

2018 SAA Seminar: Shakespeare across the Mediterranean 1
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Anthony Barthelemy, University of Miami

**Seeking the Strange in the Familiar, Finding the Familiar in the Strange, or,
Where the Hell is Messalina?**

I am interested in the degree of strangeness that is necessary to unleash hatred, violence and persecution in early modern drama, especially Shakespeare's. *Twelfth Night* is provocative because it taunts us with its ambivalent exoticisms and comic religious persecution while exploring issues of gender identity, class, sexuality and female autonomy. Illyria is a strange place. It looks and sounds familiar, but it is also very unfamiliar. Its duke is self-indulgent, indolent, luxurious and, to sixteenth-century standards, effeminate. The place, or at least its duke, is redolent with Eastern excess and sounds almost Marlovian. (Think Mycetes not Tamburlaine). Viola initially plans to present herself as an eunuch. Olivia plans to remain cloistered and at times veiled as if in a seraglio guarded by social if not biological eunuchs. Sebastian's lover(?) of three months Antonio won't accept "goodbye," and follows his lover into danger. The play hints at Muslim foreignness and yet identifies its characters as Christian. The entire plot and its characters are unusual, exotic and strange. Shakespeare's Illyrians, principally Orsino and Olivia, invite disdain from the audience while the Messalinans and their entourages of seamen and suspected pirates initiate violence and provoke introspection amongst the Illyrians. How far is Messalina from Illyria? Do the new arrivals who crossed the Adriatic if not the Mediterranean establish standards of behavior? What rights exist for those who welcome the voyagers but are yet quickly judged? *Othello*, *The Tempest*, *The Merchant of Venice* all have racial others who serve as catalysts for violence and disruptions of the peace. There are no obvious racial differences between the Illyrians and the Messalinans, but the encounter destabilizes the former while the latter struggle with understanding who they are.

Stephanie Chamberlain, Southeast Missouri State University

**The Case of Morocco:
Failed Immigration in *The Merchant of Venice***

My paper will examine failed immigration in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, focusing on Morocco, who, as do most of the suitors crowding Portia's door, fails the test for inclusion within this decidedly exclusive environment. While the lottery Portia's father devises clearly concerns economics, how, in other words, to discourage fortune hunters from seizing upon her assets, it likewise involves questions of immigration: begging the question, who best would fit within a Belmont marked by underlying fears of the religious, racial, and cultural other. In this winner take all scenario, he who becomes master of this lady must become lord of Belmont as well. Realistically, how could the "tawny" skinned Morocco prevail in the racist as well as xenophobic atmosphere that surfaces as Portia assesses the cultural worth of her diverse suitors? My paper will consider all of the above, examining economic as well as cultural concerns in the matter of early modern immigration. While Portia and Belmont clearly represent economic interests and thus a father's attempt to protect them, they also represent cultural concerns.

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Jane Degenhardt, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Mediterranean Journeys and their Erasure in *The Tempest*

This paper considers the curious erasure of references to the Mediterranean Sea in *The Tempest*. In emphasizing how his and Miranda's journey to the island took place in a "rotten carcass of a boat" deprived of "tackle, sail, and mast," Prospero explains how the geographical specificity of their fortune-driven itinerary remains unknowable. Similarly unrecoverable, Sycorax's journey to the island from Algiers, undertaken while pregnant with Caliban, lacks a living witness to narrate it. Both the history of that journey, as well as the significance of its origination in North Africa, are virtually erased. Drawing upon Lisa Lowe's work on the repressed geopolitical histories that produce new global intimacies, my discussion sheds light on the violent intimacies forged between Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban and the lost Mediterranean journeys that cause their courses to converge. What is the relationship between a lost journey and a lost history? Dionne Brand describes the journey of Africans into slavery as a "door of no return," "a place emptied of beginnings," and "a tear in the world." I am interested in her understanding of how a journey across space and time can sever one's connection to an ancestral past and render the point of origin unrecoverable. Borrowing this model, I consider the Mediterranean journey that severs Caliban from his ancestral past as a traumatic erasure that is intentional rather than accidental. I further consider how this erasure might enable a new geographically forged intimacy and a new production of difference that finds expression in the categories of "race" and "slave." How might the Mediterranean context for these erasures, intimacies, and structures of difference both familiarize and de-familiarize the productions of race and slavery associated with trans-Atlantic and Caribbean journeys?

Laurie Ellinghausen, University of Missouri, Kansas City

**"certain condolences, certain veils":
Pericles and the Counterdiscourse of Labor**

"One very obvious feature of romance," according to Northrop Frye, "is its pervasive social snobbery." Much recent criticism of Shakespeare's late romances seems to confirm that bias by describing the plays as fundamentally conservative productions that flatter aristocratic audiences, incorporate courtly forms and, in more recent accounts, promote the imperialist agendas of seventeenth-century society's wealthy elite. Alternatively, other scholars have attended to elements of the "popular" in the romances, lighting on such characters as Autolycus the ballad-monger in *The Winter's Tale* and the fishermen who appear in *Pericles*. Yet I will argue that both strands of scholarship, while valuable, tend to polarize the "elite" and the "popular" as mutually exclusive categories that confirm contemporaneous hierarchies of intellectual/moral vs. manual labor – hierarchies that held truer in theory than in practice. This paper complicates the elite vs. popular binary by tracing a different conversation emerging in *Pericles*, one that embraces pragmatic consciousness, everyday labor, and occupational identity a new basis for social and economic value. I find this counterdiscourse not only in the "lowly" Pentapolis fishermen, but in their noble counterparts Cerimon and Helicanus, whose humble, workmanlike engagements with

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everyday duty distinguish them from the wayward members of Pericles's dynasty. I propose that these qualities, exhibited by lord and fisherman alike, make these men better equipped to build and sustain a Mediterranean empire than the Prince of Tyre, whom recent criticism describes an "imperialist" figure. By focusing on occupational consciousness, my paper responds to imperialist histories that neglect to account for the role of labor in building and sustaining empire.

Barbara Fuchs, UCLA

Spanish Shakespeares

My essay explores the cultural politics of Shakespeare in Spanish via the *Enrique VIII* presented by the Spanish company Fundación Siglo de Oro/Rakatá at the 2012 Cultural Olympiad/ World Shakespeare Festival in London and subsequently in Los Angeles. I survey the complex negotiation of cultural capital that links the Hispanic classical canon to Shakespeare, and propose some alternatives to hispanized Shakespeares in the Hispanic corpus itself.

Evelyn Gajowski, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

**Traversing the Mediterranean:
Racial, Gendered Discourses and Dramatic Action
in Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam***

Elizabeth Cary's sets *The Tragedy of Mariam: The Fair Queen of Jewry* on the periphery of Europe, or, more precisely, in present-day Israel, or, what Cary refers to as Palestine -- significantly, at the age-old, culturally rich crossroads of three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. Nevertheless, Cary deploys European discursive traditions of race and gender to construct her female protagonist, Mariam, and her female villain, Salome. The tragedy occupies a position that is simultaneously outside and inside constructs of "Europeanness." Geographically Palestine is located beyond the borders of Europe. Temporally, however, *Mariam* is set at the juncture of Judeo-Christian Biblical narratives. Epistemologically, Palestine is thereby central to Judeo-Christian experience.

Absent from the first half of the dramatic action, Herod, the male protagonist, traverses the Mediterranean from Rome to Palestine. His return home has an impact on not only Mariam, his spouse, but also all of the other characters in the play. Furthermore, although Antony and Cleopatra are not technically present in the *dramatis personae*, they play significant roles in *Mariam*. Cary repeatedly represents Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, in terms of her brown complexion -- one that is inferior to Mariam's white complexion. Cary also represents Antony, Roman triumvir ("triple pillar of the world" whose "legs bestrid the ocean," repeatedly crisscrossing the Mediterranean among Rome, Alexandria, and Athens in Shakespeare's configuration) in terms of his hypothetical preference for Mariam's fairness over Cleopatra's darkness.

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European discourses of race and gender traverse the Mediterranean to intersect in *Mariam*, structuring its dramatic action in significant ways. Integral to the *blazon* that early modern English poets and dramatists inherit from the Petrarchan discursive tradition are the conventionally encoded colors, white and red (i.e., the representation of female skin as lilies, snow, alabaster, or ivory and female lips as roses, cherries, or rubies). In accordance with these conventions, Cary represents the beauty of her female protagonist, Mariam, as fairness, as whiteness. Yet Cary transforms the clichéd use of the conventional white/red binary as a standard of female beauty by interpolating it into the conventional white/black binary that structures racist discourse. Historically, racist discourse is often associated with “the dark continent,” Africa. Both of these discourses of whiteness -- Petrarchan and racist -- establish moral distinctions, as well as racial and gendered distinctions. Even as racist discourse associates vice with blackness, so too does misogynistic discourse associate vice with femininity. *Mariam* represents both -- blackness and femininity -- in its construction of Salome.

Mariam's problematization of these issues resonates with that of *Othello*, another early modern English tragedy whose racial, gendered discourses, like its dramatic action, traverse the Mediterranean. Despite Mariam's whiteness, she ends up dead. Despite Salome's blackness, she ends up alive. The concluding dramatic action of *Mariam*, as of *Othello*, represents the protagonist as a martyr and the antagonist, disconcertingly, as a survivor.

Graham Keith Gregor, Universidad de Murcia

‘Spanish’ Shakespeare and the Naturalization of *Othello*

Adaptations, especially of work by authors who don't belong to the culture in which they're received, tend to relocate that work in contexts that are at least familiar to the audiences for which they're intended. This critical truism applies especially to theatre, where the text of the play is necessarily complemented by a visual representation of the ‘world’ invoked—a world which (so the argument goes) can only be properly recognized to the degree to which it conforms to the audiences' known, or imagined, spaces. In this paper I intend to test these and related assumptions by examining the case of Shakespeare in Spain. With its Mediterranean setting and recognizably ‘Latin’ sexual anxiety, a play like *Othello* would, to an outsider at least, seem to require very few adjustments to fit a Spanish mindset. The recent spike of ‘illegal’ migration from Africa has further energized meanings already latent in the text, so that where once it may have simply resonated with exotic echoes of Spain's own Moorish past it is now used explicitly to point up tensions in the nation's multiracial present. Yet these unsurprising associations are frequently accompanied by other, less familiar strategies of naturalization—strategies reflecting readings that seemingly are alien both to the fictive space elaborated by Shakespeare and to the audiences' horizon of expectations. Charting a few landmark examples of Spanish *Othello*-adaptation, from the 1828 parody *El Caliche* to the 2012 Catalan film version *Otel.lo*, I examine a number of these eccentricities, including a focus on the social and political, rather than merely racial, dimension of the tragedy and its re-presentation as self-reflective metatheatre. To what extent do these less familiar readings (de-)legitimize the idea of “Spanish” Shakespeare, of Shakespeare

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accommodated to Spanish expectations? Doesn't the notion of adaptation as a mode of production necessarily targeted to the receiver culture need revising? Are there other Mediterranean countries/cultures where such targeting has also ceased to apply? If so, why? What is really at stake here?

David C Moberly

**Shakespeare's *Anāshīd*, Abū Shādī,
and the First Translations of the Sonnets into Arabic**

With all of the significant scholarly work that has surfaced recently on translations of Shakespeare's dramas in the Arab World, Arabic translations of Shakespeare's poetry remain almost entirely unexplored. As the sonnets are currently experiencing a boost in popularity in the Arab world (with the recent publication out of Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates of four translations of the complete sonnets) now is the time to examine the circumstances in which they were first adapted in the language.

This paper examines the foundational work of Egyptian poet and translator Ahmed Zaki Abu Shadi (1892-1955), whose 1928 essay on "Shakespeare's Sonnets" was the first critical analysis of the poems in the Arabic language. In his essay, Abu Shadi argues for the creation of an "Arabic Shakespeare Sonnet," a new poetic form that "acclimatizes" Shakespearean sonnets to Arab poetic tradition. He also situates the sonnet form within a traditional Arab poetic genre: the *nasheed*, and points out parallels in subject matter between the sonnets and a variety of Arab poetic forms. In the process, he uses Shakespeare himself as his model of the ideal "translator" or "adaptor" in his ability to perfectly Anglicize Italian forms. Thus, Abu Shadi presents not only his "Arabic sonnets," but also himself as an adaptation of Shakespeare.

Jasmine Seymour, Queen Mary University of London

Armenian Translations of Shakespeare in Smyrna

The connection between the Mediterranean and Armenian translations of Shakespeare may appear incongruent, as the modern Republic of Armenia has no apparent connection with the Mediterranean coastline. Yet throughout its history, the Armenian nation was frequently driven from its historical homeland into exile searching for safer shores across the Mediterranean and Aegean, the Balkans, Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, Persia, India and beyond. The present paper is part of my ongoing research exploring the Shakespearean heritage in the Armenian language across various diasporas.

My paper focuses on the Armenian translations of Shakespeare on the Aegean coast and the contributions of translator, poet and editor Aram Teteyan from Smyrna, who introduced Shakespeare's plays in modern Armenian from 1850s. Before Aram Teteyan, the Shakespearean canon was translated solely into Classical Armenian – Grabar – by the Armenian editors in

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Calcutta and in Venice mainly for didactic and oratory instruction at Armenian schools and colleges. Smyrna – the second largest city in the Ottoman Empire – was a cosmopolitan and vibrant port and the Empire’s window to the West, where Greek, Jewish, Armenian, Frank and Muslim communities cohabited for several centuries (Hovannisian 2012). Despite this, the threat to minorities – primarily Christian Greeks and Armenians – was perpetual, particularly after the coronation of Abdul Hamid II in 1876. The brutality of the ultimate fall of Smyrna in 1922 marked the final page of the Genocide of the Armenians and the Great Catastrophe of the Greeks. In the 19th century, however, the Armenian Quarter of Smyrna was a prosperous economic, cultural and intellectual centre, the second largest after Constantinople. Armenians – derogatively termed *gavurs* (infidels) – were treated as second-class citizens, contributed to the development of the Empire nevertheless. The printing house of Teteyan brothers translated hundreds of European authors – only from original versions – reinforcing progressive Western ideologies among the Armenians for over forty years until early 1890s, the start of Sultan Hamid’s widespread massacres of the Armenian population living in the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile Teteyan’s lifelong mission to publish Shakespearean drama had continuous hindrances: the publication of his translation of *Hamlet* was banned and his theatre magazine called *Dimak* (‘The Masque’) was terminated in 1862. It was followed soon after by the closure of the Armenian professional theatre Vaspurakan in Smyrna in 1864, which was gaining “menacing” popularity among Armenians and non-Armenians across borders. The paper investigates Aram Teteyan’s pioneering translations of Shakespearean drama and examines his role in the cultural and intellectual advancement of his adoptive country as well as his own community. What lessons can we learn from the narrative and the destiny of the Armenian community of Smyrna to address today’s issues of migration across the Mediterranean and beyond?

Ameer Sohrawardy, Rutgers University, Newark

Shakespeare’s Ship-Specific Mediterranean

My paper will suggest re-thinking Mediterranean spaces in Shakespeare’s drama through a closer examination of the ships depicted in his plays. These ships and their intermingling crews adumbrated a Mediterranean under the logocentric sway of late sixteenth-century maps and atlases. However, the imaginative Mediterranean dramatized in Shakespeare’s plays did not always conform or correspond to the geographical accuracy, precision, and scale claimed by cartographers.

Shakespeare’s Mediterranean was defined as much by the imaginative paths that specific vessels and crews took in his plays as it was by fixed points on popular maps and sea charts. The travels of these vessels, each bearing unique identities, purported sites that deserved geographical prominence. Individual crew members would often be associated with these vessels, only to be displaced from them, onto other vessels. Shakespeare’s audiences were meant to wonder, for instance, ‘Was the *Tiger* that *Twelfth Night*’s Antonio boarded the same *Tiger* that was captained by the acquaintance of *Macbeth*’s First Witch?’ If it was and the vessel traveled from Candy to Aleppo, then what distinctions earned the *Tiger* mention in both *Twelfth Night*’s Illyria and

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Macbeth's Scotland? In other words, the juxtaposition of the Grecian city evoked for audience imagination against the Candy of Shakespeare's Antonio had the effect of evoking a different kind of Mediterranean than the one taking shape on two-dimensional maps and charts of the time.

By allowing that the vessels and crews which navigated maritime and shipboard spaces in Shakespeare's plays were not necessarily committed to the imaginative debts assumed by two-dimensional maps, we may envision Shakespeare's Mediterranean using a different spatial lexicon.

Geraldo Sousa, University of Kansas

**Home and Abroad:
Crossing the Mediterranean in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors***

In this paper, I propose to examine Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* from an oceanic perspective, and explore how the play juxtaposes and interrogates home and sea. Such an oceanic perspective requires not only critical reassessment but new approaches "for thinking about surfaces, depths and extra-terrestrial dimensions of planetary resources and relations" (Hester Blum). Shakespeare gives his Mediterranean Sea a contemporary feel and raises questions about the extent to which the sea erases boundaries and shapes or challenges our sense of identity. Syracuse and Ephesus, rival merchant city states, in the play retaliate against each other, and attempt to demarcate boundaries of influence and control. Egeus' family, separated and set adrift by shipwreck in the "wild wat'ry seas," becomes migrants and refugees in a hostile world. In its own way, the play it raises the matter of human stewardship of and impact on a maritime environment. In this contested space, Shakespeare interrogates the place of home and identity.

James M. Sutton, Florida International University, Miami

**Slovenia, Shakespeare and the Syrian Refugee:
Alpine versus Mediterranean, 2015-2016**

Slovenia, the smallest and most culturally homogenous of the new Balkan states to emerge from the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, has always been a land of passing through. The ancient Romans traversed these mountainous lands from west to east, south of the "Postojna Gate" and then through the mountain pass at modern-day Trojane, on their way to the Pannonian plains and points east. Emona (now Ljubljana, the capital) and Celiae (now Celje) were both Roman settlements. Many medieval crusaders, on their way to Jerusalem, followed this same path. Piran, the jewel of Slovenia's 46-mile Adriatic coast, was a 15th century Venetian outpost. The country yet bears cultural witness, everywhere, to the passage of the Austro-Hungarians, on their way from Vienna to their Adriatic port city, Trieste, or from Budapest to Italy. As the northwestern frontier of Yugoslavia, Slovenia served as gateway for the Slavs to "western" Europe. Most recently,

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throughout 2016, Syrian refugees traversed the country on their aspirational journeys to Germany, France, and other European nations.

If, following Shakespeare's lead in plays such as *Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Othello* and *The Tempest*, we imagine the conceptual Mediterranean as a fluid field—both oceanic and continental—of passage and encounter with the exotic “other,” then, as I will propose, Slovenia beckons as one such Mediterranean space. In this provisional essay, I will survey recent Slovene responses to Shakespeare to see how this construct of passage and migration might appear. Finally, I will assert that Vienna, and *Measure for Measure*, must necessarily provide closure to this particular version of a Mediterranean Shakespeare: city and play together end-stop whatever fluidities and (rites of) passage a Slovene Shakespeare might signal.