

Istituto Studi Floriani

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The Istituto Studi Floriani's mission.

The institute's mission is to give information about Michelangelo Florio and his son Giovanni, best known as John Florio. There are relevant facts that should be known by students and researchers of English renaissance literature about Florio, Father and son, in order to have a better understanding of what Shakespeare is. In fact Istituto Studi Floriani (ISF from now on) believes that Michelangelo and John Florio's works are fundamental in tracking those events that lead to draw a better picture of William Shakespeare. The researches of Oxford University that lately certify Shakespeare as a collaborative playwright, mainly with Marlowe - and Thomas Nashe according to ISF's studies - in Henry the VI, gives right to ISF to introduce its studies about the authorship of Shakespeare's works since ISF has always presented William Shakespeare not as a person but as a collaboration between diverse writers. Anyway ISF indicates in John Florio the final organized and writer who prepared the works that bear William Shakespeare's names. To cut a long story short, here we will give a very synthetic path of ISF's studies on John Florio and Shakespeare. As Istituto Studi Floriani has indicated in many articles available at www.shakespeareandflorio.net it has been discovered that John Florio was singled out in the Menaphon, 1589, by Thomas Nashe as:

- 1) an Art Master who "reposes eternity in the mouth of a player";
- 2) as an Art Master who "vaunts Ovid's feathers as his own";
- 3) Nashe Writes that John Florio does this "in disguised array" because he has "mounted on the stage of arrogance" using works written by others;
- 4) Again, Nashe writes that this Art Master is the same person who "will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfulls, of tragical speeches".
- 5) William Vaughan in his "*The Spirit of Detraction*", 1611, allows us to understand that Nashe in the Menaphon is really speaking about John Florio. In fact Vaughan defends Florio from Nashe when Nashe wrote "*Nil dictum quod non dictum prius*" against John Florio in the Menaphon.
- 6) John Florio in his *Second Fruits*, 1591, answered Thomas Nashe's accusations almost verbatim, demonstrating once more that Nashe's target, in the Menaphon, was really John Florio.

7) The fact that the first writers that Florio attacks in his Second Fruits are Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe confirms that between John Florio, Greene and Nashe there was a quarrel and this quarrel was about "Shakespeare".

8) We understand it once we read the Groatsworth, 1592, where we find an "Absolute Johannes Factotum", that with "his tiger's hearth wrapped in a player'shyde", is offended because he writes plays stolen to other playwrights.

9) John Florio in his World of Words, 1598, attacks John Eliot, Greene, Nashe and Hugh Sanford.

10) Sanford had first offended John Florio, in 1591, using the terms "Johannes Factotum", and in answering to Sanford's offence John Florio informs us that the terms "Johannes Factotum" was used by Nashe in the Groatsworth, written by Greene in the 1591. This attack in the Groatsworth was done by Nashe to ridicule Florio who was writing works bearing the name of Shakespeare.

11) The final solution to this complicated quarrel will be find in Nashe Lenten Staff, 1599, where Nashe answering back to John Florio's World of Words accusations reveals that Rober Greene and Nashe, in the Groatsworth, were really referring to him as that "Tiger's heath" and "Absolute Johannes Factotum".

12) Greene and Nashe, but not only them, were at war with Florio because his writing technic was that of using many sources, gathered everywhere, to write the works destined to the theatre. He used even, and sometimes mainly, his father Michelangelo's books and notes, which were full of information about Italy history and geography.

13) This way of writing was not accepted by the Wits, mainly Greene and Nashe, because they thought that in doing so John Florio was not writing his own plays - with an "*extemporal technic*" as Nashe, in the Menaphon, says he and Greene did - but he was only "rewriting" other author's works. That is why Nashe in the Menaphon said about Florio that "*Nil dictum quod non dictum prius*".

There are good reasons for which Florio had to write in disguised arrays using Shakespeare as a mask, but this reasons have to be explained at lenght. All this will be done in proper occasions, and writings, where it is possible to abound in data and details.

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