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Front Matter

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**Selected Papers of the
Ohio Valley Shakespeare
Conference**

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Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference

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“Negotiating Shakespeare: History, Culture, and Context”

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From the Editor

The thirty-ninth annual meeting of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference was held at Bowling Green State University on October eighth through the tenth, 2015. Our conference theme was “Negotiating Shakespeare: History, Culture, and Context,” and our contributors responded with a bounty of essays representing diverse perspectives and methodologies. Professor Ian Smith of Lafayette College underscored our conference theme in his plenary address, “We Are Othello,” which underscored the challenges of negotiating diversity in early modern studies.

Our first contribution to volume eight of our journal comes to us courtesy of Megan Burnett, an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Bellarmine University. Her essay, entitled “A Case for Using the First Folio as Directing and Acting Text,” advocates for the use of the Folio in negotiating both direction and performance, arguing that “[a]ctors taught to look for and use the clues in a First Folio text are empowered to make fresh and exciting choices for their characters, mentally, vocally, and physically.”

A somewhat different understanding of Shakespearean negotiation arises in Dr. Uwe Klawitter’s “Skin as an Index to Moral Character in English Renaissance Tragedy.” Dr. Klawitter, a professor of English at Ruhr Universität, negotiates early modern humoral theory in order to argue that, since “skin was regarded as a readable index to a person’s inner self,” we might productively read references to skin in order to better understand character in early modern tragedy.

Mitch Ploskonka, a graduate student at Michigan State University, examines the negotiation of rhetoric in his essay entitled “Band of Bastards: Rhetorical Parallels and National Memory in Shakespeare’s St. Crispin’s Day Speech, Patton’s Speech to the Third Army, and Olivier’s *Henry V*.” Ploskonka argues that “Olivier and Patton manipulate Shakespeare’s text to fit the national and contextual sensibilities of World War II,” and demonstrates this through a sustained analysis of those texts.

Our final offering represents a negotiation of global cultures from Matthew Thome, a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. Thome’s essay, “*The Merchant of Venice*: Tsubouchi’s Shylock and Early

Modern Japanese Dichotomy,” unpacks the various ways in which the scholar Tsubouchi Shoyo, “used Shakespeare to represent an early modern Japanese cultural dichotomy between Westernization and maintaining a uniquely Japanese national identity.”

Each of these essays offer an insight into the various ways in which scholars, performers, and audiences negotiate with Shakespeare, and with early modern culture more broadly. Our contributors have helped to make this journal successful, but they are not alone in their efforts. I would be remiss not to acknowledge the hard work of countless people who make our conference possible, including (although not limited to): the advisory board and planning committee of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference; the editorial board of *The Selected Papers of the Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference*, Assistant Editor Dr. Emily Isaacson of Heidelberg University, and my colleague Dr. Hillary Nunn of the University of Akron, who provided untold assistance in assembling this volume. All of these people have volunteered their time to facilitate the volume you now read. Any errors which remain are, as always, my own.