

Preface

Figuratively speaking, you are holding in your hands a travelogue. It describes the course of a doctoral voyage through the fascinating land of transportation networks. The land had steep hills and smooth plains, both traversed with equal care. I experienced hostile weather and very sunny days. And I realized there were a surprising number of dead end streets along the way.

Many things are to be learned on such a trip. Traveling widens knowledge. Traveling allows one to gain new perspectives regarding one's own territory. Traveling teaches one to take decisions. Traveling deepens the understanding of home. Inevitably, traveling is about the people that have been there before the departure and are awaiting the arrival, and about those one meets along the way.

A doctoral trip must, by definition, be a solitary one. Yet, it never truly is. So many people have their share in it, and the trip would be doomed without them. Some laid the foundation for the trip. They nurtured the wish to pursue it. They taught how to walk, how to hike. They nourished the curiosity that generates the momentum necessary to depart. Others aided in the preparations for the very trip. Provisions were gathered. Maps were sketched and modified as obstacles appeared. Rest camps were prepared, facilitating the accrue-ment of new material on the way. Helpers awaited me at those camps, sometimes unexpected, sometimes long planned.

Many walked alongside for some time, some even for the entirety. I do not believe I spent a single day alone on this road. The faces changed. Some travelers took off on crossroads to pursue their own journey. Others joined at some point and continued all the way to the end. Travel companions kept up the spirit and helped to carry the baggage. Some sat by the campfire at nights, listened to the stories of the day, told their own stories, helped to modify and refine ideas. Advice was much needed and freely given along the way: Which general direction to head, which turn to take, which companion to seek. There were lively discussions that challenged and modified the endeavor. I found myself defending the entire trip itself more than once during this journey. Admittedly, I sometimes ignored advice and learned from that experience as well.

In particular, I would like to thank my doctoral supervisor and mentor Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Werner Delfmann, for being the chief-cartographer for this trip. Not sparing me the steeply rising paths, but always making sure there were a sufficient number of bridges mapped to cross the crevasses and rivers along the way. Additional thanks are due to Professor Dr. Dr. Ulrich Derigs and to Professor Ulrich W. Thonemann, Ph.D.

who, as members of the doctoral committee, brought in different viewpoints, acted as final gatekeepers as well as first receivers upon arrival at my destination.

Some companions are sadly missed upon the arrival, but most are here to see and to celebrate the end of this journey - far and near. Thanks to all of you. I am grateful for your preparation, your challenges, your support, and your presence. Pars pro toto: Sascha Albers, Rowena Arzt, Lisa Brekalo, Trisha Conway, Jost Daft, Björn Götsch, Ralf Günther, Caroline Heuermann, Vera Kimmeskamp, Jürgen Klenner, Kai Krause, Finn Lange, Tobias Lukowitz, Antje Möckelmann, Ralph Müßig, Christoph Paul, Edda Paul, Hans-Helmut Paul, Markus Reihlen, Ingo Reinhardt, Hilde Reuter, Jens Rühle, Heike Schwegler-Kirch, Bastian Schweiger, and Pierre Semal.

A straightforward travelogue would not make a good story as such. I had to leave out many parts of the voyage and elaborate more on certain aspects. All the same, stories from the entirety of this trip are included and I am certain that each travel companion will find familiar elements of the days spent together along the route - a route that I have enjoyed every single day.

Anne Paul