

## Preface and Acknowledgments

It took myriad individuals, villages, and institutions to raise this book. The “villages”—from urban neighborhoods and homes, to Anatolian hamlets, to Eastern European transit routes—portrayed in these pages contain the amorphous stuff of anthropological fieldwork. The fieldwork was shaped by circuitous and lengthy pathways, replete with countless detours in the peregrinations. My routes through these often unconventional fields described a patchworked sensorium: the years in Turkey and Germany were punctuated by ongoing conversations with migrants, sharing flats with some of them, enduring cloudy smoke and painful fatigue, making exhilarating discoveries, and developing cherished intimacies. It entailed endless hours of simply hanging out, watching and waiting for nothing or something to happen; loitering at demonstrations, markets, mosques, street corners, playgrounds, cafes, and grocers; being squeezed into many an ancient Istanbul *dolmuş* seemingly held together with rubber bands and prayer, propelled by liquid petroleum “aygaz” bombs in the boot. Fieldwork meant the myriad trips through the Bosphorus, suspended between continents, providing the consummate antidote to the stimulations and trials of quotidian Istanbul; the distinctive smell and sight of coal dust on Berlin’s snowy winter streets that never quite reached full daylight; finding refuge in Kachelofen-infused cold-water flats, whose primary olfactory memory is smoky coal fused with simmering mutton. Collections of saved articles, pamphlets, reports, statistics, brochures, flyers, and concert programs had to be distilled into a mere handful of references mentioned in this book. Countless scraps of semi-legible scrawls complement the stacks of filled notebooks, carbon-copied typed notes, floppy disks, and random thoughts and snippets that only years later developed into fully digested patterns and meanings.

All this relied on meeting scores of people, and in an array of contexts. Many generously invited me into their homes, tolerated my questions and observations, as they shared food, drink, rituals, hopes, disappointments, and confidences. Without these people, necessarily nameless here, I could

not have written this book. I only hope I have portrayed the excerpts of their lives in a manner consistent with their visions. Above all, to Derman, the late Hıdır, Adil, Nurcan and other Arslans, I owe endless *saygı ve sevgi*, gratitude, respect, and love.

## MEANDERING TRAJECTORIES

As I am continually asked how I came to this particular configuration of topics, exploring transnational and historical links between Greeks, Turks, Kurds, Germans, and Jews, it may be useful to chart the chronological and intellectual contours of its trajectory. After several years immersed in Modern Greek studies, I initially assumed I would carry out conventional ethnographic field work in Greece. An undergraduate semester in Athens had spurred my interest in the Black Sea Pontic minority, and I considered working in a Pontic area. However, while studying Greek grammar and literature at the University of Chicago, under the exacting tutelage of the Balkan linguist Kostas Kazazis, I began to see Greece in its wider Balkan context, as he regaled me with more information than I thought possible about this region, from its syntaxes and folklore to its political history and humor. A minor detour, taken thanks to Leften Stavrianos, led me into Albanian. A generous host, inspiring mentor, preeminent Balkanist and swimmer in frigid waters, Lefty encouraged me to expand my research purview to include Albanian; we sketched out a Ph.D. project on the Greek-Albanian borderlands. This plan was short-lived, as the closest I was able to get in the 1980s was Kosova, where I spent a fascinating summer studying Albanian in Peje, thanks to a Yugoslav Government Grant for Albanian Studies.

The more deeply I delved into Greek anthropology, the more evident it was that a great deal of what constituted Greekness was its highly charged structural opposition to Turkishness. Lest I adopt too much of this emotionally laden perspective, and unwilling to have Turkishness mediated solely through neo-Hellenic eyes, I decided to take on Turkish as a second field and language area. At this juncture in my studies, Danny Danforth and Michael Herzfeld, the two young turks of Modern Greek studies at the time, enthusiastically supported my decision, unlike some colleagues who saw it as a defection to the enemy camp. I am grateful to Danny and Michael for their encouragement, quite important to a young, insecure graduate student. My subsequent doctoral project, designed to transpose parts of the

failed Albanian-Greek venture, would address issues of identity, ethnicity, and history by comparing Turkey's Greek minority with the Turkish minority in northern Greece. To that end, after a year studying Turkish in Chicago, I had the good fortune to receive a Fulbright grant for preliminary research in Istanbul. There, I carried out a pilot study of the Greek community and dipped into northern Greek waters as well. It quickly became clear that research permission to study this sensitive minority near two troublesome international borders would not be forthcoming. Moreover, on the other side of the border, Istanbul's once enormous Greek population was so diminished—only a couple thousand remained—that it would have been an ethnographic account of a vanished community.

Fortuitously, that year I attended a conference in West Berlin, a trip that had a profound impact, inspiring me to redirect my research. Staying in Kreuzberg, I was overcome by the intensity of Greekness and Turkishness deracinated and recontextualized, once removed. Since then, I have not looked back (only sideways, to Central Asia; but that's another story), and this book represents my encounters over two and a half decades with migrants, returnees, and natives of many types. To complete the chronology: after the year in Istanbul, I returned to Chicago to reconfigure my doctoral project. It became a project meant to explore changes in Turkish and Greek representations of self and other in Germany, and the subsequent consequences of repatriation. The following three years were divided between Turkey and Germany (with numerous forays into Greece), generously supported by Fulbright-Hayes and DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). While in Berlin I was fortunate to meet Mirjiana Morokvašić-Müller, who incorporated me into her research on migrants in the European garment trade. As part of her larger, comparative project, I carried out research in Paris and Berlin, among Turkish garment workers in Parisian sweatshops and *Änderungsschneiderei* (alterations tailors) in Berlin. It was an unconventional introduction to Parisian life, to say the least. I remain ever grateful for this opportunity, both for enabling me to learn the spaces defining clandestine Paris and for opening my eyes to the often ignored mechanisms and meanings of horizontal links of transnational migration.

Several postdoctoral grants allowed me to continue the research, critical for a time-sensitive project of this nature, as I watched history overtake ethnography at what felt like cyclonic force. I was privileged to have witnessed the final Walled period of Berlin followed by the profound changes

brought about by German unification in the radically altered geopolitical space. Part of the aim of this book is to show the connections between these global events and the effects on individuals within changed and changing neighborhoods and nations.

#### INSTITUTIONAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL SUPPORTS

The research and writing shaping this project have been sustained, fostered, and facilitated by numerous foundations, libraries, institutions, and grant-giving bodies. In addition to those already mentioned, I am grateful for the confidence invested in my work by grant reviewers and grant-making institutions. The International Research Exchange Board provided funding for research in Berlin on the effects of German unification on Turkish community; I was the fortunate recipient of a Social Science Research Council postdoctoral grant for research in Berlin, a joint venture with Berlin's Free University. The Center for Middle East Studies, University of Chicago, provided much-appreciated funding for writing, as did the Charlotte Newcombe Fellowship of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and the Institute of Turkish Studies. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) supported research in Berlin as well as language study at a Goethe Institute. A Fulbright grant facilitated advanced Greek studies at the Institute of Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki. I would also like to express my appreciation, even veneration, for the incomparable resources of the Library of Congress, the British Library, and the Joseph P. Regenstein Library. In the Reg I learned what research means, complemented by specialist librarians happy to order any books I needed, regardless of how rarified. It provided the complete range of facilities, from timed lights in freezing stacks to overly comfortable armchairs for catnaps to the austere productive private study (thank you, Arthur). The year I worked in a study at the LOC, alongside a wonderfully congenial officemate, Louise Levathes, and was granted open-stack privileges was a scholar's dream. The new British Library has been a valued resource in my London neighborhood.

Heartfelt thanks also to the American Academy in Berlin, and the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Washington) for creating idyllic, collegial environments, perfectly suited for research and writing. My thanks to Gary Smith, Blair Ruble, Maggie Paxson, and Lee Hamilton for fostering and nurturing communities of

scholars, artists, and policy activists. These institutions are treasures; it was a privilege to be a part of them.

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

Though writing is a solitary endeavor, the book was vastly improved by the help of many others. Communities of friends, relatives, mentors, colleagues, and places all contributed in their own ways. In Ingrid Müller (Berlin) and Caitlin Ryan (Washington) I found eager, proactive research assistants, as delightful as they were resourceful. In addition, both of them read and commented on drafts of the manuscript, and I thank them for sharing my enthusiasm and sometimes arcane interests.

At the American Academy in Berlin I met Sander Gilman, whose enormous body of work, larger-than-life personality, and consistent generosity have been truly inspiring. I feel lucky to count him as a friend. Parts of chapter 4 in particular owe a great deal to discussions with him. I always appreciate his accessibility; wherever he is in the world, his e-response time is in the single digits. Thanks also to Carol and Joel Levy, who pointed me in useful directions in Jewish Berlin, and who read part of the manuscript.

At an earlier stage, I was fortunate to have found friends who eased my way many times through their generosity, kindness, and support. In particular, I thank Paula Franke von Bechtolsheim, Madeline Zilfi, Evelyn Early, and Donna Lee Bowen. My first friend in Turkey, Gülen Aktaş, later took me in when I was living in difficult straits in Istanbul. She insisted that I move in and share her flat, but she was far more than a roommate. Not only her living space but Gülen's boundless generosity included sharing her family, her friends, and her time. So much of what I came to know and love about Istanbul evolved through her eyes and experience. That first year in Istanbul in large part came to be defined by Gülen, as well as Tony and Joanne Greenwood, of whose warm hospitality I so often availed myself in the tense and troubled days of martial law and curfews. These are debts I cannot hope to repay. Thanks also to Anne and Cem Kozlu for lending me their home in the early days of fieldwork.

Countless people in Istanbul lent me their time and expertise. My research included ongoing conversations and relationships, as well as one-off interviews. I spoke with academics, journalists, government officials, taxi drivers, as well as numerous returnee families who, having accepted the

“go-home premiums” offered by the German government, had “killed” their passports and felt trapped. Many returned migrants entrusted their life stories to me, insisting that I write them, so others might know of their struggles. Dilek Cindoğlu was a perfect comrade in the days of trekking to the outermost reaches of Istanbul’s not-quite-urban periphery, as we sought out newly returned migrants from Germany.

Profound thanks and respect to the person, work, and music of Irene Markoff, who introduced me to the world of Alevilik. She sharpened my sensibilities with the addictive poetry and music of the saz, as together we often enjoyed private concerts in the enchanting incarnation of the late Ali Ekber Çiçek. Other anthropologists of Turkey, particularly Altan Gökalp, Alan Duben, and Michael Meeker, proffered much appreciated advice, and I thank them, as well as Nur Yalman, for some memorable and insightful conversations. Martin van Bruinessen taught me much about the politics of research, Islam, Alevi, and Kurds.

In Greece Mimi Toufexi’s hospitality was remarkable, and much formative time was spent in her home, eating her father’s lovingly prepared food, delivered daily, and serving as an informal apprentice to the stressful but heady life of an Athenian journalist. Mimi’s endless contacts opened many doors for me while I was doing research there. She also had perfected the art of finding deserted beaches for much-needed breaks. Alexander Kitroeff translated with inimitable humor hitherto elusive elements of Greek society.

Then to Berlin, initially funded by a DAAD research grant. The search for scarce accommodation that first month was eased by sleeping on the sofa in Carol Pfaff’s apartment, perched high in the lush green forests of Grunewald. Carol’s research on language use among Turkish children had brought her into contact with a diverse group of people, many of whom became my friends as well. Her generosity set the stage for an energizing introduction to Berlin. Later, she kindly hired me as a research assistant at the Free University.

Colleagues and friends in Berlin enriched my experience enormously. Lessons I have learned from those named here, and many more unmentioned, find their way into the following pages. I gained much from attending various seminars, such as those organized by Czarina Wilpert at the Technical University Berlin (TUB) and Friedemann Büttner at the Free University Berlin. Kerim Edinsel’s finely honed critical sensibility opened my eyes to much of what came to be second nature in my understanding of

Turkish Berlin. I learned much from him, working late hours together translating his poetry and prose, engaged in heated discussions, in our Schöneberg Wohngemeinschaft. I am grateful to him for permitting my translation of his short story to be reproduced here. Similarly, I value my time spent with Sema Poyraz, who taught me a great deal about important segments of Turkish German life. Twenty years of talks and walks with Hans Thomä-Venske were pleasurable and enlightening. Ayşe and Arif Çağlar were always gracious and stimulating hosts, colleagues, and interlocutors. As we interviewed Turkish mothers and daughters together as part of Czarina's TUB project, Zekiye Sarpyel and Çiğdem Eren revealed new aspects of Turkish Berlin to me; later, they shared their families in Turkey. Anita Rehm introduced me to the role and influence of media in shaping German Turkish dynamics.

I have so valued the decades-long friendship of Eser Kutay Sauerborn, an early friend from Berlin, as we've reconnected across various countries, cities, and familial configurations. Her formidable intelligence and acute perception have continually influenced and challenged me; she surely will find herself in these pages.

There cannot be many people like Czarina Huerta Wilpert. Introduced long ago through mutual friends from Istanbul, we became fast friends and colleagues. Her family took me in when I was away from mine; she and the late Bernhard, sorely missed, welcomed me in their home when I was otherwise homeless. Czarina included me on numerous research grants, providing the opportunity to collaborate with her and extend my stay in Berlin. She is a joyous companion and thoughtful interlocutor, and the depth and breadth of her intellectual and political engagement and commitment are awe inspiring. The public recognition she received as Berlin's Woman of the Year of 2006 was as long overdue as it was well deserved. She has served as a teacher, role model, advisor, confidant, and much more besides. My life and work are far richer thanks to her friendship and selfless generosity.

And Chicago: many veterans of the University of Chicago will agree that it is *sui generis* to a fault. One of the benefits of being situated at a great university is the possibility of drawing on its vast array of human resources, especially in Hyde Park, where knowledge, teaching, and learning thrive unhampered by arbitrary disciplinary borders. Thus, I am grateful to Ari Zolberg in Political Science (at the time, the only member of the faculty with experience in European migration); as well as Fred Donner, Bob

Dankoff, Halil Inalcik, and Fazlur Rahman, from Near East Languages and Civilizations. The classical historiographer Arnaldo Momigliano had an early and deep influence on a path not taken. The linguist and Balkan scholar Kostas Kazazis became a close friend as well as a formidable teacher whose intimidatingly high standards in language complemented his catholic grasp of humor. His love of language proved infectious; the world is a smaller, grayer place since his unexpected death.

Within the Department of Anthropology, going deeply against the grain (along with fellow students Martha Lampland and Jud Newborn), I chose to work outside the dominant “primitivist” paradigm then in vogue. Though the department has made a radical about-turn in the intervening years, this was not readily accepted or acceptable at the time. Still, despite my unconventional research sites, teachers such as Paul Friedrich, David Schneider, John Comaroff, and James Fernandez helped pave my intellectual way through an often changing and complex project. Caroline Brettell, then at the Newberry Library, also provided guidance and generously shared her expertise in European migration. I learned immensely from fellow students such as Fernando Coronil, Cindy Guy, Carol Hendrickson, Martha Lampland, Jud Newborn, Dan Segal, Julie Skurski, Bonnie Urcioui, and the sorely missed Sharon Stephens.

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In the writing of the book, numerous people kindly took time to read parts of the manuscript and offer suggestions. I am grateful to Sallie Marston, who provided much-appreciated comments. Thanks to Danny Miller and Scott Newton, who read and commented on early drafts. Susan Pattie read parts and offered welcome feedback.

Despite any still uncorrected errors and omissions, this surely would have been a far inferior work had I not been so fortunate to have captured the critical eye, mind, and philosophical sensibility of Luca D’Isanto. One could not wish for a more engaged interlocutor and critic, sharing his techniques of editing and refining not only wordcraft but thoughtcraft. The days and nights of discussion and debate, in Cambridge and London, helped me to imagine and visualize the hitherto illusive forest for the often distracting trees. The evenings were all the more enjoyable thanks to the splendid dinners cooked and shared with Mariane. Mariane Ferme’s thoughtful, considered input added a dynamic intellectual triangulation to



our discussions, enriching both the time spent together and the final manuscript. I am grateful to them for their hospitality, patience, and friendship.

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Many friends have contributed to this project; I can only name a few. I gained much over years of lively discussions with Robin Ostow, Michal Bodemann, John Bornemann, and Uli Linke, all fellow researchers in Berlin. Thanks to Robin and to Michal for showing me Jewish Berlins, east and west, and for including me in conferences and publications. Talks through the years with Riva Kastoryano always have been enlightening and enjoyable; I have been grateful for the supportive energy and friendship of Susan Woodward, whose sage advice that "a book is never finished, always abandoned" has proved painfully true.

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For a quarter-century, Claire Kohrman (an unwitting *shadchen*) has provided much needed sustenance, in the form of sage advice and hot soup, lovingly shared with Art. Her sociological insight, calm sanity, moral and emotional support have nourished me for years. How fortunate that our kinship reckoning includes one another!

Early versions of some of the chapters have found audiences at talks too numerous to list. I have been grateful for the opportunity to interact with colleagues at conferences and invited lectures in Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan, Norway, Greece, Ireland, and the United States. The feedback from these talks has been generous and useful, finding its way into subsequent revisions.

Earlier versions of some sections and passages have appeared elsewhere,

in journals and books (listed in the republication acknowledgments at the end of the book). The current iterations benefited greatly from a series of anonymous readers of the manuscript, and I would like to acknowledge the powerful influence of several of them. Two in particular compelled me to rethink assumptions and approaches. The many back-and-forth revisions, additional rewrites following replacement readers' suggestions, and the attempts to accommodate competing visions have meant that this book is seeing the light of day considerably later than initially envisioned. Despite any flaws and oversights that undoubtedly still mar these pages, it is unquestionably much improved thanks to their careful reading. Above all, the confidence in the value of this book shown by Ken Wissoker of Duke University Press has meant more than I can express and I thank him for his support.

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Michael surely did not realize that when we married, he also wed a

monkey on my back that became this book, long after its anticipated due date. Michael has lived with this project nearly as long as I have, in its many iterations, distractions, postponed holidays, its background white noises following us from Chicago to Washington, London, Kazakhstan, Berlin, and many backs and forths. The journey, not always easy (though usually “interesting”), has been balanced by my vicarious education in health economics, often a welcome respite. I continue to be grateful for his companionship, patience, and support through it all. My love, and much more, to him and to our precious Zara, who has been obliged, often against her very strong will, to share me with the writings and rewritings of this work.

