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HODGSON, MARSHALL GOODWIN SIMMS

HODGSON, MARSHALL GOODWIN SIMMS (b. Richmond, Indiana, 11 April 1922; d. Chicago, 10 June 1968), prominent scholar of Islamic civilization and professor of history and social thought at the University of Chicago.

Already by 1943 as an undergraduate, Marshall Hodgson had written a number of papers in world history, which were shown by his father to his future mentor, Professor John Nef, who was the founding chairman of the new interdisciplinary Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, while he was applying for admission on behalf of his son, who was away working for the Civic Public Service as a conscientious objector from 1943 to 1946. Hodgson was a practicing Quaker and a strict vegetarian. His Quaker belief in the unity of humankind engendered a firm moral commitment on his part as a historian to the affirmation of the unity of world history (Hodgson, "The Historian as Theologian"; Bellows, pp. 25-34).

At Chicago, he studied with the orientalist Gustav von Grunebaum (1909-72), and received his Ph. D from the Committee on Social Thought in 1951. After a post-doctoral year in India, Hodgson began his academic career at the University of Chicago, received tenure in 1961, and succeeded Nef as the second chairman of the Committee in Social Thought in 1964. He also joined the Department of History at the invitation of his friend and colleague, the world-historian William McNeill (b. 1917). He was instrumental in the creation

of the new Committee on Near Eastern Studies and agreed to serve as its chairman in 1964, and of the Center in Middle Eastern Studies in 1965 (Kiesling). His personal life, meanwhile, was increasingly unhappy. Of his three daughters, the twins born in 1960 suffered from an incurable neuro-muscular disease, and one of them predeceased him in 1967. He was finding his administrative duty as the Social Thought chairman too stressful and wished to be relieved of it in March 1968 (Kiesling, pp. 33-34). He collapsed while jogging in the University of Chicago's Bartlett Gym and died at the age of forty-six on 10 June, 1968.

Hodgson wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the revolutionary struggle of the Nezāri/Ismaʿili Shiʿites against Sunni Islam ("A Dissident Community in Medieval Islam: A General History of the Nizârî Ismâʿîlîs in the Alamut Period," University of Chicago, 1951) and revised and published it in 1955 as *The Order of Assassins*. His path-breaking article on the sectarian formation of Imami Shiʿism, titled "How did the Early Shiʿa Become Sectarian?," was also published in 1955. He continued his work on early Shiʿism in "Al-Darazî and Hamza in the Origin of the Druze Religion" (1962), and contributed a chapter on "The Ismāʿili State" to *The Cambridge History of Iran* (1968). Hodgson's early interest in the history of Shiʿism enabled him, in T*he Venture of Islam*, to give the period of Islamic history, beginning with the Buyid conquest of Baghdad, followed by the Fatimid conquest of Egypt and Syria, and ending with the Saljuq overthrow of the last Buyid sultan of Iraq, as "the Shiʿite century" (344-447/945-1055).

Hodgson took over the teaching of Islamic civilization at the University of Chicago after the departure of his mentor Gustav von Grunebaum to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1957. He had followed von Grunebaum in joining the project on the Comparative Social Anthropology of Civilizations, which was directed by Robert Redfield (1897-1958), and by India anthropologist Milton Singer (1912-94) after Redfield's retirement. The project was a major attempt to bridge the gap between social sciences and the humanities in comparative study of cultures and civilizations. It was conceived as the American alternative to European orientalism after World War II, and was supported by the Ford Foundation and the Social Science Research Council (Arjomand, 2014, pp. 26-29). As a part of that project, Hodgson developed the course on Islamic Civilization, the first of its kind in the United States, in 1956-57, and taught it to the end of his life (Hodgson Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folders 3-5).

Hodgson subscribed to Redfield's grand theoretical framework for comparison of civilizations and, accordingly, developed an approach to world history that was in sharp contrast to that of his colleague, William McNeill, in *The Rise of the West* (1963), which he considered Eurocentric and therefore parochial. Hodgson was, furthermore, influenced by John U. Nef in his approach to modernity. Nef argued that the so-called breakthrough to modernity in the West resulted from a happy confluence of a whole number of contingent circumstances, all at the same critical time. Hodgson explored the possibility of a similar confluence of socio-political developments that might have opened an alternative Islamicate path to modernity, and highlighted, as one such possibility, the failed but remarkable attempt by the late ʿAbbasid Caliph al-Nāser le-Din Allāh (r. 1180-225) to integrate Sufi orders and fotowwa associations of the young men and artisans of the city-quarters under the caliphate, with the advice of his Persian counselor and spiritual master, Shaikh Abu Ḥafs ʿOmar Sohravardi (d. 1234; Hodgson, 1974, II, pp. 386-436).

At the time of his death, Hodgson was working simultaneously on a book on the unity of world history and on his magnum opus, *The Venture of Islam*, as he strongly believed the first was necessary for the proper understanding of the second (Private communication with Prof. Reuben Smith). His unfinished work on Islamic civilization and culture was posthumously edited by Reuben W. Smith and published in three volumes under the title of The Venture of Islam. His manuscript on "The Unity of World History," however, remains unpublished with Hodgson's literary executor, Professor Eugene Gendlin (Private communication with Hodgson's student, Prof. Guity Nashat). Hodgson's earlier published essays on world history were later collected and edited by Edmund Burke III in *Rethinking World History*.

Hodgson's early works in the 1950s were major contributions to the history of Imami and Ismaʿili Shiʿism. He showed how the doctrine of the Imamate was elaborated under the sixth Imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādeq (d. 148/765) to counter the millennial extremism (*ḡolow; see ĠOLĀT*) endemic among the early Shiʿite religio-political factions, and in order to discipline their religiosity and organize them into a unified sect. He also offered a compelling sociological account of the doctrine, ideology, and organization of the Nezāri revolutionary state in northern Iran from its foundation by the Ismaʿili missionary(*dāʿi*) Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ, in Alamut in 1090/483, through the declaration of resurrection (*qiāmat*) by Ḥasan II in 1164/559, to the overthrow of its last ruler, Rokn-al-Din Moḥammad Ḵoršāh in 1256/654

Hodgson is, however, chiefly remembered for his novel, Weberian approach to Islam as an Abrahamic world religion, which he considered the culmination of the "kerygmatic movement" in world history, and for his consequent conceptual innovations that became widely known after the posthumous publication of The Venture of Islam. To distinguish Islam as a world religion from the civilization that grew around it in the "agrarianate-citied" region from the Nile to the Oxus (conceived as a major part of what McNeill called the Afro-Eurasian ecumene [Oikoumene]), Hodgson reserved 'Islam' for the religion but coined the term 'Islamicate' to describe the culture and civilization that developed around it and expanded throughout the ecumene. Furthermore, Hodgson believed that orientalists like von Grunebaum were too dependent on Arabic sources and mostly neglected the Persian ones. He therefore followed Arnold Toynbee's distinction between an Iranic and an Arabic Islamic civilizations in the late medieval period (Hodgson, 1993, p. 189) and called the cultural traditions that grew on the basis of the Persian language 'Persianate.' He further contrasted the continued vitality of the 'Persianate zone' with the early flourishing of the 'Arabic zone' of the Islamicate civilization, going so far as to divide the latter historically "into an earlier 'caliphal' and a later 'Persianate' phase" (Hodgson, 1974, II, pp. 293-94). It should be noted, however, that despite considering "the *Tariqa* as the pivotal late medieval institution" and discussing it in conjunction with the emergence of the Persianate world (Hodgson, 1993, pp. 184 ff.), Hodgson does not put Sufi-informed, Persianate Islam as an organizing principle of society in the middle period on par with the "*Sharʿi*-minded piety" for the earlier, "formative," phase (Burke, 1993, p. 326).

Three influential concepts formulated by Hodgson to describe the five phases or stages of the development of the Islamicate civilization amount to a typology of Islamicate political regimes. The caliphal phase, covered in the first volume of *The Venture of Islam*, culminated in the early ʿAbbasid age of "caliphal absolutism," which already bore the imprint of the pre-Islamic Persian tradition of autocracy.

In the second volume, Hodgson rejected the ideal types applied to the Islamic world by Max Weber (1864-1920)—namely, "patrimonialism" and, with better reasons, "sultanism." In their place, he offered two ideal types of his own: "the *aʿyān-amir* system" in the Saljuq period and "the military patronage state" of the post-Mongol era. The former term describes the regime that emerged with the development of the system of land tenure (*eqṭāʿ*), in which large land

grants were made to the military elite. In this system, social power of the notables (*aʿyān*) in cities was subordinated to the domination of the military elite (amirs), who commanded the garrisons and used enormous landholdings for the maintenance of their tribal contingents. With the weakening of bureaucracy and decentralization of land assignments that resulted from the increase in the size of the *eqṭāʿ*, on the one hand, and the amalgamation of fiscal revenue collection and prebendal grants for military and administrative service, on the other hand, the system ineluctably developed in a military direction.

Hodgson's third ideal type for the post-Mongol period is "the military-patronage state," which is modeled quite closely on the Mamluk sultanate in Egypt and Syria. The Mamluk *amir*s elected the ruler (*solṭān*) from their own ranks, and the Mamluk kingdom was thus taken over as a whole by him and never divided among the princes of the royal house as appanages. Egypt's Mamluk regime was strikingly similar to the Delhi Sultanate as an Islamicate polity under a complex system of collective rule by military slave generals. Given their relatively small number among the population, the Mamluk sultans of Egypt and Syria and their families developed an extensive network of patronage through endowments (*awqāf*) over civic, educational, and charitable foundations run by the civilian elite.

Last but not least, in the third volume of *The Venture of Islam*, Hodgson adopted the idea of 'gunpowder empires' for the early modern Muslim empires, namely, the Ottoman, the Safavid, and the Mughal. He did so in part to draw attention to the fact that military technology in the sixteenth century made them the center of gravity in the Eurasian landmass outside China (Issawi). It should be pointed out, however, that his emphasis on this later impact of military technology on social organization does not remedy Hodgson's blind spot on the fundamental significance of nomadic pastoralism in the Nile-to-Oxus region, which he primarily conceived as an agrarianate-citied civilization. Be that as it may, his historical analysis is persistently framed in his global, world-historical perspective.

It may yet be too earlier to assess Marshall Hodgson's heritage. His greatest impact has understandably been in the field of Islamic studies and the history of the Muslim world. In that field, the impact was immediate (Yarshater; Bellows, pp. 2-10), and the term Islamicate gained wide currency almost immediately. It took another quarter of a century, however, for the notion of the Persianate to inspire the foundation of the Association for the Study of

Persianate Societies in 1996, and its subsequent publications, *Studies on Persianate Societies* (2003-05), followed by the J*ournal of Persianate Studies* in 2007.

Hodgson's conceptual contributions have also been appreciated by a broader audience in comparative and historical sociology, as well as in world history. Charles Issawi highlighted the insights gained by Hodgson's juxtaposition of Middle East and Europe in a unified world-historical perspective, while criticizing him for the implicit downplaying of the significance of Western cultural flourishing around 1500. Saïd Amir Arjomand (1999) critically assessed his ideal-type of "military-patronage state" in view of its underestimation of the significance of nomadic polities in the east, and proposed a further division between the Turko-Mongolian empires in Iran and Central Asia, in which the Turkish ruling estate was overwhelmingly dominant over and segregated from the civilian subject estate, and the Mamluk regimes in Egypt and Syria, where a numerically much smaller Turkish military elite without any roots in local society was in far greater need of support from the Arab civilian elites, who were beneficiaries of its patronage. Johann Arnason, a comparative, historical sociologist, considers *The Venture of Islam* the closest substitute for the sociology of Islam that Max Weber did not live to write. Bryan Turner is similarly appreciative of Hodgson's work, though more critical of his immunizing faith from sociological determination. In the growing discipline of world and global history, to conclude, Hodgson is considered a forerunner of studies of interregional and global connectivity and of entangled histories and modernities.

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