

“TRANSLATED OUT OF ITALIAN”. FROM PASQUALIGO TO MUNDAY: REWRITING ITALIAN COMEDY IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

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More and more strongly believed to be the work of Anthony Munday,¹ *Fedele and Fortunio* is one of the few English comedies written before the end of the sixteenth century which are known to be direct elaborations of Italian plays, and as such it provides an interesting case for comparative study. The purpose of this paper is to offer an updated reading of it in close relation to its source and to two other plays which derived from the same Italian original.

The play's only early edition, a quarto printed for Thomas Hacket, appeared in 1585, following the entry in the Stationers' Register made by Hacket himself on 12 November 1584. Both this record and the title-page of Hacket's quarto describe it as a translation from the Italian, although no specific mention of the source is made in either of them. However, this has been long identified in Luigi Pasqualigo's *Il Fedele*, of which the English play is more properly an adaptation. This is a prose comedy in five acts published in Venice for the first time in 1576 and then again in 1579 and 1585. After a detailed textual analysis, Richard Hosley has convincingly argued that it is on the second edition of *Il Fedele* that Munday's comedy was based, which brings the earlier limit of its composition to the year 1579.²

¹ The uncertainty over the question of the authorship of *Fedele and Fortunio* originates from the fact that there is no mention of the author's name on the title page of the play's first edition, where only his initials, "A. M.", are reported. For an exhaustive survey on the subject see: R. HOSLEY, "The Authorship of *Fedele and Fortunio*", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 30: 4 (1966-67) pp. 315-330.

² IDEM, "The Date of *Fedele and Fortunio*", *The Modern Language Review*, 57 (1962), pp. 385-386.

Very little information is available about the author of the Italian play.³ We know for certain that he belonged to the Venetian nobility: for generations since the beginning of the twelfth century his family had been involved in the leadership of Venice, including among its members knights, diplomats, military chiefs, as well as scholars and poets. Like some of his ancestors Luigi (or Alvisè) Pasqualigo was both a soldier and a man of letters, but in the end, "more a follower of Mars than of Apollo", as his brother Filippo presented him in the dedicatory letter to the posthumous edition of Luigi's poems.⁴ Nevertheless, he had a quite productive literary career, which started with a collection of love letters, published for the first time in 1563 anonymously with the title of *Lettere di Due Amanti* (Two Lovers' Letters). In 1569 they were republished with the author's name and the new title of *Lettere Amoroze* (Love Letters). Other editions followed in 1573, 1581 and 1607. Divided into four volumes the book consists of a long epistolary exchange between two illicit lovers, the author himself and a Venetian married woman, who write to each other over the years about their mutual feelings and various events related to their relationship, so that the work actually takes the shape of a novel, in fact, the first modern epistolary novel of Italian literature. In 1576, aged only forty, Luigi Pasqualigo died of plague, just after the first edition of *Il Fedele* was published. Two more of his works, the pastoral romance *Gl'Intricati* and the *Rime Volgari*, were published only after his death, respectively in 1581 and 1605. For all we know, then, *Il Fedele* was Pasqualigo's only attempt to write a comedy, and no evidence has been so far produced that it was ever staged. In the dedication of the play to one Messer Alvigi Giorgio, the author states that the story dramatized there is inspired by a personal experience, the same one which had already originated the love letters published years before. As a matter of fact, the main action of the comedy is anticipated in an episode reported

³ Some information on Pasqualigo's life and family can be found in: EMMANUELE ANTONIO CIGOGNA, *Personaggi Illustri della Veneta Patrizia Gente Pasqualigo richiamati alla Memoria per celebrare le fauste nozze Pasqualigo-Scovolo*, Venezia, pel Picotti Tipogr. Edit., 1822; GIOVANNI BATTISTA DI CROLLALANZA, *Dizionario storico-blasonico delle famiglie delle famiglie nobili e notabili italiane estinte e fiorenti*, 3 voll., Pisa: presso la Direzione del Giornale Araldico Italiano, 1886-90) II (1888), 290-1; MARIO PELAEZ, "Luigi Pasqualigo" in *Enciclopedia Italiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, Roma, 1935-43, 26: 449.

in the last two volumes of the *Lettere Amoroze*. Here, as later in the play, the man comes home from a journey and finds out that the woman has a new lover and that in order to stop him from revealing her adultery she has hired somebody to kill him. Even the names of some of the protagonists of the story are echoed in its later dramatic elaboration, as in the cases of Fortunio, the man's rival, and of the hired assassin, whose name is changed from Frangipane into Frangipietra.⁵

It is possible that what urged Pasqualigo to write a comedy on the same argument of his love letters was the desire to repeat their publishing success. However, in the dedication of the play he declares that behind his decision to re-present the same story in dramatic form there is first of all the hope to achieve his revenge over the woman who caused him so much sorrow by having, one day, the comedy represented before her; secondly, because he aims to use his unfortunate love experience as an example to instruct younger men against the perils of love and the deceitful nature of women. The same didactic purpose, along with the misogynistic ideology which supports it, is expressed in the play's prologue. Here, after a short synopsis of the plot, the author claims once more the authenticity of the story which inspired it, and therefore the originality of his work, which, he proudly asserts, is independent from the influence of the common practices of the contemporary comic theatre. In reality the plot is the only truly original feature of this comedy, which appears for the rest heavily indebted to the canons of the Renaissance comic tradition.

For a start, both its formal structure and the construction of the dramatic action are rather conventional by *cinquecento* comedy standards, with the classical division in five acts introduced by a prologue, and the central plot built around four lovers and made elaborate by the creation of a net of multiple subordinate intrigues, all coming to a solution at the end in a typical conciliatory *finale*. The themes which propel the action (adultery, the jealousy of a betrayed lover, unreturned love, the

⁴ ALVISE PASQUALIGO, *Rime*, Venetia, appresso Gio. Battista Ciotti, 1605.

⁵ Adolfo Albertazzi has argued that the genuinely autobiographical character of the letters is proved by the lack of symmetry in their sequence and by the cautious vagueness with which the two lovers refer to people and objects, often just by their initials, which makes it difficult for any other reader to identify them. (A. ALBERTAZZI, *Romanzieri e Romanzi del Cinquecento e del*

resourcefulness of cunning servants) and the situations in which it develops (people spying on other people or accidentally overhearing their private conversations, use of sorcery, attempts at seduction, clandestine encounters), are not at all uncommon in the works of the Italian playwrights of that period, although here the tone of the play reaches moments of tragic seriousness when revenge and mutual death threats are introduced in the dramatic design.

Contrary to what is stated in the prologue, the most popular comic types of the Italian Renaissance theatre find their part in this play, from the pedant to the braggart-soldier; from the sorceress/go-between to the cuckolded husband; from the unscrupulous libertine to the shrewd servants and maids, as usual involved in their masters' intrigues. Moreover, as in many other comedies of the time, the nature of their names is often allusive and contributes to the ironic definition of their roles. The protagonist Fedele, for example, is so called to emphasize his constancy in love, whereas his rival's name, Fortunio, implies the character's luck with women. An ironic hint of cuckoldry is conveyed by the name of Cornelio, the betrayed husband, through its assonance with the word *corna* (horns), which in Italian popular iconography are the notorious symbol of such a state. As for the braggart soldier, he himself explains that his name, Frangipietra (breakstone), is a reminder of his incredible ability to destroy city walls and reduce stones into dust with his bare hands, except that such a legendary reputation will be soon contradicted by cowardly behaviour.

In addition to that, the most typical comic devices are employed, with plenty of cases of both accidental and induced mistaken identities, disguises, bed-tricks, failed magic rituals. Deception, on different levels, and mutual manipulation are the real focus of this play, where almost everybody, at some point, conjures up tricks at somebody else's expense for his own good in pure *commedia delle beffe*'s style. To some extent, even the claim of truthfulness and the didactic spirit expressed in the letter to the dedicatee are not alien to the practice of comedy-writing in Renaissance Italy.

It has been suggested that it is possibly in connection with the author's idea of giving this story a character of exemplarity that its location is left unspecified and simply referred to in the prologue as the town of "N".⁶ The only concrete coordinates in terms of space provided by the text are the ones which define the scenic space, which, as we learn from the prologue, is limited at the background by the houses of the four lovers. It is against this fairly anonymous scenery that the following story takes place:

After having spent some time in Spain on business, Fedele de' Cortesi comes back to his country still in love with Vittoria, a married woman with whom he had had an affair, not knowing that she has started a new adulterous relationship with Fortunio de' Gentili, a notorious libertine who utterly despises all women. Although he does not really care for her, Fortunio fears that the return of Vittoria's former lover may interfere with his present affair with her, since he is persuaded that no woman can be trusted, as he confides to his servant Renato in the opening scene of the play.

Meanwhile, alarmed by Vittoria's cold behaviour, Fedele begins to sense her infidelity. He unravels his suspicions to Onofrio, a pedant in his service, who is himself secretly in love with Vittoria, and therefore interested in discouraging his pupil's passion for her. Fedele's doubts are not removed by Vittoria's claim that her feelings for him have not changed, but that because of a religious vow she can no longer be involved in a sinful relationship. Nevertheless, she agrees to see him one more time at her house that same day.

On the other hand Vittoria feels neglected by Fortunio and to win his attentions back she decides to resort to witchcraft. In the following scene Onofrio overhears Renato promising Vittoria's maid Beatrice to see her in secret later at her mistress's house. Being aware that Renato has no intention to keep his promise, the pedant goes to the appointment in his place, dressed up as a servant, and waits for Beatrice to open the door. He hopes that once in, he will finally have his chance to court and, possibly, seduce Vittoria. But

⁶ See the Introduction to Francesca Romana de' Angelis's edition of Luigi Pasqualigo's *Il Fedele*,

his plan is neutralized by Fedele's arrival. Afraid of being recognized, the pedant hides in a sarcophagus, while his master waits for Vittoria to let him in. The woman, instead, drops a letter from her window, in which she begs Fedele not to try and see her again. Fedele is more and more convinced of having a rival and leaves his servant Narciso there to spy for him. From behind a tree, Narciso sees Vittoria, Beatrice and the sorceress Medusa come out of the house to perform the magic rite which should turn Fortunio into a more devoted lover. But the ceremony is interrupted by Onofrio, who jumps out of the sarcophagus screaming after Medusa has thrown some lit candles into it. His sudden appearance terrifies both the three women and Narciso causing their immediate flight. Alone on stage, Onofrio convinces himself that by reporting to Fedele and Fortunio what has happened he will alienate both his rivals from Vittoria and have a free hand with her.

While Onofrio informs Fedele, Vittoria is called on by Fortunio and in order to be alone with him she sends off with an excuse her other maid Attilia. Going out Attilia is met by Narciso, who starts flirting with her with the aim of obtaining some more information about her mistress's love-life. Meanwhile Fedele has approached Vittoria's house, in time to see Fortunio leaving, and mad with jealousy he confronts the woman swearing to inform her husband, Cornelio. Aware that this may put her life in danger, Vittoria resolves to take Beatrice's advice and have Fedele killed, and for this purpose she hires the *bravo* Frangipetra, promising him her favours as a reward.

While this is happening Fedele is looked for by Panfila, whose mistress, Virginia, has long been in love with him, as she confesses to her nurse, Santa, at the beginning of act three. Informed by Panfila that Virginia wishes to speak to him, Fedele pays her a visit during which she expresses her love as well as all the suffering caused by his indifference. Fedele honestly admits that he does not return her feelings, but he grants her his friendship and support.

Narciso, whose romance with Attilia is progressing, accidentally hears Frangipetra talking about his deal with Vittoria, and rushes to inform his master. Fedele is now more determined than ever to pursue his revenge and

after having given Narciso instructions for a trap to neutralize Frangipetra, he invites Cornelio to his house to tell him the truth about Vittoria's adultery. In the meantime Fortunio learns about Vittoria's attempt to put a spell on him. As a result of that he swears that he will never see her again, while his misogyny grows even deeper.

The shift between act three and four is marked by an exchange between Medusa and Beatrice about general matters such as: love, marriage, the various possible causes of infidelity and the art of the go-between, of which Medusa considers herself an expert. As such she has been hired by Fortunio, whose new objective is to seduce Virginia; but given the girl's devotion for Fedele, this will be possible only by means of a trick: Medusa convinces Virginia that Fedele has agreed to see her that very night and that he will come to her chamber disguised as a peasant. The *rendezvous* is attended by Fortunio instead, made unrecognizable by that disguise.

Meanwhile, Fedele has been asked by Cornelio to provide some evidence of his wife's infidelity. Unable to get Onofrio to help him to carry out a trick which would ruin Vittoria, he is assisted by Narciso, who offers to play the role of Vittoria's lover by coming out of her house after an encounter with Attilia, while Fedele and Cornelio are hidden outside, far enough not to recognize the woman, but close enough to hear Narciso calling her by her mistress's name in parting from her. Cornelio is now persuaded that Vittoria has been unfaithful and resolves to kill her using poison. His intentions become clear also to Vittoria, who understands that Fedele is responsible for that, but also that he is the only one who can rescue her life and reputation.

As for Onofrio, he now regrets having caused Fedele's hatred for Vittoria, so he goes to her house to warn her about the danger she is in, hoping she will elope with him. This time he disguises himself as a beggar, borrowing from Narciso the clothes he had used on the occasion of a previous secret date with Attilia. Deceived by the disguise Vittoria's maid believes that Onofrio is her lover, and is in her turn mistaken by Onofrio for her mistress. The misunderstanding is complicated by the arrival of the guards who assume they are both thieves and put them under arrest.

At the same time Frangipetra decides to break his promise to Vittoria and starts simulating a fight in the vicinity of her house, the aim being to convince the woman that he has carried out his task of killing Fedele and is therefore entitled to his reward. But he is interrupted by Narciso and some of his friends who catch him and carry him out in a net.

In the last act of the play Vittoria sends for Fedele who is looking forward to achieving his revenge, but when he sees her, he cannot help being moved by her display of remorse and request for forgiveness. The two lovers have just become reconciled when their intervention is required to clarify Attilia and Onofrio's situation, who in the meanwhile have recognized each other with great disappointment. After that Narciso and his fellows make their entrance carrying Frangipetra around in the net, and so attracting the attention of the guards, who anyway accept Fedele's explanation of the scene as a joke. The scene ends with Frangipetra being released and forgiven by Fedele himself.

In the meantime Virginia has realised that she has been deceived, and accuses Fortunio in public of having violated her. Ottaviano, her father, demands his immediate arrest and Fortunio is about to be taken to jail when Fedele suggests that Virginia and Fortunio should get married instead for their common good: in this way the girl's reputation will be restored and the man will be spared the humiliation of being imprisoned. At the end of the last act, Fedele persuades Cornelio that his wife is innocent by telling him that the woman they had both seen with Narciso was in fact Attilia. He gets him to believe that in parting from his lover Narciso had used the word "Vittoria" in the sense of "victory", that is to express his satisfaction for having won the woman. The play ends with the arrangement of Attilia's and Narciso's wedding by their masters, and Onofrio's announcement of it in a final panegyric.

Considered within its specific literary framework, this play is not devoid of literary value and dramatic merits, and can still be appreciated both as one of the few documents of its author's art, and in its ambiguous relationship with the comic tradition to which it belongs. On the other hand it is very far from being a masterpiece, or even comparable to the works of the masters of the genre, such as

Ariosto, Aretino and Bibbiena. Its plot is far too elaborate, based as it is on such an incessant and intricate sequence of intrigues, misunderstandings and deceits, and involving as it does a large number of characters. Their characterization is in many cases merely stereotypical and therefore quite predictable, and unable to arouse a real human interest. On the other hand the emphasis of the play is more on the action, meaning the preparation and carrying out of the different intrigues, than on the *dramatis personae*, who all seem to be equally focused on their selfish goals, and to share the same manipulative logic. This may explain the neglect of this comedy even by historians of the Italian theatre and literature, and the fact that even the most specialist studies on the Renaissance comedy hardly ever mention it. As a result, it is little known today.

The play has been recently republished in an attempt to rescue it from the oblivion it had fallen into, but the initiative so far has proved fruitless.⁷ What would make this comedy particularly unpalatable (to say the least) to a modern audience's taste, is, of course, its open misogynistic agenda. By making Vittoria's case emblematic of female behaviour, *Il Fedele* propagandizes all sorts of anti-feminist clichés. Throughout the play, women are monotonously targeted with accusations of cruelty, immorality, ingratitude, unfaithfulness, inconstancy, irrationality, lechery and deceitfulness, and referred to as devilish creatures, or, paraphrasing Fortunio's words in Act II, scene VIII, as the basest animal on earth, whose only manifestation of some intellectual capacity consists in their ability to manipulate those men who are foolish enough to fall in love with them.⁸

The truth is that the men in the comedy are certainly not less manipulative and scheming than the women, but their actions are never commented upon as typical of their sex; instead, they are usually justified as a form of retribution against women's supposed faults. Moreover, the titular hero's moral perspective, with which we are invited to sympathize, is clearly very ambiguous: according to his

⁷ L. PASQUALIGO, *Il Fedele*, ed. by Francesca Romana de' Angelis, Rome: E & A editori associati, 1989. All the quotations from the play reported in this paper are taken from this edition.

⁸ "Fortunio: [...] non vi è animale al mondo più vile della donna la quale, conoscendosi tale, e in ciò solo mostra la femina d'aver intelletto, tiene nel suo segreto per bestia ciascun uomo che l'ama, che la desidera e che la segue [...]" (*Il Fedele*, 2, 8).

point of view, Vittoria is not really to be blamed for her adultery, but for having cheated on her lover.

It is possible that other reasons independent from the play's literary defects caused its fall into obscurity. Yet it must have been very successful in its own time, both at home, as its three editions in close succession demonstrate, and abroad, as proved by the fact that within a few years of its first edition it was adapted in three different languages. Two more derivatives of *Il Fedele*, in addition to Munday's play, are known today. The first one is the Latin comedy *Victoria*, by Abraham Fraunce, whose only extant copy before G.C. Moore Smith's edition of 1906 was a manuscript, which is still preserved at Penshurst, probably since the day it was donated by the author to the dedicatee, Sir Philip Sidney.⁹ The fact that in the dedication Sidney is not addressed as "knight" has led scholars to believe that the play was written before he received that title in 1583. In the manuscript, which is very likely to be authorial, there is no allusion to the play's indebtedness to Pasqualigo's comedy nor to any other source, and no information on the matter appears in Moore Smith's edition either. It was only in an article by Wolfgang Keller that *Victoria's* derivation from *Il Fedele* was finally detected.¹⁰

The comedy was certainly composed when Fraunce was still a fellow of St. John's College at Cambridge, and was probably the first adaptation of an Italian play to be produced at an English University. Aiming to write a comedy in the style of the Roman comic dramatists, Fraunce turned Pasqualigo's prose into Latin hexameters, and transferred the action from contemporary Italy to classical Rome. Accordingly, the characters' names are changed into their Latin versions (with the exception of Virginia, Beatrice and Renato, who are respectively renamed Barbara, Virginia and Gallulus); the social apparatus of the play is partially redefined by having the servants and maids of the source transformed into slaves; and some references to Roman customs and history are inserted.

⁹ ABRAHAM FRAUNCE, *Victoria, a Latin Comedy*, ed. from the Penshurst manuscript by G. C. Moore Smith, London, David Nutt, 1906.

¹⁰ WOLFGANG KELLER, Review of *Victoria. A Latin Comedy* by Abraham Fraunce edited from the Penshurst Manuscript by G. C. Moore Smith, *The Modern Language Review*, 1908, pp. 177-181.

A comparison between the two texts shows *Victoria's* essential adherence to the Italian original, of which it is for the most part a close translation. Only a few changes were introduced, and it is generally considered that they do not bring about any real improvement on the source. Probably worried about the excessive length of Pasqualigo's play, Fraunce shortened it by omitting some secondary scenes and cutting some others, but this did not make the plot less complicated, neither did it speed up the action. On the contrary some of the cuts affect the logical progression of the events, leaving some situations suspended, as in the case of Frangipetra, who, after having been hired by Victoria for the murder of Fidelis, simply disappears from the play.

Moreover the omissions are balanced by some interpolations. To the eighteen characters forming the cast of *Il Fedele* Fraunce added three more: one is Onophrius's student, Pegasus, who helps his schoolmaster to rehearse the wooing of Victoria by pretending to be the woman in a scene which has no equivalent in the Italian play. The other two are the thieves Ferrapontigones and Pyrgopolinices (named after the protagonist of Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*), who appear in another new episode of Fraunce's play, inspired by one of Boccaccio's most popular *novelle* (*Decameron*, 2,5). In it the pedant is once more protagonist, and like his narrative counterpart, Andreuccio da Perugia, is involved in an attempt to rob the tomb of a famous cardinal. This scene has no real connection with the main plot, and no influence whatsoever on the action's development. It is rather a self-contained comic *intermezzo* which makes the structure of the play even more episodic, without counting the anachronistic reference to the clergyman in a play which is supposed to be set in ancient Rome. Its main effect, of course, is the expansion of Onophrius's role. On the other hand, in Fraunce's version of the play the figure of the pedant is penalized in another respect: if in the source its comic power mainly derives from the pomposity of its speeches, full of incomprehensible quotations in Latin, in *Victoria* this particular source of its comic potential is partly neutralized by the fact that all the other characters, slaves included, express themselves in classical Latin too. The linguistic realism of *Il Fedele*, where characters speak according to their social status, is therefore lost in the stylistic

uniformity of this Latin version. However, social realism does not appear to have been one of Fraunce's main concerns, since in his play even slaves can quote from Greek and have learned exchanges on philosophical topics, as Narcissus and Attilia do in another interpolated scene of *Victoria* (2,7).

The third derivative of *Il Fedele*, as well as the one which adheres most closely to the original, is the French play by Pierre de Larivey (1540 - 1612 ca.) *Le Fidèle*. Versed in the study of the classics and especially of Italian literature, Larivey was the author of a long series of translations into French of both literary and philosophical works by some of the most representative names of the Italian Renaissance, such as Alessandro Piccolomini and Pietro Aretino. At the age of forty he became interested in the theatre and engaged himself in the project of bringing to the French stage the intrigues and pictures of social life typical of the Italian comedies.

Le Fidèle, which was published for the first time in 1611,¹¹ is one of nine comedies published under Larivey's name, all more or less faithfully translated from the Italian.¹² However, its exact date of composition is still unknown. In the dedication of this first edition to M. d'Amboise, the author explains that he has found the text of the play (and of two others included in the same volume) among some old papers of his. This means that *Le Fidèle* may have been written many years before, perhaps even simultaneously with the Latin and English versions of Pasqualigo's comedy.¹³

¹¹ PIERRE DE LARIVEY CHAMPENOIS, *Le Fidelle: comédie*, Troyes, Pierre Chavillot l'Imprimeur du Roy, 1611.

¹² These were: *Le Laquais*, drawn from L. Dolce's *Il Ragazzo*; *La Veuve*, from N. Buonaparte's *La Vedova*; *Les Esprits*, from *L'Aridosia* by Lorenzino de' Medici; *Le Morfondue*, translated from Grazzini's *La Gelosia*; *Les Jaloux*, from *I Gelosi*, by Vincenzo Gabbiani; *Les Escolliers*, from Razzi's *Zecca*; *La Constance*, translated from Razzi's *La Gostanza*; *Le Fidèle*, from Pasqualigo's *Il Fedele*, and *Les Trompéries*, from N. Secchi's *Gl'Inganni*. The first six of them appeared together for the first time in 1579 with the title *Les six premières comédies facétieuses de Pierre de Larivey*, Paris, chez Abel Angelier, 1579.

¹³ Some critics, like Louis Morin, consider it probable that the three comedies by Larivey published in 1611 were composed in the author's youth, at the same time as the other six, equally drawn from Italian models, which had already been published in 1579. See LOUIS MORIN, *Les Trois Pierre de Larivey: Biographie et Bibliographie*, Troyes, J.L. Paton, 1937, p.71. Luigia Zilli, on the other hand, in the introduction to her edition of Larivey's play is more inclined to believe that the last three comedies belong to a later stage of Larivey's writing career on purely stylistic grounds, since they "trahissent une certaine fatigue et s'insèrent dans un climat théâtral qui a déjà tourné

An analysis of the play shows that the cast, plot, and scene order of the source are kept unaltered, with hardly any cut or addition in the dialogue which, like in the model, is written in prose. The linguistic adherence to the source is extremely strong, to the point that it is not rare to come across words or sentences which do not sound as genuinely French, but rather as calques of Italian phrases or idiomatic expressions. Panfila's words "Bon prò ti faccia" (*Il Fedele*, 1, 7), are translated by Larivey as "Bon prou te fasse" (*Le Fidèle*, 1, 6). As a matter of fact, from the prologue to the very end, *Le Fidèle* appears to be a word-by-word translation of Pasqualigo's comedy.

If on the one hand the linguistic dependence of the play on *Il Fedele* betrays its Italian origin, on the other, there are aspects which seem to indicate the translator's intention to make his version of the comedy appear genuinely French. After all, the 1611 edition does not present the play as a translation, nor even as an adaptation of Pasqualigo's play, but rather as Larivey's original dramatic creation. Not one word in this version is left in the original language, not even the characters' names, which are either translated or changed to others which appear more typically French. In this renaming process, Frangipetra becomes "Brisemur" (breakwall), Onofrio is called M. Iosse, whereas Attilia and Panfila appear respectively under the names of "Blaisine" and "Babille", which the audience of the time would probably have perceived as more suitable for the characters of two French maids. Consistently with the change, the etymological explanation revealing the Terentian origin of Panfila's name given by the pedant in the fourteenth scene of the second act,¹⁴ is substituted by a comment on the meaning of the name "Babille", from the French *babiller*, which, in M. Iosse's words, "est fort proper aux femmes qui veulent toujours babiller" (*Le Fidèle*, 2, 14).¹⁵

vers le melange des genres" (P. DE LARIVEY, *Le Fidèle*, pref. de Luigia Zilli, Paris, Cicero éd., 1989, pp.xii-xiii)

¹⁴ "Onofrio: Questo nome è introducto da Terenzio nell'Andria et è nome del figliuolo di Simone e significa tutto amico, da Pan che significa tutto e philos ch'importa amore o amicizia onde, se 'l nome è conveniente alla cosa, tu dei esser amica d'ognuno" (*Il Fedele*, 2, 14).

¹⁵ "[...] suits particularly well those women who chat and chat talking just nonsense" (my translation).

The elimination of some other clues to the comedy's Italian background, such as Pietro Aretino's name, mentioned by the sorceress Medusa in *Il Fedele* (3, 12) and elided by Larivey probably for reasons of censorship, contributes to make the setting of the French play more uncertain. No location at all is indicated in the prologue, which, by the way, lacks the lines reporting "N" as the place where the action of Pasqualigo's play is set. Yet, some references to other Italian eminent people, such as Palemone Vicentino (*Il Fedele*, I, 3), who in Larivey's translation is qualified as "Venitien" (*Le Fidèle*, I, 3), or Guarino (*Il Fedele*, II, 14), whose name is simply changed to a more French sounding "Guarin" (*Le Fidèle*, II, 14), may still lead to the identification of Italy as the original setting of the story.

The fact that Larivey fails to acknowledge the debt of *Le Fidèle* to Pasqualigo's *Il Fedele* in the 1611 edition, and that the only changes he made in his translation clearly aimed to produce the impression that the comedy was originally French, does not necessarily mean that the author was trying to pass the play as his own, but may be read as his attempt to establish a new kind of French comedy which, though based on foreign models, was purely French in its setting. In a way such a project had already been announced in the dedicatory letter of the 1579 edition of his first six comedies, whose dependence on both Italian and classical models is explicitly stated also on the title page: "à l'imitation des anciens Grecs, Latins, & modernes Italiens"). In the Letter Larivey sees himself as an innovator among the French dramatists of the age, the first to experiment a "nouvelle façon d'écrire en ce nouveou genre de comédie, qui n'a encores esté beaucoup pratiqué entre nos François [...]", and that he has learnt following the example of some Italian authors, whom he does not hesitate to list: "Laurens de Médicis, père du Pape Léon Dixième, François Grassin, Vincent Gabiens, Hiéronime Razzi, Nicolas Bonnepart, Loys Dolce et autres qui ont autant acquis de réputation en leur vivant et espéré de mémoire après leur décez [...]."¹⁶

The uncertainty surrounding the actual dates of composition of *Il Fedele*'s three derivatives makes it difficult to establish which of them was its first adaptation.

¹⁶ From the dedicatory letter in P. DE LARIVEY, *Les six premières comédies facétieuses*, Paris, Chez Abel Angelier, 1579.

On the contrary, what can be confidently stated is that they were not inter-related in the derivation from their common source. Even a superficial look at the three texts, reveals that neither *Victoria* nor *Le Fidèle* could be indebted to Munday's play, because their versions are clearly much closer to the original than *Fedele and Fortunio*, which, on the other hand, is undoubtedly a direct elaboration of the Italian comedy. This is easily proved by the presence in the English play of quite a few words, some sentences and two whole passages in Italian which were merely transcribed from the source, and which are not to be found either in the Latin or in the French texts. At the same time *Le Fidèle* is too straightforward a translation to be thought of as an indirect derivative of *Il Fedele*. As for *Victoria*, it also has much more in common with the Italian comedy than with Larivey's. In fewer words, all three are far closer to their source than they are to one another, and that eliminates any possibility to speculate on their interdependence, whereas it provides solid evidence of *Il Fedele*'s great popularity abroad in the years which immediately followed its publication.

In contrast with the lack of reference, both in the Peshurst manuscript and in *Le Fidèle*'s first edition, to the derivative nature of Fraunce's and Larivey's plays, the indebtedness of *Fedele and Fortunio* to an Italian model was immediately acknowledged. Both in the Stationers' Register 1584 entry, which is the earliest traceable record of the play's existence, and in the title-page of the 1585 quarto, the English comedy is said to have been 'translated out of Italian'. Which, considering the semantic flexibility of the word "translation" in Elizabethan English, probably simply meant that it was based on an Italian source.¹⁷

In fact, of *Il Fedele*'s three elaborations, Munday's is the one to which the definition of translation applies the least. In the dedication of its only early edition to Mr. Heardson Esquire, presumably written by the author himself, the comedy is alternatively referred to as a "conveyance", which appears today as a less

¹⁷ Giorgio Melchiori has argued that Munday used the words "Translated out of Italian" to describe his comedy to the readers simply to emphasize the derivation of his play from an Italian model, since he "had no other aim than that of providing a fairly sophisticated and partly Italianate English audience with a recent example of Italian comedy [...]". GIORGIO MELCHIORI, *Shakespeare Garter Plays: 'Edward III' to 'Merry Wives of Windsor'*, London, Associated

restraining description of what is in fact a rather creative adaptation of Pasqualigo's work.¹⁸

As Gilberto Storari has rightly pointed out, only part of the Italian text was actually utilized by Munday, and of that part only a few sections were literally translated.¹⁹ Besides, the possibilities of achieving an absolute verbal correspondence even in those parts, were objectively limited by Munday's substitution of Pasqualigo's prose with verse. This choice was certainly consistent with the general tendency of the Elizabethan comic playwrights to use the latter, in contrast with that of their Italian contemporaries to see more and more in prose the natural language of comedy.

The use of prose in opposition to verse in comedy-writing had been a long debated question among the theorists of dramatic art in sixteenth-century Italy. On one side there were those, like Giraldi, De Nores and Summo, who insisted on the superiority of verse being it the form used by the classics; on the other, those, such as Agostino Michele and Paolo Beni, who defended the concept of comedy as imitation of reality, and argued that no credible representation of it would be possible by having characters express themselves in verse. Moreover, it was pointed out that prose had the advantage of being more accessible to the common people and, therefore, of providing a more effective vehicle for moral teaching. Also encouraged by the more favourable response of the popular audience, prose finally prevailed, and during the second half of the century the majority of comedies written in Italy were in prose.²⁰

The impression of *vraisemblance* in the dialogue achieved in *Il Fedele* through the fact that its characters realistically communicate in prose, is reversed in *Fedele*

University Press, 1994, p. 84.

¹⁸ Richard Hosley suggests that "the word *conveiance* may reasonably be interpreted in the sense of "disposition of material" (*OED*, sense 9), a matter chiefly the concern not of a translator but of the original author." R. HOSLEY, "The Authorship of *Fedele and Fortunio*", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 30: 4 (1966-67), p.319.

¹⁹ GILBERTO STORARI, "Un Adattamento Inglese di una Commedia Italiana del '500; *Fedele and Fortunio* di Anthony Munday", *Quaderni di Lingue e Letterature*, 1 (1976), p. 104.

²⁰ On this subject see: MARIA LUISA ALTIERI BIAGI, *Sulla lingua della commedia del '500*, in *Il teatro classico italiano del '500*, Roma, Accademia dei Lincei, 1969; NINO BORSELLINO, ROBERTO MERCURI, *Il teatro del Cinquecento*, Bari, Laterza, 1973; GIANFRANCO FOLENA, *Lingua e Strutture del teatro italiano del Rinascimento*, Padova, Liviana, 1970.

and Fortunio by Munday's adoption of verse. His characters mostly converse in rhymed couplets, which rather confers on the situation dramatized in the English play a general effect of artificiality and quite a light atmosphere. On the other hand, the English dramatist does not seem to be interested in presenting his dramatic piece as a truthful depiction of real life, which on the contrary was one of Pasqualigo's main concerns. In the short prologue in verse which substitutes the original one and was written to be recited before the Queen, the author declares that 'He shoots at mirth', explicitly indicating the pleasant entertainment of the audience as his play's only aim.

The action in Munday's play develops as follows:

After a long journey abroad, Fedele has just come back to his country where he had left the woman he loves, Victoria. But during his absence she has fallen in love with Fortunio, who loves in his own turn. However Fedele's return worries Fortunio who asks Captain Crackstone, also secretly infatuated with Victoria, to investigate the woman's true feelings. At the same time, she is not sure of Fortunio's love either, and tries to bewitch him with the help of the sorceress Medusa. The magic ritual is witnessed by Fedele's schoolmaster and confidant, Pedante, and by Crackstone himself, who interrupts the ceremony with a sudden appearance.

In order to have Victoria for himself the Captain informs both his rivals about the episode. Having so learnt of Victoria's love for Fortunio, Fedele is determined to be revenged on her by getting his rival to believe that she is having an affair with another man. So he persuades Fortunio to hide with him outside the woman's house to see a disguised Pedante come out after an encounter with Victoria's maid Attilia, and hear him call the woman by her mistress's name. Enraged, Fortunio first threatens to kill Victoria, but then drops the idea and turns his attentions to Virginia, who has long been in love with Fedele.

In the meantime Victoria has realized that Fedele is responsible for the misunderstanding which has caused Fortunio's estrangement, and in order to prevent him from causing further damage to her reputation, she asks

Crackstone to kill him. But the Captain's attempt of carrying out such a task is easily neutralized by Fedele, Pedante and the watchmen, who catch him in a net and carry him around encouraging the ladies of the town to empty their chamber-pots over his head. However, he is soon released, but only to fall victim to another trick of Pedante's: having previously promised Attilia to elope with her that very night, the schoolmaster sends Crackstone to the appointment disguised as a beggar, after having persuaded him that he will find Victoria there dressed as a maid, ready to run away with him. The misunderstanding is not clarified until the two fugitives are caught by the watchmen.

Meanwhile Medusa helps Fortunio to enter Virginia's chamber while the girl is asleep. The intrusion is soon discovered by Virginia's father Ottaviano, who, at first, demands the man's arrest, but in the end Fortunio's marriage proposal is accepted by Virginia and followed by the arrangement of three other weddings, that is those between Fedele and Victoria, Crackstone and Attilia, and Pedante and Medusa.

Although the skeleton of the plot is still very close to the original and its most significant episodes reappear fully developed, the text of the English play is considerably shorter than its model's, and the action appears simplified as a result both of the omission or partial cutting of some scenes, and of the reduction in number of the *dramatis personae*. Of the eighteen characters forming the original cast of *Il Fedele*, six disappear from Munday's play, but in one case only, that of Vittoria's husband Cornelio, the absence involves a significant change in the main plot. The other omissions concern supporting figures, and precisely: Fortunio's servant Renato, Fedele's servant Narciso, Vittoria's maid Beatrice, Virginia's nurse and Marcello, a steward who works in Vittoria's household, whose entire part in Pasqualigo's text consists of a single line. However, for some of them, the absence is more nominal than actual, since at least part of their dramatic function survives in some of the characters retained.

In order to make the original intrigue less complicated and speed up the action, Munday did not simply suppress some of Pasqualigo's material, but he intervened

in it very creatively coalescing together scenes and episodes which appear separately in the source and rearranging the dramatic sequence of events. This certainly suggests that his reworking of the model was based on a thorough study and selection of his source-material. Even the scenes which he omitted altogether do not seem to have been dismissed without a prior accurate reading, as proved by the fact that some even tiny fragments of dialogue originally to be found in them, reappear, recontextualized by Munday, in the text of *Fedele and Fortunio*. For example, the play's opening lines: 'He that discloseth to a friend the secrets of his mind/ Doth rob himself of liberty;' (1.1.1-2),²¹ which Fortunio says considering the opportuneness of confiding his love for Victoria to Crackstone, clearly echo Panfila's quotation of the proverb "A chi dici il tuo segreto doni la tua libertà" (*Il Fedele*, 1.7), occurring during a conversation with Beatrice eliminated by Munday. Likewise, Attilia's allusion to the tale of Florio and Biancofiore as the perfect example of romantic love, during an encounter with Pedante (*Fedele and Fortunio*, 2.5.35-36) is the only surviving element of a conversation between Virginia and her nurse in *Il Fedele*, 3.2.

The coalescence of separate sections of the original text also enables Munday to elaborate his scenes independently from the rather conventional and, at times, rigid patterns according to which some of Pasqualigo's scenes are constructed. The first two scenes of the Italian play, for example, have an identical structure and have obviously been composed so as to parallel each other: in both, the servant or socially subordinate figure (Renato in the first scene and Onofrio in the second one) comes alone on stage and delivers a monologue in which he reveals his opportunistic reasons for serving his master; then, the master (Fortunio in scene one and Fedele in scene two) reaches him on stage to disclose his secrets and ask him for advice. Such symmetry is not repeated in *Fedele and Fortunio*, where the dramatic presentation of the events has a more fluid quality.

²¹ All references to the text of *Fedele and Fortunio* are taken from: R. HOSLEY, *A critical Edition of Anthony Munday's Fedele and Fortunio*, A Garland Series, New York and London, Garland Publishing, 1981.

Munday's rewriting of the play appears to be also marked by a tendency to reduce the number of soliloquies, which in *Il Fedele* are not only numerous, but often very long and repetitive in their content. As a result, greater emphasis is put on the development of the dialogue, which provides the English play with a more dramatic and less narrative quality.

Unlike Fraunce, who transferred the action to ancient Rome, and Larivey, who made the setting of his version ambiguous by giving his characters French names, Munday not only kept the story's original Italian background, but seems to have been eager to emphasize it. For a start, that Italy provides the setting of his comedy is implicitly announced by its full title, which along with the Italian names of the two male protagonists, includes the description of the play itself as *The Pleasant and Fine Conceited Comedy of Two Italian Gentlemen, with the Merry Devices of Captain Crackstone*. Besides, by setting the scene in the town of Naples, the English author gave the action an even more precise geographical location than the one given to Pasqualigo's play. It is very probable that Munday's only reason for choosing Naples was the fact that it was the most famous Italian city whose initial coincided with the letter indicated in the prologue of *Il Fedele* as the anonymous location of that play. On the other hand, his choice could be seen as interestingly appropriate, considering the special emphasis given in the English version to the figure of the braggart, a popular variant of which in the Italian Renaissance comedy was the so-called "Neapolitan type". Usually characterized also as a self-celebrating womanizer, this figure certainly finds a good equivalent in Captain Crackstone, who proudly states that '[never] a proper gentlewoman in Naples were out/ of quaintance with me' (1.1.26).²²

Consistently with the choice of setting, the characters' names are left in the original language and generally reproduce those of their Italian counterparts,

²² Benedetto Croce has theorized the existence of a "Neapolitan type" as the object of satire in Italian Renaissance comedy. His analysis of the Neapolitan characters present in a number of Italian comedies of the sixteenth century has revealed that such figures were generally characterized as presumptuous, vainglorious types, bragging either about their nobility, or about their luck with women, or about their courage in facing and killing their enemies, but who generally acted cowardly when faced with danger, and often ended up being swindled and ridiculed. See: B. CROCE, *Saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento*, Bari, Laterza, 1911.

except for Crackstone himself, whose name is one of the possible literal translations of the Italian Frangipietra; whereas the names of Vittoria and of Virginia's maid, Panfila, were simply adapted to the Latin spelling, and reappear as "Victoria" and "Panphila".

Finally, the somewhat large presence of words and sentences of various length left untranslated from the source, acts as yet another powerful reminder for the reader/spectator of the fact that action takes place in Italy. Without considering the names of the characters as they occur within the text, *Fedele and Fortunio* contains over one hundred and thirty Italian words. These are concentrated in the first three acts, whereas hardly any can be found in acts four and five, as if, after having been extensively used in the first half of the play, they had entirely fulfilled their function of characterizing the scenery as unmistakably Italian.

On the whole the single words and one-line sentences kept by Munday in the original language integrate quite smoothly in the English text, leaving its intelligibility for a non-Italian speaking audience basically unaffected. They include: some proper nouns; words like "*piazza*" and "*diavolo*", whose meaning was probably notorious; some common forms of greeting, such as "*Addio*" (Farewell) and "*Mi raccomando*" (literally, "I recommend myself to you"), which are made easily recognizable as such by their position within the dialogue; and some colourful expressions in the form of exclamatory sentences, which occur in the dialogue as instinctive responses to unexpected or upsetting circumstances, but whose meaning is basically irrelevant for the progression of the action, or anyway detectable from the overall tone of the dialogue.

A couple of examples of the kind can be found in the second scene of act two of *Fedele and Fortunio*. Here Pedante observes unseen the attempt to bewitch Fortunio carried out by Medusa, Victoria and Attilia, and occasionally comments on it unheard by them. The Italian words '*vi possano portare in precipizio*' (May they carry you off to Hell) (2.2.71), pronounced by him after a long list of evil spirits has been evoked by the sorceress, do not contain any vital information; they simply convey Pedante's anger, which he had already expressed in English in very similar terms: 'The greatest fiend of Hell come and take you all' (2.2.56).

Earlier in that scene the same character had uttered his surprise at the sight of the three strangely disguised women, exclaiming (like Narciso in *Il Fedele*) 'Oh, che cricca di vacche!' (What a bunch of cows), which he himself immediately turns into English: 'What cattle' (2.2.6). As in the previous case, it seems to be the impulsive nature of such a comment which provokes and justifies the speaker's sudden shift to his native language.

But when the author has the pedant read the entire text of Vittoria's letter to Fedele in Italian first, and then translate it into English for the obvious benefit of the audience, his choice appears not only superfluous but odd. The translation in this case is necessary because the letter's content enforces Fedele's suspicions of the woman's infidelity, which are one of the action's propelling elements; at the same time it makes the presence of the text of the message in the original language redundant.

Although the two plays' settings correspond from a geographical point of view, Munday's representation of the moral and social world of his comedy appears quite different from Pasqualigo's. As a result of his selective as well as creative use of the source-material, the decadent, promiscuous society of the Italian play is considerably reformed, to the point that it is impossible not to recognize in Munday's re-interpretation of the story a moralizing intent.

A first step in this direction is represented by the omission of Cornelio. By excluding him from the cast, Munday transforms Victoria from an adulterous wife into a single gentlewoman, whose only fault at the beginning of the story lies in the fact that she has been inconstant in love. Moreover, the English text supplies no evidence that her relationship, either with Fedele or with Fortunio, has been other than platonic. Instead, it provides good reasons to believe the contrary. In the play's opening scene Fortunio speaks to Crackstone about the nature of his acquaintance with her in the following terms:

Fort. Her have I seen of late, and often by her window passed,
From which she let a letter fall, which taking up in haste
read, and found within describing the frantic fits of love.

Whether it were for me or any else I cannot prove.

(1.1.27-30)

If he is telling the truth, then all there has been between Victoria and Fortunio up to this point in the story is a passionate love letter dropped by her from her window, and the man is not even sure that it was meant for him.

As for Crackstone, whose Italian counterpart is among Vittoria's lovers, he is, in Victoria's words, simply one of her "gallants" (2.4.85).

Also Fortunio comes across in the English comedy as the ennobled version of his Italian equivalent. The arrogant and callous libertine of *Il Fedele*, who brags about his success with women while confessing his contempt for them, and admits that not love but pride and the reluctance to give up a pleasant habit cause his unwillingness to lose Vittoria to another man, is at odds with the image of the character who, in the opening scene of *Fedele and Fortunio*, comes on stage 'showing a sad countenance' (see stage-direction, 1.1) and soon confesses that '[his] heart is sore' (1.1.5) at the idea that Victoria may love someone else. Munday has turned him into a sensitive and even shy lover whose attachment to Victoria is motivated by a genuinely romantic interest.

Only when he is confronted with the appearance of her unfaithfulness, do his feelings change:

Fort. Her treason makes my raging thoughts to swell
Beyond the bounds of all humanity.

(4.3.40-41)

and an impellent need for revenge is expressed:

Fort. I will, and will revenge as far as you bind me

(4.3.33)

But even then, his hatred is focused on Victoria and not indiscriminately extended to all women, in which respect he has very little in common with his misogynistic Italian counterpart. On the contrary, it soon appears clear that preserving other

women's good disposition towards himself is more important than being revenged on the one woman who, he thinks, betrayed him.

Fort. But yet before revenge my fury take,
I'll offer service to Virginia,
Lest every dame hereafter me forsake
When it is known how I used Victoria.
(4.3.46-49)

Finally the whole episode of Fortunio's pursuit of Virginia receives in Munday's play a significantly more morally acceptable elaboration than in the source, putting all the characters involved in it in a much better light. If in Pasqualigo's comedy the seduction of the girl is conceived and carried out as a mere act of libertinism, in its English adaptation Fortunio's desire to win her with the help of Medusa is originated by 'the love that I to fair Virginia bear' (4.5.23). Knowing that the girl is devoted to Fedele, and therefore unlikely to accept his courtship, he resolves to enter her bed-chamber at night, just in order to compromise her reputation and make her unmarriageable by anybody else.

Besides, not only are Fortunio's motives somewhat nobler, but the young woman's virginity is not actually violated, as Medusa duly points out in the play's final scene.

Med. Although this gallant in Virginia's chamber you did see,
Yet is her honor as it was, unspotted by the same,
And kept by me, which ever had regard unto her name.
(5.4.58-60)

The fact that her chastity is preserved is functional to the making of Virginia a romantic heroine and a fitter bride at the end of the play. In this matter it is important to notice that whereas in *Il Fedele* the young woman had arranged with Medusa to receive Fedele in her room, in the English version there is no evidence of this happening. On the contrary, according to Medusa's report, at the time of Fortunio's intrusion she 'was fast asleep' (5.4.65), which suggests that she was unprepared for anybody's visit, and therefore completely innocent.

At the end of the comedy, Virginia agrees to marry Fortunio and Victoria to marry Fedele, while the weddings of Attilia with Crackstone and Medusa with Pedante are also arranged. Although these unions are in different ways all induced by the circumstances, they are welcomed by the couples involved, and provide a romantic (though hardly probable) *finale*, which seems to convey and promote faith in the domestic values of marriage.

The, perhaps ingenuous, optimism of Munday's ending contrasts soundly with the cynicism of the ending of *Il Fedele*, where a decisively sceptical view of marriage is suggested. Here Fortunio and Virginia are trapped into marrying each other, and the adulterous *liaison* between Victoria and Fedele is restored at the end of the play. At the same time, a new case of adultery is announced, as Fedele declares his intention to seduce Virginia after she has become Fortunio's wife, in order to be revenged on his old rival. In other words, only the appearance of morality is re-established, while promiscuity still rules.

Munday's moralization of Pasqualigo's plot has reflections even on Medusa's characterization. Although she keeps her original functions of charlatan, sorceress and go-between, any allusion to the fact that she also helps young women to have abortions, which is another of her Italian counterpart's activities, is removed from the English text.

The social world of the Italian original is significantly altered in *Fedele and Fortunio* also by the exclusion from its cast of most of its servant figures. This results in the partial loss of what is one of *Il Fedele*'s main points of interest as well as one of the essential coordinates of the *commedia erudita*, that is the servant/master relationship. Faithful to that tradition, Pasqualigo characterizes the servants of his play mainly as opportunists. In a monologue which also represents the comedy's opening scene, Fortunio's servant, Renato, confesses that he has modelled himself on the prototype of the "cunning servant", and learnt how to manipulate his master by simulating loyalty, and to take advantage of his trust, which he justifies as skills necessary to a servant's survival (*Il Fedele*, 1.1). Later in the play we hear Beatrice boast about having become "her mistress's mistress" as a result of having once caught Vittoria in bed with Fedele.

Often lifted to the roles of their masters' confidants, advisors and, at times, even accomplices, they normally speak in the name of the most basic common sense. Their view of life is purely materialistic, as they appear focused on primary needs and pleasures, such as money and sex, and sceptical about romantic values such as love, loyalty and honour. In the dramatic world created by Pasqualigo they are not only represented through their relationship with their masters, but also as part of their own community, where they bond with each other sharing the perception of their superiors' world as alien.

All this is missing from Munday's adaptation, where the only servants left (Attilia and Panfila) are rather weakly depicted. This change may be ascribed mainly to reasons of dramatic economy, but a great deal, it seems, to Munday's attempt to moralize Pasqualigo's play, and rewrite it as a light, romantic comedy, where the materialistic, amoral perspective of the original servant figures had no part to play. Of all the characters of the Italian comedy who reappear in Munday's adaptation, Pedante is the one who differs the most, both in function and in terms of personality, from his equivalent in the source. Within the plot it is Narciso's part that Pedante takes on rather than Onofrio's. Like Narciso, he woos Attilia to have access to information about Victoria's private life to pass on to his master; he assists Fedele in carrying out the plot against Victoria; he engineers the big *beffa* at the expense of Attilia and Crackstone, of which in fact the pedant was originally the victim.

From Onofrio he inherits some of the pomposity and sententiousness conventionally associated with their comic type, but whereas in the source these are constant characteristics of the pedant's talk, in *Fedele and Fortunio* they are only occasionally displayed, and only in the presence of his master/pupil, as when he tries to warn him against women, using the authority of the classics:

Ped. Did not I teach you long ago out of tragical Seneca
His golden saying, *Dux omnium malorum femina?*
(1.2.69-70)

On the whole, unlike his Italian counterpart, Pedante has a well developed stylistic adaptability which enables him to shift from the ostentatious style we have just illustrated to a more direct and informal language, which he uses, for example, in his flirtation with Attilia:

Ped. Sweetheart and bagpudding, go you so swiftly?
Have with you, then, do ye lack any company?
(1.2.3-4)

This change in the presentation of the pedant results in the partial loss in the English play of a series of comic situations, which in the source are built on the stylistic contrast between Onofrio and the other characters, and on the miscommunications which derive from it.

On the other hand, part of Onofrio's dramatic and comic function survives in the character of Crackstone, who becomes in the English version the new comic focus of the play. Whereas the bragging soldier remains a purely marginal figure in *Il Fedele*, and actually appears no sooner than the third act, in *Fedele and Fortunio* his role is considerably expanded by comparison, and considering the emphasis given to his character in the play's subtitle, we are entitled to view him as a co-protagonist of the action, in which he is involved from the first to the last scene.

While keeping Frangipietra's role within the plot as the assassin Victoria hires to kill Fedele, he also covers part of Onofrio's: like him Crackstone observes the scene of the magic ritual performed by the three women, hidden in a tomb and then plans to inform Fedele and Fortunio about it to have Victoria for himself. Like the pedant in *Il Fedele*, he is later tricked into believing that Victoria is ready to elope with him, and only when caught by the guards, he finds out that the woman with him is in fact her maid.

In him the typical characteristics of the bragging soldier, such as the boasting about his valour and popularity among women, and his actual cowardice, are originally combined with some of the pedant's distinctive traits, such as the display of a pompous style, which Crackstone appropriates in a very personal way:

Crack. Methinks I should spout Latin before I be ware
Arguis mecum insputare?
Cur canis tollit poplitem
Cum mingit in parietem?
 Alice Tittle-tattle mistress Victoria's maid:
 If I speak like the schoolmaster, she will never be afraid
 As soon as she opens the door to let me in :
 With my *ropericall aliquancy* I will begin
Swinum, Vaelum, Porcum, Graye-goosorum roastibus:
Rentibus, dentibus, loafdishibus, come with us.
 (2.1.5-14)

With his malapropisms, cannibal words and inadequate use of Latin, Crackstone unintentionally becomes the source of comedy. However, he does not lack some sense of humour, which instead is missing both from Frangipietra and from Onofrio:

Crack. How saist thou, Alice Tittle-tattle, art thou content by love to be bound
 For ever and ever to be my wife,
 To disobey me and dishonor me, all the days of thy life?
 (5.4.137-139)

At the end of this analysis we can conclude that in every respect, from the construction of the plot, to the definition of the characters' roles, to the play's general tone, *Fedele and Fortunio* clearly stands out as the most creative direct adaptation of Pasqualigo's work. His reworking of the source-material shows first of all a sharper theatrical instinct and a better understanding of principles such as dramatic economy, than both the other two adaptors and the author of the Italian model.

Besides, by eliminating themes such as adultery, and some key type-figures such as the cuckolded husband and the unfaithful wife, the misogynistic libertine and the shrewd servant, Munday partially emancipated his work not only from its specific literary source, but also from some of the canons of the Italian comic tradition. What he wrote instead is a romantic and moralized version of the original story, introducing (perhaps “inadvertently”, as Melchiori believes)²³ new

²³ Giorgio Melchiori has argued that “inadvertently, by devising this play, Munday had founded a

canons of comedy-writing in Elizabethan England, in a time when theatre had already become the target of the Puritans' attacks for its supposed corruptive action.

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