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The last train to istanbul

The overarching mission of the Bioinformatics Training and Education Program (BTEP) is to disseminate information and best practices related to understanding concepts for data analysis and application of bioinformatics tools to extract meaningful results from research data. BTEP attempts to organize comprehensive bioinformatics training events that benefit the diverse scientific community across CCR, and achieves this through a multi-pronged approach of scheduling seminars, webinars, and workshops by experts (both within and outside of NIH) on relevant bioinformatics topics. One of the primary and most effective ways has been to collaborate with analysts using open-source software, as well as representatives for commercial packages (licensed by CCR/NCI/NIH), to organize training on bioinformatics tools that would be useful for the CCR scientific community. The training sessions can be in multiple formats depending on the needs of the software. The most common format is a hands-on workshop that is generally limited to 25 students, with preference being given to CCR personnel. Other formats, as mentioned, include informational seminars, introductory webinars and more comprehensive talks, based on various criteria related to the software tool and logistics. Even though Smith and Anderson were trained in various martial arts, nothing could prepare them for what they experienced on their quest: In every country, the master trainers thought that Anderson and Smith were actors first and fighters second. This was something they both worked hard to undo. Anderson says:“The first day they either try and go easy on us because they think we’re actors, or they go hard on us cause they want to watch us fold up and quit. Neither method worked. Either way, by the end of the first day we’re getting the real deal. What was often the case is that they’d go in and say ‘We’re gonna try to break these guys.’”Since they trained separately, they typically had drastically different experiences. In the Philippines, Smith trained in a traditional, if rudimentary, gym. Anderson found himself crawling face down through mud pits in what can only be described as a jungle boot camp. While Smith worked out with punching bags, Anderson went through a series of ceremonies and rituals. At one point, he was laid on a cot with his eyes closed while Filipino kali masters beat his stomach and slapped his face. They finished off the session by sacrificing a chicken and drizzling the blood over his face and body. Anderson called it “the most grueling physical challenge of my life.”In Japan, Smith trained in a gym in Tokyo while Anderson headed for the mountains to the north. Doug toughened his knuckles by punching trees and walking up flights of stone steps on his fists with someone holding his legs. Jimmy built his strength breaking boards, ceiling tiles and baseball bats with his fists and feet. He also ate the traditional Japanese “fire curry” which had him and his training partners dripping sweat and guzzling water.In Mexico, Jimmy lived and trained with Olympians and Golden Glove champions in Mexico City. Doug was taken to ancient Aztec ruins 10,000 feet above sea level. The altitude was one of the most challenging aspects of the training. Doug did squats holding huge rocks and cut through large fallen trees with an axe. While it seemed like Jimmy had it easier, his training sessions with the Olympians were brutal and “bordered on hazing.”In the next section, we’ll look at the brutality of the final fights, from broken faces to infected feet. The Byzantine Empire had been in severe decline at the time of its conquest in 1453. Even though Constantinople was one of the largest cities in the world, its population had seriously dwindled, according to Fleischer. Fleischer says that census records from the time determine Constantinople’s population to have been 30,000 people shortly after the conquest.”After the conquest, repopulation and reconstructions were major priorities,” says Fleischer. The population eventually rebounded to 400,000-500,000 people by the next century, he says. One of the great rulers of Constantinople was Suleiman ‘the Magnificent,’ also commonly known as Suleiman ‘the Lawgiver.’ Suleiman’s forefathers had done most of the heavy lifting of reconstructing Constantinople by ordering the creation of mosques, universities and hospitals.”What Suleiman did was ... to build in a very distinctive architectural style imperial monuments in the form of mosques and schools and so forth throughout the territories [of the empire],” says Fleischer.One of the mosques that Suleiman commissioned, was the Süleymaniye Mosque. Constructed by architect Mimar Sinan in the 1550s, the imperial mosque became a significant religious and educational center. The mosque still stands in Istanbul today as the one must-see relics from the Ottoman Empire.A Cultural, Religious and Commercial HubThere is no specific date for when, exactly, Constantinople became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. There had been several centers of power in the Ottoman Empire, including Bursa, which became the “intellectual and spiritual capital of the enterprise by the 15th century,” according to Fleischer. But, he says, “with the conquest of Constantinople and its reconstruction and the construction of imperial mosques and universities, the center, by the middle of the 16th century, really moved to Constantinople.”Due to its significant geographic location at the crux of Europe and Asia, surrounded by both land and sea, Constantinople was well-positioned as not only a center of cultural and religious activity, but also as a commercial center.Constantinople formed a hub, or “expanded network of trade routes,” says Fleischer. “And the trade routes were augmented by the construction of caravanserais, which were structures for long-distance traders, all the way from Iran to the borders of what is now known as Austria.”Most notably, under the Ottoman Empire, a variety of religions and languages flourished, from Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians to Turkish-speaking Muslims. “The Ottomans weren’t trying to convert everybody to Islam,” says Fleischer. They saw themselves and presented themselves as protectors of all of the monotheistic religions of the world — meaning the Christians, the Jews, as well as the Muslims.”As a result, Constantinople remained a majority non-Muslim area well into the 16th century. Instead of wholly dismantling pre-existing religious artifacts, the Ottoman Empire maintained them, retaining their architectural structures — such as large columns — even when converting them into churches and synagogues.”The large symbolic churches were converted into mosques. This was normal practice, particularly in the 15th and 16th centuries, with the architecture being preserved, but modifications being made to allow for proper orientation for the direction of prayer and so on,” says Fleischer.Overall, the Ottoman rule favored multiculturalism. “In the Ottoman case, their policy of rule was based on inclusivity and capacity to maintain and tolerate a great deal of diversity,” according to Fleischer. 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JHM CareLink provides referring physicians with access to their patients’ medical records for 90 days following a physician consultation, labs or imaging tests, outpatient visits or hospitalization at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Howard Johns General Hospital, Sibley Memorial Hospital, Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital and Johns Hopkins physicians’ outpatient services. You can also order a specialty consultation to be scheduled by the patient. Community users outside of JHM who need to review the clinical and administrative information of patients seen within Johns Hopkins Medicine member organizations. Community users could include the following: Referring physicians Referred-to physicians Contracted physicians Community physicians and their support staff Legal offices or agencies requesting documentation through HIM Community-based and public health organizations There is no cost associated with using JHM CareLink. 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Please ask the research coordinator to add the patient to the group. Please refer to page 20 of the following guide. Please refer to this tip sheet. If you cannot find the patient, please contact registration at 410-955-5000 to verify the full demographic information of the patient. Please contact your site administrator, who is your first point of contact for any questions/problems. If the site administrator is not able to assist you, please call the Help Desk, available 24/7 at 855-284-5465, and ask for help with CareLink. Please contact the JHM CareLink team at hopkinscarelink@jhmi.edu. This is not for urgent issues, and the CareLink team will respond within 48 hours. A long trip like the one from Panama City to Istanbul, requiring connecting flights and layovers and taking you across many time zones, is like a system reboot. Arriving at your destination, your mind is fuzzy, muddled. What time is it? What day is it? Should I have something to eat...or maybe take a nap? You can’t quite commit to answers to even these basic questions. More substantive decisions are inconceivable. Finally, out of desperation, you give up and give yourself over, simply, to what’s in front of you. So here I sit, on the rooftop terrace of our hotel in Istanbul’s Old City, looking out over the Sea of Marmara and at Asia across the way. No sense trying to be productive. Better just to soak it all in. The sea spread out before me is ink blue. Above it, the sky is clear, the sun hot. A steady breeze and the red clay tiles of the terrace roof keep the temperature comfortable enough, but, without cover to shade you, you know it’s summertime. Weather projections we Googled before departing Panama City convinced us to throw sweaters and jackets into our suitcases at the last minute. Just goes to show you can’t believe everything you read on the Internet. “Look at all the traffic out on the water,” Kaitlin remarked, taking in the Marmara for the first time. Indeed, the waterways here seem as busy as the Panama Canal. Ferries, cruise ships, sailboats, private cruisers, coming into port and going out, dispersing passengers and taking on new ones. Istanbul owes its place in world history to these waters, which, since the days of Byzantium, have meant tolls, harbor fees, trade, and prosperity. Today, this metropolis with such a unique and enviable geographic situation is again thriving. Officially, the population of Istanbul is 14 million, but some estimate that the city’s true current population is closer to 20 million. I read one report that suggested as much as 60% of the population, whatever it is, is under the age of 29. I can’t confirm that statistic, but I can tell you that, wandering around the neighborhoods nearby our hotel, young people are everywhere...in the parks, gardens, markets, and walkways, enjoying their city. What else can I tell you after fewer than 24 hours on the ground? Conversation is all about next month’s presidential elections and also the situation as it’s unfolding in Iraq. For the people of Turkey, this mess is too close to ignore. As well, it’s Ramadan. “For me growing up, Ramadan was about becoming a man,” I heard one young man explain. “It is not easy to fast all day. As a boy, I was hungry, I was thirsty. But so was everyone else—my father, my brothers, my friends. If they could do it, I told myself, I could do it, too. When my friends and I would get too hungry, we’d go outside and play football until it was time to break the fast.” It is that time now, late afternoon. I hear the calls to prayer. My own family and I are sitting down now, too, to dine. We haven’t fasted all day, I have to admit, but we have traveled a long way and are looking forward to our first dinner in Istanbul. “Do you have any sparkling wine on the menu?” I asked our waiter. “Yes, we have two,” he explained, showing me. Both, it turns out, are Turkish. Turkish sparkling wine? We had to give it a try, and I’m pleased to be able to report that it’s not nearly as bad as you might imagine. In fact, I recommend you try it, too, your first night in this grand, historic city. More later...after I’ve had a little shut-eye... Kathleen Peddicord Tags: ComparisonIstanbulRamadanTurkey

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