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Shakespeare & the Arab World. Edited by Katherine

Hennessey and Margaret Litvin. New York and Oxford:
Berghahn Books, 2019. 270 pp. ISBN 978-1-78920-258-8;
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The third volume of Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey's *Shakespeare &* series cautions against an understanding of Shakespeare in the Arab world that fixates on the turn of the millennia, when the world looked towards the Middle East with a curiosity unmatched since the colonial period. The 9/11 and 7/7 attacks, American invasion of Iraq, regime-changing pro-democracy uprisings of the early 2010s, and the Syrian civil war mounted global interest not only in politics, but also cultural productions across the Arab League. Fed by this global attention, the Arab world saw its first invitations for contributions at the world's leading Shakespeare academic and theater gatherings, and what came of the 2016 so-called Cultural Olympiad's World Shakespeare Festival. But editors Katherine Hennessey and Margaret Litvin, along with the contributors to *Shakespeare & the Arab World*, catalogue a rich and storied tradition of Shakespeare that extends before, through, and beyond the anglophone world's recognition and interest.

This volume presents a careful and extensive study of Arab Shakespeares and Shakespeare in Arabic ("Arab/ic Shakespeare," 4) across adaptations, critical approaches, and translation methodologies. The first section features five chapters on "Critical Approaches and Translation Strategies." Chapters include Margaret Litvin's useful model of literary appropriation (her "global kaleidoscope"), which accounts for multiple directions of influence to uncover otherwise hidden intertexts; Sameh F. Hanna's compelling analysis of the cultural shift in textual translation—from popular commercial appeal to exclusive "high art"—in twentieth century Egypt; Mohamed Enani's and Kamal Abu-Deeb's respective chapters on the difficulties of Arabic language verse translations, and the sonnet's roots in Arabic poetry; and Hazen Azmy's examination of the Egyptian nationalist project in three "snapshots" between the birth and death quadricentennial celebrations of 1964

and 2016. This section is especially rich for its lessons on identifying and accessing the numerous narratives and forms that populate the distance between Shakespeare's texts and adapters' works.

The second section, "Adaptation and Performance," gives voice and visibility to diverse artistic reproductions of the plays (in performance, television series, film, novel, mash-up, and interview), by a range of scholars (from early career and graduate students to veteran professors and independent scholars and artists) working in a host of languages (literary Arabic, Egyptian colloquial Arabic, Moroccan colloquial Arabic, English, French, and Swedish). Chapters include David C. Moberly's informative discussion of Egyptian colloquial Arabic in translation and performance as not only inclusive to but also instructional for the masses; Rafik Darragi's ambitious overview of three plays across three decades of performance, and their appointments as sites of secular aspiration, colonial caution, and unpopularity; Samer al-Saber's compelling analysis of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in performance and "outgrown" (153) colonial binaries in Palestine, evidenced by localizations in dialect, citizenship, folklore, and cultural struggles; Robert Lyons's investigation of the same play in performance in Egypt and Sweden following the US-led invasion of Iraq, and the production's allied resistance to it; Yousef Awad's fascinating reading of Shakespearean tragedy as analogue for the Lebanese civil war in Arab anglophone literature; a bracing narrative of the Doha Players' *Twelfth Night* in 2005 Qatar, in which authors Bryan Loughrey and Graham Holderness recount the suicide bombing that killed the play's director, then offer an eloquent meditation on how the play's narrative and theatrical history resonate with the Arab world; Katherine Hennessey's chapter on an adaptation of *Othello* fused with a classical Arab epic, its threads of resistance in production and in its digital afterlife; and Noha Ibraheem's discussion on the Upper Egyptian television series *Dahsha*, which she finds not only instructional, but also provocative of a particular emotional response. The volume concludes with Khalid Amine's illuminating interview with Moroccan playwright Naybl Lahlou, who discusses the colonial influences in his 1969 French play *Ophelia is Not Dead*, later translated into Arabic.

Where the volume is exceptional for its scope, several chapters, especially in the second section, come up short for the same. The contributions in this collection are not lengthy, and those that take on surveys and contextualizations of multiple plays across multiple decades undertake a task they don't see through entirely. Yet the volume maintains its remarkable value: it demonstrates that cultural and regional studies of Shakespeare are not peripheral to Shakespearean Studies. Rather, just as the series promises on its cover, it steers toward examinations of how "culture also permeates Shakespeare"; this volume locates Arab/ic Shakespeare beyond the Arab world itself, and considers how its traditions and contributions shape our understandings of the man and his works.

References

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