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Michèle Longino examines the ways in which Mediterranean exoticism inflects the themes represented in French Classical Drama. Longino explores plays by Corneille, Molière, and Racine, including *Médée*, *Le Cid*, and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* among others. She considers the role the staging of the near Orient played in shaping a sense of French colonial identity. Drawing on histories, travel journals, memoirs, and correspondences, and bringing together literary and historical concerns, Longino considers these dramatizations in the context of French–Ottoman relations at the time of their production. She argues that what goes on in the cultural space of the theatre speaks to the compelling domestic and international issues of the time, with important repercussions in our own post-colonial era. These plays continue to loom large in French cultural production even today, perpetuating a notion of “Frenchness” that is meanwhile being increasingly put into question by the very demographics of France.

MICHÈLE LONGINO is Associate Professor of French Studies in the Department of Romance Studies at Duke University. She is the author of *Performing Motherhood: The Sévigné Correspondence* (1991).

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MICHÈLE LONGINO

*Duke University*



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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
 10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia  
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
 Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 2002

*Typeface* Baskerville Monotype 11/12.5 pt.    *System* L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> [TB]

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

ISBN 0 521 80721 2 hardback

Transferred to digital printing 2003

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*This book is dedicated to my parents,  
Helen I. and James C. Longino,  
who shared with me their love for the Mediterranean,  
to my sisters, Helen and Virginia, and my brother Jim,  
with whom I first knew that world,  
and to my son Nick  
who came to love it also.*

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## *Acknowledgments*

Lectures from this book in progress were presented at various meetings and at universities in the United States and in Europe. Many thanks to all of my colleagues and friends for their interest and enthusiasm. I owe deep thanks to Duke University, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Camargo Foundation, the National Humanities Center, and the Mellon Foundation for the support that freed me to pursue the research and do the writing for this book. Sincere thanks to the colleagues who supported the project from its inception: Marcel Gutwirth, Philip Lewis, John Lyons, English Showalter. I also am grateful to my seminar students at Duke University for their enthusiasm and insight as I worked through the challenges this study presented. And I am especially indebted to three friends for generous gifts of time and helpful readings: Peter Jelavich, Alice Kaplan, and Volker Schröder were my key readers; I couldn't have hoped for keener observations or more intelligent suggestions, and I owe a special thanks to Peter for his sharp critical eye. Mary Campbell and Harriet Stone read the manuscript at earlier stages, and offered invaluable critiques. Karen Barkey, Cyril Breward, Marshall Brown, Barbara Fuchs, Ross Chambers, Tom Farrell, Michael Fischer, Paul Keineg, Claude Reichler, George Saliba, Jay Smith, Vicky Spelman, Georges Van Den Abbeele, Ken Wissoker, and the members of the Carolina French Cultural Studies Seminar saw chapters or offered useful guidance at various stages, and their comments were extremely helpful. Richard Hurley expertly and graciously assisted with all of the photography for the illustrations. My thanks here also to the Bibliothèque nationale de France, to the Brown University library, to the Harvard University library, to the Bibliothèque interuniversitaire des langues orientales, and to the archives of the Ministère des affaires étrangères for their assistance and permission to use their materials. Stephanie O'Hara did the translations and Julie Singer provided much fine-tuning of the manuscript, and I am profoundly grateful for their assistance. I owe a

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great debt to Michael Sheringham, Linda Bree, and to my readers at Cambridge University Press for their generous care in seeing this book to print. My son Nick Farrell was especially understanding and supportive of this project (and me) over recent years as it dictated the shape of much of our life together. To these people, and to the many more who helped out along the way, my heartfelt thanks. And of course, any shortcomings of this book are mine alone.

Early versions of chapters or sections of chapters in this book appeared previously in the following publications, but they have been radically recast or translated here. I am grateful to the editors and publishers for permission to use them; from chapter 1 “Médée and the Traveler Savant” in *EMF: Studies in Early Modern France*, vol. 7 (“Strategic Rewriting”), edited by David Lee Rubin and Julia Douthwaite (Charlottesville: Rookwood Press, 2001); “Creüse: Corneille’s Material Girl” in *La femme au dix-septième siècle*, edited by Richard Hodgson, Biblio 17 (Tübingen, forthcoming 2001); “Pollux: Modèle cornélien du nouveau voyageur savant, ou la ‘naissance’ de l’anthropologue” in *Actes du CIR 17*, edited by Giovanni Dotoli (Tübingen, forthcoming 2001). From chapter 2: “Le Cid: la politique sur scène” in *Littérature et exotisme, XVIe–XVIIe siècle*, edited by Dominique de Courcelles (Paris: Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des chartes, 1997): 35–59; from chapter 5: “Bajazet à la lettre” in *L’Esprit Créateur*, 38 (Summer 1998), “Racine,” edited by Harriet Stone: 49–59; “Mithridate, or “*La France turbanisée*” in “La Rochefoucauld, Mithridate, Frères et soeurs, les Muses soeurs,” edited by Claire Carlin, *Actes du 29e congrès de la North American Society for Seventeenth-century French Literature*, The University of Victoria April 3–5, 1997, Biblio 17, 111 (Tübingen: Narr, 1998): 137–46.