

Ten years of *L'Homme. Z. F. G.*: A view from Turkey

Women's History is a lively area of discussion and research in Turkey and we want to say a few words about the contribution of *L'Homme. Z. F. G.* to this field. We have to admit that the readership in German, especially in social sciences and in the specific area of Feminist Studies or Women's Studies is quite restricted in Turkey.

Therefore, we want to address the problem of language first. We think that *L'Homme* should publish those articles written originally in English, in English, side by side with its German translation. Because the German version turns out to be quite a difficult text with the concepts and terms in English and the sentence structure in German, especially for those people who have learned German as a second language. We understand that writing and publishing in German and making translations into German are important for the German speaking intellectual communities and in fact, add to the discussions in the area of Gender Studies cross-culturally. However, from our position, we need to have some practical means to benefit from this journal. Another suggestion is that abstracts of the articles in English should be lengthened at least to one page each.

In general, we think that the special themes chosen by the Editorial Board, were very inspiring for further research in the area of Feminist History. We appreciate the genuine challenge that *L'Homme* has brought in opening an alternative space for Feminist History in academic disciplines, challenging the norms and concepts of the mainstream/malestream history and discussing the significance of multidisciplinary in feminist research. The articles in *L'Homme* introduce new topics of research as well as trigger discussions at the conceptual level. They are especially good in introducing new methodological issues and new approaches to the area of historical research. One specific example, an M.A. thesis on *The Transformation of Kitchens and Domestic Work* by Necla Akgökçe, has been inspired greatly from the special issue on "Ernährung" (1/1991). Other issues about "Der Freundin?" (1/1993), "Körper" (1/1994) and "Religion" (1/1990) also struck our attention. These issues especially highlight the social spheres that women exploit as extensions of their bodies and emotional needs. Many of the articles introduce historical material of various sorts and creative ways of using them in research. Women's prayer books or witchcraft recipes, for example, are very interesting material and show how folklore can meet

with feminist historical research. Articles giving hints about how military history can meet with Feminist History, especially in the studies about the history of nursing, are a good inspiration for studies to be carried out in Turkey.

We think that the contributions from Eastern Europe enrich the cross-cultural historical material, open a venue for the evaluation of various encounters that women have had in the past and might have at present. We are not so sure what the Editorial Board thinks about opening itself to the non-European, non-American, i. e. intellectual circles not part of the West; feminist movements, discussions and historical texts about women in the Third World and elsewhere.

Oral history is a topic which wasn't taken up by *L'Homme* in a detailed way. In Turkey, recently Oral History is quite central to the discussions in the area of Feminist History. We celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Republic last year; recording the history of modernization in their witnesses' words was on the agenda of the feminists, too. These issues are usually discussed with an emphasis on identity issues, and problems of cultural encounter with the West. The social class difference between different groups of women and how they take part in the modernization process is another problem area. Feminist historical research in Turkey is at present more or less stuck with this recent history and there are only a few pioneering works about women in the Ottoman period. Some literary studies go back earlier into history and they can be a rich source for feminist historians.

Finally, we want to make a suggestion for an established "Feminist Historians' Forum" in *L'Homme*. We can organize one such forum some time in the year 2001, with feminist researchers in Turkey, who have some kind of a connection to the Women's Library, İstanbul. The topic might be the reevaluation of our educational backgrounds mainly in the West or in some type of Western educational institution in Turkey. That is, a kind of an intellectual biographical approach and self criticism for the analysis of our mental make-up as feminist researchers in Turkey can be presented here. Related to this topic, we can also edit a special issue on women in the Turkish diaspora in the West. We don't know how much room *L'Homme* can have for such an intervention by the 'outsiders'. This might also be considered somewhat different from the earlier issues, because it will be mainly about recent history.

It is mainly out of enthusiasm, going over the issues of *L'Homme* in its ten years, that we spontaneously write this idea. We will certainly understand any reservations that the Editorial Board might have.

Best wishes for the coming ten years of research and feminist questioning.

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