Islam in the Early Modern World Economy

HSTAFM 162
Class 7.2 (2/16/16)
1492

- The year 1492 was marked by two interconnected events of great significance—the voyage of Columbus to the New World, and the finale of the Reconquista with the fall of Granada.

- Early exploration of the New World was fundamentally tied to the experience of the Reconquista—Cortés for instance described Aztec temples as *mezquitas* (Arabic masğid “mosque” and their priests as *alfaqī* (Arabic *faqīh*, religious judge)).
Image from a dispersed Mughal album, painted by Manṣūr ca. 1612, one of several known turkeys from the reign of Jahangir. Victoria & Albert Museum, IM.135-1921
Fragment of Piri Reis’s World-Map of 1513, depicting the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean, and the coastline of South America
“And it is said that they are providing the Sultan with everything he needs to know about how to prepare a fleet to send to the Red Sea, and that because of them he is now very knowledgeable about the Kingdom of Portugal and the capabilities of its king to such an extent that the Sultan is now preparing an even larger force than he previously intended.”

—Portuguese report concerning the activities of Venetian merchants in Egypt, ca. 1539.
The Circulation of Men and Credit

Itineraries of Julfan commenda agents.

The young age of these agents indicates that they were already considered adults before they left home on their travels. Indeed, this is supported by a testimony at a notary public in Amsterdam given in the second half of the seventeenth century, according to which "among the Armenians [of Julfa] one is considered to be able to conduct business if he has only the age of 15 or 16... after which all his acts are considered as being valid like those of a mature person."

By the time some of these men had reached Manila and had decided to convert to Catholicism, they had already been away from their families for at least a decade. Some, like Santiago, worked in a brief visit home in the course of their long travels for the purpose of marrying a bride from their home community. Others probably married local women in the marketplaces they visited, thus "creolizing" as they traveled, as Georges Roques suggests in his manual of trade in India.

Most of the Julfans who crop up in the Inquisition records in Manila were clearly seasoned agents in the employ of wealthy aghas or khwajas residing in Julfa. Though the Inquisition records do not provide us with the names of the masters for whom these forlorn agents toiled, we can be certain that their employers were wealthy Julfan family firms with their headquarters in the nodal center in New Julfa.
Coffee beans were newly brought in large quantity in the cities of Yemen and the Ḥijāj at the close of the 9th century (late 15th century CE). They were pounded into powder, cooked, and drunk in a liquid form called qahwa. People were abuzz about it. Its drinking is permissible. Some learned men of Zubayd composed verses about it:

*Qahwa* made of coffee-beans is a drink, a solace—

    Tarry not, o Jirjis.

Poured into Chinese porcelain,

    it is like the eyes of the Narcissus.

Bring it to me in the morning—

    Darkness flees.

Lord, expand my chest,

    So that I can drink more of it.

Detail, Coffee House, Ottoman Album, Chester Beatty MS 439, Late 16th C.
Sūrnāme-i Hümāyūn
TS H 1344, illustrated by Nakkaş Osman, late 16th century
PARADE OF TEXTILE WEAVERS AT THE HIPPODROME IN ISTANBUL,
SURNAME (BOOK OF FESTIVITIES), 1582
AUSTRIAN HABSBURG AMBASSADOR SIGISMUND HERBERSTEIN WEARING OTTOMAN ROBE OF HONOR, 1559
Ottoman silk brocades: unisex patterns, 1550s
TILES AND TEXTILES
Court carpet and tile panel
Court Carpet and Jewish Synagogue Carpet (Torah Curtain)
Ottoman palace interior in Istanbul, miniature painting, 1580s

Aleppo Room, built for a Christian merchant in Ottoman Aleppo (Berlin Museum, 1600-1603)
Süleyman’s tughra (monogram), c. 1530-40

Ceramic wares from Iznik, c. 1530-40
AUSTRIAN HABSBURG GIFTS/TRIBUTE TO THE OTTOMAN COURT, GOLD CLOCKS WITH ORIENTAL FIGURES, LATE 16th CENTURY
Economic Stratification and the 1% of the Ottoman Empire

Also, velvet and brocade, gold-embroidered beauties like the gold brocade made in Istanbul, in particular, jackets made of sable and lynx fur, belts set with jewels, gem-studded daggers and knives are not proper for anyone but for high notables and privileged personages. Especially Persian and Egyptian rugs and carpets, gold-laced and gold-embroidered sofa spreads, precious cushions and table mats, silver basins and candlesticks—to decorate their dwellings with these […] has to be the privilege of those glorious ones at the highest peak. If men of lower status than these have the audacity to make use of them, sharp-tongued critics will lash them and will punish them severely by their abuse.

—Muṣṭafā ʿAlī, *Rules for Party-Hosts* (1599)
İstanbul, Süleymaniye Camii, 1551-57

Beşiktaş, Kapudan Sinan Paşa Camii, 1554-55 (posthumous)
IZNIK TILES: Grand vizier Rüstem Pasha’s mosque, 1560s