

Suzanne L. Marchand
German Orientalists
and American Babies



Born just after the official end of the baby boom (December 1961), Suzanne Marchand was an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, a grad student at the University of Chicago, and an assistant and associate professor at Princeton before making her way to Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge in 1999. She has published one book, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton University Press, 1996), but hopes to publish more, first on German “orientalism” and then on the Swiss symbolist Arnold Boecklin. She is better known, however, for her two sons, Bertie (4 years) and Henry (1 year), who were adopted as honorary members of this year’s *Indien-Schwerpunkt*. – Address: Department of History, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

It might be useful to list, first of all, what I did NOT do at the Wiko this year:

- teach western civ to sullen undergraduates
- grade papers comparing Bismarck and Nietzsche
- attempt to convince students that going to grad school is as exciting as making millions as a dot.com “consultant”
- gossip about my home department
- fill out forms proving that no liquor was consumed at departmentally-hosted dinners
- eat beef
- fight with the inter-library loan office
- attend absurdly inconsequential committee meetings
- sweat

For being released from all of these responsibilities and terrors, I am greatly indebted to the Wiko. Having a year off at this stage of my

career – tenure, first book published, small children, many irons in the fire – was essential in allowing me to make any progress at all on my new work. There is clearly a danger that scholars at this stage stagnate, lose contact with the movers and shakers in the profession, and fail to complete their second project. I think the Kolleg has helped me to avert the first two dangers. Though if I fail to complete the second book, I may actually blame the Wiko – for reasons specified below.

I came to Berlin hoping to finish the research on my project on German orientalism. It proved to be a productive year – though not in the way I imagined it would be. I thought I would spend the year in the archives and the *Stabi* (Staatsbibliothek), and return to LSU with much material, but no new ideas. Quite the opposite has occurred: partly because of my commitment to my family and partly because of the lunch requirement, I did not spend much time in archives (though I am happy with what I did find). Nor did I hole up in the Stabi – the wonderful Kolleg library staff made that unnecessary. Rather I sat in my office and grazed on periodicals and books that came by the busload. But thanks to the interesting and knowledgeable people I met, my bibliography is now longer than it was when I arrived! So too has the list of topics I “must” cover expanded ... in short, my project has increased in size, depth, and complexity to such an extent that, thanks to my year off at the Kolleg, it will take me at least two more years to finish my book.

As is probably the case for many Fellows, I spent too much time finishing up older projects, polishing up essays, in my case, on Böcklin and Burckhardt, the Turfan expeditions, and the great cataloging classicist Adolf Furtwängler. I was also compelled to do some work on a world civ textbook, a good but exhausting project the other Fellows have heard me complain about all too often. But I did write two “orientalist” papers, which, if still rather half-baked, gave me material to present to German audiences. The presentations I gave this year, to groups as diverse as the Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, the Dutch School of Classical Studies (Athens), the Südasiensinstitut (Heidelberg), and the Bielefeld, Berlin, and Bochum historical seminars, were wonderful ways to meet people working in my area and to collect their reactions to my work. I will recall with particular delight my visit to “Universitätsstadt” Göttingen, where I got to see K. O. Müller’s Aula and C. G. Heyne’s library, and have drinks in the cast collection. It was a great delight to be so warmly received by both classicists and orientalists, who don’t

usually mix, but do care a great deal about the histories of their disciplines.

I am grateful to the Kolleg and this year's Fellows, finally, for their kindness to my family during the year. Logistically, things weren't always easy for a two-career couple with two highly energetic young children (Bertie was 3 and Henry 3 months when we arrived), and we may have seemed particularly tense during the chicken-pox, bronchitis, cabin-fever, car-breakdown months. But Andrea Friedrich, Barbara Sanders, Lorena Jaume Palasi, and Gerd Riedel helped solve all the problems. The kitchen staff has earned my deepest thanks for their incredible patience and kindness, especially in evidence on Thursday nights. I was particularly lucky this year to have been in residence with so many real "orientalists" – if their brilliance was intellectually inspiring, their kindness and wit made the year a happy one. The natural scientists, too, impressed me with their concise and colorful presentations – and their "humanistic" manners. And, who would have thought it? Even my fellow historians, under Wiko conditions, proved to have good senses of humor and singing voices – would that we could introduce the *Gitarren-Abend* to American academic culture back home!

In short, I have the Wiko to thank that, rather than spending a year overwhelmed by routine tasks, I was able, together with my family, to benefit from the intellectual (though admittedly not climatological) riches of Berlin.