

# **OTHELLO**

**William Shakespeare**

**De Vos / Vigner**

**REPÈRES  
HISTORIQUES**

**Du XIIV ème  
au XV ème siècle**

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| 13 <sup>e</sup> siècle | la France – commerce du champagne – architecture gothique  |
|                        | Gènes crée des routes de commerce naval entre la Méditerranée et la mer du nord<br>liens maritimes du Cape Finisterre à la bouche du Canal sans passer par un port français  |
| 1317                   | Venise prend les mêmes routes de commerce vers le nord, Bruges et les ports anglais<br>marchandise complémentaire<br>la laine de Netherlands et les produits du Middle and far East<br>pepper, spices, sugar, perfumes, silks,,...<br>ils accostent à Aigues-Mortes, Barcelona, Valencia, Séville, Lisbon  |
|                        | routes de commerce par la terre<br>Brenner, St. Gotthard, Cologne, Nuremberg, Basle, Augsburg, les villes 'libres', Flandres, Angleterre<br>extraction d'argent  |
| from 1328              | italian painters began to find work in french artists' studios, but only as subordinates, let alone a new vision of the world, that day had not come yet   |
| 1346                   | first time references to « Flanders » galleys<br>wool from the Netherlands<br>lead and tin from England  |
| 1385                   | Venise prend Corfou<br>Base de contrôle de l'entrée Adriatique<br>Venise émerge au XIVE siècle   |
|                        | les Flamands –van Eyck - développent la peinture à l'huile<br>Italie – la perspective linéaire<br>Allemagne – l'impression sur papier – la poudre -<br>Swiss – infanterie<br>Espagne – infanterie – régiment tercio<br>alles Seefahrtsrouten sind aktiv :<br>Romanian galleys – La Tana, Trebiszond<br>Syrian and Alexandrian Galleys<br>Aigues-Mortes galleys<br>convoys of 3-5 ships were interlinked<br>1436 Barbary galleys qui vont 1442 jusqu'à l'égypte<br>goods brought by one would be picked up by another<br>a round trip took about 6 months |
| 1447                   | le genèse Malfante avance par les terres vers Tuat pour de l'or  |
|                        | les Portugais descendait la côte de l'Afrique<br>par la mer, vers le golfe de guinée   |
| 9 avril 1454           | agreement of Lodi<br>peace for forty years, until 1494, while the rest of europe rang with the clash of arms (war of the roses 1467-1485, civil war between Louis XI of France and Charles the bold 1467-1477, domestic conflicts of the iberian peninsula, Castile against first Portugal then Granada)   |
| 1454                   | Signoria en paix avec le Sultan<br>Colonies marchande en Afrique du nord<br>Tripoli, Tunis, Bougie, Algiers, Oran...<br>die Signoria in Venedig hat grosse Handelsschiffe<br>esclavage<br>dattes, cire, blé, plumes d'autruche... de l'or  |

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| 1463-1479 | <p>Venice seul - première guerre contre les turques<br/> fighting the mighty turkish empire<br/> yet obliged to do business with it<br/> Venice could not live without the turks, nor the turks without Venice, since it was through this city that the Ottoman empire acquired from the west the artillery and naval designs, the skilled workers and the silver it needed to survive<br/> complementary enemies</p> |
| 1466      | <p>The Geneva branch of Medici moves to Lyon<br/> Florentine commercial society<br/> « There are sparrows and Florentines all over the World »<br/> Florence world leader in enterprise</p>   |
| 1485-1576 | Titian  |
| 1494-1559 | <p>italian wars imposed by others<br/> french, spanish, german, swiss immigrants<br/> foreign presence<br/> fragmentation<br/> political weakness of Italy<br/> the italian wars didn't seriously disturb the economic health of the peninsula</p>  |
| 1509-1511 | <p>avance espagnole de Pedro Navarro<br/> Louis XII has his own agent in Genoa to handle purchases, to commission art works, have goods shipped to France<br/> the reformation splits europe in two halves</p>  |
| 1511      | Brescia pris par les Français   |
| 1515      | <p>François I succeeded Louis XII<br/> in Paris gothic monuments up to now</p>  |
| 1516-1517 | les turcs prennent Syrie et Egypte (before being ruled by the Mamelukes and the Sudan, accommodating towards the west)  |
| 1518      | les turcs prennent Algiers  |
| 1520      | <p>death of Raphael<br/> renaissance art begins to appear outside Italy success but not yet on a massive scale<br/> Louis XII has his own agent in Genoa to handle purchases, to commission art works, have goods shipped to France<br/> the reformation splits europe in two halves</p>  |
| 1525      | peasant revolt in Tyrol   |
| 1526-1541 | <p>Turkish conquest of Hungary<br/> (Ottoman fleet frequently took shelter in the French Mediterranean ports Marseille and Toulon)</p>  |
| 1527      | sack of Rome by the assorted troops of Conétable de Bourbon   |
| 1528-1533 | buildings of a new renaissance taste in Paris   |
| 1528      | Pavia captured by the French  |
| 1529      | Paix des Dames première fin du conflit entre les Vallois et les Habsburg  |
| 1529-1539 | Italian economy held up during the depression   |
| 1530      | <p>'serious music' recovered its status in Italy until then overshadowed by French, English, Flemish musicians<br/> foreigners revealed to Italians their own popular music</p>   |
| 1531-1590 | Agostino Ramelli, Après une solide formation mathématique, il apprit son métier d'ingénieur militaire pendant les guerres d'Italie. Sa date d'arrivée en  |

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|                 | France reste incertaine. Il prit une part active au siège de la Rochelle en 1572-1573. C'est à cette époque qu'il gagna la faveur du duc d'Anjou, futur Henri III de France, qu'il servit fidèlement pendant tout son règne.  |
| 1532            | Genoa to the Spanish  |
| -1534           | English ships sailed to Cyprus until 1534   |
| 1538            | Prince Andrea Doria in command of the galleys of the Holy League – Spain, the Papacy, Venice and the Italian allies of Charles V – abandoned the field of battle of Prevesa near the Gulf of Arta, to Barbarossa, without giving fight. The non-battle was not a non-defeat, rather it delivered the Mediterranean into the hands of the combined fleets of the Sultan and the Barbary corsairs.  |
| 1540-1617       | thinker Giovanni Botero   |
| ungef 1545-1650 | <p>invention of theater in Italy<br/> (musical and spectacular interludes were put on between the acts of tragedy)</p> <p>the Italian Cardinal Mazarin – Palais Cardinal – (Palais Royale/Richelieus former residency) semi-circular theater, the other theaters were rectangular spectators standing</p> <p>Commedia dell' arte</p> <p>closely related to the classic comedy of the humanists</p> <p>outside Italy from about 1570 on</p> <p>goes back to the fabulae atellanae which combined dialogue, dance and music/masks</p> <p>Machiavelli (early plays 1520 'Mandragola', 'The prince')</p> <p>creation of companies of 'full-time' professional actors</p> <p>moved from town to town</p> <p>allowed to improvise, only outline scenario</p> <p>typical stock of character, 10-15, their names, even their costumes remained unchanged, as in series,</p> <p>apart from the lovers the actors were masked</p> <p>(Magnifico, Pantalone – miserly rich Venetian merchant, the father of beautiful but of course disobedient daughters)</p> <p>Zanni, servant</p> <p>master-servant relationship</p> <p>apotheosis of Zanni is Arlecchino (the quick-witted Bergamask, manservant, capable of weaving and unraveling an intrigue, yet not less greedy, dishonest and prevaricating than the others, original all-white costume – Pedrolino – Pierrot- French Polichinelle emerged under Henri IV)</p> <p>Dottore, Bologna, hopeless or shameless, spoke latin</p> <p>Capitano, Spavento, devoted to all sweethearts, delicious coward, often Neapolitan or Spaniard, sometimes German (innkeeper or drunkard) stereotypes</p> <p>would-be suitors: Oratio and Flavio</p> <p>the ladies: Isabella, Flaminia, Colombina... indispensable bawd, the prostitute and the usurer</p> <p>and the company was complete</p> <p>The characters were all well known</p> <p>commedia dell' arte older than baroque</p> <p>it had to draw the public into the illusion</p> |

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|           | <p>prefabricated characters were brought to life by a plot full of incident contrasts, illuminated only by lanterns or left pitch dark.</p> <p>violent quarrels – slapsticks – slowmotion love scenes, lover in the street, the lady at the window of the house</p> <p>amore corrisposto – requited love</p> <p>amore disperato – scenes – or contra Fortuna (love in despair)</p> <p>wearing of masks obliged the actor to translate everything into the language of gesture (Baroque being governed by gesture), to express with the body</p> <p>commedia dell' arte lay above all in movement, foot work, fast action</p> <p>Turlupin, Matamore, Harlequin, Pierrot, Scapin</p> <p>obeying a certain code</p> <p>the lovers where not allowed to raise their hands higher than their eyes</p> <p>little need of logic in the plot</p> <p>pointless brawls, stage-managed illusions, unreal bodies, theatrical gestures, mock sword-fights, exaggerated emotion, strings of misunderstandings</p> <p>mask unlike antiquity (persona), hid the actor behind a screen</p> <p>actors recruited from the middle class, modest intellectuals, educated.</p> <p>pulcinella- eternal back-street beggar of Naples, wretched and scorned, so hungry that he could be bought by anyone for a plate of macaroni</p> <p>function of commedia dell' arte was to provide a clearer identity for the artificial, entire man-made world of the modern theatre, the demonstration of what a theatrical language and a theatrical world could be.</p> <p>Leading to Sheakespeare, Molière, Marivaux...</p> <p>Commedia erudite</p> <p>parts learned in advance and recited, repertoire</p> <p>was the first to be exported, Lyon for instance</p> <p>reactions:</p> <p>appeal of earthy language</p> <p>perspective</p> <p>sets</p> <p>burlesque interludes between the scenes variety turns</p> |
| 1548      | <p>triumphal entry of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici</p> <p>'Florentine nation', Lucchese, Milanese merchants</p> <p>in the garden of Cardinal of Ferrara 'Calandro' was performed by the Compagnia della Cazzuola</p> <p>Spectacular Intermezzi were put on between the acts</p> <p>Plautus was the great model for the classical comedy</p> <p>Louvre – Hotel de Bourgogne</p> <p>the monarchy lent the players halls usually reserved for official ceremonies</p> <p>commedia dell' arte borrowed the theme of identical doubles, slipped from the learned part to the improvised, from the classical to he non-classical</p>   |
| 1550-1570 | <p>as long as shipping in the Mediterranean was busy good sign for Italy's economy</p>  |
| 1551      | <p>les turcs prennent Tripoli</p>   |
| 1552      | <p>Venetian merchants set up a shop in Cairo</p> <p>trade with the far East</p> <p>pepper, silver, spices, cloths</p> <p>to Venetians business was business</p> <p>they were bound to the Turkish Empire by necessity</p>   |

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| 1555         | Germany Peace of Augsburg   |
| 3 avril 1559 | peace treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis  |
| 1559-1575    | problematic economically for Italy  |
| 1562-1598    | wars of religion in France  |
| 1561-1629    | Francis Bacon, he recommended experiment and observation before any attempt at logical interpretation, apprehending the concrete in order to apply correct theories   |
| 1564-1642    | Galileo Galilei, anticipated the future, principle of relativity, he understood and analysed, if not perfectly formulated yet, the principle of inertia, came close to discover the universal gravitation, spatial and temporal properties of motion, world as a moving body, 1623: "Nature is written in mathematical language", he precedes Descartes and Newton, The discovery of a single infinite geometrical universe, including both heaven and earth, patent of bringing water uphill (1593), thermoscope (1606) – forerunner of thermometer, study of motion of projectiles (1609), study of tides (1614), adviser to the Grand Duke in Florence |
| 1567         | Balthasar, musical director and valet to the Queen Mother, violinist, emigrated from Milan and Piedmont<br>" I have enlivened the ballet and made it speak, and have made the comedy sing and resound; by adding to it several rich and rare ornaments, I may say I have pleased, in a well-proportional body, the eye, the ear and the understanding."<br>French court ballet was studied in the Florentine 'camerate', circle around the poet Jacopo Corsi, composer Emilio Cavaleri, singer Jacopo Peri<br>Crucial experiments on the pastorale would lead to opera  |
| 1567-1643    | Claudio Monteverdi  |
| 1568-        | Spanish problems<br>English privateers disrupted the direct route to the North Sea- Antwerp<br>Antwerp, Lyon, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Vienna, Danzig<br>first performances of the commedia dell' arte in Munich (for the marriage of Duke William V of Bavaria, at the Castle of Trausnitz)   |
| 1571         | bloody victory of Lepanto, shattered the Turkish fleet, but it rose from its ashes and was back in action the following year, modernized, holding in check the victorious navies of the Second Holy League<br>first performance of commedia dell' arte in France<br>hotel of the Duc de Nevers (half Italian) than at Nogent-le-Roi near Chartres before the King by the Gelosi players   |
| 1571         | birth of Caravaggio   |
| 1571-1630    | Johannes Kepler, astronome, célèbre pour avoir étudié et confirmé l'hypothèse héliocentrique (la Terre tourne autour du Soleil), theory of the tides  |
| 1572         | le paradis de l'amour<br>for the wedding of Henri of Navarre and Marguerite de Valois 4 days before the<br>St. Bartholomew's Day massacre   |
| 1573         | English, Dutch, Hanseatic and even Breton vessels<br>the northerners took over<br>Algiers was a waystation for the English and Dutch who went on to Istanbul<br>Tasso's 'Aminta'  |

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| 1574        | <p>les turcs prennent Tunis and La Goletta</p> <p>Second Holy League fell apart because of basic disagreement between Venice and Spain</p> <p>Venice came to terms once more with the Turks in 1573</p> <p>first performances of commedia dell' arte in Spain</p>   |
| 1575-1595   | <p>upturn in the economic climate</p> <p>each one fighting 'at home'</p> <p>the Turks fight against the Persians</p> <p>Christians against Christians</p> <p>the warships left in the Mediterranean:</p> <p>Barbary corsairs</p> <p>Malta, Sicilian galleys</p> <p>clandestine privateers of Naples</p> <p>Knights of St. Stephen in Pisa</p> <p>time of the 'cops and robbers'</p> <p>Tunis was the Shanghai of the time</p>   |
| 1577        | <p>Spain came to terms with the Turks</p> <p>Turkish economy was dependent on the European</p>  |
| 1578        | <p>first performances of commedia dell' arte in Spain</p>   |
| 1581        | <p>ballet comique de la reine (known as Circe) for Louis de Lorraine, wife of Henri III</p> <p>the novelty of 'Circe' was a plot, dialogue and song, central theme if it would have been sung, it would have been a forerunner of opera</p>   |
| ungef. 1585 | <p>4000 Venetian families scattered throughout the cities and lands of Islam</p> <p>influence Indian Ocean</p> <p>Istanbul</p> <p>Tripoli in Barbary</p> <p>Livorno</p>   |
| 1590-1600   | <p>Cavalieri and Peri in Florence</p> <p>Guarini in Mantua</p> <p>singing containing inflections appropriate to the text</p> <p>since 1590 Claudio Monteverdi in the service of Duke of Mantua</p>  |
| 1592-1656   | Honthorst   |
| 1593-1652   | Georges de la Tour  |
| 1595        | Spanish bankruptcy  |
| 1596        | Dutch Captain Cornelius Hontman rounded the cape of Good Hope   |
| 1598        | <p>France: Edict of Nantes</p> <p>religious conflict again under Louis XIII</p>   |
| 1596-1650   | René Descartes  |
| 1598-1662   | architect Balassare Longhena, en 1631, il commence la construction de l'église de la Salute à Venise.   |
| 1600        | <p>Tristano Martinelli played Harlequin à Lyon in front of the king of France on the marriage occasion to Marie de Medici</p> <p>Jacopo Peri's 'Euridice' in Pitti Palace marriage Henri IV/Marie de Medici regarded as the first opera</p> <p>rappresentativo (representative of the words, which the music should underline, being content simply to transcribe the inflections and emotions of speech)</p> <p>this was seconda pratica (the modern style) opposed to the stile antico (the old counter-point, polyphonic style in which the meaning of the words was</p> |

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|                   | <p>not so important as the whole)<br/>         Claudio Monteverdi came to see 'Euridice', he found it rather monotonous, he was thirty years old and had already a musical career, published three books on madrigals, the freest form to improve the expression. He tried out everything, composer of genius, he was attacked by Giovanni Maria Artus in a pamphlet: "those new-style composers who day and night belabour their instruments to find new effects... making modern music disagreeable to the ear. One hears a cacophony of sounds, a jumble of voices and a grumbling of harmonies intolerable to the senses... Everything is singing, how can the mind recognize where it is in this whirlwind of expressions?"<br/>         Monteverdi would reply (several years later) that 'concerning consonance and dissonance' all he was interested in was 'the satisfaction provided for the sense of hearing as well as for the reason; his only aim, he added was to 'produce emotion'<br/>         at the time there was the 'camerata' in Florence<br/>         Giordano Bruno was burned Campo de Fiori</p>   |
|                   | <p>Early Baroque, more often art governed life than the other way round<br/>         Philip II launched a fashion in men's clothing, severe black tightly fitting doublet with a high collar<br/>         portraits by Titian, Bronzino, Barocci,<br/>         Baroque suggests a series of storms rather than a sheet of untroubled water.<br/>         Rubens, Michelangelo, Raphael, Correggio<br/>         Veronese (1528-1588), Tintoretto, Caracci, Caravaggio<br/>         Yves Bonnefoy: Baroque was born out of a wound<br/>         life viewed through this magic lantern</p>   |
| <p>ungef 1600</p> | <p>breakthrough of music with the opera<br/>         musical 'renaissance' (parallel to a scientific renaissance)<br/>         need of something new was felt everywhere<br/>         tonal scale of Giuseppe Zarlino (1517-1580)<br/>         experiments in chromaticism of Niccolò Vicentino (1511-1572)<br/>         Cipriano de Rore (1516-1565)<br/>         basso continuo destroys traditional polyphony<br/>         complicated musical development:<br/>         fitting dances to music<br/>         setting words of poems to music<br/>         combining different instruments<br/>         composing for a fashionable stage performance<br/>         fragile and competing forms:<br/>         ballet, pastoral, madrigal, cantata, oratorio, opera<br/>         the ballet and the pastoral led to the opera, while the Madrigal (absorbed into opera during Monteverdi's lifetime) was a fertile testing ground for musical renewal<br/>         Ballet came to France in the time of les Valois by Italian dancing-masters. (ballet=diminutive of bal)=dance in which the dancers were free to improvise their steps – opposed to dances with fixed forms<br/>         bal, danse, entrées, entremets (intermezzi), carousel<br/>         ballet de cour then exported from France<br/>         inspired the architect Inigo Jones and the poet Ben Jonson<br/>         the ballet was transformed in France, ballet alla Francesca;</p> |

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|           | expensive to put on, costly performances, not yet a fixed form, were not repeated, didn't resemble each other  |
| 1600      | Venice despite of the decline of its own merchant navy- is the busiest port in the Mediterranean, home of exemplary and original artisana of the baroque, practical knowledge of the artisan would only very slowly combine with the abstract thought of scholars or 'logicians'<br>others fought, Italy worked<br>entre autre: wollen cloth production in Venice.<br>Levant trade<br>great depots Damascus, Aleppo, Cairo<br>aggressive Catholicisme – defence mechanisme to the Reformation<br>Paolo Scarpi defending Venice against the interdict of Paul V, enormous controversy till 1605 between state and papal theocracy   |
| 1600-1682 | Claude Gellée (Le Lorrain) pursuer after light   |
| 1602-1674 | Philippe de Champaigne   |
| 1603      | James I acceded to the English throne  |
| 1607      | Spanish bankruptcy<br>Carnival performance of Monteverdi's 'Orfeo' in Mantua<br>considered as the first 'real' opera<br>Monteverdi was too much of a musician to sacrifice music to poetry.<br>the rich orchestra was not simply used to accompany the singers, but had its own dramatic functions with a particular instrumental sound for each of the characters 'leitmotif'<br>All the forms and possibilities of the future are already there, all it lacked was its true name, opera; Monteverdi's opera was still 'favola'<br>three centers in Italy: Florence until 1627, Rome till about 1660, and finally Venice – eventually capital of opera – but without monopolizing it. |
| 1608      | Rubens arrived in Genoa  |
| 1609-1681 | Montecuccoli, one of the greatest soldiers   |
| 1610      | death of Caravaggio<br>'tenebrosi'<br>Honthorst school   |
| 1618      | religious passions un leashed in Germany<br>Thirty years war<br>Italy derived substantial advantages from its religious unity and fidelity to Rome., said no to the Reformation (emerging north of the Alpes)  |
| 1627      | Spanish bankruptcy   |
| 1629      | plague   |
| 1632-1687 | Giambattista Lulli<br>Jean-Baptiste Lully, the Italian who wanted to be French<br>Duc de Guise brought him 1943 as a child to France to converse with Mademoiselle de Montpensier in Italian.<br>He completed his musical education and transferred to the King's service in 1652, 1661 Lully completely transformed himself from an Italian musician into an all-French musician, remained musical director until his death   |
| 1633      | condamnation de Galileo Galilei, Galileo's telescope, the idea of sunspots was like a sacrilege, Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631), good Aristotelian, refused to even look through the diabolic spyglass;  |
| 1637      | first opera house, the Cassiano theater in Venice (owned by the Tron family)   |

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|           | second opera house Santi Giovanni e Paolo<br>third opera house San Moisé<br>fourth Nuovissimo  |
| 1638      | birth of Louis XIV   |
| 1640      | Venetian republic embarked on the 30 years wars to recover Candia (1640-1669) with ships from northern Europe and troops recruited in Scotland<br>Venice nevertheless city of luxury<br>dazzled foreigners before music was paid for by the Signoria or some rich patrician, now the public had to pay<br>Pier Francesco Cavalli (was one of Monteverdi's pupils) willingly provided exaggerated effects.<br>Italy flooded Europe with music, even faraway England<br>not longer an art, but an industry |
| 1641      | Monteverdi's 'Il Ritorno d'Ulisse'   |
| 1642      | Monteverdi's 'L'Incoronazione di Poppea'   |
| 1642      | death of Galileo   |
| 1643      | death of Monteverdi  |
| 1643-1727 | Isaac Newton   |
| 1647      | Spanish bankruptcy<br>first opera in France another 'Orfeo' (libretto by Buti, music by Luigi Rossi)<br>thanks to Mazarin<br>France became "Italianized" on the death of Louis XIII and de-italianized after the death of Mazarin in 1661  |
| 1671      | Dresden – Carlo Pallavicino, Giovanni Andrea Bontempi<br>Bontempi's 'Dafu' was first performed with a german libretto and interludes in form of Lieder<br>attempt to give a national form to a foreign genre   |
| 1673      | 'Cadmus and Hermione' Lully success, Lully got the Palais Royal Theater until then occupied by Molière   |
| 1674      | death of Molière<br>'Alceste' Lully (librettist Quinault, designer Vigarani)<br>Lully produces a new piece very year<br>Germany is just recovering from the 30 years war<br>first opera houses in Vienna and Munich<br>musical style and language: italian   |
| 1675      | commichi italiani came from France to London to play Scaramouche in front of Charles II and his court  |
| 1678      | Hamburg opera house<br>'German baroque opera'<br>german composers trained in the Italian manner<br>Händels 'Almira' (he turned his back on German opera to join the Italian camps)   |