FORDHAM WORKSHOP ON
BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS IN HISTORY
April 13, 2018
2:00 to 6:00 PM

Presentations with discussion

- Barry Hawk (moderator)
- Phillip Ackerman-Lieberman/Islamic world
- J. Russell VerSteeg/Ancient Near East
- Dennis P. Kehoe/Athens and Rome
- Richard Squire/Rome and medieval Italian cities
- Vikramaditya S. Khanna/India from 800 BCE to 1700 CE
- Madeleine Zelin/Imperial China

General Questions/Issues

1. What are the relative roles of economic, cultural, political and other values in the formation of business organizations
   - economic and non-economic explanations
   - reasons for formation and for failure to develop long-term/multiple projects business organizations
   - inhibiting role of family preference?
   - failure of the Romans to develop further the *societas publicanorum*
   - legal doctrine like legal personality

2. Are there correlations between kinds of business organizations and economic growth? What is the relationship(s) between business organizations and growth?
   - Was lack of legal personality a factor in the decline of Islamic economic growth?

3. Are there correlations between kinds of business organizations and political institutions?
4. Was there cross-cultural borrowing via trading or other vehicles?

5. What are the similarities and differences between the modern business corporation and earlier forms:

- Compare the four pre-industrial long term/multiple projects business organizations (Mesopotamian naruqqum, Roman societas publicanorum, medieval Italian compagnia and the Chinese lineage trust) with the modern corporation.

- Is entity shielding only relevant in the modern world of numerous shareholders?

- What best distinguishes the modern corporation from pre-industrial predecessors, e.g., a shift from family to non-family businesses, a shift from family to individuals, a shift from personal relationships to impersonal relationships, etc.; role of information flows.