particularly close to this ruler’s heart.⁸⁵ The formula that *dahāqīn* and peasants are the ones who produce what people need to survive is evidently a standard one; it is found also in the

⁸¹ Horst, *Staatsverwaltung*.

⁸² ‘Utbī/Jurfādaqānī, *Tarjuma*: pp. 434-5.

⁸³ Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, ed. Muḥammad Iqbāl (London & Leiden: Brill, 1921 [Gibb Memorial Series, New Series 2]): p. 381. For the theory and practice of property rights, see Baber Johansen, *The Islamic Law on Land Tax and Rent* (London: Croom Helm, 1988). – The vizier in question was Ibn al-Qaṣṣāb, a Shiite, and we must keep in mind that Rāwandī was a fervent if not fanatic Ḥanafī.

⁸⁴ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 202.

⁸⁵ Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*: p. 332.

appointment deed for Malikšāh b. Tekeš Ḥwārazmšāh as governor in Jand (lower Syr Darya region). There, *dahāqīn* is used in parallel with *muzāri‘ān* “sharecroppers”.⁸⁶

Over time, thus, the term *dihqān* went down the social ladder. At first, it denoted powerful people, some of them close to regional rulers, some of no more than local importance, but most frequently with an active role in military and political affairs, partners of the rulers, not subjects – if a subject is someone who passively has to endure or actively to carry out what others have decided. Later, they were one of the groups which produced leading figures (and many of the middle rungs) in both the Islamic sciences and the state bureaucracy, judges and imams, viziers and tax collectors. They wrote poetry and were praised by poets; they transmitted *ḥadīṭ*, but were also the target of militant Sunni Muslims as long as they kept to the pre-Islamic types of social gatherings, which included wine and music. During the 11th century, we see that in some cases, the title is dropped in wealthy families; we see that other titles are preferred, and also that the leading figures in the countryside, whether appointed to office or not, covet other titles. *Dahāqīn* as a specific group were so to speak melting away into the elite strata in general; they appear in the sources as more or less wealthy landholders. This changes gradually during the 12th century, where the first instances appear of totally “plebeian” people who nevertheless are styled *dihqān*. In the end, the term is good enough for tailors and farmers.

Dihqānī – agriculture

A number of sources use the abstract noun *dihqānī* for “agriculture”, and the question is whether a person busy in *dihqānī* is a tiller of the soil or a landowner who lives off the proceeds of his estate, but does not work in the fields himself. One case in point is the *ḥwāja* in Ibn Funduq who had a garden in the outskirts of Nīšāpūr; he is said to have been busy in *dihqānī*.⁸⁷ Another – rather poor – *faqīh* wrote a book about *dihqānī*; Ibn Funduq gives some details that make it clear this was a book about agriculture, in particular about the way to plant and cultivate trees. Unfortunately, this man is dated only by the decade and the year – the century is missing – but the context is clear enough to make 523 (1129-30) the most probable solution. Even if this man might have been involved in agricultural work himself, given that he had enough leisure to write books

⁸⁶ Bagdādī, *Tawassul*: p. 21: «muzāri‘ān wa dahāqīn [...] ki sabab-i ābādānī-yi ‘ālam wa muḥaṣṣil-i arzāq-i banī Ādam and».

⁸⁷ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 202; see note 82 above.

and poetry, he certainly was no peasant.⁸⁸ *Dihqānī* as “agricultural business” (which does not necessarily imply that the one who engages in it is a ploughman himself) is evident in the following story: a leading figure in the region of Bayhaq called ‘Alī al-Jišumī, *amīr ra’īs-i ajall*, asked one of his business representatives to buy clothing and equipment for his slaves (*ḡulām*, in this case not evidently military slaves) for more than one hundred dinars. He did not send the money, however, but had a number of camels loaded with a salt herb (*ašnān*) which was in high demand in Nīšāpūr. In the letter to the representative, he excused himself that he got involved with *dihqānī*, but pointed out that there was no means of making a living as unequivocally *ḥalāl* as that, and that his ancestors had done the same.⁸⁹ It is interesting, though, that *dihqānī* in this story apparently is seen as a debasing activity, not quite what a gentleman should be engaged in.

A very ambiguous story is the one about the beginning of the Ḥārījī Ḥamza b. Āḍarak (active for thirty years until his death in 828) (who is a loathed figure of painful memory in Ibn Funduq and many other authors). An astrologer from Herat once went to Sīstān where he saw a *dihqān* engaged in cultivating the fields. Just then, news came that a son had been born to the *dihqān*, and the astrologer then foretold that this boy would be a spiller of blood.⁹⁰

In the “Mirrors for Princes” literature, the term *dihqānī* is unsurprisingly linked to the “circle of justice”.⁹¹ We saw such use of the term in Rāwandī, where it typically occurred not in the historical narrative, but in an admonition or praise addressed to a new ruler.⁹² The author of the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* puts it thus: Both weakness and harshness in a ruler (as opposed to a balanced “just” attitude, *‘adl*) lead to losses in cultivation, and it is the *dihqān* group that suffers most.⁹³ The *Qābūs-nāma* stresses that the ruler has to be just and to take both the military and the subjects seriously: rule is based on the army, and the cultivated status of the country depends on the *dihqān*.⁹⁴ The same source has a chapter on *dihqānī*, and there

⁸⁸ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 146.

⁸⁹ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 280.

⁹⁰ Ibn Funduq, *Bayhaq*: p. 266. Since Ḥamza lived in the early third century, when *dahāqīn* certainly did not engage in cultivation *ba-zirā’at mašḡul būd*, this could be a projection backwards. On the other hand, no peasant had an astrologer cast a new-born baby’s horoscope.

⁹¹ Maria Subtelny, *Le monde est un jardin* (Paris: Association pour l’avancement des études iraniennes, 2002).

⁹² Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*: p. 332.

⁹³ (Pseudo)-Ġazzālī / Bagley 1964, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, tr. as *Ghazālī’s Book of Counsel for Kings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964): p. 62.

evidently agriculture as a productive activity is meant. But the chapter is not only on *dihqānī* – it is on urban crafts at the same time, so that we can assume that for the author, agriculturalists and craftsmen held roughly the same rank in society.⁹⁵

In *inšā*’-collections, *dihqānī* (or *dahqanat*) also denotes cultivation, and the term is closely linked to agriculture (*zirā*’*at*).⁹⁶

Ceremonial and ritual functions

In particular in Transoxiana, agriculturalists used to have a patron saint called Bābā-yi dihqān. He is attested in numerous treatises.⁹⁷ The cult surrounding him is said to go back to a Sogdian rural god, possibly with still older precursors, and there seems to be evidence that members of well-to-do *dihqān* families were seen as manifestations and living representatives of Bābā-yi dihqān.⁹⁸ In modern times, it was the oldest and most respected peasant in the village who represented the patron saint.

There is no information in the sources under study that such a cult existed in either Khurāsān or Transoxiana in the pre-Mongol period, and no *dihqān* person is shown in any ritual or ceremonial function, linked to the agricultural calendar or otherwise. This of course does not mean that *dahqān* could not have implemented such rituals and ceremonies, at least in Transoxiana.

Rural elites and local lords after the dihqān era

Thus, at the end of the pre-Mongol period, the slow descent of the term *dihqān* towards peasants and craftsmen was largely completed. This does not mean, however, that there no longer was a social group we might term

⁹⁴ Kay Kā’ūs b. Iskandar b. Qābūs, *Qābūs-nāma*, ed. ‘Alī Huṣūrī (Tehran: Tahūrī, 1343/1964). The cultivated status of the country depends on the *dihqān*: *ābādānī-yi dīh ba-dihqān (itbāt buwad)*. The Circle of Justice runs like this: Ruling the world is possible if you have an army; you can have an army if you have gold; gold is acquired through cultivation; and cultivation comes from justice, «jihān-dārī ba-laškar tawān kard wa laškar-rā ba-zar tawān dāštan wa zar az ‘imārat ba-dast āyad wa ‘imārat az dād wa ‘adl wa inšāf», *ibid.*: pp. 172-3.

⁹⁵ Kay Kā’ūs b. Iskandar, *Qābūs-nāma*: pp. 191-2.

⁹⁶ Baḡdādī, *Tawassul*: pp. 53 and 110; Juwaynī, *Atabat al-kataba*: p. 144.

⁹⁷ Dağyeli, Jeanine Elif, “Gott liebt das Handwerk”. *Moral, Identität und religiöse Legitimierung in der mittelasiatischen Handwerks-risāla*. (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2011): pp. 86-7.

⁹⁸ Naymark, Alexandr, *Sogdiana, its Christians and Byzantium: A Study of Artistic and Cultural Connections in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages* (PhD dissertation, Indiana University at Bloomington, 2001): in particular chapter 6.

“gentry”. This would have been a group with fiscal as well as military functions, controlling a certain stretch of land, villages mostly, but probably also pasture, possibly engaging in trade as well, residing either in the countryside (manors or castles) or in the city, and related to superior families and figures by forms of subservience.

This part of the article argues that there indeed was such a group, or rather more than one: the “whole gamut of people”⁹⁹ covered by the term *dihqān* now becomes more clearly separated into three. The evidence presented comes from one main source only, Šihāb al-dīn Muḥammad al-Nasawī’s *Sīrat al-sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Mingburnī*, with only a few references to other sources. A systematic study of the question is far beyond the scope of a single paper.

The three groups whom one could see as heirs to the *dahāqīn* are represented by the author of the book himself, by a group of people he calls *ra’īs*, and lastly by the lords of Nasā.

Local lords and castellans: Šihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Nasawī

Šihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Nasawī was a young man when the Mongols reached Ḥurāsān in 1220. He had just taken over from his father, who evidently had still been alive a few years earlier. What exactly did he inherit?

First, he inherited a castle, called Ḥurandiz, which was probably not so far away from Nasā. “This is one of the finest fortresses in Ḥurāsān. I cannot tell who out of my ancestors first owned it because there are contradictory reports on this [...] and they believe that the fortress has belonged to my ancestors at least since Islam came to Ḥurāsān”.¹⁰⁰ This was the family seat, Šihāb al-Dīn was born there, and all the family treasures were kept there. But the fortress did not stand alone, of course. It had a number of villages and pastures belonging to it. One of the pastures was Marj Šā’ig, and one of the villages, next to these pastures, was called

⁹⁹ Cahen, “Tribes, Cities, and Social Organisation”.

¹⁰⁰ Šihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Nasawī, *Sīrat al-sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Mingburnī*, ed. Z.M. Buniatov (Moscow: Vostočnaja literatura, 1996): p. 65; Russian translation Buniatov, *Žizneopisanie*: same volume p. 92: «wa-hiya min ummahāt qilā’ Ḥurāsān wa-lastu a’rifu awwal man malikahā min aslāfi [...] wa-qad iḥtalafat al-aqāqil fiḥā ‘alā ḥasab al-ahwā’ [...] wa-hum ya’taqidūna annahā fi aydihim min bad’ al-islām wa isfār šubḥihi bi-Ḥurāsān wallāhu a’lam bi-ḡalika» – The place is mentioned in Abū ‘Abdallāh Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu’jam al-buldān*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft in Commission bei Brockhaus, 1867): II, p. 415 (because a scholar who was known with the *nisba* al-Ḥurāndīzī died there in 295), and Yāqūt adds: «I believe this is a village (*qarya*) in Ḥurāsān». Therefore, the fortress probably was not so well known as Nasawī would have us believe. – This entry is not in the Beirut edition of Yāqūt.

Jurmānī.¹⁰¹ The Arabic term for this village is *ḡay‘a min amlākinā*, “an estate, our property”, and this means freehold property, not an assignment, as *iqṭā‘* or otherwise.¹⁰² The author also explicitly states that agricultural lands belonged to the fortress.¹⁰³

The fortress itself was well built and could be defended against the Mongols; the author makes it clear that he is well informed about fortresses and the way they should be constructed. In fact, the author succeeded in buying off a Mongol detachment which had taken up positions around the fortress. The payment was made up mostly of garments, which the fortress was able to provide in sufficient quantities; foodstuffs are not mentioned.¹⁰⁴ The storage capacities of the fortress must indeed have been impressive.

In the end, it was not the Mongols who despoiled the author of his fortress and all his treasures and belongings, but a man known as the “son of Inanj Ḥan” who in turn had been one of the most important military leaders of the Ḥwārazmšāh Muḥammad. This man “killed all my people wherever he found them, and he robbed all my belongings and took away from my house what I had inherited from my ancestors and what I had acquired myself”.¹⁰⁵

From all that, it can be concluded that the fortress Ḥurandiz had been family property, patrimony or *patrimoine* for something like six centuries. This patrimony included also agricultural lands and pastures, together with the people working on them. This was not an *iqṭā‘*, but freehold property. Never does the fortress itself have to be confirmed as family holding.

The second part of Šihāb al-Dīn’s inheritance was a position in the power networks of the Ḥwārazmian empire. Bunyatov writes that Šihāb al-Dīn stemmed from a family of hereditary officials, from the milieu of elite state servants.¹⁰⁶ And indeed, Nasawī shows his knowledge of bureaucratic intricacies, of titles and seals, of the epistolary genre and how diplomatic letters and decrees should be put into good Persian. The fact alone that he wrote his book in competent (and rhetorically florid) Arabic

¹⁰¹ This place-name could not be identified.

¹⁰² Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 37, Bunyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 70: «wa-huwa [Marj Šā’ig] min al-murūj al-mašhūra bi-qurb qal‘a Ḥurandiz masqaṭ ra’sī wa-manša’ asāsī [...] nazaltu ‘alā ḥidmatihi [the ex-grand vizier Nizām al-Mulk] niyābatan ‘an wālidī [...] wa-šayya‘tuhu ‘alā marḡalati Jurmānī wa-hiya ḡay‘a min amlākinā [...]».

¹⁰³ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 65; Bunyatov, *Žizneopisane*: p. 93.

¹⁰⁴ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: pp. 71-2; Bunyatov, *Žizneopisane*: p. 98.

¹⁰⁵ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 131; Bunyatov, *Žizneopisane*: p. 147: «wa-qad qābala Īnānj Ḥān sawābiq ḥidmatī wālidahu bi-Nasā’ wa-Jurjān bi-qatl man zafirahu min alzāmī wa wajada min asbābī wa-kabs baytī mimmā jama‘ahu irtī wa-ktisābī [...]».

¹⁰⁶ Bunyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 26.

shows that he had received an excellent education. In this respect, his family reminds one of famous dynasties of Ḥurāsānian bureaucrats such as the Juwaynīs.¹⁰⁷ The heritage is not only in the education, moreover: In the beginning, Šihāb al-Dīn acted as his father's deputy when one of the major figures in the Ḥwārazmian administration, the grand vizier Nizām al-Mulk, passed by Ḥurandiz. It does not matter that the vizier had been deposed; it does not matter that Šihāb al-Dīn apparently had no official function but simply represented the lord of Ḥurandiz: he made his entry into the inner circle of power holders.¹⁰⁸ Next, he took up "service" at Nasā, even if at that moment, the lord of Nasā did not dispose of an imperial decree confirming him in that position. It would not come as a surprise if such service at the provincial centre next to Ḥurandiz also was some kind of family tradition: other members of the family likewise served the lord of Nasā, e.g. a cousin (*ibn 'amm*) called Sa'd al-Dīn Ja'far b. Muḥammad.¹⁰⁹

In this service, Šihāb al-Dīn occasionally had to represent his lord. During the Mongol onslaught, he joined Badr al-Dīn Inanj Ḥan, who had escaped from the sack of Bukhara and now was starting a short career as one of the "usurpers" (*mutaḡalliba*), a relatively large group of higher emirs and military leaders of the Ḥwārazmian empire who tried to save what there was to be saved and, in the process, to carve out a dominion for themselves. At first, this Badr al-Dīn seemed submissive to the lord of Nasā (the regular regional lord) on whom he depended for provisions and arms and perhaps also military manpower; but soon, his ambition led him beyond such modesty. When the lord of Nasā died at that juncture, the relationship changed in character: now it was Badr al-Dīn Inanj Ḥan who claimed superiority and even more. He expected the new lord of Nasā to deliver the taxes up to him (instead of an approved representative of the ruling dynasty).¹¹⁰

Šihāb al-Dīn had been trained for a career in the state administration. He had been educated in Arabic as well as Persian, in the chancery style and in other fields of *adab*, and his education had also included military matters. As mentioned above, he was able to estimate the military strength of a fortress; and more than once, he tells us that he has taken part in a battle which he describes. He scolds some of the Ḥwārazmian leaders for their cowardice, not only bureaucrats but also officers. In all, he corresponded to an ideal of state servant: a combination of bureaucratic and military skills that may have been the role model for a number of Iranian families. It was this combination

¹⁰⁷ Aubin, Jean, *Emirs mongols, vizirs persans dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 1995).

¹⁰⁸ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: pp. 37-8; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 70.

¹⁰⁹ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 76; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 101.

¹¹⁰ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 83; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 107.

which then was the background of Šihāb al-Dīn's later career; as is well known, he joined Jalāl al-Dīn Mingburni the Ḥwārazmšāh, whom he served as head of the official chancery (*kātib al-inšā'*).

A local noble family therefore could dispose of a number of assets: a castle as family property, with its agricultural and pastoral hinterland; and a position with regional lords and eventually with the imperial overlord, for which male scions of the family were trained. The education of these young men included not only scribal, but also military skills.

This is a typical *dihqān* family – only it is no longer called thus. Given the fuzziness of the term, this family could be seen somewhere in between, between the “founders of dynasties” and “simple cultivators of the soil”. This particular family was not a family of “lords of the manor” only, they were castellans and boasted a long line of ancestors in this position – it is open to question to what degree this may have been an exception.

Local ru'asā

Ra'īs is a complicated and imprecise term which can denote anybody holding some kind of leading position, whether officially appointed or not. In a rural context, a *ra'īs* was expected to resolve conflicts, to represent the village to the outside, perhaps to divide up extra taxes when they were levied and so forth.¹¹¹ In Ġaznawī's hagiography of Aḥmad-i Jām, we see a *ḥwāja* and son of *ḥwājas* trying to get an official diploma confirming him in the position of *ra'īs* in the village of Nāmaq, where Aḥmad-i Jām was living. He had gone to see the provincial governor of Ḥurāsān several times and spent much money, but to no avail. The source stresses that this man in fact filled the position.¹¹²

In Nasawī's narrative, similarly, a number of persons appear who are known by this title. They have much in common: they are in control of a village (perhaps a small number of villages or rural settlements), but it is not clear whether they own them or what they own there. They have some kind of military function in these villages, and they are also involved in the process of taxation. Their military means are however rarely important enough to make a larger career an option. They also are seen deciding matters of “war and peace” on a local level – this is mentioned more often than not because the author thinks they are wrong.

The first example Nasawī adduces is a man called Ḥabaš.¹¹³ He was from a village (*ḍay'a*) in the district of Ustuwā-Ḥabūšān, and he was a

¹¹¹ Paul, *Herrscher*: pp. 77-87, with further references.

¹¹² Ġaznawī, *Žinda-pīl*: p. 112. The end of the story seems to imply that there was an official *ra'īs* in the village.

¹¹³ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: pp. 65-6; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 93. The village was called Kašja, not identified.

sarhang; that is, he held a minor military position.¹¹⁴ To make fun of him, the Mongols called him *malik*; this was one of the great military titles in the Ḥwārazmian army and seems to stand for Mongol *noyan* (commander of 10000) in this context. They then gave him command over a band of renegades, local people or transfuges from the Ḥwārazmian army who for some reason or other had decided to go Mongol, and all the foot-soldiers. They also armed this band and even gave them siege machinery. This Ḥabaš then started to act on his own initiative. He wrote to his “colleagues”, the *ru’asā’ al-ḍiyā’*, and invited them to join forces against a given town. The “invited” *ra’īs* was told to come together with his people (villagers or peasants, called *ra’īyat*) and equipment, including arms, but also shovels (needed in siege warfare). The aim was to attack and lay siege to a town in order either to rob it or to extort tribute. If the *ra’īs* did not follow the summons, Ḥabaš and his henchmen would go to his village, get hold of the *ra’īs* and kill him.

Our author stresses that villages in Ḥurāsān were fortified with walls and moats and that it was not so easy to take them.¹¹⁵ Villages could resemble castles and fortresses, and their military value should not be underestimated. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that a *ra’īs* had a military function: he was the commander of the rural people when called to arms. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address the question of military recruitment and training; however, it is evident that military matters were not left to the nomads, nor to the professional soldiers, either. Warriors fighting on foot still had an important place in warfare, and much of the fighting indeed was siege warfare.

In earlier periods, military leaders of rural populations were known as *sālār*, such as the *sālār-i Būzjān* mentioned above.¹¹⁶ In exactly the same region, but roughly a century later, we still have a person who was in charge of organising the defense of a village in case of need, but the title has changed: such a person is called a *sipahsālār* in Ġaznawī.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ In Ġaznawī, a *sarhang* appears at the orders of Sulṭān Sanjar as a kind of police sergeant at the head of a group of ten: Ġaznawī, *Žinda-pīl*: p. 62.

¹¹⁵ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: pp. 65-6; Bunyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 93: «wa-kānat ḍiyā’ Ḥurāsān ḡawāt aswār wa-ḥanādiq wa-jawāmi’ wal-ru’asā’ bihā arbāb mukna».

¹¹⁶ See above at note 32.

¹¹⁷ Ġaznawī, *Žinda-pīl*: pp. 126-8, three stories about Sipahsālār ‘Umar. He is not an official person; he comes from a well-to-do family and mingles with the rural elite persons such as the *ra’īs*, the *kathudā* and the hero of the book. The “official” military is represented by the *muqṭa’* and the *šihna* in this source, both types targets of Aḥmad’s wrath (and therefore probably loathed by the rural people). – In other cases, certainly *sipahsālār* was a title for high amīrs, see e.g. Durand-Guédy, “Türkmen-Saljuq relationship”.

Another example of a *ra'īs* in a military role is found in the following account.¹¹⁸ When Jalāl al-Dīn fled from Ḥwārazm, he reached Ḥurāsān close to Nasā, but did not go there. After some skirmishing with minor Mongol troops, he appeared before a village called Jawānmand, which belonged to Nasā. Nasawī then quotes the report of the village *ra'īs* to the lord of Nasā about what he had done: the villagers had not believed that the Ḥwārazmians who had appeared before the village walls really included Jalāl al-Dīn and therefore had not opened the gates. Jalāl al-Dīn, for his part, had not insisted on entering the village, but had asked for provisions to be delivered to him and his men from within. This is what the villagers did, and Jalāl al-Dīn and his men left after a short while.

Here we see that the local *ra'īs* is part of an informational system for the regional lord. More than that: the *ra'īs* has to make decisions on his own in precarious situations, and has to bear the responsibility for that. Note that the village itself apparently was able to defend itself against smaller bands of warriors.

Our third example of the military role of a *ra'īs* involves a man called Abū l-Faṭḥ.¹¹⁹ He was the *ra'īs* of a village named Našjuwān, one of the more important villages of Nasā, which, again, boasted walls and a moat and other fortifications. For whatever reason, this man inclined towards the Mongols, and therefore he allied himself to them. The common objective was to find and destroy Badr al-Dīn Inanj Ḥan (see above) whose whereabouts were known to Abū l-Faṭḥ, but not to the Mongols. There was a battle in which Badr al-Dīn, however, was victorious, and the Mongols fled towards Našjuwān. Now Abū l-Faṭḥ decided not to help his Mongol allies, but to close the gates. This allowed Badr al-Dīn and his troops to kill all the Mongols. At the end, Badr al-Dīn reported to the lord of Nasā who told him to finish off Abū l-Faṭḥ; that was executed without further ado.

To summarise this section: Village *ru'asā* were important enough to make it into the account, not only in Nasawī. In this particular case, the basis for their importance is military rather than economic or political. They follow the earlier *sālār* who also was able to mobilise the rural population, and the *sipahsālār* who is shown in a comparable position in other sources. In Nasawī, it is not clear whether they own the villages where they hold office; in Ġaznawī and Ibn Funduq, this is probable enough. They certainly are “village chiefs” in Cahen’s terminology. “Village headmen” probably evokes egalitarian structures too strongly. The *ru'asā* in Nasawī are not shown to be “lords of the manor”, but still, they are well within the semantic field of the earlier term *dihqān*.

¹¹⁸ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: pp. 74-5; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 100.

¹¹⁹ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: pp. 81-3; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: pp. 105-7.

The lords of Nasā

Nasā was an important place. It controlled a major trade route from Ḥwārazm to Ḥurāsān, and it had one of the largest fortresses in northern Ḥurāsān. It was also one of the oldest, and in fact the antiquity of the place is beyond question. There is an extensive description of the fortress in Nasawī.¹²⁰

Nasā had been part of the Ḥwārazmian territory under Atsız (1127-56): in one of the *inšā*’-collections, there is an appointment for an unnamed governor of Nasā who had earlier been one of the leading emirs in Ḥurāsān.¹²¹ Consequently, he got Nasā as a prime for shifting his loyalties to Atsız. Unfortunately, there is no information whether this man could have been ‘Umar b. Ḥamza (of whom more presently), but this is not excluded. Nasā was where Atsız stayed when Sanjar was freed from the Ġuzz; this underlines the importance of the place.

The lords of Nasā formed a dynasty that one can retrace in the sources for three generations. The first man on record was ‘Umar b. Ḥamza al-Amīr. He was given Nasā as an *iqṭā*’ in 554 (1159-60), and his overlord was Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad the Qarakhanid, whom Sanjar had chosen as his successor and who at that moment was allied to the Ġuzz; Maḥmūd had just come back from Gurgān, where he had had to take refuge from Ġuzz attacks.¹²² Nasā was his first station when back in Ḥurāsān.

In the troubled period in the years before and after Sanjar’s death in 552 (1157), Nasā had to cope with the Ġuzz as much as had other towns in Ḥurāsān; we do not know whether ‘Umar b. Ḥamza was successful in keeping them out, but since he had accepted Maḥmūd as his overlord, this may have made things easier, and may be the background for the statement that he was able to defend the place against trouble-mongers.¹²³ Ibn Munawwar confirms that Nasā did not suffer in this period, and he praises the town for having kept sufism and good Muslim practice alive. Of course he does not attribute the fact that the city escaped pillage to the lord of the

¹²⁰ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 62; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: pp. 90-1.

¹²¹ The document is in Horst, *Staatsverwaltung*: pp. 119-120, doc. I-13, taken from the collection which Horst called *Aḥkām-i salāṭīn-i māḍī*, St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts C-816, no. 50 fol. 57a-b. The text says that this man “came with a fully equipped army to Our presence”. Another reason for the appointment is that people in Nasā were being harassed by “evildoers” *muḥsidān*. This makes the context a bit clearer. Atsız tried several times to expand into Ḥurāsān, in 1139, in 1141 and during the Ġuzz *fitna*; given the presence of “evildoers”, the most probable situation would be the last one, consequently shortly before ‘Umar b. Ḥamza was appointed as lord of Nasā by Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad.

¹²² Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil*: XI, p. 232.

¹²³ Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil*: XI, p. 232: *mana’a minhā* [Nasā] *aydī l-muḥsidīn*.

place, but to God's direct intervention and to the many shrines of pious shaykhs there.¹²⁴

Maḥmūd was not to last, however; he was blinded by the lord of Nīšāpūr, Mu'ayyid Ay Aba, in 557 (1161-2). The lord of Nasā (perhaps in need of a new overlord and unwilling to submit to Ay Aba?) recognised the Ḥwārazmšāh II Arslan as his overlord in 558 (1162-3).¹²⁵ Ay Aba was not able to take it from the Ḥwārazmians.¹²⁶

II Arslan died in 567 (1172), and his succession was problematic. There were two candidates, Tekeš (1172-1200) and Sulṭānšāh (1172-93). For a while, Sulṭānšāh, who had been ousted from Ḥwārazm, succeeded in establishing a regional state around Marw and Saraḥs; at first, at the expense of the Ġuzz statelets there, and increasingly also at the expense of the lord of Nīšāpūr, Ṭuġanšāh b. Ay Aba. Nasā was within the Ḥwārazmian domains, and in all probability, Tekeš was claiming overlordship there. In an undated appointment, Tekeš gave it as an *iqṭā'* to 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Umar; the text implies that he had the right to levy the taxes there from 573 (1177-8) on.¹²⁷ At another moment, Tekeš gave the place to the lord of Nīšāpūr, Ṭuġanšāh b. Ay Aba,¹²⁸ and it is not known whether 'Umar b. Ḥamza or his son continued to hold power in Nasā (as deputies for Ṭuġanšāh?).

In 576 (1181), Sulṭānšāh won an important victory over Ṭuġanšāh, and we learn that many local lords now chose Sulṭānšāh. The lord of Nasā may have considered such a move as well, since there is a serious warning against doing so in Baġdādī, dated 577 (1181-2).¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Ibn Munawwar, *Asrār*: p. 45.

¹²⁵ Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil*: XI, p. 315.

¹²⁶ Juwaynī, *Jahān-guṣā*: II, pp. 13 and 21; Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil*: XI, pp. 315-6, with at the end the statement «the lord of Nasā became a vassal of the Ḥwārazmšāh and the Friday prayer was read for the Ḥwārazmšāh there» *ṣāra ṣāḥib Nasā fī ṭā'ati Ḥwārazmšāh wal-ḥuṭba lahu fihā*.

¹²⁷ Baġdādī, *Tawassul*: pp. 95-100, year mentioned p. 99. Horst, *Staatsverwaltung*: document S4, p. 139. The identification of this 'Imād al-Dīn with Ay Aba (in the index) is impossible.

¹²⁸ Baġdādī, *Tawassul*: pp. 32ff. Schwarz has shown that Ṭuġanšāh had Tekeš mentioned as overlord on his coins in the beginning and at the end of his reign, in 570 (1174-5) and in 577-9 (1181-4); Schwarz, Florian, *Der Sulṭān von Ḥurāsān. Materialien zu einer regionalen Herrschaftsgeschichte nach Sanjar*, unpublished MA thesis, Tübingen 1992: p. 91. It is difficult to decide to which period the document is related. Horst, *Staatsverwaltung*: document S2, p. 138.

¹²⁹ Baġdādī, *Tawassul*: pp. 195-8. The addressee is not named in this letter, but it must be the lord of Nasā. He is reminded that he has to look for more *iqṭā'āt* only to Ḥwārazm, and that Nasā is an integral part of the Ḥwārazmian state, and that there now is an agreement between Tekeš and Sulṭānšāh so that he cannot move that way. The letter ends on a menacing note.

Most probably the lords of Nasā nevertheless recognized Sultānšāh as their overlord at this point. There is further evidence in that direction: Ibn al-Aṭīr has a report stating that Sultānšāh's first victories saw him drive the Guzz away from Marw, Saraḥs, Nasā and Abīward with support from the Qaraḥitay; even if this did not really happen and at least the chronology is wrong (the Ḥitay-supported action against Marw took place earlier, in 1179 or 80), we may conclude that Sultānšāh was seen as a major influence along the northern fringe of Ḥurāsān between the Murgāb and the Nasā region.¹³⁰ Nasawī adds that Tekeš had to lay siege to Nasā repeatedly without, however, being able to take the place by force; he then came to an agreement with 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Umar which meant that the lord of Nasā was allowed to stay in his place, but had to assist Tekeš in his conquest of the rest of Ḥurāsān, and he therefore had to contribute to Tekeš's campaigns against his brother Sultānšāh.¹³¹ Shortly after, in 577 (1181-2), Nasā troops are reported to have formed part of Tekeš's army in actions against Sultānšāh.¹³²

The hereditary character of the appointment is also stressed in the source when it says that the appointee's ancestors had always held elevated positions at the Ḥwārazmian court.¹³³ The lords of Nasā were powerful indeed; the lord of Ḥurandiz was not the only one to have served them, other people also considered them as their *maḥdūm*.¹³⁴

'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad died shortly after Tekeš, probably in 1201. His eldest son Naṣīr al-Dīn Sa'īd then took over; Šihāb al-Dīn suspected

¹³⁰ Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil*: XI, p. 380.

¹³¹ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 61; Bunyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 90: «wa-kāna al-sultān Tekeš tajaššama li-istiḥlāšihā [Nasā] marāran wa-lam yaqdur 'alayhā. wa-ḥīna ayyasa min istiṣfā'ihā li-nafsihi šālaḥa šāhibahā 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. Ḥamza fa-adḥalahu ribqata ṭā'atihi wa-stanḥaḍahu li-istiḥlāš sā'ir bilād Ḥurāsān». Bunyatov insists on the note of coercion which is evident in the relationship between overlord and vassal. It is not clear to me when these sieges of Nasā could have taken place. The moment of Sultānšāh's most noted success in the last weeks of 576/spring 1181 could be an option, and the menacing letter therefore would sound even more as a last warning against changing sides in the conflict between the Ḥwārazmian princes.

¹³² Baḡdādī, *Tawassul*: p. 155. For the situation in Ḥurāsān during this period, see Schwarz, *Der Sultan*: in particular p. 100ff.

¹³³ Baḡdādī, *Tawassul*: p. 97. This is difficult to explain. There may be something like a rhetorical reflex – such appointments just go to people who have a long record of service with the overlord. But there also is the possibility that the family indeed had been part of the Ḥwārazmian faction. If one opts for this possibility, the largely anonymised appointment deed for a *wālī* in Nasā from the reign of Atsız would have to be referred to ancestors of 'Umar b. Ḥamza, the first named lord of Nasā from this lineage; above note 117.

¹³⁴ Baḡdādī, *Tawassul*: pp. 243 and 268.

him of having poisoned his father.¹³⁵ This figure did not subsequently survive his father for very long; after some months, another son became lord of Nasā, Iḥtiyār al-Dīn Zangī. Iḥtiyār al-Dīn lived until the first period of the Mongol invasion, and after his death, his position fell to his cousin Nuṣrat al-Dīn Ḥamza.

The Ḥwārazmšāh Muḥammad had tried to subjugate the regional lords within his empire, and Nasā was no exception. In this particular case, mistrust may have lingered on from the times of Tekeš. At some point, Muḥammad b. Tekeš decided to put more pressure on the regional lords, and he made the entire family of the lords of Nasā come to Ḥwārazm, where they were held as hostages for a considerable period of time – Nasawī claims 19 years, which would cover the whole reign of Muḥammad b. Tekeš. The fortress was demolished to its very foundations,¹³⁶ but it was later rebuilt.

It does not serve the argument of this article to recount the Mongol siege of Nasā and the final conquest of the place. What is more important is that the exiled family came back. Iḥtiyār al-Dīn Zangī b. Muḥammad [b. ‘Umar] b. Ḥamza took over (again).¹³⁷ He had wanted to submit to Jalāl al-Dīn when the prince passed by on his flight from Ḥwārazm, but this did not materialise, since Jalāl al-Dīn moved too quickly. But there were more Ḥwārazmian princes active then, and two of them also came close to Nasā on their way to Ḥurāsān. Princes Aqšāh and Uzlāgšāh had a decree written for Iḥtiyār al-Dīn in which they assigned him additional places as *iqṭā’*. This was not important for the lord of Nasā, however – he read the decree as a confirmation of what had come about in the meantime; namely, his reinstatement as lord of Nasā. For he had taken up his heritage without an imperial decree confirming this, and he was therefore anxious to obtain such a confirmation. Nasawī stresses repeatedly that the Ḥwārazmšāh had had no right to deprive Iḥtiyār al-Dīn of his heritage; but on the other hand, it is clear that the lords of Nasā had to recognise imperial suzerainty and badly needed a diploma of investiture. Also, there is no question that Nasā had to deliver the *ḥarāj* to the representatives of the imperial dynasty: when after Iḥtiyār al-Dīn’s death his cousin Nuṣrat al-Dīn had taken over, he submitted to Badr al-Dīn, as we have seen; either out of fear or because he thought that Badr al-Dīn had a legitimate claim to the province’s taxes.

The position of the regional lords can be seen clearly in the report about the relationship between Nuṣrat al-Dīn, lord of Nasā, and Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Pīršāh, one of the Ḥwārazmian princes who ruled in western Iran until Jalāl al-Dīn ousted him in 1225. The lord of Nasā – who apparently had

¹³⁵ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: pp. 61-2; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 90.

¹³⁶ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: pp. 61-2; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 90.

¹³⁷ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 78; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 103; also Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 122; Buniyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 138.

enjoyed an education in no way inferior to that of our author – refused to have the Friday prayer read in Pīrshāh's name.¹³⁸ He was the only one among the regional lords to do so. This was because astrological calculations had led him to believe that Pīrshāh's star was only flickering and would soon vanish altogether. He preferred Jalāl al-Dīn. This was a clear case of insubordination, and therefore it is not surprising that Pīrshāh sent an army against Nasā to bring the regional lord to heel. In order to avoid a military confrontation which he apparently had reason to fear, Nuṣrat al-Dīn tried diplomatic means: he dispatched a delegation with appropriate presents. Our author Šihāb al-Dīn was in charge of the mission, and when, soon after, Jalāl al-Dīn took over, he thought that he had reached his goal because Jalāl al-Dīn's chancery drafted a decree confirming Nuṣrat al-Dīn as lord of Nasā. But it was too late; the son of Badr al-Dīn Inanj Ḥan had taken the city and the fortress, and Nuṣrat al-Dīn was dead. This presumably was the end of this lineage of lords of Nasā, and since his own fortress also had been taken and plundered, Šihāb al-Dīn did not go back to Ḥurāsān but stayed with Jalāl al-Dīn.

We can trace the history of this family over three generations, from the mid-12th century until the Mongol invasion, some 60 years. This is not much compared to the antiquity of Šihāb al-Dīn's family, even if some more generations in earlier Seljuq and Ḥwārazmian service are not out of the question. Also, the lords of Nasā did not rule in their own right: they needed an appointment, whereas Šihāb al-Dīn never did. Thus, they are a dynasty of regional lords, but in the status of *muqṭa'*; their right is hereditary, but it still depends on the decrees of the overlord. They were able to keep their position in quickly changing circumstances; most of the time, they seem to have been vassals of the Ḥwārazmshāh, but they accepted an appointment also by Mahmūd b. Muḥammad, together with the Ġuzz alliance which that may have implied, and may also have served Sanjar earlier. No claim for independence is visible; on the contrary: Nasawī makes it clear that Iḥtiyār al-Dīn was anxious not to make such a claim.¹³⁹ This clearly sets them apart from earlier regional lords, in Transoxania or elsewhere, who were rulers in their own right, even when they were vassals of such dynasties as the Sāmānids. It is in this respect that the history of the *dahāqīn* is linked to the spread of the *iqṭā'*.

Conclusion

Dahāqīn after the *dahāqīn* are of two kinds in Nasawī. There are the village *ru'asā'* who have much of the social status which the earlier

¹³⁸ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 128; Bunyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 145.

¹³⁹ Nasawī, *Sīrat*: p. 78; Bunyatov, *Žizneopisanie*: p. 103.

dahāqīn also enjoyed in military and political matters. But there is no information about their property rights in the villages where they are powerful, and even if it is probable that they did have some rights there, it is not clear whether they had freehold property or a kind of conditional usufruct right on the lines of *iqṭāʿ*. If their rights were conditional, this must have changed since the times of Ibn Funduq and Ġaznawī, who show clearly *ruʿasāʾ* as landowners.

The other group is represented by Šihāb al-Dīn and his family, the lords of Ḥurandiz. They appear in a way as remnants of the pre-Islamic *dahāqīn* in that they are landowners, military leaders, and servants of greater lords – on a local level, to be sure. It can be presumed that they no longer call themselves *dihqān* because the term had become so debased by then. These families claim deep roots in their locality and own their patrimony by inheritance, not by imperial assignment.

The third group, the regional lords represented here by a lineage of lords of Nasā, are rather unlike the earlier *dahāqīn* – their power is hereditary, but it is conditional. Quite like the local lords, they are vassals on the one hand and lords on the other; they are military leaders; and they have the right to collect the taxes which form the economic basis of their power. They probably have no deep roots in the region where they rule.

In sum, if we except the regional lords, the local and regional power holders in this particular source are well within the semantic field of *dihqān*. Therefore, the *dihqāns* did not go anywhere. At least in this part of Ḥurāsān, the northern fringe, they stayed where they were, and only the term faded out of the record.