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First Danish Hamlet in Denmark (1813)

It turned out to be a surprise, when curiosity recently took my research into different archives in Denmark in order to search for the remains of the first Danish production of Hamlet, performed in Denmark in 1813. What would the performance's remains tell us about the production? Apart from a librarian's notes on Danish text versions of Hamlet, and very few publications, mostly fifty or more years old, they neither had attention paid toward translation quality nor other semantic choices made in the translations, such as faithfulness towards verse. Those studies are without doubt of importance, as they are presented from more linguistic or literary points of view. However, the archival sources in this case has shown to me, that both a dramaturgical and a contextual analysis of cuttings of the play in relationship to their eventual perception correspondence to political matters under the King Frederik VI would leave a highly dramatic image of a cultural and political tense situation for the Danish Royal Theatre and, which surrounded the entire production. This paper will demonstrate how my research practice with Hamlet, with a specific dramaturgical close reading – combined with a distant reading – has revealed how at that time self censorship at Royal Danish Theatre would throw light on the most interesting production choices, made for this very theatre production.



Bio: Dramaturg, PhD, Associate Professor, at Dramaturgy – Aarhus University, Denmark. Her PhD research on 'Stanislavski's Theatre Concepts' took her to The Stanislavski Archives (MXAT, 1993-94). Annelis is member of the Editorial Board for Teatro e Storia, Il Castello di Elsinore and Nordic Theatre Studies and has a longstanding collaboration with Odin Teatret, where she is Director of the Centre for Theatre Laboratory Research (CTLS) (since 2007). Her most recent publications include co-editing *Grønlands Teaterhistorie - på vej* (Greenland Theatre History - on its way) (2019), and 'The First Danish Production of Hamlet (1813). A Theatrical Representation of a National Crisis' (2022). Her new research centre, Centre for Historical Performance Practice (CHiPP), was founded in 2018.