

Reception Studies and Adaptation

Reception Studies and Adaptation:

A Focus on Italy

Edited by

Giulia Magazzù, Valentina Rossi
and Angela Sileo

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*To our dear mentor
Professor Daniela Guardamagna*

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INTRODUCTION

GIULIA MAGAZZÙ, VALENTINA ROSSI
AND ANGELA SILEO¹

The present book results from the activity of a research group named TrAdE (Translation and Adaptation from/into English), created in 2019 at the University of Rome Tor Vergata. Such academic environment has produced prolific research over the past decades, with a focus on the interaction between texts of different genres from and into English.

The first initiative of the group, a conference held in Rome in October 2019, was focused on the interrelation between Italian and English from a mutual perspective, to create a bridge that metaphorically embodies the process of translation/transference of content from one cultural and linguistic system into another. The mark that "Italianness" imprints on English texts—be they for printing or on-screen projection—is indeed suitable for an analysis seeking to identify those factors which, in some cases, are responsible for a mismatch between hypotext and hypertext(s).

Thus, this book aims to explore the possible/potential elements of contamination that occasionally constrain the Italian version(s) of an English aesthetic product, orienting its luck and the audience reception. Consequently, this volume covers different nuances of adaptation, ranging from literary translation—where the comparison between English and Italian editions highlights how certain choices, lacking philological foundation, may compromise the meaning and the success of a work—to transmediality and audiovisual translation—where adaptation is often influenced by factors which produce, at worst, an unfaithful version of the source text.

This book is addressed to both scholars and students delving into the fields of adaptation and reception, with the focus on Italy providing the opportunity for a more detailed insight into such phenomena. A notable element of the essays collected in this book is that Italy is considered both

¹ Although the project was carried out jointly by the three authors, Valentina Rossi wrote Section 1, Giulia Magazzù wrote Section 2 and Angela Sileo wrote Section 3, as well as the initial part of this introduction.

as a target country and as a source country for the adaptation of different cultural products, approximately and overtly displaying the mark of the above-mentioned “Italianness”. The perspective offered here may be considered up-to-date on the current situation in the broad field of adaptation.

Adaptations are everywhere today: on the television and movie screen, on the musical and dramatic stage, on the Internet, in novels and comic books, in your nearest theme park and video arcade. [...] Adaptations are obviously not new to our time, however; Shakespeare transferred his culture’s stories from page to stage and made them available to a whole new audience. [...] Adaptations are so much a part of Western culture [...] (Hutcheon 2012, 2).

The book is divided into three sections: Literary Translation, Transmediality and Audiovisual Translation.

1. Literary Translation

Section 1 is centered on two aspects of literary translation: the nature of dramaturgical translation and the impact that dance manuals have exerted on both the language and culture of the target country.

If, as Carvalho Homem says, “[a]ny process of circulation or transmission alters the nature and content of whatever is being transmitted”, the latest linguistic approaches have concurred in shedding light on the processes that involve a “resemantization, refiguration, or remediation” of a literary product (Carvalho Homem 2018, 24). The features displayed by the transposition of aesthetic products in a second language imply a certain degree of freedom, whose limits frequently influence the reception of literary works. In this respect, Valentina Rossi’s article focuses on a specific adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, as well as its reception in Italy. Her paper starts from the assumption that over the years, both translations and adaptations of Shakespearean plays have occasionally reshaped the English hypotext, leading to a process of loss: “English speakers are apt to assume that foreign-language productions necessarily lose an essential element of Shakespeare in the process of linguistic and cultural transfer, and of course this is true” (Kennedy 1993, 5). Therefore, she examines Mario Missiroli’s adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra* (1982), by offering a critical reflection on some directorial choices which have significantly affected the source text, as well as undermining the quality of the representation as a whole.

The second essay, Fabio Ciambella's survey, participates in this discussion by exploiting both *corpus linguistics* and *discourse analysis* to demonstrate how Italian Renaissance dance manuals formed the basis for a terpsichorean Language for Specialized Purposes during the Elizabethan age.

2. Transmediality

Section 2 seeks to explore transmediality. According to Henry Jenkins (2003, 1), transmedia storytelling is the "flow of content across multiple media channels". He explains that, ideally, transmedia storytelling should help creative expansion by drawing from the creative capacity of each media platform. The literature on transmedia storytelling suggests that transmedia texts position media users, and are engaged with by media users, in specific ways; however, to date there has been very little research in this area. This section addresses this issue by exploring how the texts adapted for the voice—as well as paper ones—are often influenced by factors that offer a version that is not totally faithful to the source text. Aoife Beville's contribution investigates the continued observation that the prose of Ann Radcliffe and the paintings of Salvator Rosa are similar in style. The proposed model of comparative multimodal stylistic analysis is developed by aligning the meaning-making processes employed by different semiotic resources, analyzing how meanings are constructed in images and in texts and noting the prevalent choices which distinguish the style of the image or text. Giuseppe Criscione analyzes the nineteenth-century Italian librettos inspired by the Shakespearean drama *Othello*. Giorgia De Santis explores Di Michele's recent adaptation of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, with a particular focus on intertextuality and the adaptation of the text into Italian, as well as the way this play opens up *Doctor Faustus* to a new perspective and interpretation, drawing from the medieval tradition and a complex, rather unruly, intertextual net. Rossana Sebellin devotes her paper to Beckett's *All That Fall*, trying to establish a *fil rouge* between three characteristics of the play: it is Beckett's first radio play; it marks the beginning of Beckett's bilingual career; and it is the first dramatic work in which the main character is a woman.

3. Audiovisual Translation

Section 3 is devoted to Audiovisual Translation (AVT): AVT encompasses several sub-branches, among which are Language Policy, Descriptive Studies, Applied Research and, finally, Accessibility. The latter is focused

on effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction beyond any type of impairment; it includes studies on quality, fan amateurs produce and research on reception and/or perception (Di Giovanni and Gambier 2018, viii-ix). “Reception is steadily coming to the fore in academic research” (ibid., x), although a focus on Italy is still lacking. Valeria Giordano delves into taboo language, in particular on the adaptation of swearwords in the TV series *Supernatural*. The role of the patronage in AVT is taken into account, offering a glimpse into the world of censorship and manipulation of obscene language in a product-oriented approach. Giulia Magazzù researches dubbing from the perspective of manipulation and censorship, by analyzing the Italian version of *The Happytime Murders*, a 2018 American black comedy, and the adaptation choices in the Italian version or ‘alteration’. The final contribution, by Angela Sileo, aims at surveying the reception of Italian viewers in terms of preference between dubbing and SRNL (Sincronismo Ritmico Non Labiale), also known as *simil sync*.

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I

LITERARY TRANSLATION

CHAPTER 1

“QUICK COMEDIANS EXTEMPORALLY
WILL STAGE US”:
THE ADAPTATION OF SHAKESPEARE’S
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA
BY MARIO MISSIROLI (1982)

VALENTINA ROSSI

In Italy, Shakespeare’s tragedies began to be performed during the second half of the nineteenth century, and his most famous plays such as *Hamlet* or *Romeo and Juliet* usually achieved great success.¹ *Antony and Cleopatra* was staged for the first time in 1888, though it was severely unappreciated. It started to receive appraisal only from the 1950s on, reaching a climax in the 1970s, when four different companies decided to perform it; the last of these productions, in 1977 by Roberto Guicciardini, obtained an excellent reception quantified in more than 160 replicas. However, the Italian fortune of the staging of *Antony and Cleopatra* was abruptly interrupted in 1982, when Mario Missiroli presented a reduction of the play which was coldly received.

This paper aims to investigate the possible reasons for this unfortunate reception, proposing the hypothesis that it was due to specific directorial choices. As we will see by comparing the script of the play with the English text², such choices reinvent the plot and the temperament of several characters, detaching it from the Shakespearian guidelines and considerably affecting both the equilibrium and the dynamics of the tragedy.

¹ On the Italian reception of Shakespeare, see: Ferrando 1930, 157-168; Rebona 1949, 210-224; Lombardo 1997, 454-462; Clubb 2010, 3-19; Bragaglia 2005.

² All the references to the English text are taken from: Shakespeare 1995.

“O [not] well-divided disposition”: *the plot*

Missiroli’s *Antony and Cleopatra* was staged for the first time on 4 November 1982 at the Teatro Civico of Vercelli, in Piedmont, and then went on tour to several cities. He decided to adapt and reduce the translation he had commissioned from Masolino d’Amico.

The script is filed in the Archive of the Teatro Stabile in Turin³, and it is composed of 102 pages; on some of them, it is possible to detect some corrections and erasure marks, but all of them are in perfect condition, though almost forty years have passed. They are set in a spiral binding, with a rigid blue cover. On the right corner, in the upper part, we find a white label which bears the writing “ANTONIO / E / CLEOPATRA” with a black pen. Upon opening the manuscript, on the internal part of the cover, we find the instructions to divide the script into nine “fascicoli” [files]⁴, each for every scene of the play. Such relevant information lets us immediately delve into the comparative analysis between the Italian and the English text, because Missiroli decided not to respect the division in five acts and forty-two scenes as it was canonized in the eighteenth century⁵; instead, he chose to organize the plot in nine scenes as follows:

Scenes	Pages of the script	Setting	Corresponding scenes of the Arden ed.
1	1-14	Alessandria [Alexandria]	1.1, 1.2, 1.3
2	14-30	Roma [Rome]	1.4, 2.2, 3.2
3	30-39	Alessandria [Alexandria]	2.5, 3.3

³ I would like to thank Dr. Anna Peyron for kindly providing me with the original script of Missiroli’s *Antonio e Cleopatra*. All the edited material regarding the performance can also be consulted online here:

<https://archivio.teatrostabiletorino.it/occorrenze/365-antonio-e-cleopatra-1982-83>
(last consulted: March 2020).

⁴ If not otherwise indicated, all translations between square brackets are mine.

⁵ According to the editors of the *New Oxford Shakespeare* (2017) a distinction 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” is worthwhile. In this respect, *Antony and Cleopatra* is included among the so-called “scene-only counting” plays, and it is composed of forty-three scenes. Such abundance makes it the longest scene-only-counting-play of the whole Shakespearean canon. See: Taylor and Egan 2017, IX-XI.

4	39-50	Capo Miseno [Misenum]	2.6, 2.7
5	50-55	Roma [Rome]	3.6
6	55-70	Alessandria [Alexandria]	3.10 ⁶ , 3.11, 3.13, 4.2
7	70-73	“Passaggio della notte” [From day to night]	4.4, 4.5
8	73-83	“Terra di nessuno” [No Man’s Land]	4.6, 4.9, 4.12, 4.14
9	83-102	“Monumento di Cleopatra” [Cleopatra’s Mausoleum]	4.15, 5.2

We know that, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, the narration is fragmented in several scenes often centered in different locations, with no respect for the Aristotelian unity of place. As Brent Dawson says: “*Antony and Cleopatra*, perhaps more than any other play by Shakespeare, puts the world on stage [...] ranging across the Classical Mediterranean” (Dawson 2015, 173). In fact, the plot reaches a variety of countries: not only Rome and Alexandria, which are the focal points, but also Athens, Misenum, Parthia and so on. Such a dynamic plot may be challenging to reproduce on stage, since it would require a constant (and quick) change of scenography, with the actors rapidly entering and exiting.⁷

In opposition to such variety—which is a peculiarity of *Antony and Cleopatra*, one of the most extended and complex plays of the canon—Missiroli simplifies the plot of the tragedy, avoiding the redundant changes of locations and choosing instead just three main settings: Alexandria, Rome and Misenum—and an indefinite no-man’s-land. By doing so, not only does he clearly reduce—if not emend—most of the spatial leaks from one place to another, but he also creates a uniform and linear plot that is organized into sections: the events that take place in Rome as well as in Alexandria are displayed without the interferences that are in the English text, where actions and speeches are frequently interrupted because of a

⁶ Missiroli sets the naval battle between Antony and Octavius Caesar in Alexandria, whereas in Shakespeare as well as in reality, it was held in Actium.

⁷ Consider for instance the central part of the tragedy: act III and IV have thirteen and fifteen scenes respectively, some of them being very brief, such as 3.8 (seven lines), 3.9 (four lines), 4.10 (nine lines) and 4.11 (four lines).

sudden change of setting. Consider for example the scene where Cleopatra meets the servant and finds out about Antony’s wedding with Octavia: in the English version, the conversation starts in 2.5, but it is interrupted and then finished in 3.3, with more than 300 lines dividing the two parts; whereas, in Missiroli’s intentions, Cleopatra’s inquiry is not fragmented, which, I believe, serves for a better reception of the scene.

As a matter of fact, such a straightforward chain of events is more natural for the audience to follow, since actions and speeches start and finish within the same scene; people are not forced to constantly hold pieces of information in their minds, with the risk of forgetting what happened before and not understanding what will come after. Considering that Missiroli’s adaptation lasted three and a half hours, a more fragmented plot would have most likely further undermined the reception. However, it is worthwhile to remark that, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, the constant shift from Rome to Alexandria, passing through Greece and other settings, creates the peculiar rhythm of the play, along with the overlap of comedy and tragedy, solemnity and nonsense that each change of settings brings with it. The same goes for the dominating axiologies of the play, the Roman one centered on honor and power, the Egyptian one devoted to idleness, so profoundly entangled in Shakespeare and so well described by Crane:

Rome and Egypt seem to be the site of very different perceptual styles, which are in turn based upon very different beliefs about the nature of the material world. The cognitive orientations of Rome and Egypt have different epistemological underpinnings, and also very different political implications. Romans in the play name their environment the ‘world’ [...] obsessively name – and conquered – cities and nations [...] Egyptians, on the other hand, inhabit the ‘earth’, in which they imagine themselves to be immersed and which they perceive and understand through all of the senses (Crane 2009, 2).

Missiroli’s adaptation is free of such interferences but, to deprive the play of them means to annihilate the performance, to reduce it to a mere sequence of events that does not preserve the original turbulent diegesis, the sinusoidal evolution of the plot that leads to the tragic ending of the protagonists. Furthermore, it seems that the Italian director followed the strategies shared by English adapters in the eighteenth century such as: reduction, transformation and, mostly, interpolation.⁸ Such resemblances will be analyzed in the next paragraphs.

⁸ See: Innocenti 1985, 19.

“Ink and paper”: notes on the translation

When translating *Antony and Cleopatra* for the Italian stage, Masolino d’Amico would probably have experienced the same old problem: handling the alternation of both prose and blank verse typical of all Shakespearean works. Although it is widely known that there is not an equivalent of the iambic pentameter in Italian⁹, d’Amico decided to write both in prose and in verse—though most of the verses do not count eleven syllables. Needless to say, the translation is mostly accurate, though at some points he modified the text, either by changing the syntactic structure of some lines or providing a completely different solution (transformation)—especially when translating puns. In shaping his work, “he [*did*] cooperate to give new life to the [play], introducing [it] into a new language and into a new world, and he [could] also occasionally contribute new readings to the original text [...] interpreting, annotating, and rewriting Shakespeare” (Serpieri 2004, 28).

Consider the following examples. Firstly, I will focus on syntactic changes. Sometimes, the translator modifies pronouns so that the resulting line is conveyed with more intensity to the addressee. For example, in the opening scene, Cleopatra, while mocking Octavius Caesar, tells Antony: “conquistami questo regno, liberami quello” [take in this kingdom *in my name*, enfranchise that *in my name* (my emphasis)]. The *First Folio* says: “take in that kingdom and enfranchise that”: a performative act that does not include Octavius. The addition of the pronoun “-mi” alters the overall image of Octavius Caesar, the character who embodies the noble Roman values and shows no interest in material possession throughout the whole play.¹⁰

A few lines later the syntax is altered, this time to achieve the opposite result: the sentence “why did he marry Fulvia?” (1.1.42) uttered by Cleopatra towards Antony, after discovering Fulvia’s death, is translated into “se non ami Fulvia, perché l’hai sposata?” [if *you* don’t love Fulvia, why did *you* marry her? (my emphasis)]. In Missiroli’s spectacle, the sentence is transformed by using the second- and not the third-person singular pronoun. This shift strengthens the personal attack Cleopatra deliberately directs to her lover, almost as if it was a *Face-Threatening Act*

⁹ See: Lane 1979, 306.

¹⁰ His “Not what you have reserved nor what acknowledged / put we i’t h’ roll of conquest. Still be’t yours; / Bestow it at your pleasure, and believe / Caesar’s no merchant to make prize with you / Of things that merchants sold. Therefore be cheered; / Make not your thoughts your prisons” (5.2.179-184) pronounced to Cleopatra after listening to Seleucus’ accusations, is a legitimate evidence of his lack of interest in materialism.

(FTA)¹¹: the pronoun shift emphasizes the accusation towards Antony, who is unmistakably guilty for playing with both Fulvia and Cleopatra’s hearts. As a consequence, the general mood of the scene is inevitably embittered; whereas the third-person singular pronoun used in the *First Folio* provides, in my opinion, a sort of neutrality of speech, as if Cleopatra was involved in a private moment, a confession solely shared with the audience.

Some adaptations, like those mentioned above, imply some nuances we hardly detect in the English version. However, it is fair to assume that, while they mark a sensible detachment from the original text, they do not interfere with the general ongoing of the play. The same can be said when the translation presents a term that is not contemplated by the semantic area of the word(s) printed in the *First Folio*. For instance, we will consider the following lines:

<p>CLEOPATRA: conquistami questo regno, liberami quello. <i>E obbedisci o ti esilio</i> (p. 1, my emphasis)</p>	<p>CLEOPATRA: take in this kingdom, enfranchise that <i>or we damn thee</i> (1.1.23, my emphasis)</p>
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Once again the pronouns involved in the actions have been altered, since the Shakespearean *we*—the epitome of Octavius’ identification with the Roman Empire—has been substituted by the first person, which centers all the power in Octavius’ hands, with an authoritative (almost tyrannical) tone. Still, what matters in this case is not the brutal switch of pronouns, rather the selections of two verbs, *obbedire* and *esiliare*: as the *Oxford English Dictionary* demonstrates, the semantic area of the verb “to damn” includes neither “to obey” nor “to banish” among its possible meanings.¹² The choice

¹¹ According to Goffman, “[t]he term *face* may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes—albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself” (Goffman 1967, 5). Given these assumptions of the universality of face and rationality, in line with Brown and Levinson, “it is intuitively the case that certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face, namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker. By ‘act’ we have in mind what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication, just as one or more ‘speech acts’ can be assigned to an utterance” (Brown and Levinson 1978, 65).

¹² **1. a.** [...] To pronounce adverse judgement on, affirm to be guilty; to give judicial sentence against; [...] **b.** To condemn *to* a particular penalty or fate; to doom; [...]

compromises the original sense of Octavius' fake message, since he intends to punish Antony for not obeying, rather than having him exiled from the Empire.

This does not mean, however, that adaptation is always negative. Sometimes, both translators and adapters enhance the audiences' comprehension with their talent. Therefore, I agree with Loren Kruger when she says:

Theatre translation must negotiate a critical tension, we might also say “drama”, between competing paradigms, but this tension is best described not, as it often is, as a contest between “faithful” and “free” or between proper translation and improper adaptation. Rather, theatre translators must negotiate the contest between two imperatives, both legitimate: between effacing the work of translation in the interest of immediate communication with the local audience, and disclosing that work so as to communicate the challenge to communication posed by differences in language and culture [...] the imperative of communication often wins out over that of displaying the translation's foreign origins (Kruger 2007, 355).

In this respect, the following passage goes in the direction of Granville-Barker's “*equivalent effect*” (Granville-Barker 1925, 21)¹³:

AGRIPPA: (AD ENOBARBO)

Ha gli occhi rossi.

ENOBARBO:

Come un cavallo albino. Ma non è bello nemmeno in un uomo (p. 28)

AGRIPPA: [*aside to Enobarbus*]

He has a cloud in's face

ENOBARBUS: [*aside to Agrippa*]

He were to worse for that were he a horse.

So is he, being a man (3.2.51-53)¹⁴

2. a. To adjust and pronounce (a thing, practice, etc.) to be bad; to adjudge or declare forfeited, unfit for use, invalid, or illegal; to denounce or annul authoritatively; [...] **b. spec.** To condemn (a literary work, usually a play) as a failure; to condemn by public expression of disapproval [...] **3. transferred.** To bring condemnation upon; to prove a curse to, be the ruin of [...] **4. Theology. a.** To doom to eternal punishment in the world to come; to condemn to hell [...] **b. transferred.** To cause or occasion the eternal damnation of [...] **5.** Used profanely (chiefly in optative, and often with no subject expressed) in imprecations and exclamations, expressing emphatic objurgation or reprehension of a person or thing, or sometimes merely an outburst of irritation or impatience [...] **6.** To imprecate damnation upon; to curse, swear at (last consulted: February 2020).

¹³ See also: Serpieri 2004, 31.

¹⁴ “A horse with a dark spot on its face was said to have a ‘cloud’ [...] Such a mark lessened its value” (Shakespeare 1995, 178 n52).

The above mentioned case is an example of positive transformation, where the translator selects “maybe the lesser of two evils”, as Modenessi (2018, 77) would say, and recollects the image of an albino horse with red eyes—possibly familiar to the spectators—providing a simplified and maybe more effective version of the pun; therefore taking into consideration the addressee’s level of cognition while still preserving the diegesis.

In her introduction to *Crossing time and space. Shakespeare translations in present-day Europe*, Carla Dente writes:

[d]rama translation shifts the target of the text from the reader to the audience since the dramatic text itself is what has aptly been defined as the «servant of two masters» [...] This raises the problem of whether translators should also act as mediators in this field, whether, in other words, they should take responsibility for the text’s performativity in the target language. [...] Theatre translation, more than other forms of translation, is especially concerned with the context in which the speech act takes place, since dramatic language is perhaps best defined as ‘world in (physical) context’ (Dente 2008, 13).

In this section, I have tried to demonstrate how the translation/adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra* for the Italian stage is always challenging, and sometimes provides new opportunities of meaning: on the one hand, the “infinite variety” (2.2.246) of the hypertext offers certain flexibility, such as in the use of the pronouns, as we have seen; on the other hand, the complexity of the original text endorses alterations, although Missioli’s adaptations have often depleted the vigour of the Shakespearean play, providing only in certain circumstances a mitigation that makes the text accessible to the audience.

“The dove will peck the estridge”: redactions

Missioli’s play is characterized by several cuts that, in some cases, have significantly altered the text, deleting some of the peculiarities that are so essential to *Antony and Cleopatra*. In the following pages, I will try to demonstrate how numerous emendations have ultimately damaged the metatheatrical, the exotic and the premonitory elements epitomized in Shakespeare’s tragedy.

We will start our inquiry with the elimination of metadrama from the script. The absence is immediately recognizable, with the deletion of the initial dialogue between Philo and Demetrius—about the disgraceful condition of Mark Antony—seeing the play start with the protagonists’ famous lines:

CLEOPATRA:

Se questo è vero amore,
dimmi fin dove arriva.

ANTONIO:

Un amore che si potesse
misurare sarebbe da pezzenti.

CLEOPATRA:

Voglio mettere un limite a
quanto farmi amare.

ANTONIO:

Allora dovrai trovare un nuovo
firmamento, una nuova terra.
(p. 1)

CLEOPATRA:

If it be love indeed, tell how
much.

ANTONY:

There's beggary in the love that
can be reckoned.

CLEOPATRA:

I'll set a bourn how far to be
loved.

ANTONY:

Then must thou needs find out
new heaven, new heart. (1.1.14-
17)

Such a cut deprives the play of its metadramatic frame.¹⁵ Analogously, other metatheatrical elements are erased from the script. For example, Enobarbus' misleading exclamation "Hush, here comes Antony" (1.2.81) to which Charmian reproaches: "Not he, the Queen" (1.2.81), is cut; as well as Charmian's last lines, "[...] Your crown's awry; / I'll mend it, and then play" (5.2.318), where the translator does not take into account the double meaning—and its metatheatrical charge—that is intrinsic to the English verb *to play*. Instead, he opts for "ora sarò io a giocare" [now it is my turn to play], moving the focus from the verb, *giocare*, to the attendant's intentions which possibly arouse the audiences' curiosity.

As for the exotic element that we associate with Alexandria, it is severely weakened by the cuts. Most of the lines spoken by Cleopatra's courtesans are deleted from the script. For example, 1.2 is partially eradicated, so that the audience does not have a chance to penetrate the Egyptian alcove and breathe in its lively atmosphere. On the other hand, it does get to know Rome very well, thanks to Octavius Caesar and the dialogues with his men—Agrippa, Mecenates, Lepidus and others. So, it is fair to assume that Missiroli's reduction does not present the two cultures equally.

Moreover, the Soothsayer who embodies the magic and the mythical atmosphere of Egypt is not mentioned in the *Dramatis Personae*. His absence breaks a chain between the present and the (disastrous) future, and it deprives the play of those omens that are entangled to the protagonists' fate. For example, his allusive sentence "You shall outlive the lady whom you serve" (1.2.32), to suggest that Charmian will have a longer life than

¹⁵ See: Tempera 1990, 90.

Cleopatra, is missing; the same happens to the servant’s answer: “O excellent! I love long life better than / figs” (1.2.33-34), which creates a subtle connection between life and figs, under whose leaves the queen will find the fatal asp. Likewise, the strident dialogue between Mark Antony and the Soothsayer in 2.3 is emended, so that the Italian audience does not witness the prediction, fated to become true, that Octavius’ “fortunes shall rise higher” than Antony’s if he does not “make space enough” between them (2.3.15; 22).

The same treatment is reserved for the presentiments of the Roman soldiers in the second and fourth acts. So, when speaking to Menas on Pompey’s galley, Missirolì’s Enobarbus does not anticipate Antony’s getaway to Alexandria (“He will to his Egyptian dish again”, 2.6.128). Nor does he predict the severe consequences that this act will cause to Antony’s alliance with Octavius (“Then shall the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Caesar, and, as I said before, that which is the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of their variance”, 2.6.129-132). As for the anonymous soldiers of 4.3, they cannot inform the Italian audience about “something strange” (4.3.3) they’ve heard during their watch the night before the Battle of Actium, when apparently “[...] the god Hercules whom Antony loved / now leaves him” (4.3.21-22).

With all the prophecies of future events cut, Missirolì’s reduction seems centered in the present dimension, as if he wanted to create a domestic play, a bourgeois drama with no references to a metaphysical or transcendent sphere. However, in Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* the characters often evoke a glorious past or predict the future. The decision to eliminate the above-mentioned elements flattens the audiences’ expectations and precludes them from experiencing the suspense which permeates this tragedy.

“A soldier only”: *Enobarbus and Menas*

The cast of Missirolì’s *Antony and Cleopatra* counted twenty members, sixteen actors and four actresses, led by the protagonists Adolfo Celi and Anna Maria Guarnieri. By reading the *Dramatis Personae* listed in the script, fifteen Shakespearean characters are missing.¹⁶ In this section, I would like to demonstrate how such a decision significantly influenced the

¹⁶ That is: Antony’s followers Demetrius, Philo, Ventidius, Silius, Canidius, Dercetus; Octavius Caesar’s followers Taurus, Dolabella, Gallus, Proculeius; Pompey’s followers Menecrates and Varrius; Cleopatra’s attendants Alexas and Diomedes; and—as we have already noticed—the Soothsayer.

playing out of the plot, as well as the shaping of both the main and secondary characters, potentially undermining the reception of the whole play.

We have seen that the Romans soldiers Philo and Demetrius' roles were expunged. The same happens with most of the minor characters who effectively bear a pivotal function in this tragedy, where narration often prevails upon action¹⁷—that of messengers:

The action in *Antony and Cleopatra* spans various widely separated geographical locations [...] Information must travel over considerable distances if events are to unfold on an imaginative stage that is almost as vast as the known world itself, and in the absence of more sophisticated methods messengers are the only means by which this can be accomplished. Reports delivered by messengers are, moreover, the most effective means by which the audience of Shakespeare's play can be enabled to contextualize events by understanding what is happening in the world at large [...] it must be added that the number of messengers remains conspicuously high in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and furthermore that the play itself goes to some trouble to convey the impression that the highways of the world are thronging with them (Lucking 2018, 623).

As for Menas and Enobarbus' cases, their individual analysis is considered relevant and thus provided.

Menas is the provocateur of the tragedy, the one who proposes that Pompey take advantage of the triumvirs' presence and kill them while they are on board the galley, to become the "sol sir o'th' world" (5.2.119). Scholars have long studied the persistent requests of consultation he directs to his lord in 2.7—also in a pragmatic perspective, recently¹⁸—partly delivered aloud and partly aside, in order to hatch the plan. However, it is not that part that is altered in Missiroli's play, but the one that immediately follows the signing of the agreement:

POMPEO:
No, Antonio, lo decida il caso.
Ma primo o ultimo, la tua squisita
cucina egiziana
Vincerà il confronto. Ho sentito
dire che Giulio Cesare si era
ingrassato anche lui, a quei festini.

POMPEY:
No, Antony, take the lot.
But, first of all, your fine Egyptian
cookery
Shall have the fame. I have heard that
Julius Caesar
Grew fat with feasting there.

¹⁷ See: Valentini 2005, 13-14; Ead. 2018, 350-362.

¹⁸ See, for instance: Swander 1985, 165-187; Mullini 2016, 69-81; Mullini 2018a, 38-59; Mullini 2018b, 104-107.

ANTONIO:
Quante cose hai sentito dire.
POMPEO:
Non parlo con cattive intenzioni.
ANTONIO:
Né con cattive parole.
POMPEO:
Beh, è quello che ho sentito.
E anche che Apollodoro portò...

MENAS:
**Pompeo, tuo padre non avrebbe
mai firmato questo accordo.**

ENOBARBO:
Basta così: è vero.

[...]

POMPEO:
Viva la tua franchezza;
Non ti sta affattomale.
Vi invito tutti a bordo della mia
galea.
Volete venire, amici?

*ESCONO TUTTI MENO
ENOBARBO E MENAS*

MENAS:
Noi due ci siamo già incontrati.

ENOBARBO:
In mare, direi. (pp. 42-43)

ANTONY:
You have heard much.
POMPEY:
I have fair meanings, sir.
ANTONY:
And fair words to them.
POMPEY:
Then so much have I heard.
And I have heard Apollodorus
carried-

ENOBARBUS:
No more of that! He did so.

[...]

POMPEY:
Enjoy thy plainness;
It nothing ill becomes thee.
Aboard my galley I invite you all.
Will you lead, lords?

CASEAR, ANTONY, LEPIDUS:
Show's the way, sir.

POMPEY:

Come.

Exeunt all but Enobarbus and Menas.

MENAS: [aside]
**Thy father, Pompey, would ne'er
have**

Made this treaty. [*to Enobarbus*]
You and I have known, sir.

ENOBARBUS:

At sea, I think. (2.6.62-69; 78-85)

This is a remarkable example of interpolation, with a sentence moved backward in the Italian adaptation if compared to its ‘natural’ position in the *First Folio*. However, either the transformation of Menas’ *aside* into an *aloud* or its relocation in the dialogue revolutionizes, I believe, the structure of the whole scene: in Shakespeare, the soldier dares to speak only when the “[pillars] of the world” (1.1.12) have left the scene; opting for an *aside*, to share his thoughts with the spectators without being heard by others—though

critics are still debating in this respect.¹⁹ In Missiroli, on the other hand, the soldier brutally interrupts his lord and openly threatens Pompey's positive "face".

Such interpolation is noteworthy because it can be read as a discreet accusation that subverts the hierarchy on which the play is rooted: although Pompey stands above his follower Menas, the tone used by the latter gives the impression that they share the same social position. Moreover, considering the general merriment of the scene, Menas' comment seems inappropriate; in fact, people ignore it and keep talking about the Egyptian peculiarities.

The above-mentioned case creates a gap between the hypotext and Missiroli's version: while in the former, Pompey's reputation is safe in both 2.6 and 2.7, in the Italian spectacle, the balance between the roles is altered, as well as the general mood of the conversation. We know that both characters will take part in a very delicate conversation in the subsequent lines—where Menas conspires against the triumvirs and tries to convince his lord to exert the plan—so it is not clear why the director anticipates the potential dispute. Not to mention that the reprimand pronounced aside by the attendant could also be read as a presage of Pompey's misfortune, since Octavius will eventually defeat him in war and take all his possessions. Respecting the *First Folio* would have probably led the audiences to a better comprehension of the play.

While approaching the conclusion, we will focus on Enobarbus' characterization. In the essay *Ritratto di Enobarbo*, Agostino Lombardo provides a thorough definition of such an intricate character: "Enobarbo è il soldato e il confidente, è il *fool*, la *ficelle*, il coro ma è anche, a me sembra, l'artista"²⁰ [Enobarbus is the soldier, the confidant, the fool, the *ficelle*, the chorus but also, in my opinion, the artist]. However, in the adaptation we are taking into consideration, he is merely reduced to a modest soldier with a limited chance of speaking. That is because the director severely cuts most

¹⁹ "And it is surely not inconceivable that Menas might shout his rage directly and openly at the just-departed or (even) still-departing Pompey. Does Pompey hear? If still visible, does he respond by look or gesture? Do the Triumvirs [...] hear? If so, do they share a laugh, look worried or surprised? Does Enobarbus hear? If so, what does he make of it? Could the shout in fact be what holds him, be the reason he stops long enough for Menas suddenly to address him? These are not the only real questions to be asked. I do not know the answers, nor even all of the questions" (Swander 1985, 176).

²⁰ Lombardo 2002, 19.

of his lines, depriving him of the opportunity to measure and judge both people and facts²¹ as he does in Shakespeare.

When consulted, Missiroli’s Enobarbus delivers some mild answers that lack his typical irony and sarcasm. Another detail that is probably worthwhile noticing is that, especially in the stage directions of the scenes set in Rome, he is always a couple of steps behind the people standing on the stage, so to underline the different social level between him, a subaltern, and the rulers with their tribunes. However, he still depicts Cleopatra’s portrait in the second scene (pp. 25-26), but his famous opening line, “I will tell you” (2.2.200), is cut, so to emphasize that his choric function is nullified.

On the Italian stage, the description of the queen’s arrival is the only moment—together with the suicide—where Enobarbus can express some excellent rhetorical skills, most of his verses having been altered in some way or redacted. For instance, the description of the queen “[hopping] forty paces through the public streets” (2.2.239) is canceled, as well as his comments about Antony’s relationship with Pompey (3.2.1-21) and Caesar (3.13; 4.2), or about the fragmentation of the triumvirate (3.5). Additionally, in Missiroli the feast on board of Pompey’s galley has neither music nor dance. The eradication of such a cheerful moment expropriates Enobarbus of his foolery, as fools are often related to celebratory moments.²² Besides, we no longer witness the clash between Enobarbus and Cleopatra—with the soldier trying to prevent the queen from going on war for the sake of Mark Antony’s reputation (3.7.1-19)—and the plea to his lord for not “[throwing] away / the absolute soldiership [he has] by land” (3.7.40-41), fighting Octavius instead by sea. Because of the script being so redacted, Enobarbus cannot display any military or logic skills, nor can he alert, as Read would say, “discrepancies between things of all sorts” (Read 2013, 570).

Stripped of the choric, the premonitory and the foolish function, one may ask what is left of the brilliant character Shakespeare built with such prowess. In this respect, it would be opportune to examine the following lines:

ENOBARBO: (*a Scarò, ma in
realità parlando fra sé*)
Glielo avevo detto...
SCARÒ:
Cosa?

²¹ See: Adelman 1973, 25; 130.

²² See: Shawen 2016, 70.

ENOBARBO: (*assorto, ma con crescendo di passione*).

Le tue navi sono male equipaggiate.

I tuoi marinai sono mulattieri, contadini, gente

Reclutata alla svelta, e con la forza.

Mentre Cesare

Ha i veterano delle guerre contro Pompeo;

Lui ha le navi leggere, e le tue sono delle chiatte. Non sarà un disonore evitarlo per mare, quando sulla terra avresti tanti vantaggi.

SCARO:

Sì. E lui: "Sul mare! sul mare!"

ENOBARBO: (*c.s.*).

Così butti via tutti i vantaggi Della tua superiorità in terraferma.

Metti a disagio i tuoi soldati, che sono tutti fanti

Esperti in quel tipo di guerra; rinunci a sfruttare

La tua indiscussa perizia; lasci la via sicura

Per affidarti al caso... vai allo sbaraglio!

SCARO: (*ironico, amaro*).

La regina aveva sessanta navi. Più di Cesare, diceva.

ENOBARBO: (*c.s.*).

Valoroso condottiero, non combattiamo per mare.

Non ci affidiamo a quattro tavolacce marcite.

Non ti fidi più di questa spada, di queste mie cicatrici?

Ci vadano gli egiziani e i fenici, a mollo come le papere;

ENOBARBUS:

Your ships are not well manned, Your mariners are muleteers,

reapers, people

Engrossed by swift impress. In Caesar's fleet

Are those that often have 'gainst Pompey fought;

Their ships are yare, yours heavy.

No disgrace

Shall fall you for refusing him at sea,

Being prepared for land.

ANTONY:

By sea, by sea.

ENOBARBUS:

Most worthy sir, you therein throw away

The absolute soldiership you have by land;

Distract your army, which doth most consist

Of war-marked footmen; leave unexecuted

Your own renowned knowledge; quite forgo

The way which promises assurance; and

Give up yourself merely to chance and hazard

From firm security. [...]

CLEOPATRA:

I have sixty sails, Caesar none better. [...]

SOLDIER:

O noble Emperor, do not fight by sea.

Trust not to rotten planks. Do you misdoubt

This sword and these my wounds?

Let th'Egyptians

And the Phoenicians go a-ducking; we

Have used to conquer standing on the earth