Kristina Milz, *Karl Süßheim Bey (1878–1947). Eine Biographie über Grenzen.* Berlin: Metropol 2022. 789 pp., ISBN 978-3-86331-637-2

Comprehensive biographies are rare in the historiography of Islamic Studies. Personal sources such as personal correspondence (such as the exceptionally important Julius Wellhausen letters), diaries, and memoirs (such as that of I.J. Kračkovski) are exceptional and many are unpublished and/or inaccessible. Bibliographies and obituaries are, accordingly, the main material for entries in biographical dictionaries. Only a limited number of Orientalists have paid tribute to their professors’ teaching in the way Ernst Damman’s piece on Georg Jacob does.[[1]](#footnote-2) It is obvious that even important scholars in subordinate academic positions and learned language assistants are mostly neglected by historiographers and university annals.

Quite a few of the students who attended Karl Süßheim’s courses in Munich before 1933 became influential scholars in the post-war period (Hans Joachim Kissling, Anton Spitaler, Bertold Spuler: see Milz, p. 490). Franz Babinger’s remark on the outstanding (*trefflichen*) Süßheim is an exception to this shameful forgetfulness. Babinger declared 1953 at the opening of a public lecture on the history of Oriental Studies in Munich that he wanted justifiably (*füglich*) to speak only of the chair holders, but he devoted (perhaps only inserted in the printed version of 1957) a sentence to Süßheim, a man “who mastered the three most important Islamic languages in an astonishing way and also had a vast knowledge of the realities of the Orient.” He combined his praises with the snide remark, however, that Süßheim was not able to make much use of these capacities as a teacher and author.[[2]](#footnote-3)

While the Orientalist Karl Süßheim was not honoured by his former students in the form of a single published line of gratitude or even empathy,[[3]](#footnote-4) he seemingly took revenge in bequeathing an important body of personal source material, mainly diaries and letters, and there are testimonials on and traces of him in public and private archives. The Süßheim diaries were made more widely known in part by Barbara Flemming through the monograph she published with Jan Schmidt in 2002 based on them.[[4]](#footnote-5) The copybooks for the years 1902–06 later found in family papers in Washington (and now held in the US Library of Congress) were edited by Schmidt in Turkish script and paraphrased English translation.[[5]](#footnote-6) They include extremely valuable material on his residences in Istanbul and Cairo with interludes in Germany, France and England. This volume also has some remarkable passages on a walking tour to Bursa, exceptional for a *habitué* of Pera coffee houses and *müdâvim* of manuscript libraries.

Unfortunately, only 13 out of 21 copybooks have survived. They roughly cover the years 1903–16, 1917–24, and the period from November 1936 to 3 July 1940. Most are in Ottoman-Turkish, with the last two in Arabic. The first pages are in Italian, but after 26 September 1904, the text abruptly changes to Ottoman-Turkish. The parts in Arabic inherently contain a number of uncertainties, mostly concerning names of European origin.

The remarks that follow consciously neglect, given the scope of this journal, the central concern of Milz’s book with a social biography of a Jewish academic between Imperial Germany and the fall of the Third Reich. Her approach is expressly indebted to Siegfried Kracauer’s concept of “social biography” (*Gesellschaftsbiographie*). As such, it claims to diverge from traditional accounts that restrict themselves to describing the life of Süßheim, and thus resemble, in Kracauer’s words, photographic portraits. Following in the footsteps of the author of *Jacques Offenbach und das Paris seiner Zeit*,[[6]](#footnote-7) her book is even more ambitious than Kracauer’s panorama of the *capitale du monde* during the Second Empire, since Süßheim’s lifespan includes the Kaiserreich (with Royal Bavaria), the Weimar Republic and the period of the Nazis’ rise and fall. Her tragic hero spent, in addition to his academic years in Germany, a crucial period in the Ottoman capital (1902–06) and his late though still productive years in Republican Turkey (1941–47). Kracauer’s Paris is populated with members of the aristocracy, the *haute bourgeoisie* and artists; Süßheim’s immediate peers are mostly “Orientals” and Orientalists of all nations, German and Ottoman civil and military servants and, last but not least, members of his extended family.

Whereas Kracauer had no alternative after his flight to Paris but to write a book for what he hoped would be an international market (without footnotes and theoretical considerations), Milz’s voluminous monograph is a thesis submitted for an academic qualification with a heavy, though very readable, load of references and considerations, and sips at the waters of many theories.[[7]](#footnote-8) The chapter “*Biografischer Ansatz und Erkenntnisinteresse*” (pp. 33–41) serves as an introduction to the spirit of the book with a dose of Edward Said’s critique of Orientalism, feministic splitters, and Bourdieu’s unavoidable article on the *illusion biographique* (1986). Thomas Bauer’s work on the culture of ambiguity is also a fairly useful tool for understanding Milz’s perceptions of Süßheim’s personality and writings.[[8]](#footnote-9) More than 2,000 footnotes attest to her impressive knowledge of sources and research literature in all relevant languages.

Her general conclusions remain sympathetically cautious. She concedes that it is impossible to do full justice to her protagonist and seems to be closer to debates on “new biography at the beginning of the twenty-first century” which abandoned the search for a basic nucleus and recognised the possibility of multiple complex structures and intersectional identities.[[9]](#footnote-10) She even claims that Süßheim embodied the ideal of *Ambiguitätstoleranz*. Süßheim’s from time-to-time contradictory statements are partly the result of changing political conjunctures, personal opportunism or simply a shift of opinion. Whether attributions like tripartite identity (Stefan Zweig for Joseph Roth) are useful is beyond my remit here*.*

The following cannot do sufficient justice to Milz’s book’s contribution to the history of the Ottoman world at the beginning of the twentieth century and to Persian and Turkish studies. Although the author herself emphasises that she did not intend to contribute to the history of Islamic Studies, her biography is undoubtedly an important new asset for more than one of its subdisciplines, above all Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies. My remarks include addenda of unequal value as a token of recognition for an author who introduces herself as a *Seiteneinsteigerin* (“lateral entrant”) from general or modern history to late Ottoman Studies.

Important components of this book appear on the cover page: The main title contains Süßheim’s typically German first name Karl, his obvious Jewish family name Süßheim and the title Bey[[10]](#footnote-11) as an indicator to his lifelong association with Turkey. The year of his birth (1878) coincides with the Congress of Berlin where the six “great powers” decided on the future of the Ottoman Empire. Süßheim died 1947 in Istanbul, where he had found shelter from the Nazi terror in dramatically late fashion in the Summer of 1941. The year in which he died indicated the future of West Germany and, at the same time, a slowing down of de-Nazification. Milz devotes the final part of her book to Karl Süßheim’s afterlife, when his family had to fight for a decent pension.

The photograph on the cover page deserves special attention. It depicts a group of Ottoman and German gentlemen lined up for a portrait during a visit to the Great Hall of Mirrors in the Herrenchiemsee New Palace (the “Bavarian Versailles”). Süßheim – easily recognisable as the second person from the right – served on this occasion in May 1916 as interpreter for a delegation of Ottoman deputies to Germany and Austria. The photograph also shows the historian Dr. Albrecht Wirth, an “expert” on colonial issues and an aggressive antisemite.[[11]](#footnote-12) The picture is paradigmatic for the life of Karl Süßheim in more than one sense. He was a conservative Bavarian patriot, hailed from a well-to-do Jewish Franconian family and became a learned Islamologist.

The subtitle “Eine Biografie über Grenzen” reveals that its main character is one with cross-border characteristics. Süßheim transgressed frontiers between nations (European countries, Ottoman Turkey, Egypt), religions, and languages. He “played” with conversion to Islam, while his wife was Catholic and he, as an observant Jew, tried to educate his two daughters in the Mosaic faith. In addition to Kracauer’s example, his Jewishness was not only an experience (*erfahrung*) but also a religion and more than a culture.[[12]](#footnote-13)

Born in Nürnberg as the second son of a well-off merchant, Karl was not obliged to choose a profitable business (*Brotberuf*).[[13]](#footnote-14) The transition of Jewish families from *Wirtschaftsbürgertum* to *Bildungsbürgertum* has been described many times,[[14]](#footnote-15) but I have my doubts about Milz’s assumption that Süßheim was “*ein Bildungsbürger durch und durch*” (p. 201). He had written unpretentious feuilletons on Turkish painting and music; a single review is devoted to the German translation of a contemporary Ottoman author (Ahmed Midhat). After three-and-a-half months in London in 1909, he notes unemotionally that he had never entered the British Museum itself, the library of which he had consulted daily. He was almost equally blind to the architectural monuments of the Ottoman period. A journey in Anatolia is described in the style of a librarian on a business trip.

There is only space to point to a few stages in his life here. Süßheim received his doctoral degree in German history (Berlin, 1902) for a study on Prussian territorial policy in Franconia, an exceptional case in the history of German Oriental Studies where the majority of academics had a background in philology or theology. Under the influence of the charismatic Georg Jacob, he turned to Islamic Studies without, however, becoming his student. Jacob some years later warmly recommended Süßheim after an admittedly cursory examination of his *Habilitationsschrift*. A letter Milz has dug out from Fritz Hommel’s unpublished papers (pp. 262f.) was by Georg Jacob, a scholar who despised teaching the rules of Arab grammar.

Süßheim also entered the Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen in Berlin, where he later unsuccessfully applied for a position, flourishing under the influential Eduard Sachau, who, however, did not disguise his antisemitism.[[15]](#footnote-16) Süßheim experienced his Jewishness as a key career obstacle, though it was not the only one. Trying his luck in Istanbul, he had direct contact with important intellectuals and bureaucrats, worked on manuscripts and improved his Turkish, Persian, and Arabic. His work on a chronicle of the Great Seljuks’ dynasty[[16]](#footnote-17) “was the fruit of long-lasting studies in Istanbul and London” after he had received permission to copy a particular manuscript, but his efforts did not lead him into a decent academic position. His *Habilitationsschrift* was reviewed by Oskar Mann, a scholar of Persia, with scathing condescension. Mann acknowledged only that Süßheim was successful in his choice of variant readings of three manuscripts.[[17]](#footnote-18) His career path was endangered before he really set out on it. Applications for public and university positions were as unsuccessful as his efforts to obtain a position in the German Oriental business world. The director of the Anatolian Railway, Karl Helfferich, used to seek out engineers, not bookish scholars.

Many vivid portraits in the diaries are the product of the contacts he had established in search of an adequate livelihood. Whereas his style in articles and reviews is sober, the diaries often prove that he was a talented, sometimes even entertaining witness of his contemporaries. We find remarkable observations of their outward appearance, including minor details, family background, not forgetting, mostly critically, their skills in Oriental languages. Here and there, we come across interesting vignettes of an Ottoman interieur and its personnel, for example when he depicts the office of a Dâvûd Efendi where Süßheim worked in 1906 as Ottoman censor.

His reviews, articles and contributions to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* are, by our contemporary standards, modest in number and size but reading them is unavoidable to make a full assessment of the author as a contemporary Orientalist. Milz has added a couple of unpublished manuscripts in the Library of Congress to the short list of articles. She discovered more than 1,000 library slips that might have served as sources for his interest in ongoing projects that remained unfinished. In Süßheim’s days, young scholars were not condemned to either publish or perish. His peers, some of them competitors such as Björkman, Giese, Menzel and Tschudi, were in any case not voracious writers either.

The vast majority of his reviews appeared in the monthly *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*,the founding editor of which, Felix E. Peiser,evidently patronised him. As a critic, Süßheim was a sometimes sharp, even occasionally pedantic reviewer.[[18]](#footnote-19) A comparatively long essay on the decline during the Ottoman Empire’s last century[[19]](#footnote-20) published in Spring 1914 deals mainly with Abdülhamîd’s absolutism, which he had known from close distance to the new regime. He stressed that Germany was not even remotely thinking of bringing itself into disrepute through an alliance “with the degenerate and uncultured Turkey.”[[20]](#footnote-21) He had already distanced himself from the Hamdidian autocracy under the influence of the opposition in exile, though he condemned the constitutional period too. His position was affected by the “Armenian atrocities” in a way similar to that of influential French observers, historians and *préfaciers*.[[21]](#footnote-22) I cannot completely follow Milz when she states that Süßheim still felt fundamentally sympathetic to the Empire.[[22]](#footnote-23)

In 1916, the Bavarian Ministry of War asked him to go to Istanbul to collect information on the political inclinations of the leading personalities there. Süßheim requested rather naively before departing to Turkey that he was given the rank of professor in return. He confessed in his diary: “I was ashamed to go to Istanbul as a [plain] Doctor.”[[23]](#footnote-24) The project failed, not only because it was a question of honour.

Milz also draws on official files, such as lecture programmes and student registers in order to track the student and teacher Süßheim. As Privatdozent at the University of Munich, he first taught Turkish then the “three languages” and gave lessons on the history of the Islamic peoples. His diaries reveal the rise and fall in the number of his students up to the critical stage of the Great War. Süßheim announced a course on the traveller Evliya Çelebi for the Summer term of 1913. I am quite sure that he inspired a doctoral thesis which was completed in 1926 by Wilhelm Köhler, a Munich businessman and lifelong “collector of languages.”[[24]](#footnote-25)

Milz’s biography offers fascinating insights in the realities of Islamic studies in a period when the division of labour between East and West went without saying for many Europeans: The “Orientals” provided “raw material” (manuscripts, originals and handwritten copies) that European scholars turned into editions and translations as well as adding learned commentaries.[[25]](#footnote-26) However, the diaries clearly reveal Süßheim’s dependence on learned “natives” to understand expressions and verses in Arabic and Persian texts. He omits their names from the edition, but confides to his diary of the second period in Istanbul (1906) what he owed to Arab scholars in the *Sûriye Kırâ’at-hânesi*, a coffeehouse that provided newspapers for its clients in Divanyolu and to a reader of Persian he had met not far away in the Vâlide Han*,* a famous meeting place for Iranians.[[26]](#footnote-27)

The diary of the same year also has noteworthy entries on his relationship with Kâtib Sâlih Efendi, a well-known author of *Karagöz* plays. Süßheim edited and translated his piece *İki kızkanç karı* (“Two jealous women”) without giving the slightest hint of the trouble he had had obtaining the handwritten text for copying.[[27]](#footnote-28) Following a newspaper article on “*Türkische Volksliteratur*,” in which he describes a *meddâh* (storyteller),[[28]](#footnote-29) Milz discusses widespread and nowadays outdated ethnic stereotypes such as “the clever Armenian” (*der gewandte Armenier*) and “the peddling Jew” (*der hausierende Jude).* Jacob Burckhardt’s generalisation of the Italian *Volksgeist* in his classical work is surely worth discussing but is not very far from Süßheim’s understanding of a Turkish or Ottoman inborn “military spirit.” Süßheim lived and wrote in a period when *Völkerpsychologie* was a new and serious discipline, not a popular and often disparaged one. Its poor reputation amongst historians is no reason to look at the understanding of past travellers, authors and Orientalists through present-day lenses. Adnan Adıvar, Süßheim’s “superior” in Istanbul after 1941 and someone who had a deep personal understanding of Germany, admired Richard Wagner and wrote a book on *Faust,* but took Eduard Graf Keyserling’s caricature of “the Germans” at face value at the same time.

The positive image of the ordinary Turk (or Ottoman) is, in Süßheim’s eyes, does not contradict a generalised condemnation of “the Turks” from their earliest appearance in history to present times. Less understandable than these matters attributable to the zeitgeist are Süßheim’s assessments of the Ottoman past, in particular the pre-*Tanzimat* centuries. He accuses the Turks of having destroyed “endlessly numerous monuments and artefacts” and of have transformed “flourishing, bright landscapes into Scythian deserts.”[[29]](#footnote-30) He does not seem to appreciate Ottoman achievements in art and architecture and ends this survey with a brief recognition of their innate talent (*angeborenes Geschick*) militarily.

Apart from these sometimes irritating generalisations in popular texts, the Süßheim diaries are his greatest legacy and contain a wealth of personalia, often in form of vivid portraits. They support my speculation that his notes were at least in part intended as source material for future memoirs.[[30]](#footnote-31) The only copy book (Eight; 4 January to 27 October 1917) which I was able to leaf through in the original has, in contrast to the hasty scribbling of the contents within, a neatly written title page:

Journal of events in my life. Karl Süßheim, lecturer in the history of the Islamic states and Islamic languages[[31]](#footnote-32) at the University of Munich

(*Hayâtımda vekâ’i rûznâmesi.*[[32]](#footnote-33)*/Münih Dârülfünûnu/Târîh-i düvvel-i islâmîye ve elsine-i islâmîye/Mu’allimi/Doktor Karl Züshaym/*

*El-cüz’-i sâdis/Kânûn-ı sânî 1917–27 Teşrîn 1917*

Since the diaries between 1924 and 1936 are missing, Milz has had to rely on other sources for this critical period. The Nazi regime had no hesitation in removing him from teaching duties immediately after it seized power. Many pages of the book are devoted to the tragic years between 1933 and 1941, the most terrible experience described being Süßheim’s being sent to the Dachau concentration camp where he was degradingly mistreated. The chapter on these two weeks – as with the whole survey, thoroughly documented and integrated into the historiography – is among the most affecting parts of the biography.

In the 1930s, Süßheim began work on the biography of his late friend Abdullâh Cevdet and, inspired by the medical historian Feridun Nazif Uzluk, prepared a study of a eighteenth-century medical handbook which had been translated from Italian into Ottoman-Turkish by the polyglot Ottoman scholar Şânî-Zâde. The publication in *Türk* *Tıb Tarihi Arkivi* between 1935 and 1938 was introduced by a portrait of Süßheim, which turned out to be helpful in his being invited to Turkey.[[33]](#footnote-34)

The departure of the family to Istanbul was not a flight formally speaking but the result of an official invitation by the Turkish government. It is sparsely documented, but the correspondence with the Albanian nationalist Ibrahim Temo (1865–1945) yields some details about the 1941 journey to Turkey. It started on 6 June by aeroplane from Munich via Bucharest and Konstanza, ending in Turkey on 23 June.[[34]](#footnote-35)

In the last years of his life, Süßheim was affiliated with Istanbul University’s Institute of Turkology (*Türkiyat Enstitüsü*), where he must have taught courses, to classrooms full of students for the first time in his life.[[35]](#footnote-36) However, he gave priority to contributions to the ambitious Turkish version of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Its main editor, Dr. Adnan Adıvar, was a renowned historian of science and an indefatigable columnist who, with his wife, the author Halide Edib, had gone into exile in 1926 to England and then France, returning to Turkey after Atatürk’s death.[[36]](#footnote-37)

In a letter dated 7 December 1941, Süßheim described his living conditions to his faraway friend Temo. He wrote that he almost immediately started work on his article “Arnavutluk”, strictly speaking a Turkish redaction of the contribution *Albania* he had published 34 years before.[[37]](#footnote-38) “*Il faut avoir égard à toutes les velléités des chefs de l’Encyclopédie qui demandent un jour un article touffu, une autre fois de plus modeste complexion*.”

Arguably his best contribution to the *EI* was devoted to the Abdullah Cevdet in the *Supplement* (1938). In view of Milz’s close attention to Süßheim’s friendship and later research object, an addendum to the fate of the article “Abdullah Djewdet” in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* may be illuminating. It also sheds light on two contested issues: Süßheim, who was critical of Cevdet’s earlier Shakespeare adaptations, praises his translation of *Anthony and Cleopatra*[[38]](#footnote-39) as a “masterpiece,” saying that “obscure expressions in Shakespeare appear in lucid language in the Turkish translation and, not infrequently, Shakespeare’s ordinary language becomes with Ḏjewdet’s pen a sentence of striking character. Only one thing is wanting to make the translation as good as the original: the metrical form, which is not found in Ḏjewdet’s translation.”

İsmail Habip Sevük (1852–1954), an influential author and critic, had condemned Abdullâh Cevdet’s translations of Western classics in a 1940 book. It is therefore not completely surprising that Adnan Adıvar, under the cover of the anonymous committee of editors, condemned his text as “not translated from the original language, in fact superficial and popularising, subjective and sometimes full of mistakes.” [[39]](#footnote-40)

This was an attack on both the memory of Abdullâh Cevdet and the reputation of Süßheim. However, more importantly, the editors of *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* did not accept the article. Adıvar instructed his assistant, Hilmi Ziya Ülken,[[40]](#footnote-41) firstly to abridge the more-than-6,000-word piece by half and then to the minimal size of one and a half columns.[[41]](#footnote-42) Ülken gave as reason for Adnan’s deletion of a paragraph Abdullâh Cevdet’s role as agent of Abdülhamîd. Süßheim emphasised that this agreement with the authorities was a blot on Abdullâh Cevdet’s otherwise blameless life. These disputes on his contributions to İA must have engendered a deep estrangement between these two remarkable scholars.

Süßheim died on 13 January 1947 and was buried in Ortaköy’s Jewish cemetery. At his funeral, Erich Auerbach, another German-Jewish emigré and the well-known author of *Mimesis* (1946)described his colleague as a “shy and taciturn man” and stated that it was not easy to recognize the richness and depth (*Fülle und Tiefe*) of his knowledge. Auerbach continued that Süßheim’s unassuming nature, indeed, his excessive modesty (*übergroße Bescheidenheit*), was probably why he never obtained a position “adequate to his scientific rank.” Auerbach’s encomium for Süßheim, surely prepared with the assistance of Hellmut Ritter, fails to mention that the main reason for Süßheim’s failures was the widespread antisemitism he had encountered.

It could not, of course, have been predicted that Anton Spitaler, acting as dean in 1956, would write an evaluation of Süßheim’s qualifications as university teacher and scholar, at the request of the Bavarian ministry of culture. The administration wished to have an assessment of whether Süßheim, after 1933, but under “normal” conditions, would have been promoted to a full professorship. The amount of a compensation for his family depended on this evaluation. Spitaler’s faculty colleague, Franz Babinger, was surprisingly not consulted, despite his research interests as an Ottoman historian being very close to those of Süßheim, let alone that he had known him personally. Babinger, himself the subject of Nazi suspicions, was considered for this very reason to be “biased” (*präokkupiert*). Spitaler declared in his response that he had attended Süßheim’s lectures in Arabic and Turkish from 1929 onwards and, later, those in Persian and Palestinian Arabic. He continued that all his lectures and exercises were not very independent (*selbständig*) and original and that he was in actuality and methodologically a historian who used his linguistic capabilities only as a means to his own ends (*Selbstzweck*)”. Spitaler’s letter did not conceal the facts that his former teacher was neither very productive nor used languages except as a historian’s tool. Hhis sharpest reproach was that this very knowledgeable scholar was not a truly original one.[[42]](#footnote-43) In other words, Süßheim was unworthy of a full professorship even before the Nazis removed him from his position.

Kristina Milz, a *historienne engagée*, does her best to defend her hero against Spitaler’s smart malice. She means well towards Süßheim, claiming on the contrary that he was an excellent linguist and an outstanding historian. One cannot deny that Süßheim had difficulties in to place his message for the “field” in learned publications and for his university audience, but the latter was an obstacle he faced with many, if not the majority of German mandarins.[[43]](#footnote-44) I am not sure if we do him juistice by including articles for the general readership and unpublished materials to his scholarly biography and by distinguishing between his early and later works. However, these are insignificant observations with regard to the book as a whole. Karl Süßheim Bey’s legacy remains immensely valuable, predominantly as a social biography and with regard to the history of Islamic Studies.

I recommend to those readers who are interested in the secret history of the field are unable to read the whole 700 pages in German to confine themselves to one or two chapters, for instance, the one entitled “Grau ist alle Theorie. Ein Orienthistoriker.”[[44]](#footnote-45) I am sure this will entice them into exploring the rest of the work. Examining the chronology in Flemming and Schmidt[[45]](#footnote-46) can be as helpful as referring to the index which includes not only persons but also place names and other items.

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1. Ernst Dammann, “Erinnerungen an Georg Jacob (1862–1937)”, in: *Germano-Turcica. Zur Geschichte des Türkisch-Lernens in den deutschsprachigen Ländern* (Bamberg: Universitätsbibliothek, 1987), 113–18; also remarkable is a book by an eminent Orientalist dedicated to an eminent predecessor: Josef van Ess,*Im Halbschatten. Der Orientalist Hellmut Ritter (1892–1971)*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Here as elsewhere, the translation is my own unless indicated. It also mentions that he was obliged to flee from Germany in 1938 and was condemned to spend an unhappy old age in Istanbul: see “Ein Jahrhundert morgenländischer Studien an der Münchener Universität” in *ZDMG* 107 (1957), 242–69. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The historian Max Spindler, however, wrote an unexpectedly long paragraph on Oriental philology in his authoritative *Bayerische Geschichte* and mentioned Süßheim: “The excellent expert on the three Islamic main languages was forced to emigrate” (München: Beck, 1975), Vol. II, 1082; however, Süßheim’s name is missing from *Bosls Bayerische Biographie* (1983) compiled by Spindler’s successor as the Munich Chair of Bavarian History, Karl Bosl, who had concealed his National Socialist affiliation. In Milz’s book, Bosl is referred in another context: see p. 560, 682f. An entry on *Süßheim* by Milz for *Neue Deutsche Biographie* online is forthcoming. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Barbara Flemming and Jan Schmidt, *The Diary of Karl Süssheim (1878–1947). Orientalist between Munich and Istanbul* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002), as reviewed by Maurus Reinkowski in *WI* 44 (2002), 292–94. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Jan Schmidt, *The Orientalist Karl Süssheim Meets the Young Turk Officer İsma’il Hakkı Bey. Two Unexplored Sources from the Last Decade in the Rreign of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II*, (Leiden: Brill, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. *Orpheus in Paris. Offenbach and the Paris of his time* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1938), p. 37, 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. See the preface by Christian Klein, *Handbuch Biographie. Methoden, Traditionen, Theorien* (Berlin: Metzler, 2022). Martin Schmeiser observes in the same volume a widespread unease with the genre of scientific biography: “Gleichwohl sehen sich Autoren von akademischen Qualifikationsschriften, die auf biographischer Methodik beruhen, gezwungen, in langen theoretischen Ausführungen dem weithin verbreiteten Unbehagen an der wissenschaftlichen Biographie Rechnung zu tragen.” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Thomas Bauer, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität. Eine andere Geschichte des Islams* (Berlin: Insel, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Volker Depkat, “Biographik im 21. Jahrhundert – Tendenzen und Debatten”, in *Handbuch*, ed. Klein, pp. 383–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. People in the East might have addressed him as “Mösyö” when they were not sure about his religious affiliation, but they probably preferred to use Efendi, Hoca or Bey. Another possibility is that he himself wanted to be addressed as “Doktor Karl Bey.” Ibrahim Temo called him “Müderris Efendi” in a letter dated 25 Jun. 1933. The postcards and letters he sent from Munich and later from Istanbul to Temo are an important primary source for Süßheim’s life and work. We can expect more in the passive correspondence of many scholars with whom he had exchanged letters. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Wirth had an understandable reason for his personal hatred of Süßheim, who had reviewed his *History of the Turks*, a flawed book he warned everybody to refer to: “Rezension von Albrecht Wirth, Geschichte der Türken.” (Stuttgart: Frankh, 1912), in *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft* 34:1 (1913), 174f.: “[Wirth] flicht aber so viele Unrichtigkeiten ein, daß man versucht wäre, jeden zu warnen, der sich auf das Buch berufe.” The *OLZ* 16:9 (1913), 419, published a similar condemnation by Carl Niebuhr (“Machwerk, das Täuschung verbreitet”). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. The author of a celebrated biography of Offenbach’s biographer, defined Kracauer’s sort of Jewishness. “Das Judentum war für sie in erster Linie weniger eine Religion, auch keine Kultur, sondern eine Erfahrung”. Kracauer himself wrote: “Man komme aus diesem Judentum [trotzdem] nicht heraus.” Jörg Später, *Siegfried Kracauer. Eine Biographie* (Berlin: Suhrkamp 2016), 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. See the collective volume on the family: *Die Süßheims, Unternehmer, Politiker, Wissenschaftler, Sammler,* ed. Michael Diefenbacher (Nuremberg: Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, 2018) (Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur der Stadt Nürnberg. 39), with a contribution by Jan Schmidt, “Prof. Karl Süßheim als Vermittler zwischen Orient und Okzident", pp. 233–60. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. See Elisabeth Kraus, *Die Familie Mosse. Deutsch-jüdisches Bürgertum im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 1999) on the “Familienverband” Mosse, with a comparable broad basis of sources covers the same period, but which was not consulted by Milz. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Klaus Kreiser, “Der Türkisch-Unterricht am Berliner Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen zwischen 1888 und 1918”, in: *Semih Tezcan kitabı,* ed. Emine Yılmaz et al. (Ankara: Nobel, 2020), pp. 3–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. *Geschenk aus der Seldschukengeschichte von dem Wesir Muhammad b. Muhammad Ibn al-Nizâm* (Leiden: Brill, 1909) and Prolegomena zu einer Ausgabe der im Britischen Museum zu London verwahrten Chronik des Seldschuqischen Reiches (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1911) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. “*Bevor man sich zur Herausgabe eines orientalischen Geschichtswerkes entschliesst, sollte man eingehend prüfen, ob das Werk wirklich der langwierigen Arbeit würdig ist…*”, *OLZ* 12:10 (1909), pp. 430–34. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. See his perfectly justified condemnation of the *Türkisch Arabisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch* compiled by a Tewfik Ahsan and E. A. Radspieler (Vienna and Leipzig: Hartleben, 1917). Radspieler (1885–?) in *OLZ* 8 (1912), col. 367. Using the name “Rademacher” is a mistake both by the editors and Milz (p. 730). Radspieler was a *Neuphilologe* in Nuremberg and Würzburg and was one of the many *dilettanti* who bestrode Turkish teaching and learning. Süßheim uses the occasion to recommend to Karl Wieds a small Turkish grammar that he used for his Munich courses, according to the diaries. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. “Der Zusammenbruch des Osmanischen Reiches in Europa”, in M[oritz] J[ulius] Bonn: *Die Balkanfrage* (Veröffentlichungen der Handelshochschule München. 3) (Munich and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1914), pp. 68–108. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Ibid., 85: “*daß Deutschland nicht im entferntesten daran denke, sich durch ein Bündnis mit der herabgekommenen , kulturfeindlichen Türkei in üblen Ruf zu bringen*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. His authorities include Edouard Driault, *La question d’Orient depuis ses origines jusqu’à nos jours* (Paris: Alcan, 1898) and Victor Berard, *La politique du Sultan* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1897). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Milz p. 289: *“…bedauerte…die in seinen Augen ‘verpasste Chance’ des Osmanischen Reichs, da er diesem doch grundsätzlich mit Sympathie gegenüberstand*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Flemming and Schmidt, 113: “I would feel ashamed of returning to Istanbul as a ‘Doctor’ without having been honoured by a promotion (In the ms. “*Istanbul’a doktor olarak gitmekten sıkıldım*”). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Wilhelm Köhler’s doctoral thesis, *Die Kurdenstadt Bitlîs nach dem türkischen Reisewerk des Ewliya Tscheleb*i was printed in Munich in 1928. The author’s *curriculum vitae* (1870-?) names the professors including Süßheim, whose courses he joined since 1917/18. None is mentioned in the overwhelmingly detailed footnotes. Two more accessible, modern Turkish translations of Köhler’s work give no idea of the richness of references. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. “*Hier bleibt es noch bei der alten, nicht übel bewährten Arbeitsteilung: der Orient hat den Rohstoff geliefert und dem Okzident die Verarbeitung überlassen*.” Richard Hartmann, “Zu Ewlija Tschelebi’s Reisen im oberen Euphrat und Tigrisgebiet”, *Der Islam* 9 (1919), pp.184–244, on 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Schmidt, *The Orientalist*, pp.135–36, 393–94. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. “Die moderne Gestalt des türkischen Schattenspiels (Qaragöz)”, *ZDMG* 63 (1909), pp.739–73. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Milz assigns the entertaining piece sub *Rezensionen* because it mentions the first volumes of the “Türkische Bibliothek” in *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* 2. Apr. 1906, pp.147–49. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. “*So sind denn durch die Einbrüche der Türken in altpersisches und byzantinisches Kulturland unendlich zahlreiche monumentale Denkmäler und Kunstschätze in Staub und blühende und heitere Gegenden in skythische Wüsten verwandelt worden*.” (“Der Zusammenbruch des Osmanischen Reiches in Europa”,p. 69). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Milz, 23, note 54 gives no hint of a planned autobiographical publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Along with the *venia legendi*, which was extended in 1915 for Arabic and Persian. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. His title was originally “Privatdozent für Geschichte der muhammedanischen Völker und türkischen Sprache.” Süßheim preferred the Persian term to the more usual words *jurnal* and *defter*. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. The title page *Prof. Dr. phil. Karl Süßheim München Üniversitesi Doğu Dilleri Profesörü* intentionally ignores the fact that he had lost his rank and position. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. See Milz’s efforts to reconstruct the departure on pp. 625–27. Temo was informed that the family had left Munich on 8 June 1941 and had reached Istanbul on 23 July. I can add further clarification here: Anton Spitaler told me (though I am unable to remember in which exact year in the 1970s) that he had met, to his great astonishment, his former teacher at Budapest Airport. Spitaler was then serving as an interpreter for Arabic in the Dolmetscher-Lehrabteilung des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Milz, p. 667 without reference to Süßheim’s teaching programme in Istanbul. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. My first article on Adnan Adıvar is forthcoming. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. The publication of this fascicle with the name of all contributors, including Süßheim’s, was announced in *Cumhuriyet* on 6 Mar. 1942. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. *Anṭuān ve-Kleʾopātrā* (Istanbul: Necm-i Istikbâl, 1921). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. “*Asıl dilinden yapılmamak – asılda sathi ve halklaştırıcı indî ve bazı hatalı olarak*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. Ülken (1901–74) was not, given his modest university degree, one of the most significantly productive philosophers of the period. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* 1 (1940), 46, without mentioning the author. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Milz, 664. A minor oversight on this page concerns Spitaler’s affiliation. His chair did not belong to the Nahostinstitut. I know from personal experience that Spitaler tried his best to discourage students who wanted to read more than Brockelmann’s grammar. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. It is not by coincidence that excellent lecturing skills are highlighted as exceptional in personal recollections of German scholars. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. “Grey, dear friend, is all theory” (Goethe). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. *The Diary of Karl Süssheim*, pp.301–08. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)