

Bent Holm,

The Taming of the Turk: Ottomans on the Danish Stage 1596-1896,

trans. Gaye Kynoch

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Originally published 2010 in Denmark as *Tyrk kan tæmmes. Osmannerne på den danske scene*, this English language edition of Bent Holm's *The Taming of the Turk: Ottomans on the Danish Stage 1596-1896* is published by the Viennese publishing house Hollitzer Verlag (www.hollitzer.at) as the second volume of the publication series *Ottomania* (www.hollitzer.at/ottomania), devoted to researching the cultural interrelations of the Ottoman Empire with Europe with a focus on the performing arts.

Bent Holm is a theatre scholar, dramaturg and translator of drama. Until 2014 he was an associate professor at the Institute for Arts and Cultural Studies of the University of Copenhagen and a translator of plays, among them Dario Fo and Carlo Goldoni, and the holder of Holberg Medal (2000) and Cavaliere della Stella della Solidarietà Italiana (2006). He has published interdisciplinary works in fields of theatre, history and dramaturgy in Danish, English, Italian, French, and Polish.

The book starts with an extensive and illuminating introductory part that familiarizes readers with the subject matter, preparing them for what to expect in the book, and guiding them as to *how* and from what vantage to read the subject matter. It is divided into three meticulously entitled main chapters that treat the entire timespan of four centuries: "Conspiracy and Apocalypse - Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", "Parody and Pedagogy - The Eighteenth Century," and "Carnival and Casino - The Nineteenth Century". The book takes the reader on a journey across four hundred years of religious and theatrical representations of the "Turk," from 1596 (the coronation festivities of King Christian IV (1577-1648), up to the 1896 exotic show presented in the Tivoli Garden in Copenhagen (which opened in 1843), the garden which Holm defines as a "breakthrough for the spread of *turquerie* in the entertainment business." (p. 272) As Holm puts it, "the sixteenth and seventeenth century approach deems one of eliminating the Turk, the eighteenth century of refining the Turk, and the nineteenth century of amusement through the Turk." (p. 21)

In the first chapter entitled “Conspiracy and Apocalypse,” devoted to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Holm sets the scene with the 1596 coronation festivities of King Christian IV (1577-1648) by focusing on the performative dimension around the event as well as giving an overall picture of the relations with the Ottoman Empire at the time. He states that the Turk was “directly involved as something other and more than exotic symbolism” (pp. 37-38) when Emperor Rudolf II (r. 1576-1612) and Sultan Mehmed III (r. 1595-1603) were in conflict.

Suggesting that there are three Turks; The Turk as pre-given image, “the Turk” as fictional representation, and the actual Ottoman, the Turk, Holm states that “history can be understood as a process of forming images, and of formation through images” (p. 20), and adds “what is symbol to one person can be spectacle to other.” (p. 29) The binary of the Turk and the Pope presented in this chapter is rather interesting, as Holm focuses on the Lutheran thought in Denmark that saw both the Turk and the Pope as evil: “The Devil and the Anti-Christ, and the interpretation of the Lutheran times that Roman Empire being the last of the ‘four empire scenario’ of the Assyrian-Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian and the Roman.” Referring to the course of the Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Habsburg Empire, Holm reiterates the conflict between the Holy Roman and Ottoman Empires being “a matter of the Roman Empire and eschatological.” (p. 31)

The chapter entitled “Parody and Pedagogy” introduces the theatrical representations of the Turk, i.e., the *theatre turqueries*, with discussions of the prevalent canon of Turk as equivalent of exotic, foreign, Asian: “The Turks were the others. The others were the Turks.” (p. 108) The interplay of theatre, exoticism and fashion is clearly and wittily discussed, and the stereotypes of “cruel Turk” and “noble Turk” introduced.

The main focus being the eighteenth century, the reader in the second chapter is taken on a journey in search of the Turk in Paris, Vienna, and Copenhagen. Devoted to these European capitals, each section is richly illustrated by significant examples of theatrical and operatic works and their themes and Turkish (leit)motifs characterizing the evolution of the *turqueries*. This very cultural transfer itself proceeded from Paris to Vienna and then to Copenhagen, where the *turqueries* on stage were the product of theatre texts (translated mainly from French), and King Christian VII (r. 1766-1808) was presented as the leading protagonist in the story of *Türkenoper* in Copenhagen.

As to questions revolving around concepts of *seraglio* and *harem* in the section titled “The Real Seraglio,” two further titles in Hollitzer Verlag’s *Ottomania* series are recommended here: *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre. Vol. III: Images of the Harem in Literature and Theatre*, Michael Hüttler / Emily M. N. Kugler / H. E. Weidinger (eds.), Vienna: Hollitzer Verlag, 2015 and *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre. Vol. IV: Seraglios in Theatre, Music and Literature*. Michael Hüttler / H. E. Weidinger (eds.) (forthcoming).

The chapter continues with a view to the “relations” between the Dane and the Swede, and the Turk, enriched by analysis of the seraglio. The two Ottoman sieges of Vienna (1529 and 1683) appear as defining milestones of the entire historical storyline, (particularly the latter) that recur throughout the entire book. This chapter is where the real narrative starts. We track down the beginnings of theatre in Denmark as enterprise, in 1722 when the first for-profit theatre was established, and in 1748 when the National Theatre was founded. The chapter furthermore relates how the subject of Turk was treated on the Danish commercial stage. There is also a highly relevant context of diplomatic history, studying certain influential ambassadorial visits in regard to their contributions to those *turqueries*: the mission of Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq (res. 1555-1562); Emperor Ferdinand I’s (r. 1558-1564) envoy to Kostantiniyye; the sojourn of the Danish artist Melchior Lorck (1526/27- after 1583) who was a member of this envoy delegation; Ottoman ambassador Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi’s visit to Paris in 1721; Tripolitanian ambassador Mahmud Ağa’s visit to Copenhagen in 1757; Ottoman ambassador Ahmed Resmi Efendi’s visit to Vienna in 1758 (especially his attendance to the premiere of Franz Anton Christoph Hilverding’s (1710-1768) ballet *Le Turc généreux* at the Viennese Burgtheater); Tripolitanian ambassador Azzi Abd al-Rahman Ağa’s visits to Copenhagen and then Stockholm in 1772-1773, in the latter attending to the opening of the Royal Swedish Opera; and Danish vice consul Georg Hjersing Høst’s (1734-1794) mission in Morocco in 1760-1768.

The third chapter, “Carnival and Casino”, sets the scene with the political backdrop provided by two protagonists, Napoléon Bonaparte (r. 1804-1814/15) and Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839), and illustrates the representations of the Turk on the Danish theatre scene in the nineteenth century.

The determination of the *turquerie* to “apply to far more than Turkey -Ottoman Empire- alone” (p. 253) appears, to my observation, in a sense to be *one* précis which the book essentially aims to convey. In my opinion, the author presents

the reader with the dramatic, critical, and historical analyses of the representations of the "Turk" and how these differ and shift according to the *Zeitgeist*, the political air and the fashions of that century, and the country. The arch of the third chapter and of the entire book here closes with its starting point; the discussion of the Pope and the Turk. The final section of the last chapter, "Far from Denmark," shifts our sight from Denmark to Istanbul and features the nineteenth-century Danish painter Elizabeth Jerichau-Baumann (1819-1881), who sojourned in Istanbul in 1869, visited an Ottoman harem and painted the portrait of the Ottoman princess Nazlı Hanım (1853-1913). Based on Jerichau-Baumann's memories and accounts of her time in Istanbul and her encounters with the Ottoman royal family members, Holm states that the *turquerie* has "lived on in various forms of entertainment," as well as in her paintings, and concludes that stage *turquerie* in the second half of the nineteenth century was "on the wane." (p. 304)

It should be noted here, though, that throughout all the discussions in the book revolving around the *Harem*, one cannot avoid expecting a further elucidation to the reality of the *Harem* at the Ottoman court beyond the European projection, that this institution was an educational one with a highly strict discipline.

The three main chapters are followed with an afterword compactly summarizing the entire storyline, a catchy and illuminating retrospective on the gist of the book, and the levels of identification with "the Turk." Travelling through the time spectrum from King Christian IV's coronation of 1596 up to the 1896 exotic show realized in the Tivoli Garden in Copenhagen, Holm gives a clear summary of the shifting perception of the Turk as a "dynamic force", the three *turqueries* on Danish stage, from the turn of the 17th century, the mid-18th century, and the 19th century, and the stereotype of the "apocalyptic Turk" as well as the prototypes of the "cruel Turk" and the "noble Turk." Holm crystallizes his point when he tates "it is a conflict between images, not between an imaginary and a real actuality." (pp. 318-319) As the author suggests, they are "images with a large input of Occidental self-images." (p.154) In the subsection titled "Interplay and Openness", Holm's pointed and accurate delineation of theatre as fundamentally a commercial enterprise aimed at entertainment and proceeding hand-in-hand with the fashion and taste of the times, is very straightforward and down-to-earth. As summed up in the final paragraphs of Holm's work, , the Turk was not to be tamed.

Bent Holm's language and style are utterly absorbing and engaging; the book could be read like an ongoing conversation with him. The author makes brilliant use of select illustrations, borrowed mainly from the Royal Library of Copenhagen

and National Gallery of Denmark, which make the adventure of delving into the Danish history of staged *turqueries* highly appealing for the reader throughout the entire book. Holm ends his work with a bibliography comprised of highly valuable primary sources as well as the vast secondary literature in a number of languages.

The translation into English of this meticulous dramatic analysis of a specific aspect of Danish cultural and theatrical history is a true asset for reading in the field of cultural studies, because it also presents the reader with the *richesse* of the primary sources in the Danish archives. Bent Holm, throughout this panorama of theatre history, theatricality, and performativity, as well as political and diplomatic history, provides the reader "the big picture," one easily followed and grasped even by the reader unfamiliar with this topic --; Holm depicts it as clearly as he sees it. One must state that Gaye Kynoch's meticulous translation, rendered by her excellent command of the specialist field-terminology and her lucid language works very well for the reader and merits appreciation.

Hollitzer Verlag did a praiseworthy and masterful work to bring this book in the service of the English-speaking scholarly world of theatre and cultural studies. This work of sterling merit is highly recommended, and Bent Holm should be both read and praised as a cultural historian. *The Taming of the Turk: Ottomans on the Danish Stage 1596-1896* may be considered one of the essential readings for scholars and researchers in cultural studies, in theatre history as well as in Ottoman studies.

Suna Suner

Virgil Coman (ed.), Ahmet Yenikale (Osmanlı Türkçesinden aktaran),

Dobrogea în izvoare cartografice otomane (sec. XVI-XIX) [Osmanlı Kartografya Kaynaklarında Dobruca (XVI. – XIX. yy.)],

București: Editura Etnologica, 2015, 104 s., ISBN 978-973-8920-82-8.

Osmanlıların 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısından itibaren Balkanlar ve Avrupa'daki topraklarından tamamen çekilme sürecinin son halkalarından birisi de Dobruca'nın 1878 yılında elden çıkmasıdır. Berlin Antlaşması'yla son bulan dört