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REWRITING AND APPROPRIATING FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI'S *STORIA D'ITALIA* IN
ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND: GEOFFREY FENTON'S TRANSLATION AND SHAKESPEARE'S
HENRY V

Abstract

The exploration of the multifarious ways in which cultural reworkings and translations have been involved in the transmission and circulation of various discourses, concepts and ideas in different historical periods and places, has become one of the most productive fields of inquiry in Early Modern Studies. Both translation and cultural reworking have been understood as forms of rewriting that involve altering, reinterpreting and adapting texts (Fischlin&Fortier, 2000; Lefevere, 1992). The main difference between the two concepts lies in their relation to the text/texts they are supposed to rewrite. Thus, translations are related to more direct and evident means of appropriation and rewriting, most often acknowledging themselves as attempts to render a specific text from one language/culture into another. Cultural reworkings, on the other hand, presuppose the appropriation and remaking of various texts and discourses in a more indirect manner, without necessarily pointing to the particular texts that are being rewritten. They represent threads that can be identifiable or at times altered beyond recognition, frequently leading to the creation of a completely different text. Therefore, cultural reworking involves the appropriation, rewriting and recontextualization – more or less explicit— of literary and non-literary texts and discourses that belong to the, cultural, political and ideological context of a certain work.

Keywords: *HENRY V*, rewriting, recontextualization

Introduction

The exploration of the multifarious ways in which cultural reworkings and translations have been involved in the transmission and circulation of various discourses, concepts and ideas in different historical periods and places, has become one of the most productive fields of inquiry in Early Modern Studies. Both translation and cultural reworking have been understood as forms of rewriting that involve altering, reinterpreting and adapting texts (Fischlin&Fortier, 2000; Lefevere, 1992). The main difference between the two concepts lies in their relation to the text/texts they are supposed to rewrite. Thus, translations are related to more direct and evident means of appropriation and rewriting, most often acknowledging themselves as attempts to render a specific text from one language/culture into another. Cultural reworkings, on the other hand, presuppose the appropriation and remaking of various texts and discourses in a more indirect manner, without necessarily pointing to the particular texts that are being rewritten. They represent threads that can be identifiable or at

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times altered beyond recognition, frequently leading to the creation of a completely different text. Therefore, cultural reworking involves the appropriation, rewriting and recontextualization – more or less explicit— of literary and non-literary texts and discourses that belong to the, cultural, political and ideological context of a certain work. The concept can be integrated to the theoretical discussions around the concepts of intertextuality, recontextualization, adaptation and cultural re-creation which have been recently reconsidered particularly in the field of Shakespeare studies. (Marrapodi, 2004, 2007; Redmond, 2009; Lynch, 1998)

The fact that Shakespeare's own works were caught up in the ongoing whirl of intertextual references, of texts generating other texts in an endless process of cultural reworking and rewriting with no clear point of origin, is widely acknowledged not only by the New Historicism, but also by other related approaches that focus on the intertextual exchanges that characterise early modern English culture and drama. Thus, recent intertextual studies abandoned the hunt for verbal echoes and direct parallels that characterised the old-fashioned and rigid practice of traditional source criticism. They argue for the expansion of the concept of literary source to include not only immediate literary or historical influences “but vast arrays of texts (written and unwritten, known and unknown to the author), along with endless networks of linguistic and discursive structures [...]. Shakespeare's plays are no longer seen as based on a few assorted borrowings, but are now seen as interventions in preexistent fields of textuality.” (Lynch 1) In the light of this transition to a larger process of cultural influence Michele Marrapodi highlights the opportunity “to embrace such broader intercultural factors as semantic *topoi*, genre models, ideological codes, and interdiscursive relationship” in the case of the research carried on the early modern English drama's engagement with Italian culture. (Marrapodi, 2007: 1)

These definitions of intertextuality are obviously tributary to the post-structuralist understanding of the relation and the identification of the text with the intertext. (Barthes, 1977; Kristeva, 1984) Contemporary theory provides a similar outlook when it considers not the borrowing that happens in new works but what happens to them once they have been written. Emphasising and recalling the original meanings of the word “text”, which involved the figure of the web and notions of spinning and weaving, Roland Barthes argues that any text is an intertext woven from the threads of “the already written” and “the already read”. (Barthes 159)

Taking as a departure point these recent developments in translation studies and the perspectives opened up by the current theoretical debates on intertextuality, the present paper sets out to demonstrate that Francesco Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* (1561) was rewritten and appropriated in Elizabethan England in two distinct ways: first, by means of translation and, subsequently, through theatrical cultural reworking.

Thus, the first section of the paper considers the manner in which Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* was rewritten and ideologically employed by Geoffrey Fenton, the Elizabethan translator of the work, in 1579. Fenton's translation has received little critical attention although it sheds relevant light on the Elizabethan practice of translation. My purpose is to highlight the various ways in which the English translator domesticated his translation by means of additions, cuts and interpolations in order to make it conform to the Tudor myth and the propaganda surrounding it during the reigns of both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

In the second section of the paper, I focus on the ways in which Guicciardini's text was further appropriated - via Fenton's translation- by Shakespeare in his play *Henry V*. First, I investigate the multiple intertextual exchanges that occurred within the early modern discourse on just war, a discourse that was highly influential during the time when both Guicciardini and Shakespeare wrote their works. The main tenets of the just war theory inform one important set speech in Guicciardini's *Storia*, a speech that, in my view, might have been used as a source of inspiration by Shakespeare for the opening scenes of *Henry V*. The forceful arguments advanced by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the English nobles in their attempt to persuade Henry to wage war against France and legitimate his enterprise from a religious, political and moral point of view, bear a close resemblance to the structure and reasoning outlining the speech delivered by Lodovico Sforza's ambassador at the French court, in Guicciardini's *Storia*. This set speech, invented by Guicciardini, was meant to convince Charles VIII to invade the kingdom of Naples in virtue of his rightful claims to the throne of that Italian kingdom.

Translating Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* in Elizabethan England¹

Considered a fundamental source of knowledge on matters of state, war, politics and foreign affairs, Francesco Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* was one of the most widely read history books in sixteenth-century Europe. There is rich evidence of the book's circulation and popularity in the Italian, French, Dutch, Spanish and English intellectual circles of the time (Burke 132). Renaissance Englishmen such as William Cecil, Philip Marnix and King James I owned the 1566 Latin translation of Guicciardini's *Storia*; the English translations of both Machiavelli and Guicciardini could be found in the libraries of Sir Edward Coke and William Byrd (Burke 131). In 1579, the year of Geoffrey Fenton's English translation of the book, Gabriel Harvey famously stated that Cambridge scholars were thoroughly acquainted with the works of such important European writers as Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Phillip de Commines, Baldassare Castiglione and Stefano Guazzo (Long Scott 79-80).

Francesco Guicciardini's life and reputation were relatively familiar to the Elizabethan audience in 1579, the year when Geoffrey Fenton first published his translation of *Storia d'Italia*, a rendering based not on the Italian source text but on the French translation of Jérôme Chomedey (1568). On the one hand, his translation of Guicciardini contributed alongside other Elizabethan translations of European political and historical texts² to the development of the English political vocabulary and discourse. Works such as Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, Machiavelli's *Il Principe* and *Discorsi* or Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* were "a unique opportunity to learn about statecraft [...] For English students of state affairs... Italian *politica* provided the vocabulary and historical examples for the persistent domestic debates about sovereignty, crisis and national identity" (Redmond 3).

On the other hand, Fenton manipulates the original in order to make it ideologically acceptable to the Elizabethan audience of his time. While the French translation keeps close to the source, rendering most of Guicciardini's text word for word, Fenton frequently departs from the French intermediary in order to insert his own moral and value judgments. (Zaharia 183)

Given the fact that Guicciardini's *Storia* described the direct role of England in the international context of the Italian wars, including numerous references to the English kings, his book must have presented special interest to most Elizabethan intellectuals, particularly since it described the period (1490-1534) that coincided with the Tudors' ascension to the throne of England; the book covers a small part of the reign of Henry VII and most of the reign of Henry VIII and his involvement in the wars sweeping Europe in the sixteenth century. Fenton, a resolute Protestant supporter of the Queen, makes his translation comply with the Tudor myth and the propaganda surrounding it during the reigns of both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. (Zaharia 184)

The "honourable" kings of England: Fenton's ideological rewriting of Guicciardini's text

There are numerous chapters in Guicciardini's *Storia* that tell the story of the kings of England and analyse their attitudes in specific circumstances as well as the decisions they made during different historical events. In such cases, Fenton's omissions and additions to Guicciardini's text are never purely innocent. On the contrary, they are used either to magnify the qualities and virtues of the English kings or, conversely, to leave out or shun Guicciardini's mentioning of certain historical facts that could be deemed unacceptable by a certain section of the Elizabethan audience.

In the seventh book of *Storia d'Italia*, Guicciardini recounts the events of the year 1506 and mentions that in a voyage from Flanders to Spain King Philip's ships were driven by a storm upon the English coasts. Finding out about their misfortunes, Henry VII, "re di quella *isola*" (the king of that island) (Guicciardini, 1835:368), invites him to his court at London. Instead of "king of that island" which might have sounded rather diminishing, Fenton prefers to translate it as "king of that *Nation*" (Guicciardini, 1579:355) choosing to emphasize, as an authentic representative of the age that saw the

¹ I have previously treated the context of Fenton's translation in an earlier article (Zaharia 2012).

² Castiglione, *The Courtier*, trans. Thomas Hoby, (London, 1561); Jean Bodin, *The Six Books Of A Commonwealth*, transl. by Richard Knolles (London, 1606); Justus Lipsius, *Six Bookes of Politickes or Civil Doctrine*, written in Latine by Justus Lipsius: which doe especially concerne principalitie. Done into English by William Jones Gentleman (London, 1594); Niccolo Machiavelli, *Florentine Historie*, transl. by Thomas Bedingfield, (London, 1595);

emergence of the concepts of nation and nationality, the idea of England as a nation, not merely a geographical piece of land. Guicciardini assesses Philip's situation as one in which he could not afford to decline Henry's offer:

ed egli con due o tre legni fu con grandissimo pericolo trasportato in Inghilterra, nel porto d'Antona: la quale cosa intesa da Enrico settimo, che era a Londra, mandato subito molti signori a riceverlo con grandissimo onore, lo ricercò venisse a Londra; **il che in potestà di Filippo, che si trovava quasi solo e senza navi, non era di negare.** (Guicciardini, 1835:255)

By means of additions, Fenton exaggerates the precariousness of Philip's position and concomitantly emphasises the honourableness of King Henry VII's offer: "A request whiche Philip coulde not denie, the king of England's **demaunde beeing no lesse honorable, then his owne estate full of necessitie and nakednesse.**" (Guicciardini, 1579: 355)

A few lines further, Fenton highlights once again, by means of additions, Henry's principled and honoured behaviour, thoroughly opposed to the sundry examples of unscrupulous Italian princes and Popes (in the previous chapter, Pope Julius II's dissembling behaviour had just been described) portrayed by Guicciardini. The emphasis on Henry's moral rectitude, the exaggerated accentuation of the fact that he had honourably kept his promise to the King of Spain and refrained from ordering the execution of the Duke of Suffolk, are absent in Guicciardini's text:

E nondimeno Filippo, trattato in tutte l'altre cose come Re, fu in una sola trattato da prigione, che ebbe a consentire di dare in mano ad Enrico il Duca di Suffolch tenuto da lui nella rocca di Namur, il quale, (perché pretendeva ragione al Regno d'Inghilterra) Enrico sommamente d'avere in sua potestà desiderava. Dtegli però la fede di non privarlo della vita: donde, custodito in carcere mentre Enrico visse, fu dipoi per comandamento del figliuolo decapitato. (Guicciardini, 1835:256)

wherein albeit *Philippe* in all other things helde him selfe vsed as a king, yet in this one thing he complayned, that he was constraigned as a prysoner, to consent to redelyuer into king *Henries* handes the duke of *Suffolke*, whome he helde prisoner within the castell of *Namur*, and whome the king of *Englande* desyred muche to haue in his power, for that he quarreled the tytle of the Crowne, pretending the righte of the kingdome to apperteine to him: onely **the king of Englande assured Philip by the fayth and worde of a king**, that he woulde not put him [i.e. the Duke of Suffolk] to death, which he did as **justly perfourme as he had honorably promised**, keeping him in prison so long as he lyued, and afterwardes was beheaded vnder the reigne and co~maundement of his sonne. (Guicciardini, 1579: 355)

Nevertheless, Henry VII is not the only English king whose acts are marked by honour and justness. Guicciardini himself praises the heroic deeds of King Henry V when he recounts the way in which the English king defeated the French at Agincourt. He also adds that Henry would have probably managed to conquer the entire kingdom of France had he not died in the flower of his age. In his turn, Fenton makes several insertions, which bestow an aura of majesty on the king's acts and also highlight the greatness of the English conquest. Thus, the course of Henry's victories is "glorious" (542) and his victories are "honourable" (542); had he not died, he would have "brought subjected to himself the Crowne and imperie of that nation." (542) The same idea is once again underlined by restating, in the end, more clearly than in the Italian original why the French feared the English:

per la ricordazione delle **cose passate**, era sommamente temuto dai Franzesi il nome Inglese.. (Guicciardini, 1836:363)

the Frenchemen redoubting muche the name of the Englishe by **the memorie of victories and conquestes passed.** (Guicciardini, 1579: 542, my emphasis)

Eventually, it is the characterization of Henry VIII as a just, glorious and mighty king that Fenton manifestly amplifies by means of interpolations but also by modifying the text extensively. In the above quoted passage, Guicciardini states that the Pope, trying to convince Henry to join him in

the war against the French king, counted both on the “naturall hatred” of the English towards the French and on the English claims to the French crown:

Le quali cose accendevano l'animo del giovane (nuovo nel Regno, e che nella casa sua non aveva mai veduto altro che prospera fortuna), *la cupidità* di rinnovare la gloria de' suoi antecessori; (Guicciardini, 1835:363)

These were proper instruments to kindle fire in the mind of this yong king, and hauing neuer experienced in his kingdom but fortunes happy and plausible: he was also pushed forward by *an honorable desire* to renew the glory of his ancestors. (Guicciardini, 1579: 541, my emphasis)

Throughout the translation, whenever the word “cupidità” occurs, Fenton preserves its pejorative meaning, translating it as “covetousness” (Guicciardini 1579: 5,7,8,10,16), “ambition” (8,10) or “greediness” (952). Similarly, in his 1598 Italian-English dictionary, John Florio listed as English equivalents for “cupidità” the same words “covetousness”, “greediness” and “avarice” (Florio 94). Yet, since the noun refers in this context to Henry’s covetousness, Fenton chooses to evade the entire issue by translating it as “honourable desire” (Guicciardini 1579: 541), thus placing Henry VIII in line with all his other *honourable* ancestors.

Another instance of Fenton’s rewriting of the text by means of additions occurs in the twelfth book of the *Storia* when he interpolates an explanation meant to justify Henry VIII’s revengeful killing of a prisoner. In his desperate attempt to avoid war with the English, the French king invites the Duke of Suffolk “as competitor and aspirant to the Crowne of England” (661) to France, thinking that in this manner he could “terrifie the English and make them more intangled with their owne affayres” (661). As an act of revenge, Henry VIII beheads the Duke of Suffolk’s brother, one and the same with the prisoner that his father, Henry VII, had received from Philipe and whose life he guaranteed for, as we have previously seen, with “the fayth and worde of a king” (355). Guicciardini merely narrates the facts without passing any judgement:

Aveva similmente il re, per insospettire delle cose proprie il re di Inghilterra, chiamato in Francia il duca di Suffolch come competitore a quel regno; *per il quale sdegno il re anglo fece decapitare il fratello*, custodito insino allora in carcere in Inghilterra, poiche da Filippo re di Castiglia, nella navigazione sua in Ispagna, era stato dato al suo padre. (Guicciardini, 1835:473)

To these facts, Fenton adds an explanation meant to present Henry’s act as lawful and just:

Likewise the French king, the more to terrifie the english and make them more intangled with their owne affayres, had called into Fraunce the duke of Suffolke as Competitor and aspirant to the Crowne of Englande: *A devise little helping the purposes of Fraunce, and of great daunger to the race and progenie of the Duke, for that in reuenge of their dealing, the king of Englande by ordinarie course of the iustice of his Realme*, cutte off the head of his brother, who tyll then had bene holden prisoner in Englande, since the tyme that Phillip king of Castillo sayling into Spayne, deliuered him into the handes of the king his father. (Guicciardini, 1579: 661, my emphasis)

Nonetheless, the most flattering courtly bow to the Tudor ruling house is taken in the tenth book when Fenton inserts in Guicciardini’s description of the English army at the battle of Terroana an entire paragraph extolling the virtues of honour, majesty, bravery and magnanimity that characterised the king who was to become the most renowned and powerful king of his age in Europe: no one else than King Henry VIII:

The person of the king of Englande passed the sea a litle after, who had in his maine army fiue thousand horses of service, and more than forty thousand footmen. *An army not more notable by the multitudes of souldiors and consideration of their vallor, then most glorious by the presence and maiestie of their king, in whose person appeared at that instant being in an age disposed and actiue, al those tokens of honor and magnanimitie, which rising afterwards to their ful ripenes and perfection by degrees of time, study, and experience, made him the most*

renowned and mightie prince that lyued in his age in all this part or circuite of the earth which we call Christendome. (Guicciardini, 1579: 662, my emphasis)

A few lines further, the English soldiers are once more praised in the words Guicciardini attributes to Massimiliano Cesare. While Guicciardini only mentions that they were courageous and valiant (“poco periti della guerra e temerari” (475), Fenton extends the description claiming that the English, according to Cesare, were rather “resolute than well advised” and rather “disciplined and trained” than “suttle and politike” (Guicciardini, 1579: 665). This judgment is meant to set the English in opposition to the Italian, the Spanish and the French who had been characterised throughout the *Storia* as politically astute, deceiving, untrustworthy and restless. According to John R. Hale, if we analyse closely Guicciardini’s book, we can draw a composite portrait of the European nations of that time. Thus, “The French are unreliable, restless, arrogant, self-infatuated, both bold and negligent in planning and quickly discouraged by reverses; the Spanish emerge as avaricious, feckless, unreliable, mercenary, and courageous; the Germans are brutal but ineffective.”(Hale 10) In utter opposition to their European peers, Fenton’s English are resolute, determined, disciplined and trained.

Finally, when reaching the part that recounted the circumstances of Queen Elizabeth’s birth, Fenton modifies the text in order to make it comply with the Tudor version of the story. Describing the context of Elizabeth’s birth, Guicciardini reports that the English King, having secretly impregnated “*la innamorata*”, his mistress, married her officially in order to hide “the infamy” of this event before it was made public (Zaharia 193). Guicciardini’s words are clearly inculpatory:

E lo spigneua anche a questo assai il re di Inghilterra. Il quale, *avendo occultamente ingravidato la innamorata, aveva, per celare la infamia innanzi si publicasse, contratto con essa il matrimonio solennemente*; e avendo poco poi avutane una figliuola, l’aveua, *in pregiudizio della figliuola ricevuta della prima moglie, dichiarata principessa del regno di Inghilterra, titolo che hanno queglii che sono nella prima causa della successione* (Guicciardini, 1835: 843)

These offensive remarks could not be reported as such during the reign of Elizabeth herself. It might have been considered an infamy to call infamous the circumstances surrounding the birth of the Queen of England. Michael Wyatt has amply documented and presented the radical measures Elizabeth resorted to in 1591, when she became acquainted with the contents of Girolamo Pollini’s *Historia ecclesiastica della rivoluizon d’Inghilterra* (1591), who claimed that Elizabeth was not only a bastard but the fruit of an incestuous relationship (Wyatt 129). Pollini’s defamatory comments on Elizabeth’s parentage eventually led to the burning of the first edition of his book in London and Italy (Wyatt 130). In order to avoid a similar fate for his translation and being aware of the implications that Guicciardini’s comments on Elizabeth’s birth might have at the court, Fenton modifies Guicciardini’s text completely, maintaining precisely the opposite. In his account, “*la innamorata*” becomes the respectable “Lady Anne Bolleyne” whom the King had solemnly married *before* getting her pregnant:

Neverthesse he was somewhat pushed on by the incitacion of the king of England *who had now solemnly married the Ladye Anne Bolleyne, by whome hauing by due order of time procreated a Daughter he had*, to the preiudice of the Daughter of his first wife, declared her Princesse of the Realme of England, A title which is transferred to suche as are moste nearest the Crowne. (Guicciardini, 1579: 1180, my emphasis)

The climax of this description concerning the circumstances of Elizabeth’s birth is Guicciardini’s own statement with regard to the naming of Elizabeth as heiress to the throne of England in the detriment of her older step-sister Mary. The Italian historian deemed this measure justified since Elizabeth had just become the nearest person to the Crown. Thus, Guicciardini’s *Storia* gained further relevance in Elizabethan England, as a significant Italian historical text that testified to Elizabeth’s legitimacy and right to the throne of England.

Intertextual exchanges: Guicciardini’s *Storia d’Italia* and Shakespeare’s *Henry V*

Guicciardini's *Storia* was rewritten and appropriated not only by means of translation, as we have seen in the first section of this paper, but also via other Elizabethan historical and dramatic works. Raphael Holinshed made extensive use of Fenton's translation of *Storia d'Italia*, massively importing in his *Chronicles* (1587) excerpts that dealt mainly with the historical international context of Henry VIII's reign (Patterson, 1994; Fellheimer, 1945). In *The Devil's Charter* (1607), Barnabe Barnes turns Guicciardini himself into a stage character, cast as a trustworthy chorus, and makes the stage Guicciardini pronounce a series of phrases and historical details that recall Fenton's translation of *Storia d'Italia* (Redmond 83).

The second edition of Fenton's translation was published in 1599, the year Shakespeare wrote *Henry V*. Whether Shakespeare had a first-hand acquaintance with Guicciardini's *Storia* remains a matter of vagueness and confusion. As I have previously shown, the circulation and popularity of works of political theory and history (including Guicciardini's texts) in the Elizabethan intellectual and academic circles, are clearly attested and well documented. Given the fact that Shakespeare lived in London and mingled with courtiers and writers who had received a higher education, we may assume that although he was never a student at Cambridge or Oxford, he was, nonetheless familiar with such works (Hadfield 17). Moreover, his explicit use and close reading of key passages from certain works such as Montaigne's *Essays*, Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Sidney's *Arcadia*, as well as his involvement in the events surrounding the Essex rebellion³ suggest "that Shakespeare could not have been ignorant of developments in the writing of political history and the use of historical parallels." (Hadfield 17).

As I have mentioned at the outset of this paper, this section sets out to suggest the existence of some possible connections and intertextual exchanges between the rhetoric of a set speech in Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* and Shakespeare's argumentative construction of the first two scenes of *Henry V*. While it is widely known that the first part of the Archbishop's speech is predominantly a verse paraphrase of Holinshed's prose recounting of the same events (Taylor 34), the extended part of the speech that morally legitimizes Henry's war by reference to the authority of the past have no counterpart in the English chronicles (Holinshed, 1587; Hall, 1548). *The First English Life of King Henry the Fifth* (1513) makes no mention of these arguments either. I argue that this part of the Archbishop's speech does have an analogue in the set speech invented by Guicciardini and attributed to the Milanese ambassador to the court of Charles VIII. While these set speeches may seem rather tedious and monotonous to a modern audience, in the early modern period they were regarded as the best part of a work of history, being treated "like the arias of an opera", particularly in virtue of their exemplarity (Burke 133). It is impossible to ascertain whether Shakespeare read and took as a model the speech in Guicciardini's text for his construction of the Archbishop's speech or not. However, I could not help noticing the similarity of the rhetoric in the two speeches as well as the interweaving of both texts with the highly intertextual early modern discourse on just war.

The sixteenth-century discourse on the issue of war with its emphasis on the legal and religious justification of certain types of warfare were heavily informed by the Christian medieval theories on just war developed by St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas who injected Roman and Judaeo-Christian elements in their own accounts of the reasons that could justify war (Barker 71-72). The tradition of the just war theory was initiated and developed by St. Augustine in the fifth century in response to the charges that had been raised against the pacifism promoted by the Christian faith, in the aftermath of the sack of Rome (410 A.D.) (Pugliatti 10). The Christian morality of forgiveness and non-violence was held by many responsible for the disaster that fell upon Rome in 410. Augustine's answers to these allegations as well as his thoughts on the right of a nation to go to war were developed not only in his monumental work, *De civitate dei*, but also in an earlier tract entitled *Contra Faustum*. Augustine's difficult task was to attempt to reconcile the obvious political necessity of war with the tenets of the Christian religion. As Paola Pugliatti has shown, the questions Augustine had to respond to were highly controversial:

³ Essex's supporters commissioned a special performance of *Richard II*, held presumably by Shakespeare's company the night before Essex's unsuccessful rebellion, in the mistaken belief that it would incite the London population to rebellion.

But if in a political perspective armed defence and even armed attack to prevent invasion were seen as necessary (and the sack of Rome could not but strengthen the conviction), how could the decision to engage in acts of violence be justified in terms of Christian morals? How could the right of the Empire to defend itself against attackers and even to pursue its expansionist politics as a means to strengthen the *pax romana* be argued theoretically without rejecting one of the main tenets of Christ's teaching? (Pugliatti 10)

In order to offer a justification and a solution to these dilemmas Augustine elaborated the two main criteria of the just war theory - *jus ad bellum*, the right to go to war, and *jus in bello*, the right way to fight a war. Basically, the *jus ad bellum* required that the decision to go to war should be taken by the right authority and that there should be a just cause for going to war as for instance regaining sovereign territory unlawfully appropriated, self-defence or revenge of injuries; *jus in bello* specified which acts were considered morally acceptable while a war was being fought and which were not (Meron 27-28). These two basic principles had been strongly consolidated by Shakespeare's time through the mediation of such books as Christine de Pisan's *The Book of fayttes of armes and of chyvalrye* (1410) translated into English by William Caxton in 1489, John of Legnano's *De Bello* (1360) or Alberico Gentili's *De iure belli* published in England between 1588-1589 (Pugliatti 58).

The two speeches I set out to consider were both meant to persuade the kings in question to wage war against another nation in order to regain territories that allegedly belonged to their crown. As I intend to show next, both Guicciardini and Shakespeare attach special significance to the *jus ad bellum* principle, to the moral, legal and religious legitimacy of the war.

Legitimizing War in *Henry V*⁴

The opening scene of *Henry V* makes us privy to a backstage conversation between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely, on the issue of an upcoming war with France. Although both of them consider the war inevitable, the Archbishop is cautiously using words that are more ambiguous: "causes now in hand...as touching France." (1.1.78,80) The two clergymen express their concern about a bill that had been introduced to seize the Church's property, during the reign of King Henry IV. Due to the troubled times, it has never been passed into law but now the bill has been reactivated and brought to the attention of the new king of England, Henry V. In order to avoid a measure which "would drink deep" (1.1.20), the Archbishop of Canterbury offers Henry a deal: if the King blocks the bill, the clergy will provide him with the necessary money to support the war with France. Although Henry is adamant in his decision to attack France, he is also acutely aware that the war with France needs to be legally, morally and religiously legitimized. For this reason, Henry does not consent to the Archbishop's proposal instantly. Instead, he asks for the latter's informed opinion about the English king's rights to the throne of France. "Taking the hint, the Archbishop understands that the Church will have to supply not only treasure for the war chest but also a justification for making the war. Nevertheless, these 'negotiations' between the Archbishop and the king take place behind closed doors and are not revealed to the public eye since Henry is aware of the primacy of appearance over reality in politics. Hence, when the king comes to speak in public he seems to be so sincere, so pious and so eager to find out the supposedly just and impartial opinion of the Archbishop on his claim that no one could ever suspect the Machiavellian plan that lies behind this façade." (Popescu (Zaharia) 125)

Henry understands the political implications of having a pure and just cause for starting the war with France and thus, he insists on the legitimacy and the clarity of his claim to the French throne. However, when the Archbishop commences to expound the claim, clarity is definitely the one thing it lacks. In order to show that Henry will not be a usurper if he takes hold of the crown of France in defiance of the Salic law- under which succession through the female line is illegal- he invokes several cases of French kings who themselves inherited through female. "The Archbishop's argument is undermining itself because, as he further on claims, all these kings were usurpers whose titles were 'corrupt and naught'(1.2.73). Nevertheless, these crooked titles are cited as precedents in support of a claim supposed to be pure and substantial. The Archbishop seems not to observe the paradox and goes

⁴ I have first discussed this scene in an earlier article, see Popescu (Zaharia), Oana-Alis. 2008.

even further with his exposition, claiming that in fact the French kings are the ones who usurped the English one. As a result, they want to bar Henry's title to their throne because of his inheritance through the female line, when all the while their own titles were usurped from Henry's progenitors because they were inherited in precisely the same way. Thus, the very thing that proves the title of a French king to be crooked, namely inheritance through female, serves to prove the title of the English king good (Goddard 221)." (Popescu (Zaharia) 126) When Canterbury eventually comes to the end of his convoluted explanations, which he pronounces "as clear as is the summer's sun" (1.2.86), Henry simply restates his initial question: "May I with right and conscience make this claim?" (1.2.96). To which the Archbishop retorts:

"The sin upon my head, dread sovereign
For in the Book of Numbers is it writ,
'When the son dies, let the inheritance
Descend unto the daughter'." (1.2.97-100)

"Thus, the Archbishop performs a second act of legitimizing Henry's war by resorting to the religious argument and to the supreme authority of the Bible. The Archbishop's argument is highly relevant to the act of legitimizing Henry's war since it authorizes the use of force against the 'usurping' French. From this standpoint, Henry's war is one of defence, therefore just and legitimate, and not one of aggression meant to increase his power.

Ultimately, Henry's war is validated by reference to the authority of the past, an essential source of self-definition in England during the early modern period when the Elizabethans looked to the past for the roots that could legitimize their identities (Rackin 81). In what follows, Canterbury, Ely, Exeter and Westmoreland vie with one another in urging Henry to take the example of his ancestors whose mighty heir he is": (Popescu (Zaharia)125-126).

"Look back into your mighty ancestors.
Go, my dread, to your great-grandsire's tomb,
From whom you claim: invoke his warlike spirit,
And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
Who on the French ground played a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France" (1.2.101-106)

As Madalina Nicolaescu has argued, English history plays strongly emphasised "the militaristic past of relentless warfare as a source of exemplary models" (Nicolaescu165). Hence, by mobilizing the patriotic discourse about the glory and fame of the past, the Bishops carry out one final act of morally justifying Henry's war against France.

Justifying Warfare in Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia*

The set speech in Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* was also meant to convince a king to go to war by delivering legitimizing arguments in favour of such an undertaking. The speech is ascribed to the ambassador of the famous Ludovico Sforza⁵ who, after the murder of his brother, Maria Galeazoo Sforza, the Duke of Milan, acted as regent to Maria Galeazoo's seven-year-old son, the young duke Giovan Galeazzo Sforza. According to Guicciardini, Ludovico swiftly took over the real power in the state and became the *de facto* ruler of Milan. However, following Maria Galeazzo's marriage to Isabella of Aragon, the granddaughter of Ferdinand I of Naples, Ludovico felt his position threatened by the ruling house of Naples, particularly because Isabella, "a young Lady of high stomacke"(Guicciardini, 1579: 9), constantly stirred up her grandfather and father against her husband's tyrannical uncle. Fearing a secret alliance between Ferdinand I of Naples and Piero de' Medici, the ruler of Florence, as well as the hatred of his own people, Ludovico, "a Prince very watchfull and of right subtle understanding" (5), decided to appeal to foreign arms in order to ensure his own security. Hence, he thought to offer support and encourage Charles VIII of France to invade the Kingdom of Naples, in virtue of his Angevin claim to the throne of Naples. Being informed that

⁵ He was surnamed Ludovico the Moor.

Charles was not at all unwilling to attempt to acquire by force the Kingdom of Naples as his own rightful property, Ludovico sent Carlo de Barbiano Count of Belgioioso as ambassador to France in order to convince the king to undertake that expedition (14).

The ‘backstage’ negotiations that we have seen taking place in *Henry V* between the clergymen and the king seem to have been common to the French court of Charles VIII as well. Here, the Milanese ambassador had first solicited “the king certeine days in private audience” (15) and negotiated “particularly with sundry of his principal favorits”(15) before being received into the royal council in the presence of *all* the royal ministers, prelates and nobles of the court.

The rhetoric and arguments outlining the ambassador’s speech are, for the most part, similar to the ones exposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in *Henry V*. Thus, after an opening part meant to reassure the French king of Ludovico’s good faith, sincerity and, moreover, financial and armed support, the ambassador mentions as first and principal argument in favour of the war, the justice of the cause. As he points out to the French king:

it is manifest to all the world, how resolute and apparant be the rights which the house of *Aniovv*, to whom you are lawful inheritor hath to the realme of *Naples*, and how iust is the succession which this crowne pretendes to it by the yssues of *Charles*, who first of the blood royall of *Fraunce*, obteyned the same kingdom both with the authoritie of the Pope, and by his proper valour (15).

The argument concerning the justice and lawfulness of the cause is reiterated and emphasised several times during the speech, thus signalling the prominence given to the *jus ad bellum* principle both in the Middle Ages (the time of the real speech) and in the Renaissance, the moment of Guicciardini’s recounting of the events: “And seeing by cleare iustice and all iudiciall course of lawes, it apperteynes vnto you, who dowtes how iustly it agreeth with your dignitie to recouer it” , “Thus most high and glorious king is the enterprise proued iust, easie, and necessary” (17). The line of the argument is further developed by underscoring the disgrace that Charles suffers by allowing “Ferdinand *to usurp* upon you such a kingdom” (17). Therefore, as in Henry’s case, the war is proven to be one of defence, waged against usurping enemies and not one meant to encourage Charles’s dreams of self-aggrandizement, although the ambassador does emphasise several times the glory, fame and honour Charles will gain in case of victory.

A second important argument in favour of waging the war against Naples is “the facilitie of the conquest” (15) since, as Barbiano argues, the greatness of “the most mightie King of all Christendom” (15) cannot be threatened by so weak a power as that of Naples. Furthermore, he contends, the times and means have never been more propitious for such an undertaking: “And in what time hath the realme of *Fraunce* bene euer more happy, more glorious, or more mighty then at this hower: neither had this crowne at any tyme heretofore so convenient and ready meanes to establish a firme peace with all his neighbours.” (16). The terms used are similar to the ones the Earl of Westmoreland uses in *Henry V* to mark the auspicious occasion that characterises the context of Henry’s war: “they know your grace hath cause; and means and might/So hath your highness. Never king of England/ Had nobles richer and more loyal subjects...” (1.2.125-127); the Archbishop himself underscores the ease of conquest: “O noble English, that could entertain/ With half their forces the full Pride of France/And let another half stand laughing by,/ All out of work and cold for action!” (1.2.111-114)

The moral legitimacy granted by the past examples of the two kings’ predecessors is another forceful argument used both by the English clergymen and by Ludovico’s ambassador in their pleadings. As I have shown, Henry is vehemently urged to “awake remembrance of those valiant dead” (1.2.115) and “renew their feats” (116) and to prove to the rest of the world that “you are their heir, you sit upon their throne,/The blood and courage that renowned them runs in your veins...” (117-119). In a similar vein, the Milanese ambassador encourages Charles VIII to follow the examples of his mighty ancestors by invoking the name and glory of probably the most renowned French king, Charlemagne: “that mighty and triumphant *Charles*, of whom as you beare the name, so nowe the time offereth you occasion to communicate with his glory and titles” (17). Moreover, in his attempt to persuade Charles that the state of France at that moment was fully prepared for such a

noble enterprise, Barbiano invokes the memory of Charles's father who "would perhaps have bene more ready to this selfe same expedicion" (17), had all those happy factors come together in the past.

Furthermore, by conquering the Kingdom of Naples Charles would have an open door and unique opportunity to wage war against the Turks, "the enemies of our religion" (16) and thus prove that he is the worthy bearer of the surname "Most Christian", "a title wherin your predecessors have flourished with no smal examples of triumph and glory, they yssuing in armed maner out of this realme, some times to deliver the Church of God from the oppression of tyrannes, some times to invade the infidels, and recover the holy sepulcher, have raised even to the third heaven their names and maiestie of the french kinges" (17). Consequently, the *just* war against Naples will open the way to fight a *holy* war against the Ottoman infidels;⁶ hence, the war is not only legally and morally justified, but also, as in the case of Henry V's war, religiously motivated and legitimated since "not only the reasons of men, but even the self voice of God, doth call you with great and manifest occasions." (17)

All these striking similarities between the reasoning and rhetoric of Barbiano's speech in Guicciardini's *Storia* and the opening scenes of *Henry V* can encourage us to consider Guicciardini's text another historical source of Shakespeare's play.

Conclusions

It has been the purpose of this paper to explore the various ways in which Francesco Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* was culturally and ideologically appropriated in Elizabethan England. In the first part of the paper, I have considered Geoffrey Fenton's English translation of the Italian text and highlighted the translator's attempts to make it ideologically acceptable to the taste and the censorship of sixteenth-century England. I have shown that Fenton manipulated the text in order to make it conform to the exigencies of the Tudor myth and its providential view of history.

In the second part, I have argued for the possibility of an intertextual dialogue between Guicciardini's text and Shakespeare's play *Henry V*. I have attempted to foreground the similarities existing between the set speech delivered by Ludovico Sforza's ambassador to the French court of Charles VIII and the famous speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury in *Henry V*. My analysis focused on the similar ways in which the two speakers have structured and organised their arguments in accordance with the ideas on just war circulated in the period.

The complex process of appropriating and reworking the terms of the various historical, cultural and political contemporary discourses characterises not only Guicciardini's text but also Fenton's translation and Shakespeare's play. Their manner of rewriting and recontextualising pre-existing ideas already produced and circulating in culture is highly indicative of the intertextuality that permeates most early modern writings.

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⁶ "In Christian thought two types of war have been seen as permissible, the holy war and the just war. The holy war is fought for the goals and ideals of the faith and is waged by divine authority or on the authority of some religious leader. [...] The just war is usually fought on public authority for more mundane goals such as defense of territory, persons and rights." Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.2.

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