

denying non-Muslims admission to the Fütüvvet trade guild had not been adhered to, because within the framework of the Fütüvvet there was no other way to grant the peştemal to the Christian artisans. Moreover, the Fütüvvet was an effective means to also bring the Christian craftsmen into the Muslim fold.

Thus, through a deliberate plan, the doors to the Fütüvvet were opened to compel Armenian artisans "to purify themselves and to voluntarily adopt Islam." In this manner, the Turks would also force the uncircumcised to gain entry into the Fütüvvet. Beginning with the initial stage of the rituals, the Turks would make them feel, as Urakh Grigor has contended, that "they all presumably shared the same faith, and there are no differences among them, except for the matter of the circumcision" (*ibid.*, p. 57*b*). Thus, one of the most basic regulations of the Fütüvvet was deliberately violated. Also sidestepped was one of Fütüvvet's initial ranks, namely, the rank of *nimtarik* (half-member)⁵⁶ as well as the transition from the rank of *nimtarik* to *sahib tarik*, that is, from half-member to full member. Moreover, whereas the Muslim artisan was merely questioned about his religious knowledge, the Armenian artisan was unequivocally urged to become a Muslim. Thus the Armenian craftsman maintained an artificial relationship with the Fütüvvet: on the one hand he received recognition from it as an artisan, on the other hand he could not become a full-fledged member of it if he failed to accept Islam. Yet as one whose mastery as a craftsman had been officially recognized he could thenceforth practice his craft anywhere in the country.

If the Armenian artisan could not officially become a member of the Fütüvvet he could join the loncas. There is evidence that in Constantinople both Christian and Muslim artisans were members of the same loncas and that, because of occasional frictions among them, Christians were allowed to organize their own lonca guilds.⁵⁷ Citing as evidence information found in an Armenian manuscript written in Erzerum not later than the eighteenth century, V. A. Gortlevsk'i calls attention to the existence of "guilds of Armenian craftsmen" who also performed the ritual of the peştemal.⁵⁸ This indicates that the Armenian artisan could receive his peştemal of mastery in the secular setting of a lonca, that is, outside the religious framework of the Fütüvvet.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the testimony provided by Urakh Grigor confirms that Armenians were forced to obtain their artisanal rights through the Fütüvvet system, especially in the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire, as a means of compelling them to adhere to the Islamic faith.

Urakh Grigor's text bemoans the plight of Armenian artisans who were compelled to renounce their Christian faith in order to prac-