

providing a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics that defined these cultures during the early modern period.

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*Imagined, Embodied and Actual Turks in Early Modern Europe*. Bent Holm and Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen, eds.

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The editors of this collection liken their book to a kaleidoscope. The metaphor is apt because its individual chapters undoubtedly showcase diversity and complexity: in numerous ways they demonstrate how the figure of “the Turk” (ix) was encountered, embodied, and imagined throughout early modern Europe in a variety of media including ceremonies, historical writing, images, printed ephemera, travelogues, and theological treatises. But, like a kaleidoscope, the overall effect can become bewildering at times; it is not always clear what this volume is trying to say *in toto* beyond its opening mantra that “there was not just *one* image of the Turk” (ix). The book’s fifteen chapters examine European-Ottoman interrelations from three angles: the Actual, Imagined, and Embodied Turk. Within this tripartite framework, the parameters are broad and multidisciplinary: chapters mainly (although not exclusively) examine the early modern period, and geographically authors roam widely with material concerning Denmark, France, Italy, and especially Central Europe and the Balkans.

Part 1 considers “The Actual Turk” (1), by which is meant European-Ottoman interactions via conflict, diplomacy, and/or trade. The standout essay here is Kate Fleet’s deft dismantling of European historiography from the nineteenth century to the present day regarding the Ottoman world. Fleet traces the long history of several pervasive tropes concerning the Ottomans, addresses structural issues around sources, and analyzes how nationalist agendas distort the language and geography of Ottoman scholarship.

Part 2, the most substantial and cohesive section, addresses the diverse ways in which the Turk was imagined in art and literature. In her analysis of European travelogues concerning the Ottomans, Aslı Çirakman perceptively underscores the specular nature of these texts and how they display “the shortcomings and vices of home in contrast to both the virtues and vices of the foreign culture” (139). Charlotte Colding Smith expertly explores sixteenth-century representations of Turks in illustrated bibles and theological texts in both Lutheran and Catholic circles, demonstrating the malleability of the figure of the Turk in these printed works. Mikael Bøgh Rasmussen’s excellent essay examines the intersection of texts and images within the oeuvre of the sixteenth-century artist Melchior Lorck. Rasmussen traces these shifting and often contradictory representations of the Ottoman world, and offers a nuanced exploration of what the

idea of truthfulness may have meant to Lorck's original audiences by carefully unpicking the layers of texts, languages, and images that the artist and others (after Lorck's death) constructed.

Part 3 ("The Embodied Turk") explores performativity and the figure of the Turk in relation to ceremonies, operas, and plays. Dirk Van Waelderren undertakes a comparative analysis of how Ottoman figures were portrayed within Netherlandish triumphs and pageants across the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. He draws out the continuities and changes of these representations and how they were variously statements of religiosity, classical reception, and military power. Suna Suner's interesting essay draws upon unpublished archives to consider what Ottoman diplomats made of Viennese theatrical performances during the eighteenth century. While it lacks a firm conclusion, this chapter (alongside Günsel Renda's essay) provides one of the volume's rare yet tantalizing examinations of Ottoman responses toward Europe.

Unsurprisingly for such a vast volume, there are moments of unevenness: chapters vary in quality and length, and some cover several centuries at speed while others offer deep dives into specialist topics. Many chapters are strong, and several are excellent, but how they work together is less successful. The editors chose to limit cross-references, but it would have helped readers and emphasized connections and divergences if the cross-referencing had been more comprehensive and systematic. The brief prologue and epilogue (no more than eight and a half pages in total) do not help in this regard either. The editors rightly eschew any attempt to impose a uniform conclusion on this diverse material since their aim is to underscore the multifaceted nature of the figure of the Turk in various contexts. However, it is a missed opportunity not to have unpacked the implications of this argument, particularly from methodological and theoretical standpoints. Nonetheless, this volume makes several serious contributions: its breadth and multidisciplinary nature is impressive, the handling of an array of primary sources in their original languages is a strength, and the considerable bibliography is a valuable resource. Readers may come for one particular essay, but they will find much that is unexpected and important in other chapters.

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*On the Edge of Eternity: The Antiquity of the Earth in Medieval & Early Modern Europe.* Ivano Dal Prete.

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How old is the Earth? At first glance, this seems like a question that can be answered with a number. However, the question involves social, political, and historical layers: can we speak of the origin of the Earth (for example, a creation)? Which conceptions of time are involved in the question? *On the Edge of Eternity* masterfully explains what is