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OTTO VON BISMARCK, Gesammelte Werke. Neue Friedrichlsruher Ausgabe. Abteilung III: 1871–1898. Schriften: Band 1: 1871–1873. Bearbeitet von Andrea HOPP, Paderborn (Ferdinand Schöningh) 2004, LXXXII–637 S., ISBN 3-506-70130-4, EUR 60,00.

In more than one respect, both structurally and chronologically, this handsome volume begins *in medias res*. The stated intention of its distinguished panel of editors is to improve and to replace the original so-called »Friedrichlsruher Ausgabe« of Otto von Bismarck's private and public papers that were published in nineteen volumes between 1924 and 1935. Rather than to start at the outset of Bismarck's career as a Prussian statesman after 1848, however, the new *Herausgeberteam* (as they say) has chosen to parachute into the period at the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian war. This is to be the first installment of eight tomes that will cover the years from 1871 to the end of Bismarck's chancellorship in 1890. Hence the designation of Abteilung III, which indicates a plan to return subsequently to the edition of writings prior to 1871.

The first of the 506 documents presented here is a letter from Bismarck to his wife, written on the day after a preliminary peace treaty with France was signed on 26 February 1871, in which he complains about his travails in dealing with the unduly loquacious Adolphe Thiers. It is unclear why the editors selected this date. One might as well have chosen the outbreak of the war, the celebration of the Kaiserreich's founding in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, or perhaps the day of Bismarck's return to Berlin in early March. In any event, only the first six documents were sent from Bismarck's villa in Versailles; the remainder, exactly 500, from Berlin or Varzin. And necessarily, because of the arbitrary chronology adopted, no light is shed here on the still controversial topic of the origins of the war of 1870 or Bismarck's responsibility for provoking it. Presumably that matter will have to await completion of the entire project.

It would of course be quite premature to assess the value of this undertaking solely on the basis of its initial result. Still, the board of editors – all now established and elderly scholars in the field of imperial Germany – has made certain decisions that provide solid clues of what to expect. The most significant of these is stated up front: the documents are to be printed in strictly chronological order. This procedure has manifest advantages over the earlier »Friedrichlsruher Ausgabe«, which unfortunately separated Bismarck's professional writings from his private correspondence, a distinction that cannot usefully be maintained. It also avoids the bothersome topical organization of the »Große Politik«, that famous collection of German diplomatic dispatches before 1914, and thereby breaks down the untenable barrier between domestic and foreign policy. But, unavoidably, there are also disadvantages to this arrangement, of which three come immediately to mind. First, this volume is totally invertebrate, lacking even the slightest hint of a skeletal framework. One document follows another without any suggestion of their connection. Different affairs tumble out at random: thanks to the Kaiser for a decoration, trouble in Romania, Bismarck's bad health and depression, a fortress on the Rhine at Köln-Dietz, get-well wishes to a friend, the Arnim affair, family matters, railroads, and so forth. Conspicuously, the volume contains a name index but no subject index. Thus researchers are left entirely to their own devices in piecing together information related to any given topic. For example, at a guess, there must be at least two hundred references to Germany's relationship with and influence on France among the 506 separate entries, and yet – apart from Hopp's brief and cursory preface – no guidance is offered to the links among them. Although no mention is made of providing a thematic concordance at the end of the day, it appears inevitable that such an appendage to the entire project will be required after all is said and done. Otherwise we will be left with the appearance that Bismarck's career properly belongs to the one-damn-thing-after-another school of history.

The second obvious shortcoming of this publication is its one-sidedness. Only Bismarck's version of various happenings is recorded. The Great Man speaks and others listen.

He commands and others obey. Or do they? We cannot be certain about what different perspectives existed at the time or what counter-arguments were made by the Chancellor's antagonists. No doubt it is helpful to have such a splendid collection of Bismarck's own opinions, but in the nature of things they can constitute only part of the story. In many instances – the negotiations with the French, the beginnings of the *Kulturkampf*, the exaggerated threat of Socialism, the ill-fated creation of a *Reichseisenbahnamt*, the worries about Bavaria and the development of German particularism, the financial and economic crisis of 1873, etc. – many historians since the days of the Weimar Republic have conducted thorough investigations of the Bismarckian era and tried to untangle its complexities. But their efforts are ignored in this volume, which makes no reference whatever to the vast body of existing scholarship transcending one man's view of circumstances.

A third limitation is an irrepressible consequence of the first two: the selected documents have no context. One does well to insist on the notion of selection. As any scholar knows who has worked at length in the archives of the *Auswärtiges Amt* and at the Bismarck family estate in Friedrichsruh, the number of individual pieces of paper to be found there is virtually without limit. The historian is always working against infinity. Accordingly, we are forewarned against the illusion that this volume (or those to follow) can provide a definitive record of »wie es eigentlich gewesen ist«. Omitted of necessity are all those thousands of surrounding documents that have not made the final selection. The editorial care with which this volume has been prepared is manifest, and Andrea Hopp deserves our gratitude for it. But all of her efforts cannot finally produce more than a fraction of the sources left to be discovered. As it is, the separate documents are capably summarized, but they are not located in the stream of political events or the glacially slow evolution of German society.

At a more abstract level, it is perhaps already permissible to raise some questions about the ultimate purpose of this immense editorial project. Is it likely to alter our judgment of nineteenth-century Europe? Or is it not rather a methodological regression into the familiar national history of times past and, besides, a reinforcement of the old traditional biographical mode? To be sure, we can expect our research libraries of the future to boast a long shelf of Bismarckiana that marks a distinct advance over the first »Friedrichsruher Ausgabe« as well as the »Große Politik«. But, that said, there is little or no surprise in this first volume, and one must wonder whether this »neue« version will actually bring much that is new. Awaiting further publication, that question must remain in suspense, much like the curiously dangling final two entries in this volume, dated on the last days of December 1873, concerning »clerical and germanophobic agitation« in Belgium. Symptomatically, the inclusion of these documents bears no apparent relationship to those preceding them, and there is no telling where they might lead.

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Günter RIEDERER, *Feiern im Reichsland. Politische Symbolik, öffentliche Festkultur und die Erfindung kollektiver Zugehörigkeiten in Elsaß-Lothringen (1871–1918)*, Trier (Kliomedia) 2004, 529 p. (Trierer Historische Forschungen, 57), ISBN 3-89890-049-5, EUR 76,00.

Riederer justifie le choix de l'Alsace-Lorraine comme terrain d'étude par le fait qu'elle est une zone de contact entre les espaces culturels français et allemand, le lieu de confrontation de deux langues, de deux conceptions de la nation et de deux confessions. Aussi est-elle »un laboratoire dans lequel les processus et les problèmes de la modernisation apparaissent bien plus clairement que dans des régions moins sensibles«, permettant d'analyser »la signification de l'identité nationale dans l'Europe moderne« (S. 24). Pour y parvenir, l'auteur s'attache à l'analyse de la symbolique politique, de la culture festive et de la