



Johannes Feichtinger, Johann Heiss. *Geschichtspolitik und „Türkenbelagerung“: Kritische Studien zur „Türkenbelagerung“*. Band 1. Wien: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2013. 357 S. ISBN 978-3-85476-613-1.

Johannes Feichtinger, Johann Heiss. *Der erinnerte Feind: Kritische Studien zur „Türkenbelagerung“*. Band 2. Wien: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2013. 355 S. ISBN 978-3-85476-614-8.

Michael Hüttler, Hans Ernst Weidinger. *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre: The Age of Mozart and Selim III. (1756—1808)*. Wien: Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag, 2012. 1016 S. ISBN 978-3-9901206-5-1.

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Sammelrez: “Türkenbelagerung”

Since 2011 the Turkish television melodrama series “The Magnificent Century,” staging the sixteenth-century reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (also known as the Lawgiver), has contributed to a renewed cultural interest in the Ottoman empire after almost a century of purposeful republican reserve in Turkey. The glorious, violent, and lurid aspects of the Ottoman legacy have resonated not only in Turkey, but across the television screens of Southeastern Europe and the Middle East, in the former lands of the Ottoman Empire. It is interesting to observe that these very same years have witnessed an upsurge of academic interest in Ottoman traces, influences, and representations in European culture – featuring more meticulous scholarly citation and less titillating harem dancing than “The Magnificent Century.” Vienna, which once in the reign of Suleiman in 1529 (the first Turkish siege) and once again in 1683 (the second Turkish siege), witnessed an Ottoman army assembled outside its town walls, and only barely averted Ottoman conquest, now serves as the center of this recent academic enterprise.

“The Ottoman Empire and European Theatre: The Age of Mozart and Selim III” is a thousand-page volume

(designated as volume one), edited in English by Michael Hüttler and Hans Ernst Weidinger and published in Vienna in 2013, and constituted from the papers of two conferences held in Vienna and Istanbul in 2008, both sponsored by the Don Juan Archiv, which is based in Vienna. Meanwhile, also published in Vienna in 2013 are two closely connected volumes in German, “Geschichtspolitik und ‘Türkenbelagerung’” (Band I) and “Der erinnerte Feind” (Band 2), edited by Johannes Feichtinger and Johann Heiss, both of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and based on conferences held in Vienna, Bad Radkersburg, and Cracow between 2009 and 2011.

Although these two latter volumes in German focus almost entirely on the Ottoman legacy for Habsburg and post-Habsburg culture, in Austria and the lands of the former monarchy, the titles of the volumes make no allusion at all to Austria or the Habsburg monarchy, as if such a focus were simply to be assumed, or, alternatively, as if it had to be discreetly effaced. Yet, it must be noted that the significance for Habsburg and Austrian studies is very substantial, perhaps greater than for Ottoman and Turkish studies, and the titles peculiarly camouflage this crucial focus. In the case of the English-language volume

on the “Ottoman Empire and European Theatre” the field of study is more broadly European, though with a strong Habsburg emphasis, and at least the mention of Mozart’s name in the subtitle gives some suggestion of its Austrian significance.

Taken all together, this ensemble of Viennese volumes from 2013 – that of Hüttler and Weidinger, and those of Feichtinger and Heiss – includes some sixty scholarly contributions, in English and in German, studying the impact, influence, and legacy of the Ottoman encounter in European culture, an enormous aggregation of academic scholarship that transforms this whole arena of research. In a discussion of the many dramas of uneven theatrical quality on Turkish themes that were performed in Vienna around the time of the siege bicentennial in 1883, a critic humorously remarked, “Die Furcht vor den Türken kann vor 200 Jahren in Wien keine größere gewesen sein, als die Furcht vor den Türkenstücken, wie sie heute hier herrscht” (*Der erinnerte Feind*, p. 47). Contemplating the massive “siege” of publications of 2013 one might almost extend the comment to “die Furcht vor den Türkenstudien” – though, happily, the contributions to these volumes include many of very high academic quality.

At the heart of the volume on “Ottoman Empire and European Theatre” lies an important literary collection with a history that originates in the brutal circumstances of Nazi Austria, when rare books and publications were confiscated from the collections of Austrian Jews. The so-called Mauerbach Complex of publications, including many dramatic texts, were preserved after the war at the Carthusian Monastery in Mauerbach, just outside Vienna, and were finally auctioned in 1996 to benefit surviving victims of the Holocaust and their families. The theatrical texts, in particular, came into the custodianship of the Don Juan Archiv Wien, and, since almost a hundred plays and libretti concerned “Oriental” subjects, these texts encouraged the pursuit of literary and cultural research on such works and themes; this became the impulse for academic conferences and the publication of scholarship on Ottoman issues in European theater. This history of the collection is narrated in the contribution of Gabriele Pfeiffer, who then traces the literary history of the writer Franz Kratter: he came to prominence during the Josephine period in Vienna in the 1780s, intersected with Mozart in Masonic circles, and later in the 1790s wrote plays about Peter the Great that are included in the Mauerbach collection. One of these plays, “Der Friede am Pruth”, concerned the conclusion of one of Peter’s Ottoman wars, and the frontispiece has been

reproduced with its handsome engraving of an Ottoman scene (*Ottoman Empire and European Theatre*, p. 579).

The importance of the theatrical texts in the Mauerbach collection becomes further apparent through the study of other Viennese collections, especially at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, and Michael Hüttler and Matthias Pernerstorfer make very fine methodological contributions, reflecting on how one addresses issues of performance and reception for plays that survive in textual form. Hüttler considers versions of the play and opera libretto “Der Sklavenhändler von Smyrna” or “Der Kaufmann von Smyrna” in the 1770s and 1780s, while Pernerstorfer discusses dramas from the Palfy Theater Library at the University of Vienna, and particularly eighteenth-century plays associated with the 1783 Viennese centennial commemoration of the Ottoman siege of 1683. This centennial represents one of the points of intersection between the two sets of volumes, since Feichtinger and Heiss also include an excellent study, by Heiss himself, on the Viennese siege centennial of 1783. Pernerstorfer discusses the commemorative function of fireworks in the Prater, and drama on the stage, as in Paul Weidmann’s drama “Das befreyte Wien”, in which one of the characters from 1683 declares, “Und in hundert Jahren wird man noch diesen schönen Tag feyern” (*Ottoman Empire and European Theatre*, p. 517). Heiss adds further discussion of the commemorative religious procession to the Stephansdom, the pantomime “Arlekin der Türkensklave”, and the Hernalser Eselritt in which a “pasha” was placed on a donkey and mocked with alcoholic offerings. In fact, the centennial of 1783 was supposed to be the very last commemoration of the Turkish siege, since Emperor Joseph II was generally critical of wasteful expenditure, especially if it involved any religious occasion, but the research in these several volumes strongly suggests the futility, even for an absolute monarch, of attempting to suppress the cultural rituals of remembrance.

In “Ottoman Empire and European Theatre” the study of particular theatrical texts achieves its most elegant and exemplary manifestation in musicologist Thomas Betzwieser’s brilliant essay about the mid-eighteenth-century manuscript “Hs 17874” of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek: thirteen musical pieces plus five French texts on Turkish customs, from meals to prayers to dervish devotion. Betzwieser teases out the possible relations of the texts to the music, identifies as many of the musical pieces as possible (e.g. the “Sinfonia Janizaria” by Johann Joseph Fux), analyzes the “Turkish” qualities of the music, and attempts to determine what

theatrical occasion they might have incidentally accompanied (possibly a Viennese production of Molière's "Le Bourgeois gentilhomme"). Arguing that the Turkishness of the musical pieces was, to some degree, authentically conceived from Ottoman models, Betzwieser takes issue with musicologist Matthew Head who also has a very interesting piece in the same volume, exploring Mozart's relation to Oriental themes, and arguing that Mozart's "Turkish" music was inspired by Gluck, not by authentically Ottoman Janissary bands.

While the contributions to "Ottoman Empire and European Theatre" are sometimes very focused indeed (e.g. manuscript "Hs 17874"), they are also wide-ranging in subject, including very fine studies by Alexandre Lhâa on Turkish themes at La Scala, by Isabelle Moindrot on French heroines in Turkish theatrical scenarios (as in Charles-Simon Favart's eighteenth-century musical comedy "Les trois sultanes"), and Bent Holm on "The Staging of the Turk" in eighteenth-century Denmark. These contributions do not cover the continent of Europe in an even or systematic fashion, but offer fascinating insights into several particular theatrical cultures. The Feichtinger and Heiss collection is much more systematic in its geographical coverage, considering how the Turkish wars have been remembered in Lower Austria, then in Graz, then in the Styrian Mürztal, then in Carinthia, then in Burgenland, in five successive chapters. The price for such comprehensiveness is a certain cumulative sense of repetition since many forms of remembrance were similar among these adjoining territories. Simon Hadler, heroically, covers both Lower Austria and Burgenland in separate contributions in the first volume, with a third contribution in the second volume comparing the siege bicentennial of 1683 as commemorated in Vienna and in Habsburg Cracow. Discussing Burgenland, Hadler notes such diverse traces of remembrance as votive images, cannon balls, and "Turkish towers" (of uncertain Turkish association) – and he offers a fascinating conclusion on the fluctuating nature of memory traces: "Sie verblassen, sie verschwinden, und tauchen gelegentlich wieder auf; manchmal sind sie von weiten zu erkennen, ein anderes Mal können sie nur von Eingeweihten wahrgenommen werden." (Geschichtspolitik und „Türkenbelagerung“, p. 297) One of the strengths of the Feichtinger and Heiss volumes is the attention to the dynamics of historical memory and commemoration.

The attempt by Feichtinger and Heiss to distinguish the first volume ("Geschichtspolitik") from the second volume ("Der erinnerte Feind"), is only partly successful, as the subjects of history and memory tend to con-

verge, so that many of the essays might as easily be in one volume as the other. The second volume, however, has some particularly powerful groupings, beginning with four contributions on the commemoration and remembrance of the Polish King Jan Sobieski for his role at the siege of Vienna in 1683, followed by another set of three pieces on issues of memory for Ottoman Hungary and especially concerning the decisive battle of Mohacs in 1526. Anna Ziemlewska offers important research that moves from the illuminations of Cracow in 1683 to the commemoration of Sobieski by Stanislaw August at the Łazienki palace around the time of the 1783 centennial, to the gigantic historical canvas of Sobieski's relief of Vienna, painted by Jan Matejko in Habsburg Galicia for the bicentennial of 1883, the painting that now hangs in the Vatican. (The same painting receives further attention in Hadler's separate discussion of Cracow and Vienna in 1883.) Andrea Sommer-Mathis analyzes the grudging reluctance of nineteenth-century Viennese commentators to acknowledge the leading role of the Polish king in saving the Habsburg capital. Sommer-Mathis also offers an exceptionally interesting contribution to the first volume, discussing how the relief of Vienna in 1683 was celebrated all over Europe, with fireworks in Bologna, Ferrara, Rome, and Madrid, with dramatic productions in Jesuit colleges in Vienna and Vilnius, and with operas about Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa in Hamburg and Venice. Among the contributions on Hungary, particularly interesting is art historian Heinke Fabritius's close study of three important Hungarian paintings of the late nineteenth century, representing different aspects and nuances of the Hungarian-Ottoman encounter in the age of the Hungarian 1896 millennium. Unfortunately, the paintings themselves are poorly reproduced in the volume.

Hungary, of course, was not just besieged, but actually formed part of the Ottoman Empire for a century and a half, following Mohacs – which makes the questions of remembrance (and forgetting) all the more complicated. The volume on "Ottoman Empire and European Theatre" takes the problem even deeper into the Ottoman empire, examining European dramatic productions that took place in Istanbul itself. There is a fascinating pair of contributions by Suna Suner, who identifies the first European operatic production in Istanbul, taking place at the Swedish mission in Pera in 1786, and by Walter Puchner who describes the French Jesuits presenting Molière in Istanbul already in the 1670s. In another contribution Günsel Renda gives an account of the theatrical aspects of Ottoman diplomatic protocol for receiving European

ambassadors.

A number of the contributions in the volumes of Feichtinger and Heiss follow the history of remembrance into the twentieth century, including the 250th anniversary of 1933 when the new menace from the East was sometimes construed as Bolshevism, and the later twentieth century when anti-immigrant sentiment in Austria led to the xenophobic formulation of a “third Turkish siege.” Feichtinger and Heiss, in their introduction to the second volume (“Der erinnerte Feind”) comment that “manche Feinde bleiben Feinde,” but that Turks were also able to serve as a metaphor or “Platzhalter” for other foreign menaces (Der erinnerte Feind, pp. 7–10). There is an excellent contribution by Werner Suppanz on the Viennese celebrations of 1933 under the auspices of Dollfuss as Chancellor, working closely with his Austro-fascist ally Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, now “protecting” Austria from its “enemies,” just as his ancestor of the same name had commanded the defense of Vienna against the Turkish siege in 1683. At the Rathausplatz Dollfuss saluted him, “Heil Starhemberg! Heil das zu befreiende, das befreite Wien!” Starhemberg regretted the presence of “Bolsheviks” in the Rathaus, the socialist municipal government of Red Vienna, and declared, “Wie 1683 das Jahr der Befreiung Wiens war, soll auch 1933 ein Jahr der Befreiung Wiens von einer anderen, vielleicht noch größeren Gefahr sein” (Der erinnerte Feind, pp. 170–171). The manipulation of the Turkish siege to serve modern political agendas is also discussed in Johanna Witzeling’s contribution on teaching the history of the siege in Viennese schools. While the radical

right-wing Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs was manipulating public remembrance of the Turkish siege to agitate against immigrants in Austria, new textbooks were attempting to teach greater sensitivity: “Heute sind Türken und Österreicher keine Feinde mehr. In vielen Schulen sitzen türkische und Wiener Kinder gemeinsam beisammen. Viele sind gute Freunde.” (Der erinnerte Feind, p. 196) In a brilliant conclusion to “Der erinnerte Feind”, Moritz Csáky shows Hugo von Hofmannsthal almost obsessively returning to the subject of Austria’s Turkish wars as the poet attempted to come to terms with World War One.

These edited volumes are very long, and the individual contributions are of differing levels of interest and quality. One might wonder whether the two volumes edited by Feichtinger and Heiss could have been edited to one single volume of the best pieces. One might entertain similar thoughts about the thousand-page volume edited by Hüttler and Weidinger, which more frankly resembles a record of conference proceedings from 2008, including ceremonial opening speeches by diplomatic ambassadors, and even an obituary tribute to the great Turkish soprano Leyla Gencer who died in 2008. The great weight of these multiple publications of 2013, however, will serve to emphasize the manifold aspects and exceptional complexity of the subject, and will open whole new avenues of research concerning the fascinating central problem of how the encounter between Europe and the Ottoman empire left its mark upon European culture – from the theatrical stage to the rituals and monuments of public remembrance.

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