

**COST**  
Domain Committee for  
Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health (ISCH)

**COST Action A36**

**Tributary Empires Compared:  
Romans, Mughals and Ottomans in the Pre-  
Industrial World from Antiquity till the Transition to  
Modernity**

**PROGRESS REPORT**

***Period: from 04/05 to 12/2006***

This Report is prepared by the Management Committee of the Action and presented to the relevant Domain Committee

The report is a “cumulative” report, i.e. it is updated annually and covers the entire period of the Action.

Confidentiality: the documents will be made available to the public via the COST Action web page except for chapter *II.C. Self evaluation*.

Based on the monitoring results, the COST Office will decide on the following year's budget allocation.

## 1. **OVERVIEW: ACTION IDENTIFICATION DATA**

Will be completed by the COST Office.

## 2. **OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of the Action is to produce a better understanding of classical tributary empires and the problems relating to segmented, loosely integrated and partly overlapping forms of power and authority, through the establishment of a European network for the comparative study of the Roman, Ottoman, Mughal and related empires.

Our notion of the state has basically been shaped by the experience of sovereign nation-states. To deal with the problems of the modern world, however, we need to broaden our vision to take in more trans-national forms of organizing state power. The study of classical empires offers one of the best historical templates for examining how such more international systems worked in practice. They present the student with, frequently very, long-lasting and stable systems of overlapping networks of power.

Attempts to synthesise the experience of such empires have in the past been dominated by very broad and abstract sociological models. The networks aims to improve significantly on these previous interpretations by bringing specialists from the various diverse and so far unconnected fields of imperial history, together to compare processes of state-formation and governmental institutions on a better informed empirical basis.

The Action aims to become a leading international forum for comparative research on tributary empires.

## 3. **TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The action is organised closely around the work of the Management Committee. The research objectives of the Action can only be achieved if a relationship of close cooperation and dialogue is established between its core members. The whole idea is to create a continuous and permanent dialogue between a large number of disciplines which have so far been operating separately from each other. The management committee, therefore, functions as the forum where ideas and the research agenda are developed and discussed and tasks of the working groups defined, their work monitored and results evaluated and tied into the larger agenda.

The MC is headed by a core-group, the chair, vice-chair and professor Metin Kunt, each representing one of the main areas of the Action (Rome, Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire). The core-group prepares meetings, presents proposals and co-ordinate work in between meetings. This also includes working with the organisers of individual working group meetings about their specific agendas and composition of their programmes.

The working groups, in collaboration with the core-group, organise meetings where research conducted for the network on specific problems and issues, defined by the MC, is presented and discussed. The working groups, therefore, operate with a more fluent and flexible membership, constantly being adjusted to fit the specific agendas set for individual meetings. This way the Action combines a solid core of great permanence with widespread involvement of the research community in the activities of the action and thereby enables it to develop a far-

flung network of scholars working in these related but hitherto isolated fields of research. The advantages should be obvious.

The management committee has defined 3 key working groups:

W1: Empire and historical sociology. This working group is concerned with synthesising results and is thus a cornerstone of the action. It tests broad models and is concerned with establishing a common framework for research activities.

W2: Central structures: this working group organises research relating to the institutions of government of the central imperial state such as the imperial court.

W3: Experience of Empire: this working group examines how provincial societies have engaged with the central imperial state, collaboration, resistance, absorption of state-power by provincial societies etc.

Management Committee meetings are always called in connection with working group meetings. This enables mc-members, not themselves offering papers, to contribute to discussions of research being presented and thus ensures maximum input of ideas and critical discussion as well as close involvement of all parts of the network in the work of the action. After each working group meeting, the MC meets to evaluate results and discuss how they feed into the wider agenda which is then revised and adjusted in the light of these reflections.

#### 4. **PARTICIPATION AND COORDINATION**

##### 4.1 **Management Committee**

Chair: Associate professor, PhD (Cantab), Peter Fibiger Bang,  
Email: Pbang@hum.ku.dk, tel: 0045 35328254/ 0045 63150089

The Saxo Institute (History Section), University of Copenhagen, Njalsgade 102, 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark

Vice-Chair: Professor C. A. Bayly  
Email: cab1002@cam.ac.uk, tel. 00441223338321

St. Catherine's College, University of Cambridge, King's Parade, Cambridge, CB2 1RL, United Kingdom.

Professor Vincent Gabrielsen (History, University of Copenhagen, Denmark)  
Professor Greg Woolf, (Classics, University of St. Andrews, Scotland/UK)  
Professor Metin Kunt, (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabanci University, Turkey)  
Professor Halil Berktaş (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabanci University, Turkey)  
Professor Jeroen Duindam (History, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands)  
Professor Claire Sotinel, (Université François Rabelais, Tours, France)  
Professor Dariuz Kolodziejczyk (History, University of Warsaw, Poland)  
Professor Adam Zielkowski (History, University of Warsaw, Poland)  
Professor Antonios Anastasopoulos (Department of History and Archaeology, University of Crete, Greece)

Professor Suraiya Faroqhi (Institut für Geschichte und Kultur des Nahen Orients, University of Munich, Germany)

Professor Ebba Koch (History of Art, University of Vienna, Austria)

Professor Giovanni Salmeri (Department for the History of Antiquity, University of Pisa, Italy)

Professor J. C. Meyer (History, University of Bergen, Norway)

Director Björn Forsen (Finnish Institute at Athens, Finland)

#### **4.2 Participating Institutions**

The Finnish Institute at Athens, Finland

University of Bergen, Norway

University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

University of Copenhagen, Denmark

University of Crete, Greece

Université François Rabelais, Tours, France

University of Munich, Germany

University of Pisa, Italy

University of Sabanci, Turkey

University of St. Andrews

University of Utrecht, The Netherlands

University of Vienna, Austria

University of Warsaw, Poland

#### **4.3 Meetings of the Management Committee**

18 April, Brussels (kick off meeting).

19 June, Copenhagen (1st official meeting)

16 October, Istanbul

#### **4.4 Meetings of the Working Groups**

Working Group 1 (Historical Sociology), 18-19 June, Copenhagen

Working Group 2 (Central Structures), 14-16 October, Istanbul

#### **4.5 Short-term scientific missions**

None, so far.

### **5. RESULTS**

This has been the first year of the Action. Work has, therefore, concentrated on establishing a firm relationship of co-operation between the core-members, on reaching out into the wider academic community of scholars working within the field, on developing the research agenda and on getting the programme up and running in general.

These objectives have all been achieved. The MC has met thrice, meetings have been inspiring and conducted in a good atmosphere and the research of the first two years of work has already been defined. This means that the programmes including speakers for the first 4 working group meetings are now all in place, concluding with a general mid-term meeting in Warsaw, October

2006, under the auspices of working group 1. Planning for two meetings of the 3rd year (2007) is already in progress and the Chair is to present a plan for the last two years of work (2007-2008, 3rd and 4th year) to the MC at its next meeting in Athens, June 2006.

Two of the planned working group meetings have already been conducted.

1. Copenhagen, June 2005: This meeting was broad and exploratory in order to define and delineate, more closely, the general framework for our field of comparative research. Papers from this meeting are to be published together with the results of the mid-term meeting, in Warsaw 2006. Together these papers will constitute a general conceptual framework for the comparative study of pre-industrial empires based on much greater empirical expertise than has so far been the case within this genre. The Copenhagen meeting thus functioned as the basis for the further development and elaboration of the research agenda.

2. Istanbul, June 2005: This meeting aimed specifically to throw comparative light on the royal court as a central institution of rule and government in pre-industrial monarchies and empires. In doing so, it has brought together for the first time the experience of students of both Asian and early modern European societies as well as students of medieval and classical courts. The result was to throw significant new light on the court as a monarchical institution and as a system of power by creating a dialogue between hitherto unrelated fields of scholarship. The papers will be published as a separate volume.

Together these meetings have taken an important step forward in opening up a field of comparative research to students of pre-industrial empire. For the more specific outcomes, we refer to the individual reports from these meetings.

At the meetings 34 papers were presented, by a combination of MC-members, working group members and extra invited experts. The MC now has 12 member countries, covering all the most important countries with substantial research within the field of the action. Leading experts, both Europeans from countries which have not joined the action, e.g. Hungary and Sweden, and other nationalities (including Indians and Europeans working in the USA), have been invited and introduced to the network as well. All in all, the network has so far managed to establish itself as a central and leading forum for this area of comparative research capable of attracting the interest of a wide variety of scholars.

This also includes younger scholars, the chair being only 32. Others in this category would include Fabrizio de Dono of Wolfson College, Cambridge (Copenhagen meeting) and Toby Osborne of Durham.

The two meetings of 2006 will take place in June in Athens, Working Group 3, and in October in Warsaw, mid-term meeting organised by Working Group 1. Programmes are attached at the back.

## **6 DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS**

### **6.1 Publications and Reports**

The Action has been operating less than a year and work is, therefore, still in progress. As preparation for the Action, the chair and vice-chair organized an exploratory seminar in Cambridge from which the papers were published in 2003.

Papers from the first working group meeting, Copenhagen 2005, are to be worked up and joined with contributions from the mid-term meeting, Warsaw 2006, to create a book which is intended to identify the central problems in the study of classical empires and map out a framework for further work.

Papers from the second working group meeting, Istanbul 2005, are to be published as a book, providing a comparative and cross-cultural treatment of royal courts in the pre-industrial world.

Programmes and reports from each working group meeting have been made available to the wider scholarly community and the public via the action homepage.

### **6.2 Conferences and Workshops**

The action has hosted two working group meetings this year, Copenhagen and Istanbul. They have functioned as mini-conferences and have also seen considerable participation from scholars not formally part of the network, but forming part of the local scientific community.

### **6.3 Web site**

An Action website has been created and is hosted by the Faculty of Arts, University of Copenhagen. It provides general information on the purpose of the action, its activities, members and work of the management committee, programmes of working group meetings and subsequent reports.

### **6.4 Scientific and Technical Co-operation**

Contacts have been established with a group of historical sociologists, headed by Johann Arnason, and including Björn Wittrock from one of the European centres of excellence, interested in the formation of ancient empires. The chair of the action as well as Adam Zielkowski (Polich MC-member) presented papers at a conference hosted by this group at the European University Institute in Firenze in May 2005.

Furthermore contacts have been established with a parallel project directed from Stanford University (California) which attempts to compare the Roman and Han Empires. The action chair presented work to this group at a conference at Stanford in May 2005. The leader of the Stanford project reciprocated by presenting some of his research at the working group meeting in Istanbul.

## **6.5 Transfer of results**

The initiation of the project has been presented in a large interview to the Danish Newspaper, Weekendavisen. The interview was published in November 2005. Previously the action chair was interviewed about current debates concerning unilateralism and imperialism to the same paper, July 2006.

A press release, describing the action, was also handed in to Euro News in December 2005.

Below is listed the dissemination plan presented at the original adoption of the project by COST. As the work of the network progresses, this plan will be more fully developed.

## **6.6. Dissemination plan**

The main target audiences are:

1. Fellow researchers working on classical empires such as Ottomanists, Roman historians, Byzantinists, Persian, Indian and Chinese historians etc.
2. A broader group of scholars working in the field where history meets sociology and political science. The results of the Action will be important to questions and problems of state-formation, imperialism, overlapping forms of authority and sovereignty, state-building and similar issues.
3. New PhD students interested in taking up research in the field created by the Action and more broadly university students, working at all levels of proficiency.

These audiences will be reached through the Action's activities, its website, the publication of the concluding book (intended to appear on a major academic publisher) and through publication of articles in scholarly journals and on the website. The web site maintained by the Action will also be important in announcing activities to scholars, not familiar to the members of the Action. Additionally, the Action will actively contact scholars it deems to be of importance to the successful conduct of the Action. The Action itself, in other words, will also be an important medium for disseminating the results.

Furthermore, it is an important asset that many of the Action members are teaching in universities. The results will, therefore, be disseminated to the student population, both graduates and undergraduates. This will help stimulate new research students as well as help the Action's results to move outside academia.

This leads to the secondary target audience which is the general public. The network aims to improve our understanding of processes of state-formation and imperialism. As such it is a project of pure or basic research. But results are likely to be of interest to the general public, in one form or other, because they will add to our understanding of how societies function and states are created. Some of the insights gained by the Action will be of interest to scholars working with policy advice, political scientists for instance, and will thus trickle down to the public as these new results are digested by the relevant specialists. The web site will serve an important function in making the Action known outside its immediate context. Another avenue is through the more broadly accessible books written by historians. It is part of the plan of the main proposer to use the results from the Action to write a more generally accessible book on the character of imperial government and state-formation, designed to bring the experience of

the old world to bear on present problems of sovereignty, international relations, failed states and empire and thus make a contribution to the current, lively dialogue on these matters. This book will thus serve as a compliment to the final concluding set of papers published by the Action.

### **6.7 Contacts in the ERA**

As mentioned above, the action chair and one of the MC's participated in a conference hosted at the European University Institute in Florence and called by, among others, Björn Wittrock.

## **7. ECONOMIC DIMENSION**

Approximately 40 scholars, university employed in various positions, have been directly involved in the action's work this year. This does not include guests at action meetings, invited to contribute to discussions, from among the members of the local scholarly community.

Funds received this year: 40, 000 Euro, spent 33, 500 Euro.

2006: 45, 000

2007: 45, 000

2008: 45, 000

Breakdown of planned spending:

2000 Euro annually, organisational support

2 annual working group meetings combined with MC meeting of 21, 500 Euro each.

# **COST ACTION A36 (Social Sciences and Humanities)**

## **Tributary Empires Compared**

**Progress 1 January-31 December 2006**

### ***II A. Results achieved during the period 1 January-31 December 2006***

This has been the second running year of Action A36. The main achievement was the completion, according to schedule, of the first half of the planned research programme. The network has now successfully hosted 4 working group meetings, concluding with a half-term meeting in Warsaw in October 2006. In these 4 meetings, a basic framework for comparing the Roman, Mughal and Ottoman Empires has been laid out and a number of key areas for analysis have been identified:

Historiography

Historical sociology

Comparison of institutions:

Institutions of the central state

Provincial responses to imperial government

Universalism (ideology, representation, culture)

At the MC meetings in Athens and Warsaw, June + October 2006, a plan for the duration of the second half of the network was adopted, comprising 4 meetings and a concluding conference:

St. Andrews, 30 March- 1 April 2007: Empire and knowledge

Tours, 25-28 October 2007: Empire and militarism

Vienna, spring 2008: Empire and decline

XXXX, autumn 2008 (topic and venue still to be decided. The MC is currently discussing a number of options and a final decision will be reached at the MC meeting at St. Andrews 1 April 2007).

Rome, spring 2009: Concluding synthesising conference

With another 35 papers delivered to its meetings during the past year, by a broad selection of senior and junior scholars from Europe, America and Asia, the network can be said to have consolidated and developed its position as a leading pioneering forum for comparative historical research on classical empires. While the network has continued to attract eminent and leading scholars, it has also successfully managed to expand the number of younger scholars engaged in its work, including Gojko Barjamovic (Copenhagen), Cedric Breláz (Athens), Jeevan Deol (Soas), Peter Haldén (EUI), Farhat Hasan (Agra), Justyna Olko (Warsaw), Michael Somner (Liverpool), Rodica Ursu (Spiritu Haret), Zeynep Yelce (Istanbul).

## **Summary of individual working group meetings:**

Athens, June 2006

The main achievement of the working group meeting in Athens was to bring out the very varied responses and opportunities created by the imposition of empire on provincial societies. By following the “destiny” of the same regions under a succession of different imperial governments the variety of experience was demonstrated with great clarity. The meeting also served to bring out into the open the very great importance of specific historiographical traditions for how the history of empire is portrayed and understood. Thus the very act of confronting different historiographical tradition was demonstrated as a key instrument to raise new questions.

Warsaw, October 2006

The mid-term meeting in Warsaw then served to pull the different strings of the research agenda together and illustrate the various levels of analysis on which the comparison of classical empires has proved to operate best

Confrontation of historiography  
Sociological theory (confronted with historical analysis)  
Historical comparisons of institutions  
Universalist ideology

(More detailed reports of the meetings are available on the network web-site:  
<http://www.tec.saxo.ku.dk>)

## ***II B. Dissemination of Results***

Publications and reports:

Reports of the working group meetings in Athens and Warsaw have now been made available on the action homepage.

3 groups are now working on turning the papers from the meetings in Istanbul, Athens and Copenhagen-Warsaw (the last two combined, as already declared in the previous report) into a number of edited volumes.

Web-site: <http://www.tec.saxo.ku.dk> is now up and running. On the web-site information is published on the research agenda, the composition of the management committee, agendas and minutes of its meetings as well as programmes and reports from working group meetings.

Scientific cooperation:

During the year, the network has continued to expand and consolidate its contacts within the scholarly community:

In September, the chair presented the network to a group of historians at Princeton.

In October and November, the vice-chair and chair gave lectures in a series of public lectures on empires in world history at the Centre de Cultura Contemporanea in Barcelona, directed by Professor Joseph Fradera.

At the mid-term meeting, professor Scheidel (Stanford) was invited back to contribute with his experience of organising a parallel project comparing Rome and Han-China. At the same meeting Dr. Phiroze Vasunia (Reading) presented ideas for a network working on the historiography of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism. The chair will participate at the kick-off meeting of this project in London in March 2007.

(Dissemination plan is unchanged from last year).