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Henry V in France

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Henry V in France



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Definition

Henry V is a difficult play to translate and stage in France, both because of its theme and of its multilingualism. The play is known for its nationalistic take on a painful event of French history, namely, the defeat of the French army at the battle of Agincourt. It also features multiple bilingual scenes where English and French meet, making it difficult to render in a monolingual French setting: In translation, originally bilingual dialogues run the risk of becoming obscure for a French audience faced with characters unable to communicate despite their common tongue. This double issue has led to a complex reception history on the other side of the Channel, where stage performances are rare and translations are sparse. This entry offers an overview of this phenomenon, addressing the double question of how the multilingualism of the play has been rendered in written translations, and how it has been adapted on French

stages, including how foreign, non-French productions touring to France have participated in the dialogue of reception.

Introduction: A Gallophobic Play?

The relationship between *Henry V* and France is complicated. This “most polyglot” of Shakespeare’s plays (Lacroix 2020, 81), in which French acts as a prominent second language (including a scene almost entirely in French in which princess Catherine enlists the help of her lady-in-waiting to teach her some English, 3.4), also stages the humiliating defeat of the French army at the battle of Agincourt (1415), and the subsequent conquest of France by the English. The stereotypical, ridiculed representation of conceited Frenchmen, so overconfident in their abilities that they “play at dice” the “low-rated English” (4, Prologue) ahead of battle, adds to the impression that the play is inherently Francophobic, boasting English glory to the detriment of the opposite camp.

One can thus easily imagine that importing the play in France would be a challenge. Mediating or translating it for a French audience would be even more arduous: The issue of apparent ideological Francophobia adds to the difficulty of translating “Shakespeare’s French” into French, itself complicated by the fact that the French of the source text has acquired “an archaic flavor” and shows various degrees of ungrammaticality (Delabastita 2002, 305; Crunelle-Vanrigh 2013, 73–74). This

double challenge perhaps explains the fairly scarce reception history of *Henry V* in France: Though written translations of the play have been published since the late eighteenth century, the play was only once performed in French (1999, dir. Jean-Louis Benoit). After an overview of the history of translation of *Henry V*, the entry focuses on the performance history of the play in France and ends with a brief excursion into francophone performances in neighboring French-speaking countries.

Translating *Henry V* in French

Before Pierre Le Tourneur offered the first full translation of *Henry V* in 1781, the play had been introduced in Pierre-Antoine de la Place's *Théâtre Anglois* (1746). Although de la Place did not translate the play—at least not in the sense of rendering the words of the play in his target language French—he offered a description of its content, where he highlighted the play's nationalism to the detriment of France along with its multilingual nature:

Shakespeare s'est plû, dans cette Pièce, à faire un tableau flatteur pour sa Nation des exploits de Henry, Vainqueur des François à la bataille d'Azincourt, & des malheurs de la France. On juge bien que tout y doit être outré; & que, pour faire sa cour à la populace Angloise, l'Auteur a crû ne pouvoir mieux décorer son Héros, qu'en exagérant autant la gloire du Vainqueur que la disgrâce des Vaincus. (La Place 1746, 3:378)

On y voit Catherine de France essayant d'apprendre l'Anglois, d'une de ses femmes. Cette Scene est en François de ce tems, & contient des choses plus que gaillardes, ainsi que celle de sa première entrevuë avec Henry son futur époux. (La Place 1746, 3:379)

(Shakespeare has taken pleasure, in this play, in painting a picture [that is] flattering to his Nation of the feats of Henry, victorious against the French at the battle of Agincourt, & of the misfortunes of France. One can imagine that everything in it must be exaggerated; & that, to woo the English populace, the Author thought there was no better way to honor his hero, than by exaggerating both the glory of the Victor and the disgrace of the Defeated.

It shows Catherine of France trying to learn English from one of her ladies. This Scene is in French of the time, & contains more than a little

ribaldry, as does the scene of her first glimpse of Henry, her future husband.)

Apart from the ideological load, the lack of correspondence of *Henry V* to French standards of tastes, including its use of bawdy humor (especially in the mouth of noble characters like the French princess Catherine), doubtlessly contributed to the translator-adapter's decision to offer a summary of the play, rather than a word-for-word translation. The same perceived lack of taste would later lead Le Tourneur to attempt to elevate Shakespeare's language, translating, for example, Pistol's insult to French soldier Le Fer in Act 4 ("thou damnèd and luxurious mountain goat," 4.4.17–18) as the nobler "impudent Satyre" (Le Tourneur 1781, 11:362), and to relegate Catherine's English lesson to the appendix of his work under the reasoning that this passage, "unworthy of [Shakespeare's] writing" ("indignes de sa plume," Le Tourneur 1776, 1:cxxix), could not have been written by the English playwright.

In the nineteenth century, five complete translations of *Henry V* were published (excluding reeditions). The first two were revisions of Le Tourneur's successful version, respectively, by François Guizot and Amédée Pichot (1821) and by Francisque Michel (1840–1841). Three further complete translations saw the light of day in the course of the century: Benjamin Laroche (1839–1842), François-Victor Hugo (1859–1866), and Émile Montégut (1867–1873). These translations were all published in *Œuvres complètes*, i.e., volumes aimed at translating the Shakespearean canon exhaustively. The central theme of monarchy in Shakespeare's histories, in the post-French revolution period, may not have contributed to increasing the play's popularity in the nineteenth century, nor did the treatment of French characters, whom Amédée Pichot described as "comedic braggers" ("de vrais gascons de comédie," Guizot and Pichot 1821, 11:3). This may explain the absence of stand-alone translations of the play in the course of the century despite a boom in French translations of the Shakespearean canon at the time.

Shakespeare's often "unpoetic" language, on the other hand, became more acceptable as such in the course of the nineteenth century. In a 1862

re-edition of Guizot and Pichot's translation, "impudent Satyre" was replaced with the more literal "maudit bouc des montagnes" (Guizot 1862, 7:200). This increased acceptability did not, however, render the task of translating "Shakespeare's French" into French easier. Most translators simply chose to keep the French of the source text close to the original, with various degrees of editorial efforts to modernize and standardize the archaic and, at times, less than idiomatic language of Shakespeare. In the single case of Benjamin Laroche, this editorial work was undertaken to such an extent that Shakespeare's original French became virtually indistinguishable from the translated French of English characters. These standardization efforts create a level of absurdity and artificiality in scenes where both languages meet and are translated by interpreter figures in the source text:

Catherine. O bon dieu ! le langage des hommes est plein de tromperies.

Le roi Henri, à Alice. Que dit-elle, belle demoiselle ? que le langage des hommes est plein de tromperies ?

Alice. Oui, c'est ce que dit la princesse. (Laroche 1842, 2:200)

Kath. O bon Dieu, les langues des hommes sont plein de tromperies.

King. What sayes she, faire one? that the tongues of men are full of deceits?

Alice. Ouy, dat de tongeus of de mans is be full of deceits: dat is de Princesse. (Folio 1, 3105–3110)

In all the other translations of the nineteenth century, standardization stopped short of erasing the archaisms or Anglicisms of the source text. Toward the end of her English lesson, Catherine protests the sounds of the English words "foot" (resembling French "foutre," i.e., fuck) and "gown" (mispronounced as "count," resembling French "con," i.e., cunt):

Kath. Le Foot, & le Count : O Seigneur Dieu, il sont le mots de son mauvais corruptible grosse & impudique, & non pour le Dames de Honneur d'vser : le ne voudray prononcer ce mots deuant le Seigneurs de France, pour toute le monde (Folio 1, 1368–1371)

Although French translations corrected the obvious grammatical confusion between singular and plural articles ("le" and "les"), they did not alter

what can only be understood as an incorrect word-for-word translation of the English "those are words... not for honorable ladies to use"; nor did they swap the probable calque of the English "not to do something for all the world" for the more idiomatic "pour rien au monde" (Lacroix 2016, 353). The result is artificial, with French characters speaking a less idiomatic language than their English counterparts, whose original English in the source text is translated into perfectly modern, native-sounding French.

Several reasons explain the decision not to "weed out clumsy expressions" from Shakespeare's text (Delabastita 2002, 337), including "a commitment to the utmost fidelity, or the wish to inject a dose of 'authenticity' and historical 'local color' into the translation" (Delabastita 2002, 337), i.e., to give a sense of Shakespeare's historical language through a logic of *pars pro toto*. To this one can add a potential wish to retain a form of internal differentiation between the language of English and French characters in originally bilingual scenes, as well as a logic of minimalization of translational efforts. Keeping the French lines in their initial form without extensive editing is an easily available solution which simultaneously enables the text to retain some of its authentic character.

The Francophobic overtones and certain paratextual comments in translations of *Henry V* provide a further ideological explanation for the choice to keep Shakespeare's French close to the original. In the footnotes of the three bilingual scenes, Émile Montégut comments that the original scenes were "en mauvais français" ("in bad French," Montégut 1867, 5:55, 129–30). This open act of editorial scrupulousness attributing any mistakes to the original author may very well have hidden a satirical, spiteful intent: "if Shakespeare's own French is so abominable," to quote from Dirk Delabastita, "how could he then be in a position to make fun of the imperfect English of the French characters?" (Delabastita 2002, 348)—and, by extension, to make fun of the French characters altogether? Such a spiteful intent may also lure behind the comments of Benjamin Laroche, according to whom Catherine's English lesson—otherwise standardized and

rendered entirely idiomatic in the translation—was written in “incorrect French, *of course*” (“un français incorrect, bien entendu”; emphasis added, Laroche 1842, 2:178).

In the twentieth century, at least eight new translations of *Henry V* were published, both in complete works and in single-play editions: Georges Duval (1908), Marcel Sallé (1928), Messiaen, Pierre (1943), M. J. Lavelle (1947), Sylvère Monod (1950, reed. 2000), Daniel and Geneviève Bournet (1992), Sallé Jean-Claude (1997), and Déprats Jean-Michel (2022) – Marguerite Horn-Monval mentions a ninth translation by Georges Roth, in 1926 (Horn-Monval 1963, 5:73). The decision to keep Shakespeare’s French in a form close to the source text remains prominent, but translations of the twentieth century tend to standardize and modernize the text more thoroughly, especially in the final, so-called “wooing scene.” In the translations of Marcel Sallé, M. J. Lavelle, and Jean-Claude Sallé, the French of the source text, spoken by Catherine and her lady-in-waiting Alice, is on par with the translated, idiomatic French of Henry, thereby avoiding the artificiality of having French natives appear less proficient speakers of their native tongue than their English counterparts (Lacroix 2016, 422). This decision, especially in the case of M. J. Lavelle, may be colored by feminist sensitivities aiming to counterbalance the aggressive, heavily rhetorical wooing of Henry by giving the French princess more linguistic power than in her original, broken language, which “gives each of her words the ridiculous weakness of a prolonged childhood” (“donne à chacune de ses paroles la faiblesse ridicule d’une enfance qui se prolonge,” Lavelle 1947, 33; Lacroix 2016, 422).

Twentieth-century translations also show greater ease with reproducing some of the multilingualism of the source text and including some English lines in the original language, thereby reducing some of the artificiality inherent to monolingual translations. The following example is from Jean-Michel Déprats’ translation, in which preserved bilingualism counterbalances the strangeness and redundancy which would otherwise result from his modernization and standardization of Catherine’s original French lines:

LE ROI Ô belle Catherine, si vous voulez m’aimer franchement avec votre cœur français, je serai heureux d’entendre cet aveu de votre bouche dans un anglais boiteux. Do you like me, Kate ?

CATHERINE *Pardonnez-moi*, “I cannot tell vat is “like me””.

LE ROI “An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel”.

CATHERINE *Que dit-il ? Que je suis comme un ange ?*

ALICE *Oui vraiment, sauf votre grâce, c’est ce qu’il dit.* (Venet 1999a, 343–45)

Out of all the translations, only Daniel and Geneviève Bournet have decided to alter Shakespeare’s original French extensively by rendering it as Old French, in an attempt to recreate the internal differentiation between English and French of the source text, and to imbue Shakespeare’s French with a foreign air comparable to what native English speakers may experience when faced with French in the source text. What follows reproduces the first few lines of Catherine’s English lesson, which becomes a lesson in modern French (Déprats 2022, 24–25); one can see the creativity, but also the limits, of such a solution. In particular, the repeated reference to Catherine learning “Anglois” when the actual lesson has her learn words of modern French can easily become confusing for the reader:

CATHERINE Alice, tu fus chieux les Anglois, et tu ben paroles li languaige.

ALICE Alques, madame.

CATHERINE Jo toi prie m’enseigniez, me faust apenre à parler. . . Coument est appeled le paulme, en anglois ?

ALICE Le paulme ? Il est appeled “main”. (Bournet and Bournet 1992, 4:371)

This increase in creative or otherwise bilingual solutions to accommodate the multilingualism of Shakespeare’s original corresponds to shifting, arguably less normative views on translation, as well as to an increased visibility and celebration of language diversity in fiction as a whole in the course of the twentieth century. It may also be a sign of a more decomplexified relationship to *Henry V*, taking increasing distance from its perceived xenophobia especially in the second half of the twentieth century—as, as will be discussed in the next section, alternative perspectives on the play rose both inside and outside of France.

A Limited Performance History

On the stages of France, *Henry V* has been more often experienced in the original language than through French translations. Save from the well-known production of Jean-Louis Benoit at the 1999 Festival d'Avignon, translated by Jean-Michel Déprats, *Henry V* has not, it seems, been professionally produced on the stages of France in French. In 1962, an attempt was made to stage the play at the Comédie de l'Ouest in Rennes (as discussed in Miller-Blaise and Venet 2019, 57; Joubin 2022, 9; and as named in Axelrad 1963, 56). However, this production was canceled in February 1962 on account of director Jo Tréhard's limited availability (C. D. O. 1962; Sel 2024, 295).

Several factors might explain the absence of the play on French stages, having to do with the additional difficulty and resulting artificiality of rendering the play's heterolingualism (and, especially, its bilingual scenes featuring French) on live stages, and with the histories' comparatively limited success on foreign stages. As already suggested in the previous section, there may also be an ideological dimension to the (relative) lack of a French performance history, reflecting a resistance to stage the defeat at Agincourt on French stages, especially given the tone of Francophobia which has been identified in Shakespeare's play.

One may wonder whether the patriotic tone of Laurence Olivier's film has contributed to this reception. In 1947, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs feared the potential negative impact of the film on the already-tense postwar relationships between Britain and France, not so much due to the portrayal of the French defeat itself as to the negative depiction of French soldiers (Young 1987, 320; Smith 2002, 54). Such concerns may have been justified indeed following the premiere in Biarritz in 1947, which reportedly gave way to "violent incidents" (*L'Aurore* 1947). Despite this, critical reviews following a second screening at the Lord Byron theater in Paris were not overwhelmingly negative, with reviewers forgiving the nationalistic tone of the film on account of the historical distance between Agincourt and

modern times. Critics did, however, express reservations toward the stereotypical and heavy-handed depiction of French characters. Certain unflattering comparisons between the eventual marriage of Catherine to Henry and wartime collaboration with the Nazis seem to confirm the unease of French viewers toward the tone of Olivier's film:

J'avais, en particulier, goûté médiocrement la scène finale qui nous fait assister à une sorte de Montoire avant la lettre, où nous voyons Charles VI-Pétain donner sa fille à Henri V-Hitler en gage d'une collaboration qui, en 1420 comme en 1940, tenait plus de l'horreur que de l'honneur. (Mauriac 1947)

(I had found the final scene in particularly bad taste, which makes us attend a sort of Montoire before its time, in which Charles VI-Pétain gives his daughter to Henry V-Hitler as a token of a collaboration which, in 1420 as much as in 1940, owes more to horror than to honor.)

Though the influence of Olivier's film may have contributed to reinforcing the view that *Henry V* is inherently nationalistic and Francophobic, alternative perspectives on the play are not unheard of in France—and have been, in fact, present from at least the first world war. In 1916, on the occasion of the Tercentenary celebration of Shakespeare's death, scenes from *Henry V* were performed in Calais under the joint patronage of the British and Belgian base commanders, together with the Governor and Mayor of the town (Hoenselaars 2015, 18). The production, which welcomed both English and French audience members and featured a local actress of Anglo-Calais descent in the role of Catherine, laid the emphasis on the ultimate reconciliation between the English and French camps. In the beginning of the third act, the famous "Once more unto the breach" monologue in which Henry exhorts his troops to battle fiercely remained, but his subsequent threatening words to the town of Harfleur, promising that their "shrill-shrieking daughters" shall "fall into the hand/Of [English] hot and forcing violation" (3.3.115; 100–1) should the town not yield, were skipped altogether, giving way instead to Catherine's English lesson. The wooing scene, treated as the token of an emergent *Entente Cordiale* between England and France, soon followed (Hoenselaars 2015, 5–6). Almost a

century later, London-based company Antic Disposition would present a similar interpretation of the play, highlighting Anglo-French reconciliation and communion, as part of their tour in the Périgord and Quercy regions of France.

Non-nationalistic perspectives on *Henry V* were also predominant in other touring versions of the play, though these productions rather adopted an accusatory tone toward Henry's reign and his decision to invade France. The program of a production by the Bristol Old Vic company in 1964, directed by Stuart Burge, called Henry's demands for territory in France "extravagant" (which was even more explicitly translated in French as "prétensions démesurées") and acknowledged his willingness to take a simple mockery as an "opportunity for a declaration of war" (the French program was once again more explicit in translating "opportunity" as "prétexte"). A more ambiguous production by the Royal Shakespeare Company, which toured to France in 1976, treated Henry as a profoundly human, but morally ambiguous figure. More explicitly, Michael Bogdanov's production with the English Shakespeare Company, which came to France in 1986, bore strong antimilitarist overtones and openly mocked excessive nationalism. In an attempt to modernize the play's obnoxious jingoism, Bogdanov's production made use of twentieth-century cultural references and marks of patriotism—including an evocative "Fuck the Frogs" banner and parallels with the 1985 Heysel stadium disaster in Belgium (Miller-Blaise and Venet 2019, 62). The French, on the other hand, were dressed in outdated military outfits. Although this was doubtlessly meant as satire, this stereotypical association of the French with outdated courtliness was ultimately seen as a reactionary practice which risked fortifying latent jingoism in the play rather than undermining it—which may not have helped improve the reputation of *Henry V* in France (*The Guardian*, March 1987; Venet 1999b, 407). Outside of the Anglophone sphere, a further antimilitarist production of *Henry V* in German, entitled *Held Henry* (Henry the hero) and directed by Peter Zadek, was staged on 24–27 April 1964 at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt in Paris. Zadek's provocative

production, "a pacifist collage [. . .] against heroism and militarism" (Hortmann 1998, 122), openly questioned the construction and popular appeal of any kind of hero-worship by juxtaposing images of the late medieval heroic figures with twentieth-century celebrities, politicians, and dictators. Zadek's version notably established parallels between Henry's invasion of France and the Nazi occupation by projecting footage of Hitler's troops marching into Paris while Henry took the salute.

Perhaps the linguistic barrier can explain why, despite the fairly long history of importation of such nonjingoistic perspectives in France, *Henry V* is still one of the least performed of Shakespeare's plays on French stages. Ironically enough, Jean-Louis Benoit's production in 1999 may not have entirely helped rehabilitate the play for French audiences, either. In keeping with the dominant nonheroic, antimilitaristic interpretation of the late twentieth century, the director's reception of the play was not jingoistic: Benoit's program notes on *Henry V* stated that, although the play seems "une catastrophe française," it is not to be only considered as "une œuvre patriotique," naming the undermining of national mythmaking through grotesque, comical, and base scenes as illustrations of the play's double, covertly ironic message (Benoit 1999). The production, inspired by the *Théâtre Populaire à la Jean Vilar*, correspondingly emphasized the farcical aspect of the play—offering both an exaggerated, stylized staging where soldiers used wooden swords against the background of a papier-mâché castle, and comical, over-the-top characterizations. Correspondingly, far from downplaying the stereotypical depiction of the French in the original, Benoit's production exaggerated it, adorning costumes with rooster feathers and insisting on a vain attitude. This did not impress contemporary audiences: The parody of the French court was deemed "so expected that it ultimately reduces the conflict to hiccoughs of agonizing roosters" ("tellement attendue qu'elle finit par réduire le conflit à quelques hoquets de coq à l'agonie," Demidoff 1999). The production remained light in tone and, at the antipodes of the touring productions of Bogdanov or Zadek, avoided strong politicism, but its provocative, burlesque tone did not convince reviewers. Provocation was

arguably at the heart of the production—Emma Smith quotes the deliberately controversial statement of lead actor Philippe Torreton in British journals, who commented on Frenchmen being “rather more arrogant than effective on the field of battle” (Smith 2002, 66). The resulting negative tone of reviews, while perhaps indicative that the provocations hit the mark, may explain, at least in part, why the play has not been produced on French stages since 1999.

The performance history of *Henry V* in neighboring francophone countries is only slightly richer. In francophone Belgium, two productions saw the light of day in the 1950s, respectively, by the Rideau de Bruxelles, under the direction of Claude Étienne (1953), and by the Compagnie des Galeries in collaboration with the Théâtre de Beersel, under the direction of Louis Boxus (1955). Although Étienne’s version toured in francophone Belgium, and although both productions were based on the translation of François-Victor Hugo, neither was exported to France. Surviving sources from Claude Étienne’s 1952–1953 version suggest a fairly traditional treatment of the play presumably inspired by the success of Lawrence Olivier’s film: The staging was medievalist, the tone was Anglo-centric and patriotic, and the depiction of Henry was both positive and heroic. The play, according to the program, aimed at “singing [the praises] of the English nation, the great men, and the great events which have shaped it” (“chanter [...] la nation anglaise, les grands hommes et les grands événements qui l’ont illustrée”). The production was praised for its fidelity to Shakespeare’s work, in keeping with the “Shakespearean spirit” (“l’esprit shakespearien,” *La Libre Belgique* 1953). Reviewers, however, took distance from perceived Francophobic overtones in the play (presumably translated in the production), noting how Shakespeare “mishandles [France] in a very disrespectful manner” (“malmène [la France] de façon bien irrespectueuse”), not least through a ridiculous depiction of “boastful and stupid” (“vantards et stupides”) French characters (*Journal des petites affiches* 1953; *La Meuse* 1953; *Le Peuple* 1953).

While the production recuperated elements from Olivier’s film (including similar costuming choices praised in contemporary reviews),

Étienne’s main aim was presumably not to offer a homage: rather, Étienne seems to have aimed at faithfulness to Shakespeare’s original play—an aim in line with Étienne’s self-assigned “philological duty” (“devoir philologique”) to offer raw, unmitigated versions of English plays on the Belgian stage (Creuz 1993, 55). For the newly emancipated Belgian theater, which was gaining independence from the Parisian leadership after the war (1940s–1950s), such fidelity may have been a way to differentiate itself from the appropriative tendencies of French theatre—i.e., the perceived tendency for Parisian directors to adapt foreign plays to the French culture (Hislaire 2005, 1–15; Creuz 1993, 16; 55). The presumable expression of anti-French sentiments in Étienne’s production, therefore, seems to come less from an open opposition to or sneer at Belgium’s culturally dominant neighbor, than from an attempt to mark Belgian cultural independence from it by establishing a more direct link with England. The choice to feature the never-before produced *Henry V* may not have been trivial: In directing, for the first time in French, one of the most famous Shakespearean plays in England with a newly acquired international reputation through Lawrence Olivier’s film, the Belgian theater could further mark its credibility and independence from French models.

Save from the cast list and newspaper announcements, not much has survived from Louis Boxus’ 1955 production. Given the short time gap of 2 years between Étienne’s production and Boxus’, and seeing the close relation between the two directors—in addition to being a former student of Étienne, Boxus featured in his production of *Henry V* as Westmoreland—the 1955 version may have been inspired by, or be a response to, the 1953 production. The few surviving reviews mention a “lavish” (“fastueuse”), “large and picturesque” staging (“une mise en scène élargie et imagière”) and a flourish of over a 100 costumes (Lobet 1955; *Le Drapeau Rouge* 1955). Although one may suppose that this second production adopted a conventional staging and patriotic tone similar to Étienne’s, conclusions necessarily remain hypothetical (Sel 2024, 299–307).

While a large-scale Francophone production of *Henry V* in the twenty-first century is still to be staged, promising efforts are being made. Although, in Switzerland, French productions of *Henry V* remain strikingly absent from major venues, a multilingual production of *Henry V*, featuring all three national languages, was produced by student-led company Swiss Stage Bards in 2018. *Henry V*'s intrinsically multilingual and multicultural nature, featuring both national conflict and ultimate reconciliation, seems particularly appealing to multilingual cultures in which several cultural identities coexist, as also evidenced, perhaps, by one of the productions of *Henry V* with a fully bilingual cast being produced as part of the 1956 Stratford Festival in Canada, directed by Michael Langham. One may hope that the future of *Henry V* on Francophone, if not French, stages, may soon be born from such movements of intercultural dialogue.

Conclusion

Despite the overall difficulty associated with translating *Henry V* into French and adapting it onto French stages, there has been an evolution in the ways into which the play has been received in France over time, from a lack of limited translational efforts in the nineteenth century to more creative translational options and a limited stage history in the (later) twentieth century. Despite this, *Henry V* remains an underperformed play in France and Francophone cultures overall, with the performance history of the play being only slightly richer in Francophone countries outside of France.

Cross-References

► [Stratford Festival, The](#)

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