"Ink and paper"
A Study on the English Editions and the Italian Translations of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*

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Abstract

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* boasts a peculiar typographical and editorial history. Despite the fact that the version contained in the so-called *First Folio* is "the only authoritative" (Ridley 1954: VII), several variations differentiate the text published in 1623 from the copies that were printed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Nevertheless, such copies ineluctably affected the English contemporary editions as well the Italian translations of the selected Roman play that were published from the nineteenth century onwards. The present paper aims to reconstruct the history of both the English and the Italian editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, in order to understand how the evolution of both the translation theories and the editorial tendencies have shaped the structure as well the stylistic features of the tragedy, consequently affecting its reception.

Keywords

English Early Modern Literature, William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, Literary Translation, Translation Studies

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* boasts a peculiar typographical and editorial history, as several variations differentiate the text published in 1623 from the copies that were printed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. On the one hand, such redactions consisted of the correction of some graphical errors or the adjustment of the lines of the script in order to 'fit the page' before printing the book. On the other hand, the Shakespearian text was altered following the aesthetic taste of the editors. Nevertheless, such copies ineluctably affected the English contemporary editions as well as the Italian

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translations of the selected Roman play that were published from the nineteenth century onwards.

Organised into 3 sections – the first and the second one aimed at reconstructing the history of both the English and the Italian editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*; the last one presenting two case studies of literary translation –, the present essay seeks to understand how the evolution of both the editorial tendencies and the translations has impinged upon the structure as well the stylistic features of the tragedy, consequently affecting its reception.

1. The English Editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1623–1765)

The starting point of the present investigation is the text that Michael Ridley (Shakespeare 1954: VII) defined as "the only authoritative" version of *Antony and Cleopatra*, that is, the one contained in the so-called *First Folio*.[2] In the manuscript edited by John Heminge and Henry Condell, the Roman play is included in the catalogue with the title of *Antony and Cleopater*, in the section labelled as 'Tragedies,' and it is positioned between *Othello, the Moore of Venice* and *Cymbeline, King of Britain.*

The play comprises 29 pages. By opening the first one, the title is different from the one listed in the catalogue: as a matter of fact, we have *THE TRAGEDIE OF / Anthonie, and Cleopatra*, followed by a banner that bears the writing "*Actus Primus. Scæna Prima.*" The reference is noteworthy, given that there are no other act/scene divisions in the play.[3] Overwhelmingly, the text is easy to read, and the stylistic choices are applied straightforwardly (see Baldini 1962: 5). Nevertheless, according to Hower-Hill (1977: 7; see also Shakespeare 1995: 78–79), the writing does record some inconsistencies in the use of punctuation. Such an irregularity may be due to the fact that the transcription of the lines was carried out by two different compositor, B and E.

The *First Folio* was reprinted in 1632, 1664 and 1685. Although Samuel Johnson (1821: 145) considered only the 1632 edition to be "not without value," considering the other two "little better than waste paper," contemporary critics have remarked

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[2] The references to the 'historical' English editions are drawn from the Internet Shakespeare Editions. http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca (2023.07.15.).

[3] Concerning this last point, it is worth remarking that *The New Oxford Shakespeare* editors "[attempted] to distinguish between act intervals that have the authority of early performance and those that were merely mechanically inserted (with little regard for artistic effect) for print publication" (Shakespeare 2017b: ixx). Consequently, they opted for a "scene-only counting" (Shakespeare 2017b: xx) for *Antony and Cleopatra*, dividing the text of the tragedy into 43 scenes: no other Shakespearian play has a larger number.

on the propriety of the modernisation of the page layout and graphic rendering proposed in them (see, among others, Braunmuller 2003).[4]

The text contained in the collection that inaugurates the following century, that is *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, published by Tonson and edited by the poet and playwright Nicholas Rowe in 1709, presents some significant alterations when compared with the *Folios*, as argued by Hamm (2004: 179–180):

> *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear* marks a major departure from the folio collections of the previous century. Rowe makes many corrections and improvements to the text of his predecessors: he attempts to normalise spelling, punctuation, and grammar; he clarifies many of the plays' act and scene divisions; he adds robust stage directions, marking localities as well as characters' entrances and exits; he includes a list of *dramatis personae* for each of the plays; and he translates the folio's Latin headings to English. Rowe's *Shakespear* also makes numerous innovations in its treatment of the text: it contains a "life" or biographical account of Shakespeare composed by Rowe; it includes plates depicting scenes from the plays […]; it employs a new page layout that resets the folio's cramped, double-columned text; and it dispenses with the large folio volume, instead portioning out the forty-three plays included in the 1685 edition over six octavo volumes or 3,324 pages […]. [C]ritics have regarded Rowe's edition as a watershed moment in publishing history, one that marks the beginning of the modern Shakespeare text […]. This reputation continues today. […] Rowe's *Shakespear* undoubtedly marks a radical break from the seventeenth-century's Shakespeare.

The publication of the *Works* aimed to legitimise Shakespeare's reputation in England, with several editions devoted to the repertoire of "the quintessential English author, the first among the English moderns" (Hamm 2004: 193) printed in the eighteenth century, such as:

- *THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEAR IN SIX VOLUMES COLLATED AND CORRECTED BY THE FORMER EDITIONS, BY MR. POPE*: edited by Alexander Pope in 1725, with an introduction, footnotes and "an elaborate set

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[4] To provide some examples: the title is modernised in *THE / TRAGEDY / OF / ANTHONY and CLEOPATRA* – with a "y" in "tragedy" and a different spelling for the male protagonist's name; the consonant "v" is not indicated with the vowel "u" – as the line (*F1*) "new Heauen, new Earth" = (*F3*) "New Heaven, new Earth" demonstrates; we do not find the silent "e" at the end of words, such as in (*F1*) Egypte = (*F3*) Egypt or (*F1*) Queene = (*F3*) Queen; corrections of typos and other improvements are made. For instance, on page 342 of *F1*, Mark Antony and Enobarbus exit the scene, but we find no "Exeunt": the stage direction is added in *F2*; on page 344 of *F1*, Cleopatra's chamber lady's name is misspelt as "Chiarmion;" the typo is emended in *F2*.

of typographical symbols to mark what he saw as the 'Beauties' and 'Faults' in Shakespeare's plays" (King 2008: 3);[5]

- *THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE*: a critical edition published in 1733 by Lewis Theobald, an English writer who filled the pages with several footnotes to inform the readers about some personal reflections concerning those cases when two or more translations or interpretations of a term were possible, analogies or references to other Elizabethan works, historical or religious events that were mentioned in the text;[6]

- *THE PLAYS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: IN TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES, WITH THE CORRECTIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF VARIOUS COMMENTATORS, TO WHICH ARE ADDED NOTES*: considered by the critics the first "*variorium* Shakespeare" (Ritchie & Sabor 2012: 353) edited by Samuel Johnson in 1765, who nonetheless showed "less regard" for *Antony and Cleopatra* mainly due to the excessively vulgar language of some characters.[7]

2. The Italian Translations of the Tragedy

In Italy, various intellectuals approached the Shakespearean repertoire during the eighteenth century (see Nulli 1918: 3–63; Ferrando 1930: 157–168; Praz 1944, 1956, 1969; Crinò 1950; Lombardo 1964: 2–13). For instance, Domenico Valentini[8]

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[5] Pope's pioneering edition was poorly judged by Samuel Johnson (1765: 103), who disclosed his malcontent in the Preface of his edition by asserting that "the compleat explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast". Over time, critics ended up sharing such a position, in the conviction that Pope had exerted "the most unwarrantable liberty" (Lounsbury 1906: 94) when intervening on the Shakespearian texts. On the matter, see also Warren (1929), Butt (1936) and Dixon (1964).

[6] According to Dick (Theobald 1949: 1), Theobald's edition was "the first edition of an English writer in which a man with a professional breadth and concentration of reading in the writer's period tried to bring all relevant, ascertainable fact to bear on the establishment of the author's text and the explication of his obscurities. For Theobald was the first editor of Shakespeare who displayed a well grounded knowledge of Shakespeare's language and metrical practice and that of his contemporaries, the sources and chronology of his plays, and the broad range of Elizabethan-Jacobean drama as a means of illuminating the work of the master writer." About the relevance of Theobald's editorial activity, see also Jones (1966) and Smith (1928); a selection of his amendments on the text of *Antony and Cleopatra* are illustrated in Erne (2016: 66-67).

[7] For instance, concerning the line "Triple-turned whore!" (4.12.13), that is, the reproach that Mark Antony utters towards Cleopatra after he lost the Battle of Actium, Johnson wrote: "Shall I mention what had dropped into imagination, that our author might perhaps have written 'triple-tongued'? 'Double-tongued' is a common term of reproach, which rage might improve to 'triple-tongued'" (as quoted in Payne 1990: 71). If not indicated otherwise, all quotes from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* are drawn from the 1995 Arden edition by Wilders. The line numbers are provided in parentheses after quotes in the text.

[8] A professor of theology and church history at the University of Siena, Domenico Valentini (1690–1762) was the first literatus to complete a full-length Italian translation of a Shakespearian play. As Crinò claims (1949: 330), he decided to approach the Bardian canon after listening to some English friends praising his works.

translated *Julius Caesar* in 1756; Alessandro Verri[9] translated *Hamlet* between 1769 and 1777, and *Othello* in 1777; Giustina Renier Michiel[10] translated *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus* between 1797 and 1801. Although their mediatory operation was indeed remarkable, it is worth remembering that some of them did not base their translations on the English editions of the Shakespearean plays; instead, they drew from the French translations of the Bard (see Delisle & Woodsworth 2012: 68–70; Bianco 2017).

Nevertheless, French was not selected as an intermediary language by those who decided to translate *Antony and Cleopatra*, although this did not happen until the 1800s. Michele Leoni[11] was the first translator of the above-mentioned Roman play in 1819, drawing from Rowe's edition with significant effort, as he remarked in the introduction:

> In *Antonio e Cleopatra*, the action moves from one place to another and travels – so to speak – through the Roman Empire. However, in defence of the negligence [Shakespeare] showed concerning such a matter, when […] the author deals with the manners, the characterisation of the interlocutors, and lets them act or speak appropriately, […] he behaves well, and for the most part, he deserves huge praise (Leoni 1819: 23; my translation).

The second translation of the tragedy was published in 1837 by Carlo Rusconi, in a collection entitled *Teatro Completo di Shakspear*. The sub-title informed the reader that the plays were "translated by the original English version into Italian prose" (my translation) – although the source text is still unknown. Furthermore, between the 1840s and 1880s, Giulio Carcano published *Opere di Shakespeare*: "his translation-interpretation is the best that the nineteenth century has delivered," Duranti claims,

> as it legitimised the literary dignity of a playwright whose poetic and dramatic power was recognised yet feared at the same time in Italy because of the ethical, cognitive and political dimension that is typical of his works. […] Carcano sensed this tension and tried to rouse it in his own time, to provide his contemporaries

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[9] Alessandro Verri (1741–1816) was a poliedric Italian author. His repertoire included novels, tragedies and essays; he was also the co-founder of *Il Caffé*, a magazine. He spent two years in London (1766–1767) and was "fascinated by British culture, especially playwriting; once in Rome, he translated some of Shakespeare's plays into Italian prose" (Orlandi Balzari 2016: 11).

[10] Giustina Renier Michiel (1755–1832) was the first woman of letter to translate Shakespeare in Italy. The results of her efforts culminated in *Opere drammatiche di Shakespeare volgarizzare da una Donna Veneta* ([1798]1801). On the volume see, among others, Bianco (2017).

[11] Michele Leoni (1776–1858) was a writer and a committed translator of English literary works (see Vander Berghe 2019). Concerning the Bard, he rendered a selection of tragedy into Italian during the first half of the nineteenth century (see, among others, Bianco 2019).

with a model of theatre in which civil commitment and moral teaching could merge in an aesthetically and valid form (Duranti 1979: 96, my translation).

With regards to the twentieth-century editions, most translations of *Antony and Cleopatra* were published from the 1950s onwards, except for the one edited by Diego Angeli, published between 1911 and 1913, and the one edited by Augusta Grosso Guidetti, in 1942, as shown by Table 1:

Table 1. The Italian translations of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*

Time of Publication	Italian Translator
1800s	Michele Leoni (1819)
	Carlo Rusconi (1837)
	Giulio Carcano (1840–1880)
1900s	–
1910s	Diego Angeli (1911–1913)
1920s	–
1930s	–
1940s	Augusta Grosso Guidetti (1942)
1950s	Aurelio Zanco (1954)
	Cesare Vico Lodovici (1955)
	Alfredo Obertello (1957)
1960s	Gabriele Baldini (1962)
	Salvatore Quasimodo (1966)
1970s	–
1980s	Elio Chinol (1985)
	Sergio Perosa (1985)
1990s	Agostino Lombardo (1992)
2000s	Goffredo Raponi (2001)
	Guido Bulla (2009)
2010s	Gilberto Sacedoti (2015)

Altogether, 16 Italian translations were published between 1819 and the present time, the collation of which sheds light on different issues the translators had to face. For instance, it is worth mentioning the rendering of the mix of prose and verses that is typical of this tragedy: a challenge within the challenge, given that "there

is no Italian correspondent of Elizabethan blank verse," as Agostino Lombardo (1992: 166; my translation) claims. Table 2 groups the Italian editions into three categories, that is the versions in prose; those in verses; and the ones that mirror the alternation of verses and prose:

Table 2. The Italian editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in prose, verses, prose and verses[12]

Prose	Verses	Prose and verses
Carlo Rusconi (1837)	Michele Leoni (1819)	Salvatore Quasimodo (1966)
Aurelio Zanco (1954)	Giulio Carcano (1840–1880)	Elio Chinol (1985)
Cesare Vico Lodovici (1955)	Diego Angeli (1911–1913)	Sergio Perosa (1985)
Gabriele Baldini (1962)	Goffredo Raponi (2001)	Agostino Lombardo (1992)
		Guido Bulla (2009)
		Gilberto Sacerdoti (2015)

3. A Focus on Literary Translation: Two Case Studies

The present section intends to provide a critical comment about the adoption as well the Italian translation of

1) the adjectives **arm(e)-gaunt**[13]**/arrogant** used by Alexas in the lines "So he [Antony] nodded / And soberly did mount / an *arm-gaunt/arrogant* steed / Who neighed so high that what I would have spoke / Was beastly dumbed by him" (1.5.49-51; my emphasis);

2) the nouns **Autumn/Ant(h)ony** in the final scene of the play, when Cleopatra tells her dream to Dolabella and utters as follows: "[…] For his bounty, There was no winter in't; / an *autumn/Anthony* it was / That grew the more by reaping" (5.2.85-87; my emphasis).

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[12] The present table does not include Guidetti's and Obertello's choices, as their translations were not available at the moment this research was pursued.

[13] **Arm-gaunt**, *adj.* Meaning and origin uncertain and disputed. This word has been analysed as a compound of GAUNT *adj.*, although the sense and identity of the first element are both disputed. Some commentators, assuming that the compound refers to service in battle ('worn lean by much service in war', 'gaunt by bearing arms', etc.) suggest arm, singular of ARMS *n.*, while others assume a more concrete sense 'with gaunt limbs' and propose ARM *n.* (perhaps compare *arm-great adj.*, ARM-STRONG *adj.*). Alternatively, it has been suggested that arm-gaunt may represent an error for one of several other words: […] Perhaps: either 'gaunt as a result of bearing arms or serving in war', or 'with gaunt limbs' […] *a*1616 W. SHAKESPEARE *Antony & Cleopatra* (1623) (OED, 2023.07.15).

Before focussing on the Italian rendering, it is convenient to investigate the presence/absence of each term in both the 'historical' and the most recent English editions of *Antony and Cleopatra*:

Table 3. Inclusion/exclusion of the selected words in the English editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*

Editions	arm(e)-gaunt	arrogant	Autumn	Ant(h)ony
First Folio (1623)	X			X
Second Folio (1632)	X			X
Third Folio (1664)	X			X
Fourth Folio (1685)	X			X
Rowe (1709)	X			X
Pope (1725)	X			X
Theobald (1733)	X		X	
Johnson (1765)		*	X	
Alexander (Collins, 1950)		X		X
Ridley (Arden[1], 1954)	X[14]		X	
Jones[15] (New Penguin, 1977)		X		X
Wells & Taylor (*The Oxford Shakespeare*, 1986)	*		X	
Wilders (Arden[2], 1995)	X		X	
Taylor *et al. (The New Oxford Shakespeare*, 2017)	*			X

The data gathered in Table 3 show that "arm(e)-gaunt" and "Ant(h)ony" were used in the four *Folios* as well as in Rowe's and Pope's editions. However, other editors opted for some variations: for instance, Lewis Theobald selected "Autumn" instead of "Anthony," and he wrote an extensive footnote on the matter:

[…] For his bounty, / There was no Winter in't: an Antony it was, / That grew the more by reaping.] / There was certainly a Contrast, both in the Thought and Terms, design'd here, which is lost in an accidental Corruption. How could an Antony grow the more by reaping? I'll venture, by a very easy Change, to restore

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[14] The editor addresses the case in "Appendix I" (Shakespeare 1954: 221–222).

[15] Emrys Jones (1977) referred to the *Complete Works* edited by Peter Alexander (1950) who, in turn, based his work on the *First Folio*.

an exquisite fine Allusion: and which carries its Reason with it too, why there was no Winter (i. e. no Want, Bareness) in his Bounty. / – – *For his Bounty / There was no Winter in't: an Autumn 'twas, / That grew the more by reaping.* / I ought to take Notice, that the ingenous Dr. Thirlby [Theobald's collaborator] likewise flarted this very Emendation, and had mark'd it in the Margin of his Book: The Reason of the Depravation might easily arise from the great Similitude of the two Words in the old way of spelling, *Antonie and Autumn* (Theobald 1733: 324 note 62).

Said decision significantly affected the subsequent publications, as demonstrated by the copies of Pope's *WORKS OF SHAKESPEAR IN SIX VOLUMES* that were printed in Dublin in 1747: there, he chose "autumn" instead of "Anthony." The reconsideration finds its reason to be in the following footnote: "(a) Autumn. Mr. Theobald. – Vulg. *Antony*" (Pope 1747: 192); thus, it is fair to assume that he decided to modify the text after reading Theobald's edition. The lemma "autumn" was selected by Johnson, too; nevertheless, he selected "termagant" as a potential amendment of "arm-gaunt," commenting as follows:

I.v.48 arm-gaunt steed] [i.e. his steed worn lean and thin by much service in war. So Fairfax, His stall-worn steed the champion stout bestrode. WARB.] On this note Mr. Edwards has been very lavish of his pleasantry, and indeed has justly censured the misquotation of stall-worn, for stall-worth, which means strong, but makes no attempt to explain the word in the play. Mr. Seyward, in his preface to Beaumont, has very elaborately endeavoured to prove, that an arm-gaunt steed is a steed with lean shoulders. Arm is the Teutonick word for want, or poverty. Arm-gaunt may be therefore an old word, signifying, lean for want, ill fed. Edwards's observation, that a worn-out horse is not proper for Atlas to mount in battle, is impertinent; the horse here mentioned seems to be a post horse, rather than a war horse. Yet as arm-gaunt seems not intended to imply any defect, it perhaps means, a horse so slender that a man might clasp him, and therefore formed for expedition (Johnson 1765: 134).

Moving the focus of the investigation towards the English editions published during the twentieth century, the results of the present study show that both Alexander and Jones chose "arrogant" and "Antony"[16] in 1950 and 1977, respectively; the Arden editions (Ridley 1954[1]; Wilders 1995[2]) presented the opposite variants; in *The Oxford Shakespeare* (1986), Wells and Taylor selected "arm jaunced"[17] and

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[16] "This is *F*'s reading. Most editors adopt the emendation 'an autumn 'twas'. This is plausible, but emendation does not seem absolutely necessary. If it is objected that the *F* reading does not make sense, it should be remembered that Cleopatra is speaking rhapsodically and with startlingly abrupt metaphors" (Shakespeare 1977: 140 note 87).

[17] In the Selected Glossary, they define "arm jaunced" as follows: "joltes by armour" (Shakespeare 1986: 1257).

"autumn," whereas in *the New Oxford Shakespeare* (2017a), Taylor et al. opted for "argent"[18] and "Antony" – providing no explanation for this last change.

In any event, said decisions had a major impact on the Italian translators, whose interpretative choices are illustrated in Table 4.[19]

Table 4. The Italian translations of the selected words

	(1.5.49-51) Alexas: So he nodded / And soberly did mount *an arm(e)-gaunt/ arrongant* steed(e) / Who neighed so high that what I would have spoken / Was beastly dumbed by him.	**(5.2.85-87) Cleopatra**: […] For his bounty, / There was no winter in't; an *Autumn/Ant(h)ony* it was / That grew the more by reaping.
Carlo Rusconi	[…] e con un cenno del capo, montato sull'**agile** suo destriero partì di volo.	[…] La sua bontà non avea stagioni sterili: ricca e feconda come l'**Autunno**, più beni accordava, e più ne avea da profondere.
Giulio Carcano	Disse e il capo chinò: poi salì grave / Sul **focoso** cavallo, il cui nitrito, / Sol ch'io schiudessi il labbro, avria coverto / La mia voce.	Mai sua clemenza non conobbe verno; / Era un **autunno**, che il ricolto istesso / Vie più feconda.
Diego Angeli	[…] Nel dire questo / Accennò con la testa e sul **focoso** / Destriero montò che così forte / Nitriva da assordirmi col suo grido / Bestiale se avessi allora voluto Parlare.	[…] La sua / Larghezza non conosceva l'inverno: / era come un **autunno** fecondato / dalle sue stesse messi.
Cesare Vico Lodovici	[…] Qui, con un cenno del capo, mi salutò e balzò, serio serio, <u>sul suo puledro</u>: e quello diede un così fiero nitrito che soffocò col suo grido ferino quello che stavo per dire io.	La sua munificenza non conosceva inverno: un **autunno**, era, che più si vendemmiava e più dava frutto.
Gabriele Baldini (Arden 1954)	[…] Ciò detto, fece un gesto del capo, e balzò dignitosamente in sella al suo destriero **provato alle armi**, che nitrì tanto alto da impedir bestialmente che s'udisse tutto quel ch'io avrei voluto dire.	Per dire della sua generosità, non c'era inverno in essa: era piuttosto un **autunno**, che più s'accresceva quanto più se ne mieteva il raccolto.

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[18] In a footnote, Taylor *et al.* (2017a: 2585) write: "argent: silver (a textual crux)."

[19] For the sake of this study, I indicated the English editions used by the Italian translators in parentheses. Nevertheless, the information on the matter is lamentably limited, as most literati did not mention the elected source text. Furthermore, the present table does not include data about Leoni's, Guidetti's and Obertello's works, as I did not have access to the selected passages while pursuing this research.

Goffredo Raponi (New Penguin 1777, *The Oxford Shakespeare* 1986)	Indi mi fece appena un breve cenno / e tutto serio in volto balzò in sella / a un cavallo **inguantato d'armatura** / che levò alto in aria un tal nitrito, / da soffocare bestialmente in me / tutto quello che avrei voluto dirgli.	La generosità di quel suo cuore / non conosceva inverno: era un **autunno** / che diveniva sempre più ferace / col mieter dei raccolti;
Aurelio Zanco	Quindi mi accennò colla testa e dignitosamente montò su un **focoso** cavallo che nitriva così forte da soffocare bestialmente ciò che avessi voluto dire.	Quanto alla sua generosità, non c'era inverno in essa; era un **autunno** la cui fecondità si accresceva peri raccolti:
Salvatore Quasimodo	[…] Poi mi salutò con un cenno del capo, / e salì fiero sul suo cavallo **da guerra**, / che con un alto nitrito / disperse brutalmente la mia risposta.	[…] Nella sua generosità non c'era inverno, / ma sempre un **autunno** dove il raccolto / più cresceva dopo il taglio.
Elio Chinol	[…] Poi mi salutò con un cenno del capo / E montò con compostezza sul suo **focoso** cavallo, / che nitrì così alto da soffocarmi nella gola / le parole che avrei voluto dirgli.	[. . .] La sua generosità / Non conosceva inverno: era un perenne **autunno** / Che la mietitura rendeva ancor più opulento.
Sergio Perosa	[…] Quindi accennò col capo / e compunto montò il suo **focoso** destriero, / che nitrì così alto, da soffocare / brutalmente quel che volevo dire.	La sua generosità non conosceva inverno: era un **autunno** che s'accresceva mietendone il raccolto.
Guido Bulla (New Penguin 1977)	[…] Con un cenno del capo, / Montò poi sobriamente sul **bardato**[20] destriero, / Che nitrì tanto forte che ciò che avrei voluto dire / Fu zittito dall'urlo della bestia.	La sua munificenza / Non conos ceva inverno: era un **autunno** / Che s'arricchiva ad ogni mieti tura;
Agostino Lombardo (New Penguin 1977, *F1*)	[…] Accennò col capo / E grave montò su un destriero **bellicoso**[21] / Che nitrì così forte da soffocare brutalmente / Ciò che avrei voluto dire.	La sua generosità non aveva in verno, era / Un **Antonio** che tanto più cresceva quanto più / Veniva mietuto.
Gilberto Sacerdoti (*The Oxford Shakespeare*, 1986)	[…] Poi accennò col capo e montò sobriamente uno **scalpitante**[22] stallone, il quale nitrì tanto forte che ciò che volevo dire venne bestialmente ammutolito.	[…] Quanto a generosità, non conosceva inverno; era un **autunno** che più lo si mieteva e più fruttificava.

[20] "The term arm-gaunt has infinite interpretations (and amendments). I hereby accept the one according to which it derives from the Anglo-Saxon *gaunt* = whole, healthful" (Bulla 2009: 66 note 30; my translation).

[21] Lombardo (1992: 262 note 19; 263 note 51) informs the reader of the "philological background" of the terms "arrogant" and "Autumn" in the Notes.

[22] "The translation emphasizes the contrast between the 'moderation' of the man and the 'restlessness' of the animal; it clearly refers to an unrestrained interior strength" (Marenco 2015: 2915 note 48; my translation).

As far as Alexas' lines are concerned, numerous adjectives qualify Mark Antony's stallion. However, *focoso* [fiery] is frequently used to describe the horse, with 5 Italian translators (Carcano, Angeli, Zanco, Chinol and Perosa) out of 13 deciding to emphasise the fiery attitude of the animal. Other options include:

1) *provato alle armi* [experienced] selected by Baldini;

2) *agile* [quick] chosen by Rusconi;

3) a focus on the harness of the stallion, *inguantato d'armatura* [wearing a suit of armor] and *bardato* [harnessed], used by Raponi and Bulla, respectively;

4) emphasis on the combative spirit of the animal as indicated by the terms *da guerra* [martial] and *bellicoso* [belligerent] employed by Quasimodo and Lombardo, respectively;

5) *scalpitante* [pawing] as in Sacerdoti's translation;

6) finally, Cesare Vico Lodovici decides to neglect such a detail; therefore, he does not add any adjective to qualify the stallion.

Conversely, a much more uniform framework qualifies the second case study here presented: 12 translators out of 13 opted for "Autumn," with the sole exception of Agostino Lombardo, who decided to select "Antony"[23] in compliance with the *First Folio* as well as Alexander's and Jones' editions, to which he referred (see Lombardo 1992: 265).

4. Concluding Remarks

This essay has tried to demonstrate how, from the seventeenth century onwards, editors and translators have shaped Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, eventually affecting its literary reception in both England and Italy. Furthermore, the results emerging from the two case studies here indicate that in some instances the line between editing and translation gets thinner and thinner. Oftentimes, contemporary critics have shed light on the active role played by the translator who deals with any Shakespearian text:

> he does cooperate to give new life to the plays, introducing them into a new language and into a new world, and he can also occasionally contribute new

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[23] It is worth remarking that in 1988 – four years before publishing his translation –, the scholar actively participated in the staging of the Roman play directed by Giancarlo Cobelli. Being he in charge of the translation and the arrangement of the script, he selected "autumn" instead of "Antony." I would like to thank Dr. Fabio Gambetti for kindly providing me with the original script of Cobelli's *Antonio e Cleopatra*. All the edited material regarding the performance are available online at Valeria Moriconi Centre of Theatre Studies and Activities http://www.centrovaleriamoriconi.org/home/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=97&Itemid=129 (2023.07.15).

readings to the original texts. […] Trying to unravel such a complex texture, the foreign critic-translator may make some discovery or at least raise some doubts about accepted interpretations, particularly when he has to cope with cruces, neologisms, and hapax legomena (Serpieri 2004: 28–29).

The Italian versions examined above confirm such a statement: by choosing to write in prose, verses or both and, most notably, by dealing with literary cruces, "[t]ranslators [were] no longer merely reproducers of a source text in the target language, but active decision-makers who [assumed] responsibility for the functional adequacy of the translation" (Kaindl 2021: 6). Indeed, they exerted editorial power in omitting details – as Cesare Vico Lodovici did when he refused to translate "arm-gaunt"/"arrogant" –; or neglecting the *First Folio*, by opting for an alternative lemma to fit a specific line, as for the rendering of "autumn"/"Anthony."

If, as Parks (2007: 9) argues, "we can say that given the profound differences between any two languages and cultures, the translator is forced to think hard about the function of the text," it is fair to suppose that, in this case, the Italian translators had a bias toward a purely target-oriented translation.[24] Consequently, in some instances, they intentionally detached from the source text for the sake of the readers. In this direction, the second case study may prove such a hypothesis: the lines "*La sua generosità non aveva inverno, era / Un autunno che tanto più cresceva quanto più veniva mietuto*" ["For his bounty, there was no *winter* in't, an / *autumn* it was that *grew* the more by *reaping*"; my emphasis] would sound reasonable to a diverse public, composed by both experts and theatre enthusiasts, thanks to a semantic *continuum* detectable between the lines, both revolving around nature and its cycle. Conversely, "Antonio" [Antony] as a replacement for "autunno" [autumn] may be interpreted as a hazardous deviation that would jeopardise the semantic structure of the passage, finally destabilising the reader.

In conclusion, the cases illustrated above reveal the complex relationship between the English editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and its Italian translations. However, debating about such a precious legacy contributes to ensuring that "age cannot whither" the text, "nor costum stale [its] infinite variety" (2.2.244).

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[24] In this regard, the evaluation criteria adopted by the Italian translators resemble those of the so-called trans-editors, who "[evaluate] the work of translation from the perspective of target readers' needs" (Hu 2018: 184) and devote special attention to the "functions of texts, analysing semantical and pragmatical equivalences between the source and target texts" (House 2015: 63).

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