



THE BEST-LAID PLANS OF MICE
AND MEN ...
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As we all know, good things rapidly come to an end. And this has been a good year, certainly in terms of my own writing, but also because of the contacts with other Fellows and colleagues visiting in the Wissenschaftskolleg and particularly because I was able to enjoy the rich cultural life of Berlin.

My work has developed somewhat differently from the proposal I had originally handed in, now over three years ago. At the time, I had planned to work on what will hopefully one day become my *magnum opus* that, if everything goes according to plan, will analyze state-society relations in western and central Anatolia during the eighteenth century. As it turned out, I was able to get a contract for another, more easily marketable book project, provisionally named “The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It”. Unsurprisingly, this contract contains a deadline; originally it was to have been the early spring of 2003. But by driving a hard bargain, I was able to push it back to June of the same year. Yet when I came here, I had written only a very provisional draft of the introduction in addition to a single chapter. If I wanted to meet the deadline, I had no option but to put everything else on the back burner.

As a result, I have limited myself to a few articles that may later serve as building blocks for the larger project. Thus I have written out my lecture at the Tuesday colloquium for publication (“The Center and the Provinces: State Power and Society in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire”, to appear in the *Festschrift* for Hans Heinrich Nolte). I have also contributed an article to a project run by Catherine Virlouvet of the University of Aix-Marseille on the supply problems of great Mediterranean cities from antiquity to the nineteenth century (“Supplying Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Istanbul with Fresh Produce”). In addition, I have half-written a draft on indebtedness in the Bursa countryside during the eighteenth century, which I am supposed to finish by the autumn, *insha'allah*¹. Perhaps I am not really far enough advanced to come up with an *opus magnum* at this stage, and if it ever gets written, it will probably have gained by my waiting a year or two.

On the other hand, “The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It” has progressed reasonably well, thanks to the kind help of the head librarian Mrs. Gesine Bottomley and her staff. I have written four chapters called “Expanding and Safeguarding the Empire: Controlling the Access of Foreigners to Ottoman Cities and Regions”, “On the Margins of Empire: Clients and Dependents”, “Of Warfare, Booty, Prisoners and Slaves” and “Sources of Ottoman Information Concerning the ‘Outside World’”. However I am still hard at work polishing the last of these pieces. According to my schedule as it stands at present, I have one more chapter to write, in addition to the introduction and conclusion. For the former, I already have a first draft, but the latter will need to be written from scratch. A chapter that is to be third in the sequence, called “Foreign Trade” was written before I

¹ This article was completed after my return to Munich, in October 2002.

came here, so that I now have most of the coming book's first draft. Quite a lot of work still needs to be done, however, particularly when it comes to transforming the five existing chapters, which still tend to go in different directions, into an integrated whole. Wait and see how things will develop ...²

In addition, I have spent a good deal of time on two volumes that I am currently co-editing; one will be on labor and guilds in the Ottoman Empire, including, to some extent, the post-Ottoman successor states of Turkey and Egypt. On this project, I am working together with my colleague Randi Deguilhem from the IREMAM in Aix-en-Provence; it has been funded rather generously by the European Science Foundation, and now we have to show that the funding agency has not wasted its money. This volume, like other ESF projects, is due to appear as a publication of I. B. Tauris of London, hopefully next year. While here in Berlin, I have written the introduction and translated a long article from Turkish, my colleague having generously volunteered to edit the texts with special attention to the pieces written by non-native speakers.

Much more work has been necessary on the second co-editing project, in which I am engaged together with my colleague Christoph Neumann of Bilgi Üniversitesi, Istanbul. This has grown out of two conferences held at Istanbul's University of the Bosphorus in 1996 and 1997, one of which dealt with food and drink in the Ottoman world and the other with the same society's urban habitat. The German Orient Institute in Beirut and Istanbul, one of the co-sponsors of the conference, has promised to include our volume in its series *Türkische Welten*. The volume is at present provisionally titled *Food and Shelter in the Ottoman Empire* – I yet have to gain my colleague's approval for this formulation. With a bit of luck, this volume also will come out next year; in any case, I am struggling very hard to get it to the publisher at the end of the summer vacation.³

A lot of extra work has been caused by the fact that while we had asked the participants to deliver their manuscripts in English, two papers arrived written in French and four of

² During the first months of my stay, I spent quite a bit of time on the final proofs and indices of two publications, both of which appeared in print during the first months of 2002. One of them is an edited volume for which I have been responsible along with my colleague Fikret Adanır: *The Ottomans and the Balkans, A Discussion of Historiography* (Leiden: E. J. Brill). The other is a collection of my own articles, some published and others not, called *Stories of Ottoman Men and Women, Establishing Status, Establishing Control* (Istanbul: Eren Publications). Mrs. Barbara Sanders at the reception desk has been tremendously helpful in coping with the numerous faxes that these undertakings have entailed.

³ Added in the spring of 2003: the work is now in press and will be called: *The Illuminated Table, the Prosperous House, Food and Shelter in Ottoman Material Culture*.

them in Turkish. Due to the Orient Institute's financial aid, we had the funds to pay for the translation of two of these pieces by graduate students. But as Turkish artisans have known for a long time, "Whoever sends out his apprentice will find himself going right after the kid"; thus it has fallen to my lot to polish up the work of these young colleagues *in spe*. Apart from my work on the remaining articles, I have translated two pieces from French while in Berlin, in addition to writing the introduction. None of this would have been possible had it not been for the help of Mitch Cohen, who went through my productions with the fine-tooth comb of the experienced editor.

Even though I of course understand that the Fellows are supposed to spend their time at their computers or else in the Berlin libraries, with an occasional visit to the opera thrown in, I did sneak out for a few events in Frankfurt, Istanbul, Cairo, and London. Thus there was a conference on historical periodization organized by the Zentrum zur Erforschung der Frühen Neuzeit at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt, a one-week seminar for French and Turkish graduate students arranged by the Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes (IFEA) of Istanbul, a conference on rural society in the Ottoman Empire put together by the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (IFAO) of Cairo, and the bi-annual congress of the Comité International d'Etudes Pré-ottomanes et Ottomanes (CIEPO) in London. In Berlin itself, I have given one lecture and am scheduled to give another. The first of these was sponsored by the working group on autobiography and first-person writing at the Freie Universität Berlin. At this venue, I lectured on the memoirs of the Heidelberg ex-student Michael Heberer of Bretten, who, in the 1580s, rowed on Ottoman galleys and lived to tell the tale. The second lecture is due to take place early next week in the context of a seminar for graduate students and young scholars organized by the Arbeitskreis Moderne und Islam.

Moreover, in mid-May 2002, along with Sanjay Subrahmanyam, I was able to put together a short symposium on the problems ensuing when European-style record-keeping – and in some instances, record-keepers as well – confronted established bureaucratic techniques of the Ottoman Empire and India. In our group, Michael Mann (Fernuniversität Hagen), Sanjay Subrahmanyam (EHESS, Paris), and Norbert Peabody (Cambridge University) discussed Indian topics, while Dariusz Kolodziejczyk (University of Warsaw) opened up a vast new field, namely the data-gathering techniques of the Russian administrators when confronting the Crimean Tatars with their Ottoman-style, provincial methods of record-keeping. Bishara Doumani dealt with nineteenth-century documentation usable for the history of the late Ottoman family in the Arab provinces, while I myself

explored the permanence of sixteenth-century formats in the “new-style” methods of record-keeping introduced in the mid-nineteenth century.⁴

Earlier this month, it was my great joy to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of the Bosphorus in Istanbul, where I have been guest-teaching for a number of years. Even though some weeks have now passed since the ceremony, I am still quite emotional about the honor shown to me, for I am quite sure that such a thing could not have happened without my colleagues at the University of the Bosphorus’ History Department putting in a good deal of effort on my behalf. It may sound ridiculous, but such things do count. To add to the charm of the event, it was celebrated in the gorgeous garden of the University, famed for its view over the Bosphorus, on two warm summer evenings; and to top it all off, these were summer nights in real life, not just according to the calendar, as so often happens in northern regions.

When one receives an honorary degree, at least according to the American model also followed by the University of the Bosphorus, the recipient is expected to enjoy the festivities without doing anything herself. This brings us to other events that I have attended, but in which I have played a more or less passive role. First of all, the Tuesday colloquia with their variety of papers on topics about which, for the most part, I know nothing at all. I have greatly admired the skill with which most of the paper presenters have made their subjects comprehensible to an audience consisting largely of non-specialists, I can remember only one or two cases in which I have felt thoroughly lost, and that may have been because I did not concentrate as much as I should have. Outside these more formal occasions, many civilized and often friendly conversations at the lunch or dinner table have contributed making my stay here extremely pleasant.

Moreover, there is a life outside of the Wissenschaftskolleg and even, strange though it may seem, outside of scholarship. For an opera lover, Berlin is indeed paradise. To begin with practical matters: just imagine being able to get into the most desirable performances without standing in line many months in advance. And prices are affordable and the quality is usually good, and often really excellent. The Komische Oper has become my favorite theater: unforgettable last year’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* and, more recently, Benjamin Britten’s *The Turn of the Screw*, Verdi’s *La Traviata*, Jacques Offenbach’s *Hoffmann’s Erzählungen*, Gioacchino Rossini’s *Barber of Sevilla*, and Mozart’s *Figaro* (with Dagmar Schellenberger as Countess), to say nothing of an immortal *Fledermaus*. One can only hope that

⁴ See separate account.

this level will be maintained now that Harry Kupfer is no longer in charge. But there have been memorable performances at the Deutsche Oper as well (Luigi Cherubini's *Médée*, a superb *Hoffmann's Erzählungen*) and also at the Staatsoper unter den Linden, where I would single out Franz Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* and the baroque opera *La Calisto*, with its splendid stage design.⁵ Certainly I will feel nostalgic about this opera season for a long time to come. Further highlights have included repeated visits to the Berlin museums, particularly the now finally completed Gemäldegalerie. Last but not least, there is the Cinémathèque, where I have been especially impressed by the new Taiwanese films, whose directors have a talent for integrating family history and *la grande histoire* in a manner we professional historians can only envy.

Sometimes I wonder whether I should not have relaxed the academic pressure and spent more energy absorbing films and theatrical productions. But what is done is done, and apart from "goodbye", what else is there to say...

⁵ In part, it may be due to my enthusiasm for the opera that I took an Italian course at the Italian Cultural Institute, where we were taught by a charming lady with a strong interest in music and films.