Studi e Ricerche
Studies in European Linguistics

New Essays on John Florio

Linguistic and Cultural Perspectives

edited by Donatella Montini

University Press

SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ EDITRICE

Collana Studi e Ricerche 188

Studies in European Linguistics

New Essays on John Florio

Linguistic and Cultural Perspectives

Edited by Donatella Montini

SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ EDITRICE

2025

Sapienza Università Editrice
Piazzale Aldo Moro 5 – 00185 Roma

www.editricesapienza.it
editrice.sapienza@uniroma1.it

Iscrizione Registro Operatori Comunicazione n. 11420
Registry of Communication Workers registration n. 11420

ISBN 978-88-9377-439-0

DOI 10.13133/9788893774390

Pubblicato nel mese di dicembre 2025 | *Published in December 2025*

In copertina | *Cover image*: Simone Grigioni, *Gentiluomo* (2025)

Contents

Portrait of John Florio, frontispiece to Florio's *Queen Anna's new World of Words, or Dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues* (London, Melch. Bradwood for Edward Blount and William Barret, 1611). Courtesy of Bodleian Libraries, Oxford.

How to Do Things with Florio. New Approaches, New Essays

Donatella Montini

Seven essays—an invitation to re-read the oeuvre of John Florio, the Anglo-Italian lexicographer, translator, reader in Italian, and cultural mediator whose extraordinary versatility enabled him to navigate with ease the intellectual landscape and the book market of Elizabethan England. A significant portion of the critical literature devoted to John Florio, produced both in the Anglophone world and in Italy, throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, has consistently advanced a cultural and literary reading of his work (with all speculative—occasionally fanciful—associations between Florio and Shakespeare quite deliberately set aside). Scholars have unanimously celebrated Florio as the undisputed heir and foremost mediator of the Italian humanist tradition in England, from Frances Yates (1934, 1936), to Mario Praz (1954), and Rinaldo C. Simonini (1952), Carlo Maria Franzero (1969), Spartaco Gamberini (1970) and Sergio Rossi (1969); and more recently Jason Lawrence (2005), John Gallagher (2019), Michael Wyatt (2005), Guyda Armstrong (2013), Keir Elam (1984; 2008) among others. It thus seems timely to undertake a reappraisal of John Florio, so prolific and significant a figure in the shaping of early modern English language and culture, particularly in its dialogue with Italian cultural and linguistic traditions, through the lens of new interpretative and methodological paradigms. More ambitiously, this collection explores how contemporary critical frameworks, developed to engage with present-day historical, cultural, and literary phenomena, can illuminate the complex linguistic and cultural practices of the past. Grounded in the belief that much is to be gained from placing these methodologies in conversation with established traditions of historical and cultural criticism, the volume

seeks to open new directions for scholarly engagement with the linguistic and cultural production of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England.

A figure of extraordinary breadth and imagination, Florio may justly be seen as a champion of early modern English linguistic culture, one that placed its highest value on doubling, multiplication of words, and even the artful overstatement of language's power in shaping human understanding and expression. He lived in an age in which language held a central role across all spheres of cultural activity and socio-political struggle: in religious disputes, such as the controversy over "sacred" verbal formulas that fuelled the Reformation; in voyages of exploration, through encounters with unfamiliar languages; in philosophical inquiry, not least the rival Aristotelian and Platonic theories of the linguistic sign; in educational policy, in debates on the value of rhetorical training; in the emerging scientific discourse, questions over the dependability of language as a tool for knowledge; in the rise of national identity, through the assertion of the vernacular; and, of course, in the arts, especially in the theatre, with its contested moral status and its peculiar use of language (Elam 1984).

In fact, the very principle of verbal abundance was subject to intense scrutiny within the rhetorical and philosophical traditions of Florio's time. On the one hand, the accumulation of lexical material was viewed in the naïvely optimistic interpretation of Erasmus's concept of *copia verborum*, or, as Thomas Elyot translated it, "plenty of words". On the other hand, a view of rhetorical amplification as mere accumulation was commented by Erasmus himself who cautioned that "the aspiration to *copia* is dangerous [...] it is, assuredly, such a thing as may be striven for at no slight risk, because, according to the proverb, 'Not every man has the luck to go to Corinth'" (Erasmus 1963, 11). In his later critique of the English Ciceronians, Francis Bacon similarly warned that *copia* may devolve into a superficial excess of language: "for men began to hunt more after words, than matter, and more after the choiseness of the Phrase [...] then after the weight of the matter" (Bacon 1605, 18v). In short, love and fear of words taken to excess was the spirit of the age, an intellectual climate in which Florio was thoroughly embedded.

Born circa 1553 in London, the son of the renowned Michelangelo Florio and presumably an English mother, he was considered English under the tenets of Common Law. His milieu was that of the first generation of Protestant refugees: the Italian community had its own place of

worship, the chapel of the hospital of St. Thomas of Acon, also known as Merchers' Chapel, which was frequented not only by Italians but also by English gentlemen eager to engage in a form of auditory immersion and linguistic comprehension (Pfister 2005). Despite the acknowledged cultural impact of Italy on the English Renaissance, the Italian population in London remained limited, never exceeding a few hundred individuals. Moreover, only a few Italians were actively involved in fields that promoted Italian culture, such as art, music, or scholarship. This makes the lasting impact of Italian influence on English society all the more remarkable, especially when viewed against the much larger presence of Dutch and French immigrants. As Michael Wyatt observes: "Speakers or readers of Italian, indeed any appropriator of an element of Italian culture, entered into an imagined relationship with a 'nation' that, apart from its language and the culture that gave it a transmissible form, did not, in fact, exist" (Wyatt 2005, 138). At about two years of age, Florio left London, his family fleeing the Marian persecutions, and his formative years unfolded in Antwerp, Tübingen, and the Swiss canton of Grisons, the closest he would ever come to Italy itself.

Frances Yates, with evident perplexity and a hint of regret, concedes: "It begins to look as though John Florio, from whom several have supposed that Shakespeare learnt much of what he knew about Italy and Italian towns, may never have set foot in Italy itself at all" (Yates 1934, 21). Florio returned to England around 1570, and soon thereafter, he emerged as *the* Italian, or rather, the *Inglese italianato,* who, according to a popular adage, could only be "un diavolo incarnato", "a devil incarnate" (O'Connor 2004; Yates 1934).

None of Florio's major works may be deemed strictly original in the conventional sense; all his texts are bilingual, and each centres on the movement, linguistic and cultural, between two worlds and two languages. He was an intellectual deeply engaged with the dominant discourses of his time, and skilled in working across diverse textual forms: from conversation manuals, or rather, didactic dialogues, such as *Firste Fruites* (1578) and *Second Frutes* (1591), to bilingual Anglo-Italian dictionaries (*A World of Wordes*, 1598, and its revised edition dedicated to Queen Anne, *Queen Anne's New World of Words*, 1611), to translations that range from Montaigne's *Essays*, on whose influence upon Shakespeare much has been written (Boutcher 2017; Hamlin 2016), to Gian Battista Ramusio's *Navigazioni* (1550–1559), from James I's *Basilikon Doron* into Italian (Pellegrini 1965; Wyatt 2010; Montini 2019), to

the more controversial rendering of the *Decameron* (Armstrong 2013). All of these works fall under the banner of linguistic richness and expressive force: *copia verborum*, literally. Florio died in 1625, at the end of the reign of James I: his death, caused by plague and accompanied by poverty, was marked by the disappearance of his library, which had once comprised 340 volumes in Italian, English, and French. In the cultural climate of seventeenth-century England, the French model would come to predominate, and the Italian language, increasingly perceived as foreign or even subversive, came to be regarded with suspicion.

The essays in this volume aim to offer a renewed exploration from both historical and linguistic perspectives, of two intertwined dimensions of Florio's intellectual identity: that of a linguist and, in that very capacity, that of a cultural mediator between two worlds. The first dimension foregrounds his more overtly professional identity as a reader of Italian and lexicographer, as reflected in his didactic manuals, *Firste Fruites* and *Second Frutes*, as well as in his bilingual dictionaries. The second concerns his position and experience as an exile, refugee and go-between navigating the complex social and political landscape of Elizabethan London.

"The most eloquent and copious tongue of all"

Unlike the considerable attention that a significant amount of research has devoted to Florio's translations, particularly Montaigne's *Essays*, his contribution to the history of language teaching and lexicography has been notably overlooked by scholarly approaches within these fields. Yet, since the beginning of this century, we have witnessed the emergence and consolidation of distinct disciplinary fields and research perspectives that have fostered new approaches to early modern texts and culture. I refer in particular to the history of the book and to those branches of linguistic and stylistic inquiry devoted to the study of texts from the past. An interest in the linguistic diachronic dimension has given rise to studies into Historical Stylistics, or rather, a New Historical Stylistics (Busse 2010 and 2014), and, as a sister discipline, into Historical Pragmatics (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2010; Fitzmaurice and Taavitsainen 2007). Both fields have adapted methods and devices developed to work on language use and variation in past contexts, in order to supply new materials and evidence to linguists, historical linguists, and language historians. In particular, historical

pragmatics, a subfield of historical linguistics devoted to the use of spoken language in past periods, has sought to address these issues. Over the past few decades, it has been shaped by major contributions, particularly from German and English scholars, including Andreas Jucker, Merja Kytö, Jonathan Culpeper, and the Finnish school of Terttu Nevalainen and Irma Taavitsainen.

A fundamental contribution to studies in language and style has also come from the development of technologies that enabled researchers to identify, store, and process linguistic data, and Beatrix Busse appropriately suggests that researchers "combine quantitative and qualitative analyses to establish historical linguistic norms and deviations", fostering interplay between corpus stylistics and more intuition-based or qualitative approaches (Busse 2010, 41).

Historical Pragmatics focuses on the diachronic study of linguistic features of oral interaction as conveyed through written text types, such as didactic manuals, plays, and trial records. A central objective is to bring to light textual forms of spoken communication by addressing a set of interrelated questions: How is oral interaction described in historical texts? How is it represented? And how successful are these representations in conveying orality? Despite the fact that multilingual didactic manuals represent one of the most significant non-literary genres of early modern Europe, critical engagement with them remains relatively sparse, particularly in reference to "didactic works in dialogue form" (Culpeper and Kytö 2010, 42). One reason for this is the absence of a comprehensive and quantitatively substantial corpus that might allow for their systematic classification, and as a result, existing scholarship tends to concentrate on single case studies (Becker 2002; Di Martino 1999; Hüllen 1995; Montini 2011 and 2012; Watts 1999). Another factor contributing to this critical lacuna lies in the hybrid communicative nature of dialogue itself, which oscillates between the written and the spoken, and thereby evokes the inherent precariousness and instability of orality, an issue particularly pronounced in relation to historical texts. These evolving concepts, methodologies, and analytical tools offer valuable means by which to revisit and re-evaluate figures such as John Florio, while remaining attentive to, rather than overriding, the epistemic and intellectual frameworks in which early modern works were produced.

The forty-two dialogues in *Firste Fruites* (1578) may be taken as a case in point through which a number of fresh perspectives may be

brought into focus. They are undoubtedly modelled, at least formally, on Erasmus' *Colloquia familiaria*, though reimagined with Italian and English presented in parallel. They are introduced by a pointed declaration concerning the Italian language: "I am sure, that no language can better express or shewe foorth the lively and true meaning of a thing, then the Italian" (Florio 1578, 114). The English tongue—at that time depicted as barren and lacking vitality—is thus to be rejuvenated by the Italian 'fruits' that Florio brings with him. The intellectual and cultural climate at the time of *Firste Fruites*' publication was still polemical and apologetic, characterized by a spirited defence of Italian culture—whose *diminutio* would have directly undermined the interests of Florio as a teacher. One of the characters in the dialogues, reflecting the prevailing sentiment, declares that English "passed Dover is woorth nothing", and Italian words and customs and the practice of "civil conversation" must be taught and disseminated. In *Second Frutes*, it is the Italian character who asserts, of his native tongue: "I think it to be the most eloquent and copious tongue of all". Yet even here, in the prefatory address "To the Reader", Florio does not shy away from acknowledging the divided nature of his linguistic identity, reiterating: "As for me, for it is I, and I am an Englishman in Italiane". Structured as a series of bilingual didactic dialogues, *Firste Fruites* was designed to promote communicative competence in both Italian and English helping learners navigate conversational norms, politeness strategies, and situational appropriateness. Though constructed, they were speech-oriented, designed for oral use in a time when literacy and orality coexisted and were intended not only to teach vocabulary but especially to promote a nuanced awareness of language in social interaction. Appropriately, Aoife Beville's chapter "Teaching Pragmatic Competence in John Florio's *Firste Fruites* (1578)" examines the first manual through the dual lenses of historical pragmatics and contemporary Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), with a focus on Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP). Florio's work is observed as a valuable contribution to the pedagogical and pragmatic dimensions of early modern language teaching and anticipates modern language teaching principles by emphasising the integration of form, function, and context. Florio's didactic dialogues invite reflection not only on the pedagogical dynamics they enact and the visual structure through which they are presented, but also on their potential hybridity, as forms that oscillate between didactic and theatrical genres, and on their function as manuals aimed at fostering communicative competence.

The notion of 'cosmopolitan vernacular', understood as "the dynamic space in which non-classical languages interact, compete, and co-exist within textual forms that blend instructional, literary, and performative functions", underpins Francesca Forlini's essay, "Cosmopolitan Vernaculars: Mapping the Connections Between Florio's Language Manuals and Early Modern Printed Plays". By foregrounding the visual and rhetorical architecture of his manuals -their dialogic structure, *mise-en-page*, typographic variation, and modes of reader address- Florio's work is situated within a broader tradition of oral pedagogy and multilingual accessibility. In this context, his texts emerge as hybrid forms—didactic, literary, and performative—that challenge nationalist accounts of early modern print culture and illuminate the cosmopolitan dynamics of Renaissance textuality. The discussion is reoriented toward material and textual affinities, and Florio's dialogues are read as performative print artefacts embedded within a transnational literary milieu, integral to understanding early modern print culture.

Turning to his lexicographical work, Florio's two dictionaries are widely regarded as among the most significant vehicles for the dissemination of Italian culture in early modern England. The first, *A World of Wordes, or Most Copious, and exact Dictionarie in Italian and English*, was published in 1598, during the final years of Elizabeth I's reign. It was a monumental undertaking, comprising 46,000 entries and drawing upon 72 source texts. By the time of the second edition, in 1611, dedicated to Queen Anne, the number of entries rose to 74,000 (the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, published a year later in 1612, contained only 28,000 entries), while the cited sources had expanded to include 252 works by Italian authors: Tasso, Doni, Castelvetro, Caro, Citolini, Aretino. Dante and Ariosto are also invoked in the *Epistle Dedicatory*, alongside treatises on cookery, horsemanship, the art of war and a range of other semantic domains. In doing so, Florio constructed a personal canon—one that encompassed not only the major literary figures, but also many of the minor authors later recognised by historiographical scholarship as representative of the Italian Renaissance.

The wide range of both written and spoken sources used in compiling his dictionaries is mirrored in the sociolinguistic diversity of its Italian vocabulary. Examining Florio's word choices, the Italian in *A World of Wordes* seems to align with the idea of a common language: a vernacular rooted in Tuscan tradition but extending beyond regional boundaries. This informal register of Florio's Italian partly echoes Cas-

tiglione's concept of a courtly language, while at the same time standing apart from Bembo's archaic Tuscan and from later adaptations by Varchi and Salviati, as it incorporates terms from various dialects, social backgrounds, and non-literary contexts. In the *Epistle Dedicatorie* Florio raises a basic lexicographical question which is how far the word list should include dialects of the language described, showing an awareness of the relationship between literary language and the common tongue in Renaissance Italy: he considers the language used by several well-known Italian authors of the time, and ends by wondering

> How shall we vnderstande so manie and so strange bookes, of so seuerall, and so fantasticali subiects as be written in the Italian toong? How shall we, naie how may we ayme at the Venetian, at the Romane, at the Lombard, at the Neapolitane, at so manie, and so much differing Dialects, and Idiomes, as be vsed and spoken in Italie, besides the Florentine? (Florio 1598, a4r).

A few studies have highlighted the shortcomings in Florio's dictionaries — such as typographical mistakes, the lack of alphabetical order, omitted accents, repeated entries, uncredited or missing definitions, and a seemingly random approach to word selection — noting its "mechanical approach" and lack of uniformity, as Florio often applied flexible and inconsistent criteria in compiling his word lists (O'Connor 1973; Stein 1985). In this regard, Angela Andreani's essay "Metalinguistic Labelling in John Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes"* draws on research from her MetaLing Corpus Project—which was established to create a corpus of English linguistic metalanguage from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century—to reconsider the metalinguistic communicative dimension of *A World of Wordes*, specifically the underlying lexicographic rationale that informs its structure and purpose. Investigating usage labels provides critical insight into the ways linguistic knowledge was structured, categorized, and disseminated. In *The Worlde of Wordes,* Florio's application of such labels sheds light on early lexicographical practices and the development of a linguistic metalanguage: although Florio demonstrated an awareness that words could encompass multiple meanings, he did not systematically differentiate between homonymy and polysemy, nor did he consistently allocate distinct entries to their various senses. However, a heightened sensitivity to technical or occupational terminology seems to emerge, as opposed to dialectal variation or differences in register. This tenden-

cy may reflect the contemporary prevalence of specialised glossaries and field-specific wordlists. Notably, expressions associated with the familiar register were framed similarly to group labels, implying that Florio conceived of such language not as determined by communicative context, but as the linguistic repertoire of a defined social group—such as members of a household. This conflation suggests that, for Florio, what we now consider register variation was often interpreted through a social lens, aligning language with speaker identity rather than situational function.

As a polyglot and multicultural reader, Florio is perhaps most clearly reflected in the innovative inclusion of specialised language which adds a distinctive layer to the dictionary (Scarpino 2008): nature and habitat, human anatomy (with a special attention on human sexuality), fashion terms, food and food-related terms are the most prevalent semantic fields represented in Florio's lexicographical undertaking. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools, both Marco Bagli and Fabio Ciambella investigate Florio's lexicographic contribution within the semantic domain of food and taste. Employing an analytical and interpretative framework grounded in conceptual metaphor theory, Bagli's essay "A Worlde of Tastes: The Lexicographic Representation of Taste in *A Worlde of Wordes*" examines the representation of gustatory perception in Florio's first dictionary, elucidating the diachronic evolution of sensory vocabulary. He demonstrates how taste terminology serves as an intermediary between physiological sensation and cultural significance. Fundamental Early Modern English taste terms—such as *sweet, salt, sour, bitter, spiced,* and *savoury*—reveal the intricate interplay between language, culture, and cognition: while some taste terms reflect cultural artefacts and practices now obsolete, others embody enduring conceptual metaphors—such as LOVE IS SWEET or HOSTILITY IS SOUR—that continue to resonate in contemporary English. Florio's lexical choices thus offer valuable insights into Early Modern sensory experience and underscore the persistent cognitive foundations of metaphor across time.

Fabio Ciambella's essay returns attention to Florio not only as a lexicographer but as a cultural mediator whose work was instrumental in the nuanced assimilation of Italian gastronomy into Elizabethan and Jacobean England. In "Italian Food at the Elizabethan and Jacobean Courts: A Lexicographic and Morphosyntactic Analysis of John Florio's Dictionaries", the author traces the influence of Italian culinary culture on early

modern English society through Florio's writings, while underscoring the crucial role of Italian émigrés like Castelvetro. Food metaphors and culinary vocabulary are intricately interwoven within Florio's lexicographic and pedagogical endeavours, characterised by nominal groups coupled with verbal modifiers or relative clauses, thereby reflecting the instructional conventions typical of early modern culinary writing.

Mediatore, mezzano, and *intercessore*

In the early stages of his career, while seeking patrons and prestige, Florio played with his own name, manipulating its semantic resonance to serve his project of self-fashioning. This is exemplified precisely by his two manuals which, unlike other comparable works circulating in the book market at the time, do not adopt the conventional title of *Schoolmaster*, following the model of Ascham, but instead present themselves as Florio's *Firste Fruites* and *Second Frutes, To be gathered of twelue Trees*. Moreover, "Bilingued FLORIO"'s[1] signature consistently appeared in both Italian and English, John and/or Giovanni Florio: one face, two names, a doubling of the self that signals the deliberate construction of a second identity. This bifurcation of the name prefigures, in both a profound and pervasive sense, the unstable and migratory identity of an entire category, of which John Florio emerges as one of the most emblematic figures. In Elizabethan terms, this is the category of the go-between,[2] whose liminal mode of existence brings with it a condition of doubled estrangement: doubly foreign, the go-between is tied to two homelands, yet belongs wholly to neither, "forever on the periphery of the possible", constantly moving across boundaries, living in "a bilingual, bicultural, biconceptual reality", and in doing so, challenging the very idea of borders. Traveller, merchant, translator, spy, this figure lives in a state of dual alienation, occupying a "third space" that, as Homi Bhabha defines it, is simultaneously within and beyond established limits (Henderson 1995, 1; Hicks 1991, xxv; Bhabba 1994; Höfele and von Koppenfels 2005; Keener 2025).

Michael Wyatt highlights the peculiar and controversial status of the go-between and the "stranger" in Elizabethan England. The grow-

---

[1] See *Dedicatory poem* by R.H. to Florio 1578.

[2] "Go-between" is an Elizabethan neologism: the *Oxford English Dictionary* traces its first recorded use to 1598.

ing number of foreigners, including Italians, during this time prompted mixed reactions: while royal policies welcomed skilled immigrants, who brought valuable knowledge and abilities, the broader English population was frequently hostile. There was widespread resentment that many important trades were dominated by foreigners, and this tension occasionally erupted into anti-immigrant riots. To manage public anxiety, the English government conducted censuses and collected tax and denization records to keep track of the foreign population. However, these records were inconsistent and often unreliable due to poor data collection methods, language differences, and the anglicization of foreign names. One example comes from the 1571 *Returns of Aliens*, which recorded over 3,000 Dutch people in London compared to just 138 Italians, alongside a handful of "Lucchesi" and "Venetians". More broadly, the total number of foreigners in England rose from 4,755 in 1571 to over 7,000 by 1593, before dropping sharply by 1618. These fluctuations often reflected political events on the continent, such as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, which drove French Protestants to England, and the Spanish occupation of the Netherlands, which led to a steady migration of Dutch refugees (Wyatt 2005).

The condition of Italian Protestant migrants and exiles, a distinctly defined community of cultural intermediaries, is explored and reappraised in Stefano Villani's essay, "Imagined Identities: Children of Italian Exiles in Seventeenth Century England", which examines how the children of Italian religious refugees reconstructed their cultural and political identities in seventeenth-century England. Focusing on the descendants of prominent émigré families, Villani traces the complex negotiation between inherited diasporic memory and the imperatives of assimilation within English society. These 'imagined identities', formed at the intersection of linguistic hybridity, evolving religious affiliations, and transnational networks, constitute a compelling case study in early modern exile, identity formation, and cultural adaptation. Through a diacronich lens, Villani reconstructs the trajectories and lineage of five Italian families—the Florios, the Diodatis, the Calandrinis, the Torrianos, and the Antelminellis—who relocated from Italy to England without ever truly returning to their homeland, while also revealing points of convergence, divergence, and interconnection. This historical mapping sheds new light on, and in many respects redeems, the somewhat reductive critical narratives of the past fifty years that have too hastily applied the label of Anglicized Italians to these figures.

This kind of hybrid identity led also to political transactions, easily doubling as espionage interactions; and, if we let ourselves be convinced by Frances Yates describing the French embassy from 1583, this is precisely what Florio, cultural mediator *par excellence*, actually did, as *mediatore*, *mezzano*, and *intercessore (in his own lemmas),* to denote the typical functions of a go-between. Warren Boutcher's reassessment of liminality as a site of political and epistemological potential further underscores Florio's status as a paradigmatic figure through whom the complex dynamics of Renaissance mediation, and their latent political charge, can be interrogated anew. The wide-ranging essay "The Anglo-Italian Fixer: Hierarchy, Gender, and Religion in John Florio's Works of Mediation" draws upon the conceptual framework recently advanced by Zrinka Stahuljak in her study of marginal figures in medieval literary and cultural history, individuals situated between the roles of translator and cultural intermediary. Stahuljak focuses on these 'fixers', "agents who perform a range of tasks, acting as interpreters, local informants, guides, brokers, personal assistants, and more […] multifunctional intermediaries with multiple linguistic, social, cultural, and topographical skills and knowledge […] enablers, facilitators, and mediators" (Stahuljak 2024, 1). Boutcher reframes John Florio as an early-modern 'fixer', a multilingual mediator operating across a continuum of study, court culture, and diplomacy, rather than just a translator. Using the paratexts to his 1603 Montaigne and scenes from masques, dedications, and letters, the essay shows how Florio enabled élite women to act as cultural and political go-betweens, especially in the Jacobean court's carefully staged contacts with Catholic Europe during the 1598–1618 "Short Peace". Boutcher traces in detail Florio's practical work (teaching, conveying letters, translating for ambassadors, developing a "proverbial language" of sociability) and situates it within a hierarchy in which male "Protonotaries" lead, while secondary agents, women and translators, negotiate access and reputation. The underlying thread is that language, performance, and print together constituted the infrastructure of mediation connecting aristocratic households, religious confessions, and states.

To speak with the dead

I would like to conclude this brief introduction by returning to the ambition of a book that, within the intellectual paradigms of the twenty-first century, seeks to bring the new and the old into sustained di-

alogue. Among scholars engaged with the textual and cultural production of the early modern period, there is by now a well-established awareness that many of the dichotomies and categories that have shaped our thinking since the 1980s have performed valuable—indeed, foundational—work, even as such frameworks have at times disclosed more about our own scholarly moment than about the Renaissance itself. Nonetheless, our continuing efforts to "speak with the dead" (Greenblatt 1988) remain central to a historically grounded and self-reflexive critical practice.

This volume deliberately inhabits that tension. It advances the view that a productive engagement with the past emerges from the collaboration between the interpretative frameworks and innovations of contemporary scholarship and the paradigms offered by early modern texts, while remaining firmly committed to methodological rigour and to an epistemological humility that recognises the limits of those frameworks even as it mobilises them. Florio is not our contemporary; yet reading his works today enables us to chart, with particular clarity, the negotiations of language, identity, and cultural belonging through which early modern culture was articulated—negotiations that continue to matter, not because they mirror our own concerns, but because they compel us to confront forms of difference that resist easy assimilation.

Bibliography

Armstrong, G. (2013), *The English Boccaccio: A History in Books,* University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Bacon, F. (1605), *The Proficiencie and Aduancement of Learning, Diuine and Humane*, London.

Becker, M. (2002), *'Yf ye wyll bergayne wullen cloth or othir marchandise…': Bargaining in Early Modern Language Teaching Textbooks*, in "Journal of Historical Pragmatics", 3, 2, pp. 273–297.

Bhabba, H. (1994), *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London.

Boutcher, W. (2017), *The School of Montaigne in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols., Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Busse, B. (2010), *Recent Trends in New Historical Stylistics*, in D. Mcintyre and B. Busse (eds), *Language and Style*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 32–54.

Busse, B. (2014), *(New) Historical Stylistics*, in M. Burke (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*, Routledge, London, pp. 101–117.

Chambrun Longworth, C. (1921), *Giovanni Florio, un apotre de la Renaissance en Angleterre a l'époque de Shakespeare*, Payot, Paris.

Culpeper, J. and Kytö, M. (2010), *Early Modern English Dialogues*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Di Martino, G. (1999), *Cento anni di dialoghi. La Lingua Inglese dal 1573 al 1685*, Cuen, Napoli.

Elam, K. (1984), *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse. Language Games in the Comedies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Elam, K. (2008), *'At the cubiculo': Shakespeare's Problems with Italian Language and Culture*, in G. Galigani (ed.), *Italomania(s). Italy and the English Speaking World from Chaucer to Seamus Heaney*, Mauro Paglia, Firenze, pp. 111–122.

Erasmus, D. [1513] (1963), *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, trans. D.B. King and M. Evans, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee.

Fitzmaurice, S.M. and Taavitsainen, I. (eds) (2007), *Methods in Historical Pragmatics*, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin and New York.

Franzero, C.M. (1969), *John Florio a Londra ai tempi di Shakespeare*, Guanda, Parma.

Florio, J. (1578), *Florio his firste fruites which yeelde familiar speech, merie prouerbes, wittie sentences, and golden sayings. Also a perfect induction to the Italian, and English tongues*, *Imprinted at the three Cranes in the Vintree, by Thomas Dawson, for Thomas Woodcocke*, London.

Gamberini, S. (1970), *Lo studio dell'italiano in Inghilterra nel 500 e nel 600*, D'Anna, Messina and Firenze.

Greenblatt, S. (1988), *Shakespearean Negotiations.The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England,* Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Hamlin, W.M. (2016), *Montaigne and Shakespeare,* in P. Desan (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Montaigne*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 328–346.

Henderson, M.G. (1995), *Borders, Boundaries, and Frames,* Routledge, London.

Hicks, D.E. (1991), *Border Writing: The Multidimensional Text*, University of Minneapolis Press, Minneapolis.

Höfele A. and von Koppenfels, W. (2005), *Renaissance Go-Betweens. Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, Walter de Gruyter, New York.

Hüllen, W. (1995), *A Close Reading of William Caxton's Dialogues…to Lerne Shortly Frenssh and Englyssh*, in A. Jucker (ed.), *Historical Pragmatics: Pragmatic Developments in the History of English*, Benjamins, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, pp. 99–124.

Jucker, A. (ed.) (1995), *Historical Pragmatics: Pragmatic Developments in the History of English*, Benjamins, Amsterdam and Philadelphia.

Jucker, A., Fritz, G. and Lebsanft, F. (eds) (1999), *Historical Dialogue Analysis*, Benjamins, Amsterdam and Philadelphia.

Jucker, A. and Taavitsainen I. (eds) (2010), *Historical Pragmatics*, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin and New York.

Keener, A. (2025), *Theaters of Translation: Cosmopolitan Vernaculars in Shakespeare's England*, University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

Kirk, E.F. and Kirk, R.E.G. (eds) (1900–08), *Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the city and suburbs of London from the reign of Henry VIII to that of James I*, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen.

Lawrence, J. (2005), *'Who the Devil taught thee so much Italian?' Italian Language Learning and Literary Imitation in Early Modern England*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Mazzon, G. and Fodde, L. (eds) (2012), *Historical Perspectives on forms of English dialogue*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

Montini, D. (2011), *Teaching Italian as a Foreign Language: Notes on Linguistic and Pragmatic Strategies in Florio's Fruit*s, in "Textus, 24", pp. 517–536.

Montini, D. (2012), *Proverbs in John Florio's Fruits: Some Pragmatic Aspects,* in G. Mazzon and L. Fodde (eds) (2012), *Historical Perspectives on forms of English dialogue*, Franco Angeli, Milano, pp. 248–264.

Montini, D. (2019), *Renaissance Political Theory in Translation: John Florio and the Basilikon Doron,* in "inTRAlinea Special Issue: Transit and Translation in Early Modern Europe", available at: <https://www.intralinea.org/specials/article/renaissance_political_theory_in_translation> (last accessed 28 October 2025).

Nevalainen, T. (1999), *Making the best use of 'bad' data: evidence for sociolinguistic variation in Early Modern English*, in "Neuphilologische Mitteilungen", 100, 4, pp. 499–533.

O'Connor, d. (1973), *Voci non spiegate nei dizionari di John Florio*, in "Studi di Filologia Italiana", 31, pp. 207–246.

O'Connor, D. (2004), *John Florio*, in H.C.G. Matthew, B. Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 165–168.

Pellegrini, G. (1961), *John Florio e il Basilikon Doron di James VI: un esempio inedito di versione elisabettiana*, Feltrinelli, Milano.

Praz, M. (1954), *Shakespeare's Italy*, in "Shakespeare Survey", 7, pp. 95–106.

Pfister, M. (2005), *Inglese Italianato – Italiano Anglizzato: John Florio,* in A. Höfele and W. von Koppenfels (eds), *Renaissance Go-Betweens. Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe,* Walter de Gruyter, New York, pp. 32–54.

Rossi, S. (1969), *Ricerche sull'umanesimo e sul Rinascimento in Inghilterra*, Società Editrice Vita e Pensiero, Milano.

Scarpino, C. (2008), *Il lessico scientifico nel dizionario di John Florio,* in "Studi di lessicografia italiana. A cura dell'Accademia della Crusca", 25, pp. 65–95.

Simonini, R.C. (1952), *Italian Scholarship in Renaissance England*, University of Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Stahuljak, Z. (2024), *Fixers: Agency, Translation, and the Early Global History of Literature*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Stein, G. (1985), *The English Dictionary before Cawdrey*, De Gruyter, Berlin and Boston.

Watts, R.J. (1999), *Refugiate in a Strange Countrey: Learning English through Dialogues in the 16th Century*, in A. Jucker, G. Fritz and F. Lebsantf (eds), *Historical Dialogue Analysis,* Benjamins, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, pp. 215–241.

Wyatt, M. (2005), *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England. A Cultural Politics of Translation,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Wyatt, M. (2010), *John Florio's Translation of Kingship: An Italian Baptism for James VI/I's Basilikon Doron*, in B. Schaff (ed.), *Exiles, Emigrés and Intermediaries. Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York, pp. 71–84.

Yates, F.A. (1934), *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Teaching Pragmatic Competence in John Florio's *Firste Fruites* (1578)

Aoife Beville

1. Florio, our early modern colleague

As an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instructor, I see John, or Giovanni, Florio as a colleague: a professional language tutor[1] and a "go-between". He was, as scholars such as Montini and Pfister have emphasised, a man whose life was lived in a liminal space betwixt and across two cultures and two languages due to his multi-faceted role of linguistic mediation, as translator, lexicographer and Italian language instructor (Montini 2008, 47–59; Pfister 2009, 185–202). The linguistic and cultural "go-between" is a category still familiar to many contemporary foreign language instructors. Florio, like his father before him, taught Italian as a private tutor in the 1570s; indeed, Gallagher emphasises the importance of the domestic space in language learning in Early Modern England (Gallagher 2019, 16–18). His first language manual, *Firste Fruites*, was printed in 1578, and around that time, records indicate that he was tutoring students in Oxford. The current chapter examines his first published work through a twofold approach. Firstly, the text will be contextualised from a historical pragmatic perspective to understand its nature as linguistic data. Secondly, the text will be examined through the contemporary lens of Foreign Language Teach-

[1] While he denied that it was his profession ("Ma ricordatevi se ho errato di perdonarmi perché non è la mia professione"), it was however his "principal source of income" (O'Connor 2004). Moreover, as noted by Gallagher, "the concept of 'teacher' as a profession was an elastic one in the early modern period [...] the idea of a fixed vocation of 'teacher' can obscure the educational labour of many who do not easily fit a modern conception of the professional educator. Furthermore, for many early modern language masters, teaching was just one element of a constellation of activities that made up a precarious career" (Gallagher 2019, 53).

ing (FLT) and Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), specifically considering strategic language learners to determine how the text may have served as a tool for the development of pragmatic competence in their second language (L2), whether it be Italian or English.

2. *Firste Fruites* and the Early Modern tradition of didactic dialogues

John Florio's bilingual didactic dialogues in *Firste Fruites* (1578) claim to make use of "certaine common questions, and ordinarie aunsweres" to allow "Englishmen to attaine to the perfection of the Italian tongue, and for Italians to learne the pronountiation of our Englishe".

The use of dialogues for language instruction purposes was a common practice in early modern Europe (Gallagher 2019, 55–100; Richardson 2010, 78–94). The origins of pedagogical dialogues trace back to antiquity, with notable European humanist developments from figures such as Erasmus and Vives. The English scholastic pedagogical dialogue tradition begins with Aelfric's *Colloquy*, which contains glosses of Latin in Old English. Examples of English-vernacular synoptic language pedagogical dialogues first focus on French (e.g. Caxton, Bellot and Hollyband). Florio's dialogues were intended to teach Italian to anglophone learners (and English to Italophones, although to a lesser degree, according to the author's preface). These dialogues were, presumably, part of a wider 'syllabus', which in contemporary contexts included assigned readings, translation and the correction of oral and written production by a native speaker.[2] Early modern pedagogy was generally marked by a distinctive orality, and certainly language pedagogy "placed the study of pronunciation and speech front and centre" (Gallagher 2019, 80).

As Richardson notes, dialogue manuals show the desire of learners to be proficient in spoken language and communication skills and the need to implement language learning tools to meet the needs of learners:

> One response to this need, and one of the main characteristics of the learning of Italian by English-speakers as opposed to Italians in this period, was the development of parallel dialogues in both languages, suitable for either young people or adults. With the help of these texts,

[2] I thank Stefano Villani for drawing my attention to his discussion of such teaching practices as outlined by Lombardelli. See Villani 2023, 14–15.

> Anglophone students could learn how to speak the new language in everyday situations or in polite conversation, and also assimilate its structures and vocabulary by comparing it with a language they knew already. Like most innovations, these dialogues stemmed from a combination of existing practices (Richardson 2010, 86).

As was typical of these texts, Florio's parallel dialogues are presented synoptically, with the Italian dialogue in the left-hand column and the English text to the right. The typographical layout[3] allows the reader to engage with the foreign language text and its translation simultaneously. The dialogues are followed by comprehensive grammar ("Necessary Rules") explaining pronouns, verb tenses, articles, prepositions and other aspects of the Italian language with helpful comparisons to English.

According to the classification of didactic dialogues within Kytö and Culpeper's historical pragmatic framework, the texts are "constructions of speech" rather than "recordings of speech", yet they can be considered both "speech-like" and "speech-purposed" in that they aimed to be representative of the "familiare speache" and were intended to be spoken aloud by learners (Culpeper and Kytö 2010). Early modern conversation manuals, including *Firste Fruites*, claim to teach speech and pronunciation, this is only possible if we rightly contextualise them within the "noisy reading" of a time and place in which oral and literate cultures co-existed and were co-dependent, and the "manuals' readers were urged to use the book as an aid to speech, while also using voices from outside the text to animate its materials" (Gallagher 2019, 79). Indeed, Gallagher claims that the term "speech-oriented" would be better suited to describe the "outward-facing" and conversationally-purposed language manuals (Ibid., 59). Certainly, these texts were intended to be read aloud by students, not only because they contained dialogues, but due to the inherent orality of early printed materials, as convincingly argued by Jennifer Richards' scholarship on voice and text in early modern England (Richards 2019). Instruction, particularly, whether it took place in the schoolroom or at home with a private tutor, included reading aloud, repetition, oral performance and examination (Ibid., 76–129). These practical exercises in orality in learning contexts gave rise to an "embodied understanding" (Ibid., 67), in which

[3] Forlini's contribution to the present volume amply illustrates the typographical features of the text.

attention to vocal cues and the very physicality of oral performance allow the reader to comprehend the text. If orality and reading aloud held such a central place in English Renaissance teaching, it stands to reason that it was equally, if not more, fundamental in the context of foreign language acquisition. Students, their tutors, and the authors of language manuals were concerned with pronunciation and accent, as both were fundamental to actual communication and, if ably mastered, could result in prestige, while if students were unsuccessful, they could risk ridicule (Gallagher 2019, 64–66). As Richards and Wistreich affirm, "attending to the vocality of fluent readers matters because the written word changes its meaning when it is understood as inextricably linked to voice" (Richards and Wistreich 2019, 8).

However, while the text claims to reproduce the "parlar familiare", the requirements of language learning are, at times, at odds with realism and orality. Often, language instruction manuals include long vocabulary lists or the provision of alternative turns of phrase. For example, in the second dialogue ("To speake with a damsel"), a man attempts to court a maiden and, as Richardson notes "but after he declares his love, *conveniently* using past, present, and future tenses, she declares her hatred in the same tenses"[4]. Nonetheless, despite these necessary artifices, this kind of speech-centred text necessarily exposes the learner to the pragmatic conventions of interactional language use. Indeed, as Gallagher argues:

> The authors of conversation manuals wanted their readers to practise a form of reading which looked outwards from the text—these were books whose information was waiting to be activated by experience in the social, oral world. that Stefano Guazzo argued that civil conversation could not be taught as a set of precepts but had to be learnt through social practice in the world, so too did conversation manual authors accept their own shortcomings and insist on a reading of the world outside which would inform the reading of the text (Gallagher 2019, 99).

Furthermore, the very structure of the text—its division into topical sections such as "to speak with a damsel", "to speak with a merchant", and "to speak with a gentleman", to name just a few, facilitates the kind of contextual awareness necessary for furthering pragmatic competence.

---

[4] Richardson 2010, 87, emphasis added.

3. Pragmatics and ESL: Teaching pragmatic competence

Crystal defines pragmatics as "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (Crystal 1997, 301). These aspects of language use are obviously very important to a language learner. The early modern language learner, particularly, would have been concerned with correct, appropriate interactions in terms of the social norms of courtesy applicable at the time[5]. Ciambella, advocating for the use of early modern texts in the teaching of pragmatic competence, notes the paradox between the importance of teaching pragmatics from the initial stages of language instruction and the firm belief that pragmatic competence is one of the most difficult skills to acquire for EFL/ESL learners (Ciambella 2024, 15).

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) studies the intersection of pragmatics and the study of SLA (Second Language Acquisition; Kasper 2024, 808–819), with a particular focus on the 'interlanguage'—the dynamic idiolect and knowledge system of the L2 leaner, which draws from their knowledge of L1 (and other languages they may know: Ln). Research in ILP has shown that several aspects of pragmatics are profitable to teaching and learning L2; Félix-Brasdefer and Mugford cite studies in language pedagogy which focus on core areas of pragmatics such as speech acts and (im)politeness (Félix-Brasdefer and Mugford 2017, 489). Indeed, pragmatic competence is a vital part of language acquisition Taguchi states that

> in order to be pragmatically competent, L2 learners must attend to multipart mappings of form, meaning, force and context. They need to know how to say what they want to say with the level of formality, politeness and directness required in a situation, or sometimes not to speak at all and communicate intention only non-verbally. Basic parameters of context, such as speakers' relationship, role, setting, topics, assumptions about what speakers already know or do not know, and perceived impact of their language on the listener, guide L2 learners' linguistic choice (Taguchi 2018, 53).

---

[5] For a thorough examination of (im)politeness and its evolution throughout the English Renaissance, see Del Villano 2018, 53–86.

According to Felix-Brasfader and Mugford, ILP is "concerned with the *learning* component" of L2 pragmatic competence because "learning the pragmatic system of an SL or FL has implications for effective ways to teach pragmatics in the classroom" (Félix-Brasdefer and Mugford 2017, 490). In ILP the term pragma-linguistic competence is used to refer to "knowledge and performance of the conventions of language use in a given language [...] in contextually appropriate situations", while socio-pragmatic competence indicates "knowledge about and performance consistent with the social norms in specific situations in a given society, as well as familiarity with variables of social power and social distance" (Ibid). Accurately and efficiently acquiring such competencies requires the active (explicit or implicit) teaching of pragmatic aspects of language use in the classroom context (Rose and Kasper 2001). Therefore, the main objective of teaching pragmatics in language learning contexts is "to develop learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic abilities in FL and L2 host environments" (Félix-Brasdefer and Mugford 2017, 490). Thus, there is a need to include methods of instruction which involve the provision of metapragmatic information. Indeed, empirical evidence shows that including explicit metapragmatic information in input enhancement significantly improves the effectiveness and efficiency of L2 learners' acquisition of pragmatic competencies (Takahashi 2001, 171–199).

Diaphasic variation could be considered one of the most important and widely taught aspects of pragmatic competence in SLA. Indeed, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), includes "using polite forms and showing awareness of politeness conventions" and the knowledge of "register differences" in its descriptors of sociolinguistic competence,[6] while matters such as turn-taking, cohesion and coherence, and functional competence (successfully performing speech acts) are included in the section on pragmatic competence.[7]

Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory focuses on the concept of face, an individual's self-image, and the linguistic mitigation of possible threats to positive face (the desire for approval and belonging; positive politeness strategies include showing interest, giving compliments, seeking agreement, etc.) and negative face (the desire to be unimpeded; negative politeness strategies include indirectness, giving options, etc.;

---

[6] Council of Europe 2020, 136–137.

[7] Ibid., 137–142.

Brown and Levinson 1978 and 1987). Further strategies include not performing the FTA and performing the FTA off-record (through implicature). Culpeper's taxonomy of (im)politeness is based on a reversal of the strategies identified in Brown and Levinson's work (negative impoliteness, positive impoliteness, off-record impoliteness, etc., Culpeper 1996, 349–367; Culpeper et al. 2017). Leech's maxim-based approach to politeness focuses on maximising benefits and minimizing harm or offence to the Other while minimizing consideration of the Self by adhering to maxims such as tact, generosity, modesty and agreement, sympathy and obligation (Leech 1983 and 2014). Conversely, impoliteness involves the violation of such maxims (Leech 2014, 221).

While these models of impoliteness have been foundational for studies in pragmatics, Félix-Brasdefer and Mugford note that these pragmatic models "tend to lack a discursive context" and argue that "the achievement of appropriateness would be a better pedagogical target" in language learning contexts (Félix-Brasdefer and Mugford 2017, 498).

4. Teaching styles and leaner engagement in *Firste Fruites*

John Florio, argues Donatella Montini, could be seen as a proto-adherent of the communicative approach:

> If one examines Florio's manuals through the lens of modern language teaching, one finds a 'communicative approach' *ante litteram*: the emphasis on 'communicative competence', the focus on the learner, a certain attention paid to the social, if not geographical, identity of the speakers in the dialogic exchange, the stress placed on the target culture, confirming his trust in an inseparable link between language and culture (Montini 2011, 524).

He was by no means a language pedagogy theorist, but in analysing *Firste Fruits,* it becomes apparent that he was apt to include both explicit grammatical instruction and communicative-based role-playing. Indeed, he "mixed 'functional' and 'situational' methods; his dialogues are designed to set the linguistic exchange in a precise context, in a precise space, and with a precise list of functions" (Montini 2011, 524). Early modern conversation manuals provided speech-based and speech-oriented examples of dialogues that display communicative functions (giving compliments, thanking, inviting, haggling, etc.) in

use in situational contexts (courtship, commercial transactions, and social situations). *Firste Fruites,* and other manuals like it, primed the reader to focus on the interlocutor and the communicative context to orient conversation accordingly.

Florio's "teaching style" could be said to combine aspects of the academic style (translations and grammar explanations) and the communicative approach (learning through situational simulation). Interestingly, a common criticism of the communicative style is that "it has no techniques of its own for pronunciation or vocabulary […] and little recognition of the possibilities available to the learner through their first language" (Cook 2016, 278). However, *Firste Fruites* contains a guide to pronunciation and contrastive grammatical instruction in its latter sections. Indeed, Florio's complete "course", if we take into account his dictionaries, does, in many ways, make up for the shortcomings of the communicative approach. And, vitally, his didactic materials pay attention to the socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic elements, both explicitly and implicitly.

Studies in language pedagogy have identified common strategies among successful learners, or Good Language Learners (GLLs).[8] According to Oxford, a language learning strategy is "goal-directed actions for improving language proficiency or achievement, completing a task, or making learning more efficient, more effective, and easier".[9] Strategic language learners have been shown to employ cognitive and metacognitive strategies, among others, to improve their language skills. Cognitive strategies "help learners make and strengthen associations between new and already-known information" and can "involve hypothesis testing, such as searching for clues in surrounding material and one's own background knowledge" (Oxford 2001, 167). Metacognitive strategies help learners manage their own learning process; these strategies include identifying their own learning style, identifying and availing of resources, managing time, establishing goals, and the like (Cook 2016; Oxford 2001).

Taguchi outlines a set of specific learner strategies that have proved successful in acquiring and improving pragmatic competence in various studies (Taguchi 2018).

---

[8] Oxford 2001, 166–172; for a summary of the origins and developments in the study of GLLs see Oxford 2011, 167–180.

[9] Ibid., 167.

Strategy	**Basic function**	**Basic function as applied to pragmatics**
Focus and plan	Pay attention to specifics and general Set goals and plan	Pay attention to pragmatics-related concepts and set goals in attending them
Obtain resources, arrange environment and implement plans	Obtain resources Organize the learning environment and materials Put the plan into action	Obtain resources for observing communicative acts Obtain opportunities for participating in communicative acts
Monitor and evaluate	Monitor and evaluate performance and strategy use	Monitor and evaluate the process of performing and interpreting communicative acts

Tab. 1. Metacognitive strategies and functions for learning pragmatics (Taguchi 2018, 60).

Strategy	**Basic function**	**Basic function as applied to pragmatics**
Activate Knowledge	Brainstorm what is already known	Activate pragmatic knowledge in L1—how a certain communicative act is performed in L1. Reflect on how the same communicative act might be performed in L2.
Reasoning	Use inductive and deductive reasoning	**Inductive reasoning:** Analyze a communicative act by identifying contextual factors and the speaker's intention. Explain why certain forms are used in a given situation. **Deductive reasoning:** Apply pragmatic expressions to practice. Think about other contexts where the same expressions might apply.
Conceptualize in detail and broadly	Make distinctions, compare and categorize Synthesize information	Categorize expressions by function and situation. Conduct a cross-cultural comparative analysis of a communicative act.

Tab. 2. Cognitive strategies and functions for learning pragmatics (Taguchi 2018, 60).

Therefore, bilingual dialogues such as those in *Firste Fruites* were an excellent resource for a strategic early modern language learner to acquire, as they allow for the "observation of communicative acts" and

provide a framework for "participating in communicative acts" (Table 1). Furthermore, the dialogues' bilingual nature promotes both deductive and inductive reasoning and the "cross-cultural comparative analysis of a communicative act" (Table 2). The structure of the text, which divides the dialogues by communicative function or situation, further encourages cognitive strategies such as categorisation "by function and situation" (Table 2).

5. *Firste Fruites'* pragmatic features and their didactic functions

5.1. Pronoun shift

Florio's *Firste Fruites* provides a vital snapshot of the T/V pronoun system in the late 1500s, both in English and Italian. Studies in English historical pragmatics have paid much attention to the complex and fluctuating values of the second person pronouns 'you' and 'thou' in Early Modern English.[10] Indeed the English pronominal system "was in flux in the early modern period. The T/Y distinction still existed, but it was not the same as in the previous period, and scholars have tried to detect regularities of a different kind" (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013, 83). Busse's study of pronominal and nominal address terms in Shakespeare revealed that terms of endearment (chuck, heart love, etc) co-occurred most frequently with *thou*, followed by terms of abuse (devil, dog, fool, etc); while *you* co-occurred with kinship terms (cousin, father, etc) and titles of occupation or rank (nurse, Your Grace, etc.; Busse 2003, 214). Essentially, the study reveals the link between the use of *you* for courtesy and *thou* for both abuse and endearment. An attentive examination of *Firste Fruites* reveals further information about the pronominal system and its social functions, as demonstrated in the following dialogue (from chapter 17 "To talke in the darke").

HO la, chi vala.	HO, ho, who goeth there?
Io sono vostro amico.	I am your friend.
Come è il vostro nome?	What is your name:
Io son chiamato A.	I am called A.

[10] Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013; Busse 2003; van Dorst 2019, 29–45; for a comprehensive summary scholarly work on the English T-V pronoun system see Pasquali 2024, 19–56.

Voi sete il ben trouato.	You are wel met.
Cosi sete anchora voi.	And so be you also.
Perdonatemi, che non vi conscea.	Pardon me, for I knew you not.
Io ve lo credo certo.	I beleue you certis.
…	…
Orsu entriamo in casa.	Wel, let vs go into the house.
Entrate voi prima.	Enter you first.
Perdonatemi io non voglio.	Pardon me, I wil not.
Orsu, che acade tante ceremonie.	Wel, what neede so many ceremonies?
Apri la porta seruitore.	Open the doore seruant.
Io son qui signor.	I am here sir.
E stato qui nessuno a domandar di me?	Hath any body beene here to aske for me?
Non che io sapia signore.	Not that I know sir.
E chi lo sa dunche?	Who knoweth it then?
Doue sei tu stato?	Where hast thou ben?
Io sono stato fuora.	I haue been foorth.
Orsu, porta vna candela.	Wel bring a candle.
Signore, volete beuere?	Sir, wil you drinke?
Vna coppa di vino.	A cup of wyne.

The GLL, as an attentive, strategic learner (of Italian or of English), employs metacognitive strategies to observe the pragmatic features of L2 in these dialogues, paying attention to the pronoun shift (diaphasic variation) when the addressee is a servant and not a gentleman. Even the unknown person at the beginning of the dialogue is spoken to using the *you* and *voi* forms, implying the preferential usage of *you* which, as Wales states, "increasingly encroached on the territory of the thou-form, so that the distinction between 'polite' and 'non-polite' usage came gradually to be replaced by [...] 'ordinary' or 'unmarked' versus 'special' or 'marked'" (Wales 1983, 116–117). Indeed, as the you-form gained traction, it led to an increasing dispreference for the thou-form, which was acquiring a certain stigma (Ibid., 117–120).

In an English Linguistics course I teach to first-year BA students, I introduced these extracts as part of a module on the history and development of the English language. Students were first shown the dialogue above and then asked to note the deictic person elements (use of personal pronouns and verb person). After the noticing task, their observations were elicited and discussed, including references to their

prior knowledge of the thou- and you-forms. Students reasoned from context, using the Italian translation as a bridge text and engaging in contrastive analysis to understand the pronoun switch they had observed in the dialogue. The synoptic nature of the dialogues (English and Italian presented alongside one another in parallel columns) proved an invaluable resource in this context. My students actively engaged in inductive and deductive reasoning, comparing the use of the Italian *voi* with the English you-form and the use of *tu* with the thou-form and arriving at, initially simple, metapragmatic conclusions such as "*you* is polite; *thou* is less polite or rude". While the results of this input were not measured empirically, it produced observable instances of conscious noticing of diaphasic variation in the synoptic dialogue. Thus, Florio's text still provides didactically useful meta-pragmatic input enhancement for language learners. In this instance, the utility of the text was observed in the instruction of italophone ESL learners; however, given its synoptic structure and Florio's original target learners (anglophone learners of Italian as FL), there is ample reason to assume that a similar implementation of the input enhancement for students of Italian may be equally successful.

Furthermore, in Florio's text, the implicit input given in the dialogues is followed up by explicit instruction in the grammatical appendix to the text, titled "Necessarie rules, for Englishmen to learne to reade, speake, and write true Italian", under the heading "Of the persons":

> Also you are to note, that sometymes we speake vnto the second person, euen as it were the third, attributing vnto it, as it were an honourable or woorshipful title, saying, Lasignoria vostra, laeccelentia vostra, or els, la maesta vostra, that is to say, your Lordship, your excellencie, or els your maiestie, and suche like, I leaue to speake of many suche odde litle parcels, whiche are more tedious then necessary, especially vnto the begynners. As for those things that are pertinent vnto the mutable part are the Genders, the Cases, the signes of Cases, and the Articles (Florio 1578, 116).

In Florio's explanation, the you-form (insomuch as it is considered equivalent to *voi*) is, therefore, explicitly associated with deference and respect (negative politeness) due to questions of rank and relative power. While the thou-form is not openly discussed as being marked for impoliteness, the third dialogue in section 5.2 may be considered

evidence of such a use at this time. Notably, in the previous dialogue *you* is directed towards the unknown speaker, presumably to avoid inadvertently "withholding politeness"—an example of *you* being used to attend to the interlocutor's negative face wants. Such examples of pronoun use given in the dialogues are duly accompanied by metapragmatic explanations to aid the learner. The GLL may have already noted the pronoun shift in the dialogue, while for learners who had not observed the T/V variance, they provide the necessary information to develop an overt pragmatic awareness of the T/V forms in Italian. The explicit input and meta-pragmatic reasoning are, of course, vital in converting input to uptake.

5.2. (Im)politeness

Throughout the text most terms of address are mirrored with their equivalents in the other language. "Sir" is widely used for *signore*; "madam" or "lady" for *signora*, etc. However, I have identified a few exceptions, where the nominal address "sir" is present only in the English text. The following examples are from chapter 17:

Se vi mancha qualcosa chiamate il seruitore.	If you lacke any thing *sir*, cal . the seruant
A che hora leuate voi la matina, ditemi.	What tyme rise you *sir* in the morning? tel me.

In this exchange the appropriate honorific nominal address term "sir" is used in the English, but its equivalent "signore" does not appear in the Italian. While this may be a mere error or oversight, it is possible that the use of the *voi* form in Italian is deemed courteous enough not to require further negative politeness markers such as the use of honorific address terms. If this were the case, it may signal that the *you* form was transitioning into a less-marked form, eventually becoming the neutral standard form now used in contemporary English, thus necessitating the use of the honorific to match the level of politeness encoded in the Italian *voi*-form. This exchange, with its attention to politeness conventions (attending to the others' wants, etc.), is typical of the courteous socio-pragmatic behaviour which Florio exemplifies for the user of his conversational manual.

Given what is noted in section 5.1 and considering that the primary function of conversation manuals is to instruct learners in courteous

speech, it is not surprising to note that the *thou* form is used sparingly in the dialogues proper. Yet, the *thou* form is not absent from the text as a whole; its use is mainly distributed across other sections of the work. Florio uses it himself in the dedication "Unto the friendly courteous, and indifferent reader" ("I here present to *thee* my first fruites..."), while the *you* form is used in the dedication to Robert Dudley; arguably representing solidarity and deference, respectively. There are some further uses of *thou* forms in the "poems in praise", and it is used widely in the proverbs. However, it occurs only a handful of times in the didactic dialogues themselves; one such example is the pronoun shift explored in the extract from chapter 17 (above). In another instance from chapter 14 ('parlar amoroso'), two friends are discussing unrequited love, the first uses *thou* (and correspondingly *tu* in the Italian), but the form is not reciprocated.

O Caro amico, io ti prego,	OH my deare friend, I pray
che tu mi voglia aiutare	thee that thou wylt helpe me.
Volentieri, ma che aiuto volete	Gladly, but what helpe wil you
hauere? che cosa vi mancha?	haue? what lacke you?

The friend, in his response, switches to *you* and the first speaker follows suit, so the *thou* form is not used again until the recitation of a proverb at the end of the dialogue. Perhaps the first speaker overestimated the intimacy of the relationship? Or perhaps the second speaker failed to recognise the solidarity intentions in his interlocutor's use of the *thou* from? However, there are too few clues from the text to warrant conclusive statements about the politeness strategies at play in this particular case.

In contrast, the following example (from Chapter 16 "parlar familaire") shows a marked form of *thou* which could be considered verbal abuse.

Sei tu mai stato fori de Inghilterra?	Hast thou beene out of England?
Signor no, ma ci voglio ire.	No sir, but I wil go.
Ma quando?	But when?
Quando piace a Dio.	When it pleaseth God.
Sai tu parlar Italiano?	Canst thou speake Italian?
Io non parlo senon Inglese.	I speake but English.
Impara minchion che tu sei.	Learne foole as thou art.
Io vorei imparare se io potessi, ma io non posso.	I would learne if I could, but I can not.

Here, the *thou* form can be considered marked; initially, it may seem to be an instance of withholding politeness. However, the impoliteness is made evident through the use of an insult "minchion", translated here as "foole" [positive impoliteness: call the other names, use taboo words; violation of the Approbation Maxim: giving an unfavourable value to O's qualities, insulting]. A search of the text in EEBO reveals that this is the only use of the form "minchion" in the Italian text. However, "foole" and "foolish" are present a couple of dozen times and are mostly translated as either "matto" or "pazo" (crazy, mad). Here, the strategic early modern language learner must recognise the insult and note the use of the *thou*/*tu* forms within the exchange in order to understand the impolite tone of the text. It is unclear whether the learner of Italian would recognise the relative force and phallic etymology[11] of "minchion" when "fool" is given as its corresponding English term.

However, it can be argued that by including such a dialogue, Florio considered linguistic impoliteness as part of the communicative skills that the language instructor should aim to impart. This is still a matter of debate in ILP, and while there have been many studies on the explicit and implicit instruction in matters of politeness "research on the learning of impolite behaviour is scarce", indeed "rather than teaching students how to be rude in the target language, studies in TL impoliteness have examined how learners can be prepared to negotiate uncomfortable situations" (Félix-Brasdefer and Mugford 2017, 495). Such preparation to engage with and defuse impolite behaviour usually involves scripted roleplay, a classroom technique which is notably not dissimilar to the didactic methods of John Florio. As Bousfield once remarked, "impoliteness constitutes the communication of *intentionally* gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts which are *purposefully* delivered" (Bousfield 2008, 72). More recently, impoliteness scholars, including Bousfield, have espoused a more nuanced approach to interactional impoliteness which moves away from the field's initial focus on speaker intentionality due to factors such as the possibility of unintentionally causing offence.[12] However, I postulate that the *possibility* of such intentionality nonetheless exists within both

---

[11] Sanga notes the term as part of set of words meaning "penis" which undergo a semantic shift towards the meaning of *scioccio* (idiot); Sanga 2016, 529–538.

[12] See Culpeper and Hardarker 2017, 203–204 for a summary of developments around the notion of intentionality. I wish to thank the anonymous reviewer for the precision and erudition of their review in helping me better clarify this point and others.

politeness and impoliteness. I argue, therefore, that competent users should be afforded the opportunity to choose to tailor their linguistic production to reflect their intentions and attitudes regarding the situation at hand. Surely, if language users are unable to cause offence when they wish to, then they are lacking a necessary—if nasty—linguistic resource. Florio, too, seems to believe in exposing students to examples of discourteous interaction with the purpose of fleshing out the learner's interactional experiences and linguistic resources.

5.3. Discourse markers

Discourse markers[13] (DMs) are particles of speech that convey pragmatic and discursive meanings, rather than semantic meaning. They orient the discourse in terms of its cohesion and coherence. Among other functions, they may be used to initiate discourse, shift topics, hold or concede the floor, provide backchannelling, responses, and reactions. *Firste Fruites* contains a glossary of discourse markers, which are listed in the section "Of the Coniunction" and are interspersed with conjunctions. Although a thorough quantitative analysis would, no doubt, prove very insightful, some preliminary searches reveal that Florio tends to translate DMs in a somewhat fixed manner: "wel" is mostly "orsu" (Chapter 4: Orsu pigliate li |wel take them; Chapter 6: Orsu aspettate mi |Wel tary for me), "alas" is typically "oime" (Chapter 14: Oime Fratello…|Alas brother…; Oime se bene lui e vn putto…|Alas, for al that he is but a boy…) and "Oh" is generally rendered "O" (as in Chapter 14, cited above).

However, some DMs (such as "oibo" translated with "fy", or "Deh no" given as "fie no") occur exclusively in the glossary and lack, therefore, concrete examples of their use and function in discourse within the communicative situations given. Indeed, the same DMs are used repeatedly throughout the text (there is a prevalence of use of "wel" corresponding to "orsu"). The lack of contextualisation of other DMs within the dialogues and the repeated use of the same forms would, presumably, lead even a strategic learner to employ a preponderance of the more common forms and to be less familiar with the other, less-exemplified forms.

---

[13] For a comprehensive yet concise summary of studies in discourse markers, covering the various labels they have been given and their relevance to the study of early modern texts, see Ciambella 2024, 41–50.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to explore how Florio's *Firste Fruites* functioned as pedagogical resources for acquiring pragmatic competence in language learning, with a particular focus on linguistic (im)politeness, discourse markers and social deixis.

The historical pragmatic analysis of the model conversations in Italian and English considered the overlapping and contrasting pragmatic conventions of the two languages in the 1500s. The dialogues reveal the politeness implications of the T/V and T/Y variance in Italian and English in the late 1500s. Not only is this evidence available in the speech-oriented dialogues themselves but it is further amplified and made explicit through the meta-pragmatic reflection of the grammatical appendix.

The analysis conducted has outlined how the representation and explanation of such interactional strategies served as linguistic input for the early modern language learner. This sheds new light on the history of FLT and SLA. Communicative competence has been an aim in language acquisition and language instruction for a long time. Perhaps the teaching tools of the past and the attention paid to pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic functions of language within didactic materials can enliven and inspire our modern methodologies. Furthermore, Florio's inclusion of (im)politeness as part of the communicative skillset entailed within language learning brings us to question whether contemporary language teaching can include models of (im)politeness in order to encourage genuine, functional proficiency, which must include the possibility of intentionally and successfully engaging in impolite exchanges.

Furthermore, Florio's conversation manual, like other bilingual language texts of the period, shows the use of the L1 in the early modern L2 classroom. A recent and growing trend in studies in language education is the overwhelmingly positive assessment of the selective and strategic use of L1 in FL Teaching (Cook 2001, 402–423; Hall and Cook 2012, 271–308; Shin et al. 2020, 406–419). In my own teaching, partially inspired by undertaking an analysis of *Firste Fruites*, I have begun to reevaluate the use of the L1. I believe that in advanced adult learner contexts (such as University language courses), it may be the most expedient and beneficial means of stimulating contrastive meta-pragmatic reflection. Such metalinguistic thinking, drawing from

available linguistic resources (L1 and/or Ln), invites students to engage in deductive and inductive reasoning, which will equip them to become more strategic learners.

Furthermore, early modern texts, like the one examined here, are shown to be valuable in teaching pragmatic competence. Certainly, they should not be neglected in the instruction of tertiary-level students of English, who should be equipped to engage with and understand English in its multifaceted forms, understanding diachronic variations and the pragmatic subtleties of communicative exchanges. Ciambella's recent publication includes excellent ideas on teaching pragmatic competence through Shakespearean drama, for example (Ciambella 2024).

Some further directions which were beyond the scope of the present study but which merit further discussion may include: mapping the use patterns of DMs, and T/V variation with the aid of corpus linguistic tools; expanding the analysis to other texts by Florio and his contemporaries to better understand early modern trends in teaching pragmatic competence; the empirical study of the use of early modern texts in contemporary university language and linguistics courses.

Bibliography

Bousfield, D. (2008), *Impoliteness in Interaction*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.

Brown, P. and Levinson, S. (1978), *Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena* in E.N. Goody (ed.) *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 56–289.

Brown, P. and Levinson, S. (1987), *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Busse, U. (2003), *The Co-Occurrence of Nominal and Pronominal Address Froms in the Shakespeare Corpus*, in I. Taavitsainen and A.H. Jucker (eds), *Diachronic Perspectives on Address Term Systems*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.

Ciambella, F. (2024), *Teaching English as a Second Language with Shakespeare*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Cook, V. (2016), *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*, 5th ed., New York Routledge, London.

Cook, V. (2001), *Using the First Language in the Classroom*, in "The Canadian Modern Language Review", 57, 3, pp. 402–423.

Crystal, D. (1997), *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Culpeper, J. (1996), *Towards an Anatomy of Impoliteness*, in "Journal of Pragmatics", 25, 3, pp. 349–367.

Culpeper, J. and Kytö, M. (2010), *Early Modern English Dialogues: Spoken Interaction as Writing*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Culpeper, J. and Hardarker, C. (2017), *Impoliteness*, in J. Culpeper et al. (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Linguistic (Im)Politeness,* Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 199–222.

Culpeper, J. et al. (eds) (2017), *The Palgrave Handbook of Linguistic (Im)Politeness*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Del Villano, B. (2018), *Using the Devil with Courtesy: Shakespeare and the Language of (Im)Politeness*, Peter Lang, Bern.

van Dorst, I. (2019), *You, Thou and Thee: A Statistical Analysis of Shakespeare's Use of Pronominal Address Terms*, in "Contributions to Contemporary History", 59, 1, pp. 29–45.

Council of Europe (2020), *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Companion Volume*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Félix-Brasdefer, J.C. and Mugford, G. (2017), *(Im)Politeness: Learning and Teaching*, in J. Culpeper et al. (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Linguistic (Im) Politeness*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 489–516.

Florio, J. (1578), *Florio his firste fruites which yeelde familiar speech, merie prouerbes, wittie sentences, and golden sayings. Also a perfect induction to the Italian, and English tongues, Imprinted at the three Cranes in the Vintree, by Thomas Dawson, for Thomas Woodcocke*, London.

Gallagher, J. (2019), *Learning Languages in Early Modern England*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Gallagher, J. (2019), *"To Heare It by Mouth": Speech and Accent in Early Modern Language Learning,* in *Huntington Library Quarterly,* 82, 1, pp. 63–87.

Hall, G. and Cook, G. (2012), *Own-Language Use in Language Teaching and Learning*, in "Language Teaching", 45, 3, pp. 271–308.

Jucker, A.H. and Taavitsainen, I. (2013), *English Historical Pragmatics*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Kasper, G. (2022), *Interlanguage Pragmatics,* in *Handbook of Pragmatics Online,* John Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 808–819, available at: <https://benjamins.com/online/hop/articles/int4> (last accessed 16 November 2024).

Leech, G. (1983), *Principles of Pragmatics*, Longman, New York.

Leech, G. (2014), *The Pragmatics of Politeness*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Montini, D. (2008), *John/Giovanni: Florio mezzano e intercessore della lingua italiana,* in "Memoria di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies", 6, pp. 47–59.

Montini, D. (2011), *Teaching Italian as a Foreign Language: Notes on Linguistic and Pragmatic Strategies in Florio's Fruits*, in "Textus", 24, pp. 517–536.

O'Connor, D. (2004), *Florio, John (1553-1625)*, in H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Oxford, R.L. (2001), *Language Learning Strategies*, in D. Nunan and R. Carter (eds), *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 166–172.

Oxford, R.L. (2011), *Strategies for Learning a Second or Foreign Language*, in "Language Teaching", 44, 2, pp. 167–180.

Pasquali, E. (2024), *Early Modern English Trials: Pragmatic Influences on Thou and You*, Paolo Loffredo, Naples.

Pfister, M. (2009), *John/Giovanni Florio: The Translator as Go-Between*, in A. Chantler and C. Dente (eds), Brill, Leiden, pp. 185–202.

Richards, J. (2019), *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance: A New History of Reading*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Richards, J. and Wistreich, R. (2019), *Introduction: Voicing Text 1500–1700,* in "Huntington Library Quarterly", 82, 1, pp. 3–16.

Richardson, B. (2010), *'Varie Maniere Di Parlare': Aspects of Learning Italian in Renaissance Italy and Britain*, in "The Italianist", 30, 2, pp. 78–94.

Rose, K.R. and Kasper, G. (eds) (2001), *Pragmatics in Language Teaching*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Sanga, G. (2016), *L'etimologia gergale*, in L. D'Onghia and L. Tomasin (eds), *Etimologia e storia delle parole: Atti del XII convegno ASLI Associazione per la Storia della Lingua Italiana (Firenze, Accademia Della Crusca, 3-5 Novembre 2016)*, Franco Cesati Editore, Firenze, pp. 529–538.

Shin, J.Y. et al. (2020), *An Updated Review on Use of L1 in Foreign Language Classrooms*, in "Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development", 41, 5, pp. 406–419.

Taguchi, N. (2018), *Pragmatic Competence in Foreign Language Education: Cultivating Learner Autonomy and Strategic Learning of Pragmatics*, in I. Walker et al. (eds), *New Perspectives on the Development of Communicative and Related Competence in Foreign Language Education*, De Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 53–70.

Takahashi, S. (2001), *The Role of Input Enhancement in Developing Pragmatic Competence,* in K.R. Rose and G. Kasper (eds), *Pragmatics in Language Teaching*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 171–199.

Villani, S. (2023), *Wotton e l'Italia: alcune note sulle dediche ad Henry Wotton di* Fonti toscani *di Orazio Lombardelli e di* Morte innamorata *di Fabio Glissenti*, in "Bruniana e Campanelliana", 1, pp. 69–88.

Wales, K. (1983), *Thou and You in Early Modern English: Brown and Gilman Re-Appraised,* in "Studia Linguistica", 37, 2, pp. 107–125.

Cosmopolitan Vernaculars: Mapping the Connections Between Florio's Language Manuals and Early Modern Printed Plays

Francesca Forlini

Introduction

The intricate relationship between the linguistic world of John Florio and William Shakespeare has long intrigued scholars, who have sought to draw parallels between their lives, works, and the cultural influences that shaped early modern England. In 1747, William Warburton made a provocative suggestion in his annotated edition of Shakespeare's works, claiming that the character Holofernes from *Love's Labour's Lost* was inspired by John Florio[1]. Although speculative, Warburton's assertion opened a line of inquiry that has continued to capture critical attention, encouraging scholars to investigate potential connections between the two figures from both biographical and textual perspectives. As Sergio Costola and Michael Saenger point out in *Shylock's Venice and the Grammar of the Modern City* (2014), this fascination has taken two primary forms: on one hand, the search for biographical intersections such as shared social networks and patronage systems, and on the other, intertextual explorations of linguistic borrowings, stylistic echoes, and thematic correspondences.

Classic studies by Clara Longworth Chambrun (1921), Frances Yates (1934, 1936), Carlo Maria Franzero (1969), Mario Praz (1954), and Rinaldo C. Simonini (1952) have explored Florio's pivotal role as a mediator of Italian humanistic culture, and more recently, scholars such

[1] "By Holofernes is designed a particular character, a pedant and schoolmaster of our author's time, one John Florio, a teacher of the Italian tongue in London […]. From the ferocity of this man's temper it was that Shakespear chose for him the name that Rabelais gives to his Pedant of Thubal Holoferne"; see Warburton and Pope 1747, 227–228.

as Jason Lawrence (2005) and Donatella Montini (2015) have highlighted the rhetorical, dialogic, and lexical features of his texts as possible points of contact with Shakespearean drama. However, despite this sustained scholarly interest, no conclusive evidence has been uncovered to support a direct influence of Florio on Shakespeare's plays or life, let alone the more radical theories of co-authorship or identity. These remain intriguing but ultimately unproven hypotheses. In contrast to these biographical speculations, Florio's *Firste Fruites* (1578) and *Second Frutes* (1591), bilingual instructional dialogues designed to teach Italian through interactive speech, offer a more concrete field for textual comparison.

Scholars such as Warren Boutcher (2002) have already remarked the "theatricality" and "dramatic potential" of these language-learning publications. Yet, while much attention has been paid to potential ties between Florio and Shakespeare, less work has considered how Florio's manuals resonate within the broader theatrical and editorial culture of early modern England. In particular, there remains a notable gap in scholarship concerning the formal and typographical strategies shared by Florio's printed dialogues and early modern printed plays, especially in their layout, dialogic structure, and emphasis on spoken interaction. Key studies by Michael Wyatt (2005) and Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (2014) suggest the need to expand the focus, considering Florio's texts not just as didactic instruments, but as cultural artifacts that contribute to a shared vernacular performance culture.

This article aims to begin filling that gap by examining the affinities between Florio's bilingual manuals and early modern printed plays, with particular attention to mise-en-page, dialogic rhythm, and the dramatization of language on the page. Rather than positing a direct influence or transmission, the argument centers on converging textual practices, common to both the language-learning genre and the theatrical print tradition, that reflect broader tendencies in Elizabethan approaches to oral pedagogy, linguistic authority, and the performance of vernacular speech in print.

As Susanne Bayerlipp (2013) has shown, Florio's pedagogical and lexicographic work was deeply embedded in the debates on linguistic authority and the cultural prestige of the Italian language. Her reading of *Firste Fruites* and *Second Frutes* highlights how these texts engage with Italian humanistic traditions while addressing an English readership, positioning Florio as a key mediator of transnational language ideolo-

gies in Elizabethan England. Building on these premises, this contribution investigates the textual, visual, and cultural convergences between John Florio's bilingual manuals and early modern printed plays. While traditionally situated within the realm of language pedagogy, Florio's *Firste Fruites* (1578) and *Second Frutes* (1591) can also be read as cosmopolitan print artifacts, embedded in a broader transnational network of linguistic exchange and cultural negotiation. Viewed through the lens of print culture and early dramatic literature, these works participate in a shared logic of performance and vernacular literacy that complicates the nationalist framing of early modern English drama.

The aim of this article is not to claim a direct influence of Florio on the formatting of early modern drama, but rather to identify and contextualize points of formal and functional affinity that reflect broader editorial practices and a common performative ethos. By analysing mise-en-page strategies, dialogic structures, and paratextual choices, the article seeks to demonstrate how Florio's manuals and early printed plays can be understood as parallel responses to the same cultural and technological pressures: the need to render speech visible, to guide performative reading, and to engage a multilingual readership.

The first section of the analysis investigates how the typographical design and visual architecture of Florio's manuals align with broader trends in early modern printed drama. By adopting and adapting specific mise-en-page strategies such as parallel columns, speaker labels, and typographic segmentation, Florio's publications respond to a culture in which the page was increasingly conceived as a site of performance. The second section considers the emergence of typographic conventions that came to define printed drama as a genre in its own right. Although Florio was not a playwright, his manuals reveal a striking attentiveness to the expressive possibilities of print, including speaker identification, dialogic rhythm, and paratextual framing. While some of the dramatists whose printed works would later exemplify these conventions—such as Ben Jonson, John Marston, and Thomas Middleton—rose to prominence after the publication of *Firste Fruites* and *Second Frutes*, Florio's rhetorical and material choices anticipate or parallel features of their editorial design. This suggests a conscious effort to situate himself among the literary and intellectual elite of multilingual England, and to participate in the evolving print culture that shaped early modern drama. Finally, the third section explores the role of marginalia and multilingual reader address in shaping the participa-

tory and performative dimensions of Florio's texts. These elements illustrate how the manuals served not only as tools for language acquisition, but also as platforms for cultural mediation, bridging pedagogical, theatrical, and editorial practices. In doing so, they invite us to reframe early modern printed plays as products of a shared, transnational print culture, shaped by overlapping influences and textual strategies that extended well beyond national and generic boundaries.

1. Cosmopolitan print: Typography and multilingualism in Early Modern England

The development of English print culture was shaped by transnational exchanges from its very inception. A striking emblem of this is William Caxton's *Recuyell of the Hystoryes of Troye*, the first book ever printed in the English language, produced not in England but in Bruges in 1473. As Anne Coldiron argues in *Printers Without Borders* (2015), such examples reveal the early stages of "englishing", the adaptation of continental texts for English readers, a process that defined much of England's early literary formation. Coldiron emphasizes the importance of translation and multilingual mediation in shaping English literary identity, underscoring how printers and translators functioned as cultural agents operating across linguistic and political boundaries.

John Florio's work must be situated within this cosmopolitan print ecology, where English interacted dynamically with other vernaculars, especially Italian. Conceived as language-learning tools, his *Firste Fruites* (1578) and *Second Frutes* (1591) were also typographically sophisticated texts embedded in a broader landscape of multilingual publication. Florio's engagement with typographic design, reader interaction, and polyglot textuality aligns him with printers and editors who were shaping not only language acquisition but also performative reading practices. To frame this complexity, the concept of the "cosmopolitan vernacular" proves useful. Originating in postcolonial and comparative philological studies, the term refers to the dynamic space where non-classical languages interact, compete, and co-exist often in textual forms that blend instructional, literary, and performative functions. When applied to the Renaissance print context, this concept helps illuminate how vernacular languages such as Italian and English cohabited the printed page, especially in dialogic and paratextual configurations. Understanding Florio's work through the lens of cosmo-

politan vernaculars reveals how his language manuals operated not merely as instructional tools, but as participants in a broader cultural dialogue, one that challenged and expanded conventional notions of vernacular authority and textual practice in early modern England. Situating these texts within the multilingual framework of early modern England allows us to better appreciate their role in fostering the interplay of languages, ideas, and pedagogical practices that shaped the period's literary production.

This approach also draws attention to the material and textual features of Florio's manuals—such as layout and dialogic formatting—which offer tangible evidence of how vernaculars interacted and were perceived by contemporary readers. Moreover, the concept of the cosmopolitan vernacular contributes to reorienting the analysis of early modern texts away from narrowly national frameworks, toward a perspective that foregrounds linguistic hybridity and cultural exchange as defining features of early modern textual production across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Florio's manuals thus emerge as emblematic of a literary culture not bounded by linguistic insularity, but actively shaped by transnational flows and the dynamic coexistence of multiple vernaculars within the English print tradition.

Recent developments in both fields support this interpretive model. Since Elizabeth Eisenstein's seminal studies (1979), print has been re-examined not only as a technological revolution but as a cultural process, shaped by agents, networks, and readerships. Scholars such as Adrian Johns (1998) and Roger Chartier (2007) have emphasized the social history of texts, while translation theorists like Susan Bassnett (2002) and Douglas Robinson (2002) have interrogated the role of translation in reconfiguring authorship, genre, and national canons. In this context, Florio stands out as a cultural mediator: his manuals illustrate how multilingual literacy, shaped by material design and typographic practice, contributed to the formation of early modern English identity as inherently dialogic and transnational. Key collaborative initiatives such as the Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC) and the Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Project (RCCP) further underline the centrality of translation and multilingual print in shaping Renaissance literary culture. Florio's contribution belongs fully within this framework, exemplifying how typographic and linguistic strategies combined to create texts that were not merely about learning Italian, but about performing cosmopolitanism in print.

The rise of national languages in fields traditionally dominated by Latin was a prominent cross-European trend in the early modern period. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries marked a significant shift in the production, consumption, and distribution of texts. As Montini (2016) notes, this transformation profoundly influenced Elizabethan England, aided by the circulation of translations, dictionaries, grammars, and language guides. These texts acted "as a major conduit of knowledge transfer, cultural cross-fertilization, and religious, social, and economic transformation". John Florio's contributions exemplify this dynamic, illustrating how linguistic and cultural practices were deeply intertwined in shaping English culture and literature during this period.

Literary historian Michael Wyatt underscores the importance of Italian exiles in Elizabethan London, who brought with them cultural practices that would influence English society. Engagement with Italian language and culture was perceived as fostering an imagined connection with Italy, a nation defined more by cultural identity than political unity. This context shaped the reception and production of bilingual manuals like Florio's, which exemplify contrastive linguistic analysis in language instruction (Di Martino 1999). Primarily conversational in form, Florio's manuals adopted a synoptic layout, placing Italian on the left and English on the right, thus encouraging direct linguistic comparisons that served both didactic and translational purposes.

Florio's life and work reflect a complex negotiation between linguistic and cultural identities. As an Italian-English lexicographer and cultural mediator working in Elizabethan England, he described himself as "Praelector Linguae Italicae" and "Italus ore, Anglus pectore". His signatures also alternated between "G.F." and "I/J.F.", revealing his bilingual consciousness (Montini 2008). Florio's oeuvre bridges two cultural worlds, aiming to introduce Italian humanistic traditions to English readers. While his dictionaries—*A World of Words* (1598) and *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (1611)—attest to his commitment to enriching the English lexicon, his instructional dialogues, *Firste Fruites* and *Second Frutes*, go beyond language teaching, exemplifying the cosmopolitan vernaculars that characterized early modern England. An analysis of their typographic and visual structures reveals how Florio staged linguistic interactions and crafted texts that simulated real-world exchanges, blending pedagogical utility with rhetorical and stylistic sophistication.

In analysing Florio's manuals as expressions of cosmopolitan vernaculars, typography emerges as a crucial element. Scholars such as Stephen Galbraith and Anne Coldiron have shown how early modern multilingual books distinguished languages through typeface: blackletter for German or English, italic for Italian, and roman for French or Latin. This typographical differentiation helped readers visually navigate multilingual texts. For instance, in *The Execution of Justice in England* (1583), William Cecil printed each edition in the typeface most familiar to its intended audience. Such practices demonstrate that translation in the early modern period involved not only the conversion of language, but also the visual adaptation of the text to align with readers' expectations. While typographic variation in early modern publications often served broader aesthetic or practical purposes, its use in dictionaries and language manuals frequently carried specific linguistic significance.

Florio's *Firste Fruites* employed similar typographical strategies. Italian sentences appeared in italic, while English translations were set in roman type, facilitating side-by-side comparison. The two-column layout exemplified a structured approach, echoing Coldiron's observation that facing-page translations engage the reader by making the act of translation an integral part of reading. While this format was not uncommon, Florio's typographical choices are distinctive in how they reflect his role as a cultural mediator, bridging Italian and English linguistic traditions through visual design. The attention devoted to the visual arrangement of Florio's manuals was not merely aesthetic, but also served a clear didactic purpose. His use of differentiated typefaces reinforced the prevailing belief that effective learning depended on the clarity of textual presentation. In this, Florio's work aligns with broader European trends that saw typography as a key tool in guiding readers through complex multilingual material.

The significance of these typographical decisions becomes even clearer when compared with other language manuals of the time, such as John Thorius's *The Spanish Grammar* (1590), the first manual for learning Spanish to be published in London. Printed by John Wolfe, the book combines English, Spanish, and French, rendering it both a multilingual text and a work of translation. The manual includes a brief bilingual dictionary, along with sections on pronunciation, parts of speech, verb usage, and conjugation rules. It adapts Antonio del Corro's *Reglas Gramaticales para Aprender la Lengua Española y Francesa*,

initially published in Oxford four years earlier. What makes Wolfe's publication particularly noteworthy is its typographical execution, which exemplifies the sophisticated use of typefaces to denote different languages. In his preface, Thorius notes that "I haue caused it to be printed in three sundry kindes of letters" (Corro 1590, A3v), referring to the use of italic, roman, and blackletter to distinguish French, Spanish, and English, respectively. This visual separation served a practical function: it facilitated the reader's navigation of linguistic complexity, highlighting the pedagogical role of typographic differentiation in language instruction. The typographical strategies evident in *The Spanish Grammar* also reflect the broader context of England's culture of linguistic education, extended here to include Spanish at a politically charged moment, just two years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The manual paved the way for subsequent bilingual Spanish–English dictionaries compiled by figures such as Richard Perceval and John Minsheu, illustrating the sustained interest in multilingual education and the growing recognition of visual design as a key component of textual comprehension.

A more widespread example of typographical differentiation in the early modern period is found in Noel de Berlaimont's *Colloquia et Dictionariolum*, a language manual that appeared in over 150 editions across nearly three centuries, beginning in the 1520s. This work featured up to eight languages in parallel columns, producing what Anne Coldiron describes as a "compressed translation" (Coldiron 2015, 26), in which multiple vernaculars coexist within a single spatial framework. The use of distinct typefaces and typographical borders in the *Colloquia* was essential for directing the reader's attention to individual languages, highlighting the sophisticated visual strategies devised to facilitate multilingual reading. In its extended versions, the *Colloquia* included a wide range of materials: practical guides to letter writing, pronunciation treatises, a concise dictionary arranged by Dutch entries, and seven dialogues covering topics from home furnishings to market transactions and dining etiquette. These dialogues were designed for merchants, travellers, and others who required functional, everyday communication across languages. The inclusion of formats such as the 10º (decimo) further underscores how early modern language manuals sought to immerse learners in practical, lived linguistic contexts.

The examples of Berlaimont's *Colloquia,* Thorius's *The Spanish Grammar*, and Cecil's *The Execution of Justice* in England provide

valuable comparative context for understanding the typographic and dialogic innovations in Florio's *Firste Fruites*. These early modern language-learning texts share a number of features—structured dialogues, typographic differentiation, and multilingual presentation—that frame Florio's contribution within a broader tradition. Although these texts vary in chronology and complexity, they illustrate a shared set of pedagogical and typographic strategies across a multilingual print tradition. In Firste Fruites, we see these techniques deployed with distinctive purpose. Although less complex in design, Florio's use of dialogic structure and typographic distinction parallels broader tendencies in manuals such as Berlaimont's and Thorius's, illustrating how language pedagogy adapted to various audiences and formats.

By incorporating context-driven dialogues reminiscent of the *Colloquia* and aligning his text with the performative structure familiar from printed drama, Florio reinforced his role as an educational innovator. His project extended beyond language instruction: it articulated a form of cultural mediation that blended Italian and English linguistic traditions through dialogic and typographic design. This bridging of cultures not only places *Firste Fruites* in continuity with multilingual manuals of the period but also advances their aims through a heightened awareness of performative textuality. In this light, Florio's *Firste Fruites* emerges as more than a pedagogical tool. It becomes an expression of cosmopolitan vernaculars in print, integrating educational function with rhetorical sophistication and performative structure. Situated within this comparative framework, Florio's manuals both reflect and contribute to the cross-cultural dialogue and textual practices that shaped early modern Europe's multilingual literary landscape. As we shall see, these typographic and dialogic strategies are not only central to Florio's manuals, but also resonate with evolving conventions in the printing of dramatic texts, where similar concerns with voice, dialogue, and reader engagement emerged across genres.

2. Florio's language manuals, print culture, and the early print conventions of English drama

As previously discussed, the dialogic structure of Florio's language-learning manuals has attracted scholarly attention for its theatrical qualities. However, most of this attention has focused on their dramatic potential, often overlooking a related but distinct dimension:

the development of typographical conventions that bridged educational and theatrical formats. Unlike purely dramatic features, these conventions introduced structural norms that contributed to the evolving print standards for both plays and instructional texts. Florio's manuals, alongside other dialogic language books, reveal a formative stage in this convergence of print practices. They suggest that early modern conversation manuals were not simply borrowing theatrical models for stylistic effect but were actively involved in a broader shift in how texts were visually organized and presented to readers across genres.

Florio's *Firste Fruites* and *Second Frutes* appeared at a time when printed drama in England was beginning to develop recognizable conventions of textual formatting. Early sixteenth-century printed plays, particularly those rooted in native English traditions, circulated largely in the form of interludes, a genre distinct from the structured comedies and tragedies derived from classical antiquity. However, as classical texts became increasingly available through print, their influence began to shape the format and dramaturgy of English plays. This convergence of native and classical traditions helped create a hybrid medium that engaged both popular and elite audiences. During this period, typographical choices mirrored these shifts. Black-letter type, long associated with English manuscripts and vernacular traditions, remained dominant on play title pages into the 1590s. Early printed plays such as *Ralph Roister Doister* (1566) and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1575) used black-letter type, signalling their connection to native dramatic forms even as Roman type began appearing more frequently in translations and classical imitations.

As classical influence grew, printers increasingly adopted Roman and italic typefaces, especially in titles and paratexts, to evoke scholarly or continental literary associations. This shift is evident in *Gorboduc* (1565), often considered the first English printed tragedy, which combined Senecan structure with typographic hybridity: black-letter for English text and Roman type for Latin. These typographical choices were not merely functional. They also signalled alignment with the aesthetic codes and intellectual prestige of continental literature, distinguishing such works from those that retained a more traditionally English appearance in black letter. The cultural implications of these typographic shifts were far-reaching. As Charles Mish argues, black letter "was often associated with a middle- or lower-class readership", while Roman type "was seen as more refined, aligning with the tastes

and literacy levels of the educated, upper-class audience" (Mish 1953, 628). Mish further notes that black letter "can be used as a determining criterion [...] to decide for which audience, upper- or middle-class, a given work was produced" (Mish 1953, 630). Building on this idea, Keith Thomas (1986) observes that in Tudor England black letter was typically used for elementary or widely distributed texts—primers, catechisms, and popular broadsides—thus reinforcing its connection to vernacular, accessible readerships.

This social distinction in typeface choice extended to printed plays as they became more widely disseminated. By the late sixteenth century, plays such as Lyly's *Sappho and Phao* (1584) moved away from black letter, marking Roman type as the emerging typographical standard associated with a "modern" presentation and, implicitly, a more scholarly or cultured readership. By 1591, black letter had largely disappeared from the title pages of printed plays, although it remained in use for works grounded in vernacular traditions, such as *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600). This shift reflected not only considerations of readability but also a broader process of cultural refinement, aligning print drama with the literary tastes of an increasingly educated audience, a process paralleled in Florio's language manuals.

Key studies by Mark Bland (1998) and Zachary Lesser (2006) have deepened our understanding of the implications of these typographical distinctions. Beyond indicating social class, black letter functioned as a marker of cultural identity and nostalgia, reinforcing a sense of English heritage. Bland notes that despite the growing dominance of Roman type, black letter continued to be used in popular genres that emphasized continuity with traditional forms. Lesser further argues that, by the seventeenth century, black letter evoked a sense of "pastness" and a nostalgic "Englishness", constructing an imagined popular culture through the appearance of the text itself. These cultural meanings went beyond legibility, inviting readers to associate particular typefaces with specific identities and communities.

These typographical evolutions coincided with a shift in the textual organization of plays. Early printed drama, especially those rooted in native traditions, rarely adopted formal act and scene divisions. However, as classical models gained influence, printed editions increasingly incorporated features drawn from Latin drama. This hybridization is evident in *Ralph Roister Doister* (1566), which combined vernacular stage directions with structured scene divisions, illustrating a blend of

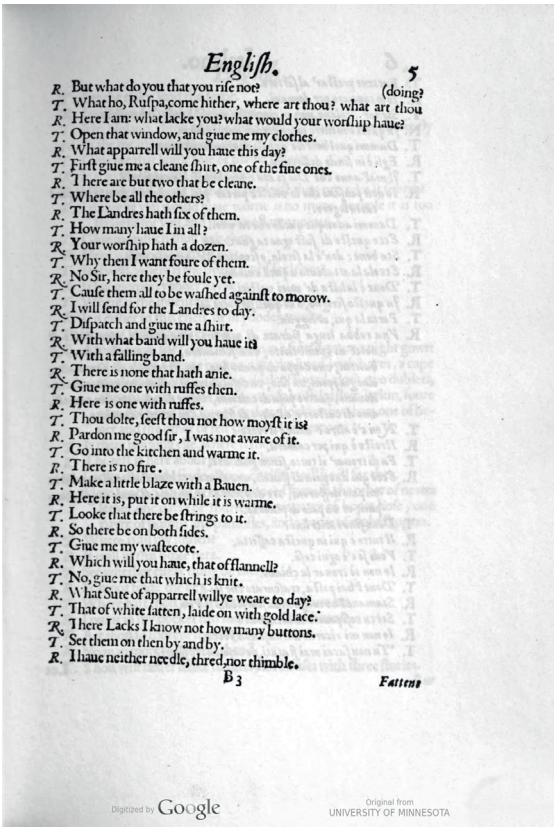
English and classical textual conventions that would shape the printed form of English drama.

By the time Florio published his manuals, these typographic and organizational shifts were well underway. *Firste Fruites* and *Second Frutes* not only employed Roman and italic fonts to distinguish English from Italian, presenting them as complementary yet distinct, but also incorporated layout conventions that paralleled those found in contemporary printed plays. This convergence positions Florio's manuals not only as language-learning tools, but as texts that participated in the broader typographic and cultural transformation of early modern English print, blending educational and theatrical modes of presentation in ways that would have felt familiar to a wide spectrum of readers.

Florio used typography strategically to align himself with university-educated, scholarly authors, leveraging typographic discourse to construct his intellectual persona as a refined cultural intermediary. *Second Frutes*, in particular, reveals this ambition. Published over a decade after *Firste Fruites*, it reflects a transition from strict bilingual columns to a more integrated single-column layout, shifting the emphasis from direct translation to contextual fluency. With character lists, brief scene-setting descriptions, and speaker initials in the margins, *Second Frutes* adopts a mise-en-page clearly reminiscent of early printed drama.

Florio further employs typographic strategies that were also common in early modern plays, such as the use of "turn-overs" and "turn-unders", devices used to preserve line integrity within narrow text blocks and to facilitate the printing of cheaper quartos (Bourne 2020, see Fig. 1). In printed drama, these techniques were adapted to align stage directions or sound cues with lines of dialogue, visually reinforcing the temporal and spatial coordination of speech and action. In *Second Frutes*, Florio integrates round brackets to align Italian and English phrases within the same column, visually pairing equivalent expressions and prompting the reader to engage with the dialogue in a fluid, theatrical manner. This arrangement reinforces the performative logic of the text and reflects its dual function as both pedagogical and dramatized language practice

Additionally, Florio uses asterisks to mark proverbs, a typograpic choice that similar strategies employed in early modern playbooks. In early modern printed drama, typographical markers like asterisks (*) and daggers (†) functioned as visual markers to guide readers through



English. 5

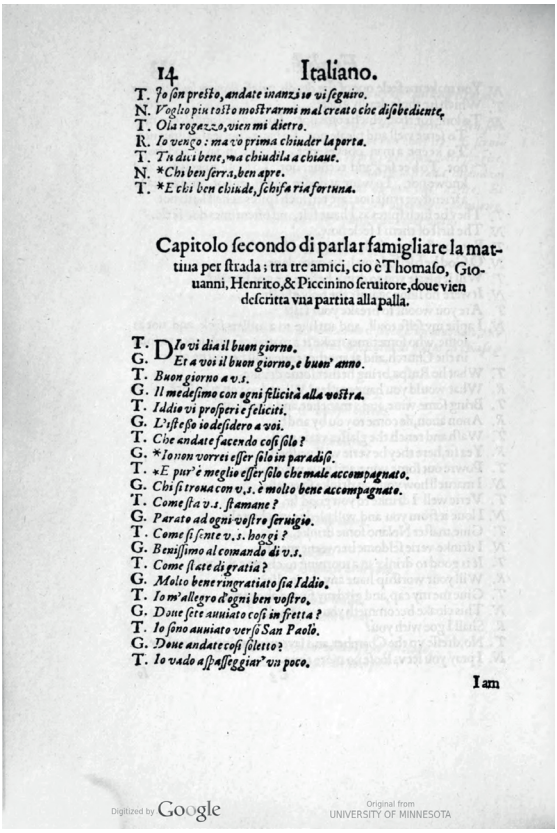
R. But what do you that you riſe not? (doing?
T. What ho, Ruſpa, come hither, where art thou? what art thou
R. Here I am: what lacke you? what would your worſhip haue?
T. Open that window, and giue me my clothes.
R. What apparrell will you haue this day?
T. Firſt giue me a cleane ſhirt, one of the fine ones.
R. There are but two that be cleane.
T. Where be all the others?
R. The Landres hath fix of them.
T. How many haue I in all?
R. Your worſhip hath a dozen.
T. Why then I want foure of them.
R. No Sir, here they be foule yet.
T. Cauſe them all to be waſhed againſt to morow.
R. I will ſend for the Landres to day.
T. Diſpatch and giue me a ſhirt.
R. With what band will you haue it?
T. With a falling band.
R. There is none that hath anie.
T. Giue me one with ruffes then.
R. Here is one with ruffes.
T. Thou dolte, feeſt thou not how moyſt it is?
R. Pardon me good ſir, I was not aware of it.
T. Go into the kitchen and warme it.
R. There is no fire.
T. Make a little blaze with a Bauen.
R. Here it is, put it on while it is warme.
T. Looke that there be ſtrings to it.
R. So there be on both ſides.
T. Giue me my waſtecote.
R. Which will you haue, that of flannell?
T. No, giue me that which is knit.
R. What Sute of apparrell willye weare to day?
T. That of white fatten, laide on with gold lace.
R. There Lacks I know not how many buttons.
T. Set them on then by and by.
R. I haue neither needle, thred, nor thimble.

B 3 Fattens

Fig. 1. Florio, J. (1953). *Second frutes*, 1591: A facsimile reproduction, Gainesville, Fla., Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints.

shifts in tone, emphasis, or action. Readers, accustomed to encountering these signs in devotional or reference texts, would recognize them as cues that structured reading experiences, often imitating theatrical pacing. For example, in *The Malcontent* (1604), asterisks are used to direct attention to marginal notes indicating stage actions, generating a dynamic relationship between text and performance. Similar uses appear in Jonson's *The Staple of News* (1631) and *The Sad Shepherd* (1641), where these markers coordinate dialogue with sound effects or gestures, reinforcing a visual logic of performance on the page.

In *Second Frutes*, Florio's use of asterisks to mark proverbs operates in a comparable way, serving not merely as punctuation but as didactic and cultural signals (see Fig. 2). These marks emphasize the proverb's significance, much like performative cues in printed plays, drawing the reader's attention to expressions of particular value. Their



14. Italiano.

T. Io ſon preſto, andate inanzi ſe vi ſeguiro.
N. Voglio piu toſto moſtrarmi mal creato che diſubediente.
T. Ola rogazzo, vien mi dietro.
R. Io vengo: ma ò prima chiuder la porta.
T. Tu dici bene, ma chiudila a chiaue.
N. *Chi ben ſerra, ben apre.
T. *E chi ben chiude, ſchifa ria fortuna.

Capitolo ſecondo di parlar famigliare la mattina per ſtrada; tra tre amici, cio è Thomaſo, Giouanni, Henrito, & Piccinino ſeruitore, doue vien deſcritta vna partita alla palla.

T. Io vi dia il buon giorno.
G. Et a voi il buon giorno, e buon' anno.
T. Buon giorno a v.s.
G. Il medeſimo con ogni felicità alla voſtra.
T. Iddio vi proſperi e feliciti.
G. L'iſteſſo io deſidero a voi.
T. Che andate facendo coſi ſolo?
G. *Io non vorrei eſſer ſolo in paradiſo.
T. *E pur' è meglio eſſer ſolo che male accompagnato.
G. Chi ſi troua con v.s. è molto bene accompagnato.
T. Come ſta v.s. ſtamane?
G. Parato ad ogni voſtro ſeruigio.
T. Come ſi ſente v.s. hoggi?
G. Beniſſimo al comando di v.s.
T. Come ſtate di gratia?
G. Molto bene ringratiato ſia Iddio.
T. Io m'allegro d'ogni ben voſtro.
G. Doue ſete anuiato coſi in fretta?
T. Io ſono anuiato verſo San Paolo.
G. Doue andate coſi ſoletto?
T. Io vado a paſſeggiar' vn poco.

I am

Fig. 2. Florio, J. (1953). *Second frutes*, 1591: A facsimile reproduction, Gainesville, Fla., Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints.

placement suggests that proverbs, in Florio's framework, are not just language units but cultural touchstones, deserving focused reflection. Within a language-learning context, such typographical emphasis invites readers to engage with proverbs as sites of both linguistic learning and intercultural exchange. Especially within the single-column layout of *Second Frutes*, the asterisks function to visually pair Italian and English counterparts, encouraging learners to see them as shared fragments of cultural knowledge. In this way, the manual stages a reading experience that is both instructional and quasi-theatrical, using typographic design to guide the reader-as-actor through a performance of language and meaning.

Expanding this typographic convergence further, Andrew Keener has drawn attention to the overlap between the printers of dramatic texts and language-learning books, offering insight into the transfer

of layout strategies across genres. Given that many of the same stationers handled both kinds of publications, it is unsurprising that visual and structural techniques developed for clarity and engagement in one domain migrated to the other. For instance, Henry Denham, who printed John Baret's multilingual *Alvearie* dictionary, also published dramatic editions of Seneca and Nicholas Udall, bridging the linguistic and theatrical print worlds. Adam Islip, printer of Randle Cotgrave's influential *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611), also produced plays by Robert Greene, Ben Jonson, and George Peele, reinforcing his role in shaping conventions that served both educational and performative aims. Thomas Purfoot likewise printed both Claudius Hollyband's language manuals and plays by Thomas Heywood and Edward Sharpham.

Richard Field, though not primarily a dramatic printer, published Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and inherited printing materials from Thomas Vautrollier, a leading figure in the production of language-learning books. Edward Blount, financier of Shakespeare's First Folio (1623), was likewise embedded in this cross-genre print economy. Blount published both Florio's Italian-English dictionary and John Minsheu's Spanish-English counterpart, both instrumental to the period's bilingual education. These overlapping print networks highlight how printers and publishers functioned as cultural mediators, transferring typographical expertise across different textual domains. Their work contributed to the formal consistency and readability of publications like *Second Frutes*, where typography operates as a tool for navigating linguistic, cultural, and performative complexity. In this context, Florio's manuals emerge as part of a shared typographic culture, one that facilitated cross-genre interaction and helped define the visual and functional parameters of early modern English print.

3. Multilingual marginalia: At the hands of readers and authors

Handwritten marginalia provide a further example of how cosmopolitan vernaculars operated across theatrical and educational genres in early modern England. Paleographical evidence, such as annotations found in copies like the British Library's *Spanish Tragedy* (Q4), attests to a vibrant culture of reader interaction with multilingual texts. These overlaps suggest that language manuals and dramatic works were not

only typographically similar but were also received and used in comparable ways by contemporary readers. Scholars have long noted the influence of multilingual manuals and dictionaries, including Florio's *Firste Fruites* and John Eliot's *Ortho-epia Gallica*, within early modern literary culture. Authors such as Shakespeare and Jonson likely had access to these resources, and in some cases, direct personal connections reinforced this link. A presentation copy of Jonson's *Volpone* contains a dedication to "his louing Father, & worthy Freind Mr. John Florio", whom Jonson calls the "ayde of his Muses"[2]. This dedication not only points to their friendship but also underscores the intellectual role Florio may have played in Jonson's creative process.

Texts like *Firste Fruites* and *Second Frutes*, originally intended for instruction and practice, often became "used books" filled with readers' handwritten notes. Recent scholarship, such as Andrew Keener's work on multilingual marginalia, has shown how early modern users actively engaged with language-learning publications, blending educational and performative modes of reading. One annotated copy of *Firste Fruites*, preserved at the University of Pennsylvania, demonstrates how readers could combine linguistic exercises with dramatic material, treating the manual as both grammar and stage. This blending of educational and theatrical content through user annotations underscores the dynamic role that language manuals played in shaping both linguistic and cultural literacy in early modern England. These texts were not only familiar to playwrights and featured typographical features akin to those in playbooks; they also invited active engagement from readers who, in turn, brought theatrical modes into their language-learning experience.

In one striking example, a seventeenth-century reader transcribed a play's prologue into the margins of *Firste Fruites*. In this short speech, the speaker admonishes an impatient audience just before the beginning of the performance:

> You who sitting heare, Do stand
> To see our play, which must This
> Night, be acted heare To Day —

---

[2] "To his louing Father, & worthy Freind Mr. John Florio: The ayde of his Muses. Ben:Jonson seales this testemony of Freindship, & Loue"; see *Ben Jonson, Volpone or The Fox* (London, 1607), π1v, British Library, C.12.e.17. The inscription is also transcribed in Yates 1934, 277.

Be silent, pray, Tho: You allowd
Do Tallke, sture not a iott Tho vp
And Down you Wallke, for Every silent
Noyes The players see, will make Them
Mute & speake: full angerly, O Tarry
Heare Vntill you Doe Departe,
Gentle your smileing frowns
Do vs Impart, And Then Wee
Most Thankless, Thanfulle [sic] Will
Apeare, and waite vpon you
Home, but yett stay heare.

The prologue appears to derive from a now-lost work of drama, although variants of it survive in seventeenth-century print. In her 2009 ground-breaking study of early modern performance documents, Tiffany Stern notes that such "severed" prologues often "find a new life" (Stern 2009, 99) as poems or jests, appearing in poetry collections and miscellanies. For instance, *The Book of Bulls* includes this text under the title "A Bull Prologu[e], to a foolish audience", while *Wit and Drollery* features it as "A Bull Prologue". A 1674 jest book also contains the "Bull Prologue", attributing it to "Sr. W. D.", a notation that J.W. Lawrence (1937) suggests could refer to Sir William Davenant.

Andrew Keener further suggests that the term "bull" may link the piece to the Red Bull Theatre in London, a venue known for its unruly audiences and energetic, sometimes chaotic, performances (Keener 2018, 493). Given the closure of public theatres by Parliament in 1642, the continued circulation of such prologues, whether through clandestine performance, publication, or annotation, offers insight into the permeability of dramatic culture across print genres. After the Restoration, theatres reopened only to face new disruptions, including the destruction of the Red Bull in the Great Fire of London in 1666. Within this context, the association with Davenant and the Red Bull remains speculative, but the survival and reuse of the prologue across media and marginalia points to its cultural resonance. What this example demonstrates is not only the fluidity of genre boundaries—between drama, poetry, instruction, and jest—but also the extent to which language-learning texts served as sites of theatrical memory and improvisation. Manuals like *Firste Fruites* were not passive vehicles of pedagogy, but active participants in the textual and performative landscape of early modern England.

Though the author of the "Bull Prologue" remains uncertain, the identity of its annotator is more firmly established. As noted by Keener (2018), scattered throughout this copy of *Firste Fruites* are signatures belonging to Richard Parsons, an early modern ecclesiastical judge and antiquary. The distinct seventeenth-century hand visible in the prologue transcription appears to match Parsons's, suggesting his direct engagement with the text. Known for his zealous suppression of dissent, Parsons may have found the prologue's admonishing tone particularly resonant, aligning with his moral and disciplinary sensibilities. Stern's analysis provides a compelling framework for interpreting this kind of inscription. She argues that "[w]ritten texts—in performance—filled the playhouse" and that "'literature' was regularly intruded into the theatrical space before the play began" (Stern 2008, 138). If so, theatrical experiences were often enriched by books, scenes, title cards, and commonplace collections, blurring the line between performance and page. While the exact circumstances of Parsons's transcription remain speculative, they nonetheless suggest an immediate and possibly experiential encounter with the prologue.

In contrast to the printed variants of the prologue, where the lines read "O stay but here" and "But go not yet", Parsons's version, with the phrasing "O Tarry/Heare", offers a distinctive textual variant. This deviation suggests that his transcription may not have been copied from print, but rather reconstructed from memory or noted during or after a live performance. Such a possibility reinforces the idea that *Firste Fruites* could serve as a space for recording and processing dramatic experience.

The "Bull Prologue" may also connect, obliquely, to the "playe at the Bull" referenced on the first page of Florio's *Firste Fruites*, adding another layer of historical resonance. Though the precise relationship is uncertain, it is evident that Parsons perceived *Firste Fruites* as a fitting location to record theatrical material, where Florio's Italian-English dialogues intersect with personal annotations, forming a hybrid text that blends language instruction with dramatic memory. Keener (2018) situates this case within a broader phenomenon, noting how early modern dictionaries and language manuals often intersected with dramatic culture. In his analysis, lexicons and indices are not only linguistic tools, but also gateways through which educated English readers could access foreign theatrical traditions, including continental playwrights. This suggests that works like Flo-

rio's participated in the construction of a transnational, performative vernacular culture.

While there is no evidence that Florio's work directly influenced the typographic conventions of printed drama, it nonetheless exemplifies the convergence of linguistic and performative print strategies in the early modern period. Florio's work does not claim typographic precedence in the printing of plays but offers a revealing case study of how shared formal strategies circulated across genres, supporting the broader development of performative reading practices in early modern England. Rather than standing out for typographical innovation per se, Florio's significance lies in his ability to operate at the intersection of linguistic instruction and theatrical print culture. His manuals offer a rare glimpse into how early modern readers could inhabit both educational and performative modes of engagement, revealing the hybrid textual practices that shaped early modern multilingual print culture. Florio's manuals, surrounded by and in dialogue with the world of early modern drama, invite us to reconsider the boundaries between education, performance, and print. They exemplify how language learning in early modern England operated within a shared space of cultural exchange, where multilingual instruction and theatricality converged.

Bibliography

Anon (1674), *The Complaisant Companion, or New Jests, witty reparties, bulls, rhodomontado's, and pleasant novels*, London, in the digital collection Early English Books Online 2, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, available at: <https://name.umdl.umich.edu/A34159.0001.001> (last accessed 7 November 2024).

Bassnett, S. (2002), *Translation Studies*, Routledge, London and New York.

Bayerlipp, S. (2013), *"All gentilmen dooe speake the courtisane": Negotiations of the Italian Questione della lingua in William Thomas and the Florios'*, in G. Schmidt (ed.), *Elizabethan Translation and Literary Culture*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 147–165.

Bhabha H.K. (1996), *Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism*, in L. Garcia-Morena and P.C. Pfeifer (eds), *Text and Nation: Cross-Disciplinary Essays on Cultural and National Identities*, Camden House, Rochester, NY, pp. 191–207.

Billings, T. (2005), *Two New Sources for Shakespeare's Bawdy French in Henry V*, in "Notes & Queries", 52, 2, pp. 202–204.

Bland, M. (1998), *The Appearance of the Text in Early Modern England*, in "TEXT: An Interdisciplinary Annual of Textual Studies", 95, pp. 91–154.

Boro, J. (2011), *Multilingualism, Romance, and Language Pedagogy; or, Why Were So Many Sentimental Romances Printed as Polyglot Texts?*, in F. Schurink (ed.), *Tudor Translation*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 18–38.

Bourne, C.M.L. (2020), *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Boutcher, W. (2002), *Humanism and Literature in Late Tudor England: Translation, the Continental Book and the Case of Montaigne's Essais*, in J. Woolfson (ed.), *Reassessing Tudor Humanism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 243–268.

Chamberlain, R. (1636), *The Book of Bulls*, London, C4v–5r.

Chartier, R. (2007), *Inscription and Erasure: Literature and Written Culture from the Eleventh to the Eighteenth Century*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Coldiron, A. (2015), *Printers Without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Costola, S. and Saenger, M. (2014), *Shylock's Venice and the Grammar of the Modern City*, in M. Marrapodi (ed.), *Shakespeare and the Italian Renaissance: Appropriation, Transformation, Opposition*, Ashgate, Farnham, pp. 147–162.

del Corro, A. (1590), *The Spanish Grammar*, trans. John Thorius, John Wolfe, London, STC 5790: Bodleian Library, 47 C 71(1) Art; British Library, C.189. aa.11; HoughtonLibrary, STC 5790; Huntington Library, RB 53880 (Gabriel Harvey copy); University of Illinois, X465 C817RET.

Di Martino, G. (1999), *Cento anni di dialoghi. La lingua inglese dal 1573 al 1685*, CUEN, Napoli.

Eisenstein, E.L. (1979), *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Florio, J. (1578), *Florio His First Fruits, Thomas Dawson, for Thomas Woodcock*, London, University of Pennsylvania Furness, PC1121.F78 1578 (Richard Parsons copy).

Franzero, C.M. (1969), *John Florio a Londra ai tempi di Shakespeare*, Guanda, Parma.

Galbraith, S.K. (2008), *English Black-Letter Type and Spenser's Shepheardes Calender*, in "Spenser Studies", 23, pp. 13–40.

Head, R. (1675), *Nugæ venales, or, Complaisant companion being new jests, domestick and forreign, bulls, rhodomontados, pleasant novels and miscellanies*, Oxford Text Archive, available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12024/A43170> (last accessed 7 November 2024).

Helgesson, S., Hansson, G. and Merkle, D. (2018), *World Literatures: Exploring the Cosmopolitan–Vernacular Exchange*, Stockholm University Press, Stockholm.

Henke, R. and Nicholson, E. (2014), *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theater*, Routledge, London and New York.

Hosington, B.M. (2015), *Translation and print culture in early modern Europe*, in "Special Issue of Renaissance Studies", 29, pp. 1–18.

Howard-Hill, T.H. (1990), *The Evolution of the Form of Plays in English during the Renaissance*, in "Renaissance Quarterly", 43, 1, pp. 112–145.

Johns, A. (1998), *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Jonson, B. (1607), *Volpone or The Fox, George Eld for Thomas Thorpe*, London, STC 14783:British Library, C.12.e.17 (John Florio copy), C.34.d.2; Harry Ransom Center, PFORZ 557 PFZ(William Harvey copy), PR2622 A1 1607, WhJ738 607v WRE; Morgan Library, W 04 C.

Keener, A.S. (2018), *Printed Plays and Polyglot Books: The Multilingual Textures of Early Modern English Drama*, in "PBSA", 112, 4, pp. 481–511.

Keener, A.S. (2025), *Theaters of Translation: Cosmopolitan Vernaculars in Shakespeare's England*, University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

Lawrence, J.W. (1937), *Speeding Up Shakespeare: Studies of the Bygone Theatre and Drama*, Argonaut, London.

Lawrence, J. (2005), *"Who the Devil Taught Thee So Much Italian?": Italian Language Learning and Literary Imitation in Early Modern England*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Lesser, Z. (2006), *Typographic Nostalgia: Play-Reading, Popularity, and the Meanings of Black-Letter*, in M. Straznicky (ed.), *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, pp. 99–126.

Lever, J.W. (1953), *Shakespeare's French Fruits*, in "Shakespeare Survey", 6, pp. 79–90.

Chambrun Longworth, C. (1921), *Giovanni Florio, un apôtre de la Renaissance en Angleterre à l'époque de Shakespeare*, Payot, Paris.

McInnis, D. and Steggle, M. (2014), *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Mish, C. (1953), *Black Letter as a Social Discriminant in the Seventeenth Century*, in "PMLA", 68, pp. 627–30.

Montini, D. (2016), *Didattica della lingua e mise-en-page nei dialoghi anglo-italiani di John Florio*, in D. Puato (ed.), *Lingue europee a confronto: la linguistica contrastiva tra teoria, traduzione e didattica*, Sapienza Università Editrice, Roma, pp. 225–242.

Phillips, J. (1656), *Wit and Drollery, Jovial Poems. Corrected and much amended, with new additions*, Nathaniel Brook, London, EEBO A66741.

Phillips, S.E. (2008), *Schoolmasters, Seduction, and Slavery: Polyglot Dictionaries in Pre-Modern England*, in P.M. Clogan (ed.), "Medievalia et Humanistica", 34, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, pp. 129–158.

Pollock, S. (2000), *Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History*, in "Public Culture", 12, 3, pp. 591–625.

Porter, J.A. (1986), *More Echoes from Eliot's Ortho-epia Gallica, in King Lear and Henry V*, in "Shakespeare Quarterly", 37, 4, pp. 486–488.

Praz, M. (1954), *Shakespeare's Italy*, in "Shakespeare Survey", 7, pp. 95–106.

Robinson, D. (2002), *Western Translation Theory: From Herodotus to Nietzsche*, St. Jerome Publishing, Manchester.

Shaheen, N. (1994), *Shakespeare's Knowledge of Italian*, in "Shakespeare Survey", 47, pp. 161–169.

Sherman, W. (2008), *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Simonini, R.C. (1952), *Italian Scholarship in Renaissance England*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Stern, T. (2008), *Watching as Reading: The Audience and the Written Text in Shakespeare's Playhouse*, in L. Maguire (ed.), *How to Do Things with Shakespeare: New Approaches*, Blackwell, Malden, pp. 136–159.

Stern, T. (2009), *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Thomas, K. (1986), *The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England*, in G. Baumann (ed.), *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Warburton, W. and Pope, A. (eds) (1747), *The Works of Shakespear*, vol. 2, J. and P. Knapton, London.

W.D. (1656), *Wit and Drollery, Jovial Poems*, printed for Nath. Brook, at theAngel in Cornhil. Wing W3211; EEBO-TCP A96732.

Werbner, P. (2006), *Vernacular Cosmopolitanism*, in "Anthropology News", 47, 5, pp. 7–11.

West, W.N. (2003), *Talking the Talk: Cant on the Elizabethan Stage*, in "English Literary Renaissance", 33, 2, pp. 228–251.

Wyatt, J. (2005), *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England: A Cultural Politics of Translation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Yates, F.A. (1934), *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Yates, F.A. (1936), *A Study of Love's Labour's Lost*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Metalinguistic Labelling in John Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598)

Angela Andreani

This essay aims to contribute a historical linguistics and lexicographical perspective on John Florio as an observer of language and linguistic phenomena by focussing on the usage labels he employed in the first edition of his Italian-English dictionary *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598, *WW* henceforth). Although usage labels are a common feature in modern dictionaries, to indicate restrictions in the use of a word, or limitations to particular contexts or registers, they were not widespread in early modern lexicography. An analysis of Florio's practice aims therefore to shed light on aspects of the history of metalinguistic labelling as a lexicographical practice, and on the development of the metalanguage used to discuss languages and linguistic phenomena in the early modern period. The underlying argument is that the analysis of labelling practices can advance our understanding of ideas about language,[1] and as an author known for his linguistic skill, John Florio is a particularly interesting test case. This research, part of a project on the history of the metalanguage of English linguistics in the period 1500-1700,[2] focusses therefore on the labels that describe word usages and meanings in *WW* by providing a taxonomic analysis of the phrases and conventions used by Florio. The aim is to explore the lexicographer's conceptualisation of register variation and of the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of lexis.

---

1 Cfr. Cormier 2008; McLelland 2024; Zimont 2020.

2 The research leading to these results has received funding from MUR, PRIN2022 project "MetaLing Corpus: Creating a corpus of English linguistics metalanguage from the 16th to the 18th century", ref.: 202233C93X, funded by the European Union under the programme NextGenerationEU. The project (Oct 2023–Feb 2025) is being carried out by two units: one from the University of Milan (Principal Investigator Angela Andreani, Research fellow: Vahid Asadi) and one from the University of Insubria (Head of unit Daniel Russo).

Sections 1 and 2 briefly present the metalinguistic functions of usage labels in a historical perspective, introduce Florio's dictionary and situate it in the context of the MetaLing Corpus Project. Section 3 discusses the methodological approach adopted in this study. Sections 4-6 turn to Florio's labelling practices to analyse the linguistic dimensions that he was especially concerned to label, and, focussing on the linguistic forms of labels, how he conveyed his knowledge of English and Italian to the readers of *WW*.

1. Dictionary labels and Florio's dictionary

Usage labels are commonly found in modern dictionaries to indicate dialectal words, particular connotations, or limitations on the use of a word, such as usages restricted to particular contexts or registers. Labels may appear in the form of abbreviations such as "vulg.", "inf." and "fam."; complete words, such as "dialectal", "slang", and "obsolete"; or longer phrases, such as "chiefly American" (or British, or other varieties of English). Crucially, a usage label will provide essential information on how to use a word, "guiding an individual language user in making an appropriate choice between alternatives" when available, or indicating that its usage is restricted to specific domains (Janssen et al. 2003, 300). A usage label will therefore function as a metalinguistic device.

When Florio published his *WW*, lexicographical labelling was neither widespread nor standardised. Embryonic practices have been observed amongst seventeenth-century French-English and Dutch-French lexicographers (Cormier 2008; Zimont 2020), but Florio's dictionary belongs to an earlier period and a different lexicographical tradition. It was the largest dictionary of English and another vernacular published in England in the sixteenth century, and its models were dictionaries of Latin and Greek (Considine 2022, 302). Although the immediate predecessor of *WW*, and the first Italian-English dictionary, was William Thomas' *Principal Rules of the Italian Grammer*, published in 1550 (Stein 1985, 380), Florio's definitions were indebted to Thomas Thomas' *Dictionarium* (Starnes 1937, 1007–1009). Florio's sources were 72 works and authors listed in the preface of *WW*,[3] amongst which John Considine identified the ones used for the construction of his draft list of headwords (Considine 2022, 306).

[3] Counted by Stein 1985, 380.

The definitions we find in Florio's dictionary range from mere translations to lists of possible equivalents in English, and they often provide information as to the form, meaning and use of words in terms of grammatical, semantic or pragmatic analyses. Indeed, Florio had a keen interest in dimensions of variation, as he expressed in the letter to the reader, noting the variety "not onely of matters, but of dialects" (Florio 1598, sig. b1). The abundance of regionalisms recorded in *WW* has been remarked upon by various scholars, including D.J. O'Connor and Gabriele Stein (O'Connor 1972, 52; Stein 1985, 398). John Considine defined Florio's "openness to variation" highlighting his "inclusive presentation" of the vocabularies of different topolects (Considine 2022, 307, 309). Warren Boutcher pointed out the "emphasis on contemporary, spoken usage" and Florio's particular engagement with Lombardo-Venetian culture throughout his works (Boutcher 1997, 49–50 and 81). In her study of the dialogues of the *Firste Fruits*, Donatella Montini drew attention to Florio's concern with the diastratic and diaphasic dimensions: "viene scelto con cura il registro da utilizzare nel caso in cui a parlare sia un gentiluomo o un mercante, una donna o un servo [...]" (Montini 2011, 84).

As he recorded registers and regionalisms, Florio experimented with the expressive means of English to create a metalanguage that could effectively convey the nuances of semantic and pragmatic variation for his readers. Taking usage labels as significant evidence to study the early modern conceptualisation of lexis and meaning, and thereby explore ideas about language in history, this paper will be especially concerned with Florio's labelling practice in order to understand the principles underlying the selection and presentation of metalinguistic information. As has been seen, Florio's dictionary is situated in a very rich lexicographical tradition. The extent to which his labelling practice was innovative, or not, is therefore undoubtedly an important research question, but given the scope of this paper and the wide-ranging sources that inform Florio's practice, the exploration of its models is reserved to a future study. In the following section, before turning to the analysis of the metalanguage of *WW*, I will situate this work in the context of the MetaLing Corpus Project.

2. *WW* in the MetaLing Corpus Project

The goal of the MetaLing Corpus Project has been to create a corpus of texts including language-related discussions in order to study the de-

velopment of terminology and explore epistemic transfer across texts and genres in a period predating the establishment of philology and linguistics as academic disciplines. As a pilot study, we compiled a small corpus containing texts dealing specifically with language variation. Source selection has relied on R.C. Alston's monumental *A Bibliography of the English Language from the Invention of Printing to the Year 1800*, since it provides unrivalled coverage of authors and sources. The phenomena of "language variation" and "sociolinguistic variation" are covered in volume 9, entitled *English dialects, Scottish Dialects: Cant and Vulgar English*. However, as may be imagined, a multifaceted concept such as language variation is not only discussed in sources ostensibly devoted to it, nor is it always discussed explicitly. This is one of the challenges posed by the study of the metalanguage of linguistics in a historical perspective (Andreani and Russo 2023).

Florio's *WW* is a case in point. In spite of its renowned concern with diatopic variation, it is not an obvious source for the study of variation in English, since at the centre of this work are Italian and its varieties.[4] However, the metalanguage used by Florio is English, and his definitions provide a wealth of information as to how languages could have been discussed amongst educated circles in England and Italy through the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as there is evidence of the dictionary's enduring fortune and international readership (Considine 2022, 311–312).

For these reasons, Florio's dictionary must be considered a significant source to explore the development of a metalanguage to describe languages, and especially varieties and variation. Focussing on the metalinguistic devices adopted by Florio, I will address the following questions: what was Florio especially concerned to label? To what extent was his practice systematic? And how did he communicate this knowledge to his readers?

3. Methodology

The analysis starts from the idea of understanding Florio's metalinguistic labelling in broad terms—in other words, not limited to the labelling of phenomena related to language variation—and then to ex-

[4] Florio's dictionary is catalogued in volume XII, part 2, of Alston's *Bibliography*, dedicated to Romance languages.

amine to what extent his practice displays awareness of and records variation.

The method has been philological, based on close reading, in order to obtain as varied and exhaustive an inventory of metalinguistic labels as possible, aiming to include also those that may be, to borrow Thomas Kohnen's phrase, "unpredictable manifestations" of metalanguage (Kohnen 2007, 141).

In discussing the methodological challenges of researching speech acts in the history of English, Thomas Kohnen advocates for microanalysis as a necessary premise for corpus-based investigations, since it is "virtually impossible to create a complete catalogue of all the different manifestations of a speech act in the history of the English language" and "Researchers have to put up with a more or less eclectic analysis of supposedly "typical" forms which they assume to be frequent in a historical corpus" (Ibid., 139).

An inventory of all the "typical", hidden or unpredictable manifestations of metalinguistic labels in historical texts is similarly challenging, since we cannot expect that Florio and his contemporaries would make use of the typical labels of modern lexicography, nor display the same terminology and practices (such as the presentation of usage notes in the paratextual apparatus of a dictionary). Therefore, following Kohnen, the study of the text has been based on microanalysis.

In order to identify the different "manifestations" of metalinguistic labelling, such as labels proper, other types of cues and typographical conventions, I have analysed systematically a number of entries around the midpoint of the dictionary (in the alphabetical ranges I and L). Following this phase, I have run keyword searches onto the whole text, which is digitised in the Oxford Text Archive (OTA),[5] applying what may be termed an "onomasiological-oriented corpus-based collocate method" to an individual text[6], in order to retrieve unpredictable metalinguistic labels.

The analysis of the data has then focussed on a) the type of labels used by Florio, i.e. whether metalinguistic information is singled out by typographical symbols, abbreviations, or textually; and b) his labelling practice, i.e. what is recorded, such as grammatical categories,

---

[5] Direct citations from *WW* are from the Douce copy preserved at the Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford.

[6] Andreani and Russo 2023, 166.

word use, word origin, or other type of metalinguistic information, adopting the classification presented in Janssen et al. (Janssen et al. 2003). The distinction between the two levels of analysis is informed by the approach adopted by Monique Cormier in her study of the usage labels in Abel Boyer's *The Royal Dictionary* (Cormier 2008).

The aim has been to record all occurrences of labels that was possible to identify in order to analyse the results quantitatively as well as in qualitative terms. However, quantitative analyses have their limits. In a systematic analysis of the macro- and micro-structure of Florio's *WW*, Gabriele Stein found that Florio is not consistent in his treatment of entries and definitions (Stein 1985, 378–409). Additionally, Florio does not label everything, as pointed out by V. Spampanato in a study of unlabelled Neapolitanisms in *WW* and in *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (Spampanato 1924, 116–124). This implies that quantitative findings will not be conclusive and might not always be informative.

4. Results: Florio's labels and his practice

4.1. Type of labels

As to the type of labels, the results are relatively uncomplicated. Florio uses textual labels, rather than abbreviations, and he does not use typographical symbols. Although they are very few in number, abbreviations are interesting and deserve mention. The only entries in which they occur are the following:

1. Il, an article masc. singuler, the, namely with nounes. Also a pronoune primitiue of the datiue and accusatiue cases, him the same, it, with verbs.
2. Le, the fem. article plur. the, a pronoune of the Dat. and Accusat. cases, to hir, hir. Also of the Ablat. from hir.

The abbreviations are 'fem.', 'plur.', 'Dat.', 'Accusat.', 'Ablat.', 'masc.'. Although some of them are now standard labels in dictionaries, the significance of their adoption by Florio should not be underestimated. In fact, it may be pointed out that the first attestation of the label "fem." dates to 1573, and the first recorded use of the label "masc." is attributed to Florio himself by the lexicographers of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.[7]

[7] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. «masc. (adj.), sense 1», March 2024, <https://doi.

As regards textual labels, or "guide phrases",[8] the examples presented below were identified through analysis of the alphabetical ranges selected for close reading (bold mine):

3. Imbarberescare, to teach any creature to do anything, [...], **the worde is taken from** those that teach Barberie horses.
4. Incaluato, become bald, **an allusion taken from** the trees, when they loose their leaues.
5. Ingeniculo, a figure among the stars **now called** Hercules**.**
6. Lanzi, dutch men, **because in** dutch **they are called** lanceknights, muffs.
7. Lanzo, **taken in mockerie for** a high dutch man or lanceknight.
8. Lubrico, [...] Also quick-siluer, **according to** the alchimists **phrases.**

The examples show that Florio resorts to nominal, verbal and prepositional phrases, in which the significant elements may be summarised as the mention of a language of origin ("dutch"), of specific nouns or verbs ('word', 'phrase', 'mockery', 'allusion' and 'call'), the adverb "now", the phrasal verb "taken from" and the preposition "according to".

These textual labels provided an initial set of "guide phrases", or collocations, to be used to retrieve more examples of usage in context. For instance, I searched for the preposition "according to", which occurs 31 times in relevant contexts (93 occurrences overall); for the phrasal verb "taken from", 12 times (17 total occurrences); for the adverb "now", 6 times in contexts marking diachronic variation; and the phrase "in mockery" overall 16 times (considering also the variants "of mockery" and "immockery"). A search for the word 'jest' returned 6 occurrences in which the term was used as a metalinguistic label, in the forms "in iest" and "iestingly". A search for the words 'call' and 'word' returned hits too numerous to be analysed manually (over 1,000 and 365 respectively), and could be studied more efficiently applying corpus linguistics approaches.

Drawing from Florio's famous remarks on dialects in the Dedication,[9] I ran a second series of searches for 'Venetian', 'Lombard', 'Neapolitan', which helped identify an additional guide phrase, or "metalinguistic collocation":

---

org/10.1093/OED/9709841675> (last accessed 13 August 2024).

[8] As termed by Cormier 2008, 155.

[9] "How shall we, naie how may we ayme at the Venetian, at the Romane, at the Lombard, at the Neapolitane, at so manie, and so much differing Dialects, and Idiomes, as be vsed and spoken in Italie, besides the Florentine?" (Florio 1598, sig. a4).

9. Ghiozzi, a kind of meat **so called** in Lombardie.
10. Sargo, a kind of fish **so called in** Rome, in latine Sargus.

A full text search revealed that the adverbial phrase "so called" is used in different functions by Florio to mark variation, especially diatopic and diastratic, etymology and literary use, as shown in the examples below:

11. Brina, a must or a hoarefrost, a nipping frost, a breame, **so called by** Chaucer.
12. Cornetto, a fish **so called in** Genoa.
13. Giuncata, a kinde of fresh cheese and creame, **so called bicause** it is brought to market vpon rushes.
14. Serpicélla, a kind of crossing of bookes or reckonings **so called among** marchants.
15. Trochéo, a foote in a verse consisting of two feete, the first a long sillable and the last a short, **so called of** swiftnes in running, and because it was fit for dancing.

What begins to emerge through the examples considered is Florio's "openness to variation" (Considine 2022, 307), which will be analysed in the next section concerned with the underlying structure of Florio's labelling practice.

4.2. Labelling practice

The examples retrieved were recorded in a database to assist in assessing the type of metalinguistic knowledge labelled by Florio, as well as the wording of his labels. The following list summarises what was labelled in *WW*:

- Class, gender and number of function words.
- Tense and mood of verbs.
- Word origin (borrowing, derivation, extension, coinages).
- Polysemy and homonymy.
- Specialised terminology.
- Literary terms.
- Diachronic variation.
- Diatopic variation.
- Diastratic variation.
- Diaphasic variation.

In addition to these, spelling variants and cross-referencing may be added, signalled by the preposition "as" and the imperative "looke" in metalinguistic function, as illustrated in the following examples:

1. Incozzare, Looke Accozzare.
2. Linguace, as Linguacciuto.

The occurrences of both, however, are too numerous to complete an exhaustive manual overview of the hits, and may be analysed more efficiently employing corpus methods.

Finally, a category of labels identified by Gabriele Stein ("lexicographical devices" in her terminology), but which escaped my attention, was used by Florio to distinguish at a semantic level between literal and figurative uses. The labels are "properly", to mark the literal sense of a word, and "metaphorically" or "by a metaphor" (Stein 1985, 395). Two examples are provided here:

3. Artiglij, the talents, clawes or pounces of birdes or haukes. By a metaphor the bands of loue.
4. Garzo, a thorne, a thistle, but properly the teazell to dresse clothes with.

Chart 1 summarises the distribution of the labels I was able to identify and count:

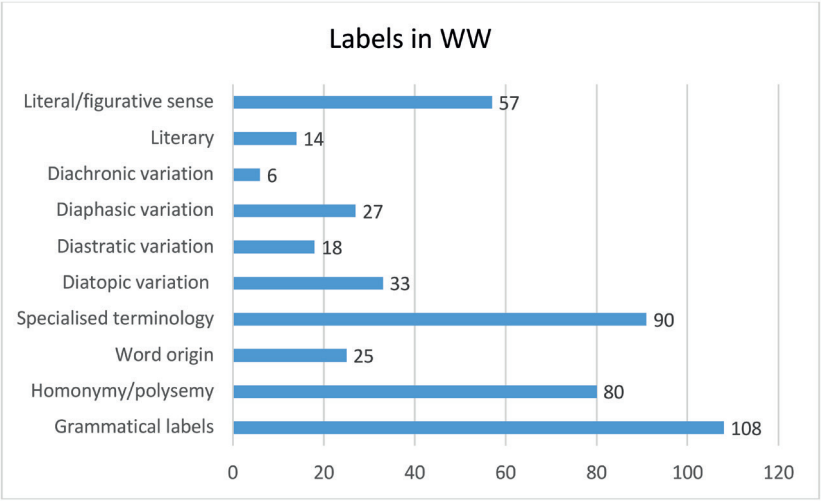


Chart 1. Labels in *WW*.

As may be seen, labels may refer to the formal aspects of a word or to its meaning (cfr. Janssen et al. 2003, 299). Florio's system comprises ten types of labels, including two formal labels (grammatical and ety-

mological, the latter indicated as "word origin" in the chart), and eight meaning labels. Grammatical labels include all the labels that mark type, genre and number of closed-class words, as well as those marking the tense and mood of verbs. Meaning labels record a variety of dimensions that range from the social to the geographical, as well as lexical ambiguity as a result of homonymy and polysemy.

The largest category, as may be seen, is the one of specialised terminology, although, as already stated, quantitative data has its limits. For instance, the count of Florio's labelling of homonymy and polysemy is only an estimate for reasons that will become clear in the following section. It should also be noted that the figures reflect the usage of labels, and not the actual examples of dialectal or specialised lexis recorded by Florio, since, as has been seen, he did not label everything systematically. As a consequence, quantitative data should not be taken at face value, and we cannot conclude that *WW* records more instances of specialised terminology rather than dialectally marked words. Rather, what the data may tentatively suggest is that Florio had more (or better) sources for specialised vocabularies than for Italian dialects, or that he attributed more importance to certain labels over others.

The examples in the section that follows will illustrate Florio's practice in context.

5. Florio's labels and his metalanguage

5.1. Formal labels: grammar and etymology

Grammatical labels are the most frequent, even though the grammatical category is not systematically marked in the entries for adverbs and adverbial phrases, prepositions, nor in those for pronouns, but it is always marked for articles, where gender and number labels are also provided. Compare the examples below:

1. Ce, an aduerbe of place, there, in that place. Also a pronoune primitiue of the Datiue, Accusatiue, and Ablatiue cases, to vs, vs, from vs.
2. In, the preposition, in.
3. Lo, an article masculine of the singular number vsed before vowels, the: a pronoune when it is ioyned with a verbe, it, the same, that, or him.
4. Per, for, by, through, to, readie to, for to, in with, by reason of, what betweene.
5. Te, thee, thee-selfe, to thee, to thee selfe. Also from thee.

Additionally, as noted by Gabriele Stein, word-classes are occasionally identified for prepositions and interjections, whereas open-class words are never labelled (Stein 1985, 387). She observed the special treatment devoted to irregular verbs, remarked by Florio himself in the address to the reader, which explicates the principle regarding the micro-structure of verbs: "I haue in all verbes of the first coniugation onely set downe the Infinitiue moode, except it be of fower irregular verbes, […] by those fewe onely one may frame all the persons of all the tences of all the verbes in the Italian toong" (Florio 1598, sig. b1v), as reflected in the following examples:

6. Vado, […]. Also the first person singular of the present tence of the Indicatiue mood of the verbe Andare, I go, Looke Andare.
7. Vanno, […]. Also they go, being the thirde person plurall of the presentence of the Indicatiue moode of the verbe Andare.

Florio records word origin marking instances of derivation, borrowings and onomatopoeic coinages, as illustrated by the examples:

8. Imbarberescare, to teach any creature to do anything, [...], the worde is taken from those that teach Barberie horses.
9. Petone, something about a fullers mill. Vsed also for the herbe Tabacco, but it is taken from the French.
10. Rombolare, to throw or cast in a sling. Also to make a whorring or rumbling noise, taken from the noise that a stone maketh separating the ayre with violence [...]

The metalinguistic label most frequently used to mark word origin is the phrasal verb "taken from"; followed by the phrase "so called because/of". Florio applies the label "taken from" also to mark lexicalisations that would be more accurately categorised as semantic shifts, as in the following example, an instance of figurative extension:

11. Incaluato, become bald, an allusion taken from the trees, when they loose their leaues.

Hence "taken from" may function as a meaning label as well as a formal label.

5.2. Lexical ambiguity: homonymy and polysemy

Example 2 in the preceding section provides another example of guide phrase that is worth examining in depth. In the entry, Florio records two senses for the word "petone". The first, about which Florio himself seems to be uncertain, appears to be related to a component or a mech-

anism in a fuller's mill[10]; it may be an instance of unmarked regionalism or specialist lexis. The second sense is introduced by the metalinguistic label "Vsed also for", whose pragmatic function is to signal a case of homonymy. The label occurs with significant frequency in *WW* (63), and even more frequent are occurrences of "also" alone (too many to be analysed manually), which suggests that Florio recorded homonymy systematically. It is not clear whether he distinguished homonymy and polysemy, however; see the following examples:

1. Acanto, neare, by, ioyning vnto. Also the herbe Bearefoote, Brank vrsin or Beares breech.
2. Infula, an ornament which priests in old time did weare on their heads, vsed also for a bishops mitre. Also a labell hanging on each side of a mitre.
3. Robore, an oke, vsed also for strength and hardines of bodie and minde, force, courage, or stoutnes.

In the first example, the words are 'accanto' (near) and 'acànto' (the name of the plant, alternative pronunciation with main stress on the first syllable). Whereas the words are not homographs in contemporary Italian, they could be in Florio's Italian, thus creating for him a case of homonymy, signalled by the label "also". Entries 2 and 3 are instead instances of semantic extension, seemingly metonymic and metaphorical, that result in polysemy.

5.3. Specialised terminology

Florio covers it extensively, including a variety of trades, arts, crafts and professions. According to Gabriele Stein, he was "the first lexicographer to draw attention to the fashionable jargon in these fields" (Stein 1985, 401). Some examples are listed below:

1. Assafetida, a kinde of lothsome liquor so called of the Apothecaries
2. Astragalo, a hucklebone. Also the neckbone. Also a kind of word in building. Also the herbe Peasearthnut.
3. Calcimia, a word vsed of alchimists for calcination. Also a kinde or part of [...].

---

[10] This sense is not recorded in the historical dictionaries of Italian consulted through the website of the Accademia della Crusca at: <https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/contenuti/dizionari/6225> (last accessed 22 October 2024): *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*; *Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini (TLIO)*; *Tommaseo-Bellini; Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*.

4. Catoccio, a piece of waste paper to put any thing in. Also a kinde of yonike worke in building so called among masons.
5. Codicillo, a codicill, a booke, a libell. It is a word vsed by lawyers.
6. Giacénte, iacent, a word of armorie.
7. Parango, a span measure or shaftsman as drapers call it in London.
8. Passata, a passado, a word in fencing.

Note the homonymy labels in examples 2, 3 and 4, and the overlapping diastratic and diatopic dimensions in example 7. Florio's interest in specialised vocabularies is not surprising. As shown by John Considine, the developments of lexicography in Renaissance Europe can be linked to the period's rising curiosity about languages and language varieties (Considine 2017). The several glossaries and dictionaries of specialised words, hard words, ancient words, topolects and poorly documented varieties published between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries reflect these intellectual trends, to which Florio was evidently receptive.

Chart 2 shows the fields labelled explicitly by Florio:

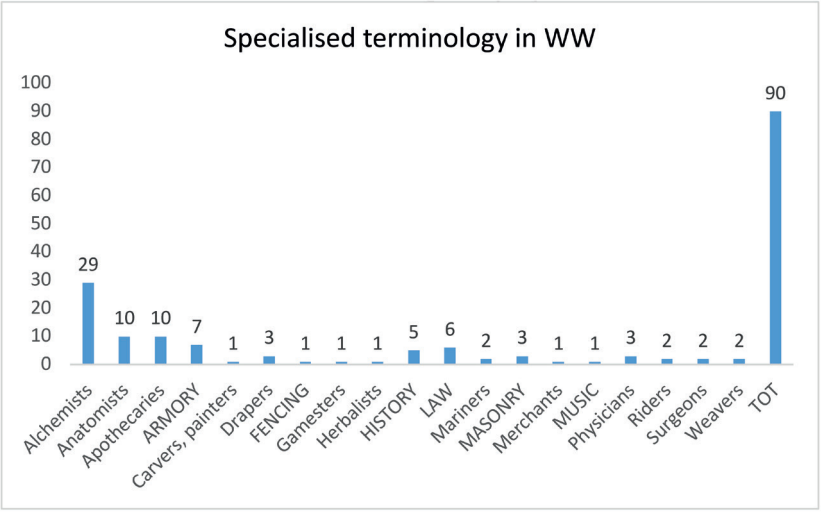


Chart 2. Specialised terminology in *WW*.

In the chart, the distinction between upper-case and lower-case font reflects a distinction present in *WW*, where some labels present the name of the field or trade in the abstract sense (eg. "a word of lawe" or "a word vsed in musicke", both upper-case in the chart), whereas others name the category of workers and professionals (eg. "so called

among masons")[11]. The number of entries devoted to the vocabulary of alchemy is interesting. The occurrences reveal that most words refer to either quicksilver (i.e. mercury, 13 entries), or gold (9 entries), as Florio himself remarked with a touch of irony:

9. Chiara del'vuouo, [...] Also according to Alchimists quicke siluer.
10. Inimico, [...] Also quick-siluer, according to Alchimists phrases.
11. Notte, night. Also quick-siluer, according to alchimists phrases.
12. Occidénte, [...] Also quick-siluer, according to Alchimists secret phrases.
13. Vecchiezza, [...] Also quick-siluer, according to Alchimists phrase.
14. Volante, [...] Also quick-siluer according to Alchimists new phrases.
15. Volatile, [...] &c. Also quick-siluer according to Chimists new fantasticall phrases.

If we combine the terms specific to the medical fields (anatomists, apothecaries, physicians and surgeons), they almost equal the entries related to alchemy.

As far as metalinguistic labels are concerned, the most common guide phrases in the examples collected are "according to", the verb 'call' and the noun 'word'. The verb 'call' is most frequently used as an active verb whose subject are the group of workers using that specific jargon, or as a passive, in the variants "called/so called of". The noun 'word' is used in the phrases "a word of/in", "a word used in/of", "by which word […] understand". Interestingly, the label "according to" occurs almost invariably (with only 5 exceptions) in entries concerning the vocabulary of alchemists.

---

[11] An additional field is that of riding and horsemanship, not included in this survey because these entries are not strictly labelled, but rather attributed to their source, Federico Grisone, called "Grison". See for instance the entry for 'incastrato': "[...] it is taken in Grison when the rowle in the mouth or bit of a horse is set close or well ioined to the other partes, as if it were of one piece". and "Sfettonare, is by Grison taken for the opening or cutting of the frush of the horse away [...]". These were erroneously considered to be dialect words by Stein (1985, 399), who might have taken the surname to indicate the dialect of the Grisons canton, in Switzerland. Indeed, in *WW* there is a dialectally marked entry for this variety: "Vlzollo, Vlzolo, a kid so called among the Grisons". However, in this case the metalinguistic collocation is "so called among", in use to label varieties spoken by specific groups of people, whereas the form "taken in/by Grison" is more likely a citation of Federico Grisone's treatise on the *Arte del Caualcare*, cited by Florio amongst his sources in the dedication (sig. a4).

5.4. Diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic labelling

I was able to detect 33 marked occurrences of diatopic variation, so perhaps fewer than expected, although we know that Florio did not mark dialect words consistently (Spampanato 1924, 116–118). Some examples include:

1. Berlingaccio, the thursdaye before shrouesunday, when euery man giues himselfe to sport: so called in Florence.
2. Cerillo, a kinde of daintie wine so called in Rome
3. Guagnélo, a Lombard word for Vangélo, the Gospell.

The guide phrases are "so called" and collocations of the term 'word' in combination with an adjective defining provenance. As already pointed out, variation is marked in English too, although I have found very few instances of explicit labels; two are shown in the examples below, others will be discussed later:

4. Ciurma, the common rascalitie of gallie slaues, a base route. The mariners call it in English ghing.
5. Parango, a span measure or shaftsman as drapers call it in London.

Another significant category labelled by Florio is diastratic variation. Most of the vocabulary recorded as spoken by a particular social group belongs to the Italian cryptolect of vagabonds and thieves. Cryptolects, or canting, as it was known in England, were probably the chief sociolinguistic varieties recorded in the early modern period, with dozens of works (treatises, glossaries, dialogues) in multiple editions and re-editions published in England alone.[12] The first records of a cryptolect variety can be dated to fourteenth-century Germany and the first Italian wordlists of the language of thieves and vagabonds were compiled in the second half of the fifteenth century (Considine 2017, 34 and 43–44). By the publication of *WW*, in other words, catalogues of cryptolects may be considered an "enduring genre" in early modern Europe, which indicates Florio's acumen as a lexicographer.

The majority of cryptolect terms recorded by Florio refers to money or objects related to it; there are then words for dogs, words related to riding, to garments, and for prostitutes:

6. Asti, or Cucchi, monie in rogues language, or pedlers french.
7. Guido, a dog or a cur in gibrish or rogues language.

---

[12] For context see Considine 2017, who makes a convincing case for the development of the genre, see especially p. 34 and ff.

8. Monélle, a roguish or fustian word, a word in pedlers French, signifying wenches, strumpets or whores.
9. Scórza di san Pietro, a cloke in rogues language or pedlers french.

This dimension of variation is marked with the labels "rogues language", "pedlers french" or "gibrish". Florio's interest in recording variants may be noticed once again in examples 7 and 8, where he provides lists of English synonyms to translate the Italian lemmas.

One final significant category labelled by Florio is that of usages restricted to specific contexts and connotations, identifying diaphasic variation. Florio displays a special interest in humorous and jocular usages, as in the following examples:

10. Arcifanfano, a supreme ruler, director, or find-fault taken in mockerie.
11. Barbanicchi, a word in iest taken for the common base people.
12. Culatorio, a woord of mockerie, as wee would say arserie.
13. Donna Beatrice, Dame Bettrice, it is taken in mockerie, and ironically, for an idle huswife.
14. Garamuffola, a word immockerie for Gramatica, as we say for Philosophie, foolelosophie.
15. Stefano, hath bin vsed in iest for a mans bellie, panch, crauer, mawe, or gut. Also a garland, a coronet, or chaplet.

A small group of labels in this category marks familiar, domestic language:

16. Babbo, the first word children call their fathers by; as we say dad.
17. Mamma, a teate, a pap, a dug, an vdder, a breast. Also the word that children vse to call their mother by as we say Mam, or my Mother.
18. Nanna, a word that women vse to still their children with, as we say lullabie. [...]
19. Pappo, a word vsed by children, as dad or dadie or bab.

If jocular usages are marked succinctly by means of labels indicating the possible connotations for the words (i.e. 'iest' and 'mockery'), the labels for domestic usages are longer, relative clauses or passives indicating the group of people using the word. As may be seen, in examples 17 and 19, Florio records variation in English too; the terms may be diaphasic, diatopic or diastratic variants representing topolects or idiolects, heard by Florio in use amongst different families, favoured by different family members, or in families of different socio-cultural backgrounds.

Indeed, variation in English is recorded throughout the dictionary by means of equivalents, variants and synonyms, which are listed sep-

arated by commas and by the use of the disjunctive conjunction "or". In all the examples discussed, we can also observe Florio's meaningful use of punctuation, indicating that the comma could also perform a metalinguistic labelling function.[13] Florio's own inclination to record an extensive range of English synonyms has not gone unnoticed (Considine 2022, 310; Stein 1985, 388); as O'Connor remarked, his norms were "consistently quantitative" (O'Connor 1972, 52), and Florio himself declared his own enthusiasm for the copy of English equivalents "If in these rankes the English out-number the Italian, congratulate the copie and varietie of our sweete-mother-toong" (Florio 1598, sig. a5).

6. Classification of meaning labels in *WW*

Focussing on meaning labels, the table below presents an inventory of their manifestations as retrieved through this study. This part of the analysis aims to add a further element to our understanding of the communicative function of the labels chosen by Florio and to establish to what extent he was consistent. The analysis is informed by the classification of labels into "group" and "register" labels, which Janssen et al. define as reflecting "a difference between characterizing a word as used by a group of speakers in a specific domain, and guiding an individual language user in making an appropriate choice between alternatives" (Janssen et al. 2003, 302).

Class (Janssen et al. 2003)	**Subclass** (Janssen et al. 2003)	**Florio's labels**	**Florio's metalanguage**
Group labels	field	Specialised terminology	according to [people], so called of/among [people], word (used) of/in [trade/people]
		Literary	used of/by, named by [author]
	geographical	Diatopic variation	so called in, a [topolect] word
	temporal	Diachronic variation	now called, anciently taken, not used nowadays
	-	Diastratic variation	in [cryptolect] language, a [cryptolect] word

[13] I am grateful to Marco Bagli for this point.

Class (Janssen et al. 2003)	**Subclass** (Janssen et al. 2003)	**Florio's labels**	**Florio's metalanguage**
Register labels	FIGURATIVE	Literal/ figurative sense	properly, metaphorically/by a metaphor
	-	Diaphasic variation	in/of mockerie, in iest a word used by [people], a word that [people] use

Tab. 1. Classification of meaning labels in *WW*.

In the table, literary terms are considered a particular type of specialised terminology and classified in the FIELD subclass. Janssen et al. do not identify a subclass that could straightforwardly be matched with the type of diastratic variation recorded by Florio, cryptolects. The language of vagabonds identifies a variety spoken by a (marginalised) social group identified by their lifestyle, rather than occupation, although in a sense "vagabonding", "rogueing" and "thieving" may be considered "occupations" and thereby be included in the subclass FIELD.

If there is a neat correspondence between the FIGURATIVE subclass and Florio's literal/figurative sense labels, Janssen et al. choose not to give any explicit sub-classification of register labels (Janssen et al. 2003, 312). The distinction between group and register labels, however, helps establish finer distinctions between different types of diaphasic variation marked by Florio. In fact, variation marked by the labels 'mockery' and 'jest' is clearly an instance of jocular register, whereas domestic diaphasic variation, that may be labelled as 'familiar' register in a modern dictionary (examples 16-19 in section 5.d above), is labelled by Florio referring to the group of people who use the words in question (children, mothers), and is linguistically more similar to the labels for specialised terminology (see for instance example 5 in section 5.c and the examples below). This may tentatively indicate that Florio did not think in terms of familiar register but rather saw this as a type of "specialised" vocabulary spoken by a particular group of people, i.e. family members:

1. Calcimia, **a word vsed of alchimists** for calcination. (*Compare with* "Pappo, a word vsed by children, as dad or dadie or bab".)
2. Prominentia, the extending or iutting of a thing out or ouer. [...], **by which word the Anatomists vnderstand** what portion soeuer doth notably surmount the parts circumiacent in thicknes, like as a hill in the plaine.

3. Scaloni, **a word that heraulds vse** in armorie as we say piles. Also great steps of a ladder or staires. (*Compare with* "Nanna, a word that women vse to still their children with, as we say lullabie. [...]".)

Looking closely at Florio's metalanguage, we can discern the following:

a) In field labels and register labels marking diaphasic variation of the familiar register he uses constructions which refer explicitly to the speaker or group of speakers using that particular variety; these may be adverbial and prepositional phrases (according to [people], so called of/among [people]), relative clauses (a word that [people] use) and passive constructions (word used of/in [trade/people], named by [author], a word used by [people]).
b) In geographical and diastratic labels he uses constructions which give an explicit indication of the language variety in question (topolect or cryptolect), or, for geographical labels, the area where it is spoken; these tend to be nominal phrases, but the adverbial phrase (so called in) is also used frequently to mark diatopic variation.
c) Figurative uses and diaphasic variation marking jocular vocabulary makes use of brief one word labels or phrases which are formally more similar to the ones that users of modern dictionaries may be more accustomed to (e.g. metaphorically).

Conclusion

Research on usage labels can throw light on a range of aspects connected with the codification and circulation of linguistic knowledge—exploring what was labelled and how helps us understand more about the study of language and linguistic thought in history. A study of the labelling practices in Florio's *WW* can illuminate aspects of relevance for both the history of lexicography and of the metalanguage of linguistics.

First, as regards Florio's conceptualisation of lexis and meaning, the examples in section 5.b indicate that he noticed that words could have multiple senses, even though he did not clearly distinguish between homonymy and polysemy, nor did he contemplate separating different senses as different entries in the dictionary.

As has been seen, then, Florio did not label everything systematically, so quantitative data should not be taken at face value. What can be tentatively concluded based on the figures in Charts 1 and 2, is that

he may have been more aware of specialised uses or uses restricted to specific (professional) contexts, than he was of dialectal forms or register variation. Such "inclination" to perceive occupational variation over other types of variation might have been influenced by the existence on the market of a plethora of glossaries, dictionaries and collections of field-specific vocabularies.

Further, as has emerged through the classification of his meaning labels in Table 1, Florio appears to have interpreted types of register variation in terms of usages by specific groups of people. Indeed, the taxonomic analysis of meaning labels has revealed that group labels are more numerous than register labels. Looking more closely at Florio's metalanguage, he resorted systematically to phrases, relative clauses and passives as group labels, whereas he reserved brief one-word labels to two types of register variation, jocular and figurative/literal senses. In this sense, diaphasic labels of the familiar register are atypical as register labels, since they appear in the form of relative clauses and passives including explicit mention of the speakers using those particular words, similarly to group labels (with the exception of diachronic variation, cfr. Table 1). This suggests that in Florio's conceptualisation, the familiar register was seen as a type of "specialised" vocabulary spoken by a particular group of people (i.e. family members), rather than a register restricted to particular contexts.

To conclude, if we consider the total number of labels identified in Chart 1 above (459) over the total number of entries counted in *WW* (43,517 entries),[14] it appears that metalinguistic labels were used marginally by Florio. This is hardly surprising, since usage labels were not widespread in sixteenth century lexicography. Yet, Florio's labels were complex, and the range of what he labelled is noteworthy. Further research will help assess whether his practice was innovative and to what extent it may have been indebted to his wide-ranging sources and models.

Bibliography

Andreani, A. and Russo, D. (2023), *Building a Corpus of the Metalanguage of English Linguistics 1500-1700: Methodological Issues*, in "Linguistica e Filologia", 43, pp. 151–174.

[14] Headword count provided by *Lexicons of Early Modern English* 2018, <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicons/231/> (last accessed 7 October 2024).

Boutcher, W. (1997), *A French Dexterity, & an Italian Confidence*, in "Reformation", 2, 1, pp. 39–109.

Considine, J. (2017), *Small Dictionaries and Curiosity: Lexicography and Fieldwork in Post-medieval Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Considine, J. (2022), *Sixteenth-Century English Dictionaries*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Cormier, M.C. (2008), *Usage Labels in the Royal Dictionary (1699) by Abel Boyer*, in "International Journal of Lexicography", 21, pp. 153–171.

Florio, J. (1598), *A Worlde of Wordes, or Most Copious, and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English*, Arnold Hatfield for Edward Blout, London.

Florio, J. (2007), *A Worlde of Wordes, or Most Copious, and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English, Collected by Iohn Florio*, Oxford Text Archive, available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12024/A00991> (last accessed 22 October 2024).

Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana, n.d., available at: <https://www.gdli.it/> (last accessed 22 October 2024).

Janssen, M. et al. (2003), *The Codification of Usage by Labels*, in P. van Sterkenburg (ed.), *A Practical Guide to Lexicography*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, pp. 297–311.

Lexicons of Early Modern English, 2018, Ian Lancashire (ed.), University of Toronto Press, Toronto, available at: <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca> (last accessed 22 October 2024).

Kohnen, T. (2007), *Text Types and the Methodology of Diachronic Speech Act Analysis*, in S.M. Fitzmaurice and I. Taavitsainen (eds), *Methods in Historical Pragmatics*, De Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 139–166.

McLelland, N. (2024), *Language Authority, Language Ideologies, and Eighteenth-century Bilingual Lexicographers of French, German, and English: Comparing Abel Boyer, Christian Ludwig, and Lewis Chambaud*, in J. Carruthers, M. McLaughlin, and O. Walsh (eds), *Historical and Sociolinguistic Approaches to French*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 181–197.

Montini, D. (2019), *Multilinguismo e strategie pragmatiche nei dialoghi didattici di John Florio*, in "Studi di grammatica italiana", 37, pp. 75–93.

O'Connor, D.J. (1972), *John Florio's Contribution to Italian-English Lexicography*, in "Italica", 49, 1, pp. 49–67.

Oxford Text Archive, n.d., available at: <https://ota.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/repository/xmlui/> (last accessed 22 October 2024).

Oxford English Dictionary Online, n.d., available at: <https://www.oed.com/> (last accessed 22 October 2024).

Spampanato, V. (1923), *Giovanni Florio: un amico del Bruno in Inghilterra*, in "La Critica", 21, pp. 56–60, 113–125, 189–192 and 313–317.

Spampanato, V. (1924), *Giovanni Florio: un amico del Bruno in Inghilterra*, in "La Critica", 22, pp. 56–61, 116–124 and 246–253.

Starnes, D.T. (1937), *Bilingual Dictionaries of Shakespeare's Day*, in "PMLA", 52, 4, pp. 1005–1018.

Starnes, D.T. (1965), *John Florio Reconsidered*, in "Texas Studies in Literature and Language", 6, 4, pp. 407–422.

Stein, G. (1985), *The English Dictionary before Cawdrey*, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston.

Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini (TLIO), n.d., available at: <http://tlio.ovi.cnr.it/TLIO/> (last accessed 22 October 2024).

Tommaseo-Bellini, n.d., available at: <https://www.tommaseobellini.it/#/> (last accessed 22 October 2024).

Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca, n.d., available at: <http://www.lessicografia.it/> (last accessed 22 October 2024).

Zimont, E. (2020), *Variation diatopique dans la lexicographie français ‹-› néerlandais aux XVI*e *et XVII*e *siècles: réception et usage des marques diatopiques*, in R. Van Rooy (ed.), *Essays in the history of dialect studies. From ancient Greece to modern dialectology*, Nodus Publikationen, Münster, pp. 48–67.

A World of Tastes: The Lexicographic Representation of Taste in *A Worlde of Wordes*

Marco Bagli

1. Introduction

Florio is considered the best interpreter of Italian culture at the Elizabethan court, at a time when Italian was the *lingua franca* of the cultural elites in England and across Europe (Montini 2015; Wyatt 2005; Pirillo 2010, 9–20). John Florio was born between worlds: he grew up as a bilingual child in a foreign country, and his capacity of inhabiting these two worlds enabled him to become a translator, an educator, and the first lexicographer to write a full-length dictionary from Italian to English, *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598).[1] Crucially, Florio included in the dictionary words that were used in a range of different Italian dialects of the time and did not focus exclusively on the Tuscan dialect (O'Connor 1972). The metaphor of a *world of words* in the title of his work underscores the intimate link between language and external reality embedded in his dictionary. As Iamartino (2010, 267–268) argues, the words collected in a dictionary delineate the boundaries of the world, while simultaneously capturing only a fragment of the reality they seek to describe. In other words, the lexicographer is confronted with the choice of selecting relevant lexical items to include in their dictionary, as it would be impossible to include every single item of a language. An in-depth analysis of the entries reported therefore may shed light on the cultural elements embedded by the compiler in their

[1] William Thomas's *Principal Rules of the Italian Grammar* includes what is considered the first Italian-English dictionary, which, however, focuses on the language of the Three Crowns (O'Connor 1972 and 1990). In contrast, Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* contains lexical items from over 72 works of Italian literature, totaling almost 46,000 entries (Iamartino 2010, 267).

dictionary. Drawing from diverse domains such as literature, botany, horsemanship, and cookery, and by incorporating dialectal variations, Florio provided insights into how language mediates and organises human experience. Among these domains, the lexicon of perception is particularly revealing. Perceptual information such as taste, smell, and touch, is deeply tied to both biological processes and cultural interpretations. Florio's choices in glossing gustatory and sensory terms offer a window into how perception was conceptualised in the Early Modern period, reflecting the interplay between human embodiment and the cultural systems of the time.

Perceptual information is mediated by our species-specific bodies: the array of stimuli that humans perceive is the result of millennia of evolution.[2] The ways in which these stimuli are represented in language instead are inextricably intertwined with cultural systems, as a burgeoning body of work in the cognitive sciences is suggesting.[3] Languages represent "a window onto the senses" (Majid and Levinson 2011, 7), and even if the number of scientific contributions concentrating on the relationship between language and perception is growing, less attention has been dedicated to its diachronic development.[4]

The aim of this study is to retrieve occurrences of Early Modern English lexical items that explicitly refer to the sense of taste in *A Worlde of Wordes*. The retrieval of Italian lexical items glossed by English Basic Taste terms sheds light on the use and meaning of gustatory vocabulary across the two languages. The data analysed reveal the richness of the Italian lexicon related to taste perception and provide an opportunity to identify the patterns of semantic extension recorded by Florio.

The present chapter is organised as follows: after this brief Introduction, I move on to the presentation of the Methodology (2), and of the Results (3), before discussing the main findings (4) and offering some final remarks (5).

---

[2] This is how Evans 2007, 66 defines *embodied cognition*: "One of the guiding principles of cognitive semantics and at the heart of much research in cognitive linguistics. This thesis holds that the human mind and conceptual organisation are a function of the way in which our species-specific bodies interact with the environment we inhabit".

[3] See, for instance, Ibarretxte-Antuñano 2013; Caballero and Ibarretxte-Antuñano 2009.

[4] But see Strik-Lievers and de Felice 2019; Anderson 2019 for relevant exceptions.

2. Methodology

The data analysed in this chapter were retrieved from the queryable version of a *World of Wordes*.[5] This version of Florio's dictionary was originally used to check and complement the results retrieved through the scanned version of the original document, freely available for download from Google Books. The use of the modernised version was necessary because some of the occurrences were not retrievable through a simple search in the original text.

To guarantee the retrieval of possible spelling variations,[6] I used the wildcards corresponding to English Basic Taste terms:[7] *sweet**, *bitter**, *sowr**, *sower**, *spic**, *sauor**, *sauour**, *salt**. I copied the relevant headwords and their definitions in a separate file, to facilitate the analyses.

In the second step of the analysis, I categorised the headwords into coherent semantic categories, mainly based on their lexical meaning. To achieve this result, I followed a two-step procedure: the entries were tagged by me and by an AI software (ChatGPT) independently, and then the results of the categorisation were compared to limit reliance on personal introspection and to buttress the relevance of the final input. The categories that emerged are discussed in the following section. The data were processed in R, using the libraries (readxl) and (dplyr), the graphs were created using the library (ggplot2) (Wickham 2016).

3. Results

The wildcard *sweet** retrieved the highest number of lexical items (n= 148). The second most frequent bulk of items were retrieved by *salt** (n= 66). It must be noted that the lexical item *salty* is not present in *A Worlde of Wordes*, despite the *Oxford English Dictionary* reports 1563 as a first appearance of the form. Therefore, the results discussed here refer to the usage of the form *salt*, whose first appearance according to the OED dates to c.1440. Both the wildcards *sauou** (n= 53) and *sauor** (n= 34) retrieve lexical items corresponding to Contemporary English *savoury*. Aggregating their frequencies shows that the overall ranking of the item does not change: it is the third most frequent Basic Taste Term. The wildcards

---

[5] Available here: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A00991.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext> (last accessed 14 September 2025)

[6] See Ciambella (2024) for a recent contribution on the matter.

[7] Bagli 2021, 40–42.

*sowr** (n= 51) and *sower** (n= 8) correspond to Contemporary English *sour*: the two variants present dramatically different figures, with *sowr* being the preferred spelling, and *sower* appearing only in eight entries. I want to emphasise that the spelling *sower* may also correspond to other lexical items, i.e., the deverbal nouns from the verbs *to sow* and *to sew*. These lexical items were discarded because they represented cases of homonymy. The wildcard *spic** (n= 38) was used to verify occurrences of *spicy*. Although this adjective is not present with this form in *A Worlde of Wordes*, the query retrieved other related lexical items such as *spiced* and *spices*. Lastly, the wildcard *bitter** (n= 24) retrieved the smallest number of occurrences, and it corresponds to Contemporary English *bitter*.

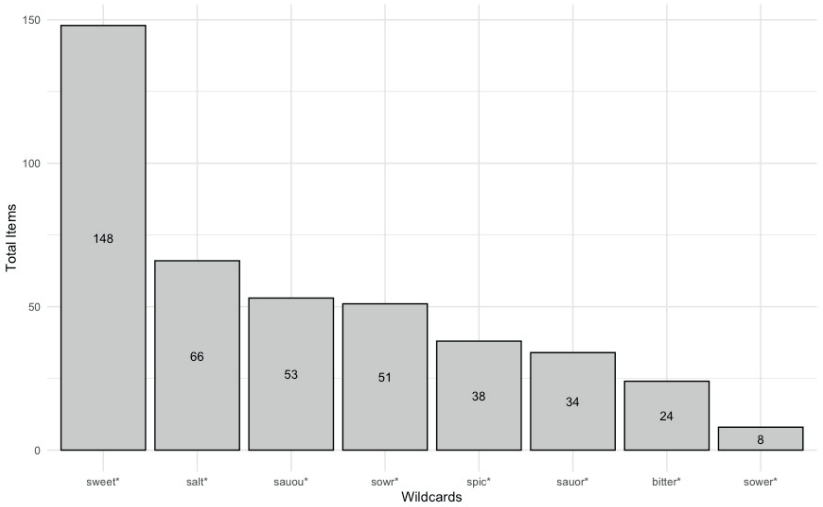


Fig. 1. Lexical items for each wildcard.

Figure (1) illustrates the number of Italian dictionary entries whose glosses include a lexical item referring to taste. In the following sections, I present the organisation and composition of the different semantic categories, and I will occasionally concentrate and discuss relevant examples.

3.1. Semantic categories

The dictionary entries retrieved with wildcards were categorised both by ChatGPT and me, and the categories were then merged to limit reliance on personal introspection and to reach more accuracy. The semantic categories that emerged from this process accommodate for the

dictionary entries retrieved by the different wildcards, thus allowing for comparison across the data. Three categories group glosses in which the taste word refers to a physical property of the headword. These are: PERFUMES AND BEAUTY CARE;[8] FOOD AND DRINK;[9] and NATURAL ELEMENTS. The fourth category that emerged is that of TASTE WORDS, which contains headwords that refer to the distinct physical sensations (e.g., *Sweetness* or *Bitterness*). Lastly, the category METAPHORICAL lists headwords whose gloss instantiates a metaphorical use of a taste word.[10]

3.2. Categories of sweet

Fig. 2 illustrates the frequencies of the lexical items retrieved by the wildcard *sweet**.

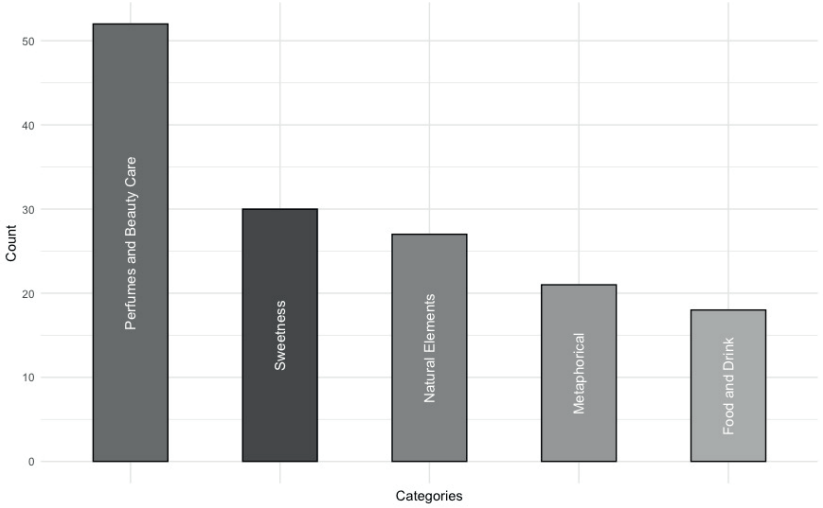


Fig. 2. Categories of sweet.

[8] Following the reviewer's observation of using different typographic conventions for the categories and for the results, and in keeping with current typographic conventions in cognitive linguistics literature, I chose to use SMALL CAPS to signal semantic categories and conceptual metaphors.

[9] A considerable number of taste words are used to describe perceptual qualities that are traditionally associated with smell. In this chapter I listed these occurrences in the PERFUMES category, and I did not consider them as metaphorical uses, in keeping with the recognition of common sensory pathways between taste and smell (AUVRAY and SPENCE 2008).

[10] The different categories are not mutually exclusive, and there are cases of potential overlap: while some of these will be commented upon, others will not. To accommodate for the fuzzy nature of the categories, I decided not to display and to discuss numerical figures in the following graphs.

The category PERFUMES AND BEAUTY CARE contains entries in which *sweet* describes the smell of an item, which often refers to cosmetics and beauty care, such as *Cifi: a kinde of sweete perfume dedicated to the Gods*, or *Unguentaio*: *[…] a perfumer, one that maketh sweet oyles and selleth them*.[11] This category also contains lexical items that describe general properties of objects perceived through smell, such as *Fresco: fresh, new, unsalt, coole, cold, green, sweet, newlaid, sound, lustie*[12] or *Fragranza: a fragrancy or sweet smelling*.

The category SWEETNESS contains entries that describe this perceptual quality, and therefore contains the lexical items that were available in Italian to describe this sensation. Some examples include *Dolcetto: somewhat sweete or pleasant*; *Dolciore, Dolcitudine: sweetenes*; *Melano: sweete like honie*; *Zuccheroso: sweete, candied, full of sugar, sugrie*. The category also contains verbs that describe the action of making something sweet, such as *Addolcire: to sweeten, to appease or asswage*, or *Raddolcire, cisco, cito: to sweeten, to appease, to asswage, to mollifie, to soften, to pacifie, to calme*. Although the glosses of these entries illustrate a figurative extension following the conceptual metaphor MITIGATING IS SWEETENING, which is still active in Contemporary English, I decided to assign them to the *Sweetness* category based on their first meaning, which refers to physical perception.

The category NATURAL ELEMENTS contains entries that typically refer to plants, herbs, or animals, and in which *sweet* refers to either their smell or their taste. For instance, *Barbacapri: the herbe maides-sweete or medow sweete*; *Ligoritia: the sweete wood we call licorice*; and *Timallo, Timalo: a fish called a flowre, goodly to look upon, and sweete in taste and smell*. Many entries in this category could belong also to FOOD AND DRINKS,

---

[11] The glosses reported in the text are from the original document available online. I use a colon to separate the entry from its gloss, while in the original document this distinction is realised graphically by separating with a blank space the two elements. I decided to report the original spelling and to avoid modernisation.

[12] I am grateful to the reviewer for drawing attention to Florio's defining style, particularly his use of series of English equivalents that allow the reader to select the most appropriate term based on context. In line with this approach, the inclusion of English glosses such as *sweet* for entries like *fresco* does not necessarily indicate that all senses of the Italian term refer to gustation. Nonetheless, the presence of a gustatory gloss—however context-dependent—was considered sufficient for the purposes of this study, either because it reflects a potential interpretative frame available to the Early Modern English reader or because it suggests a possible (even if contextually restricted) semantic association with taste.

but they were kept separate based on their consistent reference to living creatures, i.e., before these were turned into food.

The category METAPHORICAL groups together entries whose meaning is motivated by a metaphorical elaboration on the concept of sweetness. For example, *Cuoricino: a prettie little sweete hart;* or *Manza: a yong cow, a steere, a heifer, a runt, a mans sweetheart, loue, or mistres,* motivated by LOVE IS SWEET.[13] The category METAPHORICAL contains entries that consistently refer to sound and music, such as *Melodioso: melodius, harmonius, sweete singing*; or *Musa: muse, or a sweet song*. The underlying conceptual metaphor that motivates this figurative extension is HARMONY IS SWEET, which is still active in Contemporary English and motivates polysemous patterns of the adjective *sweet* when referring to music and sound.[14]

Lastly, the category FOOD AND DRINKS contains entries that refer to elements that may be consumed as food, whose distinctive taste is sweet. For instance, *Cubaita: a kinde of sweete cake or marchpane*; or *Taréllo: a kinde of cheese or sweet cake.* Two entries in this category refer to offal: *Lenesini: the sweete-bread of a breast of veale;* and *Pancrea: a kernell vnder the ventricle, to defend it from receiuing hurt. In a hog it is called the sweete bread*. The compound *sweetbread* to refer to this type of offal originates in English, but the semantic reason is not clear (OED, *sweetbread*, etymology). The inclusion of these items in the dictionary illustrates Florio's sensibility towards specific cultural and social uses, particularly about food.

3.3. Categories of salt

Fig. 3 reports the frequency of the entries retrieved by the wildcard *salt**. The category with the largest number of entries is NATURAL ELEMENTS, followed by FOOD AND DRINK, SALTINESS, METAPHORICAL and PERFUMES.[15] Although this category contains only the adjective *Fresco*, it was kept separate to maintain consistency with the categorisation of the same lexical item in *sweet*. Notably, the form retrieved by the wildcard that appears in this gloss is *unsalt*, the antonym of *salt*.

---

[13] MASTEN (2004) discusses the frequent use of *sweet* as a term of address between males in Early Modern England, and advances it may be a marker of homosexual relations. See also BUSSE (2006), BAGLI (2016).

[14] BAGLI 2021, 122.

[15] Here and later, the category PERFUMES AND BEAUTY CARE is labelled as PERFUMES for easiness of reference in the tables.

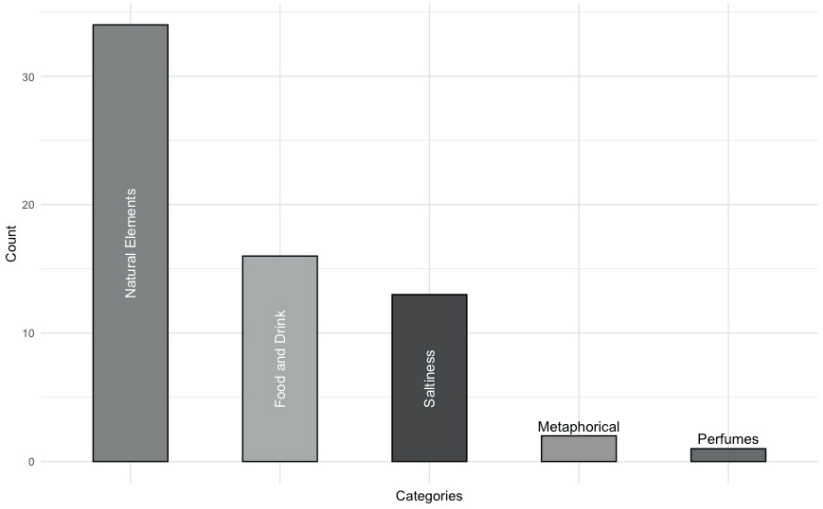


Fig. 3. Categories of salt.

As in the previous examples, the category NATURAL ELEMENTS contains dictionary entries in which the item *salt* refers to plants, herbs, and other natural entities. In the case of *salt* these are mainly rocks and minerals from which salt may be derived, such as *Sale catino: a kinde of salt*; *Sale pietra: a kinde of stonie salt*; or *Ralli: the hearbe Saltwort, or pricked kalie*. The occurrences retrieved by the wildcard in this category all correspond to the base form *salt*.

The category FOOD AND DRINK contains entries in which the lexical item *salt* is used to describe the taste of elements that may be consumed as food. For instance, the lexeme *Botargo: a kinde of salt meate made of fish vsed in Italy in Lent*, or *Salami: any kinde of salt, pickled or pudred meats or souse, namely bacon, sausages, mertlemas beefe, salt fish or whatsoeuer both fish and flesh*.

The category SALTINESS contains entries that refer to the general property of containing salt: e.g., *Salato: salt, powdred, sowsed, pickled, brackish, salted*; *Salsédine* or *Salsità*, both glossed by: *saltnes, brackishnes*. This category also contains elements that refer to the lack of salt, which results in a lack of taste, such as *Discipito: vnsauorie, tastesse, without salt, wallowish. Also simple minded.* The second part of the gloss reports an extended use of the It. *discipito*, but it was attributed to the category *Saltiness* in keeping with the first meaning reported.

The extended meaning exemplified by *discipito* is also found in the items in the category METAPHORICAL, and it is motivated by a combina-

tion of conceptual metaphor and metonymy. The general conceptual metaphor that motivates this extended meaning is INTELLECTUAL ABILITY IS TASTE, which motivates the polysemy of Latin *sapio*, which refers both to *to taste* and *to know*. The metaphorical link between taste and intelligence has survived also in Italian and other cognate languages, such as Spanish (TORRES SOLER 2021). Crucially, the lexical items under analysis here do not refer to a general lack of *taste*, rather to a lack of *salt*. The consumption of *salt* in human diet is likely due to the ability of salt to chemically combine with water, thus allowing the release of chemicals that enable a more pleasant perception of food during ingestion (HOLLEY 2015). Thus, the lexical selection of the item *salt* to refer to the more general concept of taste is motivated by the conceptual metonymy CAUSE FOR RESULT: adding salt to food results in enhancing its taste, which instantiates a figurative chain that may be formalised as follows: since adding salt is enhancing taste; and INTELLIGENCE IS TASTE; then INTELLIGENCE IS SALT. The same metaphorical link motivates the extended meaning of other entries in this category, such as *Insulso: vnsauorie, foolish, without smack or salt, or wisedome*.

A group of entries refer to "Sexual desire or excitement" (OED, †*salt*, n^2), such as It. *Infoiare: to be leacherous as a goate, or a salt bitch*, or *Esser'in frega: to be proud, or salt as a bitch, or a catterwalling as cats*. This lexical item is no longer in use in Contemporary English, and it represents a case of homonymy with the lexical item referring to taste. The word *salt* in reference to sex developed from French *saut* (lit. *leap*) < Latin *saltus* < *salire* 'to leap' (OED, †*salt*, n^2, etymology). Although these items were originally considered, they were subsequently discarded.

3.4. Categories of savoury

The frequency of dictionary entries in which lexical items retrieved by the wildcards *sauor** and *sauour** is illustrated appears in Fig. 4. Spelling variants corresponding to Contemporary English *savoury* have been grouped together and referred to under this label, as they denote the same sensory concept. As the reviewer rightly noted, spelling variation is not relevant to the present analysis, which focuses on semantics.

The categories to which the lexical items have been assigned differ slightly from previous categorisations. The category FOOD did not emerge for the entries related to *savoury*, while the categories GENERAL TASTE and GENERAL SMELL appear. This means that these lexical items do

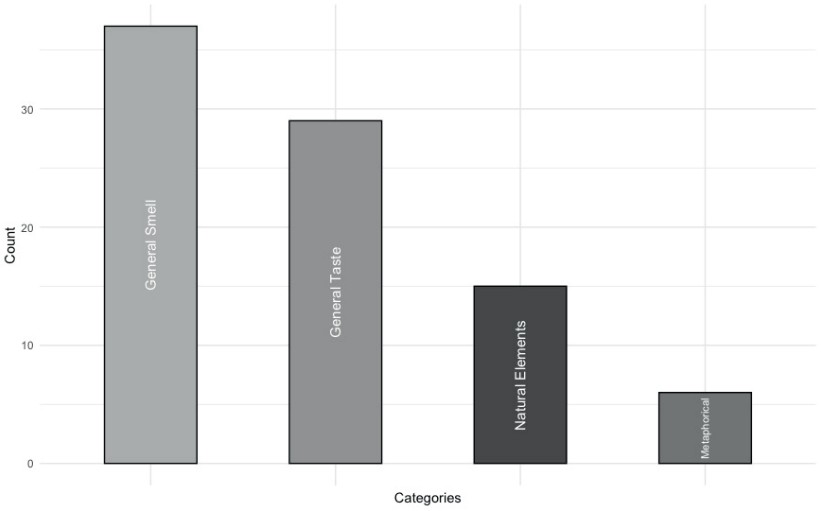


Fig. 4. Categories of savoury.

not gloss entries that refer to specific food elements, but they are frequently used to talk about the general perceptual qualities of an item.

The category GENERAL SMELL contains entries that refer to general olfactive properties of physical objects, such as *Odore: an odour, a sent, a smell, a sauour. Also perceiuing, senting, smelling*. […]; or *Puzza: a stinke or ill sauour or smell*. As evidenced by the gloss for *Odore*, the lexical item *sauour* is used to refer to a general property and does not gloss a specific property. The same item however may be used to refer to *taste*, as in *Assaporare: to sauour, to taste* or in *Sapore: a smacke, a sauour, a taste, a smell, an inward feeling. Also a sauce or taste that makes the meate to taste well*, both attributed to the category GENERAL TASTE. Although the two categories were distinguished for quantitative reasons, it appears evident from these examples that they could have been aggregated, as the lexical item *sauo(u)r* refers indiscriminately to both senses. The use of *savour* to refer to smell is maintained in Contemporary English, in which both the noun and the verb *savour* may refer both to the sense of taste and the sense of smell (OED, *savour*, verb, II; dictionary.com, *savor*).[16] The overarching meaning of this lexical item has an embodied counterpart: the sense of smell and the sense of taste are almost inex-

[16] The same does not hold for the derived adjective, which was the original target of the wildcard: according to the OED, the adjective *savoury* mainly refers to taste, and its meaning as *fragrant* (OED *savoury*, 1.c) is marked as *rare*. The gustatory meaning that

tricably intertwined in our bodies, and a vast majority of gustatory sensations are actually perceived through retro-nasal olfaction[17].

The category NATURAL ELEMENTS groups entries in which the lexical item *sauo(u)r* describes physical properties of natural items, such as herbs and plants. For instance, *Tragio: an herb growing only in Candie, having boughs, leaves and seedes like Iuniper, but it sauoureth like the stinking of a goate, false or bastard Dictam*; or *Rodia: a kinde of herbe, the roote whereof sauoureth of the rose called rosewort*. The two wildcards also retrieved adjectives such as *vnsauorie*, found in entries like *Cantharo: or Canthero, a fish endued with great chastitie as the turtle is, hauing an vnsauorie taste*. However, most occurrences in this category describe *winter sauorie*, a phytonim which appears in the glosses of several Italian entries, such as *Saturéia, Sauoreggia, Sauorélla* and *Coniella*. These plants belong to the genus *Satureja* and are often used as aromatic herbs. Notably, any plant in this genus maintains the name *savory* in Contemporary English (OED, *savory*, noun). Despite the same spelling, the relationship with the taste word is debatable. According to the etymology section of the OED, the English name *savory* is a borrowing from French through the Anglo-Norman *savoroye* (and related forms), which ultimately comes from Latin *saturēia*, of unknown origins. The lexeme however underwent a "likely alteration" perhaps by association with *saver, savor* from Latin *sapor*, thus ultimately showing a possible connection with the gustatory dimension, which is not necessarily based on a physical, embodied phenomenon as much as on a case of linguistic assonance.

Finally, the category METAPHORICAL consists of entries that bear evidence of extended meaning. These are motivated by the metaphorical mapping INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY IS TASTE, that intervenes also in the polysemy of the lexical items related to *salt*. For instance, *Insulsità: foolishness, vnsauorines*; or *Insipa: foolish, fonde, witlesse, vnsauorie, without reason*; or the entry for the verb *Saére, so, seppi, saputo*: *to know [...], to be wise, to haue a good witte, to vnderstande and perceiue well […]. Also to taste, to smell, to smacke, to sauour. […].* The metaphorical link between intelligence and taste is still active in Contemporary English, especially in its negative form *unsavoury*, and it has developed a more moral meaning. The adjec-

---

was targeted for the research is sense 3: "Of food or drink: having a salty, piquant, or 'umami' taste or flavour; not sweet".

17 BAGLI 2021; AUVRAY and SPENCE 2008; NARISANO and BAGLI 2025.

tive *unsavoury* is defined as "Objectionable on moral grounds; having an unpleasant or disagreeable character or association" (OED, *unsavoury*, 4), thus suggesting the metaphorical mapping MORALITY IS TASTE. The same metaphorical mapping may also motivate the polysemy of *savoury*, meaning "morally or ethically wholesome or unobjectionable" (OED, *savoury*, adj., 1.d.), but this last meaning is chiefly found in negative contexts, i.e., the antonym is not realised morphologically but contextually.

3.5. Categories of sour

The dictionary entries containing lexical items related to *sowr** or *sower** are categorised and presented in Fig. 5.

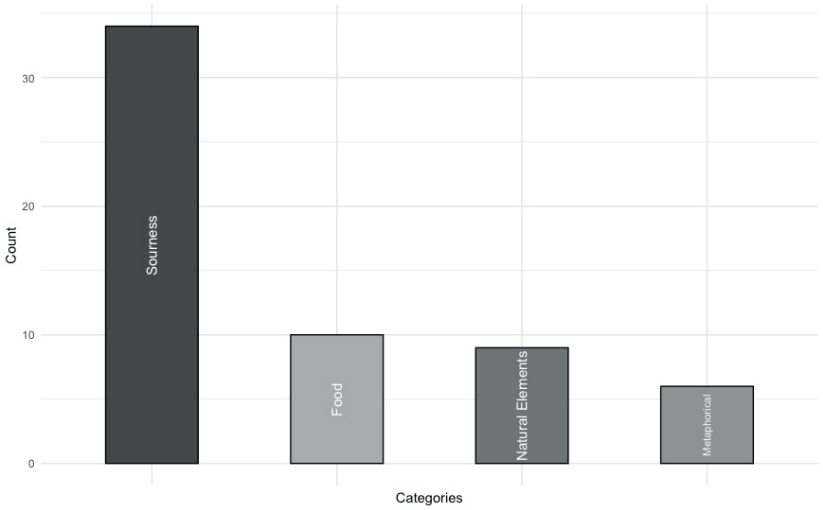


Fig. 5. Categories of sour.

The categories that emerged from these entries mirror previous categorisation patterns, except for PERFUMES AND BEAUTY CARE, which is not pertinent in this case. The only entry that explicitly mentions smell is *Fortino: rammishnes, sowrenes, rancknes in taste or smell*, but it has been categorised in the *Sourness* category due to its first reference to a sour taste.

The category SOURNESS is the largest: this is due to the variety of Italian lexical items in the dataset that describe this sensation. Besides *Aspero: sharpe, sowre, rough, craggie* […], Florio includes items such as *Acerbo, Acido, Agro, Brusco, Garbetto, Insoaue, Lazzo, Omphacino, Pontico,*

Racente, and *Sorbitico*, most of which also show morphologically derived lexemes (such as *Acerbare, Acerbamente, Acerbezza*). Each of these adjectives is glossed by Florio as a general word to refer to *sour(ness)*, as they are invariably glossed as *sowr, sharp,* or *tart*.

The semantic category FOOD contains entries in which *sour* describes the taste of specific food items, such as *Vinagro: sowre wine, vineger*, or *Vino voltato: sowre wine that hath lost his strength, dead wine*. All the lexical items in this category are specifically used to describe the properties of wine, thus forming a continuum with the items in the SOURNESS category, which however do not show any direct reference to *wine*.

As with previous entries, the category NATURAL ELEMENTS groups entries that refer to the natural world, especially plants and fruit. For instance, *Marasca: a kinde of sowre cherrie*, or *Rombice*: *the hearbe Sorrell or sowre-dock*. Another Italian name for the same herb is *Acetosa*, which suggests the semantic link with the taste of its leaves.

Lastly, the category METAPHORICAL lists elements that display a metaphorical elaboration based on the gustatory item under discussion. Thus, for instance, *Arcigno: frowning, lowring, skouling, grim, sowre-looking, powting*, or *Toruo: sowre, frowning, sterne, crabbed, pouting, lowring, grim, cruell and spitefull in lookes* […] display a figurative elaboration that links TASTE to CHARACTER, following the mapping HOSTILITY IS SOUR. This mapping is still active in contemporary English, and it motivates semantic realisations such as *sour looks*. Some lexical items, despite being assigned to the category SOURNESS, have extended meanings that may be motivated by conceptual metaphors. For instance, *Tetricità: sowernes, or sadnes of countenance,* or *inacerbare: to make or become sowre, sharp, eagre, or tarte, to exasperate, to provoke, to instigate or excite to wrath*. The item *tetricità* instantiates a metaphorical link between sourness and sadness which may be envisaged in regional Italian expressions such as adjective *tristo* < Lat. *tristis*, which may be referred both to an emotional state of a person, and to wine that has gone sour. The metaphorical link that motivates the polysemy of the verb *inacerbare* is still active in Contemporary English, and it may be formulated as HOSTILITY IS SOUR, TURNING SOUR IS BECOMING HOSTILE.

3.6. Categories of spiced/spicy

Fig. 6 illustrates the categories in which I divided the lexical items retrieved by the wildcard *spic**, which was used to identify dictionary entries that correspond to Contemporary English *spicy* and related items.

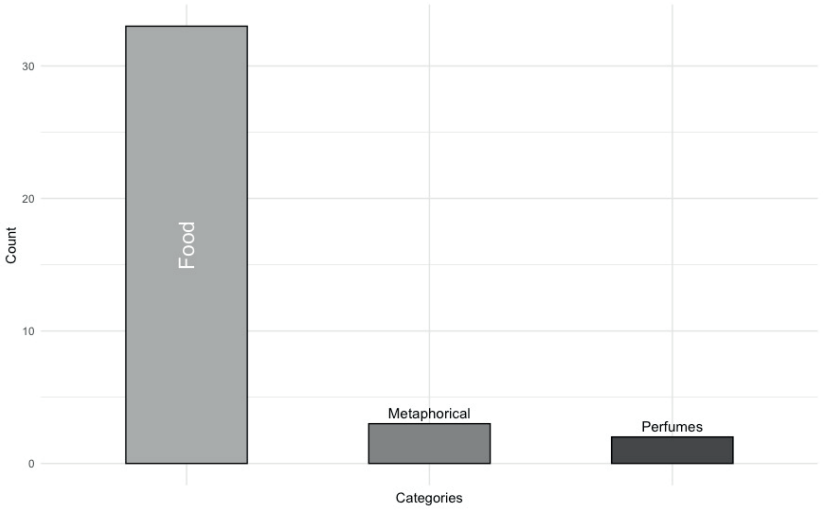


Fig. 6. Categories of spices/spiced.

The adjective *spicy* never occurs in the dataset, even though the earliest attestation in the OED dates to 1562. The form that is most frequently retrieved by the wildcard is the noun *spice*, while the past participle *spiced* is the most common adjective. As shown in Fig. 6, most dictionary entries that contain *spiced* (or related items) in their gloss describe either an ingredient or the specific flavour profile of a type of food. There are no occurrences of lexical items that describe a general quality of spiciness: the Italian term *piccante*, corresponding to contemporary English *spicy*, is glossed by Florio as: *well sauoring, smacking, briske, biting vpon the toong as wine doth, relishing somewhat sharpe or tarte. Also a tartenes vpon the toong, a tang left vpon the toong.*

The FOOD category contains lexical items such as *Sesamele: a kind of simnell bread made with honie and spice*, as well as lexical items identifying specific spices. These are: *Cinamomo* (i.e., cinnamon), *Galanga: the hearbe or spice Galangall* (i.e., aromatic plants in the genera *Alpinia* and *Kaempferia*, OED, *galangal* n.1); *Garafano: a gilliflower, or the spice called a clove*; *Gengébro, Géngero, Gengiuo, Gengiouo (*e.g., *ginger*); *Macis* (*mace*, i.e., *nutmeg*), and *Pepe, pepere, peuere* (i.e., *pepper*).

The category PERFUMES contains only a couple of lexical items that explicitly refer to *spices*, more specifically to their smell. These are *Balsamare*: *to embalme, or enspice*; and *Odoroso: savuorie, odoriferous, smelling, senting, bringing spices and sweete savuoring things*.

The category METAPHORICAL lists dictionary entries in which the items *spice* or *spiced* are used metaphorically. These are *scrupolo, scrupolosità* and *scrupoloso*. The term *scrupolo* is glossed by Florio as *any little sharpe stone. Also a doubt, a scruple of conscience, spicedness of conscience*. Similarly, the adjective *scrupoloso* is defined as *scrupolous, doubtful, […] of a spiced conscience*. According to the OED, the meaning of *spiced* that Florio uses for his gloss is currently obsolete (OED, *spiced*, adj. 2), but it testifies to the semantic link between the two items. The Italian item *scrupolo* originally referred to a weight unit of measure used for silver and gold in the Etruscan, Roman, and Campanian monetary systems (Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana, *scrupolo*, 4). According to treccani.it dictionary, the word derives from Lat. *scrupŭlus*, meaning "a small stone", as also testified by Florio. In its extended meaning, the adjective *scrupoloso* may be glossed as *conscientious, meticolous*. In the OED, *scruple* has two different entries: *scruple*, n1 refers to the unit of measure and derives directly from Latin *scrupŭlus*. The lexical item *scruple,* n2 instead refers to: "A thought or circumstance that troubles the mind or conscience; a doubt, uncertainty or hesitation in regard to right and wrong, duty, propriety" (OED, *scruple* n2), and entered English via French *scrupule*, which is also from Latin *scrupŭlus.* The semantic link that connects the meaning of *small stone* to the psychological sphere may be motivated by the embodied conceptual metaphor IMPORTANCE IS WEIGHT,[18] according to which a small object with a low weight may be used to conceptualise something that has a low importance, such as a doubt, or a scruple. In turn, this conceptualisation may be modelled by the image-schema of SIZE: a scruple has a *small size*, therefore adding a little weight (metaphorically little *importance*) to a decision or a moral behaviour, such as doubt or a scruple. John Florio glosses the Italian *scrupoloso* with *of spiced conscience*, thus illustrating a (potentially) metaphorical link between spices and doubts and/or hesitation. The first appearance of the expression *spiced conscience* in English is in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* I(A) 526. The exact meaning and derivation of this expression is still a matter of debate. According to SKEAT (1899), "the origin of the phrase is French. The name of *espices* (spices) was given to the fees or dues which were payable (in advance) to judges. A 'spiced'

[18] SCHNEIDER et al. 2011.

judge, who would have a 'spiced' conscience, was scrupulous and exact, because he had been prepaid, and was inaccessible to any but large bribes" (Biggins 1966, 169). Despite being evocative, this explanation has been disproved by other scholars. According to Biggins (1966), it is true that the French *espices* referred to judges' fees, but there is no evidence of usage in reference to conscience. Although there are some occurrences in ME of the term *spice* meaning "bribe" or "bribery", there is no evidence of a past participle of the verb with the sense of "bribed" (Ibid. 170, n. 3). According to Robinson, the meaning of the expression may have to do with "seasoned, hence highly-refined, over-scrupulous; possibly with the suggestion that he was not sophisticated, versed in anise and cummin, and negligent of weightier matters…" (Robinson 1957, 664, in Biggins 1966, 171). According to Biggins instead, the meaning "'scrupulous' presumably developed from a semantic process of this kind: 'flavoured' > 'delicately-flavoured' > 'discriminating' > 'scrupulous'; or of this: 'seasoned' > 'overseasoned, hot' > 'sensitive' > 'scrupulous'" (Biggins 1966, 173). The explanation provided by Biggins may be motivated by the conceptual metaphor MORALITY IS TASTE, which motivates linguistic realisations that describe people of dubious moral standards as *unsavoury*. Therefore, an addition of *spices* could correspond to an amelioration of taste, which in turn could correspond to *morality*. As discussed in the previous section, this conceptual metaphor is mainly found in negative contexts, and the semantic trajectory from SPICES TO MORE SAVOUR to a BETTER CONSCIENCE seems unnecessarily complicated. I argue instead that the relevant feature of the concept of *spices* that is being mapped in the metaphorical elaboration are not the gustatory qualities of *spices*, rather their size, mirroring the same conceptual metaphor that motivates the polysemy of *scruple*. Spices are typically used in small quantities, and they are handled in pinches among the fingers, therefore having *a spiced conscience* could refer to adding a small quantity of doubts to a decision that had already been made. The two meanings are not necessarily in stark contrast, rather they could feed into and reinforce each other: spices are a small quantity that alter the taste of something, thus metaphorically altering the conscience of someone, as a scruple does. The usage in English of spices as a small quantity is testified by the OED in senses 5a and 5b: "A slight touch, trace, or share, a dash or flavour, of some thing or quality" (OED, *spice*, 5b).

3.7. Categories of bitter

The occurrences of bitter are the lowest in Frequency of the Basic Taste Terms. Fig. 7 reports the details of the occurrences retrieved by the wildcard *bitter** in the dataset. The categories BITTERNESS contains the highest number of lexical items, followed by NATURAL ELEMENTS and finally by PERFUMES AND BEAUTY CARE. The category METAPHORICAL did not emerge from the analysis because there are no lexical items that have an exclusively metaphorical meaning.

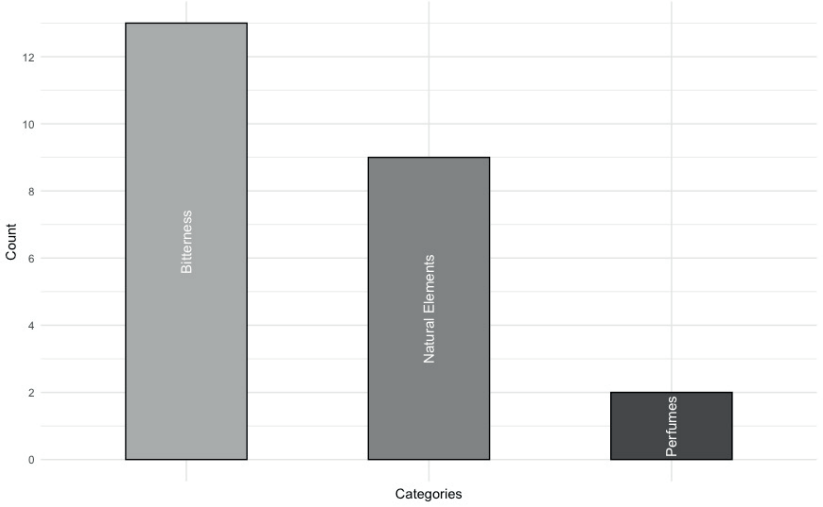


Fig. 7. Categories of bitter.

Some of the lexical items in the category BITTERNESS are also in the category SOURNESS, such as *Acerbo* and *Acerbamente*; others instead exclusively refer to BITTERNESS, such as *Amarezza, Amaritudine: bitterness*; or *Amaretto: bitterish, somewhat bitter*. Some of the meanings in this category illustrate a metaphorical elaboration from a physical to an emotional dimension, such as *Amaro: bitter, tedious, sharpe, spitefull*, or *Amarulente: bitter, spitefull, malitious*. These were included in this category in keeping with their first meaning reported by Florio. The conceptual metaphor that motivates this usage may be formulated as CONFLICT IS BITTER, which still motivates the polysemy of this gustatory descriptor in Contemporary English. Other occurrences in this category are *Mordacità*: *bitterness in tanting* (sic.), *in biting, in detracting, sharpness of words*

and *Feleggiare*: *to make or be as bitter as gall*. As evidenced by these examples, the lexical items for *bitterness* may be extended metaphorically, but the first meaning reported always refers to a physical sensation.

The second category is that of NATURAL ELEMENTS, which encompasses items such as *Gentiána: the herb of fellwort, bitterwort, or gentian*, or *Linaloè: the aloes tree, a wood that is very bitter*. Finally, the category PERFUMES contains two elements that, despite the name, refer to medicines. These are *Amaricino: a kinde of precious ointment. Also somewhat bitter* and *Hierapicra: A bitter confection to purge choler*. I decided to keep the same name to allow for cross-category comparisons. Medicines often tasted bitter because they tended to be plant-based remedies, therefore having a distinctive bitter taste. The repeated and frequent use of bitter remedies to cure ailments has motivated the development of the embodied conceptual metaphor DIFFICULTY OF ACCEPTANCE IS BITTER, which in turn motivates expressions such as Eng. *bitter pill*, or It. *boccone amaro*.[19]

4. Discussion

The lexical items referring to gustatory perception are not distributed equally across the different semantic categories. Gustatory descriptors seem to be more frequent in categories that contain concrete sources of the specific sensation: FOOD, NATURAL ELEMENTS, and PERFUMES. The second most frequent category is the lexical category of entries that describe perception per se, i.e., TASTE WORDS. The least frequent category seems to be METAPHORICAL, with only a few occurrences across lexical items. To compare between different gustatory terms, I aggregated the semantic categories in three major groups: CONCRETE SOURCES, TASTE WORDS, and METAPHORICAL. Fig. 8 illustrates this comparison.[20]

As evidenced by Fig. 8, the category of CONCRETE SOURCES contains the highest number of dictionary entries of *sweet*, *salt*, and *spicy*, while *sour* and *bitter* are most frequently found in the category of TASTE WORDS: this means that, in the dataset, the lexical items that describe the sensations of *sourness* and *bitterness* are relatively more frequent.

---

[19] Bagli 2021, 140–141.

[20] The lexical item *savour* was removed from the comparison since it does not refer to a specific type of taste, rather to a general quality of taste. Furthermore, it must be noted that the bars in the figure are adjusted to allow for a visual comparison, but the numerical scale is different.

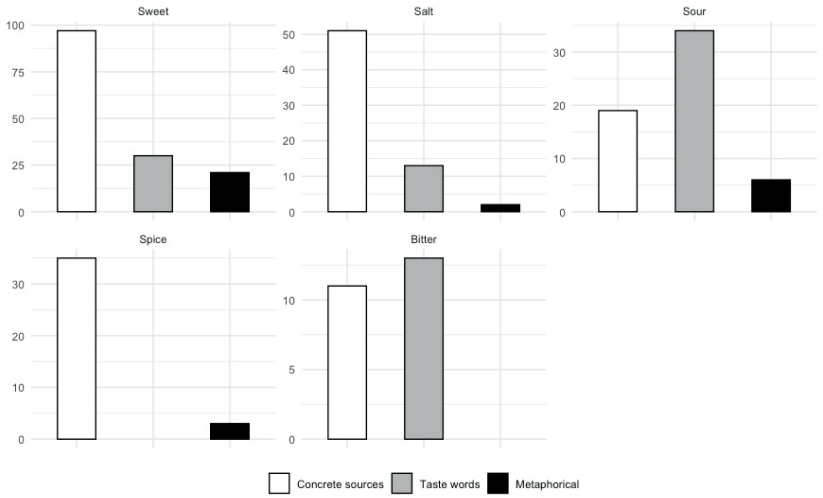


Fig. 8. Distribution of gustatory terms across three macro-categories.

Dictionary entries glossed by *sweet* are the most frequent in the dataset, in keeping with the embodied, positive nature of the concept: *sweetness* is typically evoked by the ingestion of sugars, which are quickly transformed in energy and provide positive metabolic feedback. The category of TASTE WORDS does not appear in *Spice*: the dataset does not display any abstract taste word that is connected to the root *spic**. The earliest evidence in the OED for the adjective *spicy* is from 1562, therefore more than 30 years before Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes*. Yet, this form is not present in the dataset. The Italian equivalent *piccante* is glossed by Florio as *biting vpon the toong as wine doth, relishing somewhat sharpe or tarte*, thus reporting a reference to wine. This suggests that *spicy/spiced* does not represent a Basic Taste Term at this stage, but its entrenched status was under development. Similarly, the lexical item *salty* does not appear in the dictionary, although the OED reports the first appearance of this form in 1563. The form *salt or salti* instead is first attested by the OED in c1440. The lexical item *bitter* instead never appears with an exclusively *metaphorical* meaning, although there are several lexical items that show signs of figuratively extended meanings.

Finally, to gain a general overview of the usage of gustatory lexical items across the categories and in the dataset, I aggregated together the three categories that emerged for each lexical item Fig. 9.

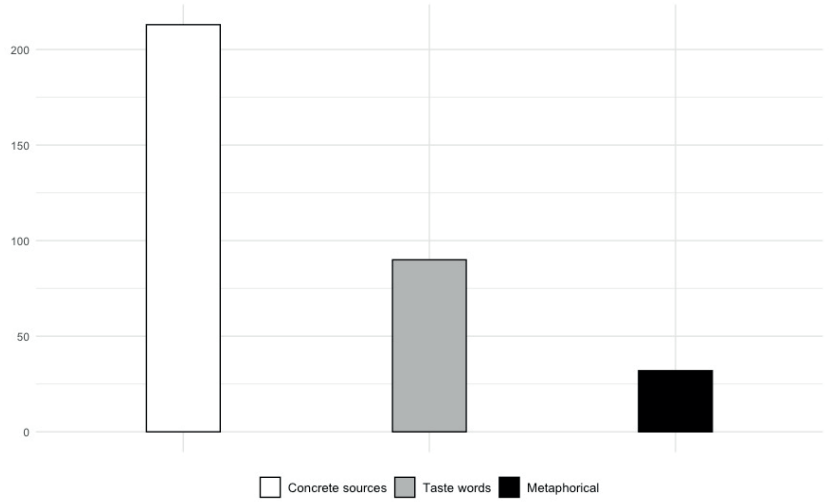


Fig. 9. Distribution of gustatory items across categories.

As Fig. 9 shows, most gustatory lexemes are used in dictionary entries that refer to CONCRETE SOURCES, followed by TASTE WORDS, and METAPHORICAL. This suggests that the most frequent use of gustatory words in the dataset is to describe the perceptual profile of an object, be it a food item, a natural element such as a herb, animal, or fruit, or even ointments or medicines. This distribution is in line with a descriptive use of gustatory adjectives, and the largeness of this category testifies to the attention that Florio had towards cultural elements. For instance, the dictionary entries that relate to food and drinks, or to special ingredients are all part of this macro-category.

The category TASTE WORDS includes elements that describe the physical perception of taste. While a detailed analysis of the Italian lexical items related to taste falls beyond the scope of this paper, future research could examine the range of Italian terms related to taste. This is particularly promising in the case of *sourness*, a category that includes numerous adjectives referring to specific sensations associated with wine, olive oil, and other foods. Finally, the category METAPHORICAL only contains elements whose meaning is exclusively metaphorical. Other cases of extended meanings may be found in the dataset, but these items were categorised in TASTE WORDS, in keeping with their first reported meaning (e.g., *Amarezza*).

5. Conclusion

The present paper has investigated the use of English gustatory lexical items in John Florio's *A Worlde of Words*, one of the first bilingual dictionaries from Italian to English. The data reported and discussed in this chapter illustrate a vibrant and diverse Early Modern lexicon to talk about taste and gustatory sensations, as well as a wide collection of specific food items that must have played a crucial role at the time, but that may have fallen out of use by now. The presence of specific items in this dictionary is revealing of the prominence of Italian culture and cuisine in Elizabethan London, as well as of the attention that Florio intended to bestow even on the most minute of details and meanings.

Overall, the data illustrate how the representation of perception changes across the centuries, and the complex interplay between language, culture, and cognition. If our bodies share the same embodied physiological mechanisms, these may be apprehended differently by distinct cultures, thus resulting in novel, sometimes obscure conceptualisations. This is the case for instance of expressions such as *spiced conscience*. The presence of lexical items for specific perceptual qualities that are no longer available may also reflect differences in lifestyles and diets, with some lexical items that are no longer needed because referring to a specific item that is no longer produced or consumed.

Finally, I think it is worth highlighting that the similarities are more prominent than the differences. The lexical items and their meanings seem stable across the centuries, and this is especially true in the case of conceptual metaphors. Each of the polysemous readings of gustatory adjectives were motivated by conceptual metaphors that are still active in Contemporary English: LOVE IS SWEET, HARMONY IS SWEET, INTELLIGENCE IS SALT, INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY IS TASTE, HOSTILITY IS SOUR, CONFLICT IS BITTER, DIFFICULTY OF ACCEPTANCE IS BITTER. Ultimately, the enduring presence of such conceptual metaphors underscores the resilience and foundational role of embodied cognition, even as specific lexical items fade with time. This continuity reveals how deeply rooted our linguistic and cultural frameworks are in shared human experience, bridging historical and cultural divides.

Bibliography

Anderson, W. (2019), *Perception Metaphor in English: A Bird's-Eye View*, in L.J. Speed, C. O'Meara, L.S. Roque, and A. Majid (eds), *Perception Metaphors*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 65–83.

Auvray, M. and Spence, C. (2008), *The Multisensory Perception of Flavor*, in "Consciousness and Cognition", 17, 3, pp. 1016–1031.

Bagli, M. (2016), *"Shaking off so good a wife and so sweet a lady": Shakespeare's Use of Taste Words*, in "Journal of Literary Semantics", 45, 2, 141–159.

Bagli, M. (2021), *Tastes We Live By: The Linguistic Conceptualisation of Taste in English*, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin.

Biggins, D. (1966), *A Chaucerian Crux: Spiced Conscience, CT I(A) 526, III(D) 435*, in "English Studies", 47, 1–6, pp. 169–180.

Busse, B. (2006), *Vocative Constructions in the Language of Shakespeare*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.

Caballero, R. and Ibarretxe-Antuñano, I. (2009), *Ways of Perceiving, Moving, and Thinking: Revindicating Culture in Conceptual Metaphor Research*, in "Cognitive Semiotics", 5, 1–2, pp. 268–290.

Ciambella, F. (ed.) (2023), *Old Language(s), New Technologies: Corpus Linguistics and European Languages in the Renaissance, 1400s-1600s*, in "Status Quaestionis", 25.

Evans, V. (ed.) (2007), *A Glossary of Cognitive Linguistics*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Gwynn, R.D. (1985), *Huguenot Heritage: The History and Contribution of the Huguenots in Britain*, Routledge, London, Boston and Melbourne.

Holley, A. (2015), *Il cervello goloso*, trans. Aglae Pizzone, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino.

Iamartino, G. (2010), *Worlds of Words. Prospettive iperboliche nella lessicografia inglese*, in M. Barsi and G. Boccali (eds), *Funzioni e Finzioni dell'iperbole tra Scienze e Lettere*, Quaderni di Acme, Milano.

Ibarretxte-Antuñano, I. (2013), *The Relationship Between Conceptual Metaphor and Culture*, in "Intercultural Pragmatics", 10, 2, pp. 315–339.

Majid, A. and Levinson S.C. (2011), *The Senses in Language and Culture*, in "The Senses and Society", 6, 1, pp. 5–18.

Masten, J. (2004), *Toward a Queer Address: The Taste of Letters and Early Modern Male Friendship*, in "GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies", 10, 3, pp. 367–384.

Montini, D. (2015), *John Florio and Shakespeare: Life and Language*, in "Memoria Di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies", 2, pp. 109–129, available at: <https://rosa.uniroma1.it/rosa03/memoria_di_shakespeare/article/view/13202> (last accessed 28 October 2025).

O'Connor, D.J. (1972), *John Florio's Contribution to Italian-English Lexicography*, in "Italica", 49, 1, pp. 49–67.

O'Connor, D.J. (1990), *A History of Italian and English bilingual dictionaries*, Leo S. Olschki Editore, Firenze.

Oxford English Dictionary (OED), online version, available at: <https://www.oed.com/?tl=true> (last accessed 28 October 2025).

Pirillo, D. (2010), *Filosofia ed eresia nell'Inghilterra del tardo Cinquecento: Bruno, Sidney e i dissidenti religiosi italiani*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma.

Robinson, F.N. (ed.) (1957), *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Schneider I.K. et al. (2011), *Weighty Matters: Importance Literally Feels Heavy*, in "Social Psychological and Personality Science", 2, 5, pp. 474–478.

Skeat, W.W. (ed.) (1899), *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Strik-Lievers, F. and De Felice, I. (2019), *Metaphors and Perception in the Lexicon: A Diachronic Perspective*, in L.J. Speed et al. (eds.), *Perception Metaphors*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 85–104.

Sweetser, E. (1990), *From Etymology to Pragmatics: Metaphorical and Cultural Aspects of Semantic Structure*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Torres Soler, J. (2021), *Variation in Embodied Metaphors*, in "Complutense Journal of English Studies", 29, pp. 21–33.

Wickham, H. (2016), *ggplot2: Elegant Graphics for Data Analysis*, Springer-Verlag, New York, available at: <https://ggplot2.tidyverse.org> (last accessed 28 October 2025).

Wyatt, M. (2005), *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England. A Cultural Politics of Translation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Italian Food at the Elizabethan and Jacobean Courts. A Lexicographic and Morphosyntactic Analysis of John Florio's Dictionaries

Fabio Ciambella

1. Introduction: Italian food in Early Modern England

As often happens with other cultural and linguistic domains in the Renaissance, even in the case of food and gastronomic manuals, Italy was ahead of time in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and exerted its influence on the rest of Europe. As early as 1470, Rome witnessed a significant culinary milestone with the publication of the very first Italian printed cookbook, written in Latin, *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* (*On Honest Indulgence and Good Health*, first English translation 1967), begun in 1465 and authored by Bartolomeo Platina. An intriguing figure, Platina's journey from soldier to gastronomer epitomised the Renaissance prototype of the Da Vincian intellectual. His cookbook not only provided a compendium of recipes but also served as a conduit for spreading the then-developing early-modern approach to food throughout Europe. Although the book was not translated into English until 1967, it was translated into Italian in 1487 and French in 1505. By the time John Florio wrote his dictionary the text may have already been known in England. This is evident from works such as Edward Fenton's 1569 translation of Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses extraictes de plusiers fameux auteurs grecs & latins* (1560), titled *Certaine Secrete Wonders of Nature […] Gathered Out of Diuers Learned Authors as well Greeke as Latine, Sacred as Prophane*. In this translation, we find the following passage: "Who liste to be priuie to the pompe of other Prelates, let him reade Platinus in his treatise *De honesta voluptate*. There was besides, a Cardinall no lesse famous this waye, than our Italian Prelate, who in the time of Sixtus the Pope, consumed into twoo yeares in banquets, ionquets and suche other bellye vanities

3000. crownes" (Fenton 1569, 80<*v*>). Similarly, in John Hooker's continuation of Holinshed's, Harrison's, and others' chronicles—*The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (1587)—Platina's *De honesta voluptate* is mentioned in connection with the author's comments on wine and drunkenness (Hooker 1587, 234).

In an era when good food practices were also considered good medicine for the body (see Pennell and DiMeo 2013; Leong 2018; Ciambella 2023), as will be seen in Florio's dictionary, Platina's work was more than just a collection of recipes; it was a reflection of the era's evolving understanding of the relationship between food, health, and pleasure. Rooted in classical theories of medicine, which espoused the notion of 'you are what you eat', his cookbook emphasised the importance of thoughtful consumption and moderation. By marrying the pleasures derived from flavourful food with health considerations, Platina laid the groundwork for a culinary ethos that would last for centuries.

According to Haller (2013, xxvi), John Florio primarily sourced the culinary terms incorporated into his dictionary from Cristoforo di Messisbugo's posthumously published work, *Banchetti, composizioni di vivande e apparecchio generale* (1549). This cookbook was crafted for those organising lavish feasts, offering intricate menu descriptions for official banquets at the Este court, in Ferrara. Beyond recipes, it delves into logistics, decor, and kitchen tools. Another work attributed to Messisbugo, *Libro novo nel qual s'insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivande secondo la diversità dei tempi così di carne come di pesce. Et il modo d'ordinar banchetti, apparecchiar tavole, fornir palazzi, & ornar camere per ogni gran Prencipe*, published in Venice in 1556 well after his passing, largely reiterates the recipes from *Banchetti*. Some of the dishes he detailed still survive in the Ferrara region today.

Fast forward to 1570, and another culinary luminary emerges on the scene: Bartolomeo Scappi, the private chef of Pope Pius V. Scappi's monumental cookbook (more than 1,000 recipes), *L'arte et prudenza d'un maestro cuoco* (*The Art and Craft of a Master Cook*, first English translation 2011), not only showcased his culinary prowess but also cemented his status as possibly the first celebrity chef. Unlike Platina, Scappi wrote from the perspective of a practicing chef, offering insights into the intricacies of culinary artistry.

Within the pages of Scappi's *magnum opus*, readers could find far more than just recipes. His work delved into various aspects of culi-

nary craft, from cooking techniques to the finer points of presentation. With menus and instructions meticulously laid out, Scappi's cookbook served as a comprehensive guide for both aspiring chefs and seasoned culinary professionals alike.

Perhaps the two books mentioned above did not reach England in the early modern period; thus, their influence on English culinary practices of the time was very limited, except, perhaps, for interdiscursive echoes connected to the combination of cookery and household medicine. Nevertheless, in a book chapter dedicated to Florio, one cannot ignore the influence exerted by Italian expats in early modern England. For instance, Giacomo Castelvetro, an Italian *émigré* who ventured to England in 1580, played a crucial role in introducing Italian cuisine to the British aristocracy. A convert to Protestantism, Castelvetro sought to educate his noble students on the delights of Italian gastronomy through his *Brieve racconto di tutte le radici, di tutte le erbe et di tutti i frutti, che crudi o cotti in Italia si mangiano.*[1] This instructional text not only provided a thorough examination of Italian culinary staples but also served as a cultural bridge between Italy and England.

As Britain grappled with culinary identity in the early modern period, it faced a confluence of conflicting ideologies. On the one hand, there was a prevailing xenophobic attitude, which manifested (itself) in a reluctance to embrace foreign ingredients and culinary practices. According to Gallaher, this apprehension stemmed from the "Elizabethan anxieties about cultural contact and cultural hybridity" (2017: 89). An example of this xenophobic attitude toward foreign food can be found in the collaborative play *Sir Thomas More* (probably written by Shakespeare, Munday, Chettle, Dekker, and Heywood), where the Lombards' (i.e., Italians') "strange culinary practices" (Fitzpatrick 2004, 35) become the object of the Londoners' accusations:

> Lincoln. They bring in strange roots, which is merely to the undoing of poor prentices, for what's a sorry parsnip to a good heart?
> Another. Trash, trash! (Shakespeare 2011, 6.11–15).

[1] 1614, first translated into English as *Fruits, Herbs & Vegetables of Italy: An Offering to Lucy, Countess of Bedford* in 1989 by Gillian Riley.

On the other hand, the burgeoning culture of consumerism fuelled a fascination with novelty and exoticism. The advent of new Atlantic trade routes opened up a world of culinary possibilities, tempting adventurous palates with tantalising flavours from distant shores. For instance, the well-known translator of Plutarch's *Lives*, Thomas North, was renowned for hosting gatherings with his Italian acquaintances, where the menu featured 'exotic' dishes that reflected an Italianate sensibility rather than traditional English fare. One striking example is the use of capers, which North and his circle obtained from Italian merchants well before the ingredient gained popularity in England in the early seventeenth century. As Gallagher observes, "Capers were an 'exotic' food common in household accounts from the 1620s onward: North (and his father) were ahead of the trend" (2017, 100). However, this newfound openness to foreign cuisine was tempered by lingering suspicions and fears regarding its potential impact on health and societal norms.

The English perception of Mediterranean-inflected foods encapsulated this dichotomy. While some items like chocolate, saffron, and lemons found their way into English kitchens, others such as olive oil, eggplant, and figs were met with scepticism. These ingredients, with their foreign origins and unfamiliar tastes, represented a departure from the familiar and raised concerns about their compatibility with English physiology.

Finally, in this complex panorama of Anglo-Italian relations, we must also consider that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, wealthy young British men embarked on journeys to Italy—the well-known Grand Tour—for various purposes, from studying medicine in Padua to exploring Classical ruins in Rome. Alongside their academic pursuits, they developed a penchant for all things Italian, including fashionable attire and culinary delights. This cultural exchange triggered an appetite for Mediterranean flavours among the English elite, paving the way for a culinary transformation.

Evidence of this Mediterranean influence can be found, for example, in the collection of early modern English manuscript recipe books at the Folger Shakespeare Library (see Ciambella 2023, 80–81). Some of the manuscripts dating back to the mid-seventeenth century offer glimpses into the evolving tastes and culinary practices of the period. From adaptations of Italian (but also French and Spanish) recipes to the incorporation of Mediterranean ingredients, they attest to the enduring legacy of cross-cultural culinary exchange in early modern England.

2. John Florio and/about food in *First Fruites* and in *Second Frutes* (1578 and 1591)

Explorations about John Florio's relationship with food in his works are very scant. In studies devoted to early modern European food discourse, the name John Florio never appears (see, among others, Thirsk 2007; Tersigni 2019; Giannetti 2022). Nevertheless, in addition to *A World*[*e*] *of Word*[*e*]*s* (1578) and *Queen Anna's New World of Worlds* (1611), which will be dealt with in one of the following sections, it is interesting to note that also in his two didactic dialogues, *Florio His Firste Fruites* (henceforth *First Fruits*) and *Florios Second Frvtes* (henceforth *Second Fruits*) Florio tackles the topic of food and drink with thought-provoking considerations that go beyond mere lexicographic issues. First, the title of the two didactic manuals already contains a food metaphor, since they are fruits, the intellectual products of Florio's efforts as language instructor. The food metaphor is prolonged in the dedications and the epistles to the reader. Moreover, the subtitle of *Second Fruits* reads that the fruits are of "divers but delightsome tastes", thus reinforcing and continuing with the metaphor.

Florio's *First* and *Second Fruits* serve as repositories not only of bilingual linguistic knowledge and Renaissance didactic practices but also of socio-cultural observations, shedding light on the culinary habits and societal practices of the era, with a specific focus on early modern English society. While few scholars have timidly ventured into this aspect of Florio's dialogues, their significance cannot be overstated.

One such instance of Florio's exploration of societal practices is exemplified in the first dialogue from *Firste Fruites* ("Italiano parlar familiare", "Englishe familiare speach"), as cited by Chidgey (2013, 78):

Italian	**English**
Vi piace accettar una quarta di vino in casa di un amico mio? Signor no, io vi ringratio con tutto il mio core. Io ho visto una bella gentildonna, una bella figlia, vergine, giovine, overo massara, meschina fantesca, & delle belle donne. Dove le havete viste? Fuora ne le campi.	Wyll it please you to accept a quart of wyne at a friends house of myne? No sir, thanke you with al my hart. I have seene a fayre gentlewoman, a fayre daughter, virgine, mayden, or els mayde servant, and many other fayre women. Where have you seene them? Out in the fieldes.

Tab. 1. A dialogue from *First Fruits* (1578, 1<*r*>).

The dialogue portrays a conversation revolving around an invitation to share wine at a friend's house, subtly alluding to the freedoms enjoyed by women in public spaces in early modern England and the significance of communal dining in private settings. To borrow from Chidgey (2013, 78): "These closing lines are the first in *First Fruites* [sic] to allude to certain social practices of English life, namely the liberties enjoyed by women in open society (public space) and the importance placed on invitations to dine and drink together or host meals at home (private space)". This passage serves as a testament to Florio's keen observation of social dynamics and cultural practices surrounding food and hospitality, but it is not the only one. For instance, in chapter 15, "A parlar Dinghilterra" ("To speak of England"), Florio celebrates the greatness of the country that welcomed his father Michelangelo stating that "Ci è grande abondatia di pane, carne, ova, formagio, butiro,[2] pesce salato, e frescho uccelami gran quantità" ("Is there great plentie of bread, fleshe, egges, cheese, butter, fish salt & fresh, foules great quantitie", Florio 1578, 16<*r*>). John, the "Englishman in Italiane" or "inglese italianato", as he famously states in the epistle to the reader in *Second Fruits* (Florio 1591, <Dd4*v*-Dd5*r*>), the man who is "Italus ore, Anglus pector" ("Italian in mouth, English in chest"), to quote from the frontispiece of *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, celebrates England as a rich, wealthy country, full of costly and tasty food.

In her well-known work *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England* (1934), Frances A. Yates draws a connection between Giordano Bruno's *Cena delle ceneri* (1584) and Florio's *Second Fruits*, specifically regarding their treatment of food and drink (Yates 1934, 114–115). Yates observes that in chapter 4 of Florio's second English-Italian language manual, titled "doue vien descritto un descinare" ("Wherein is set downe a dinner"), Florio introduces a character named Nundinio, who directly recalls doctor Nundinio from Bruno's *Cena*. This is not merely a passing reference; Florio uses this character to establish a more profound thematic link between the two texts, particularly in the realm of culinary vocabulary and the social interactions surrounding meals.

In Bruno's *Cena delle ceneri*, doctor Nundinio is portrayed as a learned figure, knowledgeable in various subjects, including food and drink. Bruno specifically notes that the doctor possesses "saper […] di

[2] "Butíro, *butter*" (Florio 1611, 72). From Latin *būtyřum*, now widespread in some Northern Italian regions, such as Veneto.

birra" (Bruno 1584, 1: "knowing about beer"; my translation), indicating the importance of his expertise in beer. Florio, in turn, incorporates this Bruno character into a setting that focuses on food, presenting him in a chapter "in which a large vocabulary of food is introduced" (Yates 1934, 114). This insertion of Nundinio into a linguistic and cultural context rich with food-related terms allows Florio to build on Bruno's portrayal, using the figure to explore the didactic aspects of Italian food lexicon in Elizabethan England.

Through this connection, Yates suggests that Florio was not only influenced by Bruno's intellectual framework but also sought to translate aspects of his Italian heritage—such as the rituals and terminology surrounding food—into his language manuals for an English audience. By including Nundinio in a chapter devoted to the description of a dinner, Florio creates a space where language learning intersects with cultural exchange, highlighting the importance of food as both a practical and symbolic element in the cross-cultural interactions of the period. In other words, the character's beer knowledge in Bruno's *Cena* is mirrored in Florio's attention to drinks and dining, making the dinner scene a microcosm of broader themes about knowledge, identity, and cultural hybridity that pervade both works.

Also Giovanni Pozzetti (2018) delves into Florio's *Second Fruits*. In the book Florio provides insights into the characteristics of good wine, emphasizing the importance of aroma, colour, and scholars also found intertextual similarities with Falstaff's monologue in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 2*, as seen more in detail in the following section.[3] Through a dialogue between characters, Florio elucidates the qualities of fine wine, highlighting its role not only as a beverage but also as a sensory experience which enhances the pleasure of dining:

> In the English-Italian language manual *Second Frutes* (1591), John Florio (1553-1625) reported that a good wine, one 'of the best' sort, even useful to wash the mouth after dinner and to settle the stomach, had to smell

[3] As discussed in the following sections, Florio's expertise in the subject of wine is also evident in his dictionary. The numerous lemmas dedicated to wine – 42 beginning with *vino* (from *vino* to *vino voltáto*, Florio 1611, 602) – demonstrate not only his familiarity with the topic but also the cultural importance of wine in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Italy. Of these, 20 entries specifically refer to different varieties or types of wine, reflecting the remarkable diversity of wine available during this period. This wealth of terminology illustrates how deeply embedded wine culture was in Italian society, with various regions, methods of production, and even characteristics of wine being carefully documented (see Millon 2024).

> 'sweetelie', be 'coloured featly' and 'smacking neately', that is, have a pleasant colour and a specific and definite taste. John Florio, *Second Frutes* (London: Thomas Woodcock, 1591), sigg. I3v-I4r, the dialogue goes as follows: 'M: Dammi un bicchiere di vino, ma del buono per lavarmi la bocca, e rassettarmi lo stomaco—H: Dunque lo volete di buon'odore, di vago colore, e di soave sapore—M: Si, acciò mi diletti al naso, compiaccia all'occhio, e contenti al gusto' (Pozzetti 2018, 142–143).

Moreover, Pozzetti uncovers Florio's incorporation of food-related proverbs in *Second Fruits*, offering glimpses into the cultural attitudes towards food and dining prevalent during Florio's time. Proverbs such as: "Uovo d'un hora, pane d'un dì, capretto d'un mese, vino di sei, carne d'un anno, pesce di dieci, donna di quindici, e amico di cento, bisogna havere, chi vuol ben godere" ("An egg of an hour, bread of a day, kidd of a month, wine of six, flesh of a year, fish of ten, a woman of fifteen, and a friend of a hundred, he must have that will be merry"; Florio 1591, I<1*r*>-I2<*v*>), encapsulate the societal values attached to various culinary elements, reflecting broader cultural norms and beliefs.

3. Florio's food lexicon and Early Modern English writers: Intertextual and interdiscoursive echoes

Before delving into Florio's works and their connection to food lexicon, this section will provide broader context by exploring the intertextual and interdiscursive echoes concerning food between Florio's writings and those of his contemporaries—especially Willaim Shakespeare and Ben Jonson.

The most obvious and frequently explored connection—though it will not be addressed in detail in this chapter—is between Florio and Shakespeare. As previously hinted at, Rinaldo C. Simonini (1952, 99) noticed some similarities between Falstaff's monologue in *Henry IV, Part 2* and Florio's *First Fruits* concerning the qualities and properties of wine:

> [A]s Plinie saith (wine so it be moderately vsed, is a thing ordeined of good, the wine doth quench the thirst, reuiue the spirites, comfort the hart, sharpen the wyt, gladdeth adoleful mind, maketh a good memorye, killeth yl humors, maketh good blod, but cõtrariwise drinking too much of it, ensue many inconueniences (Florio 1578, 28; only the English version of the dialogue is provided).

> I would you had the wit, twere better than your dukedome, good faith this same yong sober blouded boy doth not loue me, nor a mã cãnot make him laugh, but thats no maruel, he drinkes no wine, […] but for inflammation: a good sherris sacke hath a two fold operation in it, it ascendes mee into the braine, dries me there all the foolish, and dull, and crudy vapors which enuirone it, makes it apprehensiue, quicke, forgetiue, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes, which deliuered ore to the voyce, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris, is the warming of the blood, which before (cold & setled,) left the lyuer white & pale, which is the badge of pusilanimitie and cowardize: […] Hereof comes it, that Prince Harry is valiant, for the cold blood he did naturally inherite of his father, he hath like leane, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded and tilld, with excellent endeuour of drinking good Hand and good store of fertile sherris, that he is become very hote and valiant. If I had a thousand sonnes, the first humane principle I would teach them, should be, to forsweare thin potations, and to addict themselues to sacke (Shakespeare 1600, 4.3.2323–2361).[4]

Both Florio—quoting Pliny the Elder, one of the earliest wine experts in history, as a form of *auctoritas*—and Falstaff discuss the properties of wine, particularly sack wine from Spain. Florio, who mentions sack wine a few pages before the citation from *First Fruits* above (Florio 1578, 15), notes that wine, when drunk in moderation, can clear the brain, revive the spirits, and dispel bad humours. Falstaff similarly observes that Prince Harry—the future King Henry V—drank good wine, which made him hot and bold. However, I would argue that such observations can be seen as interdiscursive practices, meaning "relationships that each text, oral or written, holds with all other utterances (or discourses) recorded in a corresponding culture and organized ideologically, according to registers and levels" (Miola 2004, 23, translating Segre 1984, 111). Discussions on wine, its properties, and its contraindications were common at the time (see Curth 2003; Nicholls 2008; Phillips 2014, among others), so it is difficult to assert that Shakespeare directly derived his knowledge of sack wine from Florio's *First Fruits*. Nevertheless, another Shakespearean play shows more straightforward intertextual echoes from Florio. A passage from Florio's *Of Cannibals* (1603) is often compared to one of Gonzalo's speech-

[4] The 1600 Quarto edition of *Henry IV, Part 2* has been preferred over the 1623 Folio edition, as it is chronologically closer to the publication of Florio's *First Fruits*.

es in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (see, among others, Greenblatt and Platt 2014, xxviii; Platt 2020). In this case, the intertextual links do not directly involve Florio's own creativity, as *Of Cannibals* is a nearly word-for-word translation of Michel De Montaigne's essay *Des cannibales* (c. 1580). Nevertheless, Florio's translation was almost certainly the version of Montaigne's essay that Shakespeare encountered. The following are Florio's passage and the corresponding part of Gonzalo's speech:

> It is a nation, would I answere Plato, that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of Letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no use of service, of riches, or of poverty; no contracts, no successions, no dividences, no occupation but idle; no respect of kinred, but common, no apparell but naturall, no manuring of lands, no use of *wine*, *corne*, or mettle. The very words that import lying, falshood, treason, dissimulation, covetousnes, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard-of amongst-them. How dissonant would hee finde his imaginary common-wealth from this perfection? (Florio 1603, 294; my emphases).

> I'th'Commonwealth I would (by contraries)
> Execute all things: For no kinde of Trafficke
> Would I admit: No name of Magistrate:
> Letters should not be knowne: Riches, pouerty,
> And vse of seruice, none: Contract, Succession,
> Borne, bound of Land, Tilth, Vineyard none:
> No vse of Mettall, *Corne*, or *Wine*, or *Oyle*:
> No occupation, all men idle, all:
> And Women too, but innocent and pure:
> No Soueraignty.
> […]
> All things in common Nature should produce
> Without sweat or endeuour: Treason, fellony,
> Sword, Pike, Knife, Gun, or neede of any Engine
> Would I not haue: but Nature should bring forth
> Of it owne kinde, all foyzon, all abundance
> To feed my innocent people (Shakespeare 1623, 2.1.824–842).

Without delving into Shakespeare's engagement with Montaigne's reflections on the state of nature and cannibals—a theme extensively explored by critics (see, *inter alia*, Hooker 1902; Cox 2010; Mack 2010;

Engle 2023)—I would like to highlight the use of culinary terminology as one of the intertextual elements in the quotations above. In the state of nature, human beings subsist only on the spontaneous fruits provided by the land, while products such as corn, wine, and oil result from human interaction with and exploitation of nature. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare includes oil, a food that Florio does not mention in his translation of *Of Cannibals*. As Noble (1935, 80) observes, Shakespeare appears to reference Psalm 4:8 here: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart: since the time that their corn, and wine, and oil increased", thereby expanding the intertextual network of his play.

Nevertheless, it is Ben Jonson, more than Shakespeare, who explicitly acknowledges his debts to Florio's works. In act 2, scene 3 of Jonson's satire *Cynthia's Revels, or The Fountain of Self-Love*, Mercury mocks the would-be courtier Asotus for eating "aenchouies, maccaroni, bouoli, fagioli, and cauiare" merely because his teacher, Amorphus, deems them fashionable, not because he enjoys them. The play debuted in 1600 at the Blackfriars by the Children of the Chapel, with a quarto version published the following year. In this version, Asotus eats only anchovies and caviar, but the 1616 Folio of Jonson's collected works adds *macaroni*, *bouoli*, and *fagioli*, likely to enhance the exotic appeal of the foods favoured by Amorphus. According to the OED, the first recorded use of 'macaroni' in English appears in Jonson's 1616 Folio, defined as "In Jonson's use: (probably) = gnocchi n. *Obsolete. rare*". However, the term first appears in both versions of Florio's dictionary, defined as "a kind of meat made of round peeces of paste, boyled in water and put into a dish with butter, spice and grated-cheese vpon them" (Florio 1611, 209–210; see also Table 2), resembling an early version of *gnocchi burro e salvia* (dumplings with butter and sage). Jonson's borrowing from Florio's Italian culinary lexicon is further supported by the definitions of *bovoli* and *fagioli* in Florio's dictionary: "any round snail" (Florio 1611, 66) and "feazols, Welsh beans, kidney beans, French peas" (Florio 1611, 177), respectively. The well-documented friendship and mutual respect between Florio and Jonson, as well as Florio's influence on Jonson's works set in Italy, underscore this connection. For example, it is common knowledge that Jonson's *Volpone* title is inspired by Florio's definition of *volpone* as "an old fox, an old reinard, an old craftie, slie, subtle companion, sueaking lurking wily deceiuer" in his 1598 dictionary (Florio 1598, 455). Additionally, in 1607, Jonson sent a copy of the quarto version of *Volpone* to Florio

(now held at the British Library, London, shelfmark C.12.e.17) with the inscription: "To his loving Father, & worthy Friend, Mr. John Florio: The aid of his Muses. Ben: Jonson seals this testimony of Friendship, & Love".

4. Italian food-related lexicon and morphosyntactic structures in Florio's dictionary

4.1. Florio's sources

In an endnote to his book chapter dedicated to fish recipes in the Martino manuscripts (*Libro de arte coquinaria*, mid-fifteenth century), one of the earliest Italian cookery books, David McDonald acknowledges Florio's debts to various Italian recipe books and culinary manuals when compiling his dictionary, except the *Libro de arte coquinaria*:

> Florio does not use any of the Martino manuscripts […] as sources for his "Most copious, and exact Dictionarie in Italian and English". However he does list the cookery book *Del'arte della Cucina di Christofano Messisbugo*, the manner book *Galateo di Monsignore della Casa*, the English herbal of 'Giouanni Gerardo' (John Gerard), the Spanish herbal of 'Dottor Laguna' and *Tre volumi di Conrado Gesnero degli animali, pesci, et vocelli* (McDonald 1998, 203).

MacDonald's assertion is not based on any lexical evidence but on the list of recipe books Florio himself references at the end of his dictionary. On the contrary, Herman Haller attempts a preliminary lexical intertextual analysis. Focusing on Messisbugo's *Del'arte della cucina*, the scholar states in his introduction to the modern edition of Florio's *A World of Words*:[5]

> Food and food-related terms are of great interest in Florio's world. Drawn partly from Christofaro Di Messisbugo's *Del'arte della cucina*, they range from wine, with more than thirty entries (*Lambrusca*, *guarnaccia*, *raspato*, *trebbiano*, etc.), to bread with some twenty different types listed (*pane di semola*, *pane cornuto* 'course crustie bread,' *pane di zuccaro*, *pane di segala* 'rie bread,' *pane ficato*, *pane unto*, *pane pagato* 'simnell bread,' etc.). Different kinds of cheese are also found (*pecorino*, *robio-*

[5] Although Haller focuses on the first edition of the dictionary, Messisbugo's book is listed also in *Queen Anna's New World of Words*.

> *lo*, *taréllo*, *parmegiano*), as well as a large variety of fruits (*melacotogno* 'quince,' *mellone*, *partitoie/pesca* 'peach,' *rogge* 'pears,' *susina* 'plum,' *verule* 'cherries,' *musette* 'apples,' *muniaca* 'apricocke,' *narancia* 'orange,' *ribe* 'gooseberry'). In addition to the many kinds of fish discussed above, Florio lists numerous meats (*manfrigoli*, *morone*, *mortadelle*, *pancetta*, *persutto* 'dried bacon,' *salámi*, *soppressada*, *truffoli*), pasta dishes (*gnocchi*, *lasagna*, *rafioli*, *tagliarini*, *tagliarelli*, *tagliatelli*, *tortélli*), as well as soups, salads, and desserts (*tártara* 'custard,' *torta*, *tortano*, and *capriata* 'cheesecake,' *zabaione/zambaglione*). A few dishes have a foreign origin (*fricassea* 'French dish, minced meate,' *cuscusu* 'couscous, from Spain,' *inpeverata* 'blacke pottage they use in Germanie, made of much pepper') or are typical of an Italian region (*giozzi* 'meat in Lombardy,' *marzolino* 'a kinde of cheese in Florence'). Some foods are for poor people (*ranno* 'pottage,' *villanata* 'countrie meate for the poore'), while *rinfrescatoi* are refrigerators found in noble households, enjoyed by *canaruti* ('gormands') and *canaroni* ('gluttons') (Haller 2013, xxvi).

It seems that Florio took most of the food-related lemmas he provides definitions for from Messisbugo's *Del'arte della cucina*, as he also mentions in the list of books consulted for writing his dictionary. However, to the best of my knowledge, Messisbugo never wrote a book by this title. Is it a lost manuscript that was never printed? Was it a book whose title was changed or re-elaborated before or after being published? A footnote in Vincenzo Spampanato's article *Giovanni Florio: Un amico di Bruno in Inghilterra* in Benedetto Croce's well-known Italian journal "La Critica. Rivista di letteratura, storia e filosofia" suggests that the title of Messisbugo's supposed treatise listed by Florio should be changed to *Libro novo* (Spampanato 1923, 315). Suppose one agrees with Spampanato's emendation to Florio's list of books consulted to compile the dictionary. In that case, Messisbugo's book used by Florio as a reference is *Libro novo*, the slightly revised edition of the Italian chef's *Banchetti*.

4.2. Food lexicon in the dictionary

With its 584,685 tokens, 109,516 types, and 111,281 lemmas, Florio's dictionary—only the second edition of 1611, as previously stated—is an interesting bilingual corpus to be analysed. The software I used to explore the corpus is #LancsBox X, developed at the University of Lancaster (Brezina and Platt 2024).

To begin with, a simple word list highlights the most recurring lexical items concerning food. The table below (Table 2) shows the fif-

teen most recurring food-related terms in Florio's dictionary, extracted with #LancsBox X:

Lexeme	Raw frequency
Fish	1095
Herb/weed	975
Wine/grape	556
Meat/flesh	502
Fruit	210
Bread	205
Oil	126
Apple	113
Milk	112
Dish	105
Grain	100
Cheese	99
Nut	93
Salt	93
Egg	83

Tab. 2. The top fifteen most recurring food-related terms in the English definitions of Italian lemmas in Florio's dictionary.

Although many of the occurrences (almost 70%) do not pertain to the lexicosemantic field of food (e.g., "pesce canino, *a dog-fish*", Florio 1611, 373, where 'fish' simply identifies the species the animal belongs to, not some kind of food), one can affirm that the frequency of terms related to food gives us a clear picture of the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Italian diet and culinary habits[6]. Italy is a country where fish abound, whose diet is based also on vegetables, meat, fruit, oil (not butter which only has 37 occurrences in the dictionary), bread, grains (legumes included), and, to a lesser extent, milk and cheese, nuts, and eggs. Except for a few ingredients, such as meat,[7] fish, and grain, the frequency of the food-related terms which characterise the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian diet roughly corresponds to the hierarchical order of the so-called Mediterranean diet with vegeta-

[6] Unfortunately, a comparison with a dictionary of the English language of the period is not possible, since Robert Cadrey's *A Table Alphabeticall* (1604), the first, rudimental attempt to compile a dictionary of English before Samuel Johnson's famous publication in 1755, does not provide sufficient information about food-related terms, as it focuses on difficult words only.

[7] Even in this case, however, in the dictionary *meat* sometimes means more generally "solid food, as opposed to drink" (oed, I.1.a.).

bles, fruit, legumes, cereal, and olive oil at the base, to be served daily, then fish, then milk, dairy products, white meat, and eggs, and finally red and cured meats, and sweets to eat on rare occasions. In other words, one could conclude that Florio's dictionary demonstrates that the Mediterranean diet—especially the Italian one—has not undergone significant changes since the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

An interesting lexeme to analyze in terms of collocations is *food*. Although its occurrences in the corpus are not statistically significant (only 33 instances in a corpus of almost 600,000 tokens), its collocational patterns offer insights into dietary habits during the early modern period. Unlike modern times, where the aesthetics of dishes and the pleasure of tasting food are central to culinary discourse, in the early modern period, food was primarily regarded as "a source of nourishment for the body" (Pozzetti 2018, 5), at a time when "kitchens concentrated on producing, processing, and preserving materials necessary for nourishment and survival" (Bassnett and Nunn 2022, 11). In the dictionary, the lexeme *food* co-occurs with *sustenance* (8 times), *victuals* (7 times), *feed/feeding* (6 times), and *nourishment* (5 times), among the nouns and verbs that most frequently co-occur with the selected node. This suggests that the concept of food as bodily nourishment is strongly emphasized in Florio's dictionary. For example, *vitto* is defined as "all manner of sustenance, foode, victuals or prouision and things necessary to liue by" (Florio 1611, 604), and *vivuánda* as "any kind of viands, foode or sustenance to maintain life" (Ibid.).

As scholars in the field have recently observed (see, for instance, Fitzpatrick 2021; Winchcombe 2023; Bervoets et al. 2024, 464), the concept of comfort food, or simply deriving pleasure from eating, began to emerge during that period, but it was still in contrast to the pervasive Puritan belief that "eating and drinking to excess, or taking too much pleasure in them, is considered sinful" (Fitzpatrick 2021). The idea of condemning excessive food consumption also appears in Florio's dictionary, where the now-obsolete noun *belly-cheer* (used 10 times) frequently occurs in the definitions of Italian food-related lemmas, often accompanied by negative judgments. For example, "Pacchióne, *an Epicure, a glutton, a gourmand, a waste-full-feeder, one that makes his belly his God, a riotous louer of belly-cheere*" (Florio 1611, 349), or "Strauizzería, *all manner of gluttonie or bellie-cheere, as Gozzouíglia*" (Florio 1611, 539). According to the OED, the noun *belly-cheer*, meaning "the gratification of the belly; feasting, gluttony; luxurious eating",

did not gain much traction in the English vocabulary, with occurrences in English texts limited to the period between 1549 and 1650. Similarly, the use of *belly-cheer* to more generally define "Food, viands" (OED, n. 2), through semantic broadening, appears slightly later, in texts from 1579 to 1699, though for a restricted period. This broader meaning is also found in Florio's dictionary, as in "Gozzaríglia, *all manner of good or bellie-cheere together*" (Florio 1611, 216) and "Mangiáglia, *all manner of eatings or foode, all manner of feeding or bellie-cheere*" (Ibid., 298). In this sense, Florio's dictionary is one of the rare examples where the noun is used, and with its 10 occurrences, it stands as the early modern English—actually bilingual—text with the highest raw frequency of the noun in the EEBO (Early English Books Online) database.

Finally, as hinted at in the second section of this chapter, food and medicine formed a strong binomial in early modern England—and in Europe more broadly—serving as the foundation for many domestic medical treatments. By examining the co-occurrences of the terms listed in Table 1—especially herbs and drinks—with medical terms such as *medicine*, *cure*, *physic*, and others, an interesting picture emerges. It reveals that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian vocabulary was far more specialized than its English counterpart in terms of household medicine,—or, at the very least, Florio may not have been aware of the English names for domestic medical treatments, though this seems unlikely. In fact, Florio often struggled to find direct one-to-one correspondences between Italian domestic remedies and their English equivalents, frequently resorting to periphrastic definitions. These definitions combine general food and medical vocabulary in English. For instance, *cábuli* is defined as "a tree, whose fruit being eaten cureth all diseases" (Florio 1611, 72), *falángio* as "an hearbe that cureth the biting of the spider Phalangie" (Ibid., 177), and *tamaríndi* as "a fruit […] whereof the Indians[8] make a kind of dainty wine, it is very medicinable against the heat of choller" (Ibid., 551).

4.3. Morphosyntactic aspects of procedural definitions

Another interesting food-related aspect of Florio's dictionary concerns some definitions of lemmas corresponding to lesser-known Italian recipes or dishes. In this case, the definitions tend to be more explanatory

[8] Of course, Florio is referring to Native Americans.

and descriptive than one-to-one correspondences between Italian and English terms (e.g., "Búrro, *butter*", Florio 1611, 72). What is interesting to notice is that such procedural definitions, as I will call them, have peculiar syntactic structures resembling those of recipe titles and that can be interestingly analysed according to M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. More specifically, Florio's procedural descriptions of some lesser-known Italian recipes/dishes are usually made up of a nominal group, which corresponds to the closest hypernym to define the food described (often introduced by the hedge *a kind of*), plus a verbal group (being often introduced by prepositional verbs such as *made of* or *made with*) which functions as the post-modifier of the nominal group:

Nominal group	**Verbal group**
[a kind of] + hypernym	Made of/with… or other past participle forms

The examples below clearly show the structure explained above (Table 3):

Italian lemma	**Nominal group**	**Verbal group**
Baffétta	a kind of paste meate	fried in a frying pan
Cárne ne' tegámi	meate	stewed between two dishes, which some call a French pie
Glicirizzóne	a kind of cheese	made with milke and licorice
Maccaróni	a kind of meat	made of round peeces of paste, boyled in water and put into a dish with butter, spice and grated-cheese vpon them
Pizzicáta	a kinde of paste or banqueting dish	pinched about as pasties or tarts be
Tocchétti	a kind of meat	sliced, shread or cut in steakes or collops
Verzèlláta	a meat	made of yongue Cole-worts
Zuccáta	a kind of meat	made of Pumpions or Gourdes

Tab. 3. Examples of Florio's procedural descriptions of some dishes, showing the structure nominal group + verbal group.

In the examples listed above, the nominal group provides a broad definition and identification of the recipe or dish through a general hypernym, while the verbal group supplies information about ingredients and/or procedures, resembling a very short version of canonical recipes.

Other definitions, however, use hypotactic structures, such as relative clauses, to post-modify and qualify the head of the previous nominal group. As Halliday and Matthiessen explain (2004, 324), "A clause functioning as Qualifier in the nominal group is referred to as a relative clause":

Italian lemma	Nominal group	Qualifier (relative clause)
Alíma	an hearb	which being eaten keeps one a long time from hunger
Cára	an hearb in India	which mingled with milke makes a kind of bread
Castório	an hearbe	which makes ones nose to bleed but touching it
Gò, Gói	a Quap-fish	which is poyson to man and man to him
Nepénte	an hearbe	which put into wine driueth away sadnesse
Pome di sdégno	a kinde of forced dish	that Cookes make round as Apples
Tomacėlla	that meat	which we call Oliues of rosted Veale
Vezzína	a kinde of fish in Muscouie	that is very good meat, and hath no bones in it

Tab. 4. Examples of descriptions of some dishes, showing the preference for relative clauses which function as qualifiers.

Functioning as qualifiers, the relative clauses listed above are examples of post-modifying strategies used by Florio to provide additional information about lesser-known foods and dishes in early modern Italy, particularly regarding their properties and preparation.

The examples in Tables 3 and 4 also offer valuable insights into the Information Structure of Florio's food-related definitions, illustrating how he organises and presents information clearly and methodically. In these definitions, the nominal group—which often consists of the main noun or phrase that names the dish or ingredient—serves as the theme (or topic) of the sentence. This thematic element typically introduces the subject that is already known or assumed to be familiar to the reader. Following this, the post-modifying elements (such as descriptive phrases or clauses) function as the rheme (or focus), which introduces new or more specific information about the theme.

In other words, Florio employs what can be described as a zooming technique: he begins with general, familiar information and then progressively narrows the focus to more detailed or specific aspects. This

technique reflects the classic Information Structure strategy of moving from known to new information. The hypernyms—or more general terms that categorize the dish or food item—serve as the theme, setting the stage for what follows. These are often broad, umbrella terms that categorize the lemma (the word being defined), establishing a basic understanding.

Once the general category has been introduced, the focus shifts to the rheme, where Florio adds further layers of meaning through verbal groups and relative clauses. These elements provide new information about the preparation, properties, and even the cultural or historical curiosities of the food item. For example, after presenting the name of a dish or ingredient, Florio might include details about how it is cooked or served, what its characteristics are, or interesting facts related to its use in different regions or traditions. In doing so, he guides the reader from a broad, easily understood framework to a more nuanced understanding of the specific subject at hand.

This method reflects Florio's pedagogical intent. By moving from the general to the particular, he facilitates comprehension and aids memory retention, allowing readers to first grasp the overall concept and then absorb the finer details. The structure also underscores the practical nature of his dictionaries, which were not merely lists of translations but rich cultural and educational tools that provided Elizabethan and Jacobean users with a deeper understanding of food and its significance in both language and society.

Conclusion

Florio's dictionary not only provides a comprehensive bilingual lexicon but also serves as a bridge between Italian and English culinary traditions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Through his extensive inclusion of food-related terms, many of which stem from Messisbugo's *Libro novo*, Florio enriched the English language with Italian gastronomic knowledge, making the dictionary a vital cultural and linguistic resource. His dictionary reflects the Italian diet and culinary practices of the time, highlighting staples like fish, bread, wine, and olive oil, which are still central to the Mediterranean diet today.

Moreover, Florio's dictionary goes beyond mere lexical translations by offering detailed explanations of dishes and their preparation, using a distinctive morphosyntactic structure that closely resembles rec-

ipe language. This structure—combining nominal groups with verbal modifiers or relative clauses—effectively provides readers with both general and specific information, guiding them through the understanding of unfamiliar food items. Florio's approach to lexicography also mirrors a pedagogical intent: by structuring his definitions from broad to detailed descriptions, he fosters a deeper comprehension and appreciation of Italian cuisine for his readers.

The focus on food as sustenance, rather than pleasure, further underlines the cultural and medical attitudes of the time, where food was seen primarily as nourishment, with excess often condemned. Florio's use of terms like "belly-cheer" to describe gluttony and indulgence offers insight into early modern views on food consumption, contrasting sharply with modern attitudes toward food as a source of pleasure and aesthetic delight.

Florio's dictionary thus serves as a window into the culinary and cultural exchanges between Italy and England. It reflects not only the linguistic intricacies of food-related terms but also the broader social, medical, and cultural connotations they carried. A more detailed analysis of other entries could reveal further intertextual influences, indicating whether Florio's work left a lasting imprint on the English lexicon beyond the realm of food. Ultimately, the dictionary stands as a testament to Florio's role in facilitating the transfer of Italian cultural and culinary knowledge to Elizabethan and Jacobean England, and his unique approach to lexicography continues to provide valuable insights into the linguistic and culinary history of the early modern period.

Bibliography

Barton, A. (1984), *Ben Jonson Dramatist*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Bassnett, M. and Nunn, H.M. (2022), *Introduction: In the Kitchen*, in M. Bassnett and H.M. Nunn (eds), *In the Kitchen, 1550-1800: Reading English Cooking at Home and Abroad*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, pp. 9–25.

Bervoets, L. et al. (2024), *1500-1800*, in "Urban History", 51, 2, pp. 464–471.

Brezina, V. and Platt, W. (2024), *#LancsBox X* [software], Lancaster University, available at: <http://lancsbox.lancs.ac.uk> (last accessed 4 October 2024).

Bruno, G. (1584), *La cena de le ceneri*, Charlewood, London.

Castelvetro, G. (1614), *Brieve racconto di tutte le radici, di tutte le erbe et di tutti i frutti, che crudi o cotti in Italia si mangiano*, n.pub., London.

Chidgey, D. (2013), *Giovanni Florio's First Fruites* [sic] *(1578): Dialogue and Cultural Exchange in Elizabethan England*, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2013.

Ciambella, F. (2023), *A Corpus-driven Analysis of the Early Modern English Recipe Manuscripts at the Folger Shakespeare Library: Zooming in on Morphosyntax and Pragmatic Interfaces*, in "Status Quaestionis", 25, pp. 71–95.

Cox, M. (2010), *Montaigne and* The Tempest, available at: <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/blogs/montaigne-and-tempest> (last accessed 6 October 2024).

Curth, L.H. (2003), *The Medicinal Value of Wine in Early Modern England*, in "The Social History of Alcohol and Drugs", 18, pp. 35–50.

Engle, L. (2023), *Montaigne's Shakespeare: The Tempest as Test-Case*, in L. Engle, P. Gray and W.M. Hamlin (eds), *Shakespeare and Montaigne*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, pp. 296–325.

Fenton, E. (1569), *Certaine Secrete Wonders of Nature*, Henry Bynneman, London.

Ferguson, R. (2012), *Primi influssi culturali italo-veneti sull'inglese: la testimonianza dei venezianismi in Florio, Coryate e Jonson*, in "Quaderni veneti", 1, 1, pp. 57–82.

Fitzpatrick, J. (2004), *Food and Foreignness in* Sir Thomas More, in "Early Theatre", 7, 2, pp. 33–47.

Fitzpatrick, J. (2021), *Early Modern Literature and Food in Britain*, in "Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature", available at: <https://oxfordre.com/literature/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-1199> (last accessed 4 October 2024).

Florio, J. (1578), *Florio His Firste Fruites*, Thomas Dawson, London.

Florio, J. (1591), *Florios Second Frvtes*, Thomas Woodcock, London.

Florio, J. (1598), *A Worle of Wordes*, Edward Blount, London.

Florio, J. (1603), *The Essayes; Or Morall, Politike, and Millitarie Discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne*, Edward Blount, London.

Florio, J. (1611), *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, Edward Blount and William Barret, London.

Gallagher, J. (2017), *The Italian London of John North*, in "Renaissance Quarterly", 70, 1, pp. 88–131.

Giannetti, L. (2022), *Food Culture and Literary Imagination in Early Modern Italy*: *The Renaissance of Taste*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.

Greenblatt, S. and Platt, P.G. (eds) (2014), *Shakespeare's Montaigne: The Florio Translation of The Essays. A Selection*, New York Review Books, New York.

Haller, H.W. (2013), *Introduction*, in H.W. Haller (ed.), *John Florio: A Worlde of Wordes*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, pp. ix–xl.

Halliday, M.A.K. and Matthiessen, C.M.I. (2004), *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Routledge, London.

Hooker, J. (1587), *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles*, H. Denham, London.

Hooker, E.R. (1902), *The Relation of Shakespeare to Montaigne*, in "PMLA", 17, 3, pp. 312–366.

Leong, E. (2018), *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge: Medicine, Science, and the Household in Early Modern England*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Mack, P. (2010), *Reading and Rhetoric in Montaigne and Shakespeare*, Bloomsbury, London.

McDonald, D.S. (1998), *Pesce Cane. A Fish Recipe from the Martino Manuscript*, in H. Walker (ed.), *Fish: From Food to Waters*, Prospect Books, Totnes, pp. 197–204.

Millon, M. (2024), *Italy in a Wineglass: The Story of Italy Through Its Wines*, First Melville House Printing, London.

Miola, R. (2004), *Seven Types of Intertextuality*, in M. Marrapodi (ed.), *Shakespeare, Italy, and Intertextuality*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp. 13–25.

Nicholls, J. (2008), Vinum Britannicum*: The "Drink Question" in Early Modern England*, in "The Social History of Alcohol and Drugs", 22, 2, pp. 190–208.

Noble, R.S.H. (1935), *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge and Use of the* Book of Common Prayer*, as Exemplified in the Plays of the First Folio*, Folcroft Press, Folcroft.

Oxford English Dictionary (OED), online version, available at: <https://www.oed.com/?tl=true> (last accessed 28 October 2025).

Pennell, S. and DiMeo, M. (2013), *Introduction*, in M. DiMeo, S. Pennell (eds), *Reading and Writing Recipe Books, 1550-1800*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp. 1–22.

Phillips, R. (2014), *Early modern Europe 1500-1700: Alcohol, Religion, and Culture*, in R. Phillips, *Alcohol: A History*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, pp. 87–109.

Platt, P.G. (2020), *Shakespeare's Essays: Sampling Montaigne from* Hamlet *to* The Tempest, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Pozzetti, G. (2018), *Diet and Health in Early Modern England and Italy. A Comparative Study of the Theoretical and Practical Understandings of Humoral Principles*, PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2018.

Segre, C. (1984), *Teatro e romanzo: due tipi di comunicazione letteraria*, Einaudi, Torino.

Shakespeare, W. (1600), *Henry IV, Part 2* (*Quarto 1, 1600*), available at: <https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/2H4_Q1/index.html> (last accessed 29 September 2025).

Shakespeare, W. (1623), *The Tempest (Folio I, 1623)*, available at: <https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Tmp_F1/complete/index.html> (last accessed 6 October 2024).

Shakespeare, W. (2011), *Sir Thomas More*, edited by J. Jowitt, Bloomsbury The Arden Shakespeare, London.

Simonini, R.C. (1952), *Italian Scholarship in Renaissance England*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.

Spampanato, V. (1923), *Giovanni Florio. Un amico di Bruno in Inghilterra*, in "La critica. Rivista di letteratura, storia e filosofia", 23, pp. 56–60, 113–125, 189–192 and 313–317.

Tersigni, E. (2019), *Tastes of the Mediterranean: Italian Food before Italy*, available at: <https://www.folger.edu/blogs/shakespeare-and-beyond/italian-food-before-italy-early-modern-recipes/> (last accessed 1 October 2024).

Thirsk, J. (2007), *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions, 1500-1760*, Bloomsbury Academic, London.

Winchcombe, R. (2023), *Comfort Eating: Food, Drink and Emotional Health in Early Modern England*, in "The English Historical Review", 138, 590–591, pp. 61–91.

Yates, F.A. (1934), *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Imagined Identities: Children of Italian Exiles in Seventeenth Century England

Stefano Villani

This essay investigates the ways in which the offspring of Italian religious exiles, beginning with Michelangelo and John Florio, reconstituted their cultural and political selves in seventeenth-century England. By engaging with the descendants of eminent refugee lineages, it traces the intricate negotiation between inherited diasporic memory and the imperatives of assimilation into English society. These imagined identities—configured through linguistic hybridity, mutable confessional allegiances, and expansive transnational networks—furnish a revealing lens upon the dynamics of early modern displacement and accommodation.

1. The Florios

As is well established, John Florio was the son of a religious exile, and his affiliation with the wider Italian Protestant diaspora of his father's generation constituted a formative influence upon his intellectual and cultural trajectory. His father, Michelangelo Florio, invariably styled himself "Florentine" on the title-pages of his printed works, thereby asserting his Tuscan origin. Born most probably in the early years of the sixteenth century into a family of Jewish descent that had embraced Christianity, Michelangelo entered the Conventual Franciscan order, assuming the name Paolo Antonio da Figline, and rose to the office of guardian of the convent of Santa Croce in Florence.[1] In 1542 he

[1] Most of the information about the early life of Michelangelo Florio comes from his self-defense published in 1557, aimed at countering the claims made about him by the Franciscan Bernardino Spada from Bormio, in the Valtellina (Spada 1557). On

appeared in Venice as witness against Giulio da Milano, whom he accused of Lutheran sympathies; yet, paradoxically, in those same years he himself began to incline toward Reformed doctrines. His sermons in Venice during 1543–1544 were branded heretical, and though he initially evaded prosecution, he was arrested in 1548 and consigned to the prisons of the Roman Inquisition, where he was subjected to torture. After two years and three months of confinement, he effected a daring escape on 4 May 1550. For a time he lingered in Venice, cultivating connections with an ex-Benedictine associated with the English ambassador, before undertaking an arduous journey that brought him to London in November 1550, aided by a banker in the orbit of Cosimo de' Medici.[2] In England he soon gathered around him the Italian émigrés who had fled for reasons of conscience, thereby constituting the earliest nucleus of an Italian Protestant congregation.[3] Yet Michelangelo was compelled to relinquish his ministerial office in 1552, when it emerged that he had seduced his maid, who became pregnant and whom, it appears, he subsequently married in London. The absence of

---

Michelangelo Florio's biography see Villani 2017, 114–136; Yates 1955 161–164; Perini 1997.

[2] The already cited Spada 1557 includes a letter from Bernardino Spada in which he clearly addresses Michelangelo by his monastic name, Paolo Antonio (Spada 1557, 72). Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto have unequivocally identified Michelangelo Florio with the Franciscan friar Paolo Antonio da Figline, who was arrested for heresy in 1548, on the basis of Spada's letter and, above all, on the chronological coincidence between the events narrated in the *Apologia* and those documented in the sources concerning the heretical Franciscan (Firpo and Marcatto 1998–2000, 147–148 and 1121; Firpo and Marcatto 2011, 368, n. 121; see also Carcerieri 1912, 15–33; Bocchi 2022, 1273–1283).
In the Apologia, Michelangelo claims to have been entangled in the web of errors of the Church of Rome for 32 years (Spada 1557, 34r). In all likelihood, with this statement Florio intended to say that by the age of 32 he had adopted Evangelical positions. Since we know that as early as 1542 he was considered a heretic, it is possible to infer that he was born around 1510. Carla Rossi, who—based on a far from convincing reading of Spada's letter to Florio—denies the identification between Michelangelo Florio and Fra Paolo Antonio da Figline, has hypothesized that Michelangelo, in the passage where he speaks of the 32-year period, was referring to the year 1550, that is, to the date when he left the Order. On the basis of this uncertain dating, she argues that the "Michelagnolo" son of Maestro Giovanni, a battilana, baptized in Florence on 28 September 1518, is Florio. In our view, this hypothesis, although suggestive, is improbable (Rossi 2017, 104–120; Rossi 2018, 26–28).

[3] Luigi Firpo, *La Chiesa Italiana di Londra del Cinquecento e i suoi rapporti con Ginevra*, in Firpo 1996, 309–412, which previously appeared in the volume *Ginevra e l'Italia* (Sansoni, Firenze 1959); Boersma and Jelsma 1997. On the history of the Italian Church in the seventeenth century, see Villani 2010, 217–236 and 2015, 263–285.

her name from surviving records makes it probable that she was not Italian, a fact that would otherwise have been remarked upon. Thereafter Florio pursued a livelihood as an instructor in the Italian tongue, composing the *Regole de la lingua toscana* and publishing a translation of John Ponet's Catechism in the aftermath of Edward VI's death.[4] In March 1554, with the Marian restoration, he shared the fate of many Italian Protestants and was compelled to depart England. Following a brief sojourn in Strasbourg, he settled in the Grisons, where he assumed the pastorate of the small congregation of Soglio in Val Bregaglia, accompanied by his wife. Suspected of anti-Trinitarian leanings, he was constrained to retract in order to preserve his office, which he retained until his death, circa 1566 (Spada 1955, 78–79; Rossi 2018).

In addition to the aforementioned translation of the Catechism, Florio issued in 1557 an *Apologia*, addressing the distinction between the true and the false church and the nature of the Mass, composed in response to polemical assaults by his former confrère Bernardino Spada. In 1563 he published an Italian rendering of Giorgio Agricola's *De re metallica*, while his biography of Lady Jane Grey appeared posthumously in 1607 (Firpo 1996, 233–234; Spini 1950, 129–130).

The mediating role of John Florio as a go-between for the English and Italian cultures is so widely acknowledged that only a few salient details need be rehearsed here. Giovanni was matriculated at the University of Tübingen in 1563, where he studied under Pier Paolo Vergerio, and made his way to England around 1570. Not long thereafter, and in emulation of his father's career, he established himself as a teacher of Italian and brought out *Firste Fruites* in 1578. He subsequently entered Oxford University in 1581 and, shortly thereafter, contracted marriage with the sister of the English poet Samuel Daniel. From 1583 Florio entered the household of the French ambassador in London, serving as tutor to his daughter and as interpreter. For a time he divided his res-

[4] The *Regole* are preserved in two manuscripts: one, more extensive, housed in the University Library of Cambridge, dated August 22, 1553, and dedicated to Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (*Cambridge University Library, Dd. XI. 46*); and the other, undated, preserved in the British Library in London, dedicated to "Signora Giovanna Graia," that is, Lady Jane Grey (*British Library, Sloane MSS. 3011*). It is likely that the manuscript held in London represents the first draft of Florio's text. Henry Herbert married Catherine Grey, sister of Jane, in May 1553. The marriage was never consummated and was formally annulled in 1554. See Pellegrini 1954, 77–204; Wyatt 2005, 212–213; Bocchi 2014, 51–79. Andrea Bocchi is now working on a complete collection of his works that will help us better understand his intellectual profiles.

idence between London and Oxford, where his family remained; his daughter Joane was baptized in 1585. In due course his family joined him in London, where his other children, Edward and Elizabeth, were baptized in 1588 and 1589, respectively. In the ensuing years Florio published numerous works. Upon the accession of James I, he was appointed Italian reader to the king's consort, Queen Anna, and also taught some Italian to Princess Elizabeth and possibly to Prince Henry. Having been widowed at an uncertain date, Florio remarried at the age of sixty-three, taking Rose Spicer as his second wife in 1617. He drew up his will on 20 July 1625 and succumbed to the plague a few months later, around October. In that testament he named only one surviving daughter, Aurelia—his children of the 1580s having evidently not reached maturity—who had married the eminent surgeon James Molins, deceased in 1638.[5]

2. The Diodatis

We have recalled this aspect of Florio's life chiefly to underscore that the trajectory of the two Florios closely paralleled that of certain eminent immigrants to England, notably members of a branch of the Diodati family of Lucca. When Charles V visited Lucca in 1541, he was hosted by Gonfalonier Michele Diodati, whose son was named Carlo in honor of the illustrious guest, who acted as his godfather. That same year Pietro Martire Vermigli assumed the priorship of the Augustinian convent of San Frediano in Lucca, transforming it into a veritable Lutheran academy, where a number of prominent figures—including Michele Diodati—embraced the tenets of the Reformation. Between 1559 and 1560 Michele was brought before the Inquisition, yet succeeded in persuading his judges of his orthodoxy and chose to spend the rest of his lifein Lucca after his acquittal. His son Carlo, however, anticipating the harsher policies of repression inaugurated with the papacy of Pius V, departed Lucca in 1566. He first settled in Lyon as an apprentice to the Bonvisi banking house and subsequently moved on to Geneva, where he formally embraced Protestantism. Bereft of his first wife, Carlo contracted a second marriage in 1572 with the daughter of another Lucchese religious exile. Of their ten children, five sur-

[5] On John Florio, see Yates 1934; Tedeschi and Lattis 2000, 278–286; Wyatt 2005, 98–101.

vived to adulthood, among them Teodoro (born 1573), Giovanni (born 1576), and three daughters.[6]

The eldest son, Teodoro, decided to pursue the study of medicine at Leiden. In 1598, before completing his degree, he travelled to England in search of fortune. There he entered the household of Sir John Harington of Exton and his wife Anne Kelway, serving as tutor to their six-year-old son, John. John Florio, in the dedication to Anne and her daughter Lucy that prefaces his 1603 translation of Montaigne, celebrated Diodati—who had assisted him with the French text—as a veritable Aristotle to the young Harington, likened in turn to Alexander the Great.[7] Upon the accession of James I, the Harington family assumed a prominent role at court, and Sir John probably entrusted to Teodoro the education of the king's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, and her brother Henry (Birken 2004).

In 1608, ten years after his arrival in England, Teodoro—then aged thirty-five—married a woman whose name has not survived, though the silence of the sources renders it highly probable that she was English. Their first son, Charles, was born around 1609 (Campbell 2004). Significantly, Teodoro did not join any of London's foreign congregations; instead, he remained a member of his local Anglican parish, a clear indication of his intention to assimilate fully into the country he had chosen as his home.

Following his marriage, Diodati remained attached to the Harington household and established himself as a physician of repute. Between 1612 and 1614, however, three deaths and a marriage transformed his circumstances: Prince Henry, Lord Harington, and his son all died, while Princess Elizabeth married Frederick V of the Palatinate. Deprived of his principal patrons, Teodoro appears to have sought greater professional security by pursuing formal medical qualifications. In January 1617 he obtained his licence to practise from the Royal College of Physicians and soon afterwards moved to London. His family grew with the birth of two further children, John and Philadelphia. In 1628 Teodoro petitioned for naturalization and was ad-

---

[6] On the Diodatis see Pascal 1932; Dorian 1950; Birken 2004; Vola 1993, 111–129, in part. pp. 125–129. Now in Campi et al. 2022. On the trial of Michele Diodati, see: Adorni Braccesi 2009, 363–386.

[7] Florio 1603. See also Haan 2017. In a 1618 certificate listing the names of foreigners residing in London, Theodore Diodati is noted as having "lived in England theis twenty yeers"; see Dorian 1950, 80–81.

mitted as an English subject. He nonetheless sustained close ties with his brother Giovanni (Jean), who remained in Geneva throughout his life, renowned as a theologian, celebrated translator of the Bible into Italian, and correspondent of Paolo Sarpi as well as of the English embassy in Venice.[8]

Little documentation survives concerning Teodoro's later years. His parents, Carlo and Maria Diodati, died in Geneva in 1625 and 1626. Having been widowed before 1636, Teodoro contracted a second marriage around 1637 with a woman named Abigail, a union that provoked estrangement from his sons Charles and John (Dorian 1950, 156, 196–197). A heterodox Protestant, Teodoro affiliated himself with the radical and millenarian Fifth Monarchist movement during the English Revolution.[9] By 1640 he had established residence in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Less. He died in February 1651, omitting from his testament his only surviving son, John, and designating instead his nephew, also named Teodoro Diodati, who subsequently migrated to London and pursued a medical career. His elder son, Charles, had predeceased him in 1638 (Dorian 1950, 296).

We may now turn to the life of Charles. He was born around 1609 and bore the name of his grandfather, thus ironically recalling the memory of Emperor Charles V. Raised in London, he attended St Paul's School, where he formed a close friendship with John Milton. In 1623 Charles entered Oxford, where he excelled in Latin and Greek, receiving his bachelor's degree in 1625 and his M.A. in 1628. He then advanced to theological study at the Geneva Academy, enrolling in April 1630. Returning to England in 1631, he decided to abandon theology in favour of medicine, thus following the path of his father.[10]

Milton and Charles corresponded with great frequency in Latin and Greek. Milton's final affectionate letter to him, dated September 1637, requested a copy of Bernardo Giustiniani's *De origine urbis Venetiarum* (published in Latin in 1492 and in Italian in 1608). Shortly there-

---

[8] Dorian 1950, 63. On Giovanni Diodati (1576–1649) and his translation of the *Bible* (Diodati 1607 and 1641)—see Ranchetti and Ventura Avanzinelli 1999; McComish 1989. On the relationship between Diodati and Sarpi see Villani 2022a.

[9] Dorian 1950, 156, 192 and 196. The will of Teodoro Diodati is preserved in the National Archives: PROB 11/215 (12 February 1651). The full text of the will, dictated on 29 June 1649, is transcribed in its entirety in Dorian 1950, 296. Significantly, the witnesses to the will included Major General Philip Skippon and his son-in-law William Rolfe. Skippon was a member of the Council of State.

[10] Campbell 2004.

after Milton set forth on his Grand Tour of Italy. In 1638, while Milton was abroad, Charles almost certainly succumbed to plague in London. News of his death reached Milton in Geneva, and upon returning to England he commemorated his friend in the sublime *Epitaphium Damonis* (Haan 2019, 114).

3. The Calandrinis

Another distinguished Lucchese lineage to establish itself in England during the seventeenth century was that of the Calandrinis.[11] The prosperous merchant Giovanni Calandrini departed Lucca in 1567, accompanied by his brother, on account of religious convictions. In the ensuing decades he resided successively in France, Germany, and the Netherlands. His first wife, Maria, was the daughter of a wealthy Antwerp merchant, and their union produced nine children who survived to adulthood: seven sons and two daughters. Following Maria's death, Giovanni remarried in Amsterdam in 1607, taking as his wife the widow of the Dutch Reformed minister formerly attached to the London congregation. Around 1614 he himself moved to London, where he remained until his death in 1623. Of his numerous offspring, only one son, Cesare Calandrini—born in Stade, West Flanders, around 1596—settled in England on a permanent basis.[12]

Cesare had moved to England prior to his father's own migration, arriving in 1611 at the age of sixteen. While Giovanni, in partnership with his son-in-law Philippe Burlamacchi, continued the family's commercial enterprise by establishing a significant mercantile-banking concern, Cesare embraced an ecclesiastical vocation. enrolling at the Geneva Academy in May 1612 and later at Saumur. After completing his theological studies, he returned to England in 1616 and, two years later, was appointed minister of the French church in London.

Around the same time, the arrival in England of a former Roman Catholic bishop who had left Italy and renounced his ecclesiastical office caused a major stir. This was Marco Antonio De Dominis, bishop of Split—an erstwhile Roman Catholic prelate who had renounced his see and broken with the Curia. Motivated by fierce hostility to the

---

[11] On Calandrini cfr. Bachrach 1962, 120–121 and 124; Sellin 1967, 239–249; Grell 1989, 63–64; Vola 1993, 111–129, in part. 121–125; Dorian 1950, 54–55.

[12] Chamberlain 1939, 305–311.

Roman court, De Dominis sought to advance an irenic programme of ecclesiastical reconciliation by joining the Church of England. The Italian church in London, first established by Michelangelo Florio, had been suppressed under Mary Tudor and reconstituted during Elizabeth's reign; yet by the time De Dominis arrived, the number of its members was already in marked decline. The presence of this charismatic and pompous bishop generated tensions and defections within the community's leadership. As a remedy, De Dominis proposed that Cesare be installed as the congregation's regular preacher. The relationship between the two men, however, rapidly deteriorated. Cesare stood firmly in the Calvinist orthodoxy of Geneva, whereas De Dominis pursued a vision of ecclesiastical concord that sought to transcend the rigid confessional boundaries of the age. Matters came to a head when Cesare denounced De Dominis for teaching that the Roman Catholic Church remained a true and authentic church, though corrupt, and that its members required only material rather than spiritual separation. Such a proposition was abhorrent to Cesare's convictions. In reprisal, De Dominis appealed to the Bishop of London and even to King James, deriding Cesare as "totus Genevensis". The consequence was Cesare's removal from his post. During his tenure at the Italian church he nevertheless succeeded in taking the degree of Bachelor of Theology at Oxford and obtained the rectorship of a parish in Essex. In 1621 he married Elizabeth Harderet, niece of the minister of the French church in London, and their marriage produced three children. Cesare returned to London in 1639 as minister of the Dutch church at Austin Friars, where he cultivated close relations with Puritan leaders and presided over the steering committee of the foreign churches, the so-called *coetus*, a position he held until his death on 26 September 1665, which occurred during the London plague[13]. His son Lewis succeeded him in 1649 as rector of the same Essex parish, but in 1662, following the Restoration, he was deprived of the living on account of his Puritan views (Davids 1863, 474–475; Grell 1991, 123).

[13] On Calandrini's tenure as minister of the Italian Protestant Church of London and his troubled relationship with De Dominis, see Villani 2022a, 63–66. For his will (opened on 6 October 1665), see NA, PROB 11/318. See also Moens and Colyer-Fergusson 1896, 91 ("Will of Rachell Hardrett, Widow of Blackfriars, City of London," 13 February 1628, PROB 11/153/203).

4. The Torrianos

We have already alluded to the religious rift between De Dominis and Calandrini. In order to counter Calandrini's uncompromising Calvinist orthodoxy, De Dominis in 1619 nominated Alessandro Torriano, a native of the Valtellina, to the ministry of the Italian church. The Torriani constitute yet another immigrant family upon which we may briefly dwell. Information concerning Alessandro's lineage remains fragmentary. Gerolamo Torriano—who contributed a preface to Michelangelo Florio's *Apologia*—was a Protestant pastor in Chiavenna and may well have been connected by blood or kinship to Alessandro.[14] What is certain is that Alessandro himself succeeded in escaping the ferocious persecutions then unleashed upon the Protestants of the Valtellina, persecutions that culminated, a year after his exile, in the notorious massacres.[15] We know further that Alessandro was accompanied to London by his sons, Giovanni and another Torriano, and possibly also by a daughter named Maria.[16]

Alessandro Torriano died in 1638.[17] His son Giovanni pursued a career as an Italian teacher, his trajectory closely paralleling that of John Florio—himself also the son of a Protestant minister—and it is hardly surprising that he moved within the same Italianate milieu in London. Indeed, following Florio's death in 1625, Torriano succeeded him as Italian tutor at court and received Florio's manuscripts through

---

[14] Mazzali and Spini 1969. There are no specific studies on Torriano/Torriani; see *Historisch-biografisches Lexikon der Schweiz*; *Rätisches Namenbuch*, Staatsarchiv Graubünden; Campi and La Torre 2000, 73–75.

[15] Villani 2022a, pp. 63–65. Wolfgang Bull has informed me that on May 25, 1611, an "Alexander Turrianus mediolanensis" was present at a seminar for Protestant ministers held in Zernez. Earlier, on November 25, 1581, an Alessandro Torriano appears as a student at the Collegium Helveticum in Milan, a Catholic institution. This reference is found in *Aus der schweizerischen Correspondenz mit Cardinal Carl Borromeo, Erzbischof von Mailand* (Bibliotheca Ambrosiana, F135–F175, 1576–1584), Teil 3, p. 140, and also in *Jahresbericht der Historisch-Antiquarischen Gesellschaft von Graubünden*, p. 15. A letter dated August 17, 1618, sent from Geneva by Alexander Turrianus to Kaspar Waser in Zurich, appears to mark the final stage of his stay in Geneva.

[16] George Torriano (d. 1685) is mentioned several times in *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes* (Malcolm 1994, 633, 650, 667). In 1656, he was living in St. Nicholas Lane (British Library, Add. MS. 34015, fol. 7r). His name also appears in the list of returns of foreigners residing in London on 18 July 1635 (Scouloudi 1985, 343).

[17] The burial record of Rev. Alexander Torriano, Italian Minister, is listed under the date April 18, 1638, in London (Baddeley 1888, 140).

the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke. In 1639 he published two Italian grammars (reissued in 1640 and 1645), as well as *The Italian Tutor* in 1640. Both were dedicated to the Countess of Kent, celebrated for her passion for Italian culture, to whom Giovanni Florio had likewise dedicated his translation of Montaigne. In 1642 Giovanni brought out a collection of 650 proverbs, which was republished in 1649.[18] Between 1643 and 1656 Giovanni travelled in Italy, likely to escape the upheavals of the English Civil War—an indication that he was probably not a Puritan and may have harboured royalist sympathies. He was in Padua in 1650,[19] and by 1656 was in Rome, teaching English to the Florentine nobleman Carlo Francesco Guadagni, who urged him to compile an English–Italian dictionary.[20] Upon his return to England he not only published that dictionary—an expanded version of Florio's—but also further collections of proverbs and textbooks for the teaching of Italian, notably dedicating one of these works to the restored Charles II. His printing workshop in St Paul's Churchyard was utterly destroyed in the Great Fire of London, a calamity from which he never wholly recovered. His final publication appeared in 1673,[21] and he himself died

---

[18] On Torriano, see Chaney 1985, 371 n. 113 (cf. also p. 299 n. 4); Rossi 1969, 95–212, esp. pp. 168–191; Mączak 1994, 479; Gamberini 1970; Boersma and Jelsma 1997; Messeri 1956, 108–111; Speroni 1957, 146–157; Rossi 1991, 36–50; Sciarrino 2003, 31–46; Pizzoli 2018, 95–119. From the introduction to his *Della lingua toscana romana* (London, 1657), it appears that he succeeded John Florio as Italian language tutor at court (cf. DNB, s.v. "Florio, John 1553?–1625"). He was probably born in Valtellina in 1609; see Windsor 2025.

[19] We know of his presence in Padua from the register of English students and visitors at the University, where he is listed as traveling in the company of Henry Robinson and a certain Johannes Kynnersley. Their names appear in the following entries: num. 435. *Henricus Robinsonus Northamptoniensis Anglus*, June 4, 1650; num. 436. *Joannes Turrianus natione Italus*, June 4, 1650; num. 437. *Johannes Kynnersleyus Middlesexiae Anglus*, June 4, 1650, in Library of the Seminary of Padua, Codex 634. See Brown 1921, 140–213. On Henry Robinson's political and economic thought and his Italian experience, see Calafat 2021.

[20] Carlo Francesco Guadagni (1635–1669) was a friend of Filippo Baldinucci and of the painter Baldassare Franceschini, also known as Il Volterrano. Torriano would dedicate to him the Italian–English section of his dictionary, published in 1659. On Guadagni, see Mirto 1993, 38, 45, 100, 109, 113, 115, 118, 120, 130 and 256.

[21] In 1664, Gio. Torriano published an English translation of a report on Rome originally written around 1640 by Dirk van Ameyden. The work, titled *A New Relation of Rome as to the Government of the City, the Noble Families Thereof, the Revenue and Expences of the Pope, the Courts of Justice, the Offices, the Congregations of Cardinals, and Other Particulars Very Curious*, was said to be "taken out of one of the choicest cabinets of Rome" and was printed in London by T. Mabb for John Starkey. For the original Italian text, see van Ameyden 167[?], 99–192.

around 1688, when his vocabulary was posthumously reissued by one John Davis (Giovanni Davisio; Florio 1688).

It is noteworthy that Giovanni Torriano's name appears in a list of suspected Catholics dated April 1658. His probable royalist inclinations, together with his sojourns in the land of "Papism", may have led some to suspect that, as an Italian, he was not a trustworthy Protestant—an accusation that conveniently overlooked the exile and witness of his father in defence of the Reformed faith (Bowler 1934, 132).

5. The Antelminellis

The final family to be considered is that of the Antelminellis of Lucca. Unlike the Florios, Diodatis, Calandrinis, and Torrianos, whose exile was occasioned by religious motives, Amerigo Salvetti—who resided in England for more than half a century—was driven abroad by political circumstances. Born Alessandro Antelminelli on 19 November 1572 into one of Lucca's most distinguished patrician houses, he claimed descent from the celebrated condottiere Castruccio Castracani. Alessandro pursued a mercantile career and by August 1594 was established in Antwerp (Villani 2004, 109–125).

In 1596 his life was dramatically altered when his father was arrested in Genoa, accused of conspiring with the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The discovery of compromising documents prompted a conspiracy trial designed to facilitate the incorporation of the Republic of Lucca into Tuscany. Alessandro's father and brothers were apprehended and executed. Alessandro, then still in Antwerp, initially obeyed the summons to return to Italy but, learning of the tragedy, fled to Florence and soon afterwards abandoned Italy altogether. To evade assassins dispatched by the Lucchese authorities he assumed the alias Amerigo Salvetti and eventually settled in England. From 1617 he began transmitting reports from London as an informant to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and in the following year was formally recognised as Tuscan resident in London.[22]

Salvetti established himself permanently in England and for many years laboured unsuccessfully to recover his family's confiscated estates in Lucca. Despite repeated petitions, he was never granted a pardon. In 1635, at the age of over sixty, he contracted marriage with the

[22] On his role as diplomatic representative of the Grand Duke, see Villani 2022b. See also Boerio and Mori 2024, 75–102.

young Frances Colbrand, a member of a Catholic gentry family with notable connections to the English nobility (Villani 2004, 119–120). Their first son, Giovanni, was born in Bedfordshire in 1636, followed by Amerigo in 1638, three daughters—Sarah, Philippa, and Frances—and a younger son, Ferdinando. Amerigo Salvetti died in London in 1657 at the age of eighty-five, succeeded in his diplomatic office by his son Giovanni. Educated at a Jesuit college in France, Giovanni proved ill-suited to the post: his Italian was rudimentary, and his dispatches little more than literal renderings of the printed newsletters then circulating in London. Nevertheless, he retained the office until 1680, largely as a gesture by the Grand Duke to honour the memory of his father. Giovanni himself died in London in 1716, at the age of eighty.[23]

Of Amerigo's daughters, Philippa married an English baronet and bore eight children, including three sons. Giovanni in turn married his sister-in-law, the sister of Philippa's husband. Philippa appears to have conformed to the Church of England upon her marriage, and notably her youngest son—who assumed "Antelminelli" as his forename—entered holy orders as an Anglican priest (Villani 2004, 121).

6. Some concluding notes

What, then, are we to make of the narratives we have retraced? As Benedict Anderson observed in his seminal study of the nation as an imagined community, it is through the language "encountered at mother's knee and parted with only at the grave [that] pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed" (Anderson 2006, 154). We have considered the intertwined histories of five families: four shaped by religious exile (the Florios, Diodatis, Calandrinis, and Torrianos) and one marked by political flight (the Antelminellis). These dramatic, often perilous departures from their native soil were animated by the aspiration towards an alternative, dreamt future for their homeland—though what precisely was conceived as that "homeland" (Italy as a whole, or more narrowly Florence, Lucca, or the Valtellina) remains an open and compelling question.

The parallels among them are striking, all the more so when viewed across generations: Michelangelo Florio's emigration in 1550; Carlo Diodati and Giovanni Calandrini's departure in 1566–1567 (with Te-

[23] For a biographical profile, see Villani 2018.

odoro Diodati's arrival in England in 1598); Alessandro Antelminelli's flight in 1596; and Torriano's in 1620. None of these exiles, however, wholly relinquished their cultural inheritance. Despite their frequent marriages to women of non-Italian origin, they preserved the Italian language within the household, transmitting it to their sons. The names bestowed upon their children and grandchildren—such as the striking adoption of "Antelminelli" as a given name, or John Florio's choice of "Vera Aurora" for his daughter—betray both the persistence of familial pride and a symbolic assertion of Italian identity.

Yet this Italian heritage coexisted with an equally deliberate cosmopolitanism of education and affiliation. The children of exiles were dispatched to universities abroad and cultivated enduring ties not only with fellow Italians in exile, but also with French, Genevan, and Dutch refugee networks. For the first generation, the hope of return to Italy was seldom extinguished; and in every case, even when formal prohibition intervened, correspondence with kin at home was maintained—frequently traversing the very confessional boundaries that had occasioned their banishment.

In the second generation, a distinct intellectual trajectory becomes discernible. This conforms to a familiar pattern within diasporic communities: compelled to flee, exiles often carry little beyond their wealth and their intellect. The children of such émigrés, for the most part, never set foot in Italy—or, if they did, only fleetingly. Giovanni Torriano represents a striking exception: he spent several years in Italy and, significantly, set the dialogues of his Italian language manuals in Rome, asserting himself to be the first to do so. Despite their mixed parentage, these children were nurtured with Italian as the language of their "fatherland"—a term more apt than "mother tongue", for in most cases their mothers were not Italian. John Florio's mother was in all probability English, yet he grew up bilingually. Giovanni Salvetti Antelminelli's mother was likewise English, but he nonetheless spoke and wrote in Italian, however imperfectly. Charles Diodati and Cesare Calandrini too possessed knowledge of the language. It is scarcely surprising, then, that so many among this second generation devoted themselves to the teaching and translation not only of Italian, but also of French and Spanish, or assumed clerical offices within the foreign churches—especially the more prominent French and Dutch congregations.

A particularly revealing episode unfolded not in England but in Geneva. In 1679 Giulio Spinola, bishop of Lucca, sought to persuade

the descendants of Lucchese exiles resident there to abjure their Protestantism and return to the Catholic faith. Addressing them in Italian, he took for granted their continued command of the language. His initiative elicited an emphatic rejoinder: a public refutation, likewise in Italian, appeared in 1680, and the copies dispatched to Lucca were ceremoniously burned. This episode illuminates both the enduring memory of exile in Lucca and the cohesion of the Italian Protestant community in Geneva (Campi and Sodini 1988; Ussia 1980, 21–22).

In London, the Italian Protestant church exerted little influence upon the preservation of Italian traditions among the descendants of exiles. Though in the Elizabethan period it had flourished as a locus of theological debate, by the seventeenth century it had dwindled into a modest congregation, attended largely by Englishmen eager to improve their Italian by listening to sermons in the language. Nevertheless, at least for the second generation, it is clear that they preserved what Benedict Anderson has aptly described as an "imagined fellowship" with Italy. Many of these families remained bound by personal ties: John Florio counted Teodoro Diodati among his friends; the Diodatis and Calandrinis maintained close connections; and Torriano, inspired by Florio, almost certainly knew him in person.

It was, inevitably, a fragile identity. As has already been observed, while the children of the first generation of exiles—frequently with only one Italian parent—were able to grow up bilingual, their own children, most of whom contracted marriages with English spouses, seem, as far as the evidence allows us to judge, to have been raised as monolingual English grandchildren. In England, unlike in Geneva, the Italian community was too small and dispersed to resist the forces of assimilation.

No writings survive from the children of exiles that speak explicitly of Italy, rendering it difficult to gauge their emotional attachment to the land of their forebears. Milton, in mourning his friend Charles Diodati, memorably described him as "Carolus Diodatus ex urbe Hetruriæ Luca paterno genere oriundus, cætera Anglus" ("Charles Diodati, by paternal descent from the Tuscan city of Lucca, in all else an Englishman"). That formulation may well be the most fitting characterization of the second generation of Italian exiles in England, in whom heritage was preserved chiefly on a symbolic register.[24]

[24] See also Haan 2012.

Their identity, in truth, was indelibly marked by the moment of their parents' exile. Significantly, Amerigo Salvetti directed that, after his death, his son should employ not only the pseudonym he had assumed in exile but also the family's authentic name of Antelminelli—a deliberate restoration of the past in Anderson's sense. These figures were, in a certain measure, imaginary Italians: reared at a distance from a homeland they never knew, their sense of self fashioned through the memory and mythology of their fathers.

In conclusion, the singular figure of John Florio stands as emblematic of a broader pattern shared by exiles and emigrants of his age. All preserved a measure of their cultural inheritance, even as they participated in the cosmopolitan networks that framed their intellectual horizons. Bilingualism frequently opened the way to polyglotism. To set their experiences in comparison is to situate Florio's career within a broader transnational and diasporic frame. Yet beyond this, the legacy of the children of these exiles—suspended between languages, confessions, and nations—reminds us that identity, particularly in contexts of forced migration, is never a fixed patrimony, but rather a perpetual act of translation and reinvention.

Bibliography

Adorni Braccesi, S. (2009), *Le carte lucchesi del processo inquisitoriale di Michele di Alessandro Diodati (aprile 1559-aprile 1560)*, in "Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia", 5, 1/2, pp. 363–386.

Anderson, B. (2006), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition, Verso, London and New York.

Bachrach, A.G.H. (1962), *Sir Constantine Huygens and Britain: 1596–1687*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 120–121, 124.

Baddeley, J.J. (1888), *An Account of the Church and Parish of St. Giles, Without Cripplegate, in the City of London: Compiled from Various Old Authorities, Including the Churchwardens' Accounts, and the Vestry Minute Books of the Parish*, J.J. Baddeley, London.

Birken, W. (2004), *Diodati, Theodore (1573–1651)*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, available at: <https://www-oxforddnb-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7680> (last accessed 28 October 2024).

Bocchi, M. (2014), *I Florio contro la Crusca,* in A. Daniele and L. Nascimben (eds), *La nascita del vocabolario. Convegno di studio per i quattrocento anni del Vocabolari della Crusca,* Esedra, Padova, pp. 51–79.

Bocchi, A. (2022), *Michelangelo Florio e il Sant'Uffizio*, in "*Nuova Rivista Storica*", 106, 3, pp. 1273–1283.

Boerio, D. and Mori, A. (2024), *The Salvetti Project: A Journey Toward Digital Approaches and Public History*, in "magazén", 5, 1, pp. 75–102.

Boersma, O. and Jelsma, A.J. (1997), *Unity in Multiformity. The Minutes of the Coetus of London, 1575 and the Consistory Minutes of the Italian Church of London, 1570–1591*, Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London.

Bowler, H. (ed.) (1934), *London Sessions Records, 1605–1685*, in Catholic Record Society, London.

Brown, H.F. (1921), *Inglesi e scozzesi all'Università di Padova 1618–1775*, in *Contributo del R. Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti alla Celebrazione del VII Centenario della Università di Padova*, Regio Istituto Veneto, Venezia, pp. 140–213.

Calafat, G. (2021), *For a 'Livorno-on-Thames': The Tuscan Model in the Writings of Henry Robinson (1604–1673?)*, in "The Seventeenth Century", 37, pp. 535-564 DOI: 10.1080/0268117X.2021.1975558

Campi, E. et al. (eds) (2022), *Oliver Cromwell e la causa valdese, con altri saggi sul nonconformismo religioso nell'Inghilterra del XVII secolo*, Claudiana, Torino.

Campbell, G. (2004), *Diodati, Charles (1609/10–1638)*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, available at: <https://www-oxforddnb-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7679> (last accessed 21 September 2025).

Campi, E. and La Torre, G. (2000), *Il Protestantesimo di lingua italiana nella Svizzera. Figure e movimenti tra Cinquecento e Ottocento*, Claudiana, Torino.

Campi, E. and Sodini, C. (1988), *Gli oriundi lucchesi di Ginevra e il cardinale Spinola: una controversia religiosa alla vigilia della revoca dell'editto di Nantes*, Prisma Editrice, Napoli.

Carcerieri, L. (1912), *L'eretico fra Paolo Antonio fiorentino e Cosimo de' Medici*, in "Archivio storico italiano", 49, pp. 15–33.

Chaney, E. (1985), *The Grand Tour and the Great Rebellion. Richard Lassels and "The Voyage of Italy" in the Seventeenth Century*, Slatkine, Geneva.

Chamberlain, J., (1939) *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

Davids, A. (1863), *Annals of Evangelical Nonconformity in the County of Essex*, Jackson, Walford und Hodder, London, pp. 474–475.

Diodati, G. (trans.) (1607), *La Bibbia cioè i libri del Vecchio e del Nuovo Testamento nuovamente traslati in lingua Italiana da Giovanni Diodati di nation Lucchese*, s.l. [but Geneve].

Diodati, G. (trans.) (1641), *La Sacra Bibbia, tradotta in lingua Italiana, e commentata da Giouanni Diodati… Seconda editione, migliorata ed accresciuta*, P. Chouët, Ginevra.

Dorian, D.C. (1950), *The English Diodatis*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick (NJ).

Firpo, L. (1996), *Scritti sulla Riforma in Italia*, Prismi, Napoli.

Firpo, M. and Marcatto, D. (1998–2000), *I processi inquisitoriali di Pietro Carnesecchi (1557–1567). Edizione critica*, vol. 2, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Città del Vaticano.

Firpo, M. and Marcatto, D. (2011), *Il processo inquisitoriale del cardinal Giovanni Morone. Nuova edizione critica*, vol. 1, Libera Editrice Vaticana, Roma.

Florio, J. (trans.) (1603), *The essays or morall, politike and militarie discourses of Lord Michaell de Montaigne*, Edward Blount, London.

Florio, J. (1688), *Vocabolario Italiano & Inglese: = A dictionary, Italian & English First compiled by John Florio: and augmented by himself, with many thousand words, and Thuscan phrases: diligently revised, and compared with La Crusca, and other approved dictionaries, extant since his death; and enriched with very considerable additions. Whereunto is added, A dictionary English and Italian; with several proverbs and instructions for the speedy attaining the Italian tongue. By Gio. Torriano, an Italian; some time Professor of the Italian tongue in London. Now reprinted, revised and corrected, by J.D. M.D.*, printed by R. Holt, and W. Horton, for R. Chiswell, T. Sawbridge, G. Wells, and R. Bentley; and are to be sold by Sam. Crouch, at the corner-shop of Pope's-head-Alley, over-against the Royal Exchange, London.

Gamberini, S. (1970), *Lo studio dell'italiano in Inghilterra nel '500 e nel '600*, Casa editrice G. D'Anna, Messina and Firenze.

Grell, O.P. (1989), *Dutch Calvinists in Early Stuart London. The Dutch Church in Austin Friars (1503–1642)*, Brill, Leiden, New York, København and Köln.

Grell, O.P. (1991), *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Haan, E. (2012), *Both English and Latin: Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Milton's Neo-Latin Writings*, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

Haan, E. (2017), *"Coelum non animum muto"?: Milton's Neo-Latin Poetry and Catholic Italy*, in R. Corthell and T.N. Corns (eds), *Milton and Catholicism*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, pp. 131–168.

Haan, E. (ed. and trans.) (2019), *John Milton, Epistolarum Familiarium Liber Unus and Uncollected Letters: Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, Leuven University Press, Leuven.

Mączak, A. (1994), *Viaggi e viaggiatori nell'Europa moderna*, Laterza, Roma and Bari.

Malcolm, N. (ed.) (1994), *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. 1, 1622–1659, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Mazzali, E. and Spini, G. (1969), *Storia della Valtellina*, vol. 2, Bissoni, Sondrio.

McComish, W.A. (1989), *The Epigones: A Study of the Theology of the Genevan Academy at the Time of the Synod of Dort, with Special Reference to Giovanni Diodati*, Pickwick Publications, Allison Park.

Messeri, A.L. (1956), *Giovanni Torriano e il suo dizionario inglese-italiano*, in "Lingua nostra", 17, pp. 108–111.

Mirto, S. (1993), *Pieter Blaeu. Letters to Florentines: Antonio Magliabechi, Leopoldo and Cosimo III de' Medici, and Others, 1660–1705*, Istituto Universitario Olandese di Storia dell'Arte /Holland University Press, Firenze.

Moens, W. and Colyer-Fergusson, T. (1896), *The Registers of the French Church, Threadneedle Street, London*, The Huguenot Society of London, Lymington.

Pascal, A. (1932), *Da Lucca a Ginevra*, in "Rivista Storica Italiana", 49, pp. 315–354.

Pellegrini, G. (1954), *Michelangelo Florio e le sue "Regole de la lingua thoscana"*, in "Studi di filologia italiana", 12, pp. 77–204.

Perini, G. (1997), *Florio, Michelangelo*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 48, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma, available at: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/michelangelo-florio_(Dizionario-Biografico) (last accessed 21 September 2025).

Pizzoli, L. (2018), *Giovanni Torriano e i* Choyce Italian Dialogues *(1657): Pratiche didattiche e modello di lingua usato da un maestro di italiano nell'Inghilterra del XVII secolo*, in "Studi di Grammatica Italiana", 37, pp. 95–119.

Ranchetti, M. and Ventura Avanzinelli, M. (eds) (1999), *La Sacra Bibbia tradotta in lingua italiana e commentata da Giovanni Diodati*, Mondadori, Milano.

Rossi, C. (1969), *"…The only-Knowing men of Europe": John Florio e gli insegnanti italiani*, in Id., *Ricerche sull'umanesimo e sul Rinascimento in Inghilterra*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano.

Rossi, C. (1991), *Giovanni Torriano il primo insegnante di inglese in Italia,* in "Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies", 1, pp. 36–50.

Rossi, C. (2017), *La fede di battesimo di Michelangelo Florio,* in "Theory and Criticism of Literature and Arts", 1, pp. 104–120.

Rossi, C. (2018), *Italus ore, Anglus pectore, Studi su John Florio,* vol 1, Thecla Academic Press Ltd., London.

Sciarrino, S. (2003), *Da John Florio a Giovanni Torriano: l'insegnamento della lingua italiana nel Rinascimento inglese*, in M. Marrapodi (ed.), *Intertestualità Shakespeariane*, Bulzoni, Roma, pp. 31–46.

Scouloudi, I. (1985), *Returns of Strangers in the Metropolis 1593, 1627, 1635, 1639: A Study of an Active Minority*, Huguenot Society of London, London.

Sellin, P.R. (1967), *Caesar Calandrini, the London Dutch, and Milton's Quarrels in Holland*, in "Huntington Library Quarterly", 31, pp. 239–249.

Spada, B. (1557), *Apologia di M. Michel Agnolo Fiorentino, ne la quale si tratta de la vera e falsa chiesa, de l'essere e qualità de la messa, de la vera presenza di Christo, de la Cena, del Papato, e primato di San Piero, de Concilij & autorità loro: scritto a un heretico,* Stampato in Chamogascko, per M. Stefano de Giorgio Catani d'Agnedina di sopra.

Speroni, C. (1957), *Giovanni Torriano's* Select Italian Proverbi, in "Italica", 34, pp. 146–157.

Spini, G. (1950), *Ricerca dei libertini: La teoria dell'impostura delle religioni nel Seicento italiano*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze.

Tedeschi, J. and Lattis, J.M. (eds) (2000), *The Italian Reformation of the Sixteenth Century and the Diffusion of Renaissance Culture: A Bibliography of the Secondary Literature, ca. 1750–1997,* F.C. Panini, Modena.

Ussia, S. (1980), *Carteggio Magliabechi, lettere di Borde, Arnaud e associati lionesi ad Antonio Magliabechi*, Olschki, Firenze.

Van Ameyden, D. (167[?]), *Relatione di Roma*, in *Li tesori della corte romana in varie relattioni fatte in Pregadi d'alcuni ambasciatori veneti, residenti in Roma, sotto differenti pontefici, e dell'Almaden, ambasciator francese*, s.e., s.l. [Bruxelles].

Villani, S. (2004), *Per la progettata edizione della corrispondenza dei rappresentanti toscani a Londra: Amerigo Salvetti e Giovanni Salvetti Antelminelli durante il Commonwealth e il Protettorato (1649–1660)*, in "Archivio storico italiano", 162, 1, pp. 109–125.

Villani, S. (2010), *The Italian Protestant Church of London in the Seventeenth Century*, in B. Schaff (ed.), *Exiles, Emigrés and Intermediaries Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions*, Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York.

Villani, S. (2015), *La chiesa protestante italiana di Londra nel Seicento*, in E. Andretta et al. (eds), *Tramiti. Figure e strumenti della mediazione culturale nella prima età moderna*, Viella, Roma, pp. 263–285.

Villani, S. (2017), *"Amaestrare i Fanciulli"?: traduzioni in italiano di catechismi della Chiesa d'Inghilterra nella prima età moderna*, in "Rivista Storica Italiana", 129, 1, pp. 114–136.

Villani, S. (2018), *Salvetti, Giovanni*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, online edition, available at: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-salvetti-antelminelli_res-995b3240-9654-11e8-a7cb-00271042e8d9_(Dizionario-Biografico)> (last accessed 28 October 2025).

Villani, S. (2022a), *Making Italy Anglican: Why the Book of Common Prayer Was Translated into Italian*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Villani, S. (2022b), *"Un abisso di guerre et confusione"*, paper presented at the international conference *L'incontro col 'diverso': il viaggio come scoperta dell'alterità in Occidente e tra Occidente ed aree extraeuropee 1600–2000*, University of Pisa, Pisa, 30 September–1 October 2022.

Vola, G. (1993), *I lucchesi a Londra nel XVII secolo*, in *I lucchesi a Ginevra, da Giovanni Diodati a Jean Alphonse Turrettini*, in "Actum Luce", 22, pp. 111–129.

Windsor, R. (2025), *Genealogy Windsor-Cicognani*, in *Genealogie Online*, available at: <https://www.genealogieonline.nl/genealogy-windsor-cicognani/I10411.php> (last accessed 2 June 2025).

Wyatt, M. (2005), *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Yates, F.A. (1934), *John Florio; the Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Yates, F.A. (1955), *John Florio's Father*, in Ead., *Collected Essays,* vol. 1, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 161–164.

The Anglo-Italian Fixer: Hierarchy, Gender, and Religion in John Florio's Works of Mediation[1]

Warren Boutcher

Just for a moment, in the dedication to the third book of his translation of Montaigne's *Essayes* (1603), John Florio is the messenger of the gods. Like Mercury between the radiant orbs of Venus and the Moon he leads two noble Englishwomen in a French dance, or branle.[2] It is Florio's patrons Lady Elizabeth Grey and Lady Mary Neville, the third pair of ladies to be presented with his book, who can tell him of this dance, because they are excellent in music and knowledgeable about French court matters. Any well-informed courtier of the time would have recognised the scene he imagines. French court *mascarades* regularly featured both the god Mercury and branles of various kinds. A drawing by Francesco Primaticcio, a designer for festivities at the French court, shows a Mercury figure with plumes leading a court lady by the hand.[3] Englished also as a "braule" or "brawl", the branle had

[1] This chapter draws on research for the project TextDiveGlobal (2021–2027), supported by funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 101021262, "Textuality and Diversity: A Literary History of Europe and its Global Connections, 1545-1659", Queen Mary University of London), including research on female court performers by Dr. Lily Freeman-Jones, a TextDiveGlobal Post-Doctoral Research Fellow. It also benefits from my participation in the excellent Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research network, "Europe's Short Peace, 1595-1620", directed by Dr. Noah Millstone (University of Birmingham). My thanks to Donatella Montini, for her intellectual initiative and editorial patience, and to Stefano Villani for providing me with copies of his publications.

[2] Montaigne 1603, sig. 2R2r. References to this book will be included henceforward in parentheses in the main text.

[3] Francesco Primaticcio, *Mercury Leading a Woman by the Hand*, NMH 865/1863, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (available at: <https://collection.nationalmuseum.se/en/collection/item/72611/>, last accessed 28 October 2025); McGowan 2008, 5, 70, 73, 89, 102, 107, 115, 135, 144, 148, 160 and 241.

been part of elite English culture since at least the era of Henry VIII; it is mentioned by Thomas Elyot, and later by Sidney and Shakespeare. A social dance, it was still featuring in Florio's era in ballets and entertainments such as those sponsored by Marie de Medici. There were many different versions of the dance, but it often involved participants holding hands and taking large, slower, sideways steps to the left, then smaller, quicker, steps to the right. It could bring whole circular or serpentine chains of men and women together in measured motion in the same direction.[4]

In quasi-assuming the persona of Mercury leading Venus and the Moon, then, Florio is imagining the dance at the end of a disguising, masque or masque-like household or civic entertainment. These English festivities were commensurate in some ways with French and other European versions. Many featured Mercury, not (until the Jacobean era) as a dancer in the French style, but as the presenter or leader of the masque. Some had a "truchman" who played a Mercury-type role in introducing or interpreting the masque.[5] A Mercury figure in a white winged hat did lead the dance or march depicted on Sir Henry Unton's memorial picture of 1596, which features a Diana with a lunar design on her head-dress, six ladies or nymphs, and five boys depicted with white, five with black skin.[6]

At the end of the same dedication Florio clarifies the connection between this conceit and the design of his publication. It is a classical temple housing three altars—which appear in an engraving after the title-page—consecrated to the three pairs of honourable ladies receiving the three books of the work. Gifts of praise and thanks are to be given to each pair, in a quasi-pagan display of piety. So, at the end of

---

[4] *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), "ŧbransle noun", "ŧ branle noun 2", "ŧbrawl noun[3]" (with references to Elyot, Sidney, Shakespeare); *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "branle"; McGowan 2008, 62, 93, 95–96, 102.

[5] Wiggins and Richardson 2012–2018, vol. 2 (1567–1589), no. 467 (Mercury), no. 497 (Mercury), no. 501 (Mercury), no. 578 (1575, royal entertainment at Kenilworth, with Mercury and Diana), nos. 637–638, 642–643 (1578; Royal entertainments at Norwich consistently featuring Mercury), no. 583, no. 657 (with a truchman, and both the French and Spanish ambassador in attendance), no. 684 (a truchman?), no. 702 (with Mercury, designed by Philip Sidney), no. 751 (with Mercury); vol. 4 (1598-1602), no. 1269 (c.1600, *Cynthia's Revels*, a play with an inset masque featuring Mercury in disguise). See also OED, "truchman noun".

[6] National Portrait Gallery, London, *Sir Henry Unton*, attributed to Richard Scarlett (Skarlett), oil on panel, 1596-1606, NPG 710; Wiggins and Richardson 2012–2018, vol. 2 (1567-1589), no. 686.

this third dedication, Florio re-imagines the two ladies as a Greek and a Roman goddess. He consecrates his gifts "as to Juno in Greece, or Vesta in new Rome on the Altare of your vertues" (Montaigne 1603, sig. 2R3r). It appears he is anticipating the roles the ladies might take in a masque—the following year two of them would indeed, in a masque, be bringing gifts *to* an altar in a temple of peace, in a procession of ladies featuring both Juno and Vesta (see below).

Why "quasi-assuming"? Why Mercury? And why use the metaphor of an elite social dance in relation to the reading of a text? Mercury is atop the hierarchy of mediators, of trouchmen. He is the divine ambassador, messenger, or interpreter, associated with the very origins of eloquence and civility—even if he could also figure as a trickster, a deceiver, a thief.[7] As we shall see, mediators had to be seen as trustworthy in their performances, as the consequences of being seen to deceive could be dire. But Florio does not, even in this imaginary scenario, claim to be worthy of the role of Mercury. He only aims to resemble or second for him in a kind of rehearsal. He says that he lacks the mercurial eloquence needed to move the ladies; he has neither the god's ability nor agility to guide them nor his nobility in comforting them. But the ladies need practice or "exercise" for the real performances, the real dances. And they are happy to do so "with meaner than a teacher, or a teacher much meaner then your selves" (Montaigne 1603, sig. 2R2r). Alongside language tutors the ladies would also, at the time, have had dance and music tutors. Florio, then, is but a household tutor, providing them with the means to perform their mediatory role in the kind of events that might include a more genuinely noble Mercury. There is a hierarchy to respect. Florio is not of the rank needed to perform with them in the court entertainments which ladies of their sort had featured in since early Tudor times. He is merely preparing them.

But how is he doing this? What does the French branle or motion to which he ushers them as a kind of rehearsal for this role stand for? He is reading, repeating aloud or construing (in English) and talking about the French *Essais* with them—he is, after all, a Mercury-like interpreter, and of a text that he reads with the ladies, rather than of a court entertainment. But what does reading Montaigne's *Essais* have

[7] Wilson-Lee 2015, 128–144 and 134, citing Alberico Gentili, *De legationibus libri tres* (London, 1585); Craigwood 2019, 25–40 and 34–36.

to do with performing in a masque? Reading and translating is a social activity, a type of performance, or preparation for performance: reading, writing, interpreting, speaking aloud, performing bodily are a continuum (Gallagher 2019, 182). For the ladies it is a continuum not of employment but of entertainment. Language and dance are both media of court communication; dancers are interpreters or mediators between the hosts and patrons of masques and noble strangers in the audience, translators between the same patrons and those noble strangers' speeches or texts. Reading foreign texts and speaking foreign languages is part of the skillset the ladies need alongside skills in dance and music for their mediatory role in aristocratic household and royal court life, which complements and on occasion exceeds that of their male relatives.

One manuscript set of "Conditions" needed in a waiting gentlewoman, extracted from Castiglione, required women (amongst no less than 30 such conditions) to be "of a good house", to "have a sweetness of speech & utterance & behaviour towards strangers", "in dancing not to use any lofty or quick tricks", and to "be learned".[8] This will have required a lot of training! Metaphorically, in Florio's text, the music accompanying the dance is the French language they speak aloud with a grace double that of the French writing produced by men. As the rest of his dedication insists, foreign languages such as French and Italian are the means by which English nobility is current abroad, by which "trade or traffike with Strangers" can be safely achieved in England (Montaigne 1603, sig. 2R2r). At the same time, just as there is about to be, in the new Jacobean era, an Englished form of the *mascarade* (the masque or disguising) that will be commensurate with it, so Florio provides an Englished version of the French text that is, as far as possible, commensurate with it in eloquence and status.

The ladies' role, then, is to second the foreign relations important to their male relatives by "entertaining" those relations in the right way. This parallels their activity in reading and interpreting—entertaining—a French Roman Catholic author in both French and English. We are here a long way from the depressing role given to women by humanist educators like Vives (despite his important role in advocating for proper education of women)—a role reduced to a matter of study-

[8] Akkerman and Houben 2014a, 15–16, citing British Library, MS Harley 922, no. 3, fol. 50.

ing piously and jealously guarding their chastity all day long (Vives 2000). The diplomatic and mediatory functions of dances and masques were at least as important as those assigned to texts and books. What were originally called "disguisings" with chivalric themes became, under the influence of Burgundian and French court culture, a regular form of entertainment at Henry VII's and Henry VIII's courts and often involved aristocratic women. The conclusion of the disguising for the 1518 Treaty of Universal Peace with Valois France involved women speaking French and taking French partners into the dance.[9] Throughout the century, the Valois attempted to use court ballets and mascarades to mediate between confessions and factions in France, if in a royal and triumphalist vein (Yates 1959). The English version of this trend was revived in the diplomatic masquing activities of Florio's future patron, Queen Anna of Denmark, at the Jacobean court, which would come to include several of the aristocratic women to whom he dedicated the *Essayes*, and which sought visually to enact the Jacobean peace (McManus 2002).

Only a year or so after the *Essayes*' publication, for example, the Countess of Bedford (who received the dedication to the first book) and another lady invited the Spanish ambassador (and another ambassador) to join her in the dance towards the end of a masque by Florio's associate Samuel Daniel for Queen Anna. In this masque, the messenger of the gods who conducts the goddesses to and from the scene is female: Iris, ambassador for Juno. For diplomatic reasons, the French ambassador was not invited. The twelve goddesses in question included Diana, wearing silver half-moons, Venus, Juno, and Vesta, and they descended not in pairs but in threes, attended by torch-bearers, into a Temple of Peace to present gifts to the Sybil for an altar (a different scenario from Florio's).[10] The countess played either Diana or Vesta, the goddess of religion, who was dressed like a nun; another dedicatee (Lady Penelope Rich, given Florio's second book) played Venus (Cano-Echevarría and Hutchings 2012, 223–257; Akkerman 2014, 287–309).

During the masques themselves, women generally participated by means of dance, costume, and cosmetics, not as speakers of scripted

---

[9] Harris 1997, 215–247, 236–237, citing George Cavendish, *Thomas Wolsey*, ed. Roger Lockyer (London, 1973), 105–106.

[10] Chambers 1923, vol. 3, 280; Wiggins and Richardson 2012–2018, vol. 5 (1603–1608), no. 1416; Daniel 1604.

text (McManus 2002). Florio, then, is using the metaphor of a man leading two silent ladies in a French-style dance for a male teacher who facilitates the graceful speaking of French, and its commensurately graceful interpretation in English, by ladies. Dancing serves as a medium alongside language for the communication of virtues and honour: it too has its rhetoric. In Thomas Elyot's account, to dance is kinetically to describe and learn the various branches of the lead virtue of Prudence; the "braule", in combining two apparently discordant measures of celerity and slowness, enacts "Maturitie" (a word he self-consciously Englishes from Latin for the first time, following, he says, other strange words from Italy and France recently made denizens) or moderation, due speed for those marking the dance (Elyot 1531, sigs. L2v–4v; McGowan 2008, 56).

Let us now follow Florio's lead into the text itself for more clues regarding the culture of mediation in which he is involved and the way he performs this specific text in eloquent and graceful English with and for the ladies at tutorial events, and then for a wider market via the book trade. As we are ushered into the Englished version of the French motion, what do we find on the first page of the first book, dedicated to the Countess of Bedford and her mother? One passage has warranted some extra, lingering steps in the Englished dance that Florio is leading. The first chapter gives examples of the ways in which "by diverse meanes men come unto a like end" (only men, it appears, come unto an end), though towards its own end it also shows that by the same means men come unto different ends—there is no straightforward logic to guarantee the outcomes of mediations. But means to what? To appease the angry or revengeful minds of those who have us at their mercy and who we have offended. Should we show submission to move them to pity, or courage to drive them to admiration? We are led through various examples from history.

Many of these examples involve one of the primary means of conflict in the early modern world: siege warfare. How should the inhabitants of a besieged town or city that has surrendered or been breached gain mercy from the leader of the besieging army? Montaigne translates one story from the Latin preface to Jean Bodin's preamble to his treatise on how to comprehend histories, where it had served as an example of how narratives from history could restore the spirits of great princes like Lorenzo de' Medici (Montaigne 2007, 1330 32n.2). Montaigne removes it from its context there and uses it as an exam-

ple of one "moyen" that successfully gained mercy from a victor. The twelfth-century Holy Roman Emperor Conrad III was not inclined to mercy, whatever offers were made verbally in surrender by 'Guelphe, Duke of Bavaria' at the siege of Weinsberg. He would,

> what vile or base satisfaction soever was offered him, yeelde to no other milder conditions, but only to suffer such Gentlewomen as were with the Duke in the Cittie (their honors safe) to issue the towne afoote, with such things as they could carry about them. They with an unrelenting courage, advised **and resolved** themselves **(neglecting all other riches or jewels)** to carrie their husbands, their children, and the Duke himself, on their backes : The Emperour perceiving *the quaintnes of their devise*, tooke so great pleasure at it, that he wept for joy, and forthwith converted that former inexorable rage, and mortall hatred he bare the Duke, **into so milde a relenting and gentle kindnesse**, that thence forward he entreated both him and his with all *favour and courtesie* (sig. B1r).[11]

> ne voulut condescendre à plus douces conditions, quelques viles et lasches satisfactions qu'on luy offrist, que de permettre seulement aux gentils-femmes qui estoient [assiegees] avec le Duc, de sortir leur honneur sauve, à pied, avec ce qu'elles pourroient emporter sur elles. Elles d'un coeur magnanime, s'adviserent de charger sur leurs espaules leurs maris, leurs enfans, et le Duc mesme. L'Empereur print si grand plaisir à voir la gentillesse de leur courage, qu'il en pleura d'aise, et amortit toute cette aigreur d'inimitié mortelle et capitale qu'il avoit portée contre ce Duc: et dés lors en avant traita humainement luy et les siens (Montaigne 2007, 32).

Florio elsewhere tells us that his translation will in general serve his lady pupils to "repeate in true English what you reade in fine French" (Montaigne 1603, sig. A2r), referring to the oral translation exercises at the heart of his private lessons. When they repeat this passage in English they will find it has been mediated in a particular way: to produce a more balanced, measured prose, like a courtly dance (where Montaigne's style is more trenchant, more abrupt in its pauses and changes); to amplify and dramatize the way the ladies they are reading about have visually performed a "devise" for the end of peacemaking, of converting foe to friend. The devise has the effect of producing "favour and courtesie" in a bitter enemy of a rival political faction even

[11] Italics here indicate a particularly free translation on Florio's part; bold indicates added material.

though, again, the ladies do not speak but simply move and use their bodies. Florio's addition of the neglect of "all other riches or jewels" links the passage to a topos, most influentially transmitted by Vives, that he uses in the dedication of the second book to praise Lady Penelope Rich's care for her offspring (Montaigne 1603, sig. R2r): how the Roman matron Cornelia, asked to show another noble woman her jewels, waited until her sons the Gracchi came home and pointed to them (Vives 2000, 269).

In late Elizabethan English, a "devise" could be: something devised or contrived to bring about some end (a contrivance, a plot); a fancifully conceived design or figure such as an emblematic figure adopted by a particular person or family (usually accompanied by a motto); something devised for dramatic representation, such as a masque played by private persons.[12] They have not acted on the field of battle like the three French gentlemen who, in the chapter's opening example, resisted Edward the Black Prince even after their city was sacked—gaining his admiration and mercy (Montaigne 1603, sig. B1r). They have not been able to speak in the official parley. They have acted secondarily, after the battle is over. They have put on a kind of dumb show for the Emperor, and it has worked. In that show they have demonstrated the virtue of constancy, associated with the power of political persuasion exercised by the female heroines Philoclea and Pamela—identified by contemporary readers with the sisters of the Earl of Essex, Penelope Devereux Rich and Dorothy Devereux Perrot Percy—in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (Crawford 2014, 32–36). Florio mentions the *Arcadia* in the same breath as—without daring to compare it to—the translated *Essayes* in the second dedication, in which he compares Lady Rich to Cornelia (Montaigne 1603, sig. R3r).

All these meanings of "devise" are in play in Florio's usage, but especially the last. He is thinking of a typical court masque or entertainment in which ladies descend from a mock-besieged castle at the end. Florio's clearly pointed moral is that their true goods are their husbands, their children, and above all their higher lord, the Duke: they are "neglecting all other riches or jewels" (which could be the motto of the "devise") to physically carry or transfer the men and offspring whose interests and reputations they always bear as their burden in life. Their mediation is successful; the emperor now treats "him

[12] OED, "device, noun".

and his"—the Duke's whole familia—with the "kindness" the ladies' device has moved in him.

How can we analyse this act of mediation? Adapting the scheme of a recent volume we can think in terms of agents, skills, objects, and sites (Burghartz, Burkart, and Göttler 2016). In this case the agents of mediation are noble ladies, the skills and virtues are those involved in conceiving the trick or stratagem and in acting with constancy, the object is a performative and wordless "devise" before an Emperor, the site is a surrender after a successful siege that is transformed into a courtly space (more emphatically so in Florio's translation) by the foregrounding of women. But the story itself is also an object of mediation that has been translated and used differently across at least three languages and many contexts of application (the original German chronicle, the source of the claim that Lorenzo was restored by the narration, Bodin, Montaigne, Florio). On the first page of Florio's Montaigne, everything is a means to an end—though with uncertain outcome—from the resistance in battle of the French gentlemen to the ladies' "devise" at the siege of Weinsberg and the subsequent narration of that "devise" by various literary figures.

1. The early modern world of mediation

Agents, skills, objects, and sites of mediation were pivotal in the making of the later medieval and early modern world (Burghartz, Burkart, and Göttler 2016). They were integrated in the religio-political and commercial world of conversion and toleration, of trade wars and agreements, of rebellions and hierarchies, of courtliness and violence. There were official and unofficial modes of mediation. Within Europe, for example, the Italian protestant diaspora provided "refugee-diplomats" who could mediate unofficial exchanges across political and confessional borders (Pirillo 2018). Transcontinental Eurasian exchange worked by means of "a global concatenation of communicational acts between broadly like-minded elites" that drew upon a connected courtly culture of objects and gestures, of nobility and honour put together by bridge-building agents from all sides (Biedermann 2019, 110–141 and 120; Subrahmanyam 2012, 30). The "dragomans" or "giovani di lingua" who worked perilously as agents of mediation between Venice and the Ottoman Empire have been well studied (Malcolm 2015, 362–378; Rothman 2021).

Even princes needed the literary and linguistic skills of a mediator, as they could not always rely on the servants and translators available. Prince Hamlet is sent from Denmark to the English court on a mission with two lowly ranked, court fixers (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern) and uses his secretarial skills to change the commission they are carrying so as to be in accord with his own interests (they are to be killed on arrival by the English king rather than Hamlet).[13] In the nested hierarchies of the old regime in early modern Europe, the highest-ranking sovereigns could be positioned as mediators who needed language and other relevant knowledge and skills (whether their own or their servants') and who could be faced with the difficulty of carving out a space for the furtherance of their own as opposed to others' interests. The best example of this in Florio's world is James I and VI, who sought, as *Rex Pacificus*, to mediate peace in his own kingdom and across Europe, partly by means of the written word (Patterson 1997).

In a society whose governance centered on one side on courts and aristocratic households, elite women were also very important mediators. They did not fight in wars, act in privy councils or run administrations (unless they were Queens regnant), but they did act widely in Europe in the sixteenth century though secondary or unofficial political roles at court and in bearing symbolic messages of various kinds in their speech, behaviour, and performances (Akkerman and Birgit 2014b; Strunck 2011; Fletcher, Matheson-Pollock and Paul 2018; Merton 1992). William Latymer's chronicle described how it was Anne Boleyn's "meanes and continuall mediacione" with the King that brought God's Word (the evangelical Protestant version) into the realm, in the form of the right preachers and pastors (Dowling 1990, 59–60). Anna of Denmark, James' Queen consort, will be the main example in what follows.

Europeans depended particularly heavily on non-European mediators in their intercultural relations beyond Eurasia and in their attempts at evangelisation, even if this dependence can be less than visible in some of the surviving sources. Florio translated one source where it was very much visible. On his first venture to the Canadian territories, Jacques Cartier forcibly took two people of the Iroquois communities and then brought them back on his next trip as guide-interpreters (Go-

[13] Shakespeare 2016, act 5, scene 2. This point draws on research undertaken by András Kiséry for TextDiveGlobal.

mez-Géraud 2020, 21–38; Delisle, Otis, and Huard 2019, 9–23). His narrative gave much emphasis to forms and issues of mediation involving Indigenous intermediaries and their relative trustworthiness or otherwise, including a kind of show they "devised" with people disguised as devils in an attempt to prevent Cartier's men undertaking a particular voyage. And it was translated from the Italian version by Florio "to induce our Englishemen, […] to fall to some traffique with the Inhabitants" (Cartier 1580, sigs. H1v-H2r, B1v). Montaigne talked with three Tupi people at Rouen or elsewhere but had, in Florio's words, "so bad an interpreter", one who could not "conceive his imaginations", that he could "drawe no great matter" from the strangers (Montaigne 1603, sig. K5v). The "tangomãos" of west-central Africa were linguistic and commercial intermediaries in the trading corridor between the Rivers of Guinea and the Portuguese colonies just offshore in the Cabo Verde islands. As stabilisers of trade across language worlds they were at one and the same time an indispensable medium and a potential menace. There were also scholarly intermediaries from non-European traditions integrally involved in European studies of other cultures (Cook 2021, 24–62 and 27; Zhiri 2023). The stories of intra-European and extra-European mediators need to be reintegrated.

Agents, skills (including qualities, virtues), objects, and sites of mediation were fundamental to the intellectual and literary world that, as we have already seen above, intersected with the religio-political and commercial world. Initiations and renewals of whole literatures across premodern Eurasia often depended on "interstitial figures, bilingual or trilingual intercultural actors". These figures were the catalysts for new forms of cultural expression who imported "into the target culture their expertise in an outside literary tradition (regularly from a cosmopolitan literature)". Many of them, such as Chaucer in medieval England and Ennius in ancient Rome, were actual translators (Lande and Feeney 2021, 1–17 and 9–10). Not only was Florio himself such an interstitial figure—bringing expertise in the cosmopolitan languages and literatures of Italy, Spain, and France into England—but he saw the authors he was translating in the same terms. He insists in his paratexts that Montaigne hides the traces of his translations and borrowings from outside literatures, just as Roman orators did, and his translation makes them more visible (Montaigne 1603, sig. A5v). When he translates Cartier he gives prominence to Ramusio, the Italian mediator of Cartier's French text (Montini 2023, 187–206). As we

will hear below, he pointed out that even the famous nobleman and soldier Sir Philip Sidney was a translator.

All intellectual activity, then, was couched as a matter of textual mediation that could be both productive and controversial. This was most obvious in the form of educated and upwardly mobile secretaries who used writing to register and mediate the speech and actions of others. Letters-as-*litterae* and letters-as-correspondence mediated between thought and action and between different people and cultures in different locations in space and time, as Francis Bacon insisted (Bacon 2000, 52–53; Boutcher 2013, 155–175). Cognitive and literary-linguistic resources were invented or found, then stored for carefully judged redeployment in different situations. Controversies raged over the role of Saints as intercessors and over the identity of those with authority to interpret the books of Scripture and Nature and to regulate the access they gave to God's order: the various Reformations sought to remove some traditional forms of priestly and saintly intercession—to be replaced, in Florio's case, by female court intercessors (MacCulloch 2003). The Latin Christian Bible, devotional materials, and oral interventions by evangelising priests were mediated for conversionary purposes in languages that first had to be learned, alphabetised, spoken, and written with the help of Indigenous intermediaries.[14]

What did this mean for translation in the conventional sense? It meant it was more than a matter of translating faithfully either word-for-word or sense-for-sense. It was an act of social and intellectual mediation with different ethical and political meanings in different situations. Textual translators of secular matter were mediators of alterity and, unlike modern translators, were not bound to an ethic of silent, invisible domestication of foreign material. The process of translative mediation was more visible than in later periods, if with variations along a range. On the one hand, translators could couch themselves as colonial or piratical appropriators, nationalistically sequestering the loot of other nations. On the other hand, they could welcome, under an ethic of hospitality, foreign presences into their text with ease and grace, either hiding the traces of transformative effort, or giving more signs of their differences from their sources and source authors, of the alterations made and the boundaries encountered (Coldiron 2012,

[14] Brewer-García 2021, 63–100; Durston 2007. Cartier included wordlists from Indigenous languages, also included by Florio.

189–200; Coldiron 2010, 109–17; Sherman 2004, 199–207). In the case of Montaigne, welcomed as an eloquent stranger, Florio displays an ethics of hospitality but incorporates "a jerke of the French Iargon" (sig. A2r) and gives signs in the paratexts of some of the difficulties the stranger's discourse brought.

Different terms are used by scholars to designate the roles informing the processes of late medieval and early modern mediation: go-betweens, intermediaries, interpreters, brokers, intelligencers, informants, refugee-diplomats, pragmatic readers, linguistic agents, and so on.[15] One scholar of late medieval Valois Burgundy has used the term "fixers" (the local intermediaries who in the contemporary world accompany journalists in war zones) for agents of late medieval mediation at work in conflict or contact zones, and "fixer literature" for an understanding of texts as objects of mediation in various sociocultural spheres. They are agents who "perform a range of tasks, acting as interpreters, local informants, guides, brokers, personal assistants […] multifunctional intermediaries with multiple linguistic, social, cultural, and topographical skills and knowledge […] enablers, facilitators […] who negotiate and work through spaces of unintelligibility and […] enable various networks of exchange" (Stahuljak 2024, 1).

This, I am arguing, captures Florio's role better than other designations, even though Florio did not operate in actual war zones (with the possible exception of Ireland). Fixers constitute, in a sense, the secondary support staff for the vital business of mediation of information, texts, commerce, relationships carried out by other, more primary agents, higher up in the hierarchy. This is a way of insisting that premodern interpreting, facilitating, and translating were socially situated and multifaceted activities, whether carried out by a guide or "dragoman" accompanying and protecting a foreign visitor to a city such as Istanbul, or by literary experts redeploying or interpreting texts, or conveying the messages of a written text in another language in a specific context. In Stahuljak's account fixers mainly manage and shape intercultural relations. But the other half of the same picture is the role of fixers in domestic affairs: legal or political secretaries and attendants who managed business and negotiations between different groups within a polity.

---

[15] Höfele and von Koppenfels 2005; Gilbert 2021, 1–23; Pirillo 2018; Sherman 1995; Jardine and Sherman 1993, 102–124; Adams 2019, 63–81.

Fixers are associated in her account with particular qualities. They are not judged for their "neutrality" or "fidelity" in the accurate translation of an original message but for their loyalty and trustworthiness in representing their patrons' or nation's interests and reputations as they go about their business. At the same time, using their skills, they may "insert themselves in the translational process and create a third space" in which they assume independent agency as actors—as Florio does in the paratexts to his works, creating a consistent role and persona for himself across publications (Stahuljak 2024, 6). And scenarios of mediation are ubiquitous in fiction and real life. Within texts, individuals are represented making things happen across and between Mediterranean cultures and languages in the plots of late medieval romances, and between warring parties in historical tales of sieges and their outcomes. In all these cases, the function of fixers is to construct the linguistic and sociocultural grounds of commensuration between different groups—including, again, parties and groups within particular societies or cultures—in a context of potential conflict. Florio is doing exactly this in the context of European court and intellectual culture in his translations and other works. But in our opening passage, as we have seen, he steps back from asserting too stridently his own independence as a Mercury-type figure. His role is to facilitate his female patrons' deification as court goddesses, as potential ladies-in-waiting to the Queen, ladies whose own degree of power and agency in the hierarchy of mediators deserves respect even from strangers.

In learned and recreational literary contexts some interstitial literary and linguistic figures come to gain recognition as "authors" of collectible works, especially at the point when western European poetics is concerned with the construction of national pantheons of authors on the classical model. Some in other contexts are branded as unscholarly and cynical manipulators of information and literature for profit, hucksters whose literary remains are not worthy of collection as an author's oeuvre. Florio's critics, as represented in his own paratexts, and by figures like William Vaughan (see below), appear to have branded him in such a way. The economic or utilitarian context of linguistic and textual mediation—the commodities and benefits that are sought by mediators both on behalf of their patrons and for themselves (as payment or reward)—could be more or less prominent or visible in any given context. But this was unmistakably a market, a polyglot market in linguistic, secretarial, and sociocultural skills, in news and intelligence, in traded

and exchanged goods, in political optics and counsel, in courtly and elite self-fashioning (Gallagher 2019, 54). Another satirical text partly translated by Florio, Boccalini's *Ragguagli di Parnasso*, made this only too clear. In Florio's words, "Politicke merchants" set up a warehouse of goods for sale to courtiers and princes; amongst the bestsellers were "spectacles of admirable and sundry vertues": distorting media that could make vice look like virtue (Boccalini 1626). In the real version of this European market, goods with pragmatic applications mixed with goods for learned recreation or entertainment, including fictions and satires such as Boccalini's—or *Essayes* such as Montaigne's.

Throughout his career, Florio openly promoted study of languages as a source of profit for his patrons and a way of avoiding poverty for himself and his family. He had to generate a living from linguistic services. His earliest extant autograph manuscript was a collection of Italian proverbs he dared to address, as a "base person" ("bassa persona") to Sir Edward Dyer in partial repayment—he hoped—of that part of his debt to him of which poverty was the cause, having been forced to make a living in Oxford teaching Italian to scholars.[16] Promised rewards improved later on. It appears that during his 15 years' service as groom of the privy chamber of Queen Anna he was entitled to receive one hundred pounds per annum. But was this amount in practice paid on an annual basis? In 1608–1609 (at which point 500 pounds would have cumulatively been due, if no payments had been made) James I and VI awarded him a forfeit due from Ireland in the sum of 500 pounds (though the last documentary trace of the award shows it being haggled down by those bound for that sum). Whether or not he received the sums due, he died close to poverty, able to leave his daughter only a wedding ring, in part because his royal pension—awarded in recognition of his services after the Queen's death—had remained unpaid for years.[17]

2. Florio's works of mediation

What was John Florio's place in this pervasive culture of early modern mediation? Can we see his works as an oeuvre of fixer literature?

---

[16] British Library, Additional MS 1524, "Giardino di recreatione", fols. 6r-8r. It is not clear whether the debt is strictly financial or not.

[17] Yates 1934, 246 (citing The National Achives, henceforward TNA, SP 14/107 fol. 93), 293–300 and 314; Boutcher 1997, 39–109 and 83–84.

Yates's biography, which still provides the documentary foundations for all research on Florio, is more interested in literary influence and relationships than in such questions. Two excellent studies of his overall role have begun to pose them (Yates 1934; Pfister 2005, 32–54; Montini 2008, 47–59). Most other studies have focussed on one or other aspect of Florio's oeuvre to characterise him primarily as a translator of Italian linguistic and literary culture to England, or specifically as a translator of Montaigne or of James I, as part of Giordano Bruno's reception in England, as part of a wider culture of language learning, of the Italian Protestant diaspora culture, and so on. In terms of new approaches for Florio studies, this volume rightly proposes linguistics as a fruitful and neglected one. At the same time, a fully integrated re-assessment of relevant archival materials and Florio's printed and manuscript works—something not really undertaken since Yates' study—is merited.

Stahuljak's argument dovetails in important ways with research findings in early modern English studies.[18] Alongside a focus on sites, objects, skills and agents (fixers) we can think of language- and text-based mediation in early modern England as a continuum along three intersecting axes of study, media, and applications: from university studies in arts, philosophy, and professional disciplines including theology, centered on classical and biblical languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin), to more informal study that made greater use of modern languages (including Latin in its guise as a modern language of use) and recent or contemporary authors; from forms of oral and personal tuition and counsel, and bespoke learning materials in manuscript, manuscript letters and their manual and performative conveyance, to printed works dedicated to patrons but available to a wider market of consumers, and participation in the visual, performative, sportive arts; from theoretical and ethical learning for its own sake, for self-improvement and salvation, and study for action in law, politics, diplomacy, to recreational learning for courteous entertainment and moral consolation, for make-believe and satire.

Florio and his works inhabited the space of this continuum, along particular ranges of points on all three intersecting axes. In his studies, he may appear the most informal of scholars. But though he wrote nothing in Latin, and though he professes not to have been able to read

[18] See footnote 15.

Quintilian in the original (Montaigne 1603, sig A5r), his writings and language-teachings are proximate to and continuous with the Latinate world, just as he draws on Latin-literate scholarly assistants working in the same households when he is translating Montaigne (Montaigne 1603, sig. A3r). Florio's method was to teach conversation first and some Italian grammar second, always in dialogue with his elite pupils. But his grammar made reference to Latin and Latinate terms.[19] Latinate tutors who were teaching Latin alongside Italian, or Italian using Latin, as in the case of Catharinus Dulcis, the Savoyard who taught in the same household as Florio and Diodati in the 1590s, used similarly conversational methods. Dulcis borrowed some of his conversational material from Florio.[20] More broadly, Florio was mediating knowledge across many disciplines and arts. His dictionaries, especially the second one, build their lexicon from Italian books treating a whole range of subjects (Yates 1934, 270–273).

Accomplishment in the Italian language, in its noble sounds and measures, is commensurate with accomplishment in dance and music—which brings us to media. Florio's output ranged across all the verbal media listed above and is designed for patrons who, as we have seen, need to perform and communicate socially in non-verbal media such as dance, and to dress and comport themselves in particular ways (Gallagher 2019). And when it comes to applications, Florio inhabited the Tudor world of vernacular and pragmatic humanists or orators who acted as practical mediators of linguistically and textually inscribed knowledge from foreign sources for specific ends in specific circumstances (Boutcher 1991 and 1997). Gabriel Harvey, one of Florio's pupils for Italian and a reader of his dialogues, has emerged in the secondary literature as the best documented scholarly fixer. He read his Livy with Sir Philip Sidney and others in preparation for his embassy of courtesy to the new elected Emperor Rudolf II (Jardine and Grafton 1990, 30–78; Stewart 2000, 167–169). Florio's typical role, as we shall see, was below this level of service to the nobility, but very much continuous with it.

---

[19] Florio 1578, sig. 2E2r, at which point the dialogue starts again in the form of an outline of rules for Englishmen learning Italian, with many references to Latin.

[20] Dulcis 1616. This pedagogical collection (I have used the edition available in the British Library; there were many others) begins with a Latin treatise on the Italian language but its *Dialogi familiares rerum* (138–184) are practical Italian language dialogues, with prayers interspersed, and show heavy borrowings from Florio.

My argument here is twofold. The first argument concerns how we should view the sum of Florio's literary remains, from the translation of Montaigne to the slightest archival trace. His status as a literary and linguistic actor was clearly secondary to authors such as Ben Jonson, who merited collected "Works". Nevertheless, we can attribute a coherent oeuvre of mediation to Florio across all the documents of his social and literary activities. The works in manuscript and print that are claimed and brought into relation by means of his paratexts, whether as more original or more derivative "fruits", are all characterizable as fixer literature supporting the profit both his noble patrons and the wider public could gain from foreign languages and language materials: dialogues, lists of proverbs, dictionaries facilitating participation in affairs, civil conversation and reading across language barriers; translations and editions of modern authors offering texts across the range from the pragmatic and serviceable to the recreational and satirical.

Florio's primary offer as a fixer was verbal and written speech and language, together with the social status, outcomes, and connections they brought. What he saw distinguishing him from other language fixers in the same market, was that he would provide the 'rich coyne' of English gentility and nobility with the "stampe of language", making it viable social currency for trade or traffic with strangers both in England and abroad (Montaigne 1603, sig. 2R2r). By this he primarily meant the stamp of an international and inherently "noble" language such as Italian; a language that could serve as a common measure of elite status across nations and confessions in many countries and courts in a way that English could not beyond Dover. His complementary offer was to Italians and other strangers in England: they could learn to speak English and connect appropriately with members of an English social elite who were in the process of adopting Italianate and other continental styles in language and manners without compromising home values. When he translates Montaigne, then, he is teaching him to speak English, naturalising him as a member of the English social elite equipped with an illustrated, courtly version of the local vernacular. At the same time, he is showing the English social elite how to welcome an eloquent Roman Catholic Frenchman while lightly and appropriately censoring some of his foreign manners relating to religion and women (Montaigne 1603, sig. R2v).

The relevant scenarios are already apparent in his earliest extant works, as he moved between Oxford and London serving elite male

patrons. In the dialogues comprising chapters 26 and 27 of the *Firste Fruites* (1578) the speaker imparting wisdom to an Englishman turns out to be an Italian who has only been in England a year. In the first dialogue they are on their way to church to hear a sermon and once they arrive, to flee idleness before the sermon starts, the Italian visitor offers a philosophical but religiously pious discourse on fortune, a lament on the world's vanity (Florio 1578, sigs. M2r–Q3r). He has learned the language so well by reading in books that his English interlocutor, who returns the following day for more wisdom, does not realise he is Italian. The visitor has had to learn because when he arrived, without any English, he could not find in the first 500 people he met any who spoke proper French or Italian. He has also observed that English gentlemen generally do not have their children brought up to read, write, and speak diverse languages, and that they themselves may think it enough to learn a few words each of Spanish, French, and Italian. This presumably includes his English interlocutor, who claims to speak three or four, but without any profit.

This exchange is a preface for what follows: a long discourse by the visiting Italian on the profit that comes from reading, speaking, writing many languages, culminating in the praise of the language and learned men who have taught the worship of God—"Amen", responds the Englishman, describing the discourse later as a 'sermon' and the speaker as a "Prophet" (Florio 1578, sigs. P2r, Q1r, Q4r). And so it continues, through chapters 28–32 (reasonings on virtues, silence, age, the customs of nations, music, love, and so on). From chapter 36 there are many sayings or dicta offered from the works of the Spanish Catholic bishop Antonio Guevara. Praises of the godly English Queen, of Henry VIII, of the English church in commonwealth are interspersed throughout. Towards the end the Englishman reverts to asking the visiting Italian for a vocabulary list, though he points out many are available in print. We then return to a vocabulary of worship that works across English and Italian versions, for both moderate Protestant and Catholic worshippers, but that is presented as essentially a matter of 'English Rules": "I beleue in the holy ghost, the holy catholike church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sinnes, the resurrection of the body, & the life euerlasting" (Florio 1578, sigs. R1r–v, 2D3r, 2D4r). We finally transition from these into the visiting Italian's necessary rules for Englishmen to learn to read, speak, and write true Italian.

In short, the speaker in the latter half of the dialogue is a learned and pious Italian fixer mediating a religious and wise discourse between English and Italian in a safely English Protestant environment. It certainly appealed as such to one Cambridge scholar who we mentioned earlier as a scholarly fixer to the higher nobility: Gabriel Harvey. Harvey heavily annotated the discourse on the profits of learning and other parts of his copy of the volume with further reflections on such profits and on the cases of various pious, languaged, and learned fixers for the Tudor government, including Stephen Gardiner and Thomas Cromwell (Boutcher 1997, 53–62). A Cambridge-educated country gentleman, John North, also acquired a copy of the dialogues just after their publication in 1578. North was accompanied on travels to Italy by Giacomo Castelvetro in 1575–1577 and kept a journal of his expenses first in English then in Italian both on his travels and for two years after his return. He offers a historical example of the complementary scenario to the Anglicised Italian offering safe wisdom: the safely Italianate Englishman who returns from travels in Italy and on the continent with a cosmopolitan identity expressed in writing, speech, and manners in England: "a multisensory display of cultural hybridity" (Gallagher 2017, 88–131, passim and 123; Schlueter and McCarthy 2021, 41–56).

We can find this second scenario treated more fully in Florio's second set of dialogues, the *Second Frutes* (1591), which are accompanied by a new version of the list of Italian proverbs previously offered in manuscript to Sir Edward Dyer. These dialogues offer a form of Italian, and in parallel a form of commensurate English "proverbial speech", that "graceth a wise meaning" and "argueth a good conceipt". These "materyall, short, and witty speeches" have never, according to Florio, come over the Alps; they are different from the kind of bookish speech you can get out of copies and editions of Guazzo and Castiglione that do travel north from Italy. Even Italians try not to use this proverbial speech when abroad because they know it doesn't normally travel (Florio 1591, sig. A4v).

One of the dialogues displaying this kind of speech on facing Italian and English pages involves Stephen, who has a Paduan servant Losco, and who is visited unsuccessfully by another Paduan he was at university with. One Mr. Peeter then visits in order to ask Stephen, who spent two years in Italy, whether he would command him any service in that country, and how he should behave himself in travelling on the continent so as to "at last returne with some credit" (Florio

1591, sigs. P3r, N2r). Stephen obliges with speech sparkling with Italianate proverbs which, in the Italian version, are marked with asterisks indicating they appear in the list at the end. When asked how Peeter should behave himself towards strangers, for example, he advises caution: "Che chi pratica co lupi, impara a hurlare".[21] After pages and pages of these proverbs, often put into rhyming verse in English, such that they could be recited or even sung, Stephen declares they were given him by his father before he set off to travel. The two men then exchange proverbs about the various cities of Italy, including warnings about the corruption in Rome, "which whilom was Queene, but now is the sillie handmaide of the world". Further dialogues follow with more everyday scenarios for sharing proverbial speech, including one Pandolpho's "Letany" that God deliver him from "fiue Fs, that is females, Fire, Famin, Fryers, and Flood": "From a whore of the stewes, From friers that cloakes use, […] And from women that are ill, good Lord deliver us still" (Florio 1591, sigs. P3r, 2A3r–v).

So in Stephen we have the "Englishman in Italian" offering Peeter the less travelled Englishman a form of cosmopolitan, proverbial, and rhyming speech gathered from his time preparing for then travelling in Italy (Florio 1591, sig. *1r). There is clear evidence that this kind of Italianate speech was considered both marketable and derisible well into the early decades of the seventeenth century. Ben Jonson replicates and satirises Florio's scenario in *Volpone* when he has the equivalent of Stephen, Sir Politic, express astonishment that Peregrine, the equivalent of Peeter, has come forth to Venice without proper rules for travel. Peregine admits, though, to having some "common ones" from a "vulgar Grammar, / Which he that cried Italian to me taught me" (Jonson 2019, 46).

Astonishingly, just such a foldable, pocket manuscript survives (in a private collection) of "Wise politique Italian admonic[i]ons & Counsells" comprising about sixty proverbs in English all copied out from this very conversation between Stephen and Peeter in the *Second Frutes*. Although they are copied only in English, not in the parallel Italian, they are described as bringing politic Italian wisdom with them.[22] This

---

[21] Florio 1591, sigs. N3v and D4v (in the "Giardino") for this proverb.

[22] Dr. Peter Beal, London, Florio MS (see Beal's *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts, 1450-1700*, available at: <https://celm.folger.edu/authors/floriojohn.html>, last accessed 28 October 2025); Boutcher 1997, 62–64.

manuscript must have been carried and used by a real-life Peregrine. Similarly, in a chapter of *The Golden Fleece*, in imitation of Boccalini, William Vaughan creates an episode at Apollo's court in which the maverick Hebrew and Biblical scholar Hugh Broughton complains about the preference given to his inferior Florio. Florio has apparently gained a place as "Deane of the Lady Thaliaes Chappell" (that is, Groom of the Privy Chamber to Queen Anna) by singing a "strange morall Letany", comprising rhyming doggerel with verses shot at random, at court on the Prince's birthday. The true scholar is kept out of the royal chamber by a lightweight pandering to inferior female taste. This "Letany" is a satire of Florio's proverbial Italianate speech from the *Second Frutes*, including lines similar to those cited above: "From those Friers, which Cloakes vse, / As from such that haunt the Stewes, […] Sweet Angell free, deliver me". In Vaughan's fantasy, peddling this kind of proverbial speech has got Florio into the privy chamber of a Queen, where Broughton's biblical scholarship could not (Vaughan 1626, sigs. 2C1v–2v).

The pocket manuscript reminds us that Florio's oeuvre of mediation extends to actions in the oral and social world that left a few, fragmentary traces in archival documents and letters. These point to the actual forms of intercession in which he was involved between strangers and strange languages, environments and his English patrons and their native language and environments. Many of these fragments were located by Yates; some new ones have come to light since. Perhaps they have not attracted much further study because very few of them are authored by Florio or connected in any way with famous English authors—they are mostly about him or addressed to him or derived from his work. Though they raise many unanswered questions, and require further research, it is clear they collectively point to the works of mediation in which Florio was involved throughout his career and the social credit he gained from this. The epistolary traces that happen to survive point to his role in assisting strangers in England, mainly but not only Italian strangers, whether they were visiting officially or unofficially, physically or by means of their works.

In 1583–1585, we find Florio working for a foreign Catholic temporarily resident in England, in his household, as a "noble master" tutor for his daughter and as mediator of his administrative affairs with the English. This was the French ambassador Michel Castelnau, who, besides his many other duties, attended masques and entertainments

at court (Wiggins and Richardson, vol. 2 (1567–1589), nos. 659, 662, 663, 702). Castelnau's Latin testimonial attesting to Florio's role in the ambassadorial household, says that he was "employed in a familiar capacity [*familiaritate*] in the tuition of our daughter Katherine Marie and in the interpretation of languages, and in other honourable administration, in which he bore himself prudently, honestly and faithfully [*prudenter, sincere, et fideliter*] […]".[23] It is important to note that Florio had no role in the ambassadorial household as an official secretary; he was a servant of the household, in private affairs, language-teaching, and the ceremonial and pragmatic business of civil relations. In so serving, he demonstrated the right virtues as a loyal fixer—*prudentia*, *sinceritas*, *fidelitas*. The other documents collected by Yates give us glimpses of how he was used in administration: as a "porteur" of a letter to Walsingham and of news back from Walsingham about the Queen, and on the same occasion of a "charge" to persuade him to discharge one of Castelnau's servants of a trumped-up action. On another occasion Florio is instructed by him to employ "tous vos moyens"—all his means—in assisting another member of his retinue in pursuing business with Walsingham and the gentlemen of the Council (Yates 1934, 69, 71n.1).

We can now put together a trail of three documents relating to Florio's connection with an Italian in London called Alessandro Teregli, partially but not fully recovered by Yates. Their importance is that they show Florio in both London and Cork mediating in various ways between Teregli, who was lodged in the residence of an Italian merchant in London called Gorzi, and not only the ambassador himself, but many members of the social elite in London and the southeast. Teregli was a financial fixer and was most likely the same individual from Lucca who was later in the unofficial diplomatic service of the Spanish monarchy, and in contact with Antonio Pérez in 1609 (Hugon 2004, 388). What must be the first document, chronologically, is a miscalendered and misdated letter (not attributed to Teregli by Yates) sent directly by Teregli from Canterbury to Florio on the 8th September (the year is not given) in his room in the French ambassador's house in London—which means it must relate to 1583–1585. Giacomo or Giacopo Castelvetro, who was in London in these years, had assigned

[23] Yates 1934, 61–2n.2, citing Michel de Castelnau, Lord of Mauvissière, 28 Sept. 1585, TNA SP 78 / 14, fols. 186–87. I take "familiaritate" to mean "as part of the familia", as a household servant.

Florio a letter of Teregli's for translation into English. Despite claiming to have limited capacity in that language Teregli comments on the ways in which, by adding a few words, Florio has better explained and completed or perfected the letter, as Castelvetro himself is bound to confirm. He then makes much play with an Italian proverb Florio has used to excuse the inadequacy of his effort and asks him to add to the letter a translation of a postscript he is now sending him (Yates 1934, 76–78, citing TNA SP 14/23, no. 14).

The second document (not until now described or connected to Florio) is a courtesy letter of 17 October 1585 from Teregli in London to Castelnau in Paris, sent after the latter's departure at the end of his embassy. Teregli baldly states that "Florio" has given him the packet he has attached, consisting of the news he has gathered after the ambassador's departure.[24] It tallies with a later letter of 30 November 1585, transcribed by Yates, in which Castelnau instructs him often to send news of all that is going on and to consign letters for him to "seigneur Allexandre au logis du Sgr de Gozi sic"—"Allexandre" can now be identified as Teregli, resident at Gorzi's lodgings (Yates 1934, 73n.1). This is the same letter in which Castelnau instructs Florio to convey courtesies—not only from himself but from his wife and his daughter—to not only male members of the Privy Council, but also their female relations, and other important female aristocrats such as the Countess of Sussex. There are then two further letters from Teregli to Castelnau in Paris, in the same archival bundle, but they involve Gorzi's involvement in Castelnau's financial affairs and make no mention of Florio.[25]

The third and most interesting document is a letter from Teregli in London to Florio in Cork of 26 May 1587. He apologies that Florio has sent him three letters without reply and thanks him for the courtesy shown him in London by contacts of Florio's who did not even know him—including a "Guglmo Barnes" son of the "Governatore" of this city (probably William Barne, son of George Barne, the Mayor of Lon-

---

[24] Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF), Département des Manuscrits, Cinq cents de Colbert MS 472, p. 159 (this manuscript is paginated recto and verso): "Florio mi ha dato l'alligato plico, per farli tenere, per il qual[ ] v.s. Ill.ma potra intendere le Nuove, che di qua si sono dette, esparse dapoi la sua partita".

[25] BNF, Cinq cents de Colbert MS 472, pp. 181–184 (due to the bleeding through of ink this is barely legible in parts but the date may be 1 December 1585), 197–200 (6 January 1586, mentioning a Lelio Teregli and concerning financial matters).

don at the time). He appears to reveal Florio is enjoying good fortune in Cork with one "sr [T]illo". There is news of Francis Drake and he notes he has carried out all Florio's "raComandat[ioni]" with those friends assigned to him, apart from Giacomo Castelvetro and another.[26]

Aside from this sequence in the 1580s, very little documentation survives of Florio's daily activities of letter conveyance, translation, and courtesy until the period in which he enters into service as groom of the privy chamber to Queen Anna. He is caught liaising with the Venetian secretary sent to England to recover pirated goods in 1603, Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli (Boutcher 1997, 76–78). After Elizabeth's death, the presence of Scaramelli was turned by the new, Jacobean regime into an opportunity to show that England was no longer insular and piratical but open to negotiations with moderate Catholic powers and ready to receive ambassadors. Florio may already have been involved in Scaramelli's meetings with Queen Anna and James' children that year, which were carefully orchestrated and which are very relevant to our theme.

On one occasion the Lord Chamberlain conducts Scaramelli into her presence after a conversation with the King in French and the presentation of a memorandum about the act of piracy he was sent to seek redress for. Scaramelli expresses Venice's great esteem for Queen Anna, having again been told to speak in French as she did not know a word of Italian. She makes a gesture as if to laugh because, in Scaramelli's interpretation, she thinks he is alluding to her Catholicism. This is one piece of evidence in favour of the notion that the Queen's reputation as a Catholic was strategically used in relations with Catholic powers to complement James' courting of Protestant powers, in the name of an ecumenical politics. Scaramelli then recounts a visit to the Queen's children at Oatlands Palace, with their governors, where he spoke to Prince Henry by means of an interpreter about his courtly education and exercises, before he is conducted to the apartment of the Princess Elizabeth, who is accompanied by "Damigelle". The princes say they want to "learn our tongue" ("imparar la nostra fauella") and thank him, possibly in an Italian phrase that they had been taught, for his service.[27]

---

[26] TNA, SP 46/125, fols 163–64; Boutcher 1997, 72–73. I have not been able to find out who "[T]illo" was—possibly an Italianised version of the English name Till or Tyll. For George and William Barne see <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org> (last accessed 28 October 2025).

[27] Archivio di Stato (Venezia), Senato/Dispacci/Inghilterra, no. 37, fols. 189r–191v

Other documents show Florio liaising with Venetian and Tuscan ambassadors and associated literati, including one Antimo Galli, associated with Ottaviano Lotti (the Tuscan Grand Duke's resident). Galli published a sonnet to Florio that has not attracted much comment—perhaps because it reveals nothing about Florio himself. The same volume includes tributes to Elizabeth Talbot-Grey's co-dedicatee Lady Mary Neville, including description of her participation in a court masque, and another poem to her.[28] In many of these documents there is often mention of Jane Drummond, the Catholic lady-in-waiting to Queen Anna. In some of them, Florio's status and skills as a groom at court are foregrounded and recognised by visiting strangers. In a Lotti dispatch of August 12, 1611, he describes Florio's duties as groom as a matter of teaching Italian to the Queen all day, hearing her conversation on all subjects and writing her more "secret" letters. He even reports a conversation between Florio and the Princess about her becoming a Queen to an absolute Prince one day.[29] This is distinct from but related to what her official secretariat for foreign relations and correspondence was doing, such as writing her more public and official letters. William Fowler, like Florio, was employed for his knowledge of specific foreign languages and environments (Florence and Venice), but was, for example, writing diplomatic letters in Latin.[30]

In almost all these cases, Florio is dealing with Catholics of one or other persuasion—not only the Queen herself and ladies in her entourage such as Jane Drummond but foreign Catholics. In one case, Florio receives a letter from a Roman Catholic priest who has been expelled from the country by the Archbishop of Canterbury so precipitously he did not have time to thank Florio for all the courtesies he had shown him. Once in Rome he will continue to celebrate his name. He also

("Sua M.tà fece qui bocca da rider, stimando, come credo, che ciò alludesse al suo esser Cat.ca"). This dispatch is calendared in *Calendar of State Papers Venetian*, vol. IX, 16031607, ed. Horatio Brown, pp. 71–72, but the entry leaves out most of the detail of the encounter with the Queen and her children.

28 Galli 1609, sig. D2r. For details see Villani 2010, 91–120 and 96–99, where another poem to Florio by Francesco Perreto in a collection of 1616 is cited.

29 Yates 1934, 250–51, citing Archivio di Stato (Firenze), Archivio Mediceo, filza 4189 (containing letters from Ottaviano Lotti, 26 March 1609 to March 16, 1612). This document is now calendared online in the Medici Interactive Archive at <https://mia.medici.org>.

30 On Queen Anna's official secretariat for foreign relations, related to but distinct from the kind of services Florio offered as groom of the privy chamber, see Steenson 2024, 206–226.

vindicates himself, saying he had done nothing in England unworthy of his religion and that he could not hide his talent and vocation as a priest. He hopes to see the Queen's Catholic lady, Jane Drummond, in Paradise and will never stop saying Mass for her Majesty the Queen. He recommends an Italian gentleman coming to England for introduction to Jane Drummond. He will write again from France and awaits Florio's commands.[31] Aderse may well have been one of the Roman Catholic priests concealed as servants of Jane Drummond to be able to offer mass to the Queen. One such priest who had been at her court for more than two years was expelled around this time (Meikle and Payne 2013, 45–69 and 64–65). We cannot be sure how Florio received this letter but it is a strong indication that this son of a Protestant refugee expelled from Roman Catholic Italy for his religion was an intermediary for Italian Roman Catholics expelled from Protestant England for their religion.

3. Hierarchy, gender, religion

The second argument concerns the intersecting ways in which the continuum of study- or language-based mediation outlined above as the context for Florio's works was shaped not only by language and nation or race but by hierarchy, gender, and religion. Florio was first and foremost a gentleman servant, with a relatively lowly social status in the world of the higher court nobility. He was a secondary fixer rather than a primary mediator—his role was to serve his patrons' actions and mediations while finding what space he could for his own profile and initiatives. We have seen that in one of the 1603 dedications he hesitatingly describes himself as resembling the god of mediators, Mercury, before retreating from the claim in several important respects. In the dedication to the 1598 dictionary Florio had been still more humble in describing the service that his proxy, the dictionary itself, could do for noble dedicatees who already knew most of the Italian words that he glossed in the wordlist he was offering: "The retainer doth some service, that now and then but holds your Honors styrrop, or lendes a hande over a stile, or opens a gappe for easier passage, or holds a torch in a darke waie : enough to weare your Honors cloth" (Florio 1598,

[31] TNA, SP 85/4, fol. 114 (D. Pietro Aderse to Giovanni Florio, 8 May 1614); Boutcher 1997, 82–83.

sig. a4v). He compares his occasional provision of the definition of a word his patron does not know to a retained servant in livery occasionally intervening to assist the passage of an aristocrat on horse or on foot on a journey. The hierarchy of mediation extends from this lowly function right up to more royal and divine intercessions.

But he did not only serve in the retinues of the higher nobility; he worked for higher fixers. We find him mediating Italian language texts for Oxford-educated promoters of English colonialism in North America in the 1580s and the 1620s, though in very different scenarios (Yates 1934, 55–60, and 301–309). In both cases, he is a secondary translator and facilitator for primary, pragmatic fixers. In the first case, it seems clear Richard Hakluyt, a holder of several secretarial and clerical offices at various times, has commissioned the translation of the account of Jacques Cartier's two Canadian voyages from Florio, as the first gambit in his lifelong bid to encourage English navigations on the model of other nations (Montini 2023). In the second case, William Vaughan puts together a translation of parts of Traiano Boccalini's oeuvre to promote English ventures in Newfoundland, in which Vaughan had personally invested, along with anti-Spanish, anti-Habsburg politics in general. This includes translations of some of Boccalini's *Ragguagli* by Florio. Here, though, it is less clear that they were commissioned by Vaughan; Vaughan may have purchased them from Florio's widow after his death (Marquardt 1951, 1–19).

Hierarchy and gender intersected in shaping this culture of mediation. We noted above that Florio was serving as tutor to a young noblewoman in the early 1580s (the French ambassador's daughter). Nearly forty years later, in 1621, he would still be offering to take the daughter of Sir Lionel Cranfield as his scholar, if only he would intervene to get his pension paid (Yates 1934, 297). Elite women were fully integrated in the conduct of the unofficial political and cultural business that went on in the world of the higher nobility, which was centered on the elite household or family, whether it was that of an ambassador, a state minister, an aristocrat, or a monarch. The gender of the patron you were most directly serving made a difference. There were primary, male and secondary, female modes and spaces of mediation and related study, sometimes with harder, sometimes with more permeable boundaries between them. We have already encountered documents that concern this boundary in one way or another (the Venetian dispatch which relates encounters with James

I and with his Queen and children; Hugh Broughton's fictionalized protest about Florio).

The example offered by Castelnau's daughter notwithstanding, Florio started his career hoping to serve mainly as a language merchant for the English gentleman or nobleman; women were only present as a topic for male conversation in his dialogues of 1578 and 1591. It was from 1598, through the intercession of Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, that he moved decisively into the spaces of female mediation (see the section below). By whatever means, he gained many more significant female pupils. In 1604, along (at this or a later date) with his associate Samuel Daniel, he becomes a male groom in the privy chamber of a queen consort, Queen Anna. The dedication of the three books of the *Essayes* to six aristocratic women both prepares for and prophesies this elevation: he is working with women who will soon be stepping forth as performers in masques and powerful social mediators at the court of Queen Anna.

The ways in which hierarchy and gender intersect in shaping cultures of mediation is clear in the famous remarks he makes in the paratexts to the *Essayes* about translation as a secondary or female form of mediation, while at the same time apologising for such forms as continuous or contiguous with male or primary forms of agency. He uses mythological scenarios of unnatural male and female births and Giordano Bruno's claim that all knowledge is the offspring of translation (Montaigne 1603, sig. A5r) to probe the distinction between male originality and female translationality (Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson 2013, 47–49; Brown 2022, 19–34).[32] He also states that Sir Philip Sidney himself was a secondary mediator, for he undertook not only original inventions like the *Arcadia* (which, in any case, Florio might have added, was drawn or collected out of classical and continental models) but translations of Du Bartas and Du Plessis (Montaigne 1603, sig. R3r).

At the same time, he acknowledges that in the translation of Montaigne, relative to what Sidney was doing, "we much more meanly do in meaner works" (Montaigne 1603, sig. R3r). The metaphor he uses when petitioning in this way for recognition of his own and his female clients' places in the whole hierarchy of sociocultural mediation is telling: "where our Protonotaries doe holde the chaire, let us poore

[32] On the coinage of "translationality" as a critical term that usefully contrasts with and contests the primacy of literary "originality" see Reynolds 2024, 19–39.

Secondaries not be thrust out of doors" (Montaigne 1603, sig. R3r). He is thinking of the power held by official, principal secretaries—whether in Byzantium, the Roman Catholic Church, or in Elizabethan courts and government—in directly mediating in writing and actions the authority of the highest monarchs, spiritual patriarchs, and judges.[33] His own and his female clients' mediations are secondary and inferior relative to these, they are less pragmatic and powerful, but they are also complementary and vital to them.

In other words, although he is not, as Hilary Brown and others have shown, simply reinforcing a supposed commonplace that translation itself is essentially female and secondary, he is demonstrating status anxiety on his own and his female patrons' behalf. He is concerned with the gendered hierarchy of literary, linguistic, and sociocultural agents: the difference between male prothonotaries from Walsingham and Cecil to Sidney and Bruno, on the one hand, and female or secondary facilitators and mediators from his female dedicatees to himself and Samuel Daniel, on the other. Florio's Montaigne aims safely to legitimise and authorise the "Secondaries" to prothonotaries within a hierarchy of male and female, Latinate and vernacular-bound mediators that goes right up to the monarch. At one and the same time, those higher up in the hierarchy are encouraged in their own mediations to rely as little as possible on potentially untrustworthy fixers such as a mere "trouchman" (Montaigne 1603, sig. 2r2v) and enjoined to employ dependable fixers and mediators like Florio and his ladies.

Religion, finally, intersected both with hierarchy and gender in shaping the culture of mediation in important ways. Apart from passing remarks about Montaigne's Roman Catholicism (reference is made to his "Paris preacher"; Montaigne 1603, sig. R2v) the most obvious form of religion on display in Florio's Montaigne is the consecration of altars to court ladies who are intercessors. All forms of study in this period were reshaped by the confessionalization of learning and by corresponding attempts to build cross-confessional bridges. Florio's much-discussed identity as a safe, literary-linguistic, Anglo-Italian mediator (an Englishman at heart with Italian speech and manners) is indissociable from his identity as a son of a confessional migrant and a Protestant cross-confessional mediator (Wyatt 2005). He was a Protestant at heart who could safely "entertain" or serve foreign

[33] OED, "prothonotary, noun".

Catholics who were not militant Papists threatening the sovereignty of monarchs, especially during the Short Peace of 1598–1618. This is what reading, studying, and speaking aloud the text of a French Roman Catholic (Montaigne) with his patrons meant in 1603.

Florio's activities as a language merchant were shaped, in particular, by his relationship to the Italian Protestant diaspora that in the first, smaller generation of broadly evangelical religious exiles included his father Michelangelo Florio.[34] It is worth comparing him in this respect to other second and third generation exiles and offshoots of the larger diaspora (from the 1560s), such as that of his acquaintance Giacomo Castelvetro and associate Theodore Diodati, as to other Italians who obtained secure positions at court without playing the religious refugee card, such as Giovanni Battista Castiglione.[35] Michelangelo was born of baptised Italian Jews, lived his early life as a Franciscan called Paolo Antonio, converted to evangelical Protestantism, was imprisoned and tortured by the Papacy, sought to evangelise others, translated texts from Latin, and became a minister in the Italian church in London until he had to abandon post due to a sex scandal (probably involving John's mother). Even when he settled as pastor in Soglio in Switzerland, after exile from Marian England, he was caught up in further theological controversy.[36]

At first glance, his son John's life might be considered the polar opposite: he never translated from or wrote texts in Latin, never meddled with theology or religious controversy or succumbed to scandal, travelled beyond southeast England rarely (as far as we know), lived as an English gentleman servant with children who were baptised in an English parish church. But we have already seen that he maintained and made a living from Italian language culture (as well as cancelleresca script) and translations in ways that did continue his father's legacy—just as other second generation Italian migrants in England did. His father's legacy included a manuscript of Italian language instruction for the protestant figurehead Lady Jane Grey, another copy

---

[34] Stefano Villani's scholarship and his contribution to this volume are fundamental for this topic.

[35] See the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB) for «Castiglione, Giovanni Battista [alias John Baptist Castillion] (c. 1515–1598)».

[36] What follows in the next two paragraphs draws on Yates and on Villani 2017, 114–136 and 119–131.

for her brother-in-law Henry Herbert, earl of Pembroke (married to Lady Jane's sister), and an Italian version of Ponet's catechism for her father-in-law the Duke of Northumberland; later, also, a translation into Italian of Agricola's metallurgical treatise for Elizabeth I.

John inherits this aristocratic familial scenario of language instruction and translation, but without its radically Reformed, Latinate-theological aspect. Lady Jane Grey was being prepared as the female spearhead of a counter-Catholic and Protestant revolution and had been brought up with classical and biblical language skills. Michelangelo's dedication to her of his "Regole" of Tuscan, in which he refers to his lowly position in the familia of her father the Duke of Suffolk, is the direct precursor to Florio's dedications to his *Essayes*, in which he addresses his female pupils but refers reverently to their fathers and other male relatives, in whose houses he is entertained—houses, though, that now ranged more across the whole spectrum from Catholic-leaning to Reformed-leaning. John's first dedication printed in England was to a Dudley and mentioned his father's service to another Dudley.

Likewise, Michelangelo's remark about why languages are valuable to her in the dedication of an Italian translation to Elizabeth I—which might be considered a precursor for John's Italian translation for James I—is a precursor for similar statements made in many of Florio's dedications, especially those to the translation of Montaigne: that the Queen has mastered languages including Italian so as to be able to comprehend and listen to diverse nations without the mediation of an interpreter who may deceive her (Yates 1934, 23n1). This translation by Michelangelo is a classic piece of fixer literature—advertising the practical knowledge (metallurgical, in this case) available via Italian as an intermediary language of cultivation, and the translator as a fixer who won't deceive the Queen.

But fixing in Michelangelo's generation and beyond could also be religio-political and theological. Some of Florio's contemporaries in the second generation of the Italian diaspora pursued scholarship in the anti-Catholic cause or other theological doctrines on the broadly Protestant and evangelical spectrum. Giacomo Castelvetro was about seven years older than Florio and was old enough to have to flee himself from Modena in 1564 to Geneva. Florio followed in his tracks in some respects. Giacomo translated Charles V's instructions for his son Philip II into Italian for James VI of Scotland in the early 1590s and Florio mentions those instructions in his dedication to James I of England

of an Italian translation of his instructions for his own son (the *Basilikon Doron*, see below). Giacomo appears to have served Anna of Denmark as an Italian language tutor in Copenhagen, and John became her reader in Italian in 1604. But although they both arrived in London in the 1570s and were as we have seen part of the same network in the 1580s, Giacomo's "confessional mobility" was lifelong. He carried theological commitments as an Erastian and a counter-Papist, counter-Habsburg intelligencer all his life in various centres, running into trouble as such in Venice late in his career. He travelled with at least one English client to Venice, whereas Florio did not undertake such work on the road and was not confessionally mobile as an adult.[37]

Somewhat less mobile, and more similar to Florio in some respects, were two other second generation migrants: his associate Theodore Diodati and Giovanni Aureli. The Diodatis were confessional exiles from Lucca and settled in Geneva, along with other members of merchant families exiled from Lucca on religious grounds, taking their Reformed Italianate culture with them to that city. Some of the Diodatis became theologians in Geneva. But Theodore, after matriculating in medicine at Leiden, joined one of the households Florio was serving in England in 1598 as tutor to the eldest son, which led to his offering assistance as a learned advisor on the Montaigne translation. He became a successful physician to the English elite, including royalty. Giovanni Aureli was, like Florio, the son of a minister of the Italian reformed church in London and, besides becoming a successful lawyer in England, also prepared Italian language and literary materials in manuscript for at least one client, a merchant who became an intelligencer for Cromwell.[38]

Especially in its second and third generations, then, the Italian Protestant diaspora harboured a diverse array of religious positions, applications of knowledge, and career outcomes.[39] But they all took with them and utilised or advertised Italian language culture in their

---

[37] On Castelvetro, besides the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, see Butler 1950, 1–42; Pirillo 2018, 119–141 and 153–162; Fowler 1914–1940, vol. 3, cxii–cxiv, cxxvi–cxxxi; Toftgaard 2014, 367–393. On "confessional mobility" (developed in relation to English Catholics on the continent, but applicable to Italian Protestants beyond the Alps) see Corens 2019.

[38] ODNB, «Diodati, Theodore (1573–1651)»; Villani 2021, 159–171; Grell 2011—on the Diodatis.

[39] See Pirillo 2025, 15–32, on the diversity inherent in religious diasporas in this period.

communities as an intercultural, international language of mediation in various spheres of knowledge, practice, and commerce. Some members continued to live out the shared experience of persecution and exodus as Reformed theologians and members of an international Calvinist network in Geneva into the mid seventeenth century; others carried different religious positions with them—such as Castelvetro's Erastianism; still others settled and assimilated in their host communities without too visibly perpetuating the experience and legacy of the first generation (Grell 2011; Pirillo 2018). The latter is the category into which Florio fell.

Before zooming in on Florio's later career and its religio-political context, we can summarise what unites Florio's oeuvre across archival, manuscript and printed sources. It is the spectrum of activities associated above with the fixer working for a patron: the management, in the interests of patrons, of inter- and intra-cultural relations that require elite linguistic and social skills, whether or not backed up by formal study. Florio's primary business was the former kind of relations: trade or traffic with strangers, whether he was directly involved in such trade or traffic himself, as a gentleman servant or usher, as a translator and reader of foreign books, or whether he was equipping his noble patrons and other customers with the linguistic and social skills necessary for their own involvement at a higher level—precisely so that their reliance on lowly and unreliable fixers or "trouchmen" was kept under control. He was always concerned with "the performance of a trustworthy mediation" (Gilbert 2021, 12). He was a safe, "local", English interpreter and teacher—rather than an internationally itinerant, confessionally mobile, and therefore more suspect agent—who would decrease his patrons' and customers' reliance on potentially untrustworthy interpreters and guides whose communications might not be in their interests.

The books authored by Florio himself—dialogues, dictionaries, translations—served not only as purveyors through the book trade of sociolinguistic competences to a wider market of consumers including urban merchants and adventurers, but also as indexes and advertisements of the whole culture of mediation that was his business. The greatest of these indexes, as we have already begun to suggest, was his version of Montaigne's *Essais*. But we have also seen that his Cartier-Ramusio was itself a highly complex index of the culture of late Renaissance mediation of travel-derived knowledge for practical applications. His other

translations—the newsletter from Rome (London, 1585), the Italian version of James' *Basilikon Doron*, the English Boccalini (a satire on scholars' mediation of their learning, intelligence, and religio-political perspectives to court-centered powers)—also fell into the same category of fixer literature that facilitated the safe reception both of strangers and strange languages, news, books in England and of English-based elites and their status, interests, and communications by strangers and strange cultures abroad, whether in Venice or the New World.

Florio's performances of trustworthy mediations could involve a whole range of skills and activities on his own, his patrons' and his customers' parts: administration and the carrying of messages and conveyancing of letters in a reliable manner; learning and use of modern foreign languages and associated sociocultural competences both for reading in continental or foreign-language books and for oral conversation; provision of specific oral phrases and formulae (proverbs, counsels) useful in such conversation; communication of intelligence and news; translations of documents for intelligence and diplomacy, and of books for English patrons and consumers; involvement in the editing and production of books via the printed books trade; letters and other social forms of "correspondence" and "recommendation"—in conjunction with all kinds of facilitation of courteous exchanges that consolidate social connections; negotiation of the different customs in different places and languages; hospitality and guidance for noble strangers seeking safe passage in England; provision of the knowledge and culture necessary for English elite visitors learning to pass or seeking safe passage in foreign countries, whether in Europe for educational and diplomatic travel, or on colonial and commercial ventures both within Europe and beyond in the Americas.

4. The political context of Florio's career before and during the Short Peace (1598–1618)

From the late 1550s, early 1560s confessional fault lines and religio-political conflict were firmly embedded alongside dynastic conflict in much of western Europe. The French wars of religion and the Eighty Years' War got underway, and the monarchy of England veered wildly from one confessional allegiance to another. Between 1569 and 1572 a new, divided Europe was born (Elliott 1969; MacCulloch 2003, 317–346). But even during the early decades of Florio's career (the 1570s and

1580s), religio-political boundaries did not constitute an iron curtain. There were changing alliances and conflicts, alternations of commerce and piracy, of confessional evangelism and flexibility, of domestic and international forms of realpolitik, while scholarly and literary exchange persisted in many cases across confessional boundaries. Despite the absence of official diplomatic representation, England and Venice continued to communicate via intermediaries and Catholic France consistently maintained resident ambassadors in Protestant England—one of whom, we have seen, employed Florio as a household servant.[40]

The competition was on for the skills and knowledge that the northern European powers wanted from Iberian and Venetian sources and intermediaries to break their monopolies in the New World and the Mediterranean—the context of the translation of Cartier via Ramusio commissioned by Hakluyt from Florio. The need to accommodate resident Catholic minorities and elite Catholic visitors in Protestant countries, and vice-versa, continued in a world in which there would, by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, be enterprises to re-Catholicise England and to Anglicanise Venice (see Villani 2022; Davies 2022, 334–347). Both alliances for war and piracy and agreements for peace and trade-offs had to be constructed using unofficial and official channels, strategies both of cultural and of document-based diplomacy. Female monarchs, and with them female courtiers and their gendered modes of intercession, had come to prominence across the continent at least from the era of the "Ladies' Peace" (1529) on (Fletcher, Matheson-Pollock, and Paul 2018). All this made mediators and skills in mediation at one and the same time both vital and suspect, both male and female, both mono- and cross-confessional.

One of the leading noble mediators in Protestant international politics and in cultural diplomacy in this period, as well as in New World and Irish colonial ventures, was Sir Philip Sidney, who we have heard was acknowledged by Florio as a literary archetype or prothonotary in the dedication to the second book of the *Essayes*, where Florio hesitantly compares Montaigne's work to the *Arcadia*. Sidney was constructing a role for himself as a leader of the Protestant alliance in Europe (in which cause he died fighting) while cultivating relations with and entertaining Catholic dignitaries both abroad and at home. He was known across the continent for his ability in letters and language and

[40] See Pirillo 2018 on clandestine Anglo-Venetian relations.

his grace in social situations. He was high up in the hierarchy of mediators, though he was still subject to restrictive royal and family instructions, and still limited in the autonomy he could claim. He received two dedications of treatises that advertised him as the model of the perfect ambassador, and was particularly involved in Anglo-Imperial, Anglo-Dutch, and Anglo-French cultural and political exchanges. He acted on behalf of more powerful figures like the Queen and his uncle the Earl of Leicester while attempting to form his own brief or interpret theirs with latitude (Stewart 2000, passim; Wilson-Lee 2015, 134).

Sidney was also a translator from French, as Florio pointed out, and author of vernacular entertainments and recreations, in all of which literary activity his sister and her household, and other ladies including Lady Penelope Rich, were participants. This continued after his death in 1586. Mary Sidney Herbert was still intervening in Anglo-French cultural relations in the summer of 1592, when Queen Elizabeth I stayed with her on a progress. At the same moment, with an eye also on the French ambassador in England, she printed two translations from the French (one a Huguenot, one a Catholic text) that constituted a "public representation of Anglo-French *rapprochement*". These translations were "acts of embassy and of hospitality". A translation, as Margaret Tyler had written in 1578, was a way of "giving entertainment to a straunger"; the female host is "facilitator of male sociability and culture" (Wilson-Lee 2015, 135 and 132–133). These and other translations associated with the Sidneys were direct precedents, invoked by Florio himself, for the kind of diplomatic mediation, hosted by six female dedicatees, made by Florio's Montaigne in 1603.

But entertainment and employment of strangers could also be a vexed business, attracting much suspicion. At one end of the scale, obscure servants with the right language and literary skills had to be acquired and licensed. Cobham conveyed information about Castelvetro to Walsingham in 1580 then later, in the Tower of London, had to seek permission from Cecil for one "Cipriano" to read Spanish and Latin with him there, and in the process produce evidence of his honesty and credibility. In February 1607/08 even the father of Lady Elizabeth Talbot-Grey (with whom we started), the Earl of Shrewsbury, had to follow up with Cecil about whether he had his permission to employ a certain Italian, a "monsignor", in his household.[41] We have seen that

[41] Fowler 1914–1940, vol. 3, cxii–cxiii; Ungerer 1974, vol. 2, no. 516; Orrell 1979, 13–

one of Queen Anna's obscure Roman Catholic priests was expelled by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

At the other end of the scale, the visits of famous or infamous intellectuals could become anything from awkward to scandalous. During Giordano Bruno's two-year stay (1583–1585) at the French embassy in London, he visited Oxford with the ambassador and the Polish prince Laski, who was hosted by Leicester and Sidney. But he was rebuffed by the Oxford intellectual establishment as a charlatan and a self-promoting foreigner. Florio was employed in the same embassy at the same time and was named in one copy of Bruno's fictional dialogues (composed in England) facilitating his welcome as a non-militant Catholic into English elite society. The dialogues composed in England, besides their philosophical content, enacted Bruno's itinerary as a stranger into English elite society, including, in Florio's words, the company of the "Goddesses […] of Celestiall substance" (Montaigne 1603, sig. R2v) or noblewomen he celebrated. Florio clearly played some lowly part in this "reception", where Philip Sidney and his female associates may have played a larger part. But at least one historian (Feingold) has questioned whether it had any real substance or depth at all to it (Stewart 2000, 253–254; Feingold 2004, 329–346; Provvidera 2017, 137–156; Gatti 2017, 136–149). Either way, Bruno's reception in England, associated by Florio with the reception of Montaigne, and with the figures of Sidney and associated English ladies, was less successful and durable in the end than the Frenchman's.

Antonio Pérez, onetime principal secretary to Philip II, after imprisonment in Spain in disgrace, escaped abroad to become a hawker of anti-Spanish, anti-absolutist intelligence and counsel, and came to court in England several times in the 1590s. According to Camden's *Annales*, it was the disgraced and executed Earl of Essex who "entertained" Pérez in England and benefitted from his secret intelligence and other skills, not the Queen and Lord Burghley. But the documents show otherwise. Essex was made posthumously a scapegoat after it became politically expedient to deny any hand in bringing the Roman Catholic Pérez to Protestant England and "entertaining" him for the knowledge and counsel he might offer. The documents also show that Pérez's epistolary and courtly relations with ladies in Essex's circle, in-

23, 14, citing Historical Manuscripts Commission, Salisbury Papers, Pt. 20, London, 1968, p. 96, letter dated Mar. 1, 1607/8.

cluding Penelope Rich (one of Florio's dedicatees), were important to that entertainment (Ungerer 1974, vol. 1, 1–3, 69–73, 79–82 and 87–92). Florio would later translate Boccalini's satirical take on the scandal caused by Pérez. The ex-secretary tries to present his "Relations" to Apollo at his court, only to see them rejected and "burnt in the publike & chiefe Market-place" as a lesson to all secretaries who would reveal the secrets of their masters (Boccalini 1626, sig. I4r-v). Florio's Montaigne, again, had aimed by contrast to show how to bring a Catholic stranger with useful or entertaining skills into England and his book into English without causing any scandal.

A late sixteenth-century sea-change in the environment for trade and traffic with strangers provided the conditions for this demonstration. From the perspective of England and the major western European powers, diplomacy began to claim some achievements that were at least partly and temporarily built on successful forms of confessional flexibility and ecumenicism in internal and external relations. Spain made peace with France (which lasted until 1635), then with the newly united Britain. The period from 1598 to 1618, between the Edict of Nantes and the Treaty of Vervins and the beginning of the Thirty Years War, has recently been dubbed the "Short Peace" in western Europe—where in Eastern and South-East Europe in the borderlands between Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy, in the Ottoman Empire itself, and the Ottoman-Habsburg borderlands, it was a time of troubles.[42]

This was largely the result, on the one hand, of the changes in France between 1593, when the Huguenot king Henri IV converted to Roman Catholicism, and 1598, when he granted Huguenots limited rights in Catholic France with the Edict of Nantes and made peace with Spain. These changes altered the internal and external balance of religious politics in England and elsewhere. Henri IV's conversion and edict had the effect of quietening, temporarily, a major European theatre of religious conflict on England's doorstep and providing a model of stability and confessional flexibility in the heart of Europe. At the same time, on the other hand, James VI of Scotland had been developing conciliarist and other peacemaking strategies in the fractious context of Scottish religious politics. Conformist Catholics enjoyed greater toleration. These attitudes were increasingly projected onto European

[42] For what follows in this and the next paragraph see Millstone 2023, 134–160; Millstone 2025, 168–199; Hugon 2004; Patterson 1997.

politics as James prepared himself for and then took the throne of England. From this point in 1603, he became a royal mediator heading a diplomatic and intellectual network across the European theatre of religion and politics; other leaders and great powers in western Europe followed related strategies. There were rapprochements between James' realm and Catholic powers that, unlike France, had not maintained resident ambassadors in London throughout the Elizabethan era—the Anglo-Venetian and Anglo-Spanish moments of 1603–1604 and beyond. A series of European treaties followed to 1609.

This, I am arguing, was the cultural-political moment at which Florio came into his own as a secondary or "female" fixer, and the moment that shaped his greatest work of mediation, the *Essayes*. But even this period was punctuated by confessional confusion and acts of terrorism and assassination, with the good faith of converts, intermediaries, religious minorities such as the Moriscos always open to question. The question of the faith of Florio's principal patron (from 1604 until her death in 1619) Queen Anna of Denmark, born Lutheran but apparently converted to Roman Catholicism, and married to the Protestant king of England and Scotland, was a politically very important one. Recent research provides further context for episodes such as the Queen's interview with Scaramelli and his inference regarding her semi-concealed Catholicism (discussed above): from 1601, when she wrote to the Pope in Rome, to 1604 and beyond, Anna pursued Catholic-leaning diplomacy on behalf of her husband, using her personal diplomatic secretariat, her masquing activities, and other means (Field 2019, 87–113; Fry 2014, 267–285; Meikle and Payne 2013; Meikle 2019, 168–180).

James at the same time encouraged visits by and exchanges with learned strangers bringing theological and political perspectives conducive to a Jacobean policy of limited ecumenicism and European peace-brokering. Casaubon, Calixtus and Grotius all participated with some success. But the risks surrounding this trade and traffic continued (Patterson 1997, 124–154). One scandalous example that played out in the final years of Florio's life was that of serial convert Marc'Antonio de Dominis, the Dalmatian entertained by James I and VI as a convert to Anglicanism, who entered into dispute with an Italian Reformed minister in London, then reconverted to Roman Catholicism. He was one of a group of Italian and Dalmatian converts, including two Carmelite friars, who moved to England in the context of the Anglo-Venetian network to which Florio contributed. Dominis'

attempts to mediate—co-opted by Jacobean ecumenicism—between London, Venice, and Rome, between the different confessions of the western Christian churches, ended in failure and tragedy. His books were burned in Rome and he was ridiculed on the English stage (Davies 2022, 341; Pirillo 2025; Patterson 1997, 220–259; Malcolm 1984). Ultimately, James' wider mediations were unsuccessful; he gained a reputation as a weak peacemaker both at home and in some non-Papist Catholic states such as Venice; a European religious conflict in which his daughter Elizabeth was centrally involved would break out in 1618. When Queen Anna died in early 1619, Florio's moment—and with it his career—was effectively over.

5. Florio's moment: 1598–1605

The step-change in Florio's career occurred from 1598–1599, just as the cultural and political mood was changing in western Europe. In publishing the first edition of his dictionary he can claim three members of the higher nobility as his patrons. He starts to put together an oeuvre by recalling that he had already dedicated two "fruits" to "an Earle of Excellence […] [and] to a Gentleman of Woorth". But whereas his dedication of the *Firste Fruites* to the Earl of Leicester was perhaps aspirational (he would "fain" be a servant of Leicester, the main patron of languages and of strangers at the time) he is now able to say he is serving two noblemen who are making exactly the kind of use of Italian and other languages that was envisaged in his dialogues. Southampton was so well instructed in Italian at home by teaching and learning that there seemed no need for travel. He is, nevertheless, "nowe by travell […] accomplished"—which may refer to his journey on an embassy to Paris in the suite of Sir Robert Cecil. Rutland had already travelled in Europe, matriculating at Padua, in 1595–1597. Most significantly of all, for the first time, Florio is able to address an aristocratic, female dedicatee as one of his pupils: Lucy, Countess of Bedford.[43] By the following year, 1599 (according to a sonnet printed with the translation), she has invited him to undertake his greatest work of mediation, the translation of Montaigne, on the back of a male patron's commission of a version of just one chapter (Montaigne 1603, sigs. A2v, A7r). It would

[43] Florio 1598, sigs. A3r–v. For Southampton and Rutland, see their entries in the ODNB.

be published in early 1603, just on the cusp between the final months of Queen Elizabeth I and the arrival south of James VI and I with the Lutheran-born but now discreetly Catholic Queen Anna of Denmark.

In what senses is it his greatest work of mediation? Some indications have already been given above. In Florio's hands, the *Essayes* are a mediation of learning to social and wider public ends, first written in French by a member of the middling nobility who himself serves (as is apparent throughout the text) as a mediator to the higher nobility, most notably to a whole series of female patrons that he addresses in various chapters. It is not only in the first chapter, in other words, that Florio's Montaigne is concerned with "meanes". He is concerned throughout with human "meanes", their limits and benefits, and with the nature of his own book as a "meanes" for him to communicate in his absence with his patrons and friends. So, on the one hand, "meanes meerely humane", including letters, cannot reach to knowledge of divine "Veritie" without God's grace (Montaigne 1603, sigs. Z1r, 2B3v). On the other hand, the book itself is a means to an end: "that losing me (which they are likely to do ere long), they [kinsfolk and friends] may therein find some lineaments of my conditions and humours, and by that meanes reserve more whole, and more lively foster the knowledge and acquaintance they have had of me" (Montaigne 1603, sig. A6v).

But "meanes" are also political and diplomatic. He is in general interested and skilful in "the knowledge of entertainment", which is "the reconciler of the first accoastings of societie and familiarity" (Montaigne 1603, sig. C6r), the means by which people can become communicable and instructive to one another as examples. The examples he gives in the chapter in question are high diplomatic meetings between Pope Clement VII and the King of France, the Holy Roman Emperor, but whole chapters such as III 3 and III 8 are dedicated to related issues. In the early chapters of book 1 he is particularly concerned with parleys and the problems faced by ambassadors mediating the messages of others. He insists, in a passage marked with marginal inverted commas for its high sententious value, that no other "meanes" keeps us bound together but "our word" (Montaigne 1603, sig. C2v). It is the "interpretour of our soules" (Montaigne 1603, sig. 2L1v). This means there can be no society without common speech; otherwise men are strangers to one another. Where ambassadors have to use "false speech"—false either by instruction or by the measure of their own opinion of the truth—as a "meanes" in diplomatic interactions they

can come unstuck. One example concerns Francis I's fixer in Milan, who is working under cover with the collusion of the Duke of Milan to represent the king's interests, but who is executed by the Duke once the Holy Roman Emperor, on whom he is dependent and who is antagonistic to Francis I, becomes suspicious. Another concerns an ambassador who accidentally reveals that his personal opinion contradicts his master's instructions (Montaigne 1603, sig. C3r). Even Suleiman feared being cast out of all "commerce and meanes of negotiation" by allowing his captains advantageously to break a promise (Montaigne 1603, sig. 2K2v).

But how are the *Essayes* an act and "meanes of negotiation" in their English context? Just at the moment when the mood in Europe was changing, thanks partly to the conversion of Henri IV to moderate, non-Papist Roman Catholicism and the toleration by James VI—the presumptive heir to the throne of England—of loyalist Catholics in presbyterian Scotland, Florio publishes a book whose paratexts advertise that its dedicatees' households entertain learned support staff and are open to honourable strangers.[44] He brings to England and entertains a moderate French Roman Catholic both as a visitor to the houses of English noblewomen and as a resident in an English house in his own right (in Samuel Daniel's prefatory poem). The title-page advertises that the author, the "Lo: Michaell de Montaigne" is a "Knight/ Of the noble Order of St Michaell, and one of the Gentlemen in Ordinary of the French king, Henry the third his Chamber".[45] These dignities make him worthy to visit the houses of the female dedicatees whose names follow on the verso of the title-page, where Florio's own name, without any dignities, is relegated to the foot of the page. Not until 1611, by which time he is "one of the Gentlemen of hir [Queen Anna's] Royall Privie Chamber", would Florio be able to include a re-

---

[44] The paratexts were composed when Queen Elizabeth was still alive. We cannot know for certain that Florio was actively anticipating her death and the succession of James and Anna but knowledge in the households in which he worked of the Queen's health and the channels already open with James make it likely.

[45] Florio has probably taken most of this information from the title-page of one of the earliest French editions, as it did not appear on the title-pages of later editions. See Sayce and Maskell 1983, nos. 1–3. But he has expanded "l'Ordre du Roy" to include both the name of the order, which he might have got from the main text (Montaigne 1603, sigs. 2F6r and 3E2r), and the name of the King at the time, Henri III. Montaigne in fact became a gentleman of the chamber also of Henri de Navarre, who became Henri IV, and who was still on the throne at the time of publication.

motely comparable dignity on a title-page (Florio 1611). Though in the English scenario he occupies Montaigne's position, he is, in terms of social rank, decidedly secondary to him—which is why he invokes a more commensurate English author, Philip Sidney, in the second dedication. Like Montaigne, Sidney was a gentleman of the Privy Chamber of his sovereign, and was half in the world of vernacular, female letters, half in the world of male scholarship and pragmatic politics.

At the same time, Florio's book represents a domestic political mediation by and on behalf of the English noblewomen, who are the equivalent of the French noblewomen addressed by Montaigne in the main text. Just as on the first page of the translation proper we find medieval aristocratic women who carry their lord and their male relatives to safety, so the six dedicatees bring with them a group of male relatives whose reputations they are bearing. At this point, we need to pause to appreciate the social significance of the sequence of dedications and the subtle difference in presentation between the first two and the third (the one with which this chapter started), in light of the circumstances of the moment: less than two years after the rebellion and execution of the Earl of Essex (1601); a queen of advanced age in failing health, a king with a queen consort waiting to take the throne from Scotland; the prospect of possible changes in the privy chamber guard and in their precedence with respect to access to the heads of not one but two royal households—a male and a female one.

The heading of the first dedication pairs just the Countess of Bedford and her mother Lady Anne Harrington; husbands, fathers, brothers are only invoked in the main text. They receive the first dedication because the Countess is the main patron of the translation. Likewise, in the heading to the second dedication, the Countess of Rutland and Lady Penelope Rich feature alone. Male relatives, including the deceased Philip Sidney, are invoked only in the main text of the dedication. What do these first two pairs have in common? They were not at the time of the dedication close to the Queen's presence and privy chamber, though some may have had some access in the past. Their menfolk were not in the Privy Council. It had been in part the distance of women associated with the Earl of Essex and other aristocrats shut out of court and significant state positions that had led to the Earl's dissident actions in 1601. None of Florio's dedicatees, with the possible exception of Lady Mary Neville, were present, for example, at the royal entertainment at Harefield House, in the summer of 1602, which was packed with the ladies of

the privy chamber (Merton 1992, 167–169 and 182; Wiggins and Richardson 2012–2018, vol. 4 (1598–1602), no. 1336).

But now, in early 1603, these women are leading their families' bids for greater favour in future, in the new dispensation they are anticipating, which will include the vogue that is about to arrive with Queen Anna for women dancing in masques at court (which had not been a trend at the Elizabethan court). For it is the shadow of the Essex rebellion that must partly explain the absence of headlining men in the first two dedications. The husband of the Countess of Bedford, who receives the dedication of book 1, was according to some sources fetched personally by Lady Penelope Rich, recipient of the dedication to book 2, on the morning of the rebellion, so that he should participate. Another participant who had been punished for his part in the rebellion, and whose name is omitted, was the Earl of Rutland, husband of the other dedicatee to book 2.[46]

How do we know the absence of these mens' names in the headings to the dedications is significant? Because in the heading to the third dedication, the one with which we started this chapter, the male relatives of the ladies are prominently named: Lady Elizabeth Grey is addressed as wife to Henry Grey and daughter of Gilbert Talbot, the Earl of Shrewsbury; Lady Mary Neville as daughter to the Lord High Treasurer of England, Thomas Sackville, and wife to Sir Henry Neville of Abergavenny. This is because these families and their men are at the moment of publication established at the Elizabethan court. None of them had been disgraced or fined by association with the rebellion of the Earl of Essex in 1601. Indeed, Talbot and Sackville, the fathers of the two women paired, both sat on one or other trial of the Earl and, along with the original commissioner of the translation (Sir Edward Wotton), were on the Privy Council.[47]

One of these young women, Lady Elizabeth Talbot-Grey, was most likely, in 1600–1603, the closest to the Queen and, therefore, the most likely to gain a position of influence. Is this why she features along with Lady Mary Neville in the masque-like dance Florio imagines for us? And why this dedication, still more than the second, is the one that makes a sustained pitch for the recognition of the skills and functions ladies display at court? At the moment of the dedications, Lady

46 See the entries in the ODNB for these figures and Akkerman 2014.

47 ODNB.

Elizabeth was the one most likely to be in line to be involved in royal entertainments. In the same letter of June 1600 in which Rowland Whyte reports to Sir Robert Sidney that the Queen is angered by the Earl of Essex's overweening use of his authority, he also reports that Lady Elizabeth Talbot (not yet married to Henry Grey) is to be made a Maid of Honour to the same Queen. A further letter three weeks later (which again mentions Essex's isolation) reports that the Earl's second daughter (Lady Elizabeth) was sworn of the Privy Chamber (Collins 1746, vol. 2, 204 and 207).

As Nadine Akkerman has shown in detail, once the Queen died and the new King and Queen started to move south, the situation changed rapidly, in ways that Florio's dedications can almost be seen to foresee. It was recipients of the first and second dedications, the Countess of Bedford and Lady Penelope Rich, who quickly gained positions in the new Queen's household that they had not been close to holding in the later Elizabethan period. The Harringtons gained the tutelage of the Princess Elizabeth. Bedford and Rutland were returned to favour (Akkerman 2014). Meanwhile, the Talbot and Sackville houses honoured in the third dedication continued to have influence; Ladies Talbot-Grey and Neville would go on to gain places at court with Queen Anna, and roles in her masques.

Florio's book, then, successfully mediates for a specific group of women and aristocratic houses who are both receiving a Roman Catholic gentleman of the privy chamber of the French king and hoping that they will ascend to the privy chamber of the new Queen, also a Catholic. And this social mediation is not distinct from the literary and intellectual mediation represented by the same book. Through their daughters and wives, Florio and the other actors behind the translation are bringing together some of the great aristocratic houses, despite their different situations in relation to the Elizabethan court and the still recent Essex scandal, and despite their differing places on the confessional spectrum. They are doing so via a shared literary and linguistic culture that is not dogmatic about religion or philosophy and that facilitates trade or traffic with strangers and strange books of different religious and dynastic persuasions—within limits. We have already seen how the paratexts make the *Essayes* an apology both for womens' study of modern languages and foreign language books, so that they can speak with strangers on behalf of their male relatives. The epistle to the general reader also apologises for translation in general,

using the arguments of a famous Italian visitor to England, Giordano Bruno, who praised England's noblewomen as celestial goddesses. A translation of a book about study-informed mediation is itself an instance of a culture of mediation that was developing in particular directions at this moment in 1603, just as James was about to take the throne of England and attempt to mediate peace between moderate Protestants and Catholics in Europe—using his Queen's Catholicism and her household as a key part of the attempt.

This attempt was already apparent in his *Basilikon Doron* as published in England, in English, that very year. The Venetian secretary Scaramelli, Florio's correspondent at the time, said that it was sent to press within an hour of Queen Elizabeth I's death. The act of re-publication of the treatise—addressed to his eldest son as a testament preparing him for the office of King—in London, from the Edinburgh copy, was a way of mediating James VI of Scotland's entry into England and, as King of a united Britain, more emphatically into the wider community of European nations and sovereigns. Indeed, the treatise reflects both in its paratext (where the points of criticism of the author are addressed) and in its main text on the ways in which the writings, and more broadly the speech and behaviour in "things indifferent" (both necessary and unnecessary), of a king mediates understanding of his disposition as a sovereign. So much so, that all royal writings should be checked by scholars before being issued (King James VI and I 1603).

Of course, everyone wanted information about the disposition of the new king, especially his religious disposition. This meant translations and copies of the treatise were needed. So it was that by 24th April 1603, Scaramelli already knew that in the treatise, written in a language he could not understand, the King presented himself not as "Calvinista" but as "protestante", and that he warned his son to beware "i superbi Vescovi Papisti", while naming as "vera peste i Puritani".[48] Thoughout his treatise, James identifies both Papists and Anabaptists or Puritans as hatefully extreme underminers of the divine right to rule of lawful monarchs. We know from other documents that Italian translations of other documents were being supplied to Scaramelli.

---

[48] Archivio di Stato (Venezia), Senato/ Dispacci/ Inghilterra, filza II, fols 113-115 (114r), Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli to the Venetian Doge and Senate, April 24, 1603; *Calendar of State Papers Venetian*, vol. 10, 1603–1607, no. 22. This is the source for Scaramelli's comments about the publication of the treatise.

We don't know if it was Florio who supplied Scaramelli with this account in Italian of what was in James' treatise.[49]

But Florio did dedicate an Italian translation—of uncertain date—of the treatise to James in manuscript.[50] His dedication put James's text in the company of related texts by or about ancient and modern kings and generals—Xenophon on Cyrus, Caesar on himself, Charles V to his son (translated into Italian for James already by Florio's associate Giacomo Castelvetro) that were to be translated into every language ("da tradursi in ogni lingua"). He adds a Venetian angle by referring to a text by the Byzantine emperor "Costantino Leo" to his son that he claims is to this day is kept as a treasure in Venice.[51] Florio signs off as the king's "suddito et servitor", subject and servant, which probably indicates that he was already a groom in the Queen's privy chamber. For James and his minister Cecil took an active, politically motivated interest in selecting and approving the personnel of his wife's household (Akkerman 2014; Doran 2024). As we heard earlier, they were the ones who authorised recompense for Florio's services as a reader in Italian to the Queen, making arrangements for an Irish forfeit to be used in lieu of a direct payment. The key point is that Florio was joining the group of mediators and fixers who were translating and disseminating information about the *Basilikon Doron* in various languages both within and without the British Isles, while showing the king how he could serve as a loyal and faithful translator for strangers and into strange languages of the royal couple's language, speech, disposition (Morgan-Roberts 2025). It is another, multi-layered work of mediation, from someone—I would suggest—now firmly in the familia of the consort of the king.

In 1604, the year of the peace with Spain, there follows another such work, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, by someone who was in the same position, and who would also become a groom of Queen Anna's privy chamber. In 1603, Florio had offered a vision of six

---

[49] Florio's phrasing is slightly different to that used by Scaramelli in the dispatch: British Library, Royal MS 14. A.V, fols 21v, 22v ("si fatti Puritani, vera specie di peste nella chiesa e republica", "tanto col' reprimer' il vano puritano, quanto a non ammettere o patire orgogliosi o papali vescovi").

[50] British Library, Royal MS 14. A.V.

[51] This may be a reference to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus's *De administrando imperio*, but I have not been able to find any trace of a precious manuscript copy kept in Venice at the time.

goddesses in the paratexts to his translation of Montaigne, with altars consecrated to them. In 1604, as heard earlier, Samuel Daniel dedicated the printed text of a vision of twelve goddesses (who bring presents to an altar to Peace) in masque form to one of the two goddesses who were celebrated in both texts: the Countess of Bedford (the other was Lady Penelope Rich, who appeared in the masque). The prime mover was Queen Anna, whose actions indicate she intended it as a performance of peace for the Spanish ambassador, who accepted it as such and sent a copy back to the Spanish court in Valladolid (Cano-Echevarría and Hutchings 2012).

A year later, in 1605, both the King and Queen took their households on progress to the University of Oxford. We know it is likely that Florio was in attendance there, as the Venetian ambassador wrote eight days beforehand thanking him for letters Florio had sent on to him from Anna's woman Jane Drummond (remarking, also, that he had no letters from Italy with which to reciprocate) and saying he hoped to see him at the event.[52] Samuel Daniel was again employed to produce something in the vernacular for the ears of the Queen and the female household, and for the less learned men, as one learned observer put it, probably while the King and his Latin-learned entourage were visiting the Bodleian Library. Once again, there is a sense of two, male and female spaces of learning and entertainment that are in a hierarchical relationship but also complementary. The production in question, a pastoral play (*The Queenes Arcadia*), made extensive use of his associate Florio's translation of Montaigne, and concerned the right balance in importing strangers and strange customs into a community (Boutcher 2017, vol. 2, 258–265; Wake 1607, sigs. R3v–4v; Elliott et al. 2004, vol. 1, 299, 304 and 309). Florio's moment was at its height.

Conclusion

From 1598, Florio was a fixer for aristocratic households focussed on the royal court, and particularly for the women whose role it was to support their male relatives' reputations and ventures. He was embedded relatively low down in the hierarchy of servants supporting such households, even when he became a groom in the Queen consort's household, where he joined a vast network of domestic and interna-

[52] TNA, SP 19/2, fol. 300 (Nicoló Molin to Giovanni Florio, London, 17 August 1605).

tional mediators either based in or visiting that household. Individuals in these networks were both serving such households' interests and seeking opportunities to carve out a reputation and a place for themselves and their own families, whether in terms of financial reward, or of works that could reach a wider market and leave a legacy.

Florio's legacy in terms of his literary and linguistic works—his dialogues, his lists of proverbs and grammars, his dictionaries, his translations—is clear. This chapter has discussed the greatest of these works as the most important instance of his lifelong facilitation of trade or traffic with strangers and of his performance of trustworthy mediations. But his literary manuscripts and printed works represent only one side of his output, his oeuvre of mediation, as he was always in the paid business of serving the interests, networks, and educations of his patrons and acquaintances—while also attempting to profit from that service via the book trade. This other side is dispersed in the heritage of the aristocratic households and the individual patrons to whom he lent a hand over a stile, for whom he opened a gap for easier passage or held a torch in a dark way.

We can glimpse traces of this, on the one hand, in the reputation that Queen Anna gained with ambassadors of the Republic of Venice. Molin ended his *relazione* in 1607 with a passage on the signs and gifts that testified to her affection for the Venetian Republic, which Florio had been representing to Venetian representatives since 1603–1604.[53] But we can also see it in the case of one of the noble female pupils of Florio with whom we began: Lady Elizabeth Talbot-Grey or Lady Ruthin, the daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury, and eventually Countess of Kent. As a young woman in the early 1600s, when Florio was engaged amongst her educational support staff to teach her Italian and the cultural accomplishments that came with it, she already had the connections and the social skills to be given access to the Queen at court, and to secure a marriage to a future Earl. It appears that she may not have continued immediately in the new Queen consort's entourage after the accession.[54]

But in 1609 she received the dedication of the first homegrown Italian publication of the Jacobean era, a collection of *Rime* by An-

---

[53] See the *Relazione* of the Venetian ambassador Nicolò Molin, who met Florio in Oxford in 1605, in Barozzi and Berchet 1863, 9–82 (81–82).

[54] For the information that follows see the ODNB, «Grey, Elizabeth [née Lady Elizabeth Talbot], countess of Kent (1582–1651)».

timo Galli, an Italian tutor to the English nobility in Florio's mould who was connected to the Tuscan resident Ottaviano Lotti. The collection included a poem to Florio and a poetic account of Jonson's 1608 *Masque of Beauty* and its performers—most notably, for our purposes, Lady Mary Neville (paired with Lady Elizabeth in the dedication with which we began) and the Countess of Bedford. The Spanish and Venetian ambassadors and Lotti himself were in the audience (Galli 1609; Wiggins and Richardson 2012–2018, vol. 5, no. 1572). The poem acknowledges that Lady Elizabeth Talbot-Grey was not present at the masque while poetically inserting her and her family in the roll of fame associated with it—as though putting her in the frame for her first appearance in a court masque. Sure enough, in 1610, she danced with Queen Anna at court in another of Samuel Daniel's masques, *Tethys' Festival*, as a Nymph of Medway, with the Venetian, Dutch, and Spanish ambassadors in the audience and taken out to dance in the second scene. In the third scene, as she departed with the other Nymphs, she was called back by Mercury (Wiggins and Richardson 2012–2018, vol. 6, no. 1618). In December 1610 she was expected to dance, and most probably did dance, at the performance in February 1611, with Lady Mary Neville (her co-dedicatee in 1603), and the Countess of Bedford and Queen Anna, as a Daughter of the Morn in *Love Freed from Ignorance and Folly* (Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones).[55] She might have been in the audience with Queen Anna for three civic shows in Wells in 1613, and was present at the entertainments for the royal visit to Cambridge in 1615 (Wiggins and Richardson 2012–2018, vol. 5, nos. 1543–1544 and 1547; and vol. 6, nos 1720–1723 and 1767–1770). By 1617 she was first lady of the bedchamber to Queen Anna, eclipsing the Countess of Bedford, whose star was waning by then.

From this moment, though there were fluctuations in the Kents' access to the royal courts, the "ancient house of KENT" (Montaigne 1603, sig. 2R2v) that Florio served and commemorated around 1603 was an important space for the interface between scholarship and learning and the interests of the court and governing classes. This is most apparent in their patronage of the leading scholar and lawyer John Selden, who is a scholarly and literary prothonotary in Florio's terms. He mediated between the worlds of advanced Judaic, legal, historical studies and of practical business in parliament and law, in

[55] Wiggins and Richardson 2012–2018, vol. 6, no. 1632.

constitutional and international politics. He was connected with and worked in the interests of many of the great aristocratic houses of his day. When the Earl of Kent died, Selden and his library moved into their London home at Whitefriars with Elizabeth, Countess of Kent, and her library. The two libraries and their owners have been studied separately, even though they occupied the same space for decades.[56] We can now see them as two, complementary sides of the same male-and-female, Latin-and-vernacular, elite culture that used languages both for studies and recreation, and for applications and mediations in the world of elite society and politics. One side, perhaps, was dominated by prothonotaries, by Earls and their male scholars with expertise in law and Biblical scholarship; the other by secondaries, by ladies of the house and their tutors, readers, and dance masters. But they occupied the same spaces and shared the same goals.

Elizabeth's library contains copies of Selden's works, including the 1613 edition of Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (with Selden's historical notes, designed especially, he says in his opening epistle, for gentlewomen) and what must be the most remarkable collection of Italian literature owned by any English woman in seventeenth-century England. It included five separate editions of Guarini's *Pastor Fido* (one in English, four in Italian), two English and one Italian version of Tasso's great epic, many classical works in Italian and English, a few books in Latin—alongside controversial works such as John Wolfe's Machiavelli (the *Discorsi*) and Ferrante Pallavicino's *Retorica della Puttane*. It included works by Florio's successor as adapter and publisher of his pedagogical materials: Torriano. It also included Florio's Montaigne in the 1632 edition.[57] The library, studies, offices, and social connections of the Kent household and its wider familia of scholars and fixers is a concrete image of late Renaissance English literary culture in the round. It was elitist, hierarchical, and service-based. But it integrated women as literary, linguistic, and social mediators and it could show great openness to strangers, strange languages, and strange confessions—thanks, in no small measure, to Florio's works of mediation.

---

[56] For Selden, the Kents, and the two book collections see the ODNB and Haivry 2017, 26–66; Toomer 2009; Eckhardt and Neuhauser 2025, 141–160; Fehrenbach, Leedham-Green and Black 1992–, vol. 10, Tara L. Lyons, PLRE 299.

[57] See Fehrenbach, Leedham-Green and Black 1992–, no. 299, both in vol. 10 of the published inventories and at https://plre.folger.edu/.

Bibliography

Adams, R. (2019), *A Most Secret Service: William Herle and the Circulation of Intelligence*, in T.A. Sowerby and J. Craigwood (eds), *Cultures of diplomacy and literary writing in the early modern world*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 63–81.

Akkerman, N. (2014), *The Goddess of the Household: The Masquing Politics of Lucy Harington-Russell, Countess of Bedford*, in N. Akkerman and B. Houben (eds), *The Politics of Female Households:Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 287–309.

Akkerman, N. and Houben, B. (2014a), *Introduction*, in N. Akkerman and B. Houben (eds), *The Politics of Female Households:Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 1–29.

Akkerman, N. and Houben, B. (2014b), *The Politics of Female Households:Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe*, Brill, Leiden.

Bacon, F. (2000), *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. M. Kiernan, Clarendon, Oxford.

Barozzi, N. and Berchet, G. (eds) (1863), *Le Relazioni degli stati europei lette al senato dagli ambasciatori veneti, Serie IV Inghilterra. Volume Unico,* Pietro Naratovich, Venice.

Biedermann, Z. (2019), *Three Ways of Locating the Global: Microhistorical Challenges in the Study of Early Transcontinental Diplomacy*, in "Past & Present", 242, 14 (Supplement), pp. 110–141.

Boccalini, T. (1626), *The new-found politicke Disclosing the secret natures and dispositions as well of priuate persons as of statesmen and courtiers; wherein the gouernments, greatnesse, and power of the most notable kingdomes and commonwealths of the world are discouered and censured. Together with many excellent caueats and rules fit to be obserued by those princes and states of Christendome, both Protestants and papists, which haue reason to distrust the designes of the King of Spaine, as by the speech of the Duke of Hernia, vttered in the counsell of Spaine, and hereto annexed, may appeare*, ed. William Vaughan, trans. John Florio and William Vaughan, printed [at Eliot's Court Press] for Francis Williams, neere the Royall Exchange, London.

Boutcher, W. (1991), *Florio's Montaigne: Translation and Pragmatic Humanism in the Sixteenth Century*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge.

Boutcher, W. (1997), *"A French Dexterity, & an Italian Confidence": New Documents on John Florio, Learned Strangers and Protestant Humanist Study of Modern Languages in Renaissance England from c. 1547 to c. 1625*, in "Reformation", 2, pp. 39–109.

Boutcher, W. (2013), *Literary Art and Agency? Gell and the Magic of the Early Modern Book*, in L. Chua and M. Elliott (eds), *Distributed Objects: Meaning and Mattering after Alfred Gell,* Berghahn, Oxford, pp. 155–175.

Boutcher, W. (2017), *The School of Montaigne in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols., Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Brewer-García, L. (2021), *Gender and the Work of Missionary Translation*, in "Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies", 21, 4, pp. 63–100.

Brown, H. (2022), *Women and Early Modern Cultures of Translation: Beyond the Female Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Burghartz, S., Burkart, L., and Göttler, C. (eds) (2016), *Sites of Mediation: Connected Histories of Places, Processes, and Objects in Europe and Beyond 1450-1650*, Brill, Leiden.

Butler, K.T. (1950), *Giacomo Castelvetro 1546–1616*, in "Italian Studies", 5, 1, pp. 1–42.

Cano-Echevarría, B. and Hutchings, M. (2012), *The Spanish Ambassador and Samuel Daniel's* Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*: A New Document [with Text]*, in "English Literary Renaissance", 42, pp. 223–57.

Cartier, J. (1580), *A shorte and briefe narration of the two nauigations and discoueries to the northweast partes called Newe Fraunce: first translated out of French into Italian, by that famous learned man Gio: Bapt: Ramutius, and now turned into English*, trans. John Florio, H. Bynneman, dvvelling in Thames streate, neere vnto Baynardes Castell, London.

Chambers, E.K. (1923), *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols., Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Coldiron, A.E.B. (2010), *Commonplaces and Metaphors,* in G. Braden, R. Cummings, and S. Gillespie (eds), *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English: Volume 2 1550-1660*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 109–117.

Coldiron, A.E.B. (2012), *Visibility Now: Historicizing Foreign Presences in Translation*, in "Translation Studies", 5, pp. 189–200.

Collins, A. (1746), *Letters and memorials of state: in the reigns of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, King James, King Charles the First, part of the reign of King Charles the Second, and Oliver's usurpation*, 2 vols., printed for T. Osborne in Gray's Inn, London.

Cook, L. (2021), *The Silent Tangomão: Fictions of Intermediation along the Rivers of Guinea*, in "Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies", 21, 4, pp. 24–62.

Corens, L. (2019), *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Craigwood, J. (2019), *The Place of the Literary in European Diplomacy: Origin Myths in Ambassadorial Handbooks*, in T.A. Sowerby and J. Craigwood (eds), *Cultures of Diplomacy and Literary Writing in the Early Modern World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 25–40.

Crawford, J. (2014), *Mediatrix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Daniel, S. (1604), *The vision of the 12. goddesses, presented in a maske the 8. of Ianuary, at Hampton Court: by the Queenes most excellent Maiestie, and her ladies*, printed by T[homas]. C[reede]. for Simon Waterson, and are to be sold at his s[h]op in Pauls Church-yard, at the signe of the Crowne, London.

Davies, E. (2022), *Reformed but Not Converted: Paolo Sarpi, the English Mission in Venice and Conceptions of Religious Change*, in "Historical Research", 95, 269, pp. 334–347.

Delisle, J., Otis, A., and Huard, G. (2019), *Interprétes au pays du castor*, Presses de l'Université Laval, Québec.

Doran, S. (2024), *From Tudor to Stuart: The Regime Change from Elizabeth I to James I*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Dowling, M. (ed.) (1990), *William Latymer's Cronickille of Anne Boleyn*, *Miscellany*, XXX, Camden Fourth Series, Royal Historical Society, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Dulcis, C. (1616), *Schola Italica Innovata: In Qua Praecepta Bene Loquendi Faciliori Methodo Proponuntur, Et Selectissimis Dialogis, Sententiis, Apophtegmatibus, Epistolis, Comoediis, Historiis ac Orationibus illustrantur Accessit Ad Faciliorem Omnium Intelligentiam Dictionarivm Italico-Latinvm*, Peter Maus, Frankfurt am Main.

Durston, A. (2007), *Pastoral Quechua: The History of Christian Translation in Colonial Peru, 1550–1650*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame.

Eckhardt, J. and Neuhauser, J.T.S. (2025), *Mapping Selden's Library*, in E. Rhatigan and J. Watson (eds.), *Mapping the Early Modern Inns of Court : Writing Communities,* Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp.141–160.

Elliott, J.H. (1969), *Europe Divided, 1559–1598*, Collins, London and Glasgow.

Elliott, J.R. et al. (2004), *Records of Early English Drama. Oxford*, 2 vols., The British Library and University of Toronto Press, London and Toronto.

Elyot, T. (1531), *The boke named the gouernour*, in edibus Tho. Bertheleti, London.

Fehrenbach, R.J., Leedham-Green E.S., and Black, J.L. (eds) (1992–), *Private Libraries in Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and Early Stuart Book-lists*, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, Binghamton.

Feingold, M. (2004), *Giordano Bruno in England, Revisited*, in "Huntington Library Quarterly", 67, 3, pp. 329–346.

Field, J. (2019), *Anna of Denmark and the Politics of Religious Identity in Jacobean Scotland and England, c. 1592–1619*, in "Northern Studies", 50, pp. 87–113.

Fletcher, C., Matheson-Pollock, H., and Paul, J. (eds) (2018), *Queenship and Counsel in Early Modern Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Florio, J. (1578), *Florio his firste fruites which yeelde familiar speech, merie prouerbes, wittie sentences, and golden sayings. Also a perfect induction to the Italian, and English tongues*, Imprinted at the three Cranes in the Vintree, by Thomas Dawson, for Thomas Woodcocke, London.

Florio, J. (1591), *Florios second frutes to be gathered of twelue trees, of diuers but delightsome tastes to the tongues of Italians and Englishmen. To which is annexed his Gardine of recreation yeelding six thousand Italian prouerbs*, printed [by T. Orwin] for Thomas Woodcock, dwelling at the Black-beare, London.

Florio, J. (1598), *A worlde of wordes, or, Most copious and exact dictionarie in Italian and English,* Arnold Hatfield for Edward Blount, London.

Florio, J. (1611), *Queen Anna's nevv vvorld of words, or dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues, collected, and newly much augmented by Iohn Florio, reader of the Italian vnto the Soueraigne Maiestie of Anna, crowned Queene of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, &c. And one of the gentlemen of hir Royall Priuie Chamber. Whereunto are added certaine necessarie rules and short obseruations for the Italian tongue*, printed by Melch. Bradwood [and William Stansby], for Edw. Blount and William Barret, London.

Fowler, W. (1914–1940), *The works of William Fowler, secretary to Queen Anne, wife of James VI*, eds J. Craigie, J. Purves, and H.W. Meikle, 3 vols., W. Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London.

Fry, C. (2014), *Perceptions of Influence: The Catholic Diplomacy of Queen Anna and Her Ladies,* in N. Akkerman and B. Houben (eds), *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 267–285.

Gallagher, J. (2017), *The Italian London of John North: Cultural Contact and Linguistic Encounter in Early Modern England*, in "Renaissance Quarterly", 70, 1, pp. 88–131.

Gallagher, J. (2019), *Learning Languages in Early modern England*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Galli, A. (1609), *Rime di Antimo Galli all'illustrissima Signora Elizabetta Talbot-Grey*, excudebat M. Bradwood, London.

Gatti, H. (2017), *From Shadows towards Light: Transformations of Allegorical Journeys in Dialogue II of Giordano Bruno's Cena de le ceneri*, in G. Bonsaver, B. Richardson and G. Stellardi (eds), *Cultural Reception, Translation and Transformation from Medieval to Modern Italy: Essays in Honour of Martin McLaughlin,* Legenda, Cambridge, pp. 136–149.

Gilbert, C. (2021), *An Age of Translation: Towards a Social History of Linguistic Agents in the Early Modern World*, in "Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies", 21, 4, pp. 1–23.

Gomez-Géraud, M.-C. (2020), *Babel as a Source of Conflict: A Case Study of Two Discovery Narratives,* in G. Gelléri and R. Willie (eds), *Travel and Conflict in the Early Modern World*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 21–38.

Grell, O.P. (2011), *Brethren in Christ: A Calvinist Network in Reformation Europe,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Haivry, O. (2017), *John Selden and the Western Political Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Harris, B.J. (1997), *The View from My Lady's Chamber: New Perspectives on the Early Tudor Monarchy*, in "Huntington Library Quarterly", 60, 3, pp. 215–247.

Höfele, A. and Koppenfels, W. von (eds) (2005), *Renaissance Go-betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe,* Walter de Gruyter, Berlin.

Hugon, A. (2004), *Au service du roi catholique honorables ambassadeurs et divins espions représentation diplomatique et service secret dans les relations hispano-françaises de 1598 à 1635*, Casa de Velázquez, Madrid.

James VI and I, King (1603), Βαςιλικον Δοῤον. Or His Maiesties instructions to his dearest sonne, Henry the prince, John Norton, London.

Jardine, L. and Grafton, A. (1990), *"Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy*, in "Past and Present", 129, pp. 30–78.

Jardine, L. and Sherman, W. (1993), *Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge, Transactions and Scholarly Services in Late Elizabethan England,* in A. Fletcher and P. Roberts (eds), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 102–124.

Jonson, B. (2019), *Volpone*, ed. Robert N. Watson, revised edn., Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, London.

Lande, J.B. and Feeney, D.C. (2021), *Introduction*, in J.B. Lande and D.C. Feeney (eds), *How Literatures Begin: a Global History*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp. 1–17.

MacCulloch, D. (2003), *Reformation : Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700*, Allen Lane, London.

Malcolm, N. (1984), *De Dominis, 1560-1624: Venetian, Anglican, Ecumenist, and Relapsed Heretic,* Strickland & Scott Academic Publications, London.

Malcolm, N. (2015), *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World*, Penguin Books, London.

Marquardt, W.F (1951), *The First English Translators of Trajano Boccalini's" Ragguagli di Parnaso": A Study of Literary Relationships*, in "The Huntington Library Quarterly", pp. 1–19.

McGowan, M.M. (2008), *Dance in the Renaissance: European Fashion, French Obsession*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

McManus, C. (2002), *Women on the Reanaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court (1590–1619)*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Meikle, M.M. (2019), *Once a Dane, Always a Dane? Queen Anna of Denmark's Foreign Relations and Intercessions as a Queen Consort of Scotland and England, 1588–1619*, in "The Court Historian", 24, 2, pp. 168–80.

Meikle, M.M. and Payne, H.M. (2013), *From Lutheranism to Catholicism: The Faith of Anna of Denmark (1574–1619)*, in "The Journal of Ecclesiastical History", 64, 1, pp. 45–69.

Merton, C.I. (1992), *Women Who Served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth: Ladies, Gentlewomen and Maids of the Privy Chamber, 1553–1603*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge.

Millstone, N. (2023), *Sir Robert Cotton, Manuscript Pamphleteering, and the Making of Jacobean Kingship during the Short Peace, ca. 1609–1613*, in "Journal of British Studies", 62, 1, pp. 134–160.

Millstone, N. (2025), *Rex Pacificus and the Short Peace, 1598–1625*, in A. Courtney and M. Questier (eds), *James VI and I: Kingship, Government, and Religion*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 168–199.

Montaigne, M. de (1603), *The essayes or morall, politike and millitarie discourses*, trans. John Florio,Valentine Simmes for Edward Blount, London.

Montaigne, M. de (2007), *Les Essais*, eds J. Balsamo et al., Gallimard, Paris.

Montini, D. (2008), *John/Giovanni: Florio mezzano e intercessore della lingua italiana*, in "Memoria di Shakespeare", 6, pp. 47–59.

Montini, D. (2023), *Indirect Translation and Discursive Identity in John Florio's Two Navigations*, in K. Bennett and R.M. Puga (eds), *Translation and Transposition in the Early Modern Period*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 187–206.

Morgan-Roberts, S. (2025), *Transnationalising Early Modern Kingship: The Cultural and Political Impact of James VI and I's Basilikon Doron on the British Isles and the Continent*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Manchester.

Orrell, J. (1979), *Antimo Galli's Description of "The Masque of Beauty"*, in "The Huntington Library Quarterly", pp. 13–23.

Patterson, W.B. (1997), *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Pfister, M. (2005), *Inglese Italianato–Italiano Anglizzato: John Florio*, in A. Höfele and W. von Koppenfels (eds), *Renaissance Go-betweens:Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 32–54.

Pirillo, D. (2018), *The Refugee-Diplomat: Venice, England, and the Reformation*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Pirillo, D. (2025), *Arguing about Refugeedom: Religious Mobility in Jacobean London and Counter-Reformation Rome*, in D. de Boer and G. H. Janssen (eds), *Refugee Politics in Early Modern Europe*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, pp. 15–32.

Provvidera, T. (2017), *Bruno, Charlewood and Munday: Politics, Culture and Religion during Bruno's Time in England*, in M. McLaughlin, I.D. Rowland, and E. Tarantino (eds), *Authority, Innovation and Early Modern Epistemology*, Routledge, London, pp. 137–56.

Reynolds, M. (2024), *Critical Translation in World and Comparative Literature*, in "Culture as Text", 1, 1–2, pp. 19–39.

Rhodes, N., Kendal, G., and Wilson, L. (eds) (2013), *English Renaissance Translation Theory*, Modern Humanities Research Association, London.

Rothman, E.N. (2021), *The Dragoman Renaissance: Diplomatic Interpreters and the Routes of Orientalism* , Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Sayce, R.A. and Maskell, D. (1983), *A Descriptive Bibliography of Montaigne's 'Essais', 1580–1700*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Schlueter, J. and McCarthy, D. (2021), *John North's Account Book*, in "Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England", 34, pp. 41–56.

Shakespeare, W. (2016), *Hamlet*, eds Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, revised edn., The Arden Shakespeare. Third series, Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, London.

Sherman, W.H. (1995), *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance,* University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst.

Sherman, W.H. (2004), *Bringing the World to England: The Politics of Translation in the Age of Hakluyt*, in "Transactions of the Royal Historical Society", 14, pp. 199–207.

Stahuljak, Z. (2024), *Agency, Translation, and the Early Global History of Literature*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Steenson, A.L. (2024), *Languages, Latin, and the Jacobean Secretariat: William Fowler's Letters in Florence and Venice*, in "Renaissance Studies", 38, 2, pp. 206–226.

Stewart, A. (2000), *Philip Sidney: A Double Life*, Chatto & Windus, London.

Strunck, C. (ed.) (2011), *Medici Women as Cultural Mediators (1533–1743). Le donne di casa Medici e il loro ruolo di mediatrici culturali fra le corti d'Europa*, Silvana Editoriale, Milan.

Subrahmanyam, S. (2012), *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Toftgaard, A. (2014), *Proverbi italiani nell'Europa del nord: Il significato d'alquanti proverbi dell'italica favella di Giacomo Castelvetro*, in G. Crimi and F. Pignatti (eds), *Il proverbio nella letteratura italiana dal XV al XVII secolo: Atti delle Giornate di studio Università degli studi Roma Tre-Fondazione Marco Besso Roma 5–6 dicembre 2012*, Vecchiarelli, Manziana, pp. 367–393.

Toomer, G.J. (2009), *John Selden: A Life in Scholarship*, 2 vols., Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Ungerer, G. (1974), *A Spaniard in Elizabethan England: the Correspondence of Antonio Pérez's Exile*, 2 vols., Tamesis Books, London.

Vaughan, W. (1626), *The golden fleece diuided into three parts, vnder which are discouered the errours of religion, the vices and decayes of the kingdome, and lastly the wayes to get wealth, and to restore trading so much complayned of. Transported from Cambrioll Colchos, out of the southermost part of the iland, commonly called the Newfoundland, by Orpheus Iunior, for the generall and perpetuall good of Great Britaine*, printed [by William Stansby, Miles Flesher, and another] for Francis Williams, and are to bee sold at his shop at the signe of the Globe, ouer against the Royall Exchange, London.

Villani, S. (2010), *Libri pubblicati in italiano in Inghilterra nel XVII secolo: il caso della traduzione del Book of Common Prayer del 1685*, in D. Montoliu (ed.), *Le livre italien hors d'Italie au XVIIe siècle, Actes du colloque du 23–25 avril 2009*, Université de Toulouse, pp. 91–120.

Villani, S. (2017), *"Amaestrare i fanciulli?": traduzioni in italiano di catechismi della Chiesa d'Inghilterra nella prima età moderna*, in "Rivista storica italiana", 129, 1, pp. 114–136.

Villani, S. (2021), *Un manoscritto secentesco per lo studio della lingua italiana di Giovanni Aureli e Charles Longland conservato presso la biblioteca della University of Missouri*, in "Studi secenteschi", 52, pp. 159–171.

Villani, S. (2022), *Making Italy Anglican: Why the Book of Common Prayer Was Translated into Italian*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Vives, J.L. (2000), *The Education of a Christian Woman: a Sixteen-Century Manual*. Charles Fantazzi, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Wake, I. (1607), *Rex Platonicus: sive, de potentissimi Principis Iacobi Britanniarum Regis, ad illustrissimam Academiam Oxoniensem, adventu, Aug. 27. Anno. 1605*, Joseph Barnes, Oxford.

Wiggins, M. and Richardson, C. (2012–2018), *British Drama, 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, 9 vols., Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Wilson-Lee, E. (2015), *Women's Weapons: Country House Diplomacy in the Countess of Pembroke's French Translations*, in T. Demetriou and R. Tomlinson (eds), *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 128–144.

Wyatt, M. (2005), *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England: A Cultural Politics of Translation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Yates, F.A. (1934), *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Yates, F.A. (1959), *The Valois Tapestries*, Warburg Institute, University of London, London.

Zhiri, O. (2023), *Beyond Orientalism: Ahmad ibn Qâsim al-Hajarî between Europe and North Africa*, University of California Press, Oakland, California.

Contributors and abstracts

Donatella Montini

Sapienza University of Rome - donatella.montini@uniroma1.it

Donatella Montini (Full Professor of English Language and Translation at Sapienza University of Rome, Italy) teaches history of English, stylistics and political linguistics. She is Editor in Chief of *Memoria di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies*. She has published extensively on Queen Elizabeth I's political speeches, early modern English language teaching and translation. She has authored a volume on English contemporary stylistics (*La stilistica inglese contemporanea. Teorie e metodi*, Carocci 2020) and *Guida a Re Lear* (2024). She has co-edited a book on Queen Elizabeth I's language and style for Palgrave (*Elizabeth I in Writing. Language, Power and Representation in Early Modern England*, Palgrave 2018), and a book on the use of non standard language in fictional texts (*The Dialects of British English in Fictional Texts*, Routledge 2021). She is writing a monograph on John Florio, forthcoming for Routledge.

Abstract

This volume gathers seven essays that re-examine the work of John Florio—the Anglo-Italian lexicographer, translator, and cultural mediator whose activity was central to the formation of early modern English language and culture in dialogue with Italian traditions. Moving beyond the dominant cultural and literary interpretations of his oeuvre, the collection proposes a reappraisal informed by new interpretative and methodological paradigms. It explores how contemporary critical frameworks, set in conversation with established historical approaches, can illuminate the linguistic and cultural practices of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England.

Angela Andreani
University of Milan - angela.andreani@unimi.it

Angela Andreani is an Associate Professor of English language, translation and linguistics at the University of Milan, Italy. She has written on Elizabethan manuscripts and archives, religious prose writing and early modern English lexis. Her current research focusses on the linguistic and textual forms of early modern English sermons. As PI for the PRIN2022 project "MetaLing Corpus: Creating a corpus of English linguistics metalanguage from the 16th to the 18th century" she has been studying the history of linguistics terminology.

Abstract

This essay seeks to provide a historical linguistics and lexicographical analysis of the usage labels employed in the first edition of John Florio's Italian-English dictionary, *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598). While the use of metalinguistic labels to indicate restrictions on word usage, contextual appropriateness, or register variation is a prevalent feature in modern lexicography, such practices were relatively uncommon in early modern lexicography. By examining Florio's usage labels, this study explores the development of metalinguistic practices in lexicography and provides insight into the metalanguage used to discuss languages and linguistic phenomena during the early modern period. The core argument is that an analysis of Florio's labelling practices offers valuable insights into contemporary notions of language, its variability, and its pragmatics; as a writer renowned for his linguistic sophistication, Florio serves as an exemplary case study in this regard. This research, part of a larger project on the history of English linguistic metalanguage from 1500 to 1700, conducts a taxonomic analysis of Florio's usage labels, in order to understand his conceptualisation of register variation and of the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of lexicon.

Marco Bagli
University for Foreigners of Perugia - marco.bagli@unistrapg.it

Marco Bagli is Researcher of English Linguistics at the University for Foreigners of Perugia. His research focuses on cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, and the linguistic representation of

sensory experience, with particular attention to the sense of taste in English. He is the author of *Tastes We Live By. The Linguistic Conceptualisation of Taste in English* (de Gruyter, 2021), which received the AIA Junior Book Prize in 2022. His work also includes studies in historical linguistics, early modern English grammars, metaphorical language in the COVID-19 pandemic, and the language of food description. He has participated in national and international research projects, including PRIN (Italy), PID (Spain), and the Mapping Metaphor Project (UK), and serves as Associate Editor for the MetBib project (John Benjamins).

Abstract

This study explores the lexicographic representation of gustatory perception in John Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598). Drawing on cognitive linguistics and historical lexicography, it analyses how basic taste terms—sweet, salt, sour, bitter, savoury, and spiced—are used in Florio's glosses to convey the semantic complexity of Early Modern English and Italian sensory vocabulary. Through corpus-based searches and AI-assisted semantic categorization, the research identifies recurrent patterns across concrete and abstract domains, as well as metaphorical extensions. The findings show that while sweetness and saltiness prevail in references to foods, natural elements, and perfumes, sourness and bitterness occur more often in abstract or figurative contexts. Conceptual metaphors such as as LOVE IS SWEET, INTELLIGENCE IS SALT, HOSTILITY IS SOUR, and CONFLICT IS BITTER reveal the embodied and cultural dimensions of taste perception. Occasionally, innovative collocations (e.g., spiced conscience) attest to historically specific moral and linguistic frameworks. Overall, Florio's lexicon illuminates the interplay between bodily experience, cultural practice, and linguistic representation, demonstrating how Early Modern bilingual lexicography encoded both universal sensory experience and the distinct cultural sensibilities of Elizabethan England.

Aoife Beville

University of Foggia - aoife.beville@unifg.it

Aoife Beville is Researcher of English at the University of Foggia, Italy. Her doctoral research was published as *Telling Tales in Shakespeare's Drama: A Pragma-Stylistic Approach to Lying*, in Paolo Loffredo Editore's *Betwixt* series. Her recent publications focus on: the stylistics of persua-

sion in religious discourse (*Mocking the Devil. Persuasive Irony in C. S. Lewis'*s Screwtape Letters, in "AION Anglistica", 27, 1, pp. 47-63) and irony as a stylistic device (*A Stylistic Approach to Irony in* The Encomion of Lady Pecunia in *Richard Barnfield's Poetics: Early Modern English Poetry beyond Shakespeare*, C. Caporicci, F. Ciambella and C. Ragni (eds.), Bloomsbury, London). She is the administrative coordinator of the Argo Research Centre (Interuniversity Research Centre for the Study of Argumentation, Pragmatics and Stylistics), where she also collaborates in directing research projects on ecostylistics, (im)politeness in cinema, and the stylistics of *pseudos*.

Abstract

John Florio's bilingual didactic dialogues in *First Fruites* (1578) make use of "certaine common questions, and ordinarie aunsweres" to allow "Englishmen to attaine to the perfection of the Italian tongue, and for Italians to learne the pronountiation of our Englishe". Language teaching through dialogical exchanges, a common practice in early modern Europe, necessarily exposes the learner to the pragmatic conventions of interactional language use. The present paper explores how these dialogues functioned as useful didactic tools for acquiring pragmatic competence in language learning, with a particular focus on linguistic (im)politeness, social deixis and discourse markers. The contrastive historical pragmatic analysis of the model conversations in Italian and English will observe how pragmatic conventions varied and overlapped between the two languages in the 1500s, outlining how the representation of interactional strategies served as linguistic input for the early modern language learner.

Warren Boutcher

Queen Mary University of London - w.v.boutcher@qmul.ac.uk

Warren Boutcher is Professor of Renaissance Studies in the School of English and Drama, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Queen Mary University of London. He has published extensively on Montaigne and on humanism, translation, and the history of the book and of libraries in early modern England, France, and Italy. He has authored a two-volume study in 2017 with Oxford University Press on *The School of Montaigne in Early Modern Europe*, which analysed and

followed the objects, actors, forms and skills comprising Montaigne's literary heritage as they moved across Europe. He is currently developing a large collaborative project to produce a literary history of Europe, 1559-1648, centered on histories of literary objects and groups of objects. His research interests include Montaigne and his reception, Renaissance European literary and intellectual history, history of the modern humanities, and transnational literary studies.

Abstract

What kind of literary and social figure was John Florio? How were his textual-linguistic and his social-courtly skills related, and how were they valued? How do his surviving literary and documentary remains relate to the services he provided as a teacher, intermediary, translator, royal reader in Italian, to his social and intellectual networks and connections? Was the pinnacle of his career in service to Queen Anna of Denmark an indication that he more inhabited the female, vernacular sphere of all the elite households he worked in, rather than the male, Latin one? Though Florio is seen as a major player in literary history, thanks to a translation of a now canonical author used by Shakespeare, it is important to consider his work as a textual interpreter in relation to his role in Elizabethan and Jacobean elite networks as a minor player, a mediator. How do we describe and conceptualise that role? How did his activities mediating texts relate to his activities mediating social relationships? Zrinka Stahuljak has recently proposed the term "fixers" in relation to minor figures in medieval literary and cultural history who are somewhere between "translators" and "cultural intermediaries": "agents who perform a range of tasks, acting as interpreters, local informants, guides, brokers, personal assistants, and more […] multifunctional intermediaries with multiple linguistic, social, cultural, and topographical skills and knowledge […] enablers, facilitators, and mediators […]". I will use his "correspondenza" with the Venetian secretary Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli in 1603 as my central example.

Fabio Ciambella

Sapienza University of Rome - fabio.ciambella@uniroma1.it

Fabio Ciambella is Researcher of English at Sapienza University of Rome. His research interests include the intricate relationship between dance

and early modern language, historical pragmatics, corpus linguistics, and Second Language Acquisition. His most recent publications are *Dance Lexicon in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: A Corpus-based Approach* (Routledge, 2021), a corpus-based analysis of dance-related language in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and *Teaching English as a Second Language with Shakespeare*. (Cambridge University Press, 2024), a guide on how to teach pragmatics using Shakespeare's plays.

Abstract

This paper delves into the Italian culinary lexicon embedded within John Florio's dictionaries, *A World of Words* (1598) and *Queen Anna's New World of Worlds* (1611). In an era marked by the burgeoning cultural exchange between England and Italy, Florio's lexical compilations stand as vital linguistic artifacts, also providing a unique window into the Italian culinary landscape of the late Renaissance. Focusing on the Italian culinary vocabulary preserved in Florio's works, this study employs a lexicographic analysis to unravel the intricate web of gastronomic terms, uncovering their semantic nuances and cultural resonances. The investigation traces the evolution and expansion of the Italian culinary lexicon within Florio's dictionaries, shedding light on the linguistic choices made to convey the flavours, ingredients, and culinary practices prevalent during this period in Italy. This paper aims to identify key culinary terms, explore their contextual usage, and illuminate the cross-cultural exchanges that contributed to the culinary discourse in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Furthermore, the study endeavours to contextualize Florio's dictionaries within the broader historical and sociocultural milieu, highlighting the impact of Italian culinary diplomacy on the English language and cuisine, based on bigger corpora such as EEBO. By exploring the intersections between language and gastronomy, this research contributes to our understanding of how culinary terms were assimilated and adapted, shaping the linguistic landscape of early modern England.

Francesca Forlini

Roma Tre University - francesca.forlini@uniroma3.it

Francesca Forlin holds a PhD in Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures from Roma Tre University. She is an English Language In-

structor at Sapienza University and Roma Tre University, and currently teaches English Literature at Universitas Mercatorum. Her research focuses on contemporary British theatre, performance and ecology, and the relationship between space and dramatic representation. She has published articles on the intersection of Theatre and the environment, cultural tourism, and the adaptation of dramatic texts. She also collaborates with cultural institutions as a translator and event coordinator.

Abstract

The intricate relationship between the linguistic world of John Florio and early modern English drama has often been explored through speculative connections with Shakespeare. Yet beyond biographical hypotheses and intertextual echoes, Florio's *Firste Fruites* (1578) and *Second Frutes* (1591) offer a concrete point of comparison with the material and formal practices of printed drama in the period. While traditionally examined as pedagogical tools for teaching Italian through dialogic exchange, these bilingual manuals also share striking affinities with early modern playbooks in their *mise-en-page*, typographic layout, and visual dramatization of speech. Drawing on the concept of cosmopolitan vernaculars, this article investigates how Florio's manuals participate in a transnational print culture shaped by the circulation of languages, forms, and reading practices. Through close analysis of dialogic structure, speaker designation, paratextual elements, and multilingual marginalia, the study highlights how Florio's texts engage a performative and multilingual readership, aligning with broader editorial strategies common to early printed drama. Rather than suggesting direct influence, the article foregrounds points of convergence that reflect shared responses to the demands of oral pedagogy, vernacular authority, and print-based performance. In doing so, it reframes both the manuals and early printed plays as part of a wider landscape of textual negotiation, where linguistic instruction and theatrical culture intersect on the printed page.

Stefano Villani

University of Maryland - villani@umd.edu

Stefano Villani is Professor of Early Modern European History at the University of Maryland. He specializes in early modern religious his-

tory, with particular focus on the cultural, political, and religious relations between Britain and Italy. He teaches courses on Renaissance, Reformation, missionary, and Mediterranean history. Author of five books and over one hundred scholarly contributions, he has recently published *Making Italy Anglican: Why the Book of Common Prayer Was Translated into Italian* (Oxford University Press, 2022). He has held fellowships at the Harry Ransom Center, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the Beinecke Library. A founder of EMoDiR (Early Modern Religious Dissents and Radicalism), he co-edits its Routledge series.

Abstract

The essay explores how the children of Italian religious exiles, beginning with Michelangelo and John Florio, reconstructed their cultural and political identities in seventeenth-century England. By examining the descendants of prominent refugee families, we trace the negotiation between inherited diasporic memory and the pressures of integration into English society. These imagined identities—shaped by linguistic hybridity, shifting religious affiliations, and transnational networks—offer a revealing case study of early modern exile and adaptation.

Opera sottoposta a peer review. Il Consiglio scientifico-editoriale, anche attraverso i comitati scientifici di serie, assicura una valutazione trasparente e indipendente delle opere sottoponendole in forma anonima a due valutatori ignoti agli autori e ai curatori. Per ulteriori dettagli si rinvia al sito: www.editricesapienza.it

This work has been subjected to a peer review. The Scientific-editorial Board, also through the scientific committees of series, ensures a transparent and independent evaluation of the works by subjecting them anonymously to two reviewers, unknown to the authors and editors. For further details please visit the website: www.editricesapienza.it

Collana Studi e Ricerche

Per informazioni sui volumi precedenti della collana, consultare il sito: www.editricesapienza.it | *For information on the previous volumes included in the series, please visit the following website: www.editricesapienza.it*

186. "Cantasi come"
L'eco dell'Ars nova nelle laude imitative dei secoli XIV e XV
Studio ed edizione dei testi a cura di Thomas Persico
Prefazione di Francesco Zimei

187. Corporate Heritage: Communication and Impact on Organizations, Stakeholders, and Society.
A Transdisciplinary Research Perspective
edited by Valentina Martino and José Maria Herranz de la Casa

188. New Essays on John Florio
Linguistic and Cultural Perspectives
edited by Donatella Montini

Studi e Ricerche
Studies in European Linguistics

This collection of seven essays offers an invitation to re-read the oeuvre of John Florio—the Anglo-Italian lexicographer, translator, reader in Italian, and cultural mediator whose extraordinary versatility enabled him to navigate with ease the intellectual landscape and the book market of Elizabethan England. Much of the critical literature on John Florio, produced in both the Anglophone world and in Italy over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, has consistently advanced a cultural and literary reading of his work. So prolific and significant a figure in the shaping of early modern English language and culture—particularly in its dialogue with Italian cultural and linguistic traditions—John Florio thus seems a timely subject for reappraisal through the lens of new interpretative and methodological paradigms. More ambitiously, this collection explores how contemporary critical frameworks, developed to engage with present-day historical, cultural, and literary phenomena, can illuminate the complex linguistic and cultural practices of the past. Grounded in the belief that much is to be gained from placing such methodologies in conversation with established traditions of historical and cultural criticism, the volume seeks to open new directions for scholarly engagement with the linguistic and cultural production of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England.

Donatella Montini, Full Professor of English Language and Translation at Sapienza University of Rome, specialises in stylistics, the history of English and political linguistics. Editor-in-Chief of *Memoria di Shakespeare*, she has written on Elizabeth I's rhetoric, early modern language pedagogy, and John Florio. Her recent books address contemporary stylistics, Elizabethan language, and dialects in fiction; she is completing a monograph on John Florio for Routledge.

ISBN 978-88-9377-439-0
9 788893 774390

www.editricesapienza.it