

A crucial piece of evidence from Bāyazīd Biyāt settles the issue beyond dispute. It also offers an insight into the early-working of the *manṣab* system and therefore deserves special attention.

“... On the same night, for 100 *bar-awardī* men (*naḥar*) of Bāyazīd and 100 *dāghī* men (*naḥar*) of his sons, 14½ lakh *tankas* were sanctioned in pay... The balance due upon the *dāgh* (*taḥawāt-i dāgh*) of 100 *bar-awardī* men is also not assigned to Bāyazīd... In the year A.H. 994 (A.D. 1586) he (Bāyazīd) was appointed to the *manṣab* of *do-ṣadī* (200). Forty men from amongst the troopers (*tābīnān*) of his deceased son Sa‘ādīyār were made *dākhilī*,⁴¹ and the other subsequent sixty retainers were brought to the *dāgh*. A sum of one lakh *tankas* and odd was granted to them as loan (*muṣā‘adat*) at the time of the *dāgh* (branding). Up till this date these sixty troopers have got nothing from the *Dīwān*... During the same year (A.H. 995 = AD 1587) one side of the above-mentioned (Bāyazīd) was struck with paralysis... He resigned his ranks (*manāṣīb*, pl. of *manṣab*), *jāgīr* and *māhiyāna* (monthly pay)... Now (therefore) 100 *bar-awardī* men (*naḥar*), sixty fresh (*jadīd*) men and forty *dākhilī* men of the deceased Sa‘ādīyār have been resumed, and the *jāgīr* of Sanām transferred (from him)”.⁴²

Bāyazīd actually accounts for the two hundred *sawārs* or horsemen that he maintained on being appointed *do-ṣadī* (200) (the use of the final *yā* to be noted), proving beyond any reasonable doubt that there was at that time a single rank precisely determining the number of horsemen to be maintained. But he also makes it clear that the fixing of pay for the troopers (*ṭalab-i tābīnān*) was carried out in two stages. At the time of the award of a *manṣab*, a certain rate per trooper was paid. This rate was to be enhanced after the men and horses had been presented for inspection and *dāgh*, the difference being styled *taḥawāt-i dāgh*.

It was this evidence which led Irfan Habib to bring out the significance under Akbar of the term *bar-awardī*, as a pre-*dāgh* uniform payment per unit of *sawār* rank, which was intended to be adjusted after the *dāgh*.⁴³ His suggestion is further grounded on the testimony of the *Ā‘īn* that clearly defines the term *bar-awardī*,⁴⁴ and implies that the final salary was fixed on the basis of the contingent of troopers (*tābīnān*) actually brought to the brand (*dāgh*).⁴⁵

The pay sanctioned after *dāgh* was determined by such factors as the number of horses mustered along with the troopers, and the breed of horses (vide *Iqbāl-nāma* quoted above). The *Ā‘īn* in fact furnishes the rates of pay of *yak-aspa* “one-horse trooper”, varying according to horses of different breeds.⁴⁶

Another characteristic of the system apparent from the passages already quoted from Badā‘ūnī and the *Iqbāl-nāma*, was the obligation of the *manṣabdārs* to maintain animals such as horses, elephants, and camels in addition to the cavalry mounts. These animals were also to be presented for the *dāgh*.

The generally-accepted view, first propounded by Abdul Aziz, is that these animals belonged to the state, and were assigned to *manṣabdārs* for maintenance,

out of their personal salaries.⁴⁷ A fresh examination of the evidence in the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, however, suggests that there is little to sustain this view, and much to indicate a quite contrary state of affairs.

Abu 'l-Faḥr says in the *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* that in the 18th regnal year, at the time of the institution of *dāgh*, or branding, a classification of animals was laid down, and schedules of the sanctioned "average" costs of maintenance of various breeds of horses, elephants, camels, oxen, mules, and carts were issued. The schedules of such rates are duly set out in the *Ā'īn*,⁴⁸ which, in a separate chapter, also gives the numbers of animals of the different species, and the numbers of carts which holders of each *manṣab* were to maintain.⁴⁹ At the end of the chapter giving the schedules of rates, Abu 'l-Faḥr says that elephants and carts were allowed only to *manṣabdārs*; furthermore that camels and oxen as well as "select horsemen" (*gazīn-sawār*) were allowed to them.⁵⁰ This implies that keeping the animals was an advantage, and not a burden; and that the rates applied to the animals kept by *manṣabdārs*, as well as by the *aḥadīs* (gentleman troopers). The implication, that the schedules were of allowances paid to *manṣabdārs* and troopers, and not, as Abdul Aziz seems to have thought, of unrequited out-of-pocket expenditure required of them, is confirmed by certain other statements of Abu 'l-Faḥr: notably, when he says of specific enhancements in the rates that these were sanctioned to provide relief to the troops.⁵¹ Naturally if the rates had been simply for the costs to the *manṣabdār* and *aḥadī* of maintenance of the required animals and carts, reduction, not enhancement, would have been needed to provide relief for them.

In other words, the measures of the 18th–19th regnal year comprised the following specific innovations: (i) a single number was awarded as *manṣab*; (ii) each *manṣab* indicated, as per schedule, a particular amount of monthly personal pay for the *manṣab*-holder; (iii) against each *manṣab*, its holder was called upon to maintain different numbers of war and transport animals and carts, for which he was paid additional allowances at detailed rates laid down in official schedules; (iv) the *manṣab*-holder was called upon to maintain horsemen equal to the number of the *manṣab*; (v) an advance payment for (the whole or part of?) the *manṣab* was made at a rate called *bar-āwardī*; and (vi) the *bar-āwardī* payment being meant to cover only a part of the actual costs, the balance of the full payment was made, or, at any rate, became due, after the contingent of the *manṣabdār* was actually presented for inspection and brand (*dāgh*).

The final stage of the evolution of the *manṣab* system was marked by an innovation that came in the 40th regnal year (1595–6). Abu 'l-Faḥr says that in this year, the *manṣabdārs* were grouped into three categories. Those who maintained *sawārs* equal to their *manṣab*-number were placed in the first category. The second category comprised those who maintained horsemen equal in number to one-half thereof, or more. Finally, those with horsemen smaller in number than one-half of their *manṣab* were put in the third category.⁵²

The description of this measure, read together with the passages from *Badā'ūnī* and *Bāyazīd*, implies that while the *manṣabdārs* had been expected to maintain horsemen equal in number to their *manṣab*, this expectation in many cases was not fulfilled.

It may plausibly be conjectured, as we have seen, that, under the procedure in force until the 40th year, the *manṣabdār* was first assigned his personal pay and the salary for a number of troopers equal to his *manṣab*-number, fixed on the basis of a provisional or partial rate termed *bar-āwardī*. He was expected subsequently to present his troops and horses at the muster and brand, after which he was to be paid the balance due to him at the full *dāghī* rate (*tafāwat-i dāgh*). The *Ā'in* adds that it was laid down that when a promotion in *manṣab* (the single one presumably) was given, the increased pay for his new personal status (*zāt*) was allowed on the enhanced rank, but the amount for the additional troopers was paid only after the *dāgh*.⁵³

The procedure implies that if a *manṣabdār* was unable to produce the required number of troopers at the *dāgh*, and his contingent fell short of the number of his *manṣab*, even the *bar-āwardī* payment might involve a great loss for the administration. It is true, of course, that, as suggested by *Badā'ūnī*'s statement, fulfilment of the obligation to furnish a contingent of a certain size according to *manṣab* was a pre-requisite for all promotions. Upon bringing 20 horsemen to the brand, a *manṣabdār* could be promoted up to the rank of *ṣadī* (100); and only upon presenting the full complement of a hundred horsemen, was one qualified to get further promotions.

The situation, then, that obtained was that a sizeable number of *manṣabdārs* received the *bar-āwardī* rate but did not maintain the full number of horsemen.⁵⁴ The administration acknowledged the force of reality and modified the system accordingly. It was now in the 40th regnal year (and not, as thought by Moreland, in the 11th or 18th regnal year) that the number of *sawārs* actually expected began to be distinct from the *manṣab* number. The single *manṣab* that was in force now became valid for the payment of salary for the person (*zāt*) of the *manṣabdār* only, i.e. in respect of his personal status, while a new *sawār*-number was also assigned, against which the *bar-āwardī* rates were paid. The origin of the description *zāt* for the first rank and of *bar-āwardī* for the second, or *sawār*-rank, lies here.⁵⁵ The terms were clearly in the final stage of evolution (but not yet established completely) when the main text of the *Ā'in* was drafted in or about the 40 regnal year.

The clearly-made distinction came soon afterwards, possibly during the 41st year itself, when the *Akbar-nāma* offers the first instance anywhere of the grant of a twofold rank.⁵⁶ The formula for stating the *manṣab* henceforth changed, and the *manṣab* clearly became dual in nature, expressed by two numbers, specifying *zāt* and *sawār* (*bar-āwardī*) separately. Abu 'l-Faḥr records under the 41st year that "the rank of Mirzā Shāhrukh has been enhanced and pay-assignment

made to him for *panj hazārī* (5,000) *zāt*, with half the *sawārs* thereof as *bar-āwardī*.⁵⁷ It is also the first instance of the use of the term *zāt* in the technical sense of the personal or first rank.

The situation that obtained in and before the 40th regnal year thus appears to some extent akin to the one envisaged by Moreland for the 11th year of Akbar, though the compulsions seem quite different from those he suggested. It was not inefficiency or maladministration that necessitated the introduction of a second (*sawār*) rank. On the contrary, Akbar's administration apparently remained exceptionally zealous and exacting in this respect. The existing *manṣabs* were indeed left unchanged, but the measure adopted did imply a demotion (through lower *sawār* ranks) for those who did not maintain their contingents in full; and there was a reduction too in their *zāt* or personal salaries to accord with the number of *sawārs* they actually succeeded in maintaining (owing to their classification in three categories instituted in the 40th year, cf. p. 180 above). It could therefore not be termed a compromise, as suggested by Moreland.

The different stages, delineated by us, in the evolution of the *manṣab* system under Akbar, may now be summarized.

(i) Until the first decade of Akbar's reign, as during the previous Mughal reigns, no standing military obligations in terms of size of contingents were fixed. Salaries were sanctioned for individuals in a more or less arbitrary fashion.

(ii) Akbar in his 11th regnal year (1566–7) attempted to fix military obligations; nobles were asked to maintain cavalry troopers in accordance with the revenues of their *jāgīrs*, and on the basis of certain rates sanctioned for troopers.

(iii) In the 18th regnal year (1573–4) the numerical rank (*manṣab*) was instituted. The nobles were assigned a single number that determined both their pay and the number of animals (elephants, horses, beasts of burden and carts) that they were required to maintain on their personal establishment (*khāṣa*). More important, they were also required to maintain horsemen (*sawārs*) equal in number to that of their *manṣab*. But in actual fact, while drawing provisional rates (*bar-āwardī*) for this number, few nobles succeeded in bringing their contingents to the muster, and brand, at the full strength necessary for drawing the latter's pay at the full, or *dāghī*, rates.

(iv) In the 40th year (1595–6) the *manṣabdārs* were grouped into three categories, on the basis of the number of *sawārs* maintained in proportion to the *manṣab*. The number of *sawārs*, therefore, began to be deemed distinct from the *manṣab* number.

(v) In the 41st year (1596–7), the *manṣab* became dual in nature. Henceforth, the *manṣab* was expressed by a pair of numbers. The first, designated *zāt*, determined the personal pay and the number of *khāṣa* (personal) animals to be maintained according to a given schedule. The second, the *sawār*, indicated

the number of horsemen the *manṣabdār* was required to maintain, to which alone did the provisional or *bar-āwardī* rates now apply.

Here we reach the point where all the familiar features of the Mughal *manṣab* system can at last be discerned. There were changes made in it subsequently, tending in some respects to simplify it, in others to make it more complex,⁵⁸ but the basic principle of the two separate ranks defining distinct claims and obligations came to stay.

NOTES

¹ W. H. Moreland, "Rank (*Mansab*) in the Mughal state service", *JRAS*, 1936, 641-55; Abdul Aziz, *Mansabdari system of the Mughal army*, London, 1945, 31-46.

² M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal nobility under Aurangzeb*, Bombay, 1966; Irfan Habib, "The *Mansab* system (1595-1637)", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 29th Session, 228-49.

³ Moreland, 650; Abdul Aziz, 36.

⁴ Moreland, 643.

⁵ A. J. Qaisar, "Note on the date of institution of *Mansab* under Akbar", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 24th Session, 1961, 155-7. By an oversight, 1573-4 has been styled by him the 20th regnal year instead of the 18th.

⁶ Irfan Habib, 243.

⁷ Abu 'l-Fazl, *Akbar-nāma*, III, edited by Ahmad Ali, *RASB*, Calcutta, 1871, 69.

⁸ Badā'ūnī, *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh*, II, edited by Ahmad Ali & Lees, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1864-9, 190; Mu'tamad Khān, *Iqbāl-nāma-i Jahāngīrī*, II, pub. Niwal Kishore, Lucknow, 1870, 288. Badā'ūnī gives the measure in the course of his account of A.H. 982, which partly corresponded to the 19th regnal year. Mu'tamad Khān's passage belongs to his account of the 19th year.

⁹ *Akbar-nāma*, III, 170; Nizām ud-dīn Aḥmad, *Tabaqāt-i Akbarī*, II, edited by B. De, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1913, 328.

¹⁰ Khwāndamīr, *Qānūn-i Humāyūnī*, edited by M. Hidayat Husain, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1940, 41.

¹¹ *ibid.*, 47.

¹² *ibid.*, 43.

¹³ *Akbar-nāma*, III, 120-1.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, II, 45, 229 and 270; *Tabaqāt-i Akbarī*, II, 253 and 264.

¹⁵ *Akbar-nāma*, II, 270. My translation of this and other passages from Abu 'l-Fazl is independent of that by Beveridge, where the precise technical sense is often missed.

¹⁶ cf. the rather brief remarks of Qaisar, 156-7. It is difficult to agree with him, however, that the *Akbar-nāma* passage indicates the existence of "three kinds of *jāgīrs*".

¹⁷ *Iqbāl-nāma*, II, 213.

¹⁸ *Akbar-nāma*, III, 672; the pay schedule stated here allowed 12,000 *dāms*, 9,600 *dāms*, and 7,200 *dāms*, per year for *sih-aspa* (horseman with three horses), *do-aspa* (horseman with two horses) and *yak-aspa* (horseman with one horse) respectively. This was for troopers of Mughal (i.e. Tūrānī and Irānī), Afghān and Indian nobles. For Rājput nobles, the rates were 8,400 *dāms* for *sih-aspas*, 7,200 *dāms* for *do-aspas*. What rate the Rājput nobles drew for *yak-aspas* is left obscure. cf. Irfan Habib (n. 2 above), 233.

¹⁹ *Akbar-nāma*, II, 270.

²⁰ *Iqbāl-nāma*, II, 213.

²¹ *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, edited by Blochmann, Calcutta, 1867, 222-32.

²² Qaisar (n. 5 above), 156.

²³ *Tabaqāt*, II, 425-56.

²⁴ *Ā'in*, I, 222.

²⁵ To cite a few names, with the *manṣabs* assigned in the *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, appearing within brackets.

Bairam Khān	(5,000)	d. 971 A.H.	<i>Akbar-nāma</i> , II, 971.
Tardī Beg	(5,000)	d. 964 A.H.	<i>Tabaqāt</i> , II, 426.
'Alī Qulī Khān	(5,000)	d. 978 A.H.	<i>Akbar-nāma</i> , II, 367.
Adham Khān	(5,000)	d. 969 A.H.	<i>Akbar-nāma</i> , II, 179.
Sikandar Khān Uzbek	(5,000)	d. 980 A.H.	<i>Tabaqāt</i> , II, 430.
Habīb 'Alī Khān	(5,000)	d. 970 A.H.	<i>Akbar-nāma</i> , II, 168.
Khwāja Tāhir Muḥammad	(1,000)	d. 975 A.H.	<i>Tabaqāt</i> , II, 443.

(Note: The 18th regnal year = A.H. 980–81)

While the *Tabaqāt* does not assign any fictitious *manṣabs* to those who died before the 18th regnal year, it lacks the completeness of the *Ā'in-i Akbarī*'s list in that it fails to assign numerical ranks to some who appear on its list and died well after the 18th year. For example, Maqṣūd 'Alī (No. 136 in the *Ā'in*'s list) received the *manṣab* of 1,000 in the 25th regnal year (*Akbar-nāma*, III, 304–5); but the *Tabaqāt* does not credit him with any *manṣab*. There are others who were alive at the time the *Tabaqāt* was completed; yet, though they are assigned *manṣabs* in the *Ā'in*, the *Tabaqāt* refrains from recording any under their names. To cite a few examples, with the *Ā'in*'s *manṣabs* within brackets:

Mīr Sharaf ud-dīn	(5,000)
Qutb ud-dīn Muḥammad Khān	(5,000)
Rustam Khān	(2,000)
Ghiyāṣ ud-dīn 'Alī Saif Khān	(1,000).

Moreover, the *Tabaqāt*'s list does not mention *manṣabs* below 1,000 (there is only one exception viz. Aḥmad 'Alī Beg's rank of 700).

These deficiencies in the *Tabaqāt*'s information show that the *Ā'in-i Akbarī*'s list remains indispensable. Such deficiencies, however, do not by any means weaken the significance of the *Tabaqāt*'s list in exposing the fictitious nature of *manṣabs* assigned in the *Ā'in* to a whole group of persons.

²⁶ *Akbar-nāma*, III, 69.

²⁷ *ibid.*, II, 117.

²⁸ *ibid.*, II, 117; Badā'ūnī, II, p. 190; *Iqbalnāma*, II, 288.

²⁹ *Iqbalnāma*, II, 288.

³⁰ *Akbar-nāma*, III, 117, the phrase used here is *ba-andāza-yi 'aqīdat u sar kardan-i jamī'at*; *Iqbalnāma*, II, 288 has *quwwat-i sardārī u hausla-yi jamī'atdārī*.

³¹ It is generally held (Moreland, 65; Abdul Aziz, 147–9) that the recipients of high ranks (under Akbar, 500; and under Shāhjahān, 1,000) were designated *umarā'*, while the word *manṣabdār* was used for those holding ranks below 500 or 1000. However, Abu 'l-Faḍl (*Akbar-nāma*, III, 671, *Ā'in*, I, 187, 188, 190) and Mu'tamad Khan (*Iqbalnāma*, II, 288) use the term *manṣabdār* for all rank-holders without any distinction. Only the word *umarā'*, to judge from the *Tabaqāt-i Akbarī*, 456, was reserved (under Akbar) to those holding *manṣabs* exceeding 500.

³² Badā'ūnī, II, 190.

³³ The printed text reads *tābītān*, an obvious misreading for *tābīnān*.

³⁴ In the 17th-century chronicles, it is thus common to find the use of the formula *panj hazārī chahār hazār* to indicate 5000 *zāt*/4000 *sawār*, and so on.

³⁵ *Akbar-nāma*, III, 170, 184; *Tabaqāt*, II, 328, 340.

³⁶ *Akbar-nāma*, III, 219.

³⁷ Of Rāja Todar Mal and Qulij Khān, he says that they maintained *chahār hazār sawār* (4,000 horsemen); Majnūn Qaqshāl had 5,000 *naukar*; Muḥammad Husain, 1,000 *naukar*; Aḥmad Beg Kābulī had 700 *sawārs* (*Tabaqāt*, II, 433, 435, 441, and 443).

³⁸ *Tabaqāt*, II, 456.

³⁹ Abdul Aziz, *Mansabdari system*, 110; Athar Ali, *Mughal Nobility*, 8; Qaisar (n. 5, above), 156; Irfan Habib (n. 2 above), 212.

⁴⁰ The *Ā'in*'s list gives Muḥaffar Husain's rank as 5,000 (No. 8 on the list); he was

awarded this rank in the 40th year (*Akbar-nāma*, III, 671). cf. Irfan Habib (n. 2 above) 245, n. 52.

⁴¹ The text reads *dākhil*; however, *dākhilī* would seem to be the correct reading.

⁴² Bāyazīd Biyāt, *Tazkira-i Humāyūn u Akbar*, edited by H. Husain, Calcutta, 1941, 373–4. See also *Ruq'at-i Hakīm Abū 'l-Faṭḥ Gilānī*, edited by M. Bashir Husain, Lahore, 1968, 15–16, 20–1 and 27, where the earliest directly contemporary references to *manṣabs* occur (February–March 1581). The Hindi word *pūra* “full” is employed here for the sanctioning of the full pay against the *manṣab*, which is clearly single, and directly related to the military obligation.

⁴³ Irfan Habib (cf. n. 2 above), 233.

⁴⁴ *Ā'in*, I, 176.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, I, 194. It is further stated (p. 175) that if a *manṣabdar* found it difficult to muster horsemen, he was given some “enrolled” (branded) troopers, in proportion to his rank as part of his contingent. These were paid directly from the Imperial treasury and were called *dākhilī*. The forty *dākhilī* troopers that Bayazid mentions were apparently troopers of this kind.

⁴⁶ *Ā'in*, I, 176.

⁴⁷ Abdul Aziz, *Mansabdari system*, 48–9. He was probably led to this view by the later Mughal practice of calling upon nobles to meet the costs of maintenance of imperial elephants and other animals (*khurāk-i dawābb*). (Athar Ali [n. 2 above], 51). This does not seem to have existed under Akbar. Even though imperial elephants were given to the princes and nobles to be looked after, Abu 'l-Faṣl claims that the costs of maintenance (*khwurash*) were still met by the imperial exchequer (*Ā'in*, I, 135).

⁴⁸ See *Ā'in*, I, 176–8, for both the statement regarding the 18th year and the schedules of rates.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, I, 180–5.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, I, 178.

⁵¹ These enhancements are set out in detail for each animal, etc., in the *Ā'in*, I, 176–8. For the very first enhancement, on horses, Abu 'l-Faṣl explains that the rate was increased by 81 *dāms*, “for the welfare of the troops and to provide relief (to them)” (p. 176, 1.3 from bottom). Further on, speaking of an enhancement of rate on *shērgīr* elephants, he describes that as due to “imperial generosity” (p. 178, 1. 3).

⁵² *Akbar-nāma*, III, 671; *Ā'in*, I, 179.

⁵³ *Ā'in*, I, 191.

⁵⁴ In a passage in a letter ascribed to Abu 'l-Faṣl, the complaint is made that “there are some *manṣabdārs* who have *jāgīrs* (for the rank) of *hazārī* (1,000) but do not have even a few men with them, while there are many who are *ṣadis* (100) and have 50 good horsemen (each) for service in the Deccan and ready for endeavour all the time; and yet the latter remain without *jāgīrs*”. (*Ruq'at-i Abū 'l-Faṣl*, Kanpur, 1879, 45). It will be noticed that Abu 'l-Faṣl does not compare the actual contingent maintained with the second (*sawār*) rank, but with the single rank, always indicated, as we have seen, by the suffix *yā* (-ī). Abu 'l-Faṣl reached the Deccan early in the 44th regnal year (1599), and the letter was apparently sent to the Emperor shortly afterwards. Unfortunately, in this letter as well as in some other letters of this collection, there are departures from Abu 'l-Faṣl's usual style, and apparent inaccuracies of fact, which, casting doubt on the genuineness of the documents, detract from their authority as a source.

⁵⁵ cf. Irfan Habib (n. 2 above), 234.

⁵⁶ *Akbar-nāma*, III, 717, for Mīrzā Shāhrukh and for prince Dāniyāl (p. 271). In the latter case the formula employed for stating the paired *manṣab* is what henceforth became standardized, namely, *haft hazārī zāt u sawār* (“7,000 *zāt* and (7,000) *sawār*”).

⁵⁷ *Akbar-nāma*, III, 717.

⁵⁸ For these changes, notably, the conversion of *bar-āwardī* into the sole form of payment for *sawār* rank; the institution of *do-aspa sih-aspa* ranks; the modification of size of cavalry contingents according to geographical location; and the institution of the month scales, cf. Irfan Habib (n. 2 above), 233–9.