

Bent Holm and Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen (eds.),

Imagined, Embodied and Actual Turks in Early Modern Europe,

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Bent Holm, dramaturge and translator of plays is a lecturer at various international universities and research centers, recently in Tokyo, St Petersburg, and Venice. His special research areas are the relationship between performativity and iconography, and between theatricality and rituality. Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen is a co-author of Erik Fischer's five-volume monograph on the Danish Renaissance artist Melchior Lorck (2009). His research areas include royal portraiture, court artist, and European-Ottoman cultural exchange in the early modern period.

This volume -the tenth book of a series on the cultural transfers between the Ottoman Empire and Europe with a focus on the performing arts- edited by Holm and Rasmussen begins with an informative and insightful introductory "Kaleidoscopic Reflections" that will undoubtedly increase the familiarity of readers for the topic. Editors explain their aims for this volume over the approaches, interpretations, and the discussions held during the sessions introduced by Professor İlber Ortaylı and supported by the C. L. David Foundation and Collection. This study as the editors mentioned took its main outset from the series of seminars titled "The Image of the Turks in Early Modern Europe" at Copenhagen University.

The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the European nations in the early modern era is the essence of this study. Self-awareness of the western society is meant via the conflict between European countries and the Ottoman Empire. The editors point out the inclusive understanding of the term "image" from oral, textual, or visual representations also consisting of the view of politics and ideology. With an exploration of the reciprocal influence of experience, imagination, and embodiment, there are various research approaches in the study. The researchers from various backgrounds and mostly from western countries and Turkey contributed to this volume. The contributors' research fields are intellectual history of the early modern period, political ideas, literature, history of the Ottoman Empire, and its relations, historiography, contemporary narrative.

The volume includes illustrations with their credits, extensive citations and a comprehensive bibliography, an index including names and places. The list of

illustrations also gives useful background information. The main purpose of this volume is to investigate the relationship of the Ottoman Empire and the Europe from different aspects including actual circumstances, imagery, and performativity. Actual circumstances deal with the pragmatic, diplomatic, and cultural connections of the Europeans and the Ottoman Turks. Imagery addresses how the imagined Turks are depicted in art and literature to clarify the meaning of encounters and relations. Performativity involves the embodied *Turk* in ritualistic and theatrical settings. The editors highlight the multi-directional levels of each part as following: “A specific motif is not inherently one-dimensional; it does not necessarily mean one thing only; its interpretation is a function of its contexts, several of which might be active simultaneously.” (p. XII). Chronologically the publication focuses on approximately the late eighteenth century Ottoman Empire. Geographically the main point is the Central European geography and the Balkan peninsula. Thematically the volume covers Western affiliation with the Ottoman Turks from the view of historiographic, artistic, and theological perspectives.

The first section of the volume “The Actual Turks” comes out with the studies of various views of the history of the Ottoman Empire and its affiliation with Central and Western Europe with five papers. Pelt from Copenhagen analyses the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Europe from the rise of the house of Osman I (the founder of the dynasty) until the fall of the dynasty in the twentieth century. Fleet from Cambridge investigates the absence of the Ottoman Empire in European historiography by mentioning “Europe without the Ottomans was unthinkable” (p. 28). Pedani from Venice (sadly passed away in 2019 and the editors noticed that they published the chapter without her absence from her final proofreading) explains how the Venetian élite (the most serene republic titled by the researcher) considered the Ottomans and their culture in the fifteenth century until the eighteenth century. Ács from Budapest points out the role of humanist travelers, ambassadors, and diplomats arriving in the sixteenth century to the Ottoman Empire. The author of this chapter describes the ambassadors as a time traveler as “They arrived in a multilingual, multicultural, almost indecipherable world. Their eyes open to reality, they gradually got used to and came to understand the uniqueness and difference of the Ottoman world” (p. 63). Born from Berlin presents the self-imagining of the earlier boundary with the Ottoman Empire and the actual encounters during the age of conquest from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century focusing on Hungarian territories, the Romanian principalities, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The idea behind the second part “The Imagined Turks” is based on the first chapter and deepen the literary and visual images with seven chapters. Çırakman from Ankara introduces the extent of the descriptions of Ottoman society and customs being the in the recognition of European Anglophone intellectual discourse from the late sixteenth to the late seventeenth centuries with a range of literary genres. Renda from Istanbul focuses on the cross-cultural encounters: Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Lausten deals with the function of the Italian historiographical writings such as the treatises of Spandugino, Menavino, Giovio, and Cambini (the first objective accounts of the Ottoman chosen by the researcher for the analysis) for the images of the Turk. Durpat from Amiens mentions the four main narrative motifs in the early modern oriental fiction in the sixteenth century. The researcher also suggests reading the literary works within the framework of Edward Said’s definition of orientalism. Keller from Illinois shares the adjustable usage of the imaginary Turk and the Ottoman Empire in France especially during the 1562-1598 wars of religion. Smith from Bremerhaven explores the interpretations of contemporary events by humanists and theologians in bibles and theological texts during the sixteenth century. Rasmussen from Copenhagen provides the images by Melchior Lorck and their intense and inclusive meanings. The researcher highlights the guarantee of holding the true image of the real Turk through the works of Lorck. However, Rasmussen also emphasizes “the truth has many aspects, and the true answers depend on the questions asked” (p. 345). The importance of the images by Lorck is pointed out to be based on his experiences of the Ottoman world under Süleyman the Magnificent. For instance, Rasmussen shares the image of Lorck “The Sultan’s Chef, 1575” (Figure, 1) to find out the eyewitness speaking (p. 344). The image enables a description of the Ottoman Empire along with the manners, conditions, customs of the Turks.

The last chapter entitled “The Embodies Turk” presents the ritualistic and theatrical settings with four studies. Vaelderden from Leuven shares a short text from Herman Franciscus Van den Brandth at the very beginning of the study reflecting the intimate relationship between the state and the church and the effects of the prints and celebrations on the created image of the orient in the Habsburg Netherlands. The fundamental focus of the study by Holm from Copenhagen represents the historical, political, and geographical situations of Scotland-England and the Kingdom of Denmark-Norway during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Suner from Vienna concerns in the function of theatre played for the



Figure 1: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG36177?id=BIOG36177&page=2#page-top>
(Accessed April 30, 2022)

Ottoman diplomats in Vienna during the eighteenth century. All sections are richly endowed with citations in the footnotes.

G. Renda concludes her analysis with the important argument that “The influence and interest were reciprocal” (p. 184; for this argument also see: Seyfi Kenan (ed.), *The Ottomans and Europe: Travel Encounters and Interaction from the Early Classical Period until the End of the 18th Century*, (İstanbul: İSAM, 2010), p. 62). B. Fortna (2003) analyses the general acceptances of Ottoman education and its relationship with modernity in his study. The emphasis of his study is on the explanation of Ottoman education reflecting the imperatives and the reason behind the changes of educational policy according to trends which are the greediness of the foreign powers, the offensiveness of their missionaries, and the restlessness of neighbors and minority groups alike. He explicates the conjunction of the

educational issues of the late Ottoman Empire and the modern world. (Also see: B. C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)). Therefore, the book could also have explicated the conjunction and view of the educational issues to deepen the understanding of exchange between the Early Modern European and the Ottoman worlds. Ács notices “Light and shadow are inseparable; those studying the centuries-long struggle between Christianity and the Ottoman Empire often tend to forget this” (p. 88). The other views could be needed and added, or the further studies could reveal the other perspectives. The future translation of the book into Turkish could be a valuable contribution to understanding viewpoints about the borderlands between the Ottoman Empire and European nations in the early modern era.

This study is highly recommended for those interested in the interaction between the European countries and the Ottoman Empire in multiple aspects. From this reviewer, the readers will find the approaches complementary with its clarity to understand the nature of the centuries and with its contribution to the field. Contributors and the editors alike are to be praised for this efficient and informative collection of articles awaking the mind of the thought and raising the awareness.

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