Introduction

When John Florio arrived in Elizabethan England in the early 1570s, there was
great interest in the Italian language and culture among the educated elite and at
the court, while English, as suggested in one of his dialogue books, was not used
‘beyond Dover.’ It was a sign of sophistication to be able to speak Italian, and
proficiency in Italian was highly prized among the queens and patrons whose fa-
vours Florio pursued throughout his life. Florio’s activities as a linguist and cultural
mediator thus coincide with a time when Italian enjoyed a prominent international
role, especially in the arts and sciences. English, on the other hand, was just begin-
nings its ascent as the global language it is today. Florio’s compilation of the first
comprehensive Italian-English dictionary, *A Worlde of Wordes*, is the culmination
of a lifelong endeavour in the dissemination of Italian language and culture in Re-
naissance England, and a tribute to the wealth of early modern Italian civilization.

At a time when Italian-English lexicography was still in its infancy, and when
there existed only one minor bilingual dictionary (compiled by William Thom-
as), Florio’s corpus of some 46,000 Italian entries, and a much larger number of
English words, is nothing short of a trailblazing enterprise. Based predominantly
on words and phrases found in contemporary Italian literature, monolingual and
bilingual dictionaries by Francesco Alunno, Filippo Venuti, and works from dis-
parate fields of knowledge, *A Worlde of Wordes* is both a mirror of the state of the
Italian language into the late sixteenth century and an encyclopedic treasure trove
that provide insight in the period’s cultural and scientific vibrancy. The very name
of the dictionary, inspired by the titles of Tommaso Garzoni’s *Piazza universale
della lingua*, Francesco Alunno’s *Fabrica del mondo*, and Alessandro Citolini’s
*Tipocosmia*, speaks of the work’s universality. With his dictionary, Florio offered
cultivated English Italophiles an instrument for understanding hidden meanings, id-
ioms, words and phrases of dialect, and proverbs in a wide range of literary works,
including those placed on the *Index*, a list of prohibited texts published following
Italy’s Tridentine Council. As a Protestant Italian émigré who was born in London in 1553 but spent most of his infant and adolescent years in Switzerland and Germany, Florio was in many ways a mediator among languages, cultures, nations, religions, and social classes, an interpreter of and for great writers and intellectuals such as Giordano Bruno, with whom he spent two years at the French Embassy in London, and for the wife of James I, Queen Anne, whom he served as personal secretary for fifteen years. Florio thus laboured as a cultural ambassador, especially in his Italian teaching career and in his work in various genres, from conversation manuals to translations, and lexicography. Although he is thought to never have stepped foot on Italian soil, and was removed from the ongoing contemporary debates on an Italian standard language, Florio offered his students a language that was colloquial yet cultivated, for use in both formal and everyday speech. His dictionary contains not only single word entries, but also phrases, idiomatic expressions, and exclamations, side by side with a wealth of scholarly and technical terms, all of which lend a genuinely encyclopedic dimension. Unlike the purist-oriented Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca, which was to be published fourteen years later, in 1612, and which would become the authoritative source for Italy’s standard language, A Worlde of Wordes is inclusive rather than exclusive, plurilingual rather than monolingual, providing a broad range of expressions related to the material, sensory world, through expressive and picturesque language. Words like potta or fica, (‘a womans privie parts, a cunt, a quaint’), cazzo, coda, or destriere (‘a mans privie member’), and puttanaria (‘whoredome, the arte of whoring’), and metaphors such as Donna che manda il marito in Cornovaglia senza barca or Donna che fa le fusa storte (‘shee that makes hir husband cuckold’ [literally, ‘a woman who sends her husband to Cornwall without a boat’]; ‘a woman who purs’), appear along with interjections such as cáncaro, cáppari, jocular phrases and terms such as alla tua barba, culatorio, hyperbolic language such as Io t’ho dove si soffiano le noci (‘I care not a turd for you’) and expressions in ‘Peddlers’ French.’ Florio chose this precociously modern approach in a politically and culturally ambivalent environment in which Puritanism and libertinism coexisted, and where the celebration of all things Italian was challenged by xenophobic voices such as Roger Asham’s, for whom ‘un inglese italianato è un diavolo incarnato.’

A Worlde of Wordes was composed in Shakespeare’s time, and Shakespeare is thought to have been familiar with and inspired by Florio’s work. A work of art in itself, the dictionary is an extraordinary resource not only for the history of Italian in Italy and abroad, but also for the history of early Modern English. It is the final new bilingual English dictionary to appear before Robert Cawdrey’s first monolingual Table Alphabetical (1604), and we find in it a wealth of words listed as first attestations in the Oxford English Dictionary. Florio’s A Worlde of Wordes, enlarged in a revised edition in 1611, established an early standard for bilingual lexicography and remained an important work of reference throughout the seventeenth century, setting the foundations for Altieri’s and Baretti’s dictionaries.
Florio’s father Michelangelo was born in Tuscany, most likely in Florence, into a family of converted Jews. He joined the Franciscan order, which he later left to join the Reformation movement. A victim of the Inquisition, he was arrested in 1548 and incarcerated in Rome for more than two years. Following his escape from prison he travelled to Naples and Apulia, reached Venice by sea, and then migrated north to London in 1550. Under the protection of Sir William Cecil he was appointed pastor of a Protestant community. Following a rather controversial ministry he began to pursue a teaching career through his association with John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland. With Edward VI’s death and Catholic Mary Tudor’s ascent to the throne, he was forced once again into exile, and eventually fled to Strasbourg with his small family. At the time of his departure from England, Michelangelo was married, and his son John was one year old. While in Strasbourg he was called, in 1555, to the ministry of Soglio in Switzerland’s Val Bregaglia, perhaps through the mediation of the humanist and religious reformer Pietro Paolo Vergerio. It was among the towering mountains of the Italian-speaking Grigioni bordering Italy that John spent his early years, with his father teaching him Italian grammar, Latin, English, and French. Michelangelo’s ministry in a small town that had joined the Reformation only very recently was not easy, and he became embroiled in theological disputes and accusations of heresy. At age ten John was sent to Tübingen, where he studied with Vergerio, from whom he may have received training in Italian letters before returning to England.

In numerous ways John followed in his father’s footsteps in England, sharing his passion and love for the Italian language and humanism. To earn his living he began to teach Italian, drawing on some of his father’s aristocratic connections. Shunning the theological disputes that had forced his father into endless peregrinations, he endeavoured to collect Italian words and phrases and to translate, thus embarking on a linguistic career. He shared his father’s strong determination, coupled with a certain defensiveness that occasionally led to quarrels and animosity. From the 1590s on he signed his works as ‘John Florio the Resolute,’ an epithet underscoring his identity as a fearless pioneer. Both father and son wrote dedicatory epistles prefacing their books with praise for their patrons and their own work, followed by defences against potential detractors. Almost half of his address ‘To the Reader’ introducing A Worlde of Wordes is a virulent complaint and defence against a certain H.S., a detractor identified by Frances Yates as Hugh Sanford. Florio lashes out against a ‘tooth-lesse dog,’ whose initials may well stand for Haeres Stultitiae, Homo Simplex, Hostis Studiosorum, Hipocrito Simulatore, Huffe Snuffe, Horse Stealer, Hugh Sot, or Humfrey Swineshead, as well as other epithets that reflect Florio’s polyglot inventiveness and his obsession with ‘those notable Pirates in this our paper-sea, those sea-dogs, or lande-Critikes, monsters of men (…) whose teeth are Canibals, their toongs adder-forkes, their lips aspes-poyson, their eies basilisks (…)’ (‘To the Reader,’ 6). The invective refers very likely to more than one competitor or detractor, among them perhaps Hollyband Sainliens.
Although they cannot be separated from each other, three genres and activities stand out in John Florio’s oeuvre, namely his teaching of the Italian language, reflected in the two dialogue books entitled *Firste Fruites* (1578) and *Second Frutes* (1591), the latter accompanied by the proverb collection *Giardino di Recreazione*; his English translations of Jacques Cartier’s *Navigations to New France* (1580), Michel de Montaigne’s *Essais* (1603), and perhaps Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (1620); and his dictionaries *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598) and *Queen Anna’s New World of Words* (1611). Although different in their approach, all of these works have similar objectives. They were written for the clearly didactic purpose of teaching aristocratic students Italian. The dialogues and dictionaries are arranged in a similar fashion, with Italian in the left column and English in the right, and are directed primarily at cultivated English readers and students to teach them to appreciate the subtleties of Italian and its dialects, and to perfect their overall proficiency. Yet at the same time, Florio’s guide to correct English pronunciation \(^{12}\) and the grammatical rules appended to the *Firste Fruites* suggest that he also had in mind Italian readers. In the ‘Epistle Dedicatorie’ to *A Worlde of Wordes* he consecrates his dictionary ‘to all Italian-English, or English-Italian students’ under his patrons’ protection (5), while in his ‘Address to the Readers’ he hopes that his labour of twenty years would also attract a warm reception abroad (9). As the chronology of the works in the three genres suggests, Florio’s various books were composed simultaneously, as a constantly evolving hermeneutic collection of Italian and English words, phrases, idioms, proverbs, and grammatical rules. Florio’s works display the creativity and technical skills of both translator and writer. \(^{13}\) Throughout he demonstrates a profound knowledge of different linguistic registers, while adopting rhetorical devices consistent with euphuistic fashion and his dedication to *copia*, the Renaissance ideal of copiousness. Florio’s intertextual endeavours thus demonstrate a circular movement, cross-fertilizing each other continuously. They reflect his experience as an émigré with a dual identity, as an ‘English man in Italiane,’ ‘Italus ore, Anglus pectore,’ \(^{14}\) who shares both his love for what he considers Italy’s superior culture, a land which his family was forced to abandon because of their Protestantism, and for England, the country that allowed him to prosper.

1. Florio’s Three Genres

*Firste Fruites and Second Frutes*

John apparently spent his early English years in Oxford as a tutor of the Italian language at Magdalen College. Among his friends were Matthew Gwinne, ‘Il Candido,’ and the poet Samuel Daniel. John married Samuel’s sister Rose, with whom he had three children, his daughters Joane and Elizabeth and his son Edward, baptized in Oxford in 1585, 1589, and 1588 respectively. He began his career in a country that was isolated geographically from the rest of Europe, and was not particularly
eager to accommodate foreigners. Yet the Italian language and culture were hugely popular in England, as evidenced by the presence in London of printers such as Thomas Wolfe, Thomas Woodcock, and Edward Blount, who produced books in Italian. The latter two published respectively Florio’s two dialogue books, his dictionary, and his Montaigne translation. When considering the significant number of educated Italian expatriates, the exclusion of foreign languages from the scholastic curriculum, and the monopoly of French as the primary foreign language, the competition among Italian tutors must have been fierce and the search for students a never-ending concern. Florio inserts a complaint about lack of interest among the English in the study of foreign languages in a dialogue in his *Firste Fruites*: ‘What thinke you of the maners of English men? Tel me of curtesie.’ ‘I wyll tell you, some are well manered, but many yl (…) toward strangers: and fewe of these English men delight to have their chyldren learne divers languages, whiche thing displeaseth me. When I arrived first in London, I coulde not speake Englishe, and I met above five hundred persons, afore I coulde find one, that could tel me in Italian, or French, where the Post dwelt’ (ch. 27).

Florio was fortunate to make the acquaintance of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and son of the Duke of Northumberland, his father’s patron. He was connected with prestigious members of the circle of Philip Sidney, Robert Dudley’s nephew, which included Fulke Greville, Gabriel Harvey, and many others. While building his career as Italian tutor of high-profile students, Florio must have been keenly aware of the need for suitable teaching materials. Sixteenth-century England favoured the direct method in foreign language teaching, as illustrated in language manuals such as Hollyband’s *French Schoolmaister* (1565), *The French Littleton* (1566), and *The Italian Schoolmaister* (1583). With his *Firste Fruites*, printed in 1578, and according to the lengthy title ‘the like heretofore, never by any man published,’ the young Florio provided a similar instrument for Italian, with ‘familiar speech, merie Proverbes, wittie Sentences, and golden sayings. Also a perfect Induction to the Italian, and English tongues.’ The dialogue book with its flowery title is composed of forty-four graded dialogues, a palimpsest with conversations about war and peace, pride and envy, nobility and poverty, clemency and sobriety, music and love, lust and virtue, all with moralistic overtones. Most of the chapters aim to teach practical phrases for interaction among different social groups, thus immersing students in actual conversational situations. At the same time the book provides a commentary on contemporary English life and customs. Unlike Hollyband’s manuals, Florio’s dialogues are intended for students with previous knowledge of Italian who are eager to converse among members of the upper classes. They include valuable information on late sixteenth-century England, as observed by their author. While the portrait of England and its Queen is favourable and informative, with descriptions of the city of London, its universities, entertainments, justice system, and customs (*Firste Fruites*, ch. 15), Florio’s assessment of the English language seems less so, hiding perhaps his view of the superiority of Italian,
not devoid of purist overtones: ‘It is a language that wyl do you good in England, but passe Dover, it is worth nothing (…), it is a language confused, bepeesed with many tongues: it taketh many words of the latine, & mo from the French, & mo from the Italian, and many mo from the Dutich, some also from the Greeke, & from the Britaine, so that if every language had his owne wordes againe, there woulde but a fewe remaine for English men, and yet every day they adde’ (ch. 27).20 The passage emphasizes how receptive the English language was to the introduction of words from other languages. Florio seems to modify this assessment a decade later in his ‘Epistle Dedicatorie’ to A Worlde of Wordes, where he praises ‘the copie and varietie of our sweete-mother-toong, which (…) is growne farre beyond that of former times’ (5), and where he champions language contact in the ‘manie-folde Englishes’ (9).

Inspired in part by Bishop Antonio Guevara’s and Lodovico Guicciardino’s dialogues21 as well as by other sources, the Firste Fruites surpasses dialogue books composed previously in its sophisticated attempt to teach both language and culture. The dialogues are enriched by proverbs and idioms, and by a short dictionary in chapter 43, which anticipates the author’s lexicographic ambitions. They are followed by a guide to English pronunciation and a ‘Necessarie induction to the Italian tongue,’ with grammatical rules for the benefit of both English and Italian native speakers.

Six years after his two-year residence at the French Embassy on London’s Butchers Row, where he tutored the daughter of Ambassador Michel de Castelnau, Lord of Mauvassière, and where he met Giordano Bruno, whose books became sources for his dictionary’s enlarged second edition, Florio published his Second Frutes (1591). Divided into twelve chapters, Second Frutes deals with typical activities in a day of an English gentleman, from getting up in the morning to meals, games, and refined social customs. Florio must have worked on the new dialogues while at the embassy, with which he remained connected even after Mauvassière’s departure, when De Chateauneuf led the French embassy. The new Frutes was accompanied by the Giardino di Ricreatione, a collection of some 6,000 Italian proverbs without English equivalents, a garden ‘nel quale crescono fronde, fiori e frutti, vaghe, e leggiadri, e soavi’ (rich in foliage, flowers and fruits, all lovely, graceful, sweet). The Second Frutes and the Giardino di Ricreatione were printed for a new generation of students and courtiers, such as Sir Walter Raleigh, Essex, and Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, at a time when Shakespeare and English literature flourished.

As with the previous collection, the Second Frutes’ purpose was didactic, with an emphasis on spoken language; its aim was to instil enthusiasm for language learning through literary rhetoric and proverbs that could be memorized and used in conversation. It also included situations depicting formal and informal interaction, but with more interlocutors. Giardino, appended to Second Frutes and printed outside Italy, seven years before Orlando Pescetti’s Proverbi italiani, establishes
Florio as an early paroemiologist who attempted to preserve this heritage among Italian expatriates, as he is aware that among strangers they will ‘speak bookish, and not as they wil doe amongst themselves because they know their proverbs never came over the Alpes’ (‘Epistle Dedicatorie,’ 6). The Italian used in Second Frutes seems more polished, without the Florentine and Northern Italian inflections noticeable in the earlier book of dialogues. With Giardino, Florio aimed at providing a genuinely original compendium for the ‘wise and gentle.’ The Second Frutes’ more relaxed tone stands in contrast to the moralizing aspect of the previous collection, which, however, tends to be more colourful.

Florio’s success and fame were confirmed by his appointment in 1594 as the Italian tutor of the Earl of Southampton, whose patronage he shared with Shakespeare, and to whom he dedicated A Worlde of Wordes. It should be noted anecdotally that much has been written about Florio’s and Shakespeare’s identities. Some authors go as far as suggesting that Shakespeare was the nom de plume of Florio.

Florio’s Dictionaries

Florio’s A Worlde of Wordes of 1598, his expanded and revised 1611 edition Queen Anna’s New World of Words, and his work on a third edition, all entrusted in his will to Lord William Earl of Pembroke and later used by Giovanni Torriano for his Vocabolario Italiano & Inglese (1659), represent the culmination of a lifelong labour for the dissemination of Italian language and culture in England. Florio strove to build bridges between nations and civilizations, an extraordinary feat for a son of Italian immigrants to England, whose connections to Italian language and culture were mediated through his father, his childhood in Switzerland’s Italian-speaking Grigioni, his studies with Vergerio in Germany, assiduous readings, and his teaching career. With his comprehensive dictionaries Florio set the foundations for a bilingual Italian-English lexicography, toiling on his own with perseverance and keen ambition. His only predecessor was William Thomas, who in 1550 published the Principal Rules of the Italian Grammar, with a Dictionarie for the better understandyng of Boccace, Petrarcha, and Dante, which consisted of a list of some 8,000 Italian words translated into English. Florio could also rely on Alunno’s Italian and Venuti’s Italian-Latin dictionaries, which appear in his list of sources. There were in addition Latin-English, French-English, and Spanish-Italian dictionaries, which provided clues and inspiration for some of his English definitions. Although he probably did not refer to many of these rich resources, Florio was surrounded by significant English bilingual and polyglot lexicographical works, among them John Palsgrave’s Eclaircissement de la langue françoyse (1530) and the Latin-English dictionaries by Thomas Elyot (1538), Robert Estienne, John Vernon, Thomas Cooper (1565), and Thomas Thomas (1580), as well as early French-English works. Some scholars have endeavoured to show how Florio lifted materials from some of these sources, suggesting derivativeness and plagiarism. However, when consid-
ering the early state of Renaissance bilingual lexicography, with its natural reliance on previous works, the difficulty of working outside Italy, and the limited access to Italian books, Florio’s effort must be credited as nothing short of trailblazing and astounding.

As with his pedagogical work, his dialogue books, and proverb collections, the aim of his dictionaries was the spread of Italian Renaissance civilization, universal knowledge, and multilingualism. In his flowery ‘Epistle Dedicatory’ to the 1598 edition, Florio advocates ‘ambidexterity,’ the need for the cultivated gentry of using both hands, of being bilingual: ‘Lame are we (...) if we be not ambidexters, using both hands alike’ (1).

Florio’s two dictionaries were written over the course of many years, while he was working on his Fruites, translations, and proverb collections. Their publication coincides with the years of his growing success, which reached its peak at the transition from the Tudor reign to the rule of James I by his employment as Queen Anne’s ‘Groome of the Privy Chamber.’ Florio was now living at court, holding a prestigious position at the centre of power, serving the new Queen as her Italian preceptor and private secretary. From 1604 to Anne’s death in 1619 he had a secure income, and his life was on a steadier course. He probably owed his appointment to a number of factors: Robert Cecil’s patronage, the widespread respect for his work, and diplomatic skills acquired at the French Embassy and with his aristocratic students, which allowed him to prosper under politically very different reigns. During the years at court Florio became grandfather to a child of his daughter, who was married to James Molins, a renowned physician. Florio remarried in 1617, at an advanced age, choosing as his wife another ‘Rose flourishing’ in his life, Rose Spicer. During these years he witnessed the success of his translation of Montaigne’s Essais, and worked on the second edition of the New World of Words dedicated to Queen Anne.

Florio’s dictionaries are of very considerable size. The 1598 edition features some 46,000 entries, drawn from 72 cited works, of which 22 were placed on the Index librorum prohibitorum of 1559, while the 1611 edition contains some 74,000 entries drawn from 249 sources, of which one-fifth appeared on the Index. Through the inclusion of material from books on the Index in Italy, English Italophiles gained access to bits and pieces of ‘forbidden fruits,’ such as Aretino’s oeuvre. As noted in the ‘Epistle Dedicatory’ to A Worlde of Wordes, Florio was constantly striving to find new words, with an almost unparalleled lexical voracity. To cite Frances Yates, he ‘loved words with an aesthetic delight in their strength, delicacy, colour, and infinite variety. He collected them into his dictionary as another might collect jewels in a cabinet.’ Quantity was a primary objective, and Florio endeavoured to challenge any potential competitor: ‘If any thinke I had great helpes of Alunno, or of Venuti, let him confer, and knowe I have in two, yea almost in one of my letters of the Alphabet more words, then they have in all their twenty; and they are but for a few auctors in the Italian toong, mine for most that write well, as may appeere by
the Catalog of bookes that I have read through of purpose for the accomplishing of this Dictionarie’ (‘To the Reader,’ 9). His was a cumulative practice dependent on the availability of suitable books. Although we do not know what method he used in compiling the dictionary, and contrary to his claim in the ‘Address to the Readers,’ it is highly unlikely that he excerpted page after page of his books. Some scholars have suggested that he had a preference for indexes and subjects listed in the great Renaissance compendia by authors such as Garzoni, Citolini, Alunno, and Gessner. Under the circumstances it is hardly reasonable to expect a thorough reliability in the use of cited sources. Some texts apparently used, such as Giordano Bruno’s *Il Candelaio*, are not listed, while others listed were probably not used or excerpted only tangentially. Such practice was not at all unusual in Florio’s times.

The cited sources that follow the ‘Epistle Dedicatorie’ of 1598 include a corpus that is made up mostly of contemporary literary texts, ranging from Sannazzaro’s *Arcadia* and Tasso’s *Gerusalemme Liberata* to Castiglione’s *Cortegiano*, Della Casa’s *Galateo*, and Caro’s *Lettere famigliari*, as well as a wide range of *Dialoghi* such as those written by Sperone Speroni and Stefano Guazzo. Fourteen citations alone or one-sixth of the catalogue are sources from Aretino, highlighting Florio’s interest in theatrical texts and spoken language for pedagogical purposes, and his willingness to capitalize on his English readers’ salacious interest in Aretino’s explicitly erotic and sexual content. Among the few medieval literary sources cited are the *Novellino*, Boccaccio’s *Decamerone*, Petrarch, and Passavanti’s *Specchio di vera penitentia*. Dante’s works are visibly absent from the list of sources in the first edition, but for this author Florio very likely relied on Alunno’s *Le Ricchezze della lingua volgare* and Thomas’s word list. The encyclopedic nature of Florio’s dictionary, with its abundance of technical terms, is attributed to specialized works such as Messisbugo’s *Del’arte della cucina*, Federichi’s *Del falcone e uccellare*, Gerardo’s *Herbario Inghilese*, Grisone’s *Ordini di cavalcare*, Konrad Gessner’s three-volume *Degli animali, pesci e uccelli*, and Ollao Magno’s *Historia delle cose settentrionali*. Florio also acknowledges a number of dictionary sources, among them Alunno and Venuti’s English-Italian, Italian-French, and Italian-Spanish dictionaries. The latter are cited without authors but were compiled respectively by William Thomas (1550), Jean Antoine Fenice (1583), and Cristóbal de las Casas (1570). Thomas Thomas’s Latin-English dictionary is not mentioned, although it was most likely a source for some English definitions.

A glance at the enlarged 1611 edition with its triplicate list of cited works reveals a broadening of literary sources. Florio now claims to have consulted Boccaccio’s *Corbaccio* and *Fiammetta*, Boccaccio’s and Landino’s commentaries on Dante, the works of Petrarch, Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*, Boiardo’s *Orlando inamorato*, Bembo’s *Asolani*, Pulci’s *Morgante*, Lorenzo De’ Medici’s *Canzon di ballo*, Bandello’s *Novelle*, Machiavelli’s *Tutte le opere* (with *Clizia* listed separately), Guicciardini’s *Historia*, and four of Giordano Bruno’s books (*Cena delle ceneri*; *Della causa, principio ed uno*; *Dell’infinito, universo et mondo*; *Heroici furori*, *Spatio*...
della bestia trionfante). With his expanded text selection Florio proposes an early modern Italian literary canon. While no additional lexicographical sources appear, numerous Vite and historical treatises were added, together with manuals on the military arts and on political science, alongside Diodati’s translation of the Bible.

The Translations

Throughout his life, Florio was engaged in translating from French and Italian. As Michael Wyatt convincingly shows, the art of translation flourished during the Tudor period, with Florio a leading exponent, especially with his 1603 translation of Montaigne’s Essais, widely praised by scholars as a classic. It is thought to have inspired Shakespeare, in particular his Love’s Labour’s Lost. Florio began to experiment with translation shortly after publishing the Firste Fruites, perhaps following in his father’s footsteps, in 1580, with an English version of Jacques Cartier’s Navigations to New France, based on an earlier Italian translation by Giovanni Battista Ramusio. The Navigations reflects the world of discovery and colonial expansion that surrounded Florio. For his Montaigne translation, which influenced many English writers and intellectuals, such as Ben Jonson and Sir Walter Raleigh, Florio seems to have had some help from Matthew Gwinne, La Boétie, and Diodati. He probably knew Girolamo Naselli’s selective and conservative 1590 Italian version, which may even have prompted his own English translation. Montaigne’s fragmented and relatively terse linear style must have appealed to Florio, who could endorse the great writer’s plurilingual imprint, ‘que le gascon y arrive, si le francoys n’y peut aller.’ As Tom Conley notes, of the English translations of Montaigne’s Essais Florio’s was the most faithful to the original; by keeping the original’s paragraph structure he was able to quietly digress and amplify the text with alliterations, synonyms, and proverbs, while transferring the power of allegory into English. Even a casual comparison of the two original texts shows how Florio’s translation is fairly literal, and how his stylistic amplifications are limited, contrary to the practice in A Worlde of Wordes. The Montaigne translation is an outstanding achievement by an author who worked between languages, with French and English acquired from his parents, study, or direct immersion.

While serving as Queen Anne’s tutor and groom of the privy chamber, and after losing his position and status at her death and retiring at Fulham in the vicinity of London, Florio continued to work tirelessly on a new edition of his dictionary, and on new dialogues mentioned in his will. He may also have authored a translation of Boccaccio’s Decameron, based on Salviati’s purged edition, which was published anonymously in 1620. Florio spent his last years in poverty, apparently with no economic support from his daughter and in-laws or from the aristocracy that he served so faithfully throughout his life. However, despite his predicament, and despite the decline of interest in Italian language and culture in the early seventeenth century and the new popularity of multilingual dictionaries, Florio pursued
his passion and love for words to the end of his days. He died in 1625, probably of the plague that ravaged London at that time. His lexicographical and grammatical heritage was continued by Giovanni Torriano with great alacrity and dedication, but without the imagination, creative enthusiasm, thirst for knowledge, and exuberant love of all things Italian and English that infuse Florio’s oeuvre. It is this vitality and creativity that prompted the present, slightly modernized edition of the original 1598 A Worlde of Wordes.

2. A Worlde of Wordes

Florio’s dictionary is the work of a genuine polyglot and passionate philologist. He knew French and Latin, perhaps also Spanish, in addition to Italian and English, and was a practitioner of plurilingualism. A ‘landmark in the history of Italian scholarship in England,’ A Worlde of Wordes is the first comprehensive Italian-English bilingual dictionary, if we exclude William Thomas’s earlier bilingual word list designed on a small scale, and it sets an early lexicographical standard for future works. It was designed primarily as a tool that would help the cultivated English public to read contemporary Italian literature in the original, and to build bridges between the two languages and cultures. In his lengthy ‘Epistle Dedicatio’ in which he invites his three talented private students and patrons Roger Earle of Rutland, Henrie Earle of Southampton, and Lucie Countesse of Bedford to the christening and protection of the dictionary, likened to a ‘bouncing boie, Bacchus-like,’ generated by an Italian Semele and an English thigh, Florio compares the difficulty of his work with that of the Tuscan poets, especially Dante, and of the Renaissance authors, such as Castiglione, Aretino, Garzoni, Citolini, and others. Its usefulness extends to the variety of Italian dialects, from Venetian to Roman, Lombard, and Neapolitan, ‘so manie, and so much differing Dialects, and Idiomes, as be used and spoken in Italie, besides the Florentine,’ challenging even native Italians: ‘And I have seene the best, yea naturall Italians, not onely stagger, but even sticke fast in the myre, and at last give it over, or give their verdict with an ignoramus’ (3).

A Worlde of Wordes was of course much more than a linguistic tool, as it provided a window to the world with its proliferation of technical and scientific vocabulary from many fields of knowledge. It is also a unique achievement by a second-generation Italian immigrant, a secondo, with a fluid linguistic, social, and cultural identity. As a locus of negotiation the dictionary represents a summa of Florio’s activities and interests. The originality of this work cannot be overstated. It is filled with life, enthusiasm, humanist thirst for knowledge, fantasy, and the passion of an author eager to establish himself as a master of his craft. This strong ambition perhaps explains the lengthy address ‘To the Reader.’ It follows the equally long five-page dedication with a fervid plea for generous reception of his work, and a venomous two-page invective against past and future detractors. Florio likens his
lexicographic enterprise to seafaring adventures with the risk of shipwrecks and
refers to works on other languages undertaken by Thomas Eliot, Bishop Cooper,
Thomas Thomas, John Rider, and the ‘Stephans,’ who had ‘this advantage of me,
that they were many to steer a passage-boat; I was but one to turn and winde
the sails, to use the oare, to sit at sterne, to pricke my carde, to watch upon the
upper decke, boate-swaine, pilot, mate, and master, all offices in one, and that in a
more unruly, more unweildie, and more roomy-some vessel, then the biggest hulke
on Thames (…) and that in a sea more divers, more dangerous, more stormie,
and more comfortlesse then any Ocean’ (9). With his flowery comparisons Flo-
rio is only superficially modest, as his defence is embedded in self-praise, with
three sonnets honouring his patrons, and with a congratulatory poem written to
‘Master John Florio’ by a beloved friend with the initials B.B. He avoids ‘a large
discourse of the Italian toong,’ and purposely excludes from A Worlde of Wordes
what he considers useful observations, as some have ridiculed them as ‘juggling-
tricks’ (10), referring most likely to the Necessarie Rules for Englishmen to learne
to reade, speake, and write Italian, appended to Firste Fruites. And he promises
a more perfect edition with the addition of the French and Latin, and ‘with the
wordes of some twenty good Italian auctors (…)’ and ‘an Alphabeticall English
Dictionarie, that any man knowing but the English word, shall presently finde the
Italian for it’ (11).

A Worlde of Wordes is a work that brings together the author’s three major roles:
Florio as the plurilingual reader and word collector; Florio as teacher of Italian
language and culture, as a grammarian and paroemiologist; and Florio as translator
and creative writer.

Florio the Reader and Lexicographer

As a plurilingual reader Florio can be observed already in his Firste Fruites (1578),
where in chapter 43 he lists some 400 Italian words with their English equiva-
lents, many of them regionalisms that suggest his exposure to the dialects of Val
Bregaglia and Northern Italy, as well as to languages he may have encountered
among Italian expatriates in London. An even greater linguistic variety is found in
A Worlde of Wordes, drawn from a vast corpus of texts collected gradually, eventu-
ally amounting to some 340 books mentioned in his will, and from Florio’s own
vocabulary and memory. Much scholarship has been devoted to illustrating the
flaws of Florio’s dictionary, such as typographical errors, lack of alphabetical order,
missing accents, repetition of entries, plagiarized or missing definitions, and arbi-
trary selection. Several studies highlight a ‘mechanical attitude’ and a lack of con-
sistency. He tended to adopt elastic criteria in his word collections. He excerpted
his father’s translation of Agricola’s De re metallica without citing it as a source,
while using other cited sources only superficially. Florio did correct some of these
shortcomings in Queen Anna’s New World of Words, although he was mostly con-
cerned with expanding his dictionary. While keeping in mind that the reliance on previous sources was a common practice of his time, and adopted in later lexicography, Florio’s rather flexible criteria must be understood within the context of early Italian bilingual lexicography; his multifaceted activity, of which teaching Italian provided his primary source of income, his operating outside Italy; and his constant search for newly available Italian books.42

The variety of written and oral sources used for the compilation of his dictionary is reflected in the sociolinguistic variety of its Italian entries. In *A Worlde of Wordes* we find a plethora of regional, social, and stylistic variation that results in a linguistic model that is very much at odds with the archaic literary model promoted by the Venetian Cardinal Pietro Bembo. Although Florio does not theorize his choice of language explicitly, he seems to follow his father’s linguistic ideas and practice consciously. In his address ‘Al benigno lettore’ to the Italian translation of Giorgio Agricola’s Latin book on metallurgy *De re metallica*, Michelangelo notes that he did not want to ‘caminare per le pedate di Bembo (…) perch’esta mia traduzione non ha esser letta solamente da que’ che havranno studiato minutamente le sue parole, ma da molti eziandio che non l’havranno forse mai sentito nominare’ (to walk in Bembo’s footsteps […] since my translation ought not to be read only by those who studied his words in detail, but by many who may in fact never have heard mention his name). Florio’s father wants his translation understood by the ‘semplici,’ by ‘ogni idiota,’ by ‘tutti coloro, cui la natura, o la pratica, o l’arte gl’ha fuori di tali autori insegnata la lingua Italiana’ (by simple folks, those who by nature, practice, or work acquired the Italian language without those authors).44 He observes how many of Bembo’s words are not comprehensible to Lombards and people from other regions, not even to Tuscans. When compiling his dictionary John Florio must have remembered his father’s linguistic ideology and choices, which were influenced by the sales potential of his translation for Hieronymus Froben (1501–1563), the famous printer in Basel. Florio combines popular, practical language learning with scholarly knowledge, proposing a language for contemporary use, while perhaps not always being precisely aware of the spectrum of varieties introduced.

Considering Florio’s lexical choices, the Italian language of *A Worlde of Wordes* seems to be close to the ideal of a *lingua comune*, a vernacular based on the Tuscan tradition but common to more than one region. This colloquial language follows perhaps in part Castiglione’s ideal of a *lingua cortigiana*, ‘italiana, commune, copiosa e varia, e quasi come un delizioso giardino di diversi fiori e frutti’ (*Il libro del Cortegiano*, I.34–35). Florio’s Italian seems removed from Bembo’s archaic Tuscan, as well as Varchi’s and Salviati’s later revisions of Bembo’s model, as it includes not only words from different dialects and social strata, but also non-literary vocabulary.45 The graphemic solutions adopted in Florio’s dictionary reflect the uncertainties of his time, with its Latinizing traits (*di gratia*, *annuntio*, *oratione*, *pestilentiale*, *spatio*, *absurdo*), etymological and paraetymological *h* (*habitare*, *ab-*)
hominevole, dishumano), fluctuation of double consonants, oscillating separation of words, use of the punto mobile followed by lower case initial, and other features preceding the choices of the Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca (1612). On the other hand, Florio’s choices are generally more modern in the use of accents on final syllables and in the use of apostrophes.46

Following are some illustrations of regional, social, and cultural differences in speech that can be gleaned from reading Florio’s Italian entries.

Representation of regional dialects among the Italian entries is more apparent, as Florio is very familiar with the great variety of Italian dialects. Among his Italian entries one finds Northern dialect words such as barba (‘a beard. Also an uncle’), cadéna (‘a kinde of chaine’), cadréga (‘a chaire’), nigotta (‘nothing’), cao (‘head’), migà (‘as mica’), cito and toso (‘a yong boy or lad’), tosa (‘a young wench, a girle, a lasse, a maiden’), ostreca/ostrega, zoppegare (‘to halt, to limp’). Numerous forms, such as the Northern or Central Italian fenocchio, locchetto, menchione, menchia, prîncipe, zepolla, salsizza, fogaccia are listed as autonomous entries, with or without cross-references introduced by Florio to finocchio, lucchetto, minchion, nutrire, prîncipe, cipolla, salsiccia, focaccia. Other words have a Southern inflection, such as the Neapolitan boce (‘voice’), perhaps taken from Boccaccio’s novella Andreuccio da Perugia, as well as crai (‘hath beene used for domani, to morrow’), poscrai (‘to morrow next’), saccio (‘I know’), stutare (‘to do out or extinguish’), cucuzza (‘a gourd, a pompilion’), fratelmô and mogliata (‘my brother, thy wife’), with the enclitic possessive. Words with the ending -aro are quite frequently cited as autonomous entries and are sometimes accompanied by forms with the ending -aio (monedaro ‘a coyner,’ mugnaro ‘a miller,’ speciaro ‘Apothecarie or a spicer,’ trombettaro ‘a trumpeter’). Unlike in the later 1611 edition, Florio names specific dialects rarely (e.g., guagnélo ‘a Lombard word for Vangélo, the Gospell’), but sometimes associates a word with a region or city (e.g., gondola ‘a kinde of small boates like our wherries used in Venice’).47

Language contact with English and ‘overseas’ languages is another feature of the English definitions that highlights Florio’s global interests and exposure to different cultures. As C. Scarpino pointedly observes, identifying loanwords in A Worlde of Wordes is a particularly arduous task, rife with the possibility of misinterpretation.48 Gallicisms appear as the most frequently recurrent loanwords, owing to the historically strong contact between the French and English language, but also to Florio’s fluency in French and experience in translation. We find among the English definitions unadapted transfers such as quelquchose (carabozzada ‘a kind of daintie dish or quelquchose used in Italie’), ciarmare, ciarmatore, ciarma from French charme, panier (fescéia ‘a…basket, a p.’), jouissance (gioia ‘delight, pleasure, j.’), chevissance (guadagno ‘gaine, profit, ch.’), pottage (guazzèto ‘a kinde of fine saucie meate … p.’), puissant (poderoso ‘strong, mightie, … p.’), puissance (habilità ‘power, p.’), rendezvous (rassegna ‘a retreate …Also r.’), obeisance (os-sequentia ‘obedience, p.’), misensaile (cazzáride ‘a certain rope in a ship about
Among Italianisms used in the English definitions one comes across cannoniere ('a c. or a gunner'), cinque ('five, a c.'), uvola (palate della bocca ‘the pallat, uvola or upper roofe of the mouth’), sgranfo (occhiara ‘the fish called a Seabreame … others take it for the fish S.’), burato (burattino ‘a kinde of stuffe called Burato’), mazapane (‘any thing or paste that is kneaded … all manner of marchpane, or m.’), stufe from stufa, as well as nouns with the ending –ado /-a, such as camisado (camisciata ‘a sudden secret attempt or surprise in time of warre, so called because it is done and executed with shirts over the soulidiers armour, a c.’), carbonada (carbonáta ‘a c., meate broiled upon the coles’), frizado (from frisada), palizada (from impalizzata), panado (from panada/pagnotta), bastonadas and bastionado (dar delle bastonate), refusado (from refusati), passado (from passatta), ranchado for ranciata (‘sucket of orenge’). One also notices numerous Hispanisms such as creado (creato ‘… Also a c., a servant’), giuradios (‘Spaniard, or braggard’), posada (‘dwelling, house’), moccia (‘a flurt, a trull, a harlot’), mozza (‘a wench, a lasse, a girle, [Spanish moza]; also a woman’s geere or cunnie’). Anglicisms can be detected occasionally among the Italian entries, for example bugetta (‘a budget’), Gemini (‘twins’), or in a definition, as ambusheado for imboscata (‘an ambush, an a.’), a neologism likely coined by Florio himself. Florio’s keen interest in different social classes and particularly in slang and language of the lower classes can be seen in the great number of derogatory expressions. In reading the dictionary from beginning to end one is astonished and amused by the great number of entries for ‘fool, foolish fellow’ (francatrippa, gnoco, nocco, mellone, menchione, mestolone, mignocco, miccia, musorone, noddo, pascibietole, pillucne, tentennone, torlorù, uccellone), by epithets with their colourful English equivalents such as lavaceci, lavaceti (‘a vile base person’), leccapignatte (‘a lick-pot … a slovenly greasey fellow’), marucco (‘a self-conceited asse’), mascalzone (‘a rogue, a raskall’), minutaglia or gentaglia (‘the basest kind of people, the skum of the earth’), pattacchione (‘a slovenly, filthie, greasey, slaverig fellow, a gore-bellied gulch’), pecorone (‘a beastly fellow’), pelacane (‘a dog fleer, a base fellow’), perdigornata or pescavento (‘idle loytrer’), spiritòcco (‘a foolish, dissembling, hypocriticall, busie, pickthanke fellow’). While Florio adds such epithets for males on almost every page of his dictionary, we find fewer such forms for women (mestola ‘a foolish, simple idle huswife that can do nothing but skum a pot,’ pazzivola ‘a foolish woman,’ donna zucca al vento ‘a lazy huswife, a light headed wife,’ maybe derived from Boccaccio’s Venetian tale). But there is an almost endless list for ‘prostitute’: among these are barbiera (‘a she barber. Also a common harlot’), bagascia (‘a harlot, a strumpet, a whore’), baiarda, baldracca, baiarda (‘a common filthie over-ridden whore’), buldriana, cian-
ciafera (‘a filthie slut, a dunghill queane’), ciarpa, ciccantona, ciutaccia, donna da molti, fornicate, frustabordel, gabrina, guagnastra, lamia, magalda, mammola, mattotta, meretrice, palandrina, paltrocca, pedrolina, pegola (‘infectious whore’), putta, puttanella (‘a filthie great whore’), puttanella (‘a young whore, a little harlot’), rienza, ruffa, scanfárd (‘an overridden whore, a stallion ramp’), toghna (‘a flurt, a slut, a driggledraggle’), zambélla (‘a trull, a flurt, a minx, a harlot, a whore’). Florio also lists several terms for young male prostitutes, as bagasciuolo (‘a wanton boy’), bardascia (‘a bardash, a buggering boy’), cinédo, fioramuzzi (‘effeminate wantons’), garzonastro (‘a yong lustie stout lad or boie’), menaculo (‘a smug, nice, wanton, effeminate fellow’), zanzeri (‘ganimeds, cinedos, wanton boies’). A gender bias becomes apparent in the disparate definitions of cortegiano (‘a courtier’) and cortigiana (‘a curtezan, a harlot, a strumpet, a whore’).

Other varieties on the lower social scale belong to what Florio calls ‘rogues language,’ ‘Peddlers’ French,’ ‘gibbrish,’ ‘fustian toong,’ or ‘parrats language’ (pap-pagallesca lingua), with words mostly used to refer to money (asti, cucchi, cresta, contramaglie, scarpa, tuòsa ‘purse of money’). On the opposite side of the social scale is the vocabulary of literature and scholars, words employed by the educated classes. These include words such as discérnere, pronosticatione, surrogatione, macrologia (‘idle talk’), prochemasi (‘foretaken of tempest to come’), macanopoietico (‘ingineer’), sissarcosi, trassostanzione, with similar entries recorded on each page.

A polyglot and multicultural reader, Florio is seen perhaps most clearly in the innovative dimension of specialized language that enriches the dictionary. Following is a sample of the most prevalent semantic fields represented in Florio’s work, which highlights the author’s prevailing interests.

The terminology related to nature and habitat makes up what appears to be quantitatively the dominant semantic field in A Worlde of Wordes. It includes numerous animals, among them patassio (‘titmouse’), pelargo (‘stork’), vespertillo (‘a night bat or reremouse’), volpe (‘a foxe, a renard’). Birds are equally present, such as pavone (‘peacocke’), pescatore del Re (‘a bird called a Kings fisher’), pettorosso (‘a robin, red-breast or rud-cock’), pelicano (‘a Pellican’), rapariro (‘thistlefinch’), ro-signòlo (‘a nightingall’), sparvier (‘hauke’), taranto (‘a green finch’), to name but a few. An even greater wealth of species is found among the fish, with a list that could easily fill a small manual. Here we come across morena (‘lamprey’), muggine (‘mullet’), occhiara (‘seabream’), orata (‘gulthead’), ombriana (‘halibut’), pastinaca (‘raie’), píttaru (‘menow fish’), polpo (‘cuttle-fish’), ragosta (‘crab or a lobster’), sgombo (‘makrell’), sturione (‘sturgeon’), tregliuza (‘a little Barble or a Mullet fish’). Occasionally Florio is at odds with English equivalents, using a generic ‘kind of fish’ for oltramini, vacca, or a cautious ‘kinde of shell fish’ for ombilico.

Among all the animals that populate A Worlde of Wordes, the horse occupies centre stage, with its important role in Renaissance Europe in transportation, sports, and combat. Different types of horses (moresco ‘barbarie horse’, moscato ‘a dap-
ple-graie, fleabitten, speckled horse,’ *poledro*, -a ‘horse-colt’ or ‘mare-colt’) appear side by side with the horse’s movements (*parare* ‘to teach a horse to stop and state orderly,’ *piantarsi* ‘to stand still and stop,’ *inalborarsi* ‘is when a horse doth rise and fall backward’), and with a myriad of horse diseases (*lucérdó* ‘the cricke,’ *scabbia* ‘scurvie,’ *spavanèlla* ‘a kinde of spavin, cramp or convulsion in horses,’ *polvizze* ‘swelling’).

Next in frequency are botanical entries, especially those related to flowers, vegetables, and herbs (*trapese* ‘the herbe orach or golden flower,’ *rammarino* ‘rosemary,’ *siliquastro* ‘pepperwoort,’ *sparagi* ‘sparagus’). Some plants are noted for their healing properties (*siderione* ‘an hearbe … like coriander … cureth all cuts and gashes’), while others have destructive powers (the poisonous *minaide* or *sandonico* ‘a kind of herbe which killeth beasts,’ *sardona* ‘an herb like smallage, which being bitten causeth great laughing … whereupon followeth death’).

Florio also pays close attention to human anatomy, the functions of the human body, and the illnesses afflicting it. The more common, such as *spatola* (*shoulder-blade*), *trachéa*, *umbilico* (*navill*), *pancreo*, *perinéo*, alternate with more carefully defined terms (*proglossi* ‘the forepart of the toong,’ *eritride* ‘one of the fower thin skins that cover the testicles,’ *sfagitide* ‘two great veines appearing on each side of the throte,’ *sagittale* ‘suture on the top of the head,’ *sutura* ‘the line under the yard of a man’), and with a rich compendium of diseases, ranging from smallpox (*varole*) to measles (*roggia*), glaucoma, Saint Anthony’s fire or shingles (*her-pete*), dropsy (*hidropisia*, *leucoplemmantia*), hemorrhoids (*hemoroide*, *maroelle*, *marische*, *morice*, *porrofico*), and venereal disease (*mal francese*, *mal di Napoli*, *mal napolitano*).

Human sexuality figures prominently in the dictionary, as its author tries to satisfy the foreign reader’s curiosity with words for love and sex in all their forms and expressions. Here we find an array of both formal and colloquial words for male and female genitals. The penis appears as a neutral *membro virile* or *genitale*, more scientifically as *erpice*, euphemistically as *naturale*, *facende*, *necessario*, *virilità*, followed by a flowery range of terms, from *cazzo* to metaphorical *coda*, *pestello*, *rozzone*. The words for vagina and vulva range from *cotale* to *cunno*, *fica*, *gabbia*, *golfo di Setalia*, *malforo*, *monina*, *mortaio*, *mozza*, *potta*, *vulva*. Sexual intercourse encompasses *fottere*, *chiavare* (used in a vulgar sense for *fottere*), *hinchinchiare*, *saltare*, and in addition *bugerare* (‘to bugger’), *inculare*. Many terms depict flirtation and copulation among males, with language related to *Sodomia* (‘the naturall sin of sodomie’). ‘Wanton boy’ defines *bagasciulo*, *bardascia* ‘a buggering boy,’ *civettini*, *mongrellina*, *zanfrone*, *zanzeri*, and ‘consenting to buggerie’ translates the metaphorical *dar le pesche*. The buttocks are referred to as *martino*, *culo*, *mele*, *pesca*, *pesco*, *sedére*, *coliseo*. Sexual appetite is increased with the herb *catanace*, and a writer who specializes in erotic matters or a pornographer is called a *mimografo*. Prostitution and sexual transgression are richly described to satisfy the sexual curiosity of the English reader of Italian Renaissance texts, with several entries
bordering on the pornographic or exhibiting misogynistic overtones. Such content may have furthered English prejudice against Italian hedonistic culture. Some imagery for female sexuality has highly negative connotations, as documented by *Valle di Acheronte* or *Porcile di Venere*, whereas male sexuality is celebrated with pride, with metaphors like crescere, cresceimmano, destriere for the genitals, and with satiriassi/lentigine (‘prick pride’) or (‘priapisme’). Female sexuality may also be perceived as a threat to men who end up as cuckolds, as castroni, becchi, men who are tricked by a woman. The inclusion of erotic and sexual words, almost absent from the dialogue books, constitutes a key feature of Florio’s dictionary. At a time when bawdy language was censored in the theatre, it could make its way more easily into the sea of words of a large dictionary.

Food and food-related terms are of great interest in Florio’s world. Drawn patly from Christofaro Di Messisbugo’s *Del’arte della cucina*, they range from wine, with more than thirty entries (Lambrusca, guarnaccia, raspato, trebbiano, etc.), to bread with some twenty different types listed (pane di semola, pane cormuto ‘course crustie bread,’ pane di zuccaro, pane di segala ‘rie bread,’ pane ficato, pane unto, pane pagato ‘simmell bread,’ etc.). Different kinds of cheese are also found (pecorino, robiolo, taréallo, parmegianno), as well as a large variety of fruits (meladicotogno ‘quince,’ mellone, partitoie/pesca ‘peach,’ rogge ‘pears,’ susina ‘plum,’ verule ‘cherries,’ musette ‘apples,’ muniaca ‘apricocke,’ narancia ‘orange,’ ribe ‘gooseberry’). In addition to the many kinds of fish discussed above, Florio lists numerous meats (manfrigoli, morone, mortadelle, pancetta, persutto ‘dried bacon,’ salámi, soppressada, truffoli), pasta dishes (gnocchi, lasagna, rafioli, tagliarini, tagliarelli, tortélli, tagliatelli, tortélli), as well as soups, salads, and desserts (tártara ‘cus- tard,’ torta, tortano, and capriata ‘cheese cake,’ zabaione/zambaglione). A few dishes have a foreign origin (fricassea ‘French dish, minced meate,’ cuscusu ‘couscous, from Spain,’ inpeverata ‘blacke pottage they use in Germanie, made of much pepper’) or are typical of an Italian region (giozzi ‘meat in Lombardy,’ marzolino ‘a kinde of cheese in Florence’). Some foods are for poor people (ranno ‘pottage,’ villanata ‘countrie meate for the poore’), while rinfrescatoi are refrigerators found in noble households, enjoyed by canaruti (‘gormands’) and canaroni (‘gluttons’).

The many fashion terms are similarly connected with the higher social strata, the aristocracy, and the court. *Trabêa* is a robe worn by kings under their mantles of estate, and *mullei* are described as Turkish shoes for kings, rising to the middle of the leg. Fabrics used in Italy comprise gavardina, stametto (‘woollen or flannell stuffe’), sattino (‘silke stuffe, sattin’), velutino (‘refusado velvet’), zendado (‘silken stuffe’), pelle di vacca/pelle di camoccia, panno accottonato. Women wear the orlo (‘skirt’), pelliccia, mantellina, posta (‘girdle’), as well as head attires such as the rullo, scuffia, or the solena (‘a broad hat to protect from the sun’). *Liscio* and *purpurino* are types of cosmetics.

Additional terms are found with less frequency in semantic areas extending to literature and music, religion, alchemy, and astronomy.
Florio the Teacher and Grammarian

Among the many original aspects of *A Worlde of Wordes* are its didactic features. Throughout the many years devoted to compiling his dictionary, Florio taught Italian to his English aristocratic students who were eager to use the language for travel to Italy and to read great Italian classics in their original. Contemporary teaching of foreign languages emphasized a practical, direct method, aimed principally at spoken communication.

This didactic emphasis, reflected in Florio’s dialogue books and collections of proverbs, idioms, and phrases, is clearly apparent in *A Worlde of Wordes*, most of all through the inclusion of oral expressions, such as bè (‘well, how now?’), an (‘how? oh? what?’), deh (‘I pray you’), a bomba (‘a mans home or resting place’), horvia, himeccere, qual tu vuoi, come domine?, a che proposito? The emphasis on spoken language is also apparent in the presence of vocabulary associated with different social classes, especially the low register with its expressive derogatory lexicon (canaglia ‘skum of the earth, onlie fit for dogs companie,’ schiccheracarte ‘a foolish poet,’ pretacchione ‘filthie, lubberly, greasie, hedge priest,’ spaventacchio ‘a terrible huffe-snuffe,’ vecchia trentina ‘an old bagge that would faine be yong againe … an oulde beldame’), exclamations (ohimè, ohibò, tòttela ‘take it to thee,’ tò ‘catch,’ tiella/tiello! ‘hold it,’ ma che, cáppari, Dio me ne guardi, moia ‘Good Lord,’ gnaffe, voglia Dio, viva).

Florio’s interest in providing a full linguistic spectrum, allowing his students access to and immersion in Italian civilization, is visible in the wealth of idiomatic expressions. For stare we find forty-six locutions (as stare all’érta ‘to lie in waite,’ stare a disagio ‘to stande or lie uneasilie, stare alle póste ‘to stande or wait in some set place,’ stare alla guardia ‘to watch,’ stare allegro ‘to live and be merrie,’ stare a vedere ‘to marke,’ stare a pollo pesto ‘to be at the point of death,’ stare a schimbecchi ‘to live and be in baudie houses,’ etc.), and a similar number of idiomatic expressions appear with the verbs dare, fare, porre. Fanciful definitions criss-cross the dictionary, revealing Florio’s inventiveness as a writer. They include phrases such as accordare col fornaio (‘to bee well to live, to have no need of bread […] also to die’); andare in Piccardia (‘to go to be hanged’); dare le cervella a ripedulare (‘to let ones wits goe woolgathering’); dire il pater nostro della Bertuccia (‘to curse, ban […] grumble in vaine and to no ones purpose to ones self, as an ape does grinning his teeth’); fare le fica (‘to bid a fig, a flurt or a turde for one’); fare stocchi (‘to rob Peter and pay Paul’); gonfiare alcuno (‘to make one beleive the moone is made of greene cheese’); montar la mosca (‘to take pepper in the nose, to be soone angrie’); promettere Roma e Toma (‘to promise heaven and earth, to promise impossibilities’). Florio’s didactic intent becomes also apparent in the relatively few grammatical annotations found in the dictionary. As he observes in the ‘Address to the Reader,’ in the second and third conjugations of Italian verbs the infinitive is followed by first person singular present indicative, first person singular past per-
fect indicative or ‘preterperfect,’ and the participle. To be sure, Florio occasionally adds some variant forms, for example for vedere one finds ‘vedo, or veggo, or veggio, vidi, or viddi, veduto, or visto.’ For the regular first conjugation no verb forms are given, while in the fourth conjugation the passato remoto form is limited to a few verbs only (thus capire, capisco, capito vs. aprire, apro, apersi, aperto). At a closer look one notes the inclusion as autonomous entries of specific irregular verb forms, consistent with the author’s didactic goals, forms such as dorrò, dorrà, dorrai, dorrei, dorrebbe; dissero, dissi, disse; presi, prese, presero. Similarly, Florio lists verb forms combined with clitics, such as fattosene, fammi, fammelo, funne, hollo, holla, hollè, holle, sonci (‘there are, are there?’), parti (‘seem to thee?’), Vottene meglio (‘I love thee better for it’). Throughout his dictionary, stress accents on Italian entries are introduced for the benefit of his students (spòrtula, spósto, sprézzo, spúrio, spròmettere, squálido, squalóre), although not consistently. Erroneous stress accents are not infrequent, as with scóstare, scóttare, sólitamente, sprémuto, tráhre, srávaglioso. These errors were not eliminated or corrected in the present edition, with the purpose of showing Florio at work both as a lexicographer and as a teacher.

Finally, Florio’s interest in linguistics, particularly rhetoric, is reflected in his inclusion of specific terminologies. Not only does he add entries with their respective definitions, such as ablattivo, averbio, bilingue, dittongo, derivatione (‘a derivation or etymology’), dipthongo, epenthesi, ethimologia, ortographia, ottativo (‘the wishing or optative mood’), clisi (‘a declination or bending’), semivocale, participio, he also includes among the entries rhetorical terms and respective definitions such as sinaleffe, sineddóche, sinomino, onomatopeia, ossimoro, paragóge, peri-frasi, protesi, zeugma. He lists examples for some of these, such as onomatopoeic fare fritt fritt, frigulare, guagliare (‘to whine as children do’), orcare (‘to braie as an ass’), pipillare (‘to chirp as a sparrow, to squeake as a peacock’), and pipire (‘to peepe as a chickin’).

The linguist Florio is a cultural mediator who transmits a wealth of linguistic and cultural information to his English and Italian readers. Classical Italian authors are occasionally referred to, such as Dante (for giuggiola, indovare, introque, ita, sie/sia, sipa, surse, testeso ‘used of Dante for testè’), Boccaccio (manico di scopa ‘Bocace doth use it for a hard turd,’ setalia ‘Bocace doth use it for a womans privie parts, saying Valle S.’), and Ariosto (frontino, gabin). The numerous references to Italy include mora (‘game in Italie’), paganina (‘a kinde of dance in Italy’), paranimpha (‘marriage maker in Italy’), trenta paia (‘a curse then used in Italy, as if one should say all the devils in hell take thee’). Venice has a privileged place as one of Europe’s Renaissance capitals, with several terms related to city governance (doge, dogaressa, dogato, sopra castaldo, piovego ‘a name of a magistrat in Venice,’ sopradatio ‘customs magistrat in Venice,’ ternaria ‘customs official for oil in Venice’), fashion (sbalco, vadia ‘honorable kinde of habite that ladies of Venice were wont to weare’), social relations (ballerino ‘he that leads or gives a bride
to hir husband in Venice’), and maritime life (trasti della barca ‘chiefe place in a gondola,’ vergole ‘little bote used in Venice’). Additional entries relate to Sicily (sicilizzare ‘to speak the language of Sicily, play the Sicilian’), Rome (sicato ‘oil used by women in Rome’), Florence (stinche ‘the name of a prison in Florence’), Naples (nonupo ‘nine-times double, a paiment used in Naples for some forfaitures’), Genoa (prusa ‘fish so called in Genova’), as well as cities and countries outside Italy, such as London (stracciaria ‘long lane in London where old rags are sold’), Switzerland (sguizzato ‘Swizzer, Helvetian’), Spain (zeo ‘fish’), India (tatusia ‘beast in India’), and Turkey (scimitara ‘a Turkish or Persian crooked sword’), all underscoring Florio’s commitment to producing a dictionary with universal appeal.

Florio the Translator and Writer

Florio’s lifelong efforts as a translator from Italian and French to English are evident throughout A Worlde of Wordes. His intertextual awareness and devotion to the art of translation is seen in the Reader’s Preface to his translation of Montaigne’s Essais, where he states: ‘Yea but my olde fellow NOLANO tolde me, and taught publikely, that from translation all Science had its of-spring.’ Florio’s experience as a writer and translator reverberates in his prefaces and dedications, and most prominently in the definitions of the dictionary entries. It is here that we find perhaps his strongest expression of Renaissance copia, with his passion for explications and amplifications. Numerous single nouns, adjectives, and verbs among the Italian entries are explained with ten, twenty, even forty terms and definitions. In his pursuit of copia, Florio offers no fewer than forty-four definitions for ragione (‘reason, right, due, knowledge, wit, wisedome, discourse, discretion, judgment, advise, pur-pose, counsell, care, respect, consideration, advisement, regard. The case, the matter, the state, the means, the way, the fashion, the forme, the proportion, the kinde, the sise, the sort. A rule, the trade, the feate, the manner and sort, a minde, a counsell, a perswasion, a cause, an account, a reckoning, busines, quantitie, value. Also justice, doome, or place of justice, and lawe’), while for tiro we find sixty-seven items, and forty-five for vago. Multiple definitions are frequently accompanied by figurative meanings, separated by a punto mobile followed by ‘Also.’ Other entries with a high number of definitions include prémere (33), molle (30), podestà (30), sëno (28), romputo/rotto (26), sapère (26), stúdo (26), levare (25), spécie (25), parare and parato (24 resp. 27), spléndido (23), fermo (22), puntare (22), risolvere (22), tenace (22), ristrétto (21), vedere (21), guardare (20), and the list could go on. Risoluto, an epithet Florio adopts for the first time in Second Frutes, yields many qualities with which the author must have identified, perhaps even with some of the negative connotations listed: ‘resolved, determined, deliberated. Also melted, thawed, dissolved, or consumed away, vanished. Also resolute, wilfull, hardy, bold, or determinate. Also loosed, untide, unbounde, ungirded, undone, frustrate, dis-appointed, made voide, separated, put asunder, confuted, broken off, absolved, rid
It must be kept in mind that a single entry, in addition to polysemous and multiple definitions, comprises frequently different grammatical categories, as is the case for *molle*, defined first as adjective, and later on as noun: 'soft, tender, slender, limere, lith or soft in feeling. Also pliable, gentle, tractable, yielding, effeminat, nice, remisse, easie, delicate, pleasant, calme, milde, wanton. Also moist, wet, wattrish, dimpish or soft under foote. Also a paire of tongs, pincers or mullets. Also a whiting fish or any soft fish: in musicke it is taken for flat.' Similarly, in *mondo, piano, riccio, sconcio, secco, sol* the meanings of the noun are followed by those of the adjective, or vice versa, and sometimes with intermittent definitions (*sconcio*: adjective/noun/adjecive/noun), while in other entries a noun is combined with a verb form (*resta*: ‘…. Also it remaineth, it resteth …’; *sapère*: ‘Also knowledge, wit, wisdome …’). This combination is not always consistent with Florio’s recommended pronunciation, as a stress accent would be valid only for one of the entry’s categories (*spenséro*, as *spenditore*. ‘Also, they extinguished’; *Sì*: ‘yea, yes, as well, even as … but if it be joined with a verbe, it is a pronoune, singular and plurall, him, to him, himself, them, themselves, to them, to themselves, namely speaking of persons. But if it be of things, then it makes the verbe passive, as *si dice*, it is saide …’).

A comparison between the dictionary’s two editions for selected entries shows a tendency to reduce the number of synonyms or multiple definitions in the second edition, perhaps because of doubts about some definitions, but also of the need to save space in a potentially unwieldy volume:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1598</th>
<th>1611</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Accelerare</em>, to hasten, to dispatch or make speede.</td>
<td><em>Acceleráre</em>, to hasten, to make speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Accendimento</em>, an enfaming, an enkindling, a burning, a blazing, a provoking.</td>
<td><em>Accendiménto</em>, an enkindling, a provoking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Accervo</em>, a heape, a huddle, a bundle, a hay cocke: a masse.</td>
<td><em>Accervo</em>, a heape, a hudle, a round masse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Accomodare</em>, to lend, to accommodate, to ease, to borrow, to bestowe, to place, to stowe.</td>
<td><em>Accomodâre</em>, to ease, to place, to stowe. Also to lend unto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Accorato</em>, grieved or toucht at the heart: hartie, true, loving, passionate.</td>
<td><em>Accoráto</em>, toucht or grieved at the heart.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The comparison of definitions of even a select number of pages clearly illustrates how by reducing the number of synonyms and multiple definitions, Florio abandoned some of the freshness and creativity that characterize the first edition of his dictionary. It is for this reason that I decided to edit the first version of 1598. Florio’s creativity is visible not only in his pursuit of *copia*, but also in his free use of vivid English expressions and his creation of neologisms, especially loan translation, with their attempt to make ‘English natural.’ Colourful definitions such as ‘higledi-pigledie, helter-skelter, cricket a wicket’ for *tarabara*; ‘to ginicomtwig’ for *scuótere il pelliccione/fottere*; ‘as you bake so brew’ for *tal sia di voi*; ‘fresh water souldier’ for *tiro, tirone*; ‘the mani-headed monster multitude’ for *volgo*, ‘kir-imiriebuff’ for *tartóffola*, all document the lively use of different registers of the English language throughout the dictionary. Several English constructions replicate the Italian prefix, constituting in some cases what appear to be first attestations by Florio, as they are not included in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Among these are ‘unhungered’ for *sfamato*, ‘to unmilke, weane’ for *slattare*, ‘to unjawe’ for *sma-scellare*, ‘to unlouse’ for *spidocchiare*, ‘dispoeted, degraded from a poets being’ for *spoetato*, ‘to unpromise’ for *sprométtere*. Occasionally, a translation seems erroneous, such as ‘weaheartened, unlevered’ for *sfegatato*, an adjective referring to the ‘passionate pursuit of a cause or advocating of an opinion.’ Shakespeare appears to have created similar neologisms in his plays, including ‘undivulged, to unmake, to unsex, to unspeak,’ and others. The binary phrases of other definitions suggest Florio’s search for poetic rhythm (*stuólo*, ‘an armie, a troupe, a band, a squadron, a rout or companie of men, a shoale of fish, a flight of birds, a swarme of bees, a crue of good fellowes’), a rhythm elegantly applied to the envoy at the end of the

| Affermare | Affermàre, to affirme. Also to affix unto. |
| Affermàre | Affermàre, to affirme. Also to affix unto. |
| Afflittione | Afflittione, affliction, trouble, vexation, persecution, torment or calamity. |
| Afflittione | Afflittione, affliction, trouble, vexation, calamity. |
| Habilità | Habilità, ability, fitnesse, power. |
| Habilità | Habilità, ability, fitnesse, power. |
| Libidine | Libidine, all manner of lust, luxurie, sensualitie, concupiscence, burning lust or unlawfull appetite. |
| Libidine | Libidine, leacherie, lust, pleasure, luxurie, desire, sensualitie, unlawfull appetite, wanton lust of bodie, concupiscence. |
| Zambèlla | Zambèlla, a pretty trull, a fine harlot, a flurting whore, a minx, a gixie. |
| Zambèlla | Zambèlla, a trull, a flurt, a minx, a harlot, a whore. |
Preface (‘I wish thee, as of me thou shalt deserve, and wish of thee as I knowe of thee I have deserved.’). Florio’s rhetorical vigour is visible in the use of alliteration (scardassare, […] ‘to beate, bumbaste, bange, touze, or bumfeagle. Also to back-bite, to detract or raile at one behind his backe’). Florio’s love of words, his interest in the human condition, and his desire to mediate cross-cultural communication all contribute to his strength as a translator and writer, and to *A Worlde of Wordes*’ originality and richness as a repository of knowledge and as a social document.

*Within the context of early modern Italian language and culture outside Italy, John Florio’s *A Worlde of Wordes* stands out as an extraordinary lexicographic and encyclopedic achievement, as the first comprehensive bilingual Italian-English dictionary. *A Worlde of Wordes* crowns Florio’s lifelong labour in teaching and promoting Italian language and culture among the educated class of Renaissance England and beyond. Not only did it enrich the English language with numerous original words and phrases, it also opened Italian civilization to the world through a language that was beginning its global ascent. The first edition of 1598 especially stands out as a work of art by a courageous and ‘resolute’ humanist with a dual, bilingual identity, who braved treacherous seas both professionally and socially, following the proverbial wisdom adorning the dictionary’s preface: ‘Et a torto si lamenta del mare chi due volte ci vuol tornare.’ As Florio’s ‘bouncing boie, Bacchus-like,’ *A Worlde of Wordes* exudes a remarkable liveliness and vibrancy, a joie de vivre that belongs to the sensual and intellectual passion of ‘chi si contenta gode’ expressed on the frontispiece of the second edition. It reflects the author’s openness to all of human experience, in a sort of piazza universale that embraces diverse fields of knowledge, unabashed realism, different modes of Italian and English, from the learned speech of scholars to dialects and roguish language. As an all-encompassing allegory, Florio’s works are in search of ongoing perfection, of an earthly pagan trinity. The number three is in fact auspicious – Florio was active as a lexicographer, translator, and teacher, working mostly with Italian, French, and English; third editions of both his dictionary and dialogue books were in preparation; in addition, *A Worlde of Wordes* is dedicated to three individuals, whose ‘thrice-honored hands’ (3) are praised, among them those of ‘my most noble, most gracious, and most graceful Earle of Rutland’; the dictionary, which is set in three columns, is justified by the arduous reading of Italy’s Three Crowns (‘Boccace is prettie hard, yet understood: Petrarche harder, but explained: Dante hardest, but commented’), and by the encyclopedic wealth of Citolini, Alunno, and Garzoni.

And just as Florio is a go-between for different social classes both as an insider and an outsider, as a preceptor and translator, *A Worlde of Wordes* is a go-between for Italian and English, different languages and cultures, Venice and Europe, written and spoken language, formal and informal interaction, classical antiquity and early modernity. Perhaps unconsciously, outside the linguistic debates among
Italian academics and intellectuals, Florio was also a mediator between Bembo’s archaic model and the revised model propelled a decade later by the Accademia della Crusca, as a promoter abroad of ‘italiano regionale comune,’ a practical, colloquial, yet cultivated language with Northern Italian features, both receptive and productive, but drawn to modernity. Most of all, A Worlde of Wordes reverberates and instilled a humanistic love for learning that led the way to later bilingual and monolingual dictionaries.

The Arrangement of A Worlde of Wordes

A Worlde of Wordes is arranged in alphabetical order of the entries, which include spoken expressions and phrases, irregular verb forms, singular and plural nouns, and a great number of variants in spelling. The alphabetical order is frequently compromised with nouns or adjectives following a verb of the same word family. Cross-references are frequent but at times missing, especially in the case of polyrematic entries. Florio uses both phonetic accents and stress accents, although inconsistently, sometimes erroneously. Entries are followed without grammatical information, except in rare instances. The definitions often include several synonyms and multiple definitions, consonant with Florio’s love of copia with its emphasis on stylistic variation and amplification. Entries may at times be vague, and also contain definitions for multiple grammatical categories of the same word. A few entries refer to their usage by great Italian writers, or to their relevance in a particular semantic field or geographical and cultural context.

Keeping in mind the dictionary’s didactic orientation, I have decided not to correct Florio’s flaws, imprecisions, inconsistencies, and errors for the present edition, except for some obvious typographical errors. In order to keep the volume to a manageable size, cross-references were not added where they are missing. It is hoped that the slight modernization of this semi-diplomatic edition based on the original printed version and the anastatic edition of 1972 will allow the reader to experience Florio at work in the earliest stages of Italian-English lexicography.

Notes

1 The citation is from the dialogue book Firste Fruites: ‘It is a language that wyl do you good in England, but passe Dover, it is woorth nothing.’ (ch. 27, 50).
2 Thomas compiled an Italian-English list of some 9,000 words used by the Tre Corone and based on Alunno’s and Acarisio’s 1543 Italian dictionaries.
3 The Index Librorum Prohibitorum was initiated in 1559 and consisted of a list of books that were prohibited by the Catholic Church.
4 The citation in Florio’s Second Frutes replicates Asham’s in The Scholemaster: ‘If you think, we judge amiss (…) hear, what the Italian sayeth of the English man (…)’: Inglese Italianato, è un diavolo incarnato, that is to say, you remain men in shape


6 For a history of bilingual dictionaries see Carla Marello, Dizionari bilingui con schede su dizionari italiani per francese, inglese, spagnolo, tedesco (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1989), and Desmond O’Connor, A History of Italian and English Bilingual Dictionaries (Florence: Olschki, 1990).


8 Relatively little is known about John Florio’s life. Frances A. Yates’s is to date the best and most comprehensive account based on archival research. Her book is the most important source for subsequent studies, such as Silvio Policardi, John Florio e le relazioni culturali anglo-italiane agli albori del XVII secolo (Venice: Montuoro, 1947); Michael Wyatt, The Italian Encounter with Tudor England. A Cultural Politics of Translation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Manfred Pfister, ‘Inglese italiano–Italiano anglizzato,’ in Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels, eds., Renaissance Go-Betweens, 32–54.

9 Florio’s father Michelangelo wrote, in the Alpine retreat of Soglio, an autobiographical Apologia (published in 1557), a biography about Lady Jane Grey, the deposed queen (1561), an Italian translation of Georg Agricola’s metallurgic treatise De re metallica (1563) with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth, as well as an unpublished manuscript on Italian grammar.

10 These derogatory surnames suggest a deep insult or envy prompted by one or several readers of Florio’s previous works, most likely his Firste Fruites and Second Frutes. While the identity of H.S. is debatable, it could be attributed to John Eliot, who in 1593 published Ortho-epia Gallica, a satire in which he ridiculed Florio. Another very successful competitor was Claude Hollyband de Saiiilien, who published in French and Italian. For a discussion see Michael Wyatt, The Italian Encounter with Tudor England, 163ff., and Spartaco Gamberini, Lo studio dell’italiano in Inghilterra nel ’500 e nel ’600 (Messina–Florence: D’Anna, 1970).

11 Hollyband’s dialogue books (The French Schoolmaster, The French Littleton) were
printed in numerous editions. Hollyband ventured into Italian in 1575 with *The Prettie and Wittie Historie of Arnalt & Lucenda, with certen rules and Dialogues*, set foorth for the learner of th' Italian tong, followed in 1583 by *The Italian Schoole-Maister*, which enjoyed several editions, likely in competition with Florio’s works. For brief references to these and other works see Mario Mormile and Riccarda Matteucci, *Le grammatiche italiane in Gran Bretagna. Profilo storico: secoli XVI, XVII, XVIII* (Lecce: Argos, 1997), and Rinaldo C. Simonini, ‘The Italian Pedagogy of Claudius Hollyband,’ *Studies in Philology* 49 (1952), 144–154.

12 John Florio’s guide to English pronunciation accompanies the *Firste Fruites* in four folios. See Giordano Orsini, ‘Un trattatello sconosciuto di G. Florio,’ *Cultura* 10 (1931), 483–489.

13 Florio may have also written his own stories, such as *Lippotopo; novelletta nella quale narrasi uno singolare tratto di accidia: Con altra novelletta d’un avaro* (London: Appresso Thomaso Woodcock, 1591). However, his creative writing abilities are demonstrated best by his Montaigne translation and the English definitions of *A Worlde of Wordes*.

14 The English phrase is from Florio’s *Second Frutes*, while the Latin citation is prominently displayed on the frontispiece below his portrait in *Queen Anna’s New World of Words*. Florio’s bilingual and bicultural identity is displayed early on in the Epistle *Dedicatorie* and Reader’s Note in the *Firste Fruites*, where his signature alternates between ‘Giovanni Florio’ and ‘I.F.’ (John Florio).

15 Edward Blount was a bookseller and translator whose third printed book was Florio’s *A Worlde of Wordes*. He had cosmopolitan ambitions and published translations from numerous languages. He was the chief publisher of the first folio edition of Shakespeare’s *Comedie, Histories, and Tragedies*. For a brief biography see Gary Taylor, ‘Edward Blount,’ in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 6 (2004), 297–299.


17 The passage is Florio’s translation of: ‘Che vi pare de li costumi de gli Inglesi? Ditemi di gratia. ‘Io vi dirò, alcuni sono bene costumati, ma molti male (…) verso i Stranieri, e pochi di questi Inglesi si dilettano di far imparar lingue a i suoi figlioli, la qual cosa mi dispiace. Io quando arivai in Londra, non sapendo parlar Inglese, scontrai più di cinque cento persone, inanzi che io sapessi trovare uno, che mi sapesse dire in Italiano o Francese, dove che stava la Posta’ (ch. 27, 51).

18 Among early instruments for the study of Italian as a foreign language, Gamberini, *Lo studio dell’italiano*, mentions polyglot dictionaries such as Noel Van Bartlement’s *Colloquia et Dictionariolum* (Antwerp 1557), *Sex Linguarum... dictionarium* (1541), Lodovico Guicciardino’s phrase book *Hore di ricreatione* (…), Andrew Boorde’s *Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of knowledge* (1542) with its many Italian dialect words, William Thomas’s *Principal rules of the Italian Grammar* (1550), and Hollyband’s works. For a detailed analysis of grammars for the teaching of Italian in England see Lucilla Pizzoli, *Le grammatiche di Italiano per Inglesi* (1550–1776): *Un’analisi lin-


20 The passage is a translation of: ‘E’ una lingua che vi farà bene in Inghilterra, ma passate Dover, la non val niente (…). E’ una lingua confusa, repezata da molte altre lingue: lei piglia molte parole dal Latino, e più dal Franzese, e più dal Italiano, e assai più dal todesco, e anche se ne piglia dal Greco, e dal Britannico, tanto che se si rendesse a ogni lingua le sue parole, poche ne resterebbero per gli Inglesi, e pure ogni giorno se ne gli aggiunge.’

21 Respectively by the Spanish moralist and chronicler Guevara (1481–1545) and the Florentine writer and merchant Guicciardini (1521–1589).

22 Their successful reception outside England is evidenced by Gomes de Trier’s translation entitled Verger des colloques recreatifs ... en langue francoise & bas allemande (Amsterdam: Paul van Ravesteyn, 1605), and Le Jardin de recreation auquel croissent Rameaux, Fleurs et Fruits, tres-beaux, gentilz et suefiz... (ibid., 1611).

23 Among the most recent books suggesting the coinciding of Shakespeare’s and Florio’s identities is Lamberto Tassinari’s Shakespeare? È il nome d’arte di John Florio (Montreal: Giano Books, 2008). Through a reading of Shakespeare’s plays and Michelangelo Florio’s Apologia the book argues that Shakespeare was the nom de plume of Florio. While not grounded in philological research Tassinari’s work draws attention to what he considers a deliberate neglect in academia of Florio’s influence on Shakespeare. Similarly, Saul Gerevini’s rather entertaining book William Shakespeare, ovvero John Florio, un fiorentino alla conquista del mondo (Aulla: Pilgrim Edizioni, 2008) attempts to build bridges of identity between Shakespeare’s sonnets and plays and Florio’s works outside philology and Shakespeare scholarship, in the absence of a critical bibliography. Similar discussions date back to Santi Paladino’s Shakespeare sarebbe il pseudonimo di un poeta italiano (Reggio Calabria: Borgia, 1929), a pamphlet rife with fantasy and historical distortions written during the Fascist period, with Shakespeare being identified with Florio’s father Michelangelo.

24 Among them DeWitt Starnes (‘John Florio Reconsidered,’ Texas Studies in Literature and Languages 6 (1964), 407–422) emphasizes Florio’s derivative lexicographical practice, a claim that was challenged by David O. Frantz in ‘Negotiating Florio’s A Worlde of Wordes,’ Dictionaries 18 (1997), 1–32.


26 Yates, 239.

27 Sergio Rossi, “‘The Only-Knowing Men of Europe’: John Florio e gli insegnanti italiani,” 144ff.


29 William Thomas, Dizionario Italiano ed Inglese = Principle Rules of Italian grammar, with a Dictionarie for the better understanding of Boccace, Pettrarcha, and Dante (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1550); Dizionario Italiano e francese = Jean Antoine Fenice, Dictionnaire François & Italien (Morges, 1583); Dizionario Italiano e Spagnolo = Cristóbal de las Casas, Vocabolario de las dos lenguas Toscana y castellana (Seville: Alonso Escrivano, 1570).

30 Thomas Thomas, Dizionario Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae (1570).


33 Marcel Tetel, ‘Idéologie et traductions,’ 179.


35 Although there is no information on his mother, at age 25 Florio’s proficiency in English and his early bilingual publications suggest that his mother was of English extraction, and that Florio became bilingual while growing up in Soglio.

36 In his study on the translation of Boccaccio’s Decameron, entitled The First English Translation of the Decameron, 1620 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953; Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1953), Herbert G. Wright makes an attempt at hypothesizing Florio’s authorship with numerous but not always convincing claims, especially as to the use of alliteration.

37 Giovanni Torriano published the Vocabolario Italiano e Inglese in 1659. The dictionary, in which the Crusca Academy’s Vocabolario lessons are apparent, was based on Florio’s work and his plans to produce an English-Italian section for the dictionary. Torriano uses asterisks for his own word entries or for entries that were modified from the 1611 edition. The dictionary is dedicated to Maria di Modena, Queen of England, and wife of James II. Torriano also published Select Proverbs in 1642, and a Piazza Universale di Proverbi Italiani (1666), based most likely on Florio’s Giardino di Ricreatione. He also published an Italian Tutor in 1640, a grammar followed by Italian-English dialogues, which could be based on the dialogues Florio mentioned in his will. Other works followed, among them Della lingua Toscana-Romana (1657), The Italian Revised (1670, 1673, 1689). Torriano’s efforts are a tribute to Florio, whose ideas and works thus survived into the late seventeenth century. See Yates, ‘Torriano’s and Florio’s manuscripts,’ in John Florio, 322–333.

38 Yates, John Florio, 189.

39 In his very short dedication to Queen Anne in the 1611 edition of his dictionary Florio compares himself immodestly to Columbus ‘at command of glorious Isabella,’ as in his new enlarged edition ‘it hath (at home) discovered neere halfe a new world’ (To the Imperiall Majestie of the Highest-borne Princes, Anna of Denmarke, Anna of Denmarke, by God’s permission, Crowned Queene of England, Scotland, France & Ireland, etc., 2).

40 The dialogue chapter is entitled ‘Names of all the members appertaynyng to man, of al parentes, of the dayes of the weeke, with the seasons of the yeare, howe one shal number, with a certaine briefe Vocabularie.’

41 See, for example, Desmond O’Connor, ‘Voci non spiegate nei dizionari di John Florio,’ Studi di Filologia Italiana 31 (1973), 207–246, and Gabriele Stein, The English Dictionary before Cawdrey.

42 Some of the flaws and peculiarities described in Florio’s dictionary are found also in other bilingual English dictionaries. They include the privileging of word class over alphabetical order, and the omission of English definitions for some vernacular words (e.g., in William Salesbury’s Welsh-English dictionary [1547]), of which traces are
found in Florio’s *World of Wordes*). Other peculiarities, such as the stress accents introduced didactically in the vernacular, are also observed in Peter Levins’s rhyming dictionary (1570). For further comparisons see Stein, *The English Dictionary before Cawdrey*.


The passage from Michelangelo’s address ‘al benigno lettore’ (6 r) continues: ‘e oltre a ciò che quando il leggersero, non l’intenderiano che tanto, o quanto, pe non esser Toscani, ne havere studiato le centonovelle. L’intento mio, lettore carissimo, è stato da agevolare tanto il mio parlare (…) che i semplici altresì possano intenderlo. E chi non sa che il parlare, e scrivere del Bembo non è quello stesso che generalmente s’usa per ogni idiota, ma che da dotti solamente in alcune Academie vien’ usato (…) perché questa mia traduzione non dee esser letta da l’età del Boccaccio, ma da la presente. I parlari da l’hora in qua si sono mutate, come dal di a la notte.’ (And furthermore they would only understand it somewhat when reading it, not being Tuscan, and not having studied the hundred tales [scil. the Decameron]. My intent has been, dearest reader, to facilitate my speech […] so that simple folks may understand as well. And who doesn’t know that Bembo’s spoken and written language is not the language generally used by people, but that it is only used by the learned in some Academies […], reason why my translation is not to be read in the age of Boccaccio, but at the present time. The speech has changed from then to now, like from day to night.)


The rich presence of dialect words has been illustrated especially by Silvio Policardi, ‘I dizionari di John Florio,’ *Lingua Nostra* 9 (1948), 54–60, and by Desmond O’Connor, ‘Resolute John Florio,’ in idem., *History of Italian and Bilingual Dictionaries*. O’Connor notes how the dialects are present already among the 394 words of the brief vocabulary in the *Firste Fruites*, with words from Venetian, Lombard, and Friulan (galte ‘cheeks,’ panza, barba, etc.).

See Cristina Scarpino, ‘Il lessico scientifico nel Dizionario di John Florio,’ *Studi di Lessicografia Italiana* 25 (2008), 87–88, where she observes how interference analysis is complicated by the participation in printing by four professionals, i.e., the author, editor, printer, and reviser.

In his study ‘Lexical Strata in Florio’s “New World of Words,”’ *English Studies* 44 (1963), 415–423, James L. Rosier notes that Florio tends to prefer loan blends over unadapted imports in the English definitions (predordinare: foreordaine; incanito: indogged; insorellare: to insister).

Most of these loanwords are found in the *Online Oxford English Dictionary*, with the exception of quelquechose, misensaile, habillement, sans-fear, bastonadas / bastionado, panado, palizada, ranchado.
In his excellent study entitled ‘Florio’s Use of Contemporary Italian Literature in A World of Wordes,’ David O. Frantz notes Florio’s hierarchical penchant.

Several of these entries are found in Aretino and registered in Battaglia’s Grande dizionario della lingua italiana: mestolone, miccia, minutaglia (with its technical meaning cited from Michelangelo Florio), perdigiornata, baldracca, ciarpa, magalda, menaculo, scanfärda. Other terms are found in Old Venetian dialects: togna, zambella, leccapignatta (Old Ven. pignata ‘pan’); still others are not registered in Battaglia, or in Cortelazzo-Zolli’s Dizionario etimologico italiano: baiarda, ciutazza, francatrippa, lavaceti, marucco, palandrina, rienza, torlorù, trassostanzione.

For a discussion of this dimension see Cristina Scarpino, ‘Il lessico scientifico nel Dizionario di John Florio,’ 87–88.


We find this definition in the Grande dizionario della lingua italiana: Sfegatato, ‘Che sostiene una causa, un’opinione o una fazione politica fino al fanatismo o con eccessiva convinzione; infervorato, ardente nel sostenere un’idea.’ Other historical meanings include ‘madly in love, particularly intense’ (Aretino).