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II

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Michael Hüttler – Hans E. Weidinger (ed.), *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre I: The Age of Mozart and Selim III (1756-808)* (Wien: Hollitzer, 2013), 1016 p.

Although a number of studies increased recently on the age of Selim III, needless to say original and high caliber ones are few, there are still pristine areas or several untouched issues that wait for to be examined. *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre I* edited by M. Hüttler and H. E. Weidinger as part of the Ottomania series meticulously prepared by Don Juan Archiv Wien and exquisitely, I must affirm, published by Hollitzer is surely one of those rare works that focuses on the interaction and reciprocal influences of the Ottoman Empire and European theatre in the second half of the 18th century. The book covering the period between 1756 and 1808, the era of Selim III (1756-1808) and Mozart (1761-1791), came out as the first volume of the symposia and books series *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre* coordinated by Don Juan Archiv Wien organized as an intercultural and interdisciplinary project stressing various sensational and musical expressions of the exponents of the Ottoman Empire, presented on the theatrical stages of Europe, including the appearance of European theatre and opera in the Ottoman Empire, especially in İstanbul. Not only the life-spans of historical personalities that the book covers overlap, but also they were dominating figures of their era: W.A. Mozart as a remarkable composer in the Western world and Selim III as both an enlightened ruler and a fascinating composer in the Ottoman world.

When you start reading from the contents of the book, you would be immediately puzzled whether you are reading an outcome of an interdisciplinary project or a dramatic genre of Don Juan plays. The forty-four contributions of this book are astutely edited in eight sections entitled Overture, Prologue, Acts I-V and Epilogue. The Overture incorporates the opening speeches of diplomats, politicians and scholars and the Prologue includes texts by eminent historians who analyze historical relations and interactions between the Ottoman Empire and Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century from both Turkish and Austrian points of view. Acts I-V feature several articles. Most of them are meticulously prepared and carefully researched, but one of them failed to get away from a goof, I must admit. C. Herfert examines in her article (pp.795-819) a drama *Selim der Dritte* written by a writer and playwright, Murad Efendi as a historical tragedy in five acts in autumn 1870 and completed in winter 1870/71. Murad Efendi, whose original name was Franz von Werner, was a “Viennese Turk”, a figure of metamorphosis: at once German and Turkish, then writer and diplomat. Herfert contributed to the volume by studying scrupulously such a forgotten important cultural mediator between the Ottomans and Europe, however she

missed another significant drama that was written by J. Friedrich Regges in 1855, much before Murad Efendi's play, entitled *Sultan Selim der Dritte oder der Janitscharen Aufstand. Ein historisches Schauspiel in fünf Akten*. And a curious mind hankers to inquire further and questions whether these two dramas are related or not while reading through the pages of Herfert's article. Another research is surely needed to satisfy this curiosity.

The book ends with exquisitely published picture gallery in the appendix section, and the index for names and works, and also the index for places are masterfully devised in the close.



Murad Efendi's *Selim der Dritte* played by Friedrich Krastel in the title role in 1872, as C. Herfert unveils. (Photograph Szekely-Wien, IMAGNO/ÖNB, Bildarchiv)