

Ježernik, Božidar. 2010. *Imagining the Turk*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishers. 205 pp. Hb.: £39.99 / \$59.99. ISBN: 9781443816632.

‘Imagining the Turk’ is a volume edited by an author who has written or edited around 25 books. Prof Božidar Ježernik is a prominent Slovenian scholar and, above all, an expert on south-east European ethnology. This volume brings forward an interesting array of contributions spanning from the classical European images and perceptions of Turks all the way to the musicological perspective of the Balkans. Nevertheless, it also provides us with an inverse angle of seeing the Turk or the European through the Turks themselves. The book consists of 14 chapters. Each written as its own piece, yet each represents a logical particle within the set of theorizations on ‘the Turk’.

The first chapter, which is also the title of the book, is written by the editor. He devotes himself to discussions on the imaging of the Turk in Europe. He embraces a wide time frame – from the early stages of Turkish appearance back in 14th century Europe, to its heyday and high plateau and, finally, towards their political and imperial demise in the beginning of 20th century. Analyzing the European stereotypes on the Turks and Turkish culture, the author introduces an interesting collection of vivid images (sometimes from his own collection). In his otherwise uncompromised stance, he had partly given some way to exaggerations of the Turkish might. Citing Slovene-Carniolian historian Josip Gruden, for instance, it might be too ‘optimistic’ to state that Carniola (one of Slovenia’s territorial predecessors), which had had about half a million inhabitants at its peak in 1910, lost about a half of population solely from ‘the medieval Turkish hand’ through, say, kidnappings and killings (cf. p. 9). Nevertheless, the chapter brings together mostly overlooked though important bits and pieces of European history.

Authored by Rajko Muršič, the second chapter theorizes the ‘symbolic othering’ through the excoriation of ‘the Turk as a threatening other’ (p. 19). Özlem Kumrular contributed the third chapter, where he deliberates ‘the image of the Turk in the 16th century Mediterranean’ through the eyes of chroniclers, poets, and writers. In the next chapter Miha Pintarič lucidly explains the Rabelais’s ‘Turks of Panurge’ (p. 47). Nedret Kuran-Burçoğlu takes us through the ‘representations of the Turk in the German media from early modern Age to the enlightenment’ (p. 55), while Peter Simonič’s abundantly referenced chapter reassesses ‘Valvasor’s hereditary enemy’. Beyond ‘Giaour’ and ‘Wild Europe’ (cf. p. 83), Jale Parla draws on a comparative perspective to assure the potential of differing methodologies in reaching similar or same conclusions. Remaining in a belletrist’s domain, Bojan Baskar engages with an interesting analysis of orientalism through the Slovenian poet Anton Aškerc and his trip to ‘Stambol’, as regards his views of Pan-Slavism and Islam. Once again through ‘the discursive optics of Slovenian historiography and literature’ (p. 111), Alenka Bartulović uncovers their underneath intentions. While proposing the ‘Ottoman’ instead of the ‘Turkish incursions’ (p. 113, footnote 3), she renders a very informative and firmly backed up analysis. Further on, Nazan Aksoy maintains the analytical position by mirroring the other within ‘early Turkish novels’ (p. 137). Aleksandra Niewiara tops the European perspective by a complementary Polish view of the Turk. Owing to harsh historical relations to Russia, Niewiara states, the Polish thence tended to picture even the ‘vicious murderer’

as an ‘ancient friend of theirs’ (p. 155). From a musicological perspective, Bülent Aksoy first draws attention to Westerner’s look to Ottomans’ music, to open the floor to Svanibor Pettan’s analysis of ‘the *alaturka-alafranga* continuum in the Balkans’ (p. 191). To neatly conclude the volume, Ayhan Kaya added the last chapter to ‘the age of securitisation’ (p. 195). In calling for ‘desecuritized migration’ (cf. p. 204), Kaya questions the migrants’ integration and the contemporary debate on European models of integration.

Applying diverse approaches and theoretical frameworks, this convincingly written book supplies the reader with the necessary toolkit applicable ‘from the Greater Europe to the Minor Asia’. Rich in citations, cited references and sources, comprehensive in discussions, and clear in conclusions, this well-equipped and diverse volume is a valuable companion to both researchers and laymen who would like to get more acquainted with ‘the Turkish matter’. Just perhaps, readers might want to examine the individual CVs of the contributors. However, this is at the utmost a task for the second edition.

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