Seminar

Of Seas and Oceans, of Storms and Wreckage, of Water Battles and Love in Shakespeare's Plays

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The various contexts in which Shakespeare's plays are set cross borders. Some places are easily spotted on maps, some others are imaginary and insubstantial. As we read the plays, our minds travel; as we attend the performances, our eyes explore materialized areas thanks to either elaborate or suggestive scenographies. Shakespearean characters are often attracted by the outside, either to conquer new territories or to flee from their own. Whether in tragedies, histories, romances or comedies, they contribute to shape new horizons, beyond the stage copes and the sixteenth-century's audience's imaginary borders.

In this seminar, we would delightfully welcome proposals on the way these sea routes and tormented travels are tackled, from the textual and metaphorical approach but also from the performative angle. How did Shakespeare describe the places that neither he nor his audience knew? How did different practitioners position themselves with respect to the showing vs. telling dichotomy or to the relationship between the verbal and the non-verbal component of theatre performance? The papers may focus on the impact of seas and oceans in Shakespeare's plays: how for instance water battles (against the enemy or against nature) are dealt with, on page and on stage; how female compared to male characters react when they are the victims of a shipwreck and, as a consequence, when they are lost and exiled; how the sea routes are key elements in the praxis; how they were possibly performed in Shakespeare's time and after; how they inform us about the European geography Shakespeare and his contemporaries had in mind; how today new technologies in stage scenery can produce images and convey the illusion that the performance travels indeed, and finally how these stage devices address cultural and political issues of the performance.

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