

### BOOK REVIEW

Hutchings, M. (2017). *Turks, Repertories and Early Modern English Stage*.  
London: Palgrave Macmillan.

### KİTAP İNCELEMESİ

Hutchings, M. (2017). *Türkler, Repertuarlar ve Erken Modern Dönem İngiliz Sahnesi*. Londra: Palgrave Macmillan.

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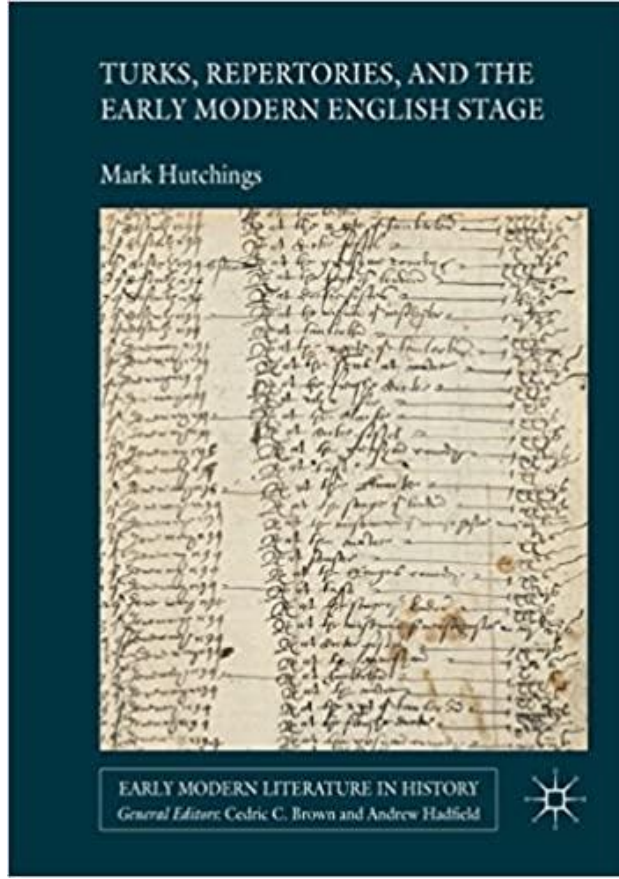
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**Abstract:** The book, *Turks, Repertories, and the Early Modern English Stage*, written by Mark Hutchings and published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2017, is about the recurrent use and staging of the images of Turks on the English playhouses through following a certain and regular repertory system circulating among London playmaking. The Elizabethan theatre in this respect is occupied mostly by the staging of Turks, not due to historical and cultural images and popularity of cultural identity of Ottomans in that period but rendering a Turk as a constructed theatrical identity circulating among the acting companies between 1567 and 1642. The studies made on the representation of Turks and Ottomans in the early modern English drama made use of the historical accounts and geopolitical conceptions, depicting the Ottoman Empire as "the present terror of the world", articulated by Richard Knolles in his famous and historical account, *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603). Accordingly, the dramatic corpus of the early modern England attempted to understand how the Turks through the Ottoman Empire were constituted and formulated within the early modern English imagination. It is in this regard that this book contributes to the literary studies in the direction of giving detailed information related to the depiction of both major and minor texts including and treating the Turk material, which was fashionable and popular in the early modern period.

**Key Words:** Mark Hutchings, Renaissance Drama, Early Modern English Stage

**Özet:** Mark Hutchings'in 2017 yılında yazdığı, *Turks, Repertories and Early Modern English Stage* (*Türkler, Repertuarlar ve Erken Modern Dönem İngiliz Sahnesi*) adlı kitap, Türk temsillerinin belirli ve düzenli bir repertuar sistemi izlenerek İngiliz tiyatrolarında tekrar tekrar kullanılması ve sahnelenmesi hakkındadır. Bu bakımdan Elizabeth dönemi Tiyatrosu, daha çok Osmanlıların tarihsel ve kültürel imajları ve kültürel kimliğinin o dönemdeki popüleritesi nedeniyle değil de, 1567 ve 1642 yılları arasında oyunculuk yapan topluluklar arasında dolaşan bir tiyatro kimliği olarak temsil edilen "Türkleri" oluşturması nedeniyle sahnelenmektedir. Erken modern İngiliz tiyatrosunda Türklerin ve Osmanlıların temsili üzerine yapılan çalışmalar, Richard Knolles tarafından yazılan *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603) (*Türklerin Genel Tarihi*) adlı eserinde dile getirilirken, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu "dünyanın mevcut terörü" olarak tanımlayan tarihsel konulardan yararlanmıştır. Buna göre, erken modern İngiltere'sinin drama külliyatı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu aracılığıyla Türklerin erken modern dönem İngiliz algılanması içinde nasıl oluşturulduğunu ve formüle edildiğini anlamaya çalışmıştır. Bu bakımdan bu kitap, erken modern dönemde daha çok moda olan "Türk" malzemesini içererek hem büyük hem de küçük metinlerin tasviri ve ele alınması ile ilgili ayrıntılı bilgi verme yönünde edebi çalışmalara katkıda bulunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimesi:** Mark Hutchings, Rönesansta Drama, Erken Modern Çağ İngiliz Sahnesi



Mark Hutchings, *Turks, Repertories, and the Early Modern English Stage*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, ISBN: 978-1-137-46262-6, 254

The Elizabethan theatre is occupied mostly by the staging of Turks, not due to historical and cultural images and popularity of cultural identity of Ottomans in that period but rendering a Turk as a constructed theatrical identity circulating among the acting companies between 1567 and 1642. In this regard, a great deal of studies have been made to represent the Turks and Ottomans in the early modern English drama by many scholars, particularly Daniel Vitkus (2003), Mabil Matar (1999), Matthew Dimmock (2005), Richmond Barbour (2003), Linda McJannet (2006), Jonathan Burton (2005), and Jane Hwang Degenhardt (2010), who employed and studied the historical and cultural environment of the plays written in this period. In most of these studies, "the Turk" was presented as a raw material, depicting mostly the attitudes of the West and the English towards the Turks and Ottomans. Furthermore, the common point of these studies was that inclusion of the Turks on the English stage was due to the historicizing of Turks and the Ottoman Empire as the greatest power of the period, having military and political power, causing fear and admiration among the Christian West, circulating frequently through the fantasies for the Muslim and Eastern despot. As a matter of fact, the studies made on the representation of Turks and Ottomans in the early modern English drama made use of the historical accounts and geopolitical conceptions, depicting the Ottoman Empire as "the present terror of the world", articulated by Richard Knolles in his famous and historical account, *Generall*

*Historie of the Turkes* (1603). Hence, the depiction of the Turks was assumed as the external historical realities, taking their sources from Knolles's book to some extent. Therefore, most of these plays have been analysed and studied in the light of historical accounts, diplomatic letters, travel writings, and pamphlets, having been treated as historical texts hence, which constructed, shaped, and even historicized the theatrical representations and constructions. Accordingly, the dramatic corpus of the early modern England attempted to understand how the Turks through the Ottoman Empire were constituted and formulated within the early modern English imagination.

However, Mark Hutchings's book, *Turks, Repertories, and the Early Modern English Stage*, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2017, depicts the recurrent use and staging of the images of Turks on the English playhouses through following a certain and regular repertory system circulating among London playmaking, and the book reveals the fact that, considering the repertories of the English playhouses between 1567 and 1642, representation of Turkish identity was fluid and unsolidified as it became the motif indicating the modes, fashion, and conventions of the English stage. It is in this manner that Hutchings claims "the Turk" motif was not geopolitical, dealing with insights upon Anglo-Ottoman relations, but became the construction of the London playhouse culture, as pointing out, "London playmaking did not simply 'reflect' and external reality but created a self-referential environment as much in dialogue with itself as with the world outside its framing timbers" (2017: 1). Hutchings bases his claim on the classification of company repertories, and around three thousand plays were written between 1560s and 1640s, one fifth of which can be categorized as the Turk plays, referring Turks and the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, this book specifically deals with the fact that representation and inclusion of Turks in these repertories were predominantly due to theatrical concerns rather than historical or cultural ones because the playwrights subverted, reconstructed and adapted the Turkish material for their own concern considering their commercial interests and the popularity of the image among the audience. Approaching this material in terms of theatrical commerce and practices for producing plays, "dramatists and actors represented or alluded to the Turk, for all that this called up a certain knowledge underwritten by a shared cultural memory" (Hutchings, 2017: 6). Thus the present book is concerned mainly with qualitative approach, rather than quantitative one, to the texts in terms of the depiction of the Turks by the early modern English dramatists. In this respect, Hutchings's book reveals the view that the Ottoman Empire's being historically significant in the early modern period for its effective military attempts and conquests of the western areas does not sufficiently explicate their presence in the theatre's investment. However, the Turk phenomenon on the English stage was mostly "repertorially", as it becomes fundamentally the product of the circulating repertory system which directed London playmaking.

The opening chapter of the book gives a general view of the inclusion and representation of Turks in early modern English drama, reviewing the Turk play in

its historical and genealogical accounts, examining various attitudes the dramatists employed and made use of in their plays as fashionable and popular scenarios for the theatre. The chapter also reveals the scope of the study, mentioning the previous studies preoccupied mainly with the analysis of the Turk motif from cultural and historical perspectives. It has been indicated that the narratives of the Turk, circulated among the early modern English playwrights, historicized the phenomenon.

Chapter 2 of the book identifies the depiction of "1453 narrative" in English drama, which establishes a framework into the plays which made use of this narrative as a cultural response of the west to the fall of Constantinople, as the earliest example can be found in Thomas Kyd's *the Spanish Tragedy*, in which "Soliman and Perseda", a play within the play, reflects the revenge fantasy of the west concerning the fall of Constantinople. Hence, this metatheatre contributes to the rise of interests in Turks among the Elizabethan audience. As Hutchings claims, the narrative of 1453, which was also seen as a catastrophe in the minds of the Christian world, was not solely "the collective, cultural memory of a long-past traumatic event" but it continued to the present through circulating among literary productions (Hutchings: 24). It has been stated that the narrative of 1453 was always exploited by playwrights for their own purposes (Hutchings, 2017: 24). In this respect, the Turks as "scourge of God" became a framework for many dramatists of the early modern period, taking their sources from the narrative of 1453, as "playmakers were inventive in the ways in which they fitted this material for the stage" (Hutchings, 2017: 25). The English playhouse extensively used and staged the narrative of 1453 not as a nostalgia but as the popularity of the material. Hence, this narrative remained only as recurring motif not representing the historical or cultural realities of the event but revisiting this motif for its theatrical desire and entertainment. Along with the narrative of 1453, there are two sub-narratives, popular and fashionable among the playhouse, which are identified fantasy and desire of the playwrights. Conversion to Islam was one of the sub-narratives that the playhouse included in the repertoires of theatre, through which the playhouse exploited interest in the Ottoman Empire. The Irene trope was another sub-narrative, which depicted the Turks as rapist and violent in the plays. Hutchings examined and analysed *Osmond the Great Turk* for illustrating the sub-narrative of the Irene trope, and *A Christian Turned Turk* for elucidating the recurring theme of turning Turk. Such detailed analysis of the plays provides some critical insights into the themes of the Irene trope and turning Turk, which reveal, hence, referential examples of cultural perceptions of the early modern period. However, as Hutchings points out, "the driving force behind the Turk play, the agent that stimulated the imaginative ways in which playwrights and actors fashioned and refashioned it, was not ideology but theatre. The inventiveness with which playwrights adapted their source material was a result, principally, of material imperatives at the heart of playhouse practice" (2017: 62). Likewise, the Turk play became a cross-repertorial phenomenon as reflected in this chapter.

Chapter 3 of the book is devoted to Philip Henslowe's *Diary*, which gives significant insights to the depiction and use of the Turk play in the repertoires of the early modern English theatre. Accordingly, the chapter reveals how the repertory system, documented and recorded by Henslowe when he was running the Rose playhouse and Fortune, played an important role in the circulation of the Turk motif in the early modern period, as it has been suggested that a variety of manners that playwrights transformed the western perceptions of the Ottomans to what was suitable on the English stage.

Chapter 4 of the book, entitled as "the Turk Play and Repertory Modelling" examines the Turk play as analysed in the *Tamburlaine* plays written by Marlowe. According to Hutchings, the Turk play was fostered by Marlowe, and many of the issues and images related to the Turks were invented by Marlowe himself, although he employed in *Tamburlaine* plays what Daniel Vitkus depicted Turks as the scourge of God famously. Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays became a model for the playwrights and playwrights, and this also gave way to the rise of popularity of the themes, characters and images concerning Turks, which induced both economic and artistic rivalry among the playhouses and playwrights.

Chapter 5 deals with how William Shakespeare expounded the Turk motif in his plays, and being the contemporary of both Marlowe and Kyd, Shakespeare mentioned Turks in nearly eighteen plays, making half of his canon. The most apparent depiction of the Turk play is involved in *Othello*, in which Shakespeare represented the theme of the Turkish attack on Cyprus in 1570. Along with *Othello*, Shakespeare mentioned the Turks in his tragedies, history plays, comedies and romances, as he was aware of the popularity of the Turk material among the Elizabethan audience. This is not because of demonstrating the significance and the value of the Turk material for his playmaking but for theatre companies for which he composed his plays. In this manner Shakespeare's employing the Turk material is due to the cross-reportorial connections obtained in the London theatre.

Hutchings's including the appendix at the end of the book is quite valuable as it gives the classified list of the texts that include the Turkish motif. Hutchings reveals the table which draws principally the Turk plays. Hutchings gives the names of the text, which is one hundred and thirty in total, which would make contributions and clear classified information for those who could study the Turks in early modern English texts. It is in this regard that this book contributes to the literary studies in the direction of giving detailed information related to the depiction of both major and minor texts including and treating the Turk material, which was fashionable and popular in the early modern period.

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