

era

VOL. V

No. 2

Zum Augenblicke dürft ich sagen:
Verweile doch du bist so schön!
Es kann die Spur von meinen Erdetagen
Nicht in Äonen untergehn.--
Im Vorgefühl von solchem hohen Glück,
Geniess ich jetzt den höchsten Augenblick.

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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Bruce A. Miller and Raymond Duvall

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SOCIALIST THEORY AND CONFLICT CAUSATION: INVESTIGATION OF AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

} 3/4 "

■ Kenneth Waltz, in his analysis of potential causes of war proffered by historians, philosophers, and ideologues over centuries of time, focuses in the course of his schema upon the "second image" — nation-level explanations of the phenomenon of war. One of the argument-systems offered is the Socialist delineation of causation of war. In this ideology there is a causal nexus between the internal structure of nation-states and international systematic conflict behavior. According to the Socialist thesis, the world-wide class struggle, as it manifests itself within each non-Socialist nation-state, causes war. In the Socialist conception, capitalist societies need to go to war in order to preserve the political power of their respective elites. The thread of reasoning in the argument continues with the proposition that elimination of the bourgeoisie results in a classless society. As classes die, nations wither away. As the nation-state disintegrates, war is precluded.

The Socialist schema of conflict causation is a single-factor theory: inequality among men within a nation-state is held totally culpable for system conflict. It is this inequality of wealthy, social status, and political power which is the very *raison d'être* for the class struggle. The class struggle acts to rectify, reform, or even smash bourgeois-proletarian inequality patterns and through doing so eliminates world conflict.

No empirical support is offered by any Socialist theorist for the propositions which are espoused. It should be recognized that this Socialist formulation embodies — rather assumes — a "spillover" mechanism whereby national conflict

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inevitably leads to international conflict. There is a temptation to dismiss out of hand a proposition which on its face confounds two levels of analysis, and the Socialist framework is patently such a proposition. But there are theoretical and intuitive reasons why dismissal of this quasi-metaphysical framework at this time is inappropriate.

One theoretical justification for the Socialist schema relies on symbol theory. If there is great economic and social inequality within a nation-state, then, assuming that some of the "unequals" are marginal so that political activity is possible, a certain amount of civil strife and conflict will result. Through symbols the decision-makers within the elite of the nation-state may turn to external concerns in order to divert attention from internal reform. As the civil dissension between socio-economic groups becomes marked, the nation-state can emphasize external threats to the continued existence and prosperity of that nation. As the nation becomes involved in this symbolic malaise, its symbolically-created "interests" begin to conflict with the contrived "interests" of other symbol-manipulating elites in diverse nations. At this point, the conflicting nations may be on a descending spiral leading toward war. The traditional example of the use of this technique is Joseph Stalin's claim that world-wide anti-Communism was trying to destroy the USSR. This position was used symbolically by Stalin to justify his internal dictatorship.

A second possible reason for temporarily accepting the Socialist theory rests upon the psycho-symbolic framework devised by Freud and Lasswell. Assuming the existence of marginality among the unequal masses so that goal-oriented activity can be presumed, it may well result that mass frustrations due to inequality cause the masses to channel their anxiety in the field of foreign policy. By this account, the internal frustrations created by an inequalitarian society (Freud) may be relieved through application of symbols in a different field by the masses (Lasswell). This being the case, the masses may devise a "national interest", internalize that concept, and fall prey to chauvinism in an attempt to suppress their frustration due to inequality. As many large masses within nation-states do this same thing, again a vortex of conflict is entered which may ineluctably result in global pugilism.

The economic schema devised by Organski can also justify momentary acceptance of the Socialist thesis. Organski, of course, saw a clear differentiation between powerful and weak nations and between satisfied and dissatisfied nations. His explanation of war centered upon conflict between nations on the first tier of power and satisfaction and middle-range nations possessing power but not satisfaction with the world-wide economic and military status quo. Nations with great inequality (assuming still some degree of marginality) are liable to be those middle-range powers with a substantial and exploitative aristocratic or bourgeois class. The proletarians within such a nation are the citizens through whose labor the nation was capable of becoming militarily powerful. They, after all, are the ones in the factories producing the munitions. Such a nation, possessing military



A Revolutionary Street Crowd in Petrograd.

power by virtue of exploitation of its laboring class, might seek political prestige in the global system equal to its military capacity. Belligerence and bellicosity may result as such a nation challenges, according to the Organski schema, the international clique of powerful-satisfied nations.

A fourth and final potential justification of the inequality explanation of war may be perceived in the Deutsch national communication framework. Within this model there are two cleavage continua along which groups within nations may be placed: mobilized versus underlying population (this continuum refers to extent of political involvement) and assimilated versus differentiated populations (this continuum refers to extent of acceptance of existing social system). Naturally in a system with great inequality, the poor masses are in the underlying population category and may or may not be in the differentiated category. In either case they do not communicate with the dominant aristocrats, capitalists, or bourgeoisie. This non-communication is accompanied by pejorative connotations of inferiority. In such an unequal society, social discrimination will be paramount and will parallel economic and political selectivity. Frustration will result and may lead to inter-personal aggressiveness.

The studies of Fensterwald, Helfont, Pittigrew, and Christiansen all found in the course of their respective research a high correlation (+.6 to +.8) between inter-personal aggression and advocacy of aggressive attitudes in the international sphere. The attitudes resulting from the frustration of inequality may cluster in the form of an image in the Boulding sense of the term. If the image is sufficiently strong, the elite may be forced to respond to this aggression-oriented mass image held by a partially marginal underlying population.

Because so much of the theoretical material we have studied can be used and integrated to justify the Socialist hypothesis, it is necessary that this proposition be carefully examined on the basis of empirical data. Accordingly, we have operationalized inequality, our independent variable, by using a cluster of six indicators as measures of that phenomenon. The six include: (1) Gini inequality figures for income distribution before taxes; (2) Gini inequality scores for income distribution after taxes; (3) Gini agricultural land inequality scores; (4) Adelman and Morris social mobility quotients; (5) Adelman and Morris literacy rates; (6) Ekstein internal war scores. As the three Gini scores rise, as social mobility declines, as the literacy rate declines and as internal strife rises, inequality is maximized.

The dependent variable implicit in the Socialist hypothesis, viz. world conflict participation, has been operationalized through data presented by Singer and Wright concerning (1) participation in conflict, (2) numbers of battle deaths incurred by each nation divided by total population (intensity dimension), (3) duration of participation by each nation (temporal dimension).

It must be noted at this time that the data collected are incomplete to a large degree. Moreover, our data on conflict participation encompass a time period running from 1912 to 1964. Unfortunately we have no such temporal

dimension for our inequality data. Since it is impossible to obtain data for the six inequality measures in 1912, we must of necessity assume our inequality scores to be relatively static over the 52 year and 33 year periods stated. This is a tenuous assumption but is one born of necessity due to unavailability of data.

A further problem which warrants mention is the fact that the Socialist framework is attempting to explain causation of war in the sense of specifying the aggressive initiator of a war. However, the dependent indicator measures we have isolated emphasize participation in war along quantity, intensity, and temporal continua. Obviously the two are not the same: participation does not necessarily imply causation. However, we have chosen the participation operationalization for two reasons. First, in most cases, determination of which nations are aggressors involves a value judgment too subjective to be seriously considered as empirical data. Secondly, it will be noted that participation in war is seldom forced — even if a nation is attacked, it still has a choice as to whether it desires to respond militarily. Using the terms of the Socialist hypothesis, it may be argued that great inequality within a nation enhances the possibility of a military response to attack in addition to predicting which nation is the aggressive initiator of a conflict. Hence conflict participation and conflict initiation are not as unrelated as first supposed. The benefits of avoiding value judgements about aggressors far outweigh any assets resulting from strict measurement of conflict initiation to the exclusion of non-aggressive conflict participation.

Aware of these problems, we can now begin our explanation of the variables and indicators we have chosen. The first three independent variables are Gini scores taken from Russett's *World Handbook*. A Gini score is computed as a function of the area between a 45° line which denotes perfect equality between two variables and a Lorenz curve which plots the actual relation of the two variables in a particular country. That is, Gini scores measure the difference between the real and the ideal. (Each 10% of national income corresponds to 10% of the population on the 45° line of equality). For the three Gini measures we utilized, the two related variables are such things as percent of population and percent of national income, or percent of farm owners and percent of farm land. The greater the Gini score, the greater the inequality.

The social mobility and literacy indices are both taken from the Adelman and Morris material. However, since all of our other measures exist as interval scales, it proved necessary to convert the Adelman and Morris scores into such a form. For example, Adelman and Morris assign the score 97 to all countries having a literacy rate greater than 85%, the score 90 to countries between 75% and 84%, and so on. In converting the scale we have assigned to each country the value obtained by subtracting from 100% the values of the midpoint of the corresponding interval on the Adelman and Morris scale. (e.g. Mexico is 60 on the A&M scale. This corresponds to the interval 45%-54%, of which the approximate midpoint is 50%. Subtracting this 50% from 100% produces a score of 50% illiteracy, which is the score we use.) The same process is involved with the



"Die Schweizerschlacht," by Hans Holbein.

social mobility index, for the social mobility scale. (e.g. the score 1 is assigned to all countries with more than 20% of the working class employed in middle class occupations, while 9 is given to those having less than 2%. Intermediate scores are assigned at intervals of equal width.) The result is two interval scales, both of which are positive functions of inequality. That is, high scores equal high inequality.

The last independent variable is the Eckstein internal war scale taken from an article by Bruce Russett in *World Politics*, (April, 1964, p. 442-54). The scale is simply the total number of violent incidents (from plots to protracted guerrilla warfare) for each country between 1946 and 1961. The variable was chosen as an operationalized measure of perceived social inequality. We felt it necessary to include some measure of the mass's image of its relative social and economic position. The options were for opinion poll data or for data on overt expressions of perceived inequality. Eckstein's scale is of the latter type, and proved more convenient than various opinion polls which often do not include comparable questions cross-culturally. Eckstein's measure also has the advantage of providing data to test the "spill-over" notion inherent in the socialist hypothesis.

The three measures of the dependent variable were taken from an article by Singer and Small and from Wright's *Study of War*. The first is simply the number of wars participated in between 1912 and 1964. The second is number of battle deaths between 1912 and 1945, divided by the total population of the country

at the end of that time period. (Population figures were taken from Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*). Dividing by total population provided a scale of standardized scores, since it is assumed that one million battle deaths represents a greater war intensity for Israel than for India. The scores were computed to 1/100 of 1 percent, and multiplied by 10,000. The third measure is simply the number of months between 1912 and 1945 that each country was involved in international military conflict. The three measures, frequency, intensity, and duration, all provide positive continua for the dependent variable of conflict participation.

With each variable in the above stated form, we computed Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients for each possible combination of independent and dependent variables. This statistic tells both the strength and the direction of a relationship. Through a process of regression, it also enables prediction of unknown values of the dependent variables in cases where the relationship is significantly strong. For our purposes, a value of $r = \pm .75$ would have to be obtained for a relationship to be considered significant.

The following matrix shows the actual values obtained. The N column gives the number of countries for which we had data on each independent variable. (A total sample of 92 countries was employed. All had data for two or more inequality measures).

	Number of wars	Deaths/ Pop.	Months	N
1.) Gini before tax	-.277	+.238	-.175	17
2.) Gini after tax	-.258	+.306	-.195	11
3.) Gini land distribution	-.423	-.176	-.170	47
4.) Social mobility	-.277	-.171	-.279	70
5.) Literacy rate	-.196	-.212	-.295	71
6.) Eckstein internal war	+.069	-.158	-.116	46

The matrix reveals no relationship of significant strength in the direction predicted by the socialist hypothesis (positive relationship). In fact, of 18 relationships, 15 were negatively correlated, although none of these were statistically significant according to the criteria established earlier. Those three which are positive are also not significant and serve only to demonstrate the randomness of the relational phenomena observed. Hence, within our empirical framework, inequality does not predict to systematic conflict behavior, and since none of the relationships are significant, regression analysis is not warranted. Prediction is not possible with random association.

But there is the possibility that this is due to the assumptions of a linear relationship implicit within product-moment correlation analysis. It might still be the case that a curvilinear function or a linear function beyond a certain threshold would describe a strong relationship between the variables. Thus, the socialist hypothesis can not yet be discarded.



Untitled by George Grosz.

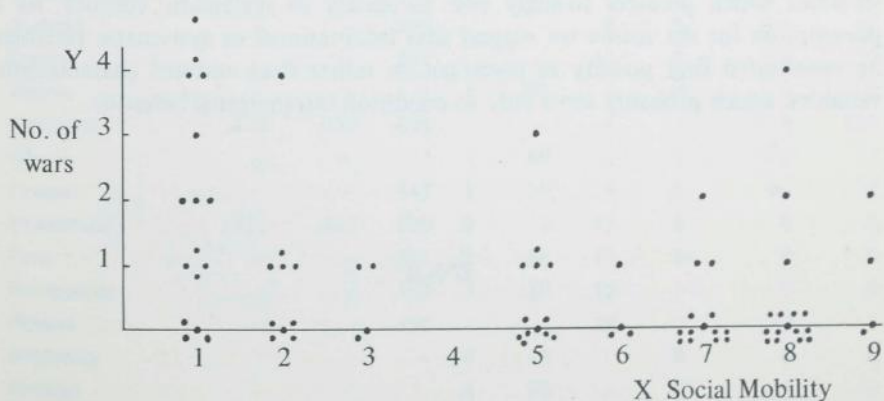
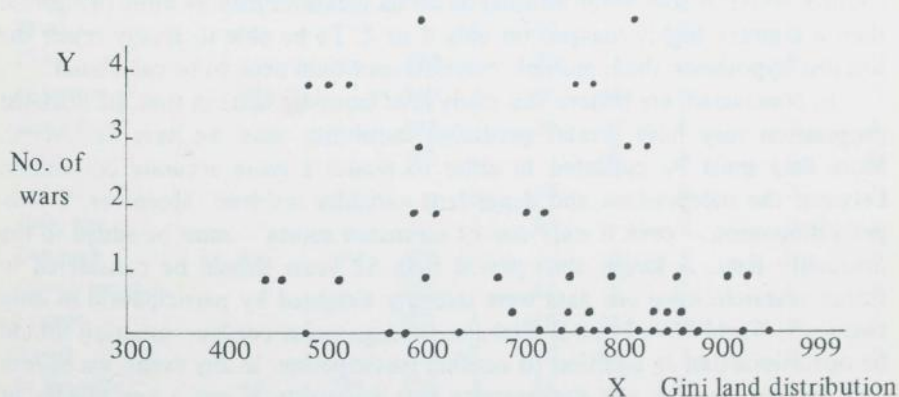
The negative correlations which were obtained, being contrary to what was predicted, could be at least partially explained through the concept of marginality introduced earlier. In all justifications for the socialist schema which were offered previously, we found it necessary to qualify the concept of inequality by assuming some degree of marginality. If inequality is extremely great within a society, and a large, depressed, non-marginal population exists, there will be no need for elites to symbolically placate the masses, nor will the masses indepen-

dently devise "national interests" due to their frustration. Instead the mass will be concentrating what little goal-oriented activity it is capable of in the field of food procurement and other elementary tasks.

This implies that within the concept of inequality there may of necessity be a threshold, i.e. national inequality may predict to systematic conflict at an inequality level x , but not at $3x$, since at the level of greater inequality, the masses are incapable of political activity and will be relegated to a minor position in the socio-political order.

This suggests that if we were to take our data and exclude from our correlation coefficients all nations where inequality is so great that marginality is precluded, then positive correlations might result. Obviously introducing a threshold concept compromises the Socialist hypothesis to some degree. However, if the antimony is avoided and the concept of threshold is deliberately excluded, the Socialist proposition will possess only negligible predictive power.

Pursuant to this theoretical framework, some scattergrams are shown below in order to ascertain if such a threshold does in fact exist on a preliminary basis.



Examining these two sample scattergrams for a possible curvilinear relationship or threshold notion complicating a simple linear relationship involves examining only those countries which score below a certain arbitrary limit on the inequality scales. That is, for Gini land distribution, one might consider only those countries below .750, assuming that countries beyond that fail to meet the marginality criteria. But, it is obvious that no threshold exists in either scattergram to bias the data. A significantly large number of highly unequal countries participated in wars. In neither case would a strongly positive relationship result by deleting the extreme right end of the X-axis. And in neither case is there suggested a significant curvilinear function, such as a bell shaped curve, which would suggest a "belligerent range" of inequality. Rather, the scattergrams only confirm our previous calculations, in showing a highly random association.

But, again, the evidence is not completely sufficient to warrant rejection of the socialist hypothesis. All of our statistical work has been as 1:1 correlations between each independent variable and each dependent variable. No multiple correlations have been attempted. It is certainly conceivable that a significant relationship could be obtained by combining independent variables. That is, a country which is somewhat unequal on all six measures may be more belligerent than a country highly unequal on only 1 or 2. To be able to finally reject the socialist hypothesis, then, multiple correlations would need to be calculated.

In conclusion, we believe this study is of heuristic value in that the Socialist proposition may have greater predictive capability than we have discovered. More data must be collected in order to render a more accurate correlation between the independent and dependent variables involved. Moreover, a temporal dimension — even if only one of estimated scores — must be added to the inequality data. A longer time period than 52 years should be considered in future research, since our data were strongly weighted by participation in only two wars, World Wars I and II. Perhaps, too, aggressive conflict initiation should be operationalized in addition to conflict participation. In any event, we believe that further research will demonstrate that inequality is not a key cluster of variables which predicts strongly and accurately to systematic conflict. As a prescription for the future we suggest that international or systematic variables be vouchsafed first priority in investigation rather than national characteristic variables, which probably serve only to condition international behavior.

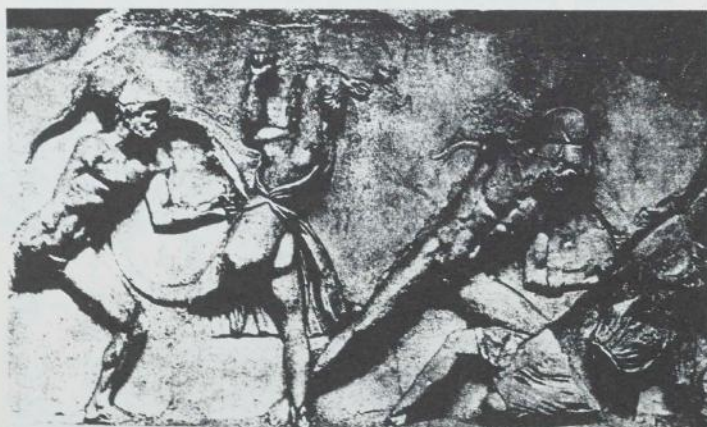


SOCIALIST THEORY AND CONFLICT CAUSATION

APPENDIX I

Country	Gini before tax	Gini after tax	Gini land	Soc. mob.	Literacy	Eckstein	1912-64 No. wars	1912-45 Deaths/ Pop.	1912-45 Months
Afghanistan	—	—	—	9	90	—	0	0	0
Algeria	—	—	—	8	80	—	1	0	0
Argentina	—	—	.863	1	10	57	0	0	0
Australia	.347	.277	.929	—	—	0	1	29	71.5
Austria	—	—	.740	—	—	4	1	727	51
Belgium	—	—	.587	—	—	8	3	110	51.5
Bolivia	—	—	.938	7	70	53	1	200	84
Brazil	—	—	.837	2	50	49	1	0	10
Burma	—	—	—	7	50	—	0	0	0
Cambodia	—	—	—	7	80	—	0	0	0
Cameroon	—	—	—	8	100	—	0	0	0
Canada	.390	—	.497	—	—	22	1	28	71
Chad	—	—	—	8	100	—	0	0	0
Chile	—	—	.983	3	20	21	0	0	0
Colombia	.432	—	.849	2	40	47	0	0	0
Costa Rica	—	—	.892	2	20	19	0	0	0
Cuba	—	—	.792	—	—	100	0	0	0
Cyprus	—	—	—	3	40	—	0	0	0
Dahomey	—	—	—	7	85	—	0	0	0
Denmark	.421	.396	.458	—	—	0	1	0	0
Dominican Rep.	—	—	.795	5	60	6	0	0	0
Ecuador	—	—	.864	5	40	41	0	0	0
Egypt	—	—	.740	5	80	54	3	0	0
El Salvador	.400	.393	.828	5	60	9	0	0	0
Ethiopia	—	—	—	9	100	—	2	14	12
Finland	—	—	.599	—	—	4	2	205	42.5
France	—	—	.583	—	—	46	5	378	70.5
Gabon	—	—	—	8	90	—	0	0	0
Germany	.473	.432	.674	—	—	4	2	779	119.5
Ghana	—	—	—	5	80	—	0	0	0
Greece	—	—	.747	1	20	9	5	86	70.5
Guatemala	.458	.423	.860	8	75	45	0	0	0
Peru	—	—	.875	5	40	23	0	0	0
Philippines	—	—	.564	3	20	15	1	0	0
Poland	—	—	.450	—	—	19	1	130	1
Rhodesia	—	—	—	8	75	—	0	0	0
Senegal	—	—	—	8	90	—	0	0	0

Country	Gini before tax	Gini after tax	Gini land	Soc. mob.	Literacy	Eckstein	1912-64	1912-45	1912-45 Months
							No. wars	Deaths/ Pop.	
Sierra Leone	—	—	—	8	90	—	0	0	0
Somalia	—	—	—	8	100	—	0	0	0
So. Africa	—	—	—	6	60	—	1	5	71
Spain	—	—	.780	—	—	22	0	0	0
Sudan	—	—	—	8	90	—	0	0	0
Surinam	—	—	.709	2	30	—	0	0	0
Sweden	.399	.388	.577	—	—	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	—	—	.498	—	—	0	0	0	0
Syria	—	—	—	5	75	—	1	0	0
Tanganyika	—	—	—	7	90	—	0	0	0
Thailand	—	—	—	5	30	—	1	0	45
Trinidad	—	—	—	2	30	—	0	0	0
Tunisia	—	—	—	5	80	—	0	0	0
Turkey	—	—	—	2	60	—	4	201	96
Uganda	—	—	—	7	80	—	0	0	0
United Kingdom	.366	.318	.710	—	—	12	4	234	122.5
United States	.397	.373	.705	—	—	22	4	28	63
Uruguay	—	—	.817	1	10	1	0	0	0
Venezuela	—	—	.909	2	40	36	0	0	0
Vietnam	—	—	.671	8	80	50	2	0	0
Yemen	—	—	—	9	100	—	1	0	0
Yugoslavia	—	—	.437	—	—	9	4	306	57
Zambia	—	—	—	7	75	—	0	0	0



Battle of the Greeks and the Amazons. Frieze of the Mausoleum, Halicarnassus, c. 350 B.C. British Museum



Watercolor by Henri Michaux, c. 1954/55.

Rhinoceros within a room
Beak is lighted blue.
Laughter flows from hollow mouth
 Toucan cackle born in the jungle
Concrete green and rivers baked into his mind
He looks at you.
Elephant within a room
Trunk is lighted blue.
Ivory eyes scanning the skies
 Sleepwalk lumber born in thunder
 Meshed into his mind
He looks at you.
Viper snake within a room
Lips are lighted blue.
Horsetail black upon his back
 Armored ages rocks and salt
 Are sitting on his mind
He looks at you.
Conscience Zoo.

—Christopher Warntz

The lights flicker, and finally die.
The crowd mourns, but now a glove falls.
Blue silence, so sensitive that she resents
The slip of a delicate glove, pouts
Like a child not wanting to go to bed
Before she kisses one favorite toy.

But the curtains part with a fluent bow.
Blue silence bursts in a fanfare red.

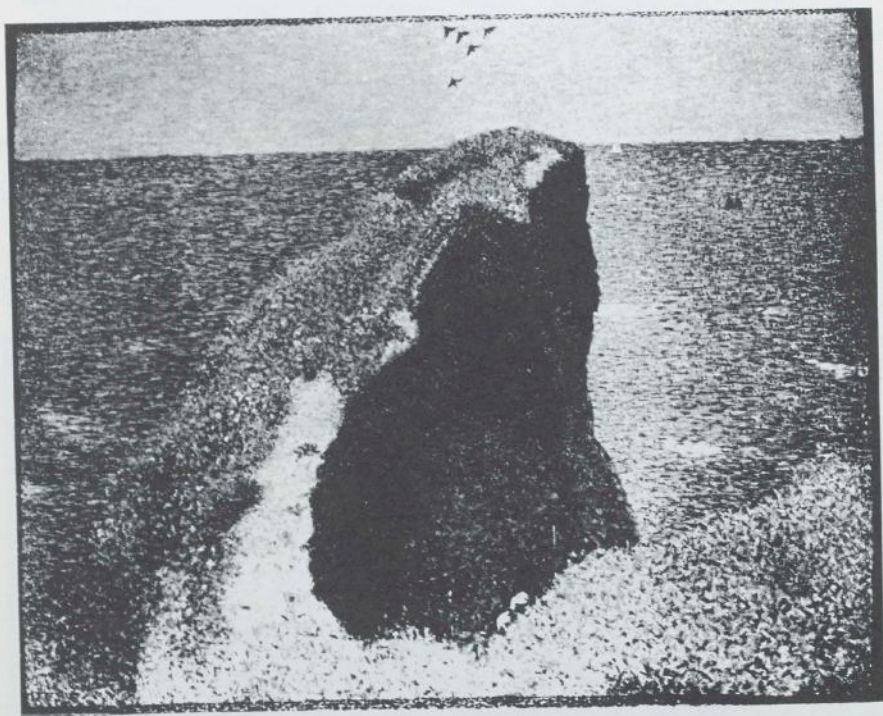
Before a summer's storm, blue silence reigns
In the robes of a wind, pregnant and still,
Watching and wishing and waiting until
She gives birth. Then she is gone again.

When winter lingers, blue silence has hold
Of spring, her single shelter from the cold.

—William DiCanzio



"Autum," by Vasily Kandinsky. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



"Le Bec du Hoc a' Grandcamp," by Georges Seurat, 1885.

LANDSCAPE IN BLUE

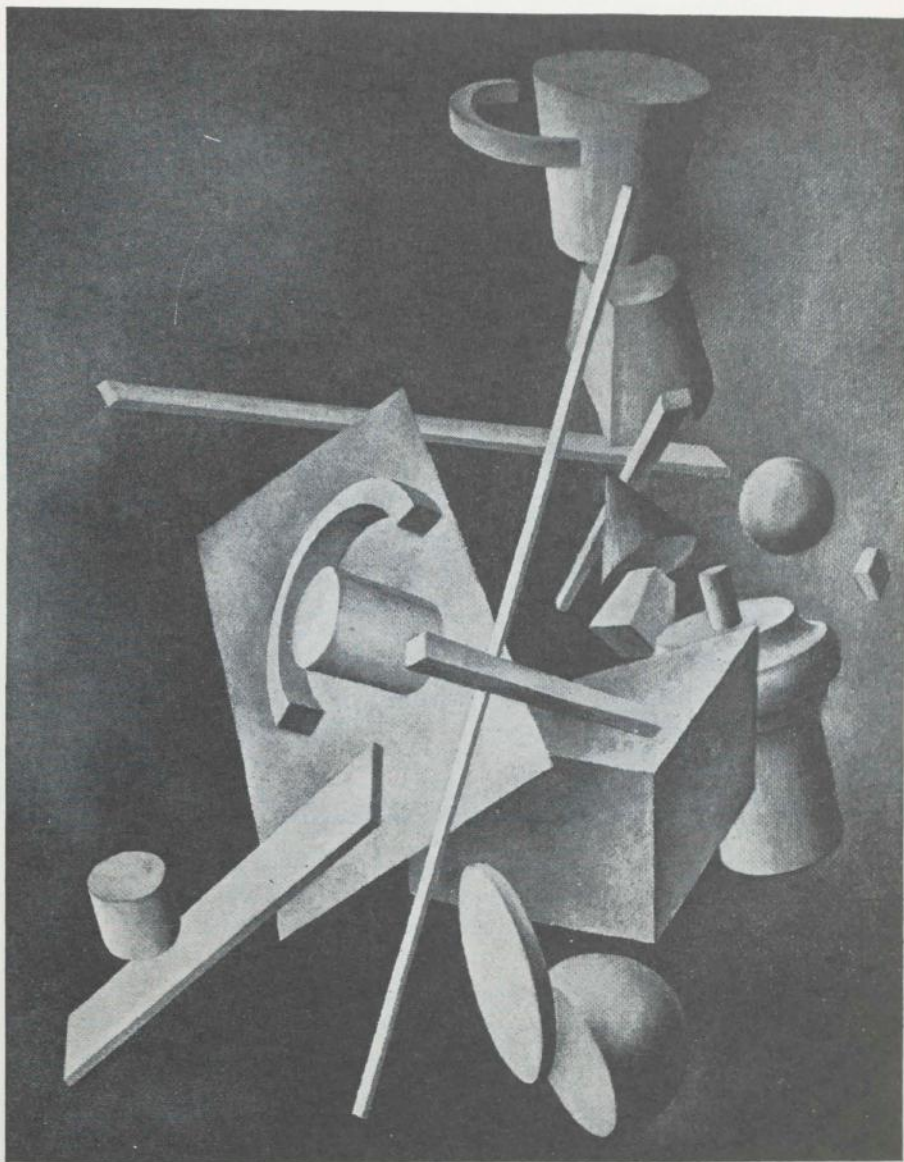
blubbery bathers
on the red promontory
declined invitations
to gimlet cocktails
this spurious
bluestocking trait
went unnoticed in
all the best circles,
a tremulous voicequiver
engaged his glance—
before the ironbark
reached the pebbled shore
three not five adamantines
retook the blubbery
but the bathers dispersed
in desnetude
a sacculus here and there
being the last vestiges
of their having been;
alone the kookaburra
grazed upon their remains,
the welkin above.

—Mary Acosta

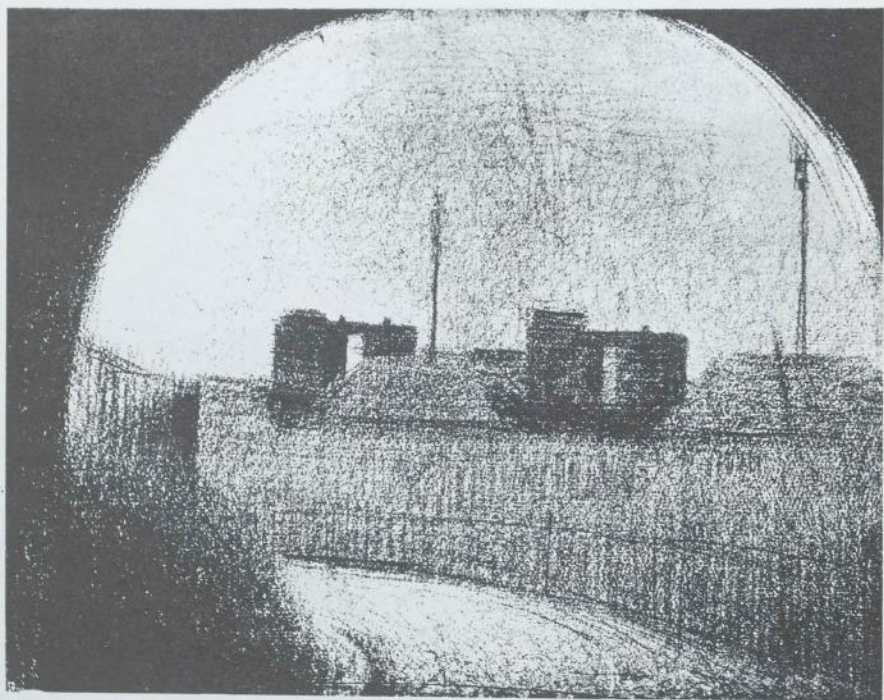
MONADS (For Gotfried Leibnitz)

Fired with one another's light
Into eternal mouldings cast
Performing tasks as best they might
Big with to be and past.
They fulgurate at every point
Reality in mirror jars
Compossible composed conjoint
The building blocks for stars.
A universe within a leaf
A sun within a stone
A thinker's much maligned belief
In order far outgrown.

—Christopher Warntz



"Composition," by Paul Kelp. Courtesy American Abstract Artists.



"La Route de la Gare," by *Georges Seurat*, c. 1882.

UNDER HAMPTON ROADS

in the middle of a white mosaic tunnel
as waves go on above
red lights flash in the semidark
the traffic stops.
inside the tiled womb
the heartbeat from throbbing cars
pumps nervous and afraid.
there has been an accident

waiting
in our car
as they take the bodies
we think of the chesapeake above
and in our exhaust-filled tunnel
we can hear
above the waiting engines
nothing but more waiting engines
on the other side

—Sandra Dechert

(TRANSLATED FROM HEBBEL'S *Death of Siegfried*)

Hagen

I would have challenged
the knight to a duel; that was my usual way.
But I couldn't separate him from the dragon,
and dragons one just kills. Why did this hero
take the protection of the dragon's blood?

Kriemhild

Protection! He had to kill it first,
and in the dragon he conquered the whole world,
the dark forest with all its savage monsters
and every knight who out of private fear
left the grim dragon living, yourself included!
You gnaw at him in vain! It was envy
which your malignancy lent dreadful arms to!
They'll speak of him and his nobility
as long as humans live upon the earth,
and also all that time will tell your shame.

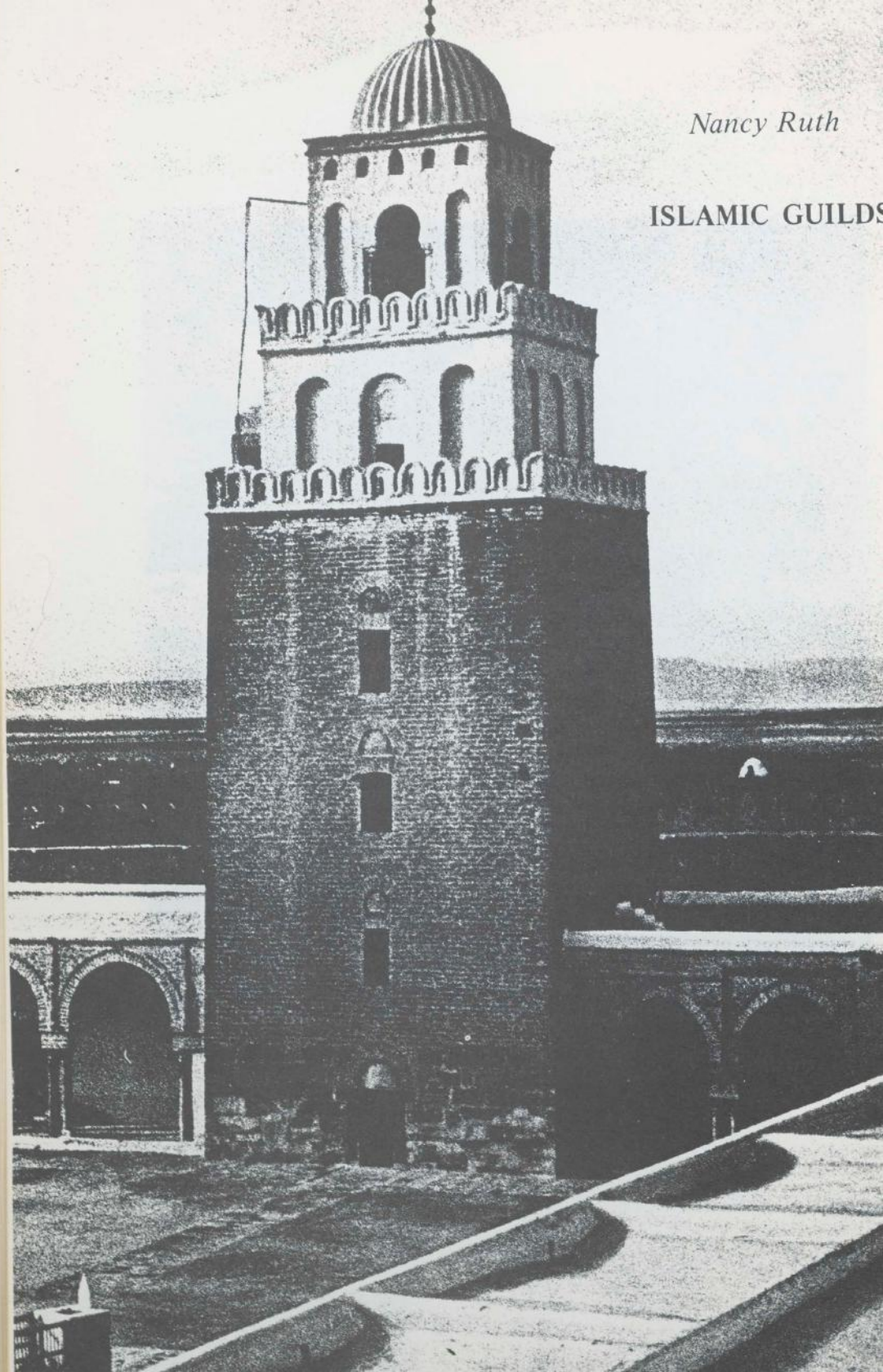
Paul Hopper



"The Green Rider" by Odilon Redon, 1904, R. Bühler Winterthur.

Nancy Ruth

ISLAMIC GUILDS



■ A shortage of source material, excessive generalization on a basis of insufficient evidence, and confusion over basic definitions have characterized past investigations into the nature of Islamic guilds (*asnāf*, s. *sinf*). Research presently underway will probably revolutionize our understanding of these important organizations, particularly during the classical and early medieval periods of Islam, for which information is all but nonexistent at this time.

Another weakness of most extant writing on the guilds is its emphasis on their relationship to the Quarmats, Sufis, and *Futuwwa*, to the neglect of the socio-economic (and political) functions which, after all, distinguished the guild as a professional organization. It is these roles of the guild which I should like to emphasize, in the context of the guild as a major element in the regulation of urban life. In a study of Islam as a social system it is often necessary to define the "economic," "religious," and "political" aspects more or less artificially. While these designations seem necessary for the convenience of writer and reader alike, it is important to remember that such compartmentalization distorts the essential unity of Islamic social structure.

This paper will attempt to present a generalized picture of the traditional Islamic system and its decline in the nineteenth century, as exemplified by Egypt. There are, however, many large gaps in our knowledge of the economic organization of the Arab world during some periods. Illustrations will also be drawn from Turkey, Syria, and Morocco. The main thrust of the analysis is intended to be one of function rather than structure. The origins of the guilds are essentially unknown, although much has been inferred on this subject (of which more later), perhaps erroneously. Although nearly all classes of Islamic society from international merchants to pickpockets were organized in "guilds" or similar organizations at some periods, we are concerned chiefly with the classes of skilled workmen or artisans and smaller merchants and retailers. The Islamic guilds of such peripheral regions as Central Asia or Java are outside the scope of this paper, as are those of Iran. This is also true for post-nineteenth century guilds generally. I shall, however, discuss some of the problems facing the Arab world today as it attempts to construct new horizontal institutions (e.g. trade unions) on the ruins of the traditional way of life.

1. Topography of the Islamic City

Three distinct but mutually interdependent types of communities are found in the Islamic world: the nomad camp and the village comprise the smallest units of Middle Eastern community life, while the urban aggregation is a more complex affair characterized by ethnic and economic divisions, and specialization of

The minaret of the great mosque of Kairouan.

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many kinds. As the village and camp produce food for the cities they are in turn supplied with manufactured items. It is essentially economic functions which differentiate the town from the village. Coon defines a town as "a community of traders and processors which has grown up around an outdoor market or through the expansion of a village handily situated for commerce."¹ He further differentiates the city from the town both qualitatively and quantitatively — the city is the center for higher officials and handles a greater volume of trade. Its craftsmen are superior to those of smaller communities, tend to concentrate on a local specialty, and serve the townspeople and also the inhabitants of smaller neighboring communities.² Guilds play an important part in his definition of the city.

*In my opinion, this threshold [between town and city] is the presence or absence of guilds. In the town the mukhtārs [ward leaders] or their equivalents care for the domestic organization of the citizens as members of wards, while the ra'īs baladīya [head of the municipality] or his equivalent controls their relations as manufacturers and traders. When the town grows and the number of individuals engaged in each craft or kind of trade increases beyond a certain point, the market provost [muhtasib] and his deputies are unable to cope with the situations that arise between members of a single craft and between crafts. Then the members of each craft organize as separate institutions, each with its head under the over-all guidance of the provost. The town has become a city.*³

Certainly most observers agree that the market and the Friday mosque are the essential features and foci of the city.

There is a characteristic uniformity in the spatial arrangement or topography of Islamic cities which as often been noted but is still incompletely understood. "In almost any city of the Middle East or North Africa . . . the workshops or trading booths of any particular craft are generally to be found assembled in a quarter recognized by tradition as theirs."⁴ Massignon defines four basic reference locations for the traditional arrangement of crafts in Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, and other cities. They are (a) the exchange, where the money-changer, auction market, and the headquarters of the *muhtasib* are located; (b) the *Qaisariya*, a strong building where valuables may be stored and where general shops are found; (c) the thread market (*suq al-ghazl*) or textile center, and (d) the mosque and university center.⁵

These commercial centers are arranged concentrically, with the chief mosque and the most important suqs comprising the "central business district" from which radiate other business, residential, and semirural quarters, culminating in the town cemeteries on the outskirts. The general principles are the "concentric arrangement and hierarchical division of the different quarters, topographic partitioning and corporative concentration in commercial districts, and ethnic as well as religious segregation in residential areas."⁶ Near the mosque

are located sellers of incense, candles, and books. They are followed by traders in textiles, leather, rugs, etc., dealers in food, and various craftsmen such as carpenters and coppersmiths. Near the city gates are retailers who cater to the needs of the rural population, while some crafts such as smiths and bakers seem to be scattered more or less randomly throughout the city. Still others must locate near their special resources such as a flowing stream in the case of millers and tanners.

"Downtown" Fez in 1935 included a *Qaisariya*, thread market, *funduqs*, universities, the Mosque of Qarawiyin, and the *zawīya* or shrine of Mulai Idris. A *funduq* is a good place for the conduct of business over tea, but has other functions as well. "The funduq is the center of a certain trade, and its guildhall, as for example the Najjarin or Carpenters' Funduq."⁸ Away from the center of the city are located homes, bakeries, and *baqqāls* (small retail merchants). One estimation put the total number of trades and specialists in other services at 164, which included at least one quarter of the working population, averaging 160 persons per trade.⁹

The leather industry was represented by three tanners' guilds. There were four tanneries and one plant in which wool was removed from sheepskins. The actual process of tanning required 20 steps, in which each tanner or sheepman specialized. Marketing of skins and raw materials and finished leather goods required a host of specialists, subspecialists, and apprentices, from the *funduq* auctioneer to the currier. Besides the *funduqs* other institutions serving the tanners included tan mills and grain mills. In addition, property (fixed installations, real estate, warehouses, etc.) belonged, not to the tanners, but to an assortment of owners and *habūs* (Moroccan for *waqf*) to which the craftsmen paid rent. But the tanners did not spend all their time with fellow guildsmen.¹⁰

*In four mosques the tanners carry on ritual as members of their profession; three are special to them . . . the fourth is the central zawīya of Mulai Idris, which serves all crafts and professions. The zawīyas [headquarters] of five Sufi brotherhoods care for their mystical needs, while the headquarters of three rifle companies furnish them with diversion outside the tan vats, as do the baths, tea-houses, and their homes.*¹¹

All of the above institutions in which the tanners participate consist of small groups based on personal association with each of the other members of the groups.¹²

The question remains — how rigid were these craft boundaries? The uniform location of suqs and other public centers may antedate Islam, and has certain technical and administrative advantages. "According to L. Massignon, this division is almost absolute in any given Islamic city throughout its history."¹³ But others criticize this view as too restrictive. Professor Goitein was unable to detect official coercion in the location of specific trades in specific streets or neighborhoods of 11th and 12th century Cairo or other cities of this period.¹⁴

To facilitate tax collection and encourage competition in the marketplace, however, it appears that the Mamluks did enforce such a requirement.¹⁵

2. The Guilds and Islam

It is believed that there were guilds in Byzantine Egypt and Syria, but of them little is known. By the late 9th century there are a few references to organizations of merchants and craftsmen, but they are not of the characteristic Islamic type. They "are rather a public regulation and control of markets and crafts, of the kind described in contemporary Byzantine sources."¹⁶

A second, more widely accepted theory of guild origins was developed by Massignon, who believed that the guilds were created by the Qarmati movement of the tenth century. This sect, an offshoot of the Isma'ili (Sevener) Shi'a, emerged during the period of social unrest which accompanied the increased urbanization and industrialization of the economy during the 9th and 10th centuries. The Zanj rebellion had been put down in 883. In the cities "the growing concentration of capital and labor had created a large, discontented town proletariat. In 920-921, the financial operations of the Wazir led to bread riots in the capital and to simmering discontent all over the Empire."¹⁷

The Qarmati revolt had strong appeal for the artisan classes, but was at the same time a schismatic Shi'ite sect resisting the orthodox Sunnism supported by the Establishment and one of

*a whole series of mystical, heretical sects, running from the eighth century A.D. until the Mongol conquest. These sects were almost all characterized by a syncretistic philosophy, containing elements borrowed from pre-Islamic systems, Manichaeism, and Mazdakism, by a revolutionary and equalitarian social philosophy, and by a secret, quasi-masonic organization, usually interconfessional, with graduated ranks of initiation.*¹⁸

Little is known of the philosophy and beliefs of the Qarmatis, although the 11th century *Epistles of the Sincere Brethren* (*Rasā'il Ikhwān as-Safā*) indicate their interest in propagating their ideology among the artisan classes (vol. i, pp. 210ff). "It was to reach the artisanate that they created and dominated the guilds, which came to have a double character, being at once professional guilds and Qarmati fraternities."¹⁹

As evidence in favor of a Qarmati origin for the guilds Lewis points to a lasting influence of Qarmati tradition, the interconfessionalism of later guilds, and the prosperity of the guilds under the Fatimids (908-1171). After Saladin conquered Fatimid Cairo in 1171, "immediately the guilds were deprived of most of their rights and privileges, and submitted to a very strict control."²⁰ Lewis' own opinion is that "Qarmatism has played a great role in the development of the Islamic guilds, [but] there is not yet sufficient evidence to show that it actually *created* them."²¹ The Hellenistic element in Qarmati thought indicates some Byzantine influence on the Qarmatis, and the resulting guild

system could well be the product of a synthesis of Graeco-Roman and Syro-Persian concepts.

Recent evidence, however, tends to discredit reports of Islamic guilds earlier than the 14th century. Goitein writes that for the 11th century we actually know much more about Byzantine than Islamic guilds. No literary references to guilds during the 11th and 12th centuries have come to light in Cairo or elsewhere, because they did not exist. "While such organizations, connected with the mystical brotherhoods of Islam, are attested to for the late Middle Ages, it has yet to be shown that they were in existence during the eleventh and twelfth centuries."²² He criticizes Massignon's article on *sinf* in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, which "does not provide a single real proof of their activities prior to the thirteenth century."²³

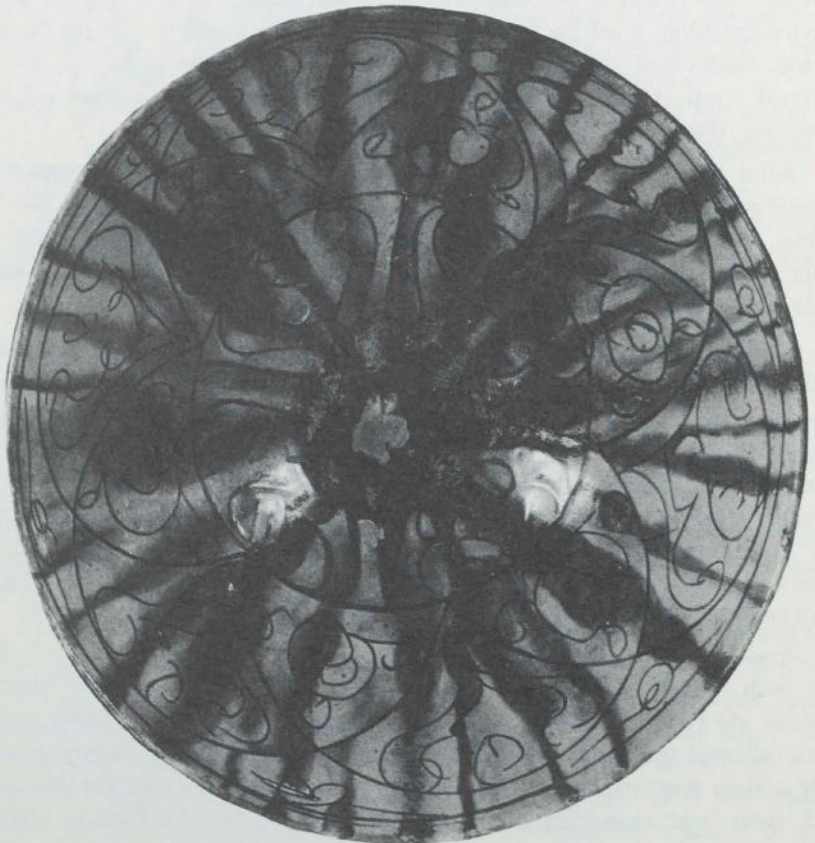
Other recent research on Syrian and Egyptian cities under the Mamluks (1250-1587) indicates that neither the Byzantine (State organized and controlled) nor the European (voluntary, autonomous associations) type of guild structure was found in the Muslim cities of this period. In this analysis guilds, strictly speaking, must be distinguished from fraternal orders. "In the Mamluk period, trades and crafts were subject, like the Byzantine guilds, to rigorous external controls intended to keep worker activities within certain political, economic, fiscal, and moral bounds."²⁴

After the disappearance of the Qarmatians, and Sunnism had become the general rule, many guilds became associated with Dervish brotherhoods. The Sufi orders often became a point of contact between the functionaries of the religious establishment and other sectors of the population, "particularly to small-scale craftsmen and merchants."²⁵

Aside from the Sufi brotherhoods, other organizations closely associated with guilds are the *Futuwwa* and *Akhi* movements in Turkey. The origins of the *Futuwwa* in 12th or 13th century Anatolia are obscure, but essentially the organizations consisted of young men bound to one another by ritual and promoting an ethical system not unlike that of medieval chivalry. There are several theories on the history of the *Futuwwa*. Gordlevsky and Koprulu place the "fusion of guild and *Futuwwa* in thirteenth century Anatolia, and [connect] it with the highly important Akhiyan-i-Rum (Akhis of Anatolia)."²⁶ By the 15th century, the *Futuwwa* had spread throughout the Islamic world.²⁷

Another urban movement composed mainly of artisans appeared in 13th and 14th century Anatolia. Its leaders were called *Akhis* — probably from the Turkish *aki* (generous) rather than the Arabic *akh* (brother).²⁸ These associations followed the Sunni Hanafite rule and show some Shi'ite influence, particularly in their veneration of Ali. Their decline dates from the rise of the Ottomans, with their final disappearance in the 15th century. The *Akhi* are of interest, however, mainly because in them "is thus realized for the first time the union of guild, *Futuwwa*, and religious brotherhood."²⁹

The guilds were never secular organizations in any sense. Whether or not the guilds originated as secret Qarmati societies, mystical doctrines and a moral and ethical code seem always to have been a part of the apprentice's education. There is no direct and necessary relationship, however, between specific mosques or *zawīyas* and particular crafts or guilds. Goitein notes that during the 11th and 12th centuries mosques would sometimes be designated by reference to a particular profession, but this reference is geographical to indicate their location.³⁰ Another curious feature of Islamic guilds was their interconfessionalism. "Whereas the European guilds were open to Jew, Christian, and Muslim alike, some guilds . . . being even predominantly non-Muslim."³¹ In practice, however, this interconfessionalism was greatly modified by the ethnic division of labor so that even it nominally open to all, "in effect the corporations were organized along ethno-religious lines, as a result of the characteristic occupational specialization . . . among the various communities."³²



Bowl of splash-glazed ware with foliate and scroll patterns, ninth century.

3. Economic Functions

Our information on the condition of the working classes is drawn largely from Goitein's investigations of the Mediterranean economy during the 11th and 12th centuries (early medieval period). There were five socio-economic classes in Cairo at this time. The upper class was composed of high government officials, the most important doctors and judges, and the leading businessmen. The middle class, the bourgeoisie of businessmen and professionals, was divided into two parts. The lower middle class also included master artisans and "beggars" — small businessmen. The fourth class consisted of the mass of urban craftsmen and laborers, while the peasants or *fellāh* occupied the lowest rank.³³

This classification compares nicely with Coon's description of the social structure of Fez, some eight or nine centuries later, when four outstanding classes could be recognized. The *tājir* or merchant in the international import-export business was a member of a small, select group of endogamous families, from whose ranks scholars and most government officials were also drawn. Both the *tājirs* and the class of retail merchants just below them were literate. The upper middle class retailer (the proverbial "soft, white-faced, and myopic shop-keeper") often came from the same background as the *tājir*. The master artisans, e.g. tanners, shoemakers, and masons, were organized into guilds, as were the merchants. This group comprised well over half the city's population, but were nearly illiterate. The fourth stratum — poor journeymen, unskilled laborers, street cleaners, etc. were usually outsiders who had migrated to the city in search of work, and resided largely in New Fez.³⁴

Most work was carried on in small workshops, although in Cairo paper and sugar were manufactured in large plants called *matbakhs* (lit. places of cooking). There is no documentary evidence on the life of the laborer in such a factory:

*An equivalent to the modern labor class, i.e. a large section of the population employed in the service of industrialists, is absent from the Arabic sources and the Geniza records related to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, just as we do not find in them guilds, the form of industrial organization of the later Middle Ages.*³⁵

Among the artisans, extreme specialization of function was the rule. Goitein notes that the 265 crafts found in the Cairo documents so far represent only a fraction of the total. Such division of labor resulted in a fine quality of workmanship and reduced the amount of training (*tarbiya*) necessary per man. Another consequence is a lack of cohesiveness: "the craftsmen of this period can, by no means, be regarded as forming a unified social class."³⁶

Workers were divided into two important classes:

The dividing line is to be found between the masters of the higher crafts, who normally worked with their own capital or formed free and often short-term partnerships, and others with little or no means, mostly the pursuers of lower professions, the hired laborers and paupers in general.

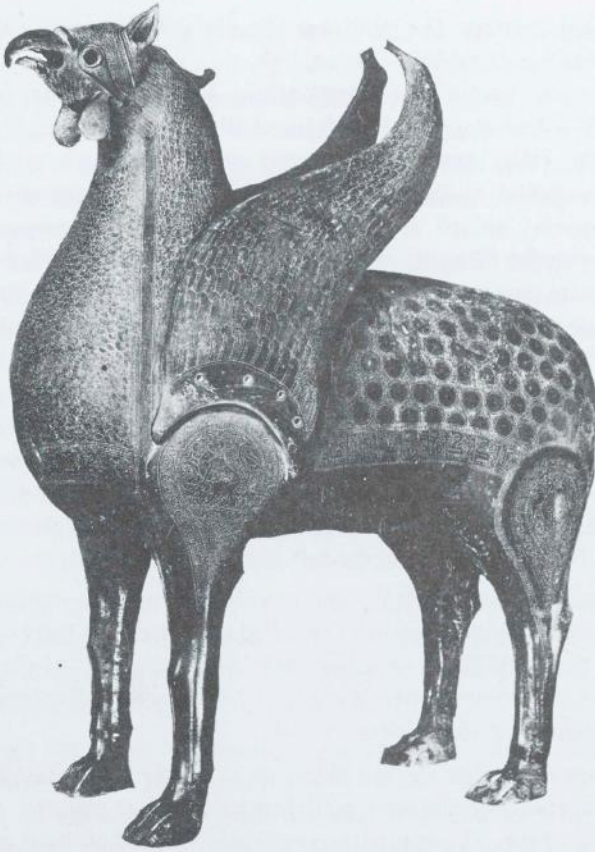
Workshops were run either as a family business or as a partnership. The contract of partnership was the characteristic form of association among merchants and master craftsmen (*mu'allim*). They were usually of relatively short duration, as terms of six to twelve months are found in many of them, though these may represent "trial periods."³⁸ Such partnerships took many forms and did not always involve a transfer of capital. One partner might contribute a certain amount of labor (or even prestige) in lieu of money. Various arrangements for "fringe benefits" such as meals were included in the contracts. Larger numbers of partners assumed the form of "companies," but no corporations in the Western sense ever developed.³⁹

Laborers, except for unusual long-term associations, were paid by the day in silver dirhams. Employment was a condition despised by workers of the day, and "no one would agree to the status of a 'hireling' except when forced to do so by dire financial circumstances."⁴⁰ There were several names for employed workers: *sabī* or *ghulām* ("boy" or "young man") was a common expression for workers regardless of age or social standing, implying rather one who had been "connected with an employer in a personal relationship of long standing."⁴¹ Other terms included *ājir* and *sāni'* for ordinary workmen or hirelings, and *raqqās*, literally "runner," for unskilled laborers.⁴²

Although sons normally followed the occupation of their fathers, they were under no social compulsion to do so, and there are many cases on record of sons rising above the position of their fathers. Middle Eastern society had, and has, a fluid character unlike either Asian caste systems or European hereditary nobility. It is true that big landowners are often related to leading businessmen (a situation which became increasingly common toward the end of the Ottoman period), but mobility increased as industrialization changed patterns of residence and occupation, and revolutions overturned privileged positions.⁴³ The slave could and did become king. In the early medieval period, the "absence of rigidly organized professional organizations"⁴⁴ (i.e. guilds) contributed to this freedom of occupation, and although ethnic preferences in the division of labor still held forth, they were never rigidly enforced.

Much of our information on the interior organization of Islamic guilds comes from the esoteric manuscripts (*Kutub al-futuwwa*) of the *Futuwwa* guilds of the 14th and 15th centuries. These provide descriptions of the guild hierarchy of grades, the initiation ceremony (*shadd*) and the collective guild traditions (*dustur*), but yield little information on other functions such as the guild tribunal. Some of this information can be garnered from historical and legal texts and descriptions of such travellers as Ibn Jubayr and Ibn Battuta (both 14th century).

These early descriptions exhibit considerable local variation. The generalized pattern of grades is: *mu'allim* (master craftsman), *khalīfa* (journeyman), *muta'allim* (apprentice), and *sāni'* (laborer).⁴⁶ Lewis provides a somewhat more detailed account which represents a composite picture from several sources:



Bronze gryphon of Fatimid period, probably from Egypt.

Each guild is headed by a shaykh who is elected by the *mu'allim* (also called *usta*). The *Ikhtiyariya* was a group of elders among the *mu'allim*. *Sāni'* is the term for a journeyman in his classification, although they were not considered an important grade as their status was usually temporary where it existed. The usual transition was direct from apprentice to master. Another temporary intermediate stage found in some guilds was known as *khalfa* or *khalīfa* (lit. "companion" or "adjunct"). The apprentice was called a *mubtadi* or *muta'allim*. The period of apprenticeship varied from master to master, but no masterpiece was required. Discipline was carried out by the shaykh or the shaykh plus the *Ikhtiyariya*.⁴⁷

Gordlevsky describes another type of organization, found in later Anatolian guilds, providing for an apprenticeship of 1001 days, which included instruction in the craft and morals. After the completion of a masterpiece and a formal ceremony, the apprentice became a *khalfa*. Six months later he could take his

place among the masters. The guild was administered by a committee of elders for the maintenance of "quality control."⁴⁸

We have only two detailed descriptions of Islamic guilds, one by Evliya Celebi, a Turk whose *Book of Travels* listed all the corporations in 17th century Constantinople, (they totaled 1001), and an Arabic work on the guilds of Damascus, researched by Elia Qoudsi in 1883. The organization of the Damascene guilds appears unique to that city. The highest post was occupied by the *Shaykh al-Mashayikh* (Shaykh of Shaykhs), who headed all guilds in the city and derived his wide powers from membership in one shaykhly family and the revenues of special *waqfs* reserved to him. His authority was curtailed drastically by the Tanzimat reforms, however, and by 1883 his position was largely honorary. He appointed the *Naqib* as his deputy and functionary. Next came the *shaykh al-hirfa* or guild shaykh (*hirfa: sinf*), "elected by [the consensus] of the eldest workers from among the best craftsmen and guildsmen. No rule of priority, whether of age or length of membership, was observed."⁴⁹ The guild shaykh was confirmed by the *Shaykh al-Mashayikh*, but subject to dismissal if incompetent. His duties included the following:

*to summon and preside at meetings, to watch over the maintenance of the standard of the craft, to punish those who violated the rules of the craft, to regulate the conditions of labor (this was delegated to the masters); to initiate new journeymen and masters, to be the responsible head of the guild in all dealings with the government.*⁵⁰

A *Shawish* was appointed by the elders to assist the guild shaykh. In contrast with earlier practice, journeymen (*sāni'*) formed the large majority of guild members in Qoudsi's time. The apprentice (*mubtadi*) worked without pay for several years while learning the craft, he became a journeyman on attainment of mastery and maturity. Qoudsi then describes the ceremonies and traditions of the guild, "the oaths of secrecy and good craftsmanship involved, the elaborate set of rules (*Rusum*) regulating every aspect of the guildsmen's lives, and the signs and gestures of recognition."⁵¹

Neither journeymen nor a *Shaykh al-Mashayikh* were found in the Egyptian guilds of this period, with the chief of police assuming the functions of the latter. The guild shaykh, known as the *shaykh at-tā'ifa* (*tā'ifa: sinf*, 19th century Egyptian) "had the power to supervise the workers, to adjudge professional conflicts, to punish faults."⁵²

4. Guilds and Government

To understand the political importance of the Muslim guild, we should examine first the theoretical underpinnings of political association in Islam. In the Graeco-Roman tradition, the *polis* or city-state is the perfect and natural society — an end in itself — the moral association through which man realized the fulfillment of his very being. "The city-state . . . exists for the good life

which is inseparable from law and justice."⁵³ For the European, citizenship involved special privileges and a strong sense of civic pride and solidarity.

In Islam, the good life requires a middle class existence which is possible only in an urban environment. Yet in Islam, the *raison d'être* of the State is merely to facilitate the chief goal of man, which is service and obedience to God. To this end, the function of the State is *hisba*: the commanding of the good and the forbidding of evil.⁵⁴

The city in Islam is not a closed corporation, but an urban aggregation — a mosaic of ethnic, religious, and economic communities. This mosaic of conflicting interests gradually fragmented existing Hellenistic checkerboard cities into myriad quarters, blind alleys, and compounds. A city without citizens? Recalling our definition of the city, the mosque and market are the essential institutions — not city hall. Consequently, the State becomes "an outside agency with which one no longer identifies but which one rather wishes to keep at arm's length from the spheres of one's personal and familiar life."⁵⁵

Municipal administrators were appointed by the central authority, rather than elected from the "grassroots." As a result,

*all that spirit of local solidarity and organization, that is so important in medieval Europe, was excluded by the permanently unsettled state of Muslim political conditions from expression in the political field and was driven to seek an outlet in economic life.*⁵⁶

We have already seen that "the markets and bazaars . . . are the chief manifestations of community life on the nonreligious level."⁵⁷ Yet the story would be incomplete if we did not envision the overall pattern of Coon's mosaic: not only professional guilds, but nearly all social organizations competed in the perpetual intramural struggle for political and economic dominance in the Islamic city.

Hence, Lewis considers the traditional guild "a spontaneous development from below, created, not in response to a State need, but to the social requirements of the labouring masses themselves."⁵⁹ As evidence for this interpretation, he recalls the guilds' traditional attitude of distrust, suspicion, and hostility vis-a-vis the State, an attitude "which the public authorities, political and ecclesiastical, have always returned."⁶⁰

According to von Grunebaum,

*the professionals, following the later classical and Byzantine corporative tradition, would constitute a rather large number of guild-like associations within which each individual . . . would find a place and a certain measure of protection against governmental negligence or oppression.*⁶¹

Consider, then, a segmented society in which nearly all components are organized into ranks, with the guild shaykh serving as a buffer between the guild and government. The struggle is not one of capitalist class versus feudal class or proletariat, but rather conflict of all against all. The bourgeoisie (property owning class) is weak, and few institutions — no church, no permanent bureauc-

racy -- develop. Even the guilds lack the economic muscle of their European counterparts. But all is not anarchy, because each group bargains for power according to accepted formulas. Ritual and tradition provide the cement which holds the mosaic together.

Only three or four officials, appointed by the Caliph or his Vizier, were required to tax, police, and adjudicate the Muslim city. The city governor (*ra'is baladiya*, *'āmil*, Pasha) was served by a staff of three: the *sāhib ash-shurta* (police chief), the *qādi* (judge), who was assisted by *'adls* (notary publics), and the *muhtasib*, or supervisor of markets and public morality (literally: censor).

The *muhtasib* or market provost was subordinate to the *qādi* and was required to be a Muslim of good character. Among his special concerns were the accuracy of weights and measures, frauds and trickery in the marketplace, and nonpayment of debts. After a period of dormancy, the office of *muhtasib* was revived by the State during the 12th century. The *muhtasibs* were also supplied with assistants for their daily rounds. In Mamaluk times, "each craft or trade had an *'arif* appointed as its overseer. These were selected from among the craftsmen, but appointed by the *muhtasibs* to be their agents and agents of the state authority."⁶²

The city ward or quarter (*hāra*) represented another level of political jurisdiction, under the *shaykh alhāra* (later: *mukhtār*). The quarter may or may not be a unit politically; sometimes it is "affiliated to a certain political party."⁶³ There is no necessary or consistent relationship between the guilds and the quarters. However, "in some cities the corporation heads were responsible to the *shaykh* of the quarter."⁶⁴

5. Decline of the Guilds

The guild system of Ottoman Egypt has yet to be studied in detail. The two most important sources for the 17th century are an anonymous manuscript in the Landesbibliothek of Gotha, the *Kitab al-dhakha'ir wa'l-tuhaf fi bir al-sana'i wa'l-hiraf*, which dates from the 17th or late 16th century, and Evliya Celebi's account of Egyptian guilds during the 1670's. Other sources include the chronicle of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti (*'Aja'ib al-athar fi tarajim wa'l-akhbar*, Cairo, 1870-71), which may be translated *Biographical and Historical Wonders*.

All sources agree that after the conquests of the Ottomans the position and power of the guilds declined throughout the Arab world. The author of the Gotha manuscript "considers the rule of the Circassian Mamaluks . . . the golden age of the guilds."⁶⁵ But this report is very difficult to reconcile with Lapidus' findings that "considered from the point of view of political organization, economic regulation, or even corporate fraternal life, there were no guilds in Muslim cities at this period in any usual sense of the term."⁶⁶ The fact is that we simply do not know what kind of community controls operated to protect the interests of the working man. What forms of organization did exist were created by the State to enhance its own interest.

*Neither were the merchants organized into guilds. In the fourteenth century the kārīmī merchants in the spice trade between Egypt and India were supervised by a ra'īs, selected from their number, but appointed by the Sultan to act as a liaison for the organization of their banking, diplomatic, and fiscal duties to the state.*⁶⁷

By the 17th century, a system of tight control by the government existed in Cairo. The *qādī* was placed in charge of guild affairs and given the right to appoint guild shaykhs. The shaykhs gradually became tools of the government and increasingly estranged from their constituents in the guilds. Simultaneously, the administrative role of the guilds expanded until their political and economic decline in the 19th century.

But the guilds represented the interests of their members, as well as those of the State. Within the guild "an esprit de corps" existed "which did in fact give mutual help when the need arose."⁶⁸ In fact, the conflict between the guilds and their Ottoman overlords frequently erupted and "even expressed itself in demonstrations and clashes with the army."⁶⁹ During periods of crisis, guild political activism occasionally took the form of anti-government inspired uprisings, some of which were recorded by Jabarti.

*To give but two examples, in Muharram 1202 (October 1787) guilds rose in protest against a forced loan (Ja. II, 151), and in Muharram 1205 (September 1790) there was an uprising in protest at the arrest of the head of the guild of butchers (Jab. II, 188).*⁷⁰

In addition, this struggle between guilds and rulers "is reflected throughout the Gotha manuscript, and to judge by this source it assumed the character of antagonism between Arabs (Egyptians) and Ottomans."⁷¹ In any event, it was the government which triumphed in the long run.

During the nineteenth century, the gradual destruction of the old socio-economic framework of Egyptian society brought about the dissolution of the tribe and village community, a decline in the power, wealth, and status of religious leaders generally, and the disappearance of the corporations. In the cities, the *hāra* lost significance as a social unit, due to increased immigration which broke down the previous economic and religious homogeneity. The older pattern of religious separation in residence and occupation continued, however, particularly in the smaller towns. "Generally speaking, all persons engaged in a specific urban occupation belonged to one [religious] community; where the trade was practiced by people of more than one community, they usually formed separate guilds."⁷² Each quarter continued to be headed by a *shaykh al-hāra*, but most of his functions were taken over by the government. At the same time, religious functionaries were robbed of their tax-collecting duties by the abolition of the *jizya* (tax on non-Muslim communities) in 1855.

In the economic sphere, closer contact with the West (culminating in European intervention and occupation) resulted in a profound re-orientation of the



Panel of marble of the mihrab of the great mosque of Kairouan.

economy from subsistence to exports. These changes did not, however, affect the essential status of women, the role of the family or of religion. The essentially agrarian nature of the Egyptian economy was maintained throughout the 19th century, despite the industrial experiments of Muhammad Ali. Burdensome taxes, uneconomic production in factories, competition from European imports, and the possibility of larger profits in agriculture, all combined to discourage native investment. Foreign investors were more interested in public utilities (water, gas, railroads) than in industry. "The British occupation changed this situation only in so far as most of the oppressive taxes were abolished, but Cromer opposed industrial development."⁷³

No free labor market existed in Egypt before the 1880's, and domination by the guilds continued up to the last decades of the century. Even at this late date, "a ramified system existed in Cairo and many other towns in Egypt, comprising the whole indigenous gainfully occupied population."⁷⁴ The average guild of 18th and 19th century Egypt was characterized by a small membership, and extreme fragmentation and specialization. It was headed by a shaykh who may or may not have been appointed by the government with the advice of the elders. The shaykh in turn appointed his assistant, the *naqīb*, whose functions were largely ceremonial. The guild's small size may have been related to the tax-collecting role of the shaykh: "perforce the shaykh had to be personally familiar with each of the guild members."⁷⁵

The decline of the Egyptian guilds has been attributed to many factors. One theory, associated with Mustafa Fahmy (*La Revolution d'industrie en Egypte*) asserts that the creation of large-scale industry by Muhammad Ali was responsible. Others have postulated that the French and British occupations, in conjunction with Ali Pasha's industrialization, accomplished the eventual suppression of the craft associations. Yet guilds flourished in Cairo nearly half a century after Muhammad, and we might rather ask why they lasted so long.

According to Gabriel Baer, there were three factors in the guilds' longevity during the 19th century, which also help to explain why Muhammad Ali could not have been responsible for their demise. Most important, the maintenance of the guild system was in the interest of the government, due to the numerous social functions carried out by these organizations, including the collection of taxes from the guild members. The shaykhs followed the instructions of the government, arbitrated disputes, judged the misdemeanors of their membership, and supplied labor to both private employers and the government.

Secondly, equalitarianism remained a characteristic feature of Islamic guilds down to modern times. In most periods, the journeyman phase remained either transitory or absent, thus reducing the kind of tension which split European guilds into two separate and antagonistic classes (masters and journeymen) during the 15th and 16th centuries. "In Islam, master, journeyman, and apprentice remain essentially of the same class, in close personal contact. The rank of

journeyman never developed into a permanent social group without hope of ever attaining mastership.”⁷⁶

Finally, the fact that ‘Ali’s industrialization attempt failed delayed the need for new economic institutions for many years. Guild shaykhs did not intend to become contractors, and little or no change occurred in the artisan guilds. Muhammad ‘Ali’s factories in general did not compete with the crafts, because they were established in new and different industries.⁷⁷ But possibly Baer overlooks several aspects of ‘Ali Pasha’s policies which did indeed harm the guilds. The changes in Egypt’s foreign commerce which were largely responsible for the guilds’ disintegration occurred as “a result of Muhammad ‘Ali’s preferential treatment of Europeans.”⁷⁸ Secondly, “we have only to look at Jabarti to realize that though Muhammad ‘Ali did not kill the guilds, yet his policy of state monopoly of primary materials did strongly affect them . . .”⁷⁹

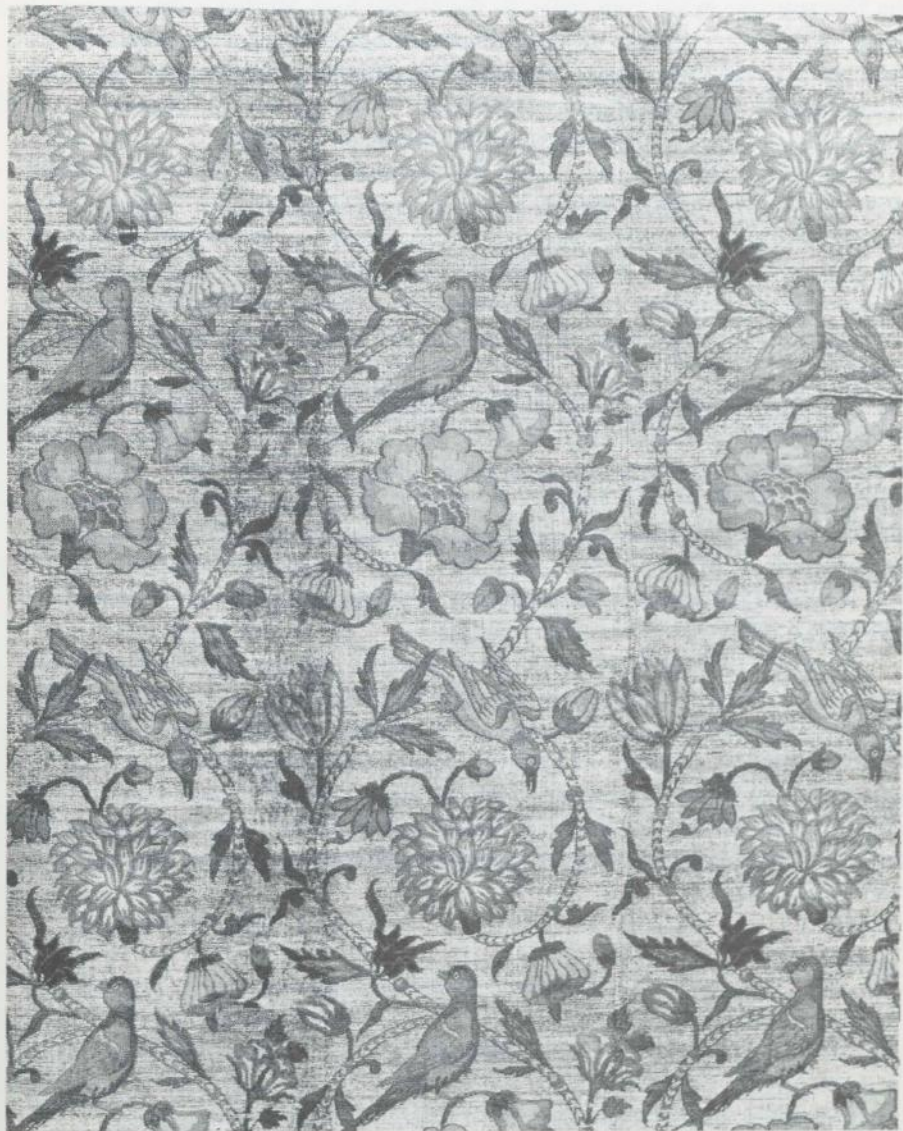
But the real *coup de grâce* — if we accept Baer’s theory — was “the influx of European goods and of Europeans settling in Egypt.”⁸⁰ The importation of manufactured items forced many traditional crafts out of business. Guild conservatism prevented the adoption of new techniques and methods which might have improved the competitive position of Egyptian products. Other factors included the dissolution of the traditional market organization as retailing spread throughout the town, the infiltration by Europeans of traditionally Egyptian industries, and a change in the nature of foreign trade from mainly Oriental goods to cotton. In addition, “Egyptian merchants suffered from a large variety of oppressive taxes and duties, from which foreign merchants were exempted by the Capitulations,”⁸¹ All of these factors combined to make control of the situation by the shaykhs impracticable.

During the last quarter of the century, migration from rural areas to the towns glutted the labor market with “non-union” workers. Unable to maintain their old monopolies, the shaykhs found their traditional function as suppliers of labor abrogated by the first decade of the new century.

Administrative reform of the Egyptian government during the 1880’s and 1890’s removed most remaining responsibilities of the shaykhs. At about mid-century, they had lost

*the function of distributing among the members of the guilds a fixed tax-quota imposed on the guild as a whole . . . In 1881 the shaykhs were relieved of the task to collect the taxes, and by 1892 all taxes on the guilds, and thereby the remaining fiscal functions of the shaykhs, had been abolished.*⁸²

Subsequently, the government took over the issuing of professional permits and the fixing of wages for certain public services. Monopolistic practices of specific guilds were prohibited during the years 1887-90, and in 1890 the complete freedom of all trades was announced.”⁸³ By the First World War, the impact of the guilds on public life was negligible.



Persian brocade of the Safavid period.

Conclusion

The Islamic guild, irrespective of its antecedents, developed in response to the needs of a traditional society, deriving its form from the modes of tension management available to it. The personalized nature of all guild relationships may be detected in its structure, small size, and social functions — the traditional man is unused to collaboration with strangers. Solidarity beyond the confines of the *hāra* scarcely exists even today in the Middle East. Missing is the concept of legitimized power which undergirds Western institutions, from the British Parliament to the AFL-CIO. This is precisely the difference between European and Islamic guilds: the autonomous jurisdiction of the former as opposed to the fluctuating status and perpetually tenuous footing of the latter.

Traditional Islamic society never developed a durable, independent middle class. During the medieval period, the small bourgeoisie depended heavily for its security on the landowning class. Even today, where the landowning aristocracy has been eliminated, it is the military, rather than the inchoate professional salariat, which formulates public policy. The artisan, fast becoming obsolete technologically, is represented by no one, as the traditional guild has never been replaced.

The worker, skilled, or (as is more likely) unskilled and unemployed, remains impotent. In Egypt, the first labor union appeared in 1899, but development was slow, due in part to opposition from the British and the Egyptian ruling class.⁸⁴ Even this form of protection does not exist in Afghanistan, Yemen, or Libya, and is either outlawed or too small to be effective in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Iran, Syria, and Pakistan. In Egypt, trade organizations are tied to the Arab Socialist Union, and only in a few small countries has organized labor had a voice in political modernization.⁸⁵

In neither the medieval nor modern Islamic world can economic problems be separated from broader social and political processes. As a power constellation for the future, the trade union can provide an association which transcends traditional loyalties of family, clan, and community: "when free to organize, Middle Eastern trade union federations, like Middle Eastern mass parties, often include manual workers, the skilled and unskilled, and members of the secular intelligentsia — an alliance, in short, of the new middle class, the workers, and the peasants."⁸⁶



Footnotes

- ¹ Carleton S. Coon, *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East*, (revised ed.), New York, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966, p. 226.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 229.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 230.
- ⁴ Reuben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ., 1965, p. 89.
- ⁵ Louis Massignon, "Sinf," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, (1st ed.), p. 436.
- ⁶ Xavier de Planhol, *The World of Islam*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell Univ., 1958, pp. 9-10.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- ⁸ Coon, p. 236.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 239-42.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 239.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 244.
- ¹³ de Planhol, p. 13.
- ¹⁴ S.D. Goitein, "The Working People of the Mediterranean Area During the High Middle Ages," in *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1966, pp. 259-260, and Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society, I: Economic Foundations*, Berkely, Univ. of Calif., 1967, p. 83.
- ¹⁵ Ira Marvin Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Harvard Univ., 1967, p. 100.
- ¹⁶ Bernard Lewis, "Islamic Guilds," *Economic History Review.*, VIII (November, 1937), p. 21.
- ¹⁷ Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1960, p. 107.
- ¹⁸ Lewis, "Islamic Guilds," p. 22.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- ²¹ *Loc. cit.*
- ²² Goitein, "The Working . . .," pp. 267-68.
- ²³ *Loc. cit.*
- ²⁴ Lapidus, pp. 97-98.
- ²⁵ Gabriel Baer, *Population and Society in the Arab East*, Hanna Szoke, tr., New York, Praeger, 1964, p. 216.
- ²⁶ Lewis, "Islamic Guilds," p. 28.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- ²⁸ F. Taescher, "Akhi," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, (2nd ed.), p. 321-23.
- ²⁹ Lewis, "Islamic Guilds," p. 29.
- ³⁰ Goitein, "The Working . . .," p. 270.
- ³¹ Lewis, "Islamic Guilds," p. 37.
- ³² Z.Y. Hershlag, *Introduction to the Modern Economic History of the Middle East*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1964, p. 20.
- ³³ Goitein, *A Mediterranean . . .*, pp. 78-79.

- 34 Coon, pp. 246-48.
- 35 Goitein, "The Working . . .," p. 274.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 256-58.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 277.
- 38 Goitein, *A Mediterranean . . .*, p. 88.
- 39 Goitein, "The Working . . .," p. 271.
- 40 *Ibid.*, p. 278.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 275.
- 42 *Loc. cit.*
- 43 Baer, p. 206.
- 44 Goitein, "The Working . . .," p. 267.
- 45 Louis Massignon, "Sinf," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, (1st ed.), p. 436.
- 46 *Loc. cit.*
- 47 Lewis, "Islamic Guilds," p. 30.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 50 *Loc. cit.*
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 52 *Loc. cit.*
- 53 G.E. von Grunebaum, "The Structure of the Muslim Town," in *Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, (2nd ed.), London, Routledge and Paul, 1961, p. 143.
- 54 *Loc. cit.*
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- 56 Lewis, "Islamic Guilds," p. 20.
- 57 de Planhol, p. 8.
- 60 Lewis, "Islamic Guilds," pp. 35-36.
- 61 *Loc. cit.*
- 62 von Grunebaum, p. 150.
- 63 Lapidus, p. 98.
- 64 Baer, p. 191.
- 65 Hershlag, p. 19.
- 66 Gabriel Baer, *Egyptian Guilds in Modern Times*, Jerusalem, The Israel Oriental Society, 1964, p. 11.
- 67 Lapidus, p. 101.
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- 69 Afaf Loutfi el Sayed, Review of *Egyptian Guilds in Modern Times*, by Gabriel Baer, *Middle Eastern Studies*, (April, 1966), p. 275.
- 70 Baer, *Egyptian . . .*, p. 15.
- 71 Loutfi el-Sayed, p. 275.
- 72 Baer, *Egyptian . . .*, p. 15.
- 73 Gabriel Baer, "Social Change in Egypt: 1800-1914" in P.M. Holt, ed., *Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt*, London, Oxford Univ., 1968, p. 146.

- 74 *Ibid.*, pp. 137-38.
- 75 *Ibid.*, p. 142.
- 76 Loutfi el-Sayed, p. 273.
- 77 Lewis, "Islamic Guilds," pp. 36-37.
- 78 Loutfi el-Sayed, p. 273.
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 274.
- 80 *Ibid.*, pp. 273-74.
- 81 Baer, "Social . . .," p. 143.
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 144.
- 83 *Loc. cit.*
- 84 *Loc. cit.*
- 85 Manfred Halpern, *The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa*, Princeton Univ. Press, 1963, p. 321.
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- 87 *Ibid.*, p. 338.

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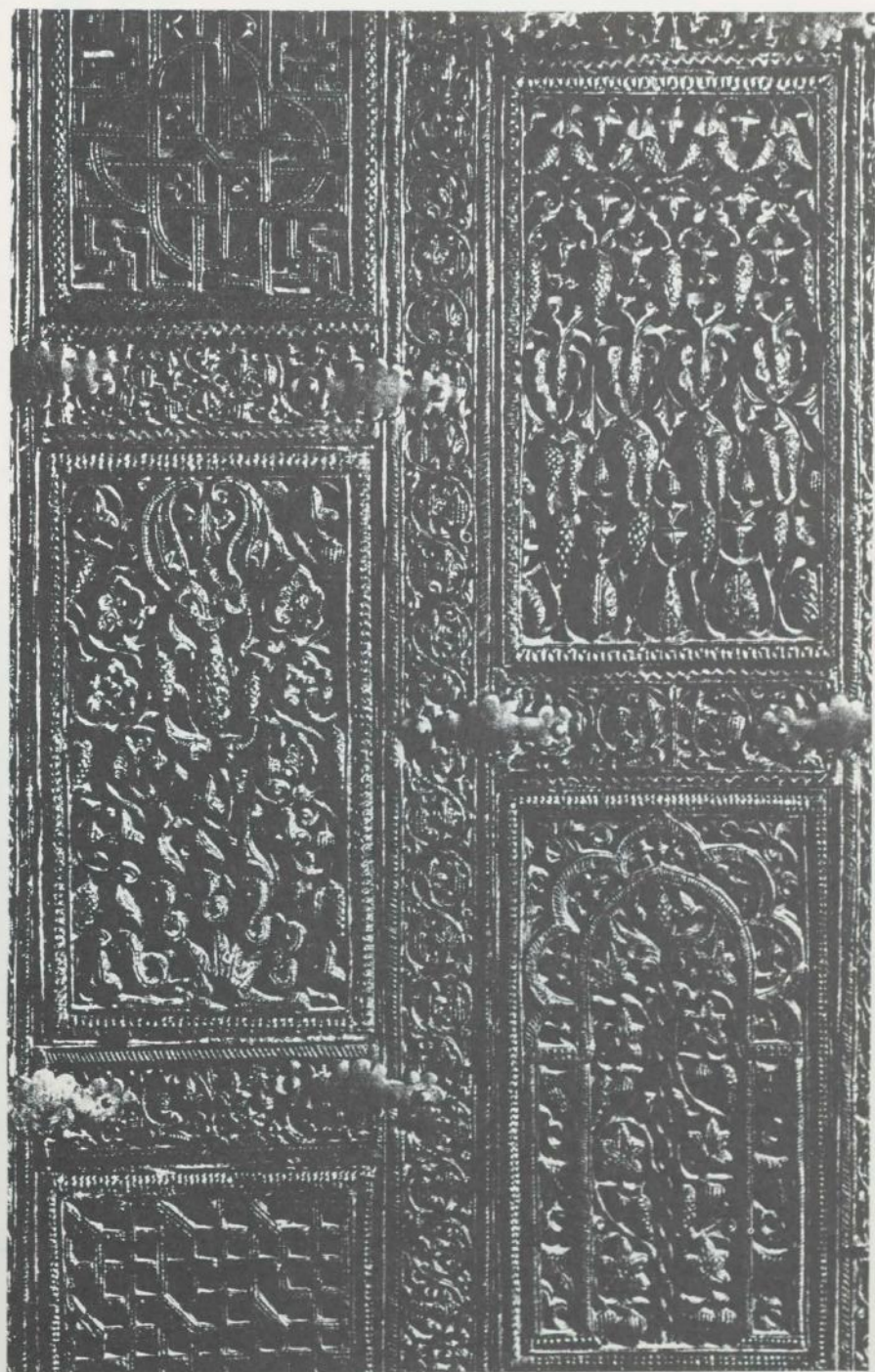
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Ivory oliphant or drinking horn, eleventh century.



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