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Jews, Landlords and Peasants in the Ghaznavid Bamiyan Hinterland: A Private Archive from the Eleventh Century (Bamiyan Papers/Afghan Genizah)

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This paper discusses the 'Bamiyan Papers,' also known as the 'Afghan Genizah,' which probably originated in the Bamiyan region in present-day central Afghanistan. Particular attention is given here to their earliest phase, comprising the private archive of Yehuda ben Daniel, a Jewish landowner residing in early Ghaznavid Bamiyan in the first half of the eleventh century, who plays a central role in this study. The archive documents shed significant light on the interaction between an urban private landowner and the rural population, with specific emphasis on his tenants. By closely examining two texts from the archive, this paper illuminates the complexities inherent in the landowner-peasant relationship and unveils the financial connections that existed between urban landowners and peasants. This research thus contributes to our understanding of Ghaznavid rural history and provides insights into the broader context of the pre-Mongol Iranian world.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Bamiyan, village, landed property, Ghaznavids, Ghurids, private archive, geniza

Introduction

The history of the eastern Iranian world in the pre-Mongol period, up to the early thirteenth century, has received a fresh impetus in recent years thanks to the discovery of several textual corpora originating in central Afghanistan.[2] The most famous of these are the Bamiyan Papers, also known as the Afghan Genizah,[3] a significant portion of which were

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[3] Throughout the article, I use the term Bamiyan Papers, which was coined by the Invisible East Programme initiated by Arezou Azad at the University of Oxford's Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

purchased by the National Library of Israel (henceforth NLI) in 2013–2016. The NLI Collection comprises some 250 leaves of paper claimed to derive from central Afghanistan.

The NLI Collection spans a period of over two centuries and includes documents, such as letters and tax receipts, as well as fragments of literary and religious works pertaining to both Jews and Muslims. The texts in this collection are written in six different languages and linguistic varieties in two script systems: Early Judeo-Persian, Judeo-Arabic, Aramaic, and Hebrew in Hebrew script, and Early New Persian and Arabic in Arabic script.

The Hebrew-script texts in this corpus, particularly the fragments of literary and religious works, received significant attention from the Israeli scholarly community and media during the early 2010s. The unexpected discovery of these fragments led to the assumption that the material originated in a Jewish Genizah from medieval Afghanistan, thus dubbing it the "Afghan Genizah." However, there exists uncertainty regarding whether these documents were indeed components of a Jewish Genizah—a repository for worn texts in Hebrew script, often found within a synagogue or cemetery setting. Moreover, the bulk of the texts in the NLI Collection are written in Arabic script and have no connection to the Jewish communities in the region (Haim 2019b:70–71).

The Bamiyan Papers were obtained from the antiquities market and their precise provenance is unknown. According to some reports appearing in Shaul Shaked's publications, the documents were found in the Darra-yi Ṣūf District in the northern Samangān Province; more specifically, Shaked provides a report—whose authenticity he questions—that the papers were discovered inside a cave where a family of foxes had repurposed the sheets as ground padding (Shaked 2013:153). Given the fact that the corpus is made up of different groups of texts, the paper sheets were probably not all found in a single location; rather, they were assembled by those involved in its long journey from central Afghanistan to the antiquities market.

The shared feature of all the documents is their connection to the city of Bamiyan, which gained global recognition in 2001 as the site where the historic Buddha statues were tragically destroyed by the Taliban.[4] Bamiyan is situated 2500 m asl in the Bamiyan Valley, between the westernmost extension of the Hindū Kush on the north and the Kūh-i Bābā Mountains on the south. Its strategic position in the central Afghan mountain massif as a connecting link between Balkh and the Kābul Valley (and thus the Indus valley), bestowed some wealth and importance on the city until its utter destruction by Chinggis Khan in 618/1221, after the death of his grandson Mütügen during the Mongol siege of the city (Planhol, Tarzi and Balland 1988).

In this paper, I present an overview of the textual corpora uncovered in central Afghanistan during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, with a specific focus on two of the Bamiyan Papers. Subsequently, I share my preliminary findings concerning the eleventh-

[4] On the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, see Flood 2002; Husseini 2012.

century Bamiyan rural landscape, highlighting the intricate dynamics between landlords and tenants, as well as the noteworthy activities of private landowners within this countryside.

Textual Corpora from Northern and Central Afghanistan

As mentioned above, the Bamiyan Papers are not the only textual find from the Bamiyan Valley datable to the pre-Mongol period. In 1931, eleven documents were uncovered by an archaeological expedition to Shahr-i Ghulghula, a fortified urban site, on behalf of DAFA (Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan; Kohzad 1328/1949).[5] These manuscripts, whose current location is unclear, were photographed and sent to Paul Pelliot for further examination in Paris, who handed them over to Vladimir Minorsky. Based on these photographs, Minorsky published a study on eight of these documents, including a complete transcription and translation of a well-preserved long letter (Minorsky 1943: MS A). Since one of the documents is dated 607/1211, Minorsky argued that all the other documents were issued around that year, namely between the last days of Ghurid presence and the conquest of Bamiyan by the Khwārazamshāhīs (Minorsky 1943:86, 96–99).[6]

Two other textual finds did not come from an official excavation site but are said to derive from the Bamiyan area. The first is a marriage contract in Persian, referred to by scholars as *kābīn-nāma*, that was studied by Gianroberto Scarcia (1963; 1966).[7] Dated 470/1078, this contract was a singular find providing a glimpse into Ghaznavid Bamiyan, particularly its geographical features; however, the current whereabouts of this legal document are also unknown. The second item is a Jewish Aramaic amulet in the Schøyen Collection, written on a narrow strip of paper on behalf of a woman named Mahnāz, to protect her from illness and from the evil eye (Shaked 2009). Based on its paleographical features, the amulet is datable to the early eleventh century, i.e., the early Ghaznavid period (Shaked 2009:485–486).

Several other sets of pre-Mongol documents hailing from northern and central Afghanistan have been acquired by European private collections in recent decades. The Khalili Collections contain 32 administrative and legal documents in Arabic, datable from 138/755 to 160/777, namely the early Abbasid period (Khan 2007). These documents belong to a private archive, probably of the family of Mīr b. Bēk, who carries the *nisba* al-Bāmiyānī ("of Bamiyan"; Khan 2007:20–22). The Khalili Collections also include 16 documents, most of which are legal in nature, dealing with the sale of land, marriage and loans. The

[5] On the site of Shahr-i Ghulghula, see Ball (2019:346–347). For a recent archaeological survey of the site, see Bendezu-Sarmiento 2022.

[6] For the most recent studies on the Ghurid dynasty, see O'Neal 2015; Thomas 2018; Patel 2022. On the short-lived Khwārazamshāhī period in Khorasan, see Bosworth 2012. A short historical survey of Bamiyan under both dynasties is provided in Baker and Allchin 1991:27–33.

[7] Many of Scarcia's reading suggestions were amended in Humāyūn 1343/1965; 1344/1965.

documents are related to an unidentified settlement called Istīw, perhaps in the vicinity of the mountainous Ghūr region, and are dated from 593/1197 to 617/1220.[8]

Two other pre-Islamic corpora from northern Afghanistan (ancient Bactria) are also held in private hands. The earlier of the two is a group of 48 Aramaic documents (353–324 BCE), connected to the Achaemenid satrap of Bactria, Akhvamazda, and his governor, Bagavant (Shaked and Naveh 2012). The second group consists of 168 texts (legal documents, lists and accounts, letters and Buddhist texts) written in Bactrian, and datable from the fourth to eighth centuries (Sims-Williams 2000–2007). Significantly, the three latest Bactrian documents were drawn up in the early Abbasid period and are directly connected to the family archive of Mīr b. Bēk (Khan 2007:64–65).

Unlike the materials discussed above that are held in private hands, a collection of some 100 sheets of paper discovered in Ghalmīn (northern Ghūr province), was deposited in the National Archives of Afghanistan in Kabul in 2020. These papers, also known as the "Fīrūzkūh Papers,"[9] date from 573/1177 to 618/1121, thus covering several decades of the Ghurid period and the few years of Khwārazmshāhī rule until the Mongol conquest. The Fīrūzkūh Papers contain letters, legal documents, administrative correspondence, and lists. The largest sub-group in the Fīrūzkūh Papers consists of documents issued by al-Dīwān al-Ikhtiyārī dated around the year 614/1217–1218. These documents were sent to local officials, particularly to ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Rashīd, a storehouse manager in charge of several villages in the Ghalmīn area (Khwaja and Saqi 1388/2010: Nos. 28–50).[10]

As shown above, the number of sources for the study of pre-Mongol Bamiyan and neighboring regions has significantly increased in the last few decades. Among the corpora presented here, the Bamiyan Papers are the largest in number and richest in content. In what follows, I provide a brief survey of the contents of this corpus and present initial findings of an ongoing study of the Bamiyan countryside.

The Bamiyan Papers

Over 80% of the Bamiyan Papers in the NLI Collection may be classified as documentary material, consisting of letters, legal and administrative documents, account books and various lists. These can be roughly divided into two separate groups that differ in many

[8] The documents are currently being studied by the Invisible East Programme at the University of Oxford. For now, see the inventory list of these documents at https://invisibleeast.web.ox.ac.uk/new-persian#collapse3255496.

[9] Similar to the naming convention established by the Invisible East Programme for the Bamiyan Papers, I employ the term Firuzkuh Papers for these documents.

[10] For a study of the documents issued by al-Dīwān al-Ikhtiyārī, with an emphasis on the village headmen (*muqaddam*), see Husseini 2021.

aspects, primarily in date, content and ownership. Below is a brief survey of the main two phases: Phases I and II.[11]

Phase I: First Half of the Fifth/Eleventh Century

Most, if not all, of the documentary material from this phase, was part of an archive of a Jewish family who lived in the city of Bamiyan during the early Ghaznavid period (first half of the fifth/eleventh century).[12] The two individuals whose names figure in this archive are Abū Naṣr Yehuda ben Daniel, and his son, Abū al-Ḥasan Siman-Ṭov. The archive consists of three main types of texts: letters, Islamic legal documents (mainly acknowledgment deeds), and incomplete account books. Most of the letters and account books were written in Early Judeo-Persian, whereas the legal documents were drawn up in Early New Persian.[13] The dating of this archive is based on the legal documents; the earliest text in this group was drawn up in the year 395/1005, and the latest one, in 430/1039 (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.20=4 and 8333.15=4, respectively). In addition, some of the notes in the account books contain dates from the 1330s of the Seleucid Era (1018–1028 CE).

Until the discovery of the archive, the knowledge of the Jews of this area from the advent of Islam up to the Mongol invasion was rather scant, deriving from several archaeological pieces of evidence and short historical accounts in Jewish and Islamic literature (e.g., Fischel 1945; Zand 1988; Kaganovitch 2019). Consequently, the archive in the Bamiyan Papers is of great significance for the study of the Jewish communities in the eastern Iranian world as it sheds light on the everyday life of Jews in urban centers of the Ghaznavid state (367–583/977–1186) and on their interactions with the Muslim majority, as well as of landlords in general.

A network of Jewish communities in the early Ghaznavid domain emerges from the intricate web of personal and economic matters displayed in the correspondence of Yehuda ben Daniel and his son. It moreover appears that the Jewish urban elite was assimilated into the nascent Persianate culture under the Ghaznavids. This can be exemplified by a few poetic texts that accompany the documents, such as a Persian *qaṣīda* written for Siman-Ṭov ben Yehuda, in which the author (probably a Muslim) expresses his hope to receive the wine promised by Siman-Ṭov some time ago (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.7=4, 8333.9=4, 8333.10=4 and 8333.14=4; Yastrebova 2019). Another example is a bifolium containing several anonymous *ghazal*s dating to the tenth or eleventh century (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.195=4). It is quite likely that these *ghazal*s were transcribed into Hebrew script by the copyist.

[11] I use the terms Phase I and Phase II in accordance with the terminology used by the Invisible East Programme. The terms are congruent with the terms Group I and Group II that I used in my survey of the NLI Collection of the Bamiyan Papers (Haim 2019b).

[12] On the early Ghaznavids, see Bosworth 1963.

[13] For a useful discussion of Early New Persian (eighth–twelfth centuries), see Paul 2013a. For Early Judeo-Persian grammar, see Paul 2013b.

Yehuda ben Daniel and his son were undoubtedly part of the urban elite of Bamiyan; the various archive documents show Yehuda ben Daniel's high standing, both within the Jewish community and in wider circles (Haim 2014:16–17). He was a landowner, who purchased agricultural plots of land in villages around Bamiyan and leased them to their inhabitants (Haim 2019b:73). Additionally, as shown below, he appears to have been involved in the trade of agricultural produce cultivated in the Bamiyan area. Through these activities, he managed to accumulate wealth which may have allowed him to consolidate his position as a prominent figure in the region.

Phase II: Second Half of the Sixth/Twelfth–Early Seventh/Thirteenth Centuries

Over half of the items in the NLI Collection belong to Phase II, which comprises letters, account lists and various legal and administrative documents. These documents are dated from the second half of the sixth/twelfth to the early seventh/thirteenth centuries, up to the arrival of the Mongols in eastern Iran. The documents are written in New Persian, with a few in Arabic; no Hebrew-script texts pertain to this phase.[14] This phase serves as an important source for Bamiyan in the Ghurid (540–612/1145–1215) and Khwārazmshāhī (612–618/1215–1221) periods, as the majority of the documents were written between the Ghurid conquest of Bamiyan and the destruction of the latter by Chinggis Khan (Haim 2019b:73–75).

Unlike the Phase I documents, the Phase II documents do not relate to a specific individual or family, and they seem to be divided into several smaller groups, recording the activities of different individuals in the Bamiyan area in the decades preceding the Mongol invasion. Particularly intriguing is a group of nearly 90 sheets of paper connected to a few individuals, notably Abū Bakr b. 'Umar (1155–1185) and 'Alī b. Abū Bakr (1206–1219), presumably the former's son. Forty-seven of these documents were issued by these two, who are referred to as the "storehouse manager" (*anbār-dār*) of a royal storehouse (*anbār-i khāṣṣa*), where tax payments in kind, specifically grains, were kept.[15] The storehouse documents comprise tax receipts (*barāt*, from Arabic *barāʾa*), orders for payment (also called *barāt*), legal acknowledgments, internal correspondence with other state officials,

[14] This set of documents is currently being studied by the Invisible East Programme.

[15] The set of documents connected to Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar and ʿAlī b. Abū Bakr will be the center of a forthcoming publication by Azad and Firoozbakhsh. The following discussion is based on my cataloging work of the NLI Collection in 2017 (published in Haim 2019b) and the further findings by Azad and Firoozbakhsh, which will be published in this forthcoming publication. For now, see Azad and Firoozbakhsh 2020. See also the two blog posts dealing with these documents on the Invisible East website: (1) https://invisibleeast.web.ox.ac.uk/article/rural-administration-society-and-economy-in-the-bamiyan-area; (2) https://invisibleeast.web.ox.ac.uk/article/rural-administration-society-and-economy-in-the-bamiyan-area-part-2.

and lists. Over 20 documents are tax receipts issued by Abū Bakr b. ʿUmar in the years 564–565/1169, with another smaller sub-group from the early seventh/thirteenth century.[16]

The documents of the two storehouse managers describe the activities of the second tier of the administrative hierarchy responsible for collecting tax contributions and managing loans to the rural population. The viewpoint of these middle-rank officials uncovers the fiscal system in Bamiyan from the village and its peasants (*barzigarān*), the local police force (*shiḥna*) to the *dīwān* and its officials.

While acknowledging the significance of the Phase II documents, the ensuing discussion relates primarily to the findings from my study of the Phase I documents, specifically the Yehuda ben Daniel archive. This archive is one of the few recorded cases of a long-term relationship between an urban private landowner and peasants in pre-Mongol Iran, thus providing unparalleled evidence for its agricultural and socio-political landscape. The available source materials, especially local and dynastic chronicles, focus mainly on the upper echelons of society and dominant social and political actors.[17] Based on a rigorous reading, translation and contextual analysis of the archive documents, I attempt to shed light on the rural population and the small landowners, who were central in the agricultural, and hence the socio-political landscape.

The evidence offered by this material is compared to and contextualized within the existing body of scholarship, notably the work of Ann Lambton (1953; 1988). To date, Lambton's work continues to be the authoritative reference sources for understanding rural administration and land management in the pre-Mongol and Mongol Iranian world. Lacking original documents similar to the ones presented here, Lambton utilized narrative sources, such as chronicles and geographical works, and compilations of administrative documents (Lambton 1988:365–372). Furthermore, she focused on the western part of the Iranian Plateau, especially the Qumm area, which differs greatly from the Bamiyan region in its ecological, topographic and demographic realities. Nevertheless, her work still remains the best comparative source for the study of the Bamiyan Papers.

This paper discusses two textual specimens from the Yehuda ben Daniel archive, which demonstrate the uniqueness of the Phase I documents (for the two texts with commentary, see *Appendix*, below). The first, Text A (Fig. 1), is a letter sent by a rural community to a landowner, possibly Yehuda ben Daniel, in which the villagers protest against the landowner's representative. The second specimen, Text B (Fig. 2), is a page from one of Yehuda ben Daniel's account books, which elucidates his dealings with the villagers in the village of Rām K.ray (or K.rī?). Alongside the examination of other relevant documents

[16] It is possible that the eight documents discussed by Minorsky had some connection with the documents preserved at the NLI; nearly 40 documents from the NLI are datable to the early seventh/thirteenth century. The same can be said of the Scarcia document.

[17] For dynastic chronicles from the eastern Iranian world in the pre-Mongol period, see, for example, Bayhaqī 1373/2005; Jūzjānī 1342–43/1963–64.

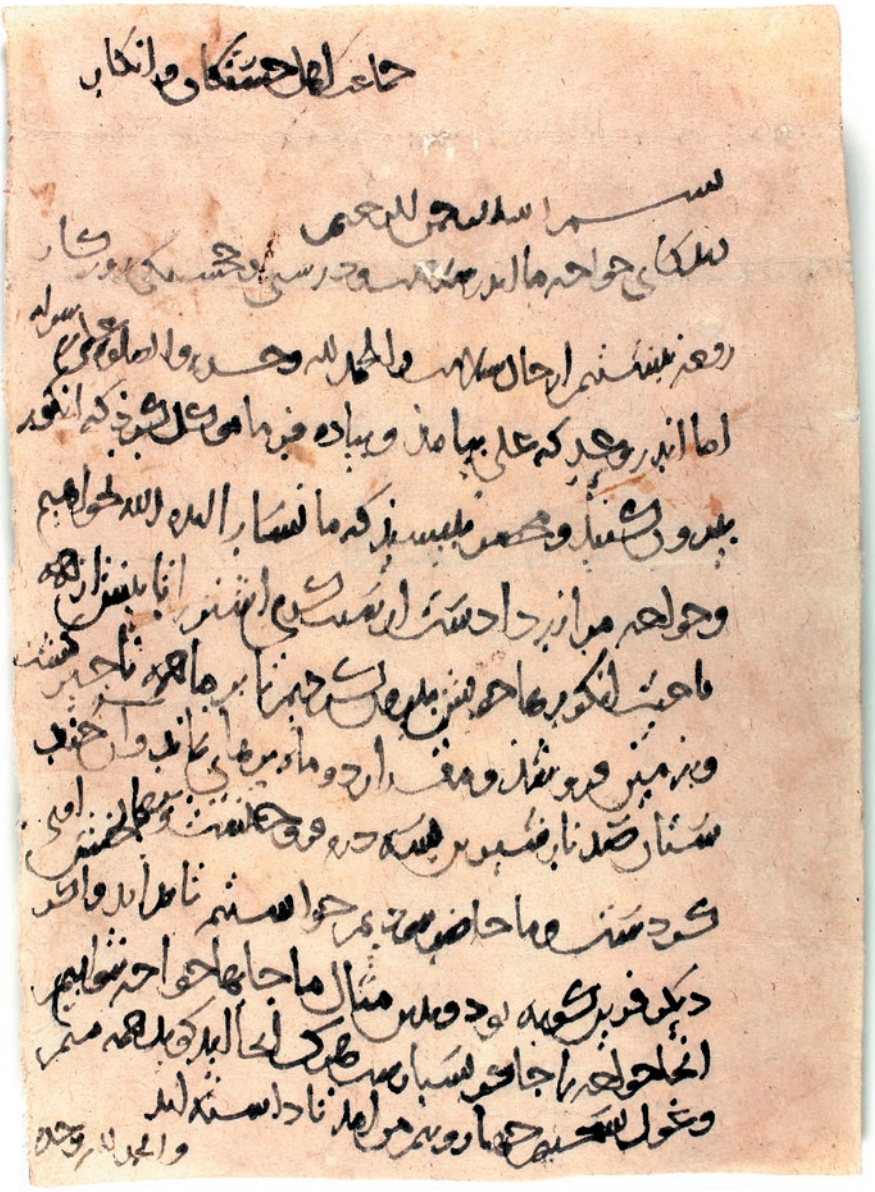

Fig. 1. Text A: Jerusalem, NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.18=4, recto
(courtesy of the National Library of Israel).

within the archive, my aim is to offer a sketch of Yehuda ben Daniel's financial activities. Additionally, I endeavor to outline an initial portrayal of the interactions between Yehuda ben Daniel and the rural population, with a specific emphasis on his tenants. In pursuing this, I aim to contribute to filling the gap in our understanding, underscored by Lambton's observation (1988:132) that, "there is little detailed information concerning the relations between landowners ... on the one hand, and the peasants on the other."

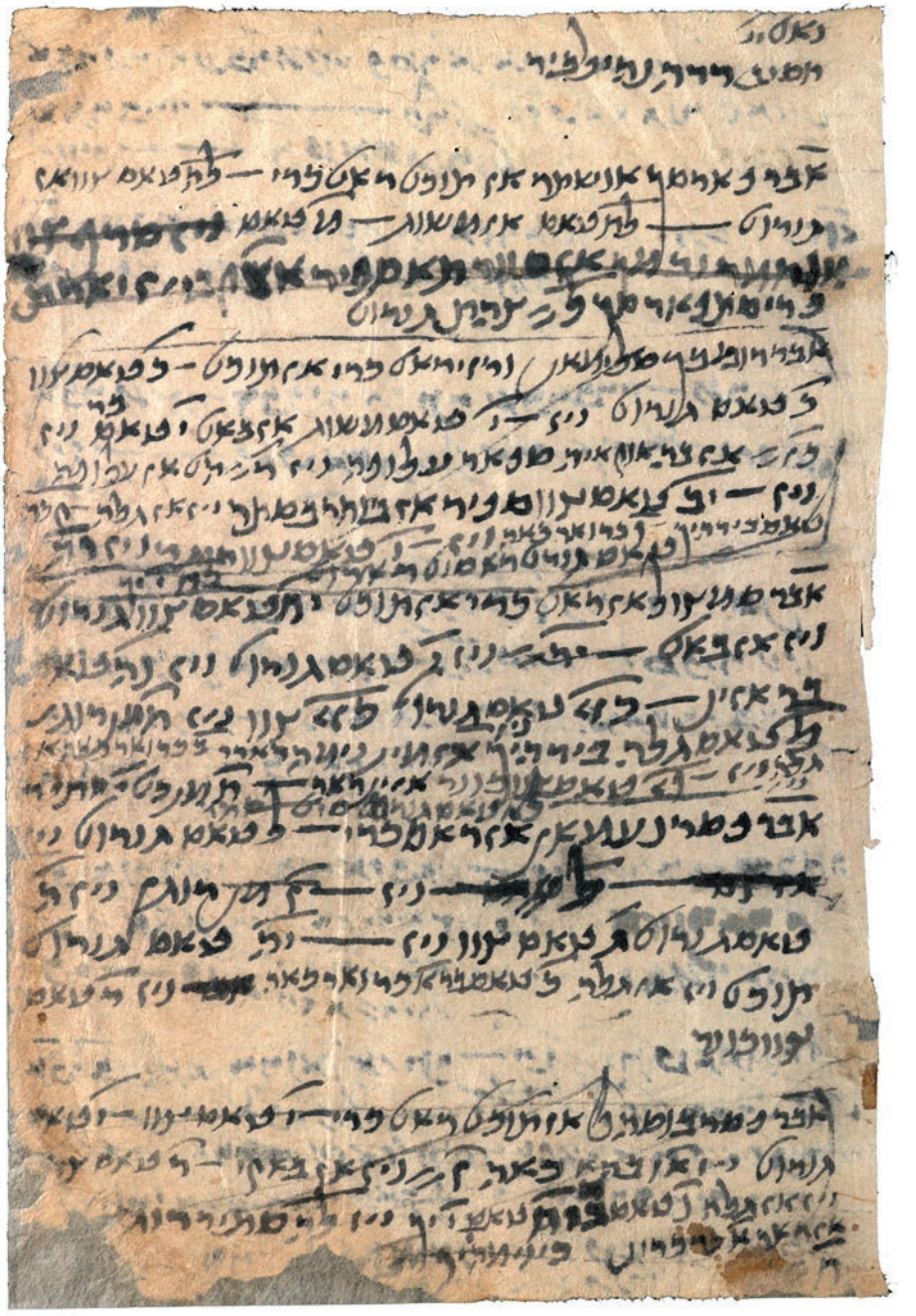

Fig. 2. Text B: Jerusalem, NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, fol. 11v
(courtesy of the National Library of Israel).

Yehuda ben Daniel and Bamiyan's Hinterland[18]

As mentioned above, Yehuda ben Daniel's archive records his economic activities in the Bamiyan countryside. Specifically, his account books (singular form: *daftar*), which constitute the majority of the material preserved at the NLI, list many debts in cash or kind (or both), owed to him by numerous individuals. The leaves from the account books housed at the NLI are grouped into two. The first group comprises a thread-bound account book, totaling 28 leaves (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4). The inner logic behind the arrangement of the leaves in the book is not clear as there seems to be no discernible connection between the content of one leaf and the next, and some of the leaves are even written upside down; further examination may enlighten this issue. The second group consists of 16 loose leaves (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4) that were once part of a specific account book (or books). This is evidenced by the presence of two holes on the crease of most leaves, through which the thread passed.

Amidst this complexity, one can discern several types of sections into which the entries were organized. A recurring term in the account books and other documents is the *nāma* (lit., "letter, epistle"), which appears to be a type of section in the account books. The *nāma*-type section specifies the transactions conducted on a typical month of the Hebrew calendar. For example, a debt of 15 bowls (*ṭās*) of wheat owed to Yehuda ben Daniel is indicated as pertaining to "(the year) 1338 (of the Seleucid Era; =1026–27 CE), the *nāma* of (the month of) Adar" (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.25=4, verso).[19] Moreover, an income report of several parcels of land is designated as the "[…] *nāma* of (the month of) Marcheshvan, (the year) 1337 (of the Seleucid Era; =1025–26 CE)" (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4, 8v:1).[20]

Another type of section appearing in the account books is the *ḥisēb* ("account"; an *imāla* form of Arabic *ḥisāb*). The division into *ḥisēb* sections is geographical, each dedicated to a mountain valley (*darra*) or village (*dih*). I have managed to trace the *ḥisēbs* of the following places: Nahīlbid (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, fol. 11v; Text B, Fig. 2);[21] Kīran (?; NLI, Ms. He. 8333.206=4, fol. 15r); Surkhdar (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4, fol. 1r); Wārī (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4, fol. 11r); and Wānshān (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4, fol. 12v).

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[18] The present section contains the preliminary results of my ongoing research of Yehuda ben Daniel's archive, which will culminate in a future publication on Bamiyan's hinterland during the Ghaznavid period.

[19] The expression *nāma-yi Adar* is mentioned in an archival note on the backside of an acknowledgment deed dated Muḥarram 418/February 1027. The reading suggested here is a correction meant to replace the previous reading *nāma andar* (Haim 2019a:428).

[20] In the top right corner of the folio, there exists a gap where the word preceding *nāma* was originally written. It is plausible that *nāma* is part of a longer term, such as *dīwān-nāma*. In one notable instance, Yehuda ben Daniel writes: "In the name of God. This *dīwān-nāma* of (the month of) Marcheshvan was issued in the year 1330 (of the Seleucid Era). May God bestow a good sign, a nice sign, upon Yehuda ben Daniel. Thousands of greetings." (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, fol. 10v:1–4).

[21] The relation of Text B to the other side of the folio (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, 11r) has not yet been established. Therefore, it is not discussed in this article.

Furthermore, one *ḥisēb* is dedicated to "the city" (*shahr*), probably referring to Bamiyan (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4, fol. 19r).

To date, I have identified only one toponym in the list—Surkhdar (often spelled Sughdar in modern sources), a valley and a village situated a few kilometers west of Bamiyan (Adamec 1985:69, 769). Two other toponyms, Khustgān and Angār (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.18=4, recto; Text A, Fig. 1) can be identified with two neighboring villages about 80 km northeast of Bamiyan in the present-day Dahana-yi Ghūrī district, Baghlān province.[22] As the work on the archive progresses, it is hoped that more places will be identified on the map. For now, my working premise is that Yehuda ben Daniel owned lands in different villages near Bamiyan and was strongly linked to its countryside.[23]

Significantly, the name of at least one village is attested in each *ḥisēb* section, enabling us to attribute different localities to these valleys, and better understand the geographical distribution of rural communities in pre-Mongol Bamiyan. For example, the *ḥisēb* of the Nahīlbid Valley (Text B) lists the debts of five individuals from the village of Rām K.ray. The name of this village occurs throughout the archive, demonstrating Yehuda ben Daniel's involvement in the agricultural and commercial affairs of the village. Moreover, Yehuda ben Daniel owned lands there; the latest acknowledgment deed in the archive (430/1039) records a three-year lease of three parcels of land in Rām K.ray: Pūlar, Sūyrak and Bahārak (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.15=4, recto; Haim 2019a:432–434). Interestingly, the names of these parcels of land recur in the above-mentioned *nāma* of Marḥeshvan, dated 13 years earlier to 1026 CE (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4, fol. 8v:9–12), of which Yehuda is clearly the owner. The landowner, Yehuda ben Daniel, received his share of the crops as initially agreed on with the tenant and stated in the lease contract. In this document, the tenant, Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan, leases these three parcels of land for three years, and he is also given a loan of 42 bowls (Persian *ṭās*) of grain and one and a half donkey-loads (*kharwār*) of straw. After this period, Ḥusayn is required to hand over thrice the amount given to him, namely 126 bowls of grain, and four and a half donkey-loads of straw. The tenant also declares that if anything happens to the provisions or to the state's straw (Persian *kāh-i sulṭānī*), he shall pay it off (Haim 2019a:432–433). In other words, the tenant is fully responsible to repay the loan in any possible scenario of damage incurred to the yields. The mention of the "state's straw" is intriguing, probably denoting that some taxes were paid in kind to the Ghaznavid authorities. Perhaps the reference to this tax is meant to eliminate the possibility of repaying the landowner's share with taxes due to the state treasury. Several more obligations are imposed upon the tenant: (1) to sow the land; (2) to keep it prosperous; (3) and to fulfill the "obligation of cultivation" (*ḥaqq-i warzī*; Haim 2019a:433). The latter is an obscure term

[22] The following coordinates are specified: خوستگان (Khūstgān, the approved form)—lat. 35°23'39''N, long. 68°19'39''E; انگار—lat. 35°23'50''N, long. 68°20'19''E. Information retrieved from the database of the Geographic Names Server (National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, US Military), available at https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSHome/index.html.

[23] On the fragmented landownership in villages in pre-Mongol Iran, see Lambton 1988:131.

that probably entails a set of requirements to be fulfilled by the tenants, first and foremost ensuring fine yields in terms of both quality and quantity.

The lease contract demonstrates the view that in the medieval Iranian world, the prevalent method of exploitation was crop-sharing, as highlighted in the works of Lambton (1988:133). This view is also supported by other texts datable to the early eleventh century, such as a fully preserved letter in Early New Persian that stands out among the Phase I documents as it reflects the peasants' viewpoint rather than that of the urban landowner (Text A). It was sent from the community (*jamāʿat*) of the villages Khustgān and Angār. As stated above, these two toponyms can be identified with two neighboring villages in the present-day Baghlān province located about 80 km northeast of Bamiyan. The recipient is addressed as "the master" (*khwāja*). It is clear from this letter that its recipient, presumably Yehuda ben Daniel, owned land in the areas of Khustgān and Angār.

The text is a letter of complaint by the peasants about irregularities in the division of the yield of grapes and pomegranates by the landowner's representative. The modalities for the division have been established in a contractual agreement between the residents of the villages and the landowner, setting the foundation for their relationship. The senders of the letter protest against the misconduct and unprofessional behavior of the landowner's representative,[24] who was sent by a certain ʿAlī, possibly an employee of the landowner.

The appearance of the name ʿAlī suggests that perhaps either Yehuda ben Daniel or his son was the addressee of the letter. One of Yehuda ben Daniel's wage workers was indeed called ʿAlī. For example, in a letter sent from Ghazna to Bamiyan, the sender (Yaʾir ben Ēmēd) refers to a previous letter by the recipient (Yehuda's son, Abū al-Ḥasan Siman-Ṭov): "You had said that 200 *dirhams* were lost by the arrival of ʿAlī and Fārisak" (Haim 2016:111). The two individuals were possibly related. A certain ʿAlī is described as the brother-in-law (*khusūr bura*) of Fārisak Ushtur in the account books (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4, fol. 24v:11). Fārisak (the Arabic proper name Fāris followed by the Persian diminutive suffix -*ak*) is probably Fārisak Ushtur mentioned in Text B. He is mentioned more than ten times in Yehuda ben Daniel's account books and seems to be employed by Yehuda ben Daniel as a collector of debt and transporter of goods. Perhaps the noun *ushtur* (lit., "camel") attached to his proper name indicates that he drove camels as part of his line of work.

Returning to the letter, the representative claims that the "master" had given him the financial means to rent camels to ensure a speedy transport of the agricultural produce from the villages. However, due to what must have been perceived by the peasants as the representative's lax action, the grapes never arrived at the (unspecified) destination, the cargo was ruined beyond repair and the sale nullified.

The senders further state that a certain individual, probably the same representative, sold 100 sweet pomegranates for a mere three *dirhams*. The remonstrative tone of this part of the

[24] The representative is referred to as *piyāda* (lit. "foot-soldier; peon"). On this term, see below, Text A, Commentary.

letter implies another attempt by the villagers to discredit the representative. The senders clearly felt that the sum of three *dirhams* was too low. In addition, the representative took his "share" (of his wage?) without the villagers being present, which seems to have been a breach of protocol.

Furthermore, the tenants express concern, or perhaps even an implied threat, that the recurrence of such actions may prevent them from further cultivating "the places of the master" (*jāyhā(-yi) khwāja*). This would have caused the landowner significant financial damage, as "the master has many servants there" (*ānjā khwāja-rā chākar bisyār-ast*). The request continues that the landowner should inform in advance the next person sent to their rural community, of the contractual arrangement, noting their wish that no future misconduct or errors ensue. A few insights can be extracted from this fascinating letter:

(1) It reflects the trajectory of the agricultural produce cultivated on private lands, namely, the produce was collected and loaded on the back of camels in the village, and then transported to the marketplace, where it was sold in exchange for other commodities or currency.

(2) In accord with previous scholarship on agreements between landlords and peasants (Lambton 1988:133), the letter provides evidence of a structured and organized process for the collection of agricultural produce, established through a contractual arrangement between the landlord and the peasant, explicitly outlining the distribution of the yield and delineating the responsibilities of each party. The letter reveals, for example, that the transportation costs were covered by the landowner and provided by his representative, who also supervised the loading of agricultural produce on the camels and was in charge of the safe arrival of the agricultural produce to its destination. Interestingly, the mention of the sale of pomegranates implies that both the representative and the villagers were present in sale transactions outside the village. Why would the villagers be involved in the sale of what appears to be the landowner's share? A possible answer is that the villagers' share may also have been transported out of the village, indicating that it exceeded the amount required for their subsistence, and the villagers were able to sell some of their produce for their own profit.

(3) The possible threat made by the tenants demonstrates the landowner's dependance on them for his economic success, as any breach of contract by the landowner or his representative would result in a severe reaction by the tenants. Without the farmers' labor, the landowner would not be able to make profit from his land, and the fact that the tenants were able to complain, and perhaps even threaten to sever their ties with their landlord, shows that the landowner could not replace his tenants immediately, causing a vacuum in land cultivation and a consequent loss of revenue. This observation aligns with Lambton's analysis regarding the peasants' potential to abandon the land when burdened excessively by either the state or the landlord. As Lambton aptly points out, considering the absence of viable alternatives, the prospect of peasants fleeing their land served as a restricting factor on the excessive demands of the state and landlords (Lambton 1988:185).

Whether the recipient of the letter was Yehuda ben Daniel or not, his role as landowner in the Bamiyan area is evident from the archive documents kept at the NLI. At the same

time, it seems that his financial affairs with the rural population extended beyond lease transactions. A legal document drawn up in the community of Wārī (*jamāʿat-i Wārī*), for example, involves a *waqf* land, indicating that Yehuda ben Daniel's ties to the rural population were not always connected to his landed property (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.215=4). This document describes a purchase by Yehuda ben Daniel of crop yields, fifteen *qafīz* of grain in total, cultivated on the *waqf* land of Aḥmad and Muḥammad, sons of Chach.[25] In addition, unlike the lease contract mentioned above, most of the legal deeds in Yehuda ben Daniel's archive are acknowledgment deeds dealing with debts in currency or in kind, in which no mention of the sale or lease of land is attested. Moreover, in the account books, the villagers' names, that are mostly connected to debts owed to Yehuda ben Daniel, outnumber the plots of land belonging to him.[26]

Since the reasons for the debts are not usually indicated in the legal documents and the account books, it is difficult to fully grasp the nature of the interactions between Yehuda ben Daniel and his debtors. However, a meticulous examination of the account books and the terms appearing in them may shed light on this matter. This may be exemplified by Text B, the *ḥisēb* of the Nahīlbid Valley. It is arranged in five entries, each noting the debt owed to Yehuda ben Daniel by an inhabitant of the village of Rām K.ray. The five debtors are: Fārisak Ushtur; Dumbak(?) b. Sulaymān; Sāmjūl; the son of Nuʻmān; and the son of Bū Sahl.[27]

Each debt in the records includes at least one of the following sections: (1) Seed (*tukhm*); (2) Loan (*bām*); and (3) Grain (*ghalla*). The Seed section likely pertains to the provision of seed credit extended to the villagers for cultivation in their fields. According to Text B, the villagers of Rām K.ray sowed seeds of wheat, barley and mushung, a small black bean commonly found in Afghanistan. The practice of granting grain-seed loans appears to have been widespread in pre-Mongol Iran, although the available evidence primarily focuses on the assistance provided by tax-collectors (*ʿāmil*), and not the landlord, to the peasants (Lambton 1988:162).[28]

The second section in the above list, namely Loan, encompasses wheat, barley, oil and *shiyānī*, the local designation of a silver *dirham* (Haim 2016:114–115). In several instances, the writer may provide the reason for a monetary debt. For example, it is stated that Dumbak(?) b. Sulaymān owes 27 *shiyānī* in exchange for a cover of a plowshare (*wiqāya-yi sipār*) and fodder. From this short reference, it may be inferred that Yehuda ben Daniel was

[25] The patronym Chach may also be read as Jaj, since the Arabic letter *jīm* is used to represent the consonants *j* and *ch*. The document is currently being prepared for publication.

[26] The archive documents housed at the NLI record approximately ten plots of lands owned by Yehuda ben Daniel, whereas the peasants' names mentioned add up to nearly one hundred.

[27] These five names recur in an undated report listing the amounts of threshed grain (*rāsh*) handed over by them to Yehuda ben Daniel (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4, fol. 17r:2–8).

[28] In the context of Ghurid Bamiyan, see also Azad's argument regarding the possibility of loans given to peasants by the state's granary (*anbār-i dhakhīra*). See *https://invisibleeast.web.ox.ac.uk/article/rural-administration-society-and-economy-in-the-bamiyan-area-part-2*.

the supplier of necessary provisions and goods for the subsistence peasants in the Bamiyan area.[29]

The Grain section comprises wheat, barley and straw. Intriguingly, certain grains within this section are labeled as tithe-exempt (*bī-dah-yak*). It is plausible that this designation refers to grain for which the tithe had already been collected, indicating their exemption from further taxes. In general, the payment of the tithe by certain peasants is indicated in the account books. These mentions of tithe possibly demonstrate the significance of the state tax. As Lambton points out, the state tax was a prerequisite for the distribution of grain shares, as the apportionment of grain between the landlord and tenants occurred usually after the payment of the state tax (Lambton 1988:133).

The mention of the tithe by Yehuda ben Daniel raises fascinating questions about his activities. One might wonder why he included this information in his account books: Was he functioning as a tax-collector on behalf of the Ghaznavid state? Based on several Cairo Genizah documents, Goitein considered that financial investments in rural property in the countryside were often made by individuals with connections to the land, particularly tax-farmers and state officials (Goitein 1967:265–266).[30] An additional argument in favor of Yehuda's role as a state functionary is his engagement in seed-grain loans, which historical sources attribute to tax-collectors, as shown above. Therefore, these findings lend credibility to the possibility that Yehuda ben Daniel was indeed involved with the state. However, further evidence is required to substantiate this argument.

The distinction between the Grain and Loan sections is unclear. The two categories are also attested in an acknowledgment deed dated Rabīʿ II 411/July–August 1020 (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.21=4; Haim 2019a:423–425). The acknowledgment concerns the debt of a certain ʿAlī b. Abī Sinīn, who owes Yehuda ben Daniel 338 bowls of grain, two young lambs, three castrated lambs and 121 *shiyānī*. This debt is arranged according to two categories: 120 bowls of grain pertain to the "account of grain of two years" (*ḥisēb-i ghalla-yi du sāla*), while the rest is regarded as a "loan" (*wām*, equivalent to *bām*). The same ʿAlī b. Abī Sinīn is mentioned in the account books as owing Yehuda ben Daniel a loan of 317 and a half bowls of grain, four young lambs and 120 *shiyānī* and, as well as 50 *shiyānī* for the "grain of the (parcels of) land" (*ghalla-yi zamīnhā*; NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, fol. 16r:1–3).

In both occurrences, ʿAlī b. Abī Sinīn is described as "the learned, the townsman" (*adabī shahrī*).[31] This indicates that ʿAlī b. Abī Sinīn was not a villager, but rather that he lived in an urban environment, perhaps he was even an urban landowner. This assumption

[29] For other monetary debts related to the term "cover" (*wiqāya*), see, for example, NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, fol. 2v, l. 7; fol. 7r, l. 19.

[30] The question of whether Yehuda ben Daniel also engaged in tax-farming remains open. I intend to address this question in a future study that delves into his interactions with the state.

[31] Alternatively, the expression אדבי שהרי may be interpreted as a *nisba* derived from a toponym (*Adab-i Shahr*? *Arb-i Shahr*?).

may be strengthened by a short debt entry in the archive; a debt of 12 bowls of barley is owed by ʿAlī, the servant (*chākar*) of ʿAlī b. Abī Sinīn (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, fol. 16r:7). As shown in Text A, the term *chākar* may refer to rural tenants.

If this interpretation is correct, it is conceivable that Yehuda ben Daniel's financial networks extended beyond the scope of the villagers, also encompassing fellow urban landowners. It suggests that he engaged in loans and the sale of goods to both the rural and urban populations. Additionally, he was possibly involved in other financial and commercial practices. Some of the debts recorded in the archive reflect the practice of advance sale (Arabic *bayʿ salam*), such a sale occurring when the object of sale is not available at the time of the contract and is based on the prepayment of the buyer and the seller's guarantee to deliver the object of sale within a pre-determined period (Latham 2012). As apparent in several dozen documents from Egypt (Bondioli 2021:114), the advance sale of yields was a prevalent practice, in which the contract was concluded between two parties at the beginning of the growing season when the crops are unripe. In exchange for the payment made by the buyer, the seller promises to deliver an amount of the crop determined by both parties after the harvest.[32]

Although no known term connected to the advance sale, specifically *salam*, is attested in the eleventh-century archive, such practice was indeed common in the Bamiyan area on the eve of the Mongol invasion. This is evidenced by two Phase II documents issued in 617/1220 (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.62=4) and 618/1221 (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.67=4, verso). These two documents serve as debt acknowledgments, sharing a similar formulaic structure with the eleventh-century acknowledgment deeds found in Yehuda ben Daniel's archive. As a result, it is plausible to consider that the early acknowledgment deeds, along with certain debt entries in the account books, might have originated from prearranged sales between Yehuda ben Daniel and the rural residents of the Bamiyan region.

So, who was Yehuda ben Daniel? Based on the evidence presented here, he emerges as an individual with a diverse economic profile: an urban landowner, a merchant primarily involved in grain trade (and potentially other commodities), and a moneylender. Was he also a tax-collector on behalf of the Ghaznavid state in the Bamiyan countryside? He seems to be involved in the business of grain-seed loans, which was normally practiced by state officials in pre-Mongol Iran, and his personal notes contain information about tax payments made by villagers. When we consider the rural landowners in eleventh-century Egypt, it is not surprising to find individuals engaged in similar multifaceted economic pursuits, as for example, these landowners often assumed roles as tax-farmers and dealt in various goods (Wickham 2019:81–87; 2023:64, 116).

Yehuda ben Daniel's participation in agricultural production does not appear to have been a common practice among Jews in the medieval period. The Cairo Genizah offers numerous

[32] For a detailed discussion of the advance sale of grain in documents dating from pre-Fatimid and Fatimid Egypt, possibly indicating the peasants' tax indebtedness, see Bondioli 2021:123-136.

records of commerce and urban occupations in Egypt, including manufacturing, services and educated and religious professions (Goldberg and Lieberman 2021:417–418, 428–429). In contrast, there is little evidence of Jewish individuals engaging in wheat trading (Goitein 1967:211; Goldberg 2012:97–98) or owning lands in the countryside (Goitein 1967:116–117). This discrepancy has been explained by the possible exclusion of Jews from owning estates on the grounds of religious identity (Goldberg and Lieberman 2021:428–429),[33] or their deliberate avoidance of the grain trade, which held strategic importance for the state, due to concern about anti-Jewish sentiment in times of crisis (Goldberg and Lieberman 2021:438).

Notwithstanding the considerable distance between Egypt and Afghanistan, perhaps the occupational trends among Jews in the Ghaznavid state resembled those observed in Fatimid Egypt. In this context, Yehuda ben Daniel's ability to transcend religious boundaries and invest in rural landed property was likely due to his elevated social status and financial capabilities. At the same time, within the broader urban elite, Yehuda ben Daniel's economic activities and roles, including land ownership, grain trading, money lending, and possibly tax collection, reflect the prevailing practices and conditions of the pre-Mongol Iranian world, and more broadly, the medieval Islamic world.

Conclusions

The meticulous study of the recent discoveries of textual hoards from Afghanistan, including the Yehuda ben Daniel archive, holds the potential to bridge a significant gap and provide a new vantage point on the social and economic history of pre-Mongol Iran. This is exemplified here through the analysis of Text A, which sheds light on the significant influence of rural tenants over their urban landowners. Such insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics that governed the relationships between these two parties. Additionally, Text B, and the account books in general, reveal the multiple roles of an eleventh-century member of the Jewish urban elite. Not only was Yehuda ben Daniel a landowner deeply integrated into Bamiyan's countryside, but he also functioned as a moneylender and merchant involved in the grain trade. While he may have been an exceptional figure in the Jewish community, further exploration of his archive raises questions about the 'traditional' or 'typical' Jewish professions, thus challenging generalizations about Jews in the medieval Islamic world.

Delving deeper into the archive raises other intriguing issues pertaining to Yehuda ben Daniel's financial activities, including the extent of his landed property, his potential role as a tax collector in the countryside, and his involvement in broader trade networks spanning the Ghaznavid state. Presently, these questions remain unanswered, leaving room for further exploration and investigation in other documents in his archive and comparisons with Phase

[33] Cf. Goitein's assertion (1967:116) that "whoever could afford it, possessed land and looked after its yields, whether this was a Muslim judge in Ghaza, Palestine, or the scribe of a Jewish court in Old Cairo."

II documents, as well as with documents from other parts of the medieval Islamic world, notably the Cairo Genizah.

APPENDIX: TEXTS A AND B

Graphic signs used in the edition and translation of the texts are as follows:
[ ] Square brackets indicate lacunas in the manuscript and may comprise partly legible letters, words or phrases and suggestions for their reconstruction.
( ) Round brackets indicate complementary suggestions for translation of words and phrases which do not appear in the original text.
~~abc~~ Crossed-out text indicates deletions by the author of the text.
[a], [b], [c] Superscript indicates text written above the line.

Text A: A Commercial Letter (undated)

Jerusalem, NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.18=4. Paper. 31.8 × 23.3 cm. Recto; the verso is blank.

1. جماعت اهل خستگان وانگار
2. بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم
3. زندگانی خواجه ما اندر سلامت ودرستی وخجستگی روزگار
4. رقعه نبشتیم از حال سلامت والحمد لله وحده والصلوه علی رسوله
5. اما اندر وعد که علی بیامذ وپیاده فر ما موکل کرذ که انگور
6. بیرون کنیذ ومحضر نبیسیذ که ما نسا را ایده الله نخواهیم
7. وخواجه مرا زر دادست از سبب کری اشتر را تا پیش از همه
8. ناحیت انگورها خویش بیرون کردیم تا بر ما همه ناچیز گشت
9. وبزمین فرو شذ ومقدار دو ماه برهایی بماند وآن چند
10. بستان صد نار شیرین بسه درم فروختست وبرها بخش اوی
11. کردست وما حاضر نبودیم خواستیم تا بداند واگر
12. دیگر فرین گونه بود وبدین مثال ما جایها خواجه نتوانیم
13. آنجا خواجه را چاکر بسیارست هرک آنجا آید گوید همه سیم
14. وغول سختیم چهار ونیم من آمد تا دانسته اید
15. والحمد لله وحده

Translation

1. The community of the people of Khustgān and Angār
2. In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
3. (May) the life of our master (be long) in peace, good health and good fortune.
4. We wrote the letter in a state of peace, praise be to God alone, and His blessing upon His messenger.

5. As to the set time when ʿAlī came and appointed over us a peon (who told us to):
6. "Send out the grapes and write a report (saying): 'We do not want N.sā, may God support him.'
7. The master has given me gold for hiring camels."
8. We sent out our grapes first in the region. But all our fruit was ruined and
9. dumped to the ground; a total of two months of fruit was left (behind). And as for (the yield from) those few
10. gardens, he has sold one hundred sweet pomegranates for three *dirhams*, and has taken his cut from the (sale of the) fruit
11. in our absence (lit., 'and we were not present'). We wanted to inform him (about this matter). If
12. this happens again and in the same manner, we will not be able (to cultivate) the master's lands (lit., 'places').
13. The master has many servants there; whomever he sends there, he should tell (him that).
14. We weighed all the produce(?), (it) amounted to four and a half *mann*. He should take notice of this.
15. Praise be to God alone.

Commentary

Line 5: وعد – the reading وعید ("threat") is also possible. There may be a diacritical sign below the word.

پیاده – The term *piyāda* should be interpreted as a wage laborer dispatched to the village on behalf of the landowner. It is important to note the author's critical tone, which could also imply connotations of "ignorant" or "unskilled." Given the context, the conventional meaning of *piyāda* as a "foot-soldier" does not seem to be suitable here.

Line 6: نسا – the reading نیسا (Nīsā) is also possible. The following blessing strengthens the possibility that it is a private name.

Line 7: کری – a form derived from the Arabic word *kirāʾ*.

Line 8: انگورها خویش – the *iḍāfa* marker is omitted.

بر ما – another possible, though less likely, reading is برها: "But all the fruit was ruined …". Cf. برها appearing in l. 10.

Lines 9–10: وآن چند بستان – doubtful reading. Alternatively, the phrase may be read وآن چند ستان (*wa-ān chand sitān*), where the word *sitān* is most likely the imperative form of the verb *sitadan* ('to take'): "And take those several (*mann* of fruit that are left)." See the comment regarding line 14. Another possibility, though less likely, is that چند ستان (*chand-sitān*) is a compound form consisting of *chand* ("few, several") and the present stem *sitān*-. Based on this suggestion, the following translation may be offered: "and that who takes the few(?, or "beggar"?) has sold one hundred sweet pomegranates from three dirhams."

Line 12: جایها خواجه – the *iḍāfa* marker is omitted.

نتوانیم – the modal verb lacks its complement.

Line 13: چاکر – The term *chākar* may be understood here as "tenant," who lived on lands owned by the addressee. It is attested twice in the Judeo-Persian account books: A certain ʿAlī who is the *chākar* of ʿAlī b. Abū Sinīn (Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, fol. 16r:7); and Yūsuf, the *chākar* of Maṣṣūr (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, fol. 12r:17).[34]
Line 13–14: همه سیم و غول سختیم چهار ونیم آمد – This short passage probably refers to the remainder of the produce left, although the meaning of *sīm wa-ghūl* (?) is unclear to me.

Text B: A Page from an Account Book (*daftar*) Belonging to Yehuda ben Daniel (first half of eleventh century)

Jerusalem, NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.206=4, fol. 11. Paper. 24.5 × 18.0 cm. Verso.

1. נאם יי׳
2. חסיב דרה נהילביד
3. אבר פארסך אושתר אז תוכם ראם כרי --- לה׳ טאס צוו אז
4. גנדום --- לח׳ טאס אז משוג --- מ׳ ~~טאס ניז סרף צוו~~
5. ~~מוחמד נרמך אז כונד תא ספיד א>׳ קביז זיאדת~~
6. פדיסת פארסך כ׳ // צהת גנדום
7. אבר דומבך סלימאן ורזי ראם כרי אז תוכם --- כ׳ טאס צוו
8. כ׳ טאס גנדום ניז --- י׳ טאס משוג אז באם י׳ טאס בר ניז
9. כז׳ // אז בהא וקאיה ספאר עלופה ניז ד׳ // הם אז עלופה
10. ניז יב׳ טאס צוו ספיד אז בוחרב סתד ניז אז גלה --- קלה׳
11. טאס בידהיך --- ו׳ כרואר כאה ניז --- י׳ טאס צוו דיגר ניז יה׳
12. טאס גנדם רא סים דאדום כח׳ י׳ יך
13. אבר סמצול אז ראם כרי אז תוכם יח׳ טאס צוו גנדום
14. ניז אז באם --- יד׳ // ניז י׳ טאס גנדום ניז נה׳ טאס
15. בר אזין --- כז>׳ טאס גנדום כז>׳ צוו ניז ח׳ מן רוגן
16. מ׳ טאס גלה בידהיך ניז א׳ זמין נימה דארד ב׳ כרואר כאה אז
17. גלה ניז --- ו>׳ טאס צוו כונד אזין דאד --- ח׳ מן כם י׳ סתיר
18. כא׳ טאס גנדום סים סתד
19. אבר פסר נעמאן אז ראם כרי --- ל׳ טאס גנדום ניז
20. ~~אז צוו(?)~~ --- ל׳ **טאס** // --- ניז --- ז׳ מן רוגן ניז ה׳
21. טאס גנדום ג׳ טאס צוו ניז --- יה׳ טאס גנדום
22. תוכם ניז אז גלה כ׳ טאס בר א׳ כרואר כאה **אבר** ניז ד׳ טאס
23. צוו כונד
24. אבר פסר בוסהל אז תוכם ראם כרי --- י׳ טאס צוו --- י׳ טא[ס]

[34] Written *mṣwr*, the common spelling of the Arabic name Manṣūr in the Hebrew-script documents pertaining to the family archive (Haim 2019a:429).

25. גנדום ניז אז בהא כאה ז׳ // ניז אז באקי --- ד׳ טאס צ[וו]
26. ניז אז גלה נ׳ טאס בר ח׳ טאס י׳ יך ניז לה׳ סתיר רו[גן ...]
27. אז דאר א׳ כרכרין כי נימה יך [...]
28. ח׳ // [...]

Translation

(1) (In) the Name of God

(2) The Account of the Valley of Nahīlbid

(3–6) Fārisak Ushtur owes from the seeds of Rām K.ray: 35 bowls of barley; 38 bowls of wheat; 40 bowls of mushung. ~~Also, the expenditure of barley of Muḥammad b.(?) *nrmk* from low-quality to white (barley) – additional 1.5 qafīz~~. Fārisak holds 20 *shiyānī* for (the value of) the wheat.

(7–12) Dumbak(?) b. Sulaymān, the peasant from Rām K.ray owes: From the seeds—20 bowls of barley, 20 bowls of wheat. Also, 10 bowls of mushung. From the loan—10 bowls of grain. Also, 27 *shiyānī* for the worth of the cover of the plowshare (and the) fodder. Also, 4 *shiyānī* from the fodder as well. Also, 12 bowls of white barley; he took (it) from Bū Ḥarb. Also, from the grain—135 bowls, tithe-exempt. (Also)—6 donkey-loads of straw. Also, additional 10 bowls of barley. Also, I paid for (the equivalent of) 15 bowls of wheat in cash. (I paid?) 28 (*shiyānī*? for) the tithe.

(13–18) Sāmjūl from Rām K.ray owes: From the seeds—18 bowls of barley (and) wheat. Also, from the loan—14 *shiyānī*. Also, 10 bowls of wheat. Also, 55 bowls of grain, from which 27.5 bowls of wheat (and) 27.5 (bowls of) barley. Also, 8 *mann* of oil (and) 40 bowls of tithe-exempt grain. Also, he holds half of one (parcel of) land (and) 2 donkey-loads of straw from the grain. Also—6.5 bowls of low-quality barley. Out of this, he gave—8 *mann* minus 10 *stīr*. He received (the equivalent of) 21 bowls of wheat in cash.

(19–23) The son of Nuʿmān from Rām K.ray owes: 30 bowls of wheat. Also, ~~from barley~~—30 ~~bowls~~ *shiyānī*. Also, 7 *mann* of oil. Also, 5 bowls of wheat (and) 3 bowls of barley. Also, 15 bowls of seeds of wheat (lit., "15 bowls of wheat, seeds"). Also, from the grain—20 bowls of grain (and) one donkey-load of straw. ~~He owes~~ Also, 4 bowls of low-quality barley.

(24–28) The son of Bū Sahl owes: From the seeds of Rām K.ray—10 bowls of barley (and) 10 bowls of wheat. Also, 7 *shiyānī* for the worth of the straw. Also, from the remainder—4 bowls of barley. Also, from the grain—50 bowls of grain, 8(?) bowls (of grain paid) as tithe. Also, 35 *stīr* of oil […] from the house(?) one *krkryn*, half of which (is) one […] 8 *shiyānī* […]

Commentary

Line 4: סרף – read: *sarf*, possibly a misspelling of Persian *ṣarf* ("expenditure, expense; payment").

Line 5: נרמך – doubtful reading (*narmak*?). The word is understood as a proper name.

כונד – read: *kund*. According to Persian lexicography, the term *kund* refers to anything of low value that cannot be sold (Dihkhudā 1373/1994, 11:16,420).
Line 7: דומבך – Alternative reading: רומבך. Interestingly, the name Dubak(?, Rubak?) is attested twice in relation to Rām K.ray in the account books (NLI, Ms. Heb. 8333.220=4, fols. 17r:5, 18r:2), suggesting that both names refer to the same individual.
Line 11: בידהיך – The term consists of two parts: *bī* ("without") and *dahyak* ("tenth" or "tithe"; equivalent to Arabic *ʿushr*).
Line 26: ח׳ טאס י׳ יך – the letter *ḥet*, representing the numeral eight, could potentially be a result of a miswriting of the letter *he*, which represents the numeral five. This hypothesis arises from the likelihood that it signifies ten percent of the preceding sum, which amounts to "50 bowls of grain." If so, the following translation may be offered: "Also, from the grain —50 bowls of grain, (from which) 5 bowls (of grain were paid) as tithe."
Line 27: דאר – uncertain reading.
כרכרין – a term of unclear meaning.

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