

THE GENESIS OF "ROMEO AND JULIET"

English Queen Jane Grey is Juliet of "Romeo and Juliet"

In these brief notes we will try to demonstrate how the tragic play "Romeo and Juliet" by Shakespeare reports the same contents and words of the story written in Italian language by Michelangelo Florio in 1561 (and published in 1607, shortly after Michelangelo's death), about the life and death of Lady Jane Grey, his preferred pupil!

It is a new thesis and as such should we hereby try to explain, with great humility, to the scholars, to be verified.

It should be firstly noted that Michelangelo Florio "was a Franciscan friar who had embraced the Protestantism and been imprisoned by the inquisition for preaching in Naples, Padua and Venice."¹ Michelangelo wrote a manuscript in Italian language (a "*rare little book*", as pointed out by Yates, John Florio, 1934, p.9²) " *Historia de la vita e de la morte de l' Illustriss. [Story of life and death of] Signora Giovanna Graia* ", who is known in English history as Lady Jane Grey, " the nine days Queen". The book was written in 1561/2, six years after the martyrdom of Cranmer (1556), Ridley and Latimer (1555), Anglican bishops, who had been burned by order of Bloody Mary (see: page 8 of this Michelangelo's book; Yates, John Florio, 1934, p. 9 footnote 1; Ives, Lady Jane Grey, 2009 p.27 - 28); the book was published only in 1607. In this volume, Michelangelo "thus describes a conversation which he once had with Jane, no doubt during an Italian lesson 'One day I was recounting to her the outrages, the *scorns*, the torments which I had endured for the space of twenty-seven months in Rome under Paul and Julius II for having there, and in Naples, and in Padua, and in Venice preached Christ without disguise, I myself saw her weep with such deeply felt compassion that it could well be seen how much she had true religion at heart. And raising her eyes to heaven she said, 'o God, if I displease Thee not with this my petition, do not suffer it any longer that the world should abuse Thy servants thus'". "Io stesso contandole un giorno, gl'oltraggi, gli *scorni*, et i tormenti ch'in Roma per lo spazio di XXVII mesi sotto Paolo, et Giulio III, sofferti hauea. Per hauer iui [io], et in Napoli, et in Padoua, et in Venegia predicate Christo senza maschera; la uidi con si sviscerata compassione lagrimare, che ben si conosceua quanto gli fosse à cuore la uera religione; et alzati gl'occhi al cielo, disse, Deh Signore, s'io non ti offendo con questa mia dimanda, non patir piu ch'el mondo faccia tanti strazii dei tuoi" (pp. 27-28) (Yates, op.cit., pg. 9 and pg. 10, footnote I; Michelangelo confirms that his imprisonment was due to his having preached the new ideas of the Reformation). Michelangelo, in this volume, points out (p. 26) that Jane's father, Henry Grey had been " a great lover of his homeland, tenacious and zealous defender of the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ, true Maecenas of all virtuous people", including Michelangelo himself, who had fallen on hard times and had been thrown out of Lord Cecil's house for his " act of fornication " with a parishioner, from whom John Florio was born in 1552. In the same volume dedicated to Lady Jane Grey (p.44), Michelangelo still speaks of his gratitude to Jane's father: " He was charitable to me as he would have been to his close relative and also he was charitable to all those who were persecuted by Antichrist."

Michelangelo had dedicated, in 1552, to Jane Grey his manuscript *Regole de la lingua thoscana*, a manuscript "hitherto, completely overlooked" (Yates, p.7). The manuscript (currently in the British Museum-Yates, op.cit.,p.7), in its original elegant binding (see Ives, Lady Jane Grey, 2009, p. 66 and therein, Illustration [Plate] 25), also contains a dedication, in which Michelangelo saluted Jane as "illustrious and learned lady" and praised her father's "indulgence, kindness and courtesy".

1 Eric Ives, Jane Grey, A Tudor Mystery, Wiley-Blackwell 2009, p. 65.

2 The book by Yates on John Florio is available, for some parts, in the link <http://books.google.it/books?id=Ju48AAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=it#v=onepage&q&f=false>

“It is very interesting to find this proof that Michael Angelo was Lady Jane’s Italian master and thus in part responsible for her well-known proficiency in languages. From the beginning of the dedication one infers that Michelangelo was under an obligation to Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk, her father, and was living in his house, since he says that he holds in reverence ' the lowest servants of his [the duke’s] well-nourished and well-dressed family " . "Apparently [see Yates, p.8] his [Michelangelo’s] recent disgrace [his act of fornication] was no bar to service in that strict household”.

This dedication (as well as *Le Regole de la lingua thoscana*, to which the dedication is attached) was written,

according to Yates (p.8, and footnote 2), *in the summer of 1552*, since Michelangelo seems to make reference, in the final part of the dedication, to his act of fornication - for which he hates himself – which had been discovered six months earlier, in February 1552. Indeed, since then , Michelangelo was devoted to the teaching of the Italian language, having been suspended by Lord Cecil from his position as pastor at the Italian Church in London, and he apologizes to Jane for not having written a religious book useful for a Christian (but promising to dedicate her a further religious book in the future), but a book about the language "of little importance " ; Michelangelo invites Jane to blame for this, the severe sufferings [the act of fornication] " that for six months have been disturbing my mind, so that I almost hate myself. It is not inconceivable that Michelangelo called his son John (Giovanni)³, who was also born in the summer of 1552⁴, also as a sign of his esteem for Jane (who was called by Michelangelo, in his Italian cited work, Signora Giovanna Graia), his exceptional pupil⁵.

With regard to these *Regole*, it has been noted⁶ that "*it is strange that Michelangelo Florio’s grammar should make such extensive use of its author’s unapologetic anti-Catholic convictions, but as should be abundantly*

3 It is also worth noting that, for a Christian Pastor (just like Michelangelo), John the Evangelist, was one of the Lord’s favorite disciples, who began the very famous prologue of his Gospel with the words: “In the beginning was the Word [in Greek, logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”. John was the Evangelist of the “Word” that came down to earth and became flesh (“The Word became flesh and ... We have seen his glory, the glory of the Only Begotten Son, who came from the Father” – Gospel of John, 1,14), to intercede between God and the world. In the “Epistle Dedicatorie” of the 1598 *World of Wordes*, John Florio explains the meaning of the title of his Italian-English dictionary “A Worlde of Wordes: since as the Universe containes all things, digested in best equipedged order, embellisht with innumerable ornaments by the universall creator”.

4 In his Latin letter on January/February 552 (Yates, p.5 and 6), sent to Lord Cecil from Michelangelo, Michelangelo begs forgiveness for an act of fornication; of course, at that time, Michelangelo was forced to reveal the situation, considering the state of advanced pregnancy of his beloved. Just as Claudio in *Measure for Measure*, imprisoned and sentenced to death by an act of fornication ("lechery," Act I, scene ii, 134), when the pregnancy becomes obvious: i.e. when "The stealth of our most mutual entertainment With character too gross is writ on Juliet" -Act I, scene ii, 149-150).

The calculations on John Florio’s birth (based on his age of 58 in the portrait reproduced in the dictionary of 1611- see Yates p.13-14) do not take into account the fact that, at the date of publication of this dictionary (probably in the first half of 1611), John had not yet turned 59 years old. Probably, John was not proud to make public to have been the result of an act of fornication! In my opinion, he tried to misleadingly disconnect his parents’scandalous fornication and his conception, supporting the idea that he was born in 1553 and therefore that he had been conceived (out of any act of fornication) after the holy celebration of his parents' wedding; thus, “in the absence of any document registering John Florio’s birth” (Yates, op.cit. pg. 258, footnote 2), differently from William from Stratford (in my opinion, it cannot be excluded that John himself might have managed to destroy this document!). To be honest, Yates firstly (op. cit., p.259, footnote 2, point (3) hypothesized that John Florio “may have deliberately given misleading information as to his origin in order to cloak the scandal connected with his birth”. He too (not only his parents) had been, though indirectly, involved in the huge scandal; he suffered such heavy situation. Suffice to say that the Polish John à Lasco, superintendent of the foreign Protestant churches in London, wrote a letter in June 1553 to no less than Heinrich Bullinger (the well-known Swiss reformer, Huldreich Zwingli’s successor); Lasco made indisputable reference to Michelangelo (although his name was not explicitly mentioned, clearly as sign of due respect towards such an eminent person) "who has recently been excluded from his ministry on account of a scandal against the moral principles"(Yates, p.7 and footnotes 1-3) .

In short, a really big scandal had arisen; it had been an event that objectively had been around the world at that time. It had involved one of the highest authorities in England (Sir William Cecil Lord Burghley, who became Secretary of State of Queen Elizabeth, in 1558) and its extensive eco had shaken the whole Protestant world, crossing the borders of England. It had been a shocking event, which the extremely sensitive Michelangelo had always kept inside himself as an unspeakable torment, continuously searching for mercy.

clear by now, there is nothing at all coincidental about the intermingling of language and ideology. "Michelangelo is doing more than conveying grammatical information in offering such examples as":

- "If I were to obey the Pope, I would obeying the Anti- Christ (regarding the relationship of the subjunctive to the conditional)."

- " The Pope claims to be the vicar of Christ, but contrarily the Holy Spirit shows us that he is the Anti-Christ (on contrariety)."

In addition, as already mentioned, Michelangelo (see page 8 of Michelangelo's book on Jane Grey's life and death) had told Jane the sufferings he had endured in Roman papal prison for 27 months, and , as the scholars noted⁷, so he educated his pupil, *"also feeding Jane Catholic atrocity stories."*

Thus, Michelangelo contributed, in a significant way, to confirm Jane in her religious convictions, linked to the Evangelical Reformed Church and against the Catholic Church.

Michelangelo was also linked to Lady Jane Grey's father in law, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, who convinced King Edward VI to contemplate in his will (his famous testamentary disposition or "devise" / "deuse" - see Ives , op. cit. , p.137 et seq.) the succession to the throne in favor of Lady Jane . In fact, Michelangelo translated into Italian the Catechism of the Bishop Ponet (composed in 1552-53 in English and Latin, and then suppressed by Mary Tudor) and dedicated such translation to " Sir John Dudley, worthy Duke of Northumberland "; according to Yates (p.11), the translation was made " after the death of Edward [in Greenwich, July 6, 1553] and before the fall of Northumberland at the proclamation of Mary as queen [July 19, 1553]".

Therefore, Michelangelo (as evidenced by the Yates, p. 10-11), *"attached as he was to the Grey household, was in a position to watch these developments, and there is evidence to show that he identified himself with the Dudleys. If the duke's plan had succeeded, Michael Angelo's fortune would have been made and he would not have had to set forth on his wanderings again"*.

It is now worth noting that Queen Jane Grey is the fourth of the six Tudor monarchs (after Henry VII , Henry VIII, Edward VI and before Mary I and Elizabeth I). She was great-grandson of Henry VIII and daughter of Frances Brandon who was, in turn, daughter of Princess Mary (sister of Henry VIII). Jane was born in October 1537⁸ and had in his destiny from his birth a royal name, since she was named Jane in honor of

5 It is worth noting that engravings representing the portraits of both John Florio (1611) and Lady Jane Grey (1620) are available. They shall bear their Latin names: IOANNES FLORIUS; IANA [Latin abbreviated translation of Ioanna, female of Ioannes] GRAYA [Michelangelo had translated into Italian as Graia her English surname Grey; the portrait shows the same Michelangelo's translation, but with the "y" instead of "i"]. According to the fashion of the time, even "Iana"'s portrait [preserved in the British Museum, see-http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=509992&objectId=3105069&partId=1] contains some Latin words: "IANA GRAYA decollata, Regia stirps tristi cinxi diademat crines / Regna sed omnipotens hinc meliora dedit," "GIOVANNA GREY decapitated, [I], royal lineage, put on my hair a sad crown / but the Almighty then gave me better reigns."

6 See Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 212-213; see also Ives, *Lady Jane Grey*, p. 73. Michael Wyatt, in his turn, reports the belief of Giuliano Pellegrini, 1954, p.103 "Michelangelo Florio e le sue regole de la lingua thoscana", in "Studi di filologia italiana" 12:72-201.

7 Ives, *Lady Jane Grey*, p. 73.

8 See <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/245943/Lady-Jane-Grey>

another Queen Queen Jane Seymour , who had generated in October 1537 Edward VI, son of Henry VIII⁹ and died in late October 1537 for some complications due to childbirth.

Edward VI , suffering from tuberculosis, along with John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland¹⁰ (his tutor and father of the husband of Jane , Guilford Dudley) had decided to exclude Tudor Mary Tudor and Elizabeth from the succession in favor of Lady Jane Grey¹¹ . It was a real “coup”, which aimed to change the line of succession to avoid the return of Catholicism in England under Mary Tudor , the Catholic daughter of Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. This machination was intended to avoid the predictable massacres (which then took place, under Mary Tudor, called the Catholic and also known as Bloody Mary) of those who did not profess the Catholic religion, but who had joined the reform of Anglicanism . Michelangelo states that the maneuver was aimed also to satisfy appetite for power by John Dudley, who crowned Queen his daughter -in-law Jane Grey, with the inner desire that she would have attributed to her husband (Guildford Dudley, John’s son) the title of King (p.35of the cited work by Michelangelo) . Jane, in fact, just like Michelangelo, adhered to the religion taught by Henry VIII, which was closer to the Gospel and detached itself from the power (not always administered according to Christian principles) by the Pope of Rome.

Lady Jane Grey’s life has been recently studied by a great English scholar, Eric Ives, Emeritus Professor of English History at the University of Birmingham, in his book “*Lady Jane Grey, A Tudor Mystery*, Wiley Blackwell, 2009. It is probably the most comprehensive and wide study (with extensive bibliography) on the story of Queen Jane Grey and so-called "crisis of 1553" (“the year of three sovereigns”, who followed each other on the throne of England Edward VI, Lady Jane Grey and Mary I - Ives, p.7 ff)¹².

In the opening of Michelangelo’s Italian work, you find the “The Warning by the publisher”, to which “Preface by Michelangelo Florio” follows and then the work for a total of 135 pages, with the further addition of a theological dispute which was held in 1554 in Oxford.

The title of the book by Michelangelo is: *Historia De la vita e de la morte de l’Illustris. Signora Giovanna Graia, già Regina eletta e pubblicata d’Inghilterra: e de le cose accadute in quel Regno dopo la morte del Re Edoardo VI, Nella quale secondo le Divine Scritture si tratta dei principali articoli de la Religione Christiana, con l’aggiunta di una dottis. Disputa Theologica fatta in Ossonia, l’Anno 1554* ", “Story of life and death of Lady Jane Grey, already publicly elected Queen of England, as well as the events that happened in that kingdom after the death of King Edward VI. In the story, the major items of Christian Religion are reported according to the Divine Scriptures, with the addition of a Theological dispute held in Oxford in 1554”.

The scholars point out that this book is “*is the only immediately contemporary account of Jane’s brief reign*”.¹³

9 See <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/179773/Edward-VI>

10 See <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/420007/John-Dudley-duke-of-Northumberland>

11 See <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/179773/Edward-VI>

12 “La vicenda di Lady Jane Grey (1537-1554) ” (published by "Tempo della Riforma ", 2009) is also told, in Italian language, in a brief book by Paolo Castellina, who was reformed evangelical pastor in Soglio, as he himself says, “in the context and the valley of the same church where he [Michelangelo Florio] worked and of whom I was successor some centuries later”.

13 See Michael Wyatt, op.cit., p.100.

Yates (John Florio, p.14) states that Michelangelo probably received in Strasbourg Lady Jane Grey's writings by James Haddon, one of Jane's tutors and Dudley's chaplain, whom Michelangelo (op.cit. p.58) mentions as one of the sources of oral information about what Jane said during his imprisonment. Michelangelo himself (op.cit. p.327 –see also. Yates , John Florio , p.14 , footnote 3) makes it clear that he received in Strasbourg a copy of the dispute in Latin (which he published as a final "addition" in his work dedicated to Jane Grey - Yates, p.14) between Nicholas Ridley (Anglican) and the Papists restored by Catholic Mary.

In the "Warning of the publisher", it is stated that the book had been found after Michelangelo Florio 's death, and that it had been left in the safe hands of a honored person and great benefactor *for over fifty years* and that intention was that it was published. The publisher (who published the book in 1607, after Michelangelo's death, over fifty years after 1554, when Jane's beheading took place) evidently believes that the book had been written in 1554 (while on p. 8, it is stated that the book had been written six years after the death of Ridley, Latimer and Cranmer in 1555-1556, and for this reason, Yates - op.cit ., page 9 , footnote 1 – " puts the date of composition [of the book] at 1561", while Ives, p.28, believes that the book was written in 1561/1562) .

It is easy to assume, in my opinion, that Michelangelo had given strict instructions about the publication of the manuscript only immediately after his death; the manuscript, in fact, was the praise of a Queen who had (convinced by her and her husband's parents) violated the laws of succession to the throne, which were in favor of Henry VIII's daughters (Mary and Elizabeth). Edward VI, King of England, sixteen, had signed in late June 1553 (a few days before his death on July 6), his "device for succession," according to which Mary and Elizabeth were declared illegitimate daughters, since the marriages that their mothers (Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn) had contracted with Henry VIII were declared invalid (Ives, p. 167-168), and as such unable to succeed to the throne. Michelangelo would have, in life, created great problems for himself and for John if he had published, under Elizabeth's reign, a hagiographic book of a Queen who had attempted to exclude Mary and Elizabeth from the Throne of England and therefore sentenced to death!

The same Prof. Ives points out that "*Queen Elizabeth's hostility to the Greys would clearly account for the failure to publish*"¹⁴ this book before 1607.

Michelangelo imagines that Jane, taking stock of his brief but intense life shortly before her death, thought: "*The opportunity to have a good knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew is what more than anything else I liked in my life. I confess that all my pleasure and all my happiness (if such pleasure can be called happiness), in my life, have been the studies of good literature and especially of the Holy Divine Sacred Scripture*" (p.71). Jane was fond of the works of Plato and exchanged letters in Latin with Heinrich Bullinger (Huldreich Zwingli's, Swiss reformer, successor), although she was still a young girl (Ives, op.cit. , p . 51-55 and 66-67). Roger Ascham reported (in a very famous passage of his volume "The Scholemaster ") that he met , in August 1550 , Jane (of whom he had probably been schoolmaster in 1548) during a visit to his friend John Aylmer (Jane 's tutor); Ascham saw her in her room reading the *Phaedo* of Plato in Greek¹⁵. John Aylmer (bishop of London and a great scholar of ancient Greek) is also mentioned by Michelangelo in his work on Lady Jane Grey's life and death (p. 16). Michelangelo stated that Jane "*dedicated her life to study Latin, Greek and Hebrew as a child; she was driven by his natural predilection for such studies and by obedience to her father's will. She had as master a young person, one of the most learned, educated and religious of that kingdom, John Aylmer, who his father had chosen with great care. She quickly and so well*

14 Eric Ives, op.cit., p.297, footnote 25.

15 Eric Ives, op.cit., p.51.

learned those languages that she seemed to have more a divine than a human mind". Surely, Michelangelo

was supposed to be "subdued" by Jane's passion for the study and for the Holy Scriptures.

The Playwright himself, just like Michelangelo¹⁶, showed to be an enthusiastic promoter of women's cultural emancipation (see the characters of Portia, in *The Merchant of Venice*, and of Miranda in *The Tempest*). Finally, Ben Jonson, in the First Folio, concisely exalted the verses of the Playwright, "In each of Which, he seemes to shake a Lance [i.e., to shake a Speare] as brandished at the eyes of Ignorance".

In short, Michelangelo's thirst for knowledge (just like that of the Playwright), his religious faith and his sensitivity were very similar to those of the really young Jane.

So briefly told about the work of Michelangelo on Lady Jane, it should now deal briefly with the play *Romeo and Juliet* of the Playwright and compare the two works in order to reach a conclusion.

The scholars (see Melchiori, *Shakespeare, Genesi e struttura delle opere*, Laterza, Bari, 2008 p.214 -215) find that *Romeo and Juliet* was inspired by a collection of works by Bandello (whose stories dated 1554 are among the volumes of the library of the Florios, listed among those read by John for his dictionary of 1611¹⁷) compiled by the French Boistuau, which also included the *Novella IX* of the second part of the *Novelle* by Bandello; this collection (*Histoires Tragiques extraites des oeuvres italiens de Bandel – 1559*) was translated into English by Arthur Brooke (*The tragicall History of Romeus and Juliet – 1562*) and by William Painter (*The Palace of Pleasure – 1567*). According to scholars (see Melchiori, op.cit., p.215), the Playwright "primarily and almost exclusively followed the text by Brooke".

Melchiori (op.cit., p.215, 216 and 226) notes that essentially three major changes are made by the Playwright with respect to the work of Brooke:

- (i) In the work of Brooke, the two lovers (as it is proclaimed in the preface) are two lustful people, "enslaved to dishonest desires", overlooking the right advices of their parents and friends, and that "made use of the honorable name of marriage to hide the shame of their illicit amours, and hastened, by means of a dishonest life, a miserable death." As Melchiori noted, the "degrading story" by Brooke has nothing to do with the delicate and "ennobled" story by the Playwright.
- (ii) The Playwright concentrated (with respect to the work of Brooke) the action time (Melchiori, op.cit., p.216): "the action of the drama takes five days," (op. cit., p. 229).
- (iii) Count Paris's death (the Count who was betrothed to Juliet) is also contemplated in the drama by the Playwright.

Below we listed the most touching elements in Lady Jane Grey's story of life and death, as told by Michelangelo, which just perfectly coincide with the most touching ones in Juliet's story, as recounted in the work *Romeo and Juliet* by the Playwright.

¹⁶ Also Gerevini, *William Shakespeare ovvero John Florio: un fiorentino alla conquista del mondo*, Pilgrim edizioni, 2008, p.258 points out that the Florios "promoted women's education".

¹⁷ You may read such list in the volume by Tassinari, *John Florio, the man who was Shakespeare*, Giano Books editore, 2009, p.137.

- (a) In Lady Jane Grey's story (in Italian) of life and death, as told by Michelangelo, it is assumed that there has been a final death sentence against the two lovers Jane Grey and Guildford Dudley. They are waiting to die by decapitation in a dismal place: on Tower Green, inside the Tower of London (Jane; beheading in the privacy of the Tower Green was considered a privilege of rank) and on Tower Hill¹⁸, in a public square outside the Tower of London (Guildford).

Similarly, even in Romeo and Juliet the audience is immediately informed in the Prologue, pronounced by the choir, that "the two hours' traffic of our stage" is related to "A pair of star-crossed lovers" and to "The fearful passage of their death-marked love" (they are two "doomed-to-die people"!) because of "their parents' strife". They also both died for unnatural death in a dismal place (not less dismal than the Tower of London or the adjacent public square), in a tomb.

For both pairs, then, from the beginning, it is already clear to the audience that there is a final judgment of death! In both cases, the two lovers are bound by a destiny of death that indissolubly unites them from the very beginning.

- (b) In both cases, the stories make reference to two young newlyweds, regularly conjugated (Jane and Guildford's wedding was celebrated on May 25 of 1553; Friar Laurence, referring to Romeo and Juliet, says "you shall not stay alone Till Holy Church incorporate two in one"- Act II, scene vi, 36-37¹⁹). Jane (born in October 1537 and beheaded on February 12th, 1554) had just turned 16, while Guildford (born in 1536 and beheaded on February 12th, 1554) was a little over 17 years. Juliet (as revealed by her mother and the nurse in Act I, scene iii) has not yet turned 14, while Romeo is likely to be slightly older.

- (c) *Their parents' thirst for power of is the cause of their death.*

Jane must quickly marry Guildford (on May 25th 1553), because such weddings are instrumental to the succession to the throne of Edward VI (who was of the same age as Jane), ravaged by tuberculosis; he died a month after these wedding (on July 6th 1553) and Jane was crowned Queen on July 10th, 1553, in place of Mary Tudor, in contrast with what expected by Henry VIII. Michelangelo notes that Jane says: "I deny at all that I have wanted the title and the name of Queen" (p.132). Michelangelo (see again, his work dedicated to Jane, p.32) points out: "O wretched case, from the forced consent of this holy innocent young maiden, many great evils followed", "She was ... cut off his head" (p.33). Jane had felt compelled to reluctantly obey to his parents. Initially, it seems that her marriage with Guildford "was not to be consummated yet 'because of their tender age', and for much of June, Jane and Guildford do appear to have lived apart, visiting and building up a relationship". Then they stayed together "two or three nights" after 19 June. "By the time Jane was proclaimed queen, the couple were living at Durham House and sleeping together". "From 19 July Jane and Guildford were prisoners, and by at least 22 July they had been separated"²⁰. In short, a forced marriage, but then it followed a poignant tenderness between the couple, aware of the challenge with death, in the case, not unlikely, that the machinations concocted by their parents to the detriment of Mary Tudor does not go through. In

18 See Eric Ives, op.cit., p.274. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower_Hill and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower_Green

19 Michelangelo's "cross" (related to his "act of fornication") is a recurring theme and we can often find a measure of the extent of his "regrets" in the works of the Playwright.

In The Tempest, Prospero warns Ferdinando, Miranda's fiancée, to avoid most categorically, any "extra marital" relations before celebrating the holy marriage rites. "If thou dost break her virgin-knot before/ All sanctimonious ceremonies may/ With full and holy rite be minister'd, / No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall/ To make this contract grow ..." (IV, 1, 15-17).

The whole plot of Measure for Measure is centered on a young man even sentenced to death for his act of fornication (his partner waits for a child), see our article on this website.

20 Eric Ives, Lady Jane Grey, 2009, p. 185-186.

August 1553, Jane wrote a letter to Queen Mary, to ask her forgiveness, in which “*she described herself not just as a ‘wife’ but ‘a wife who loves her husband.’*”²¹

Juliet is similarly forced to marry the next day he met Romeo, to avoid the marriage that the family intends to impose to her with Count Paris, a Prince of Verona’s relative; few hours before the dance in which Juliet knew Romeo, her mother had told her: “*Thus then in brief: The valiant Paris seeks you for his love*”(Act 1 , scene iii) . The same Juliet, who has promised to marry Romeo on the same evening that she knew him, said: “*Although I joy in thee, I have no joy of this contract tonight. It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden; Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be Ere one can say ‘It lightens’*” . The day after Romeo communicated her where and when to get married. “*And all my fortunes at thy foot I’ll lay And follow thee my lord throughout the world [this and next]*”. Their fates of death (as foreshadowed in the prologue) are united forever in eternity, like those of Jane and Guildford.

(d) *Both stories are developed in five days.*

Lady Jane Grey’s story by Michelangelo extends substantially over a period of 5 days. Jane Grey and Guildford had been sentenced to death on November 13th, 1553. It seems that “*Mary forgave Jane*”²², but the revolt of the faction opposed to the restoration of Catholicism, led by Thomas Wyatt (plotted as a result of the previously announced Mary's marriage to Philip II of Spain and Spanish Emperor of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V’s son) persuaded the Queen to give effect to the conviction. Indeed, “*Only later did rebellion make it ‘necessary for justice, duty and the quietness of the kingdom’ to put Jane to death*”²³. The “*rebels surrendered on 7 February*”²⁴ and “*five days after Wyatt’s surrender Jane and Guildford were beheaded.*”²⁵ Jane and Guildford’s final drama was consumed in those five days. Michelangelo notes that the revolt of Wyatt showed aversion of the English people against the re-introduced the “*Papal religion*”, so that “*Queen could no longer live safe, as long as Jane lived, since she [Jane] had been publicly elected Queen ... Therefore, Queen Mary, not wisely, decided Jane’s death*”(p.67). Jane's execution of death sentence, which had been suspended until that time, was then very quickly decided as soon as the rebels surrendered on 7 February. According to the story of Michelangelo (p. 68), Mary called the Benedictine John Feckenham (her confessor), ordering that “*he forthwith go to the Tower [of London].*” The crucial part of the story by Michelangelo starts from 7/ 8 February 1554 , in which Michelangelo tells us that the Catholic priest John Feckenham was sent by Mary to convince Jane to convert to Catholicism; in that case, she would have saved her life. Feckenham tells Jane her impending death, unless she converted to the Catholic religion (what Jane refuses, with many arguments) . The words addressed by Feckenham to Jane are: “*Be ready [Jane] for your death in two days*”.

Jane asked the priest one more day to be ready for death and repent of his sins and obtained two more days by Queen Mary Tudor (Jane had grown up with Mary as a sister), deeply touched, according to the story (p.72) by Michelangelo (“*The Queen was intimately touched by a right piety; she considered the young Jane’s innocence, destined to be executed without any fault, and granted Jane two more days of life, instead of just one day, as Jane had requested*”).

21 Eric Ives, Lady Jane Grey, 2009, p. 186.

22 Eric Ives, op. cit., p.19.

23 Eric Ives, op. cit., p.19

24Eric Ives, op. cit., p. 262

25 Eric Ives, op. cit., p.10, 19.

The story by Michelangelo covers five days from 7/8 February (date on which, after Wyatt's surrender, the decision was made to immediately execute the death sentence) to 12 February, the date of Jane and Guildford's execution.

Even the drama of Romeo and Juliet is concentrated in just five days. The scholars²⁶ note that "the action lasts five days. It starts on a *Sunday* in July, in the morning with the battle on the streets among Capulets and Montagues' servants. In the afternoon, a Capulets' servant delivers the invitations for a feast in the evening during which Romeo meets Juliet for the first time. After the banquets, Romeo climbs over the garden wall of Capulet's house and remains in conversation with Juliet until the dawn on *Monday*, when he goes to visit Friar Laurence. The nurse sent by Juliet meets Romeo at noon and in the afternoon of the same day the lovers are married by the friar. An hour after the wedding, Romeo kills Tybalt in a duel; the wedding is consumed that night (Monday to *Tuesday*) and at dawn Romeo, exiled, left towards Mantua. On Tuesday Capulet [Juliet's father] decides that Juliet's wedding with Paris will take place on Thursday of the same week, but later on he anticipates the wedding on Wednesday. Also on Tuesday Juliet swallows friar's potion. During the night from Tuesday to Wednesday Capulets happily prepare the wedding, but at dawn Juliet is found dead and the wedding turns into funeral. In the afternoon, Romeo is informed of Juliet's death, returns to Verona, enters the tomb and kills himself; Juliet, waking up and finding him dead at his side, does the same. On *Thursday*, the dawn causes, in the words of the Prince, a 'glooming peace. "

As the scholars pointed out, "*the race against time is one of the central themes of the play*"²⁷; both couples go at a rapid pace towards their destiny of death!

- (e) *In both plots there is a mere "diversion", which could lead to a conclusion with a happy ending.*
The Catholic priest John Feckenham (Queen Mary Tudor's confessor) was sent by Mary to convince Jane to convert to Catholicism; such conversion, according to Feckenham's words, could have saved her life (p. 68). But it is clear that the death sentence had been pronounced to prevent any "conspiracy" against Mary, by non-Catholics; and thus was possible until Jane was living. Neither this fear could have been foiled by a last hour "conversion," before Jane's execution; it seems that the real Mary's intent was to induce Jane to conversion, to save her soul. However, Jane strongly reaffirms his belief and his death is therefore, in any case, confirmed.
In Romeo and Juliet, the attempt made by Friar Laurence miserably fails because the letter that had to inform Romeo about Juliet's apparent death could not be delivered to Romeo due to an 'accident' (Act v, sc. Iii, 251) ; but it is clear that such a plan were to fail, considering that in the Prologue had been clearly stated that "the two hours' traffic of our stage" is related to "A pair of star-crossed lovers " and to "The fearful passage of their death- marked love " (they are two "doomed-to-die people"!).
- (f) *In both stories, there is a poignant request to postpone the death or separation before the death between the two spouses.*
The words uttered by the Benedictine John Feckenham to Jane are: "*Be ready, [Jane] for your death in two days*". The theme of being ready to die is a Christian crucial theme in the story by Michelangelo. The "doomed to die" Hamlet, in view of his fatal duel with Laertes and having clear premonitions of death, affirmed (see Boitani , Il Vangelo secondo Shakespeare, 2009, p. 35) that "*the readiness is all* " (Hamlet, Act V , sc. ii, 216), which is the invitation of Jesus to be "Ready" at any time of one's life, "for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come" (Luke 12 , 35-40 and Matthew , 24, 44). Again, in Measure for Measure, Isabella tells Claudius

26 See Masolino D'Amico, Scena e parola in Shakespeare, vol. 24, Roma 2007, Hoepli, p.55-56 in <https://www.google.it/search?hl=it&tbo=p&tbn=bks&q=isbn:8884983819>

27 See Agostino Lombardo, Introduzione a Romeo e Giulietta; Feltrinelli, 2012, p. XI.

(sentenced to death for an act of fornication!²⁸) the same identical words uttered to Jane by the Benedictine Feckenham: "*Be ready, Claudio, for your death Tomorrow*" (Act III, Scene i, 108). And Claudio affirms: "[I] *am prepar'd to die*" (Act III, Scene i, 4)²⁹.

Jane asks Feckenham to be able to have a little more time to "be prepared for death", "to give rejection to this natural fear of death" and to "think of my sins." "I beg you no long time, but only one more day." According to Michelangelo (p. 72), Queen Mary (to whom Jane's request had been submitted by Feckenham) "*was intimately touched by a right piety; she considered the young Jane's innocence, destined to be executed without any fault, and granted Jane two more days of life, instead of just one day, as Jane had requested*".

Juliet tries in every way to retain Romeo still for a few moments at dawn on Tuesday, at the song of the lark (and not of the nightingale as Juliet seeks to support) "messenger of the morning"; on Wednesday both lovers will die. Romeo wants to remain; even if the guards could kill him because he was banned: "I have more care to stay than will to go. Come, death and welcome! " Then Juliet convinced him to escape and he comes out of the window; Juliet says: " Then window, let day in, and let [my] life [Romeo] out " (act III, Scene V). In fact, Juliet never again saw Romeo alive and Romeo saw Juliet only in a state of apparent death. Juliet, on Tuesday, had been fallen in a very death-like sleep and wake up on Wednesdays only for few moments before she killed herself after having seen Romeo's lifeless body.

(g) *References to the life beyond death are in both works.*

Jane, in Michelangelo's recount (p. 65), thinks: "I don't want to live long in this life, which is full of contrasts, of idolatries, tyranny and murder of innocents. I leave my mortal body to go to heaven to live with Jesus Christ ... I lose the dying mortal body, more fragile than glass, but I do not lose my life; I will leave the world and find eternal glory in heaven".

28 We have clarified (see my article "Michelangelo Florio e Misura per Misura " in this website) that in no civil legal system those who (free of wedlock) consensually fornicate before marriage are punished with death; from a religious point of view, the act of fornication is a " mortal sin ", which is the cause of eternal damnation of the soul, in the absence of divine forgiveness. This is what Michelangelo feared, approaching the divine judgment on his life!

Going back to Lady Grey , the theme of " readiness " is blatantly central in the letter (published by Michelangelo on p. 117 of his book) that Jane wrote from the Tower of London to his sister Catherine on February 10th , 1554 (two days before her execution) (the date of the letter is shown on p. 120 of the book) . Jane warns her sister that death can take even the young women and invites to always be prepared for death: "She despises the delights of the world, escapes the pitfalls and snares of Satan, and dodge the enticements of the flesh ", "*Pray with Paul, of leaving the prison of this body, to go to die with Christ, since following him death itself shows the life. "Follow in the footsteps of the good servant of the Gospel, and be at midnight awake, so that death, when it will come, as a thief in the night, will not find you sleeping like the bad servant."* "*Take care not to miss the oil, like the foolish women, so that you will not be locked out, or thrown out as the one who came to the banquet, without the wedding garment "*."I am quite certain that instead of the loss of this deciduous and mortal life, I will receive that life that in no way you can lose." (p. 118 -119). As already mentioned, it is the invitation of Jesus to be found " ready " at any time of life, ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect " , " Watch therefore: for you know neither the day nor the time "(Luke 12 , 35-40 and Matthew, 24 , 44 , 25 , 1-13) .

29 In the work by Michelangelo dedicated to Jane Grey, there is a clear reference to the Gospel passage that is the basis of the title of Measure for Measure. In fact, when on July 19 Mary was declared Queen, the counselors left Jane, the deposed queen. Michelangelo reports that (as he was told by James Haddon, one Jane's tutors and John Dudley's chaplain), Jane called out such counselors "men with two faces," saying: "But you are, you are just to be sure that *with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*. Michelangelo adds,"and here for a long time [Jane] was silent and those left and bushed with blame ... ", leaving Jane under the supervision of Mary's guards (p. 59 the work of Michelangelo). The title of the play Measure for Measure is taken up by a comparison contained in the Gospel of Matthew (7, 1-5): "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and *with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+7%3A1-5&version=KJV>).

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Friar Lawrence "celebrates Juliet's ascension into heaven"³⁰ (the "funeral" of the young, who was simply sleeping by narcotic), with religious accents that "enrich the work more than it has been already noted"³¹. "Heaven and yourself had part in this fair maid. Now heaven hath all, and all the better is it for the maid. Your part in her you could not keep from death, but heaven keeps his part in eternal life" (Act IV, scene v, 66-70).

- (h) *Both works make reference to the "flower" of youth, which is put to death.*

According to Michelangelo's story (p. 71), Jane states: "I am still under eighteen, which is the *flower* of female age. My body is whole, with all its limbs that are proportionate and sane".

Juliet's father states: "Death lies on her like an untimely frost upon the sweetest *flower* of all the field" (Act IV, scene v, 27-28).

- (i) *Both works make reference to the exile.*

Michelangelo (p. 42) speaks of the persecution of non-Catholics under the reign of Catholic Mary. Someone "had been forced to convert to Catholicism"; the alternatives were "losing one's life", or the exile ("losing ... home" – p. 42). "The true Christian religion, the doctrine of Christ and Christ himself were banned; and England that [under Edward VI] hosted for many years the believers coming from every country, persecuted by the tyranny of Antichrist [the Catholic Inquisition], not only ordered their exile [a royal edict in February 1554 banned foreigners within 24 days – Yates, p. 13], but also such believers' really atrocious deaths and their blood flowed on the streets" (p. 33). Michelangelo then speaks of "us, called evangelicals" (i.e. like Michelangelo and Jane, believers in the truth of the Gospel and not in the authority of the Pope), by Maria "persecuted, imprisoned, shamed, and what is worse, burned as wicked heretics" (p. 78).

Romeo, banned from Verona, claims: "Hence banishèd is banished from the world, and world's exile is death. Then 'banishèd' is death mistermèd. Calling death 'banishèd', thou cuttest my head off with a golden axe and smilest upon the stroke that murders me" (Act III, scene iii, 19-23). "For exile hath more terror in his look, much more than death" (13-14). Romeo finally tells Friar Laurence (who rationally argues that exile is better than death): "*Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel*" (64).

I personally think that emotions and feelings of an exiled, the fear of what can happen, and the sense of uncertainty are deeply autobiographical Michelangelo's sensations. Suffice it to read the letter that Michelangelo wrote in Latin to Cecil in January/February 1552 (still readable in the Memorial of Thomas Cranmer – v. Yates, p. 5, note 6). Michelangelo had made a woman pregnant, perhaps of his parish (an Italian refugee according to Aubrey-Yates, p. 13) in 1552 and, because of his "act of fornication"³² his patron, Sir William Cecil, threw him out of his house, he dismissed from his Ministry in the Italian church in London and wanted to banish him from England ("Cecil had intended to inflict 'some severe punishment upon him; which seemed to be the banishment out of the nation' ..." – see Yates, p.6). Michelangelo wrote a letter in Latin to Cecil, a "skilfully argued letter", in which (Yates, p. 6) "Florio implores forgiveness for some serious moral lapse of which he has been guilty and which has caused Cecil to withdraw all his favor from him. He cites examples from the Old Testament of Sinners whom God forgave and entreats Cecil's mercy, for *if he is forced to fly the kingdom he will be obliged either to offer his flesh and blood to the enemies of the Gospel or to deny the truth of it.*" Also in his work on Jane

30 See Agostino Lombardo, *Introduzione a Romeo e Giulietta*; Feltrinelli, 2012, p. VIII.

31 See Agostino Lombardo, *Introduzione a Romeo e Giulietta*; Feltrinelli, 2012, p. VIII.

32 According to Yates (p.5), "perhaps Michelangelo's sufferings in Italy [he endured for twenty-seven months in Rome, as dead sentenced by the Inquisition for heresy in the papal prison of Tor di Nona] had disturbed his balance"; "Florio's moral failure at this point in his career was perhaps connected with his spiritual instability" (p. 6).

Grey's life and death, Michelangelo confirms that death (or a forced conversion) was the alternative possibility to exile, following the reintroduction of Catholicism by Maria.

As above mentioned, Michelangelo (see Yates, p.10-11) "attached as he was to the Grey household, was in a position to watch these developments, and there is evidence to show that he identified himself with the Dudleys. If the duke's plan had succeeded, Michael Angelo's fortune would have been made and he would not have had to set forth on his wanderings again".

Michelangelo, following Jane's beheading, was forced to exile, leaving London on March 4, 1554 (as he told in his biography, the Apology on p. 78 – see Yates, p. 13). Michelangelo had (similar to Romeo) expressed its terror to exile when Cecil had threatened to banish him from England: the exile was very similar for him to death. Michelangelo, as he said in his mentioned letter to Cecil would "*be obliged either to offer his flesh and blood to the enemies of the Gospel or to deny the truth of it*".

Michelangelo, escaped (in May 1550) the death penalty of the Roman Inquisition, risked, in February 1552, to fall back into Inquisitors' hands, outside of England, and then losing his life or renouncing his faith. *On that occasion, Cecil was struck by Michelangelo's desperate letter and retreated from the severe punishment of banishing him from the country* (Yates, p. 6). The echoes of this desperate letter appear to be clear in Romeo's words on the exile as death; *certain feelings, whether not personally experienced, cannot be understood: "Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel"* (Romeo tells Friar Laurence). The spectre of Inquisition comes back when Mary banned all the foreigners who were not Catholics and who had taken refuge (as Michelangelo) under the reign of King Edward VI, who had offered asylum to the pilgrims of every nation, persecuted (as Michelangelo) "from the tyranny of Antichristo" (i.e. from the Roman Inquisition).

(j) *In both cases, the two couples are innocent and sacrificial victims of their parents' strife and machination.*

With respect to Jane, Michelangelo, dejected, wonders: "*Jane was an innocent girl; what was her fault? No fault at all*" (p.31). Her husband too "was the simplicity and purity" in person (p.38); later Michelangelo also reaffirms that "her husband, Lord Guildford Dudley, for its purity and simplicity had no fault in the conspiracy made against Queen Mary" (p.74). According to Michelangelo (p.31) it was not correct that, as a consequence of Duke of Northumberland's plans "Jane Grey, a poor girl, lost her life" without any fault and her young husband too. As Ives points out (op.cit.,p. 19), Jane is a victim of the "*battle between Catholic and Protestant* ", so that the scholar John Foxe (in his "Acts and Monuments , [the Book of Martyrs]") stated that "Jane was a martyr and that she and Guildford were *innocents, victims of Rome*"; just like, as we point out, Michelangelo had been unjustly tortured in the papal prison Tor di Nona in Rome for 27 months because of his faith and since he had preached the " true religion " (as Michelangelo told to Jane, during a lesson of Italian, according to what he wrote in his work on Lady Jane Grey's life - p.27 -28), and Michelangelo himself was a *victim of Rome*. Michelangelo had endured the " scorns " (the " sufferings ") of the Tor di Nona prison , awaiting for death (p. 28) , as well as Jane suffered the " scorns " (the " sufferings ") of her imprisonment, in view of being beheaded in the Tower of London (p. 62) , as well as the Anglican martyrs Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer suffered the "scorns" (the " sufferings ") waiting to be burned alive (p.8). The same word "scorns" still occurs in Hamlet's soliloquy, where also Hamlet is a "doomed to die person", in view of the fatal duel with Laertes (see my article on the genesis of this monologue on this site). "Scorns" is an unusual word, which Michelangelo used three times in Italian ("scorni") in his work concerning Lady Jane Grey's life (in the meaning of the extreme " sufferings " of a doomed to die person); as

we said before, also the Playwright used in English ("scorns") with respect of the doomed to die Hamlet, in his famous soliloquy, before the fatal duel with Laertes³³.

Juliet's father, at the end of the play *Romeo and Juliet*, says: "*Poor sacrifices of our enmity!*"

- (k) *The two young couples die for a violent death; the groom a few minutes before the bride. The bride, then, before her death, is subjected to the atrocious fate to see her husband's lifeless body, before reaching him in the afterlife - The fundamental role of the "window" (from which Jane sees her husband's lifeless body and Juliet experienced the same) in the two works.*

According to Michelangelo's story, Guildford Dudley, Jane's husband (from 25 May 1553) was beheaded on the same morning that Jane herself was beheaded (February 12, 1554).

We report below, the touching and poignant pages 74-76 of the Italian work by Michelangelo (translated into English; the original Italian text may be read in my Italian article in this website), a passage that is not inferior, for drama and emotion, than some passages of the English play *Romeo and Juliet* by the Playwright.

"This young innocent [Jane] had to die in the Tower of London [on Tower Green reserved for persons of rank], while her husband had to die in the public square, out of the Tower [on Tower Hill], where the death sentences of the other gentlemen took place. The persons responsible of this tragedy ordered that on February 12th 1554 morning her husband, Lord Guildford Dudley, had to be firstly beheaded; Guildford for its purity and simplicity had no fault in the conspiracy made against Queen Mary. So it happened. After having beheaded Guildford, they put his bust (with the shirt) and his head on a hurdle, without even cover them with a blanket, and brought him in the Tower of London to bury it. What consequently happened is crueller than the same word 'cruelty'. They deliberately ordered that the hurdle with this bust had to be stopped just below the window of the room where Jane was praying, since she too was suddenly expecting to leave her mortal body. It seemed to Jane (as she often told to her bridesmaids) to have spent thousand years pending between this and next world, in view of enjoying eternal treasures in heaven, which she already had seen with the eye of her faith, hoping to be among the elects. Jane heard the noise of the rumbling wheels of the hurdle next to the wall of his room and heard that the hurdle stopped below the window of his room; Jane said that she wanted to see the hurdle. Her bridesmaids, who knew that it was the hurdle with Guildford's lifeless body, warmly invited her not to look, but they failed in their attempt. Jane came up to the window and saw her husband's body with his cut off head. Without becoming frightened and mourning (becoming aware that she too would soon be beheaded), said: O Guildford, Guilford, I do not want and I cannot deny that the foretaste [the death] – you have already tasted and I will very soon taste as well – is so bitter that it makes my weak flesh tremble and suffer. But this foretaste and the bitterness of death (which seems to me that for a thousand years I have been suffering) are nothing compared to the sweetness of the noble and excellent feast and banquet that you and I will forever enjoy together and partake of in heaven; rest in peace!"(p.76)

In this really touching tale, Michelangelo magisterially describes a really happened event, "crueller than the cruelty itself"; the hurdle with Guildford's beheaded body was deliberately stopped under the window where Jane was praying in his room in the Tower of London, waiting for her death. In this way she takes dramatic awareness of what is going to happen to her in a few minutes. It is a horrifying scene that is carved in the mind of any reader, and first, of whom who wrote this really dramatic passage. Jane's love towards Guildford is shown by her sweetly twice repeating her husband's name through the window. Jane, when seeing her beloved's lifeless body,

33 The thesis introduced in the article *The genesis of Hamlet's soliloquy* (on this website) about the fact that the meditation of Playwright about his 'philosophy of being' was born during the captivity in Tor di Nona, for 27 months, of Michelangelo (sentenced to death for heresy and awaiting for execution), is shared by Roman-Bellini, *Il segreto di Shakespeare, Chi ha scritto i suoi capolavori*, Mondadori, 2012, p.101, as well as by Vito Costantini, *Shakespeare è italiano*, Youcanprint 2013, p. 52-53.

below her window, twice implores from the window of her room, in a poignant way, her beloved's name: "o Guildford, Guildford" (page 76 of Michelangelo's work). It can be said that Jane's love for Guildford manifests itself in this really touching scene where Jane is at the window and Guildford's beheaded body under the window. This shot of Jane at the window and Guildford (beheaded in a "hurdle" coming back from the scaffold) under the window is so horrifying, that it indelibly remains in the mind of every reader of Michelangelo's story. He himself had to be struck in first person, in telling this scene. Love and death and a window as a screen between the two married lovers; this seems to be the content and the visual message that emerge from this description.

As for Romeo and Juliet, it is well known that when you think about this play, you identify it with Juliet's window (the balcony is a scenic element that is not mentioned by the Playwright). The whole play is centered on this window. In Act II, Scene ii, Juliet appears at the window of her room. The window is thus introduced by the Playwright in Romeo's words, after that he penetrated, on Sunday evening after the dance, in Capulets' garden - he had climbed over the boundary walls ("For stony limits cannot hold love out")-: " *What light through yonder window breaks? Is the East, and Juliet is the sun!*"

Juliet does not know that Romeo is under the window; she has been told by her nurse that Romeo is a Montague. She already foreshadows the fatal misfortunes of a love so "impossible" and opposed by her parents and pained whispers: "O Romeo, Romeo!" (Act II, Scene ii, 33-34), inviting him to disown his father and his name. Juliet pronounces the same heartfelt and tender words that Jane whispered at her window seeing Guildford's body under the window: "O Guildford, Guildford!"

The scene is the same: Jane and Juliet from the top of their windows repeat the name of their lovers, who are under the window: Guildford already dead, Romeo still alive, but "doomed to die" just like Juliet, as the choir has already warned in the Prologue.

Romeo and Juliet that night, talking each other through the window, promise perpetual mutual love. Juliet is called by the nurse and then come back to the window:

"Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed. If that thy bent of love be honourable, Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow, By one that I'll procure to come to thee, Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite, And *all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay And follow thee my lord throughout the world [this and next].*"

Juliet has indissolubly linked her fate to Romeo: she will follow him anywhere in this and next world. Juliet retires, but then she reappears again at the window: "What o'clock tomorrow Shall I send to thee?" "By the hour of nine" is Romeo's answer. Romeo and Juliet still exchange sweet phrases. *A love spoken through a window! Juliet from the top of her window and Romeo down.* This is what the audience of the drama Romeo and Juliet remembers, as a carved vision. The window reappears in Act III, scene v. Romeo and Juliet were married on Monday and they had spent together the only night of love that will be granted to them, between Monday and Tuesday (the Playwright nothing says about this night, and he limits to describing Juliet's expectations, on Monday evening: "And bring in cloudy night immediately. Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night, That runaway's eyes may wink, and Romeo Leap to these arms untalked of and unseen"- Act III, scene ii, 5-7). Even Jane and Guildford had spent their first nights together in late June 1553 and had slept together during Jane's brief reign (few days !) Jane had been declared Queen on July 10 and had been deposed on July 19 ; then they were imprisoned in the Tower of London. It seems that Jane did not want to bid Guildford farewell the day before the execution; according to Ives (op.cit., p. 274), this does not reveal "an ice maiden", "More probably it reveals the struggle Jane was having to retain her own focus".

Coming back to Romeo and Juliet, on Tuesday morning (after a night spent together, which says nothing about the Playwright) they appear, this time together, at the window. Juliet tries to

postpone Romeo's departure by saying her famous sentence: "Believe me, love, it was the nightingale" singing and not the lark, the herald of the day. "Therefore stay yet. Thou needest not to be gone" (Act III, scene v, 16). Then the nurse enters to warn that Juliet's mother is coming. And Juliet says: "window, let day in, and left [my] life [Romeo] out "; Romeo leaves out of the window, and with him even Juliet's life leaves out! The two spouses did not see each other alive ever again: on Wednesday Romeo saw Juliet apparently dead in the tomb, and so he killed himself by means of a poison; even Juliet killed herself when she discovered Romeo's lifeless body. *Their fates of death are inseparable.*

The drama continues: Romeo says his farewells to Juliet before going down and leaving the window: "Farewell, farewell! One kiss, and I'll descend". Romeo goes down.

At this point, the Playwright introduces the exact same scene as told by Michelangelo in his work on Jane's life and death. It is just the same memorable and horrifying scene that Michelangelo had described in his work on Lady Jane Grey's life and death.

Suddenly, Juliet saw Romeo under the window and had a terrible presentiment:

"O God, I have an ill-divining soul! Methinks I see thee, now thou art so low, As one dead in the bottom of a tomb".

Here the Playwright substantially replicated the same chilling Jane's vision, from her window, when she saw below the lifeless Guildford (beheaded), in the hurdle within the Tower of London. Juliet's feeling is identical; Romeo is not dead yet, and then the stratagem used by the Playwright is a presentiment, a strong presentiment of death on the part of Juliet.

Even the hurdle on which Guildford's body lies, coming back from the scaffold, had deeply impressed Michelangelo, as well as the readers of Michelangelo's story on Lady Jane Grey 's life and death.

Even the Playwright introduces the "hurdle" in Romeo and Juliet's plot, when Juliet's father forcedly imposed (on Tuesday) his decision about Juliet's wedding with Paris: "But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next To go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church [to marry him], Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither" (Act III, Scene 5). *The English word " hurdle " is just the cart on which the condemned were brought to the scaffold. In short, Juliet's parents are ready to sacrifice their daughter on a scaffold, just like Jane's parents!*

- (l) *Gruesome details are related to Lady Jane Grey's execution, as reported by Michelangelo; similarly, Juliet's last moments of life are harrowing. In both works, the following wives' bloodcurdling scream before their death is reported, being both wives groping in the dark: "Where is that? Where is that? [The question is referred by Jane with respect of the block on the scaffold and by Juliet with respect of Romeo, that she expected to find close to her, when she woke up from his apparent death ³⁴] "*

Jane claims to have broken the law by accepting the crown of England, though he never wanted to become Queen (p.132). Then she recites Psalm 51 on repentance and God's mercy (p.133). "Now Jane was going to be blindfolded, when the executioner knelt in front of her and asked her forgiveness. She most willingly gave her forgiveness [the condemned used to forgive the executioner for his mournful office]. Then the executioner told her to stop on the straw that was on the platform; at this moment, she accidentally saw the block. She asked: "Is this perhaps the block?" And the executioner answered: " Yes, it is". She said: "I pray you, dispatch me quickly." At the same time, she knelt and asked: "Will you cut off my head before I lay me down [with the

34 It is worth noting that Michelangelo, in his Italian work on Lady Jane Grey (p.134), recounts that Lady Jane Grey asked: "Dove è egli? Dove è egli?", "Where is that? Where is that?" [referring to the block that Jane, who had been blindfolded, did not find] In old Italian, the pronoun "egli" could be referred both to a thing [the block that Jane did not find] and to a person [Romeo, that Juliet, groping in the dark of the tomb, did not find close to her, when she woke up from her apparent death].

head on the block]?³⁵ [Ives, op.cit., p.277, points out the desperation of this question, "anxiously" asked by Jane] The executioner answered: "No, madam." Then Jane, who had been blindfolded, groping in the dark [Ives, p.277, specifies "with darkness panic"], asked: "Where is the block? What shall I do? *Where is that? Where is that* [the block]?" Then a bystander guided Jane to the block. She laid down with her body and arms [and with her head on the block]. She said: "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Take mercy on me." After that she said this, the executioner cut off her neck. And this was the end of so pitiful and lamentable tragedy" (Michelangelo, p.134).

This scene represents the most dramatic moment before death. No one spontaneously would put his finger or his hand on a block to have it cut (as it was custom in ancient times for thieves); all the more reason, no one would put his head on a block, once he knew by the Executioner that, as soon as his head is on the block, the deadly blow will occur. Finding the block (and putting the head on it) means finding death!

As for Jane, Michelangelo had captured that "universal moment" when every man presages now very close his death (before death every man is alone!); every one *sudden feels his solitude and literally 'gropes in the dark'*. That irresistible motion caught even Christ, when He asked His Father: "Father, if You are willing, take this cup from me" (Gospel of Luke - 22,42). The primordial instinct of self-preservation and the anguish of any creature facing imminent death led Jane to avoid that block, which, as she had learned from the Executioner, means death for her. The bystanders who were watching the execution were anguished, suffered and "froze" (as Ives rightly points out, op.cit. , p.277); they were powerless at this Jane's natural moment of refusal of the horror of death, with respect of *Jane's pitiful, perhaps even unaware, attempt of gaining some more moments of life*. Then, at the end of this long and endless moment, Jane was firmly guided by a bystander to her 'bitter cup', to the block. The very famous painting by the French painter Paul Delaroche (first shown in Paris in 1834) portrays "the most poignant moment in the execution when Jane had to be helped to find the block".³⁶

A substantially identical scene is described by the Playwright for Juliet. She drank on Tuesday night the potion she had received from Friar Laurence and which had caused her apparent death. Romeo should have been close to her, when she woke up; but the strong and vivid premonition she had of Romeo dead in a tomb (which she had seemed to see from her window, just like Jane had seen Guildford's lifeless body) can only give her a kind of inner certainty on a dramatic and mournful end. Although Romeo's body (and even Paris's body) lies dead on Juliet's "bosom" (Act V, scene iii, 155), Juliet does not seem to realize (or does not want to realize) anything. Juliet woke up and, with her eyes (we can imagine) 'groping' in the darkness of the tomb, just like those of Jane (who had been blindfolded on the scaffold), gave (similarly to Jane) her desperate scream: "*Where is my lord? ... Where is my Romeo?*" [She was desperately hoping to find him, but she did not see him]. Jane, according to Michelangelo's recount, had similarly shouted: "*Where is it [the block]? Where is it [the block]?*"

Even in this case, it creates, in the watching audience, the same state of mind of those who were present at Jane's execution. The audience sees Romeo's lifeless body in Juliet's "bosom" (Act V, Scene iii, 155), such as the bystanders at Jane's execution saw where the block was. Even in this

35 Probably the very sensitive Jane had been deeply touched by the recounts that she heard by his grandfather Charles Brandon, who was one of the witnesses when Anne Boleyn's execution took place (just in the year before Jane's birth) in the same Tower Green, where Jane herself was executed. It is of common knowledge (see http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Bolena and bibliographic references cited therein) that the executioner had killed Anne with a sword (and not with an ax, as it happened for Jane) and had beheaded Anne, *catching her by surprise, in a moment when Anne could not expect the stroke*; Anne held her back straight and her head in the right position to be beheaded with a single stroke. Evidently *Jane wanted to know when the fatal stroke was coming and did not want it to arrive at an unexpected moment, by surprise, as it had been the unusual case of Anne Boleyn's execution!*

36 Eric Ives, op.cit., p. 278.

case, the spectators participate with heart-breaking, suffering and powerlessness, “frozen” for Juliet’s desperate hope of finding alive her Romeo. *No one in the audience would dare to take away from Juliet these long moments of desperate hope*; the discovery of Romeo’s lifeless body has for Juliet the same meaning of finding the block that Jane wanted to avoid. Indeed, just like finding the block means death for Jane, also finding Romeo’s lifeless body means death for Juliet herself, who promised to follow Romeo wherever in this and next world, being their fates indissolubly bound. In short, *finding Romeo’s lifeless body even means Juliet’s death, it is equivalent to finding the block for Jane!*

Finally, after this really painful, infinite moment (during which time seems to be extended), it is up to Friar Laurence the thankless task of firmly guiding Juliet to her block! “*Thy husband in thy bosom lies dead; and Paris too*” (Act V, Scene iii, 155-156).

- (m) *As above noted, the wives (Jane and Juliet), before dying are subjected to the atrocious fate to see their husbands’ lifeless bodies, just few moments before reaching their husbands in the afterlife. They oppose the bitterness of their husbands’ death to the sweetness of dying together.*

Jane, according to Michelangelo’s recount, saw, from the top of her window Guildford’s beheaded body and “(becoming aware that she too would be soon beheaded)” said: “O Guildford, Guildford, I do not want and I cannot deny that the foretaste [the death] – you have already tasted and I will very soon taste as well – is so bitter that it makes my weak flesh tremble and suffer. But this foretaste and the bitterness of death (which seems to me that for a thousand years I have been suffering) are nothing compared to the noble and excellent feast and banquet that you and I will forever enjoy together and partake of in heaven; rest in peace!” (p.76).

In Romeo and Juliet, Juliet says: “What’s here? A cup, closed in my true love’s hand? Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end; oh churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop, To help me after? I will kiss thy lips. Haply some poison yet doth hang on them, To make me die with a restorative. [She kisses him] Thy lips are warm” (Act V, Scene iii, 161-168).

In both cases, death is a bitter potion (a bitter poison, in Romeo and Juliet), but there is also the sweetness of *jointly* “dining and drinking” the bitter cup, in view of sharing the feasts of a common fate in the afterlife:

- (i) Jane, telling to Guildford’s lifeless body, “cannot deny that” his death, “the foretaste – you have already tasted and I will very soon taste as well – is so *bitter* that it makes my weak flesh tremble and suffer.” However, Jane is also reaching out to the sweetness of the heaven (as opposed to the *bitterness of death*) and “the bitterness of death (which seems to me that for a thousand years I have been suffering) are nothing compared to the *sweetness* of the noble and excellent feast and banquet that you and I will forever enjoy together and partake of in heaven”; she compares, by contrast, her imminent death and the “bitter foretaste” (Guildford had already tested) with the *sweetness of enjoying in the Heaven forever a common dinner with Guildford after death*. Prof. Ives (op.cit., p.275) notes that it is possible that Jane made reference to “the bitterness of death” (after having said “Oh Guildford, Guildford”), but he does not consider likely at all that she pronounced the “*contrived conceit which Florio reported about the executions [of Guildford and Jane] being the [bitter] antipasto [foretaste] to the [sweet] heavenly banquet*”. In short, Prof. Ives rightly believes that this conceit would not certainly have been pronounced by Jane, *but that it should have rather been the result of Michelangelo’s creative sensitivity: it should have been an image created by Michelangelo’s mind to describe what Michelangelo imagined that Jane had felt when she saw her lifeless beloved husband, just few moments before her own death.*

- (ii) Similarly Juliet, making reference to her husband’s “timeless end” says that she wants to share with her husband the *bitter foretaste* he already enjoyed, the *bitter poison*; she tries to suck a few drops of such bitter poison kissing Romeo’s lips, “Haply some poison yet doth hang on

them, To make me die with a [sweet] restorative". Both the wives (Jane and Juliet) make reference to the "bitter" taste of death and the "sweetness" to share a drink or dinner with their husbands, leaned toward the afterlife.

The two passages contain the same contents, the same emotions, the contrast between the bitterness of death and the sweetness to die together and find forever indissolubly in the afterlife with their beloved husbands. Such emotions were described by Michelangelo in a manuscript that was unpublished until 1607! Only Michelangelo could remember them in his mind and replicate them in English with the help of his son John, the most talented translator of the time!

(n) *In both works is described in the "noise" of imminent, upcoming death.*

There is also a further small (but not insignificant) detail that had to be remained particularly impressed in Michelangelo's mind and soul. After Guildford's death, just before Jane's execution (as a sort of caesura-connection between the two deaths) there is the horrible "noise" of the "rumbling wheels" of the hurdle (p. 76 of Michelangelo's work) where Guildford's body lay; *that noise was also the terrible announcement that Jane's death was now very close*. Michelangelo pointed out that when Jane saw Guildford's beheaded body of on the hurdle, "she became aware that she too would soon be beheaded". *It was the noise of imminent death; now it was Jane's turn to go to the block and die.*

Even in Romeo and Juliet, the Playwright tells us the details of Juliet's death.

Friar Lawrence had tried to convince Juliet to leave the tomb and to follow him. The Friar had heard some "noise". "I hear some noise ... the Watch is coming. Come, go, good Juliet. I dare no longer stay". "Go, get thee hence, for I will not away", Juliet answered and the friar had moved away from the tomb, frightened by the noise of Prince's Watch coming into the tomb. Even in this passage, Playwright makes reference to this "noise" (Prince's Watch coming into the tomb) to announce the heroine's death, who cries: "Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger! [She snatches Romeo's dagger] *This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die* [She stabs herself and falls]". That noise of supervening death means that Juliet will immediately reach her husband in the afterlife for not breaking her unbreakable promise of eternal love beyond the barrier of the world; otherwise the Watch would prevent her from keeping her promise. Here, the noise of upcoming death is the sound of a death that Juliet must give to herself alone and that does not concretely come from third parties, but by an irresistible destiny she cannot avoid to follow her beloved husband. Even Juliet, just like Jane, dies by means of a blade, not of an ax, but of a dagger.

In our view, *the "noise" of upcoming death* is also an *autobiographical element* of Michelangelo's life; during his Roman imprisonment in Tor di Nona, he had often heard the sound of footsteps echoing in the dungeons of the guards who came to take a death sentenced prisoner to lead him to the scaffold. Juliet heard such noise of echoing footsteps of Prince's Watch coming into the tomb (announcing imminent execution, although this time the executioner and the victim will coincide); such noise is the horrible sound of "the rumbling wheels" of the hurdle showing Guildford's beheaded body and announcing Jane's imminent death.

The lifeless Guildford's body represents the symbol of an imposed marriage, but also of Jane's finally dearly loved husband (by a "wife who loves her husband") even in a most likely perspective of a common fate of death. In my opinion, this could be one of the reasons why the Playwright (changing Brooke's text) shows even the dead Paris (the symbol of a marriage that Juliet's parents would have imposed her) in Juliet's bosom together with Romeo, Juliet's lover and tender husband. Both Romeo and Paris coexist in Guildford's lifeless body and the Playwright seems to want to give a further clue to reconnect Romeo and Juliet's story to Jane and Guildford's real historical vicissitudes.

- (o) *In both works, the dramatic story of the two spouses is part of a context of social conflicts; but there is something providential in the two stories, since young people's innocent deaths will not be in vain. Their deaths will help to pacify the conflicts and ensure a new pacified age.*

Michelangelo tells Jane and Guildford's story, which is part of a crucial moment of transition in the history of England, the so-called "crisis of 1553" (the year in which three kings took turns on the throne of England: Edward VI, Jane Grey and Mary I - Ives, p.7 ff.). Michelangelo's recount on Jane Grey, according to scholars (Wyatt , *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.298 , footnote 139) , " deserves some place in the history of sources about this short-lived but significant crisis in the history of the Tudor monarchy . "

After the death sentences of Catholic believers (by Henry VIII), most notably that of Thomas More, John Dudley's attempt aims not only to make King his own son Guildford, but also to prevent foreseeable massacres of Anglicans under Catholic Mary Tudor's reign. These massacres and deaths (including the deaths sentences towards Jane and Guildford and the three martyrs of Oxford, the Anglican bishops Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer) convinced an entire nation that the religious peace was needed. Anglicanism, thanks to such martyrs' deaths (firstly including Jane Grey's death, Queen of England), became part of English soul. The Anglican choice was not just a mere expedient to justify Henry VIII's marriage with Anne Boleyn but had been a turning point towards a closer proximity to the Gospel (often contradicted by Roman Popes' behavior), as well as a way to liberate the nascent British colonial power from the constraints of Roman Popes' powers. The Englishmen, thanks also to Jane and Guildford's martyrdom, understood the importance of a religious peace that took place under Elizabeth I Tudor's kingdom and that would open a period of great prosperity, the Elizabethan Age, during which Shakespeare's plays could flourish. A new era, that allowed, through the work of the Playwright, the spread around the world via the nascent British colonial empire, of his message of love. Queen Jane's story and martyrdom was the basis for the pacification of the new era for the world.

Even in *Romeo and Juliet*, the deaths of these two noble young people are caused by the discord between the factions of a community, Verona. According to the Playwright's drama, Juliet's father says: Romeo shall lie by his lady, "Poor sacrifices of our enmity!" (Act V, scene iii, 302-303). However, their tragic end brought with it in Verona a "glooming peace" (glooming for the tragic events!), as the Prince solemnly declares in the last stanza of the work. Thursday dawn brought with it such new peace in Verona.

In both cases, the story of the two young people is part of a wider collective context. Their vicissitudes are caused by disagreements between the factions and their tragic end, their dramatic love forever changes the world before torn by discord.

All of this is emphasized in *Romeo and Juliet* by Chorus's words in the Prologue and by Prince's words at the end of the drama.

This is not merely a private story between two young people, but a dramatic event caused by the discord of a community and the tragic love story has the beneficial effect of composing this collective disagreement and open up a new era of peace: that is the dawn in a peaceful Verona, and the splendor of the Elizabethan age due to the religious pacification.

- (p) *Finally, the last words of both works are dedicated to the personal story of these two couples, after having stressed the pacifying effect of an entire community.*

Michelangelo defines Lady Jane Grey's story: "so miserable and lamentable tragedy" (p. 134 of Michelangelo's work).

The Playwright, similarly states that: "never was a story of more woe Than this of Juliet and her Romeo"(Act V , Scene iii, 309-310) .

"Romeo and Juliet can finally be together but only in the crypt, with their love frozen for eternity in golden statues that their executioners will raise to remember them."³⁷

Jane and Guildford will be buried together in the Chapel Royal St. Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London³⁸.

It is necessary to briefly focus on the last two lines that close the drama: "*For never was a story of more woe Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.*"

In these two lines, which sealed the end of the play, *the Playwright reverses the "misleading" priority order of the names of the two main characters*, which, in the title (merely copied from the work of Brooke) is in favor of Romeo .

Here, in the last two lines of the play, the Playwright wants to specifically and definitively clarify that the story he told is *the " story ... of Juliet and her Romeo "* , just like Michelangelo had already narrated in Italian *the story of Jane and her Guildford's life and death*.

The Playwright intends to provide valuable information, which aims to connect Juliet's drama with Jane's drama!

The Playwright even knows (on the basis of Giordano Bruno's mnemotechnics) that the audience will especially remember the penultimate line ("*For never was a story of more woe*") that touches deeply it into the emotions, while the valuable information contained in the last line, in combination with the penultimate line (*the "story ... of Juliet and her Romeo "*), will almost go unnoticed!

Two real "high-wire acrobats of language"³⁹, such as Michelangelo and John Florio, wanted to leave, in the last final line of the play, a very important message: the story that the Playwright told was the *story of Juliet and her Romeo* ! The story was *not* (as in the title, at the beginning of the play), *the story of Romeo and Juliet*.

It is a nuance seemingly insignificant, but not for two "high-wire acrobats of language" such as Michelangelo and John; for them, each word has a precise and fundamental meaning!

To conclude on this point, we can summarize as follows the terms of the issue: (i) the discrepancy between the title and the last line of the play cannot be considered "fortuitous", since the two Florios (as well as the Playwright) were always careful on the meaning of every word they wrote; (ii) such a "discrepancy" is objective evidence of the "camouflage" of the work of the Playwright which will be further discussed later (you could not openly write, under Elizabeth I Tudor's reign, a work dedicated to celebrating a Queen, Jane, who had declared Elizabeth as Henry VIII's illegitimate daughter); indeed, the title "Romeo and Juliet " (merely taken from the work of Brooke) produced a further effect of "camouflage" , making it even more difficult to reconnect the story of this couple (in which, according to the title, Romeo seems to have a primary role) to the Queen Jane Grey and her husband Guildford's vicissitudes; (iii) in accordance with the general principles of legal interpretation of a document (and Michelangelo had undoubted legal competences, since he " acted as a notary public in Soglio " - Yates, p.25), in case of "inconsistency" between the title of a document and the contents of the document, the contents of the document take precedence and prevail, since the title fulfills the function of a mere approximate indication; (iv) this means that the Playwright specially wanted to leave a clarification (for a careful - and free from the emotions provoked by the penultimate verse - reader) about his real intention to dedicate the drama to celebrate a heroine, Juliet, just like Michelangelo had dedicated his work in Italian language to celebrate a heroine, Jane Grey!

37 Perosa, op.cit., p.vii-viii.

38 See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter_ad_Vincula_\(London\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter_ad_Vincula_(London))

39 See Tassinari, John Florio, cit., p.95.

The text of *Romeo and Juliet*, written by the Playwright in 1592-1594⁴⁰ follows the words and concepts of the manuscript by Michelangelo, held in private custody until 1607, as the publisher warns, when it was published. *Only Michelangelo's mind could "rewrite" in Romeo and Juliet (in 1592-1594) the same words and conceits contained in the manuscript of 1561/1562 dedicated to Lady Jane Grey (published only in 1607)!*

It is clear that the bilingual "John Florio"⁴¹ played a significant role in writing in English the drama! Michelangelo, when writing in Soglio in 1561/1562 Lady Jane Grey's story in Italian language, surely spoke at length with John (then about ten years old) about his extraordinary pupil. Jane was almost a kind of "spiritual daughter" for Michelangelo, and a "spiritual elder sister" for John, full of passion for the study of languages just like John. John bore the male correspondent Christian name of Jane (and for the future lexicographer John, the word of his Christian name should arouse great curiosity about its origin!). Michelangelo had dedicated to Jane his manuscript *Regole de la lingua thoscana* just in the summer of 1552 when John was born!⁴²

The two Florios (who, in general, worked in a collaborative and symbiotic union, in a ' writing workshop ', reflecting the interpenetration of two talents – as Tassinari properly points out in his *John Florio*, cited above, page 36) expressed their best to create their masterpiece in English, in honor of a person infinitely dear to them, who was a kind of spiritual daughter (for Michelangelo) and spiritual sister (for John).

Juliet, the most poignant character of Playwright's Poetics, was not an Italian maiden from Verona, but nothing less than a Queen of England, Queen Jane Grey, belonging to the Tudor dynasty, "the nine days Queen"!

Some of the passages of the Italian text by Michelangelo are definitely not inferior, as for dramatic force and emotions, to those of the English text of the Playwright.

I invite readers to watch the wonderful move "Lady Jane" (1986), thinking that its title is *Romeo and Juliet*: I am sure (as I have personally experienced) that no one will absolutely be disappointed!

The Playwright (Michelangelo and John!) had immortalized the poignant Queen Jane Grey's vicissitude, in his most romantic and famous drama in the world, Romeo and Juliet!

An unexpected important part of the English history is reflected in Playwright's feelings that are expressed in this work: a story so fascinating, romantic and amazing, such as that of Lady Jane Grey's life and death.

It is quite clear that the Playwright could not, under Elizabeth Tudor's reign, write a drama that was Queen Jane Grey's apology, since Jane had violated the dynastic laws to the detriment of Mary and Elizabeth Tudor!

Moreover, Michelangelo (as evidenced by Yates, p. 10-11), *"attached as he was to the Grey household, was in a position to watch these developments [of John Dudley's plan], and there is evidence to show that he identified himself with the Dudleys. If the duke's plan had succeeded, Michael Angelo's fortune would have been made and he would not have had to set forth on his wanderings again"*.

Lady Grey before dying acknowledged their sins: "What against the Royal Majesty was done, against the law was made", but she denies she wanted the title of queen (p. 132 of Michelangelo's work): she had consented to the lust for power of her parents! She recognizes herself as "greatly guilty" (p. 132) and says: "And if the Lord will take account of our sins, who could be saved?" (P. 132). "He punishes his believers [in Jane's case with the death penalty], not to ruin them, but to save them" (p.133).

And, therefore, also the whole setting of the drama *Romeo and Juliet* (in Verona) was only a way to "disguise" the real, true story that the Playwright intended to make immortal, bearing in mind that the work had been written in 1592-94, under Elizabeth Tudor's reign, a Queen who had been declared illegitimate (as a result of the alleged annulment of Anne Boleyn's marriage with Henry VIII) by

40 See Melchiori, op.cit., p.213.

Jane's counselors! Now, however, it is time that the world knew who Juliet (described by the Playwright) really was, a young Queen of England in flesh and blood, whose heart-rending story has enthralled and excited and will continue to thrill and excite audiences all over the world! A Queen who was little known, but who henceforth will be the subject of admiration and study! A Queen, as scholars point out, the most neglected and even gone down in history as "Lady" and not as "Queen", often not even considered in some histories, since Mary is considered as the direct successor of Edward VI, omitting a parenthesis evidently deemed too short and unremarkable, despite inter alia the many acts of clemency that Queen Jane Grey put in place during her short reign⁴³ and her and her husband's martyrdom.

41 See the dedicatory poem of R.H. in the First Fruits (see Manfred Pfister, op. cit., p.36). John Florio had been considered by English scholars as the holder of the knowledge of the Italian places, Italian dialects, Italian proverbs and mottos, which characterize the works of Shakespeare. Prof. Thomas Spencer Baynes had expressed this view in his paragraph "Shakespeare's connection with Florio" in his entry "Shakespeare", in the ninth edition of 'Encyclopaedia Britannica' (1902), where John Florio was considered Shakespeare's "literary associate" (see the passage on the Official website of the Encyclopaedia Britannica <http://www.1902encyclopedia.com/S/SHA/william-shakespeare-31.html>). Furthermore, the scholars discovered that John had spent his childhood in Soglio (Switzerland) and had studied in Tübingen (Germany). In my opinion, his father Michelangelo had absolutely not wanted that John, son and pupil of a heretic condemned to death by Roman Inquisition (such as Michelangelo was) could be imprisoned in Italy and condemned as a heretic. John had, in general and in his turn, known Italy, its places and its dialects not directly but through his father Michelangelo! The literary association between Shakespeare and John had even involved also John's really Italian father Michelangelo. John (notwithstanding his Italian origins) was an English citizen for all legal purposes (thus, by virtue of his birth in London, according to the *jus soli* - the right to automatically acquire citizenship of the country where you are born, regardless of the nationality of your parents - already in force at the time in the English law, on the basis of the rules of the common law dating back to the thirteenth century - see Manfred Pfister, op.cit., p. 36 and footnote 18) and his literary association with Shakespeare could have solved many problems for the English scholars! Actually, the direct source of Shakespeare's Italian knowledge was Michelangelo (John's father): he had written in Italian the "Primi Frutti" and "Secondi Frutti" (John had filled the column of the Italian translation with some improvements) [the "Secondi Frutti" were published in Italy in 1549, and they were discovered by an Italian journalist Santi Paladino, who wrote an article on such discovery, published on the newspaper "L'Impero" 4 February 1927 (available on the "downloads" of this website); then Paladino wrote a book "Un italiano autore delle opere Shakespeariane", 1955; the volume "Secondi Frutti" was sequestered and destroyed by the Italian Authorities, since the Associazione Shakespeariana, which had been set up by Paladino in 1929, had been considered as a masonic organization - see Paladino, op.cit., p.13 and Romani-Bellini, cit., p.19]. Michelangelo had also drafted a dictionary of the Italian language, which John would have turned into an "Italian -English" dictionary (the same John's dedicatory epistle of his dictionary of 1598 précisés that: "Glad would I be to see that work abroad: some sight whereof, gave me twenty years since the first light to this". Therefore, "John tells us that 20 years earlier he had the idea for this book [the dictionary] when he saw [abroad, in Soglio] a manuscript draft for an Italian dictionary from the hand of a gentleman of 'worshipful account' and 'well -experienced in the Italian' ... the author of the incomplete draft, which John takes over and finishes, is his father Michelangelo" (see Tassinari, John Florio, cit. p. 102-103). Michelangelo had likely set up also the library of 252 Italian books that were read by John for his dictionary of 1611 - see such list in Tassinari, cit., p.132 ff.- other 90 French and Spanish books completed the Florios' library, composed by 340 volumes, to which John made reference in his will - available in this website]. The literary association between Shakespeare and John (an English citizen, though of Italian origins) really patently even involved John's father, the very Italian Michelangelo! The entry of Encyclopaedia Britannica by Baynes disappeared since 1911. The "vexed question [raised by Baynes] of [John] Florio's relations with Shakespeare" was the subject of in-depth study of Yates dated 1934 on John Florio (see Preface). Specifically, Yates stated that the goal of her study was just to allow "to reaching a definite conclusion upon the vexed question of Florio's relations with Shakespeare". Yates confirmed not only the "connection" between the works of John Florio and the works of Shakespeare, but also the connection between the works of Michelangelo and the work of Shakespeare. In fact, Yates confirmed that only Michelangelo directly knew Italy and its cities and dialects; he preached in all the cities described by Shakespeare (Rome, Florence, Venice, Padua, Naples, etc.), just as documented in the autobiography by Michelangelo, *Apologia* (see Yates, op. cit., p.2 and footnote 3). Thus, while several English scholars [including Baynes] had "supposed that Shakespeare learnt much of what he knew about Italy and Italian towns", "It begins to look as though John Florio ... may never have set foot in Italy itself at all" (Yates, p. 21). John's knowledge about Italy was not direct, but he had, in his turn, learned it from his father Michelangelo; Michelangelo had begun in that generation the work which his son was to continue in the next (Yates, p.8). In our opinion (such as also Panzieri states), Michelangelo and John worked together for a long time; on the basis of the publication of Michelangelo's manuscript in Italian language on Jane Grey in 1607, we can assume (how it may be also argued from the "Warning of the publisher") that Michelangelo died in 1605 (the same opinion was expressed by Paladino, cit., p., having given instruction to publish such volume immediately after his death. It is certain (see Panzieri "Sintesi biografica di Michel Agnolo Florio- Biografia di uno sconosciuto", pg.29 in this website) that Michelangelo came back from Soglio to London in 1577. Panzieri makes reference to a book by the Protestant pastor Jak. R. Troug of Chur, "*Die Pfarrer der evang. Gemeinden in Graubunden und seinen ehemaligen Untertanenlanden*", published in 1935 (publisher Druck von Sprecher, Eggerling & Co. of Chur in Engadina), where the names of the titular pastors of the Evangelical Churches in the Canton of Grisons from the XVI to the XX century are listed. At page 214 of such volume, it emerges - in old German language - as follows: "1555 - 1577 Mich. Angelus Florius, Florentine, imprisoned in Rome, then exile in London from 1550 until 1554, successively from Berna (with) Ochino from 1554 until 1555, arrived in Soglio from Antwerpen on May 27th 1555, moved to London in 1577. - ([Wrote] Apologia)"

A Queen who, however, marked (with her marriage, her tragic love and martyrdom), the history of England and of the world. *His love for Guildford has really changed the world.* As noted above, *the English people, thanks to Jane and Guildford's martyrdom, understood the importance of a religious peace that took place under Elizabeth I Tudor, opening a period of great prosperity, the Elizabethan Age (the "Golden Age"), in which Shakespeare's theater could flourish.* A new era, which allowed, through the work of the Playwright, *to spread around the world via the nascent British colonial Empire, the Playwright's message of love.* And the name of the Playwright could not be that English, the new universal language, which was going to become as such via the nascent British colonial Empire⁴⁴. Queen Jane's story and her martyrdom were at the basis of the pacification of the new era for the entire world.

This was the "peace" that came on Thursday dawn in Verona after Romeo and Juliet's death! The private Jane and Guildford's story (as well as that of Romeo and Juliet) is deeply interwoven with the history of the real world, influencing it, pacifying it and allowing the worldwide spread of the Playwright's message of love (allowing everywhere the knowledge, in English, of the beauty of the classic Greek and Latin works and of the Italian and European Renaissance).

Romeo and Juliet is the story of an unjust death of two young people without guilt, and the story aims at also remembering the hard real history, through which an entire nation found its identity and its

[the document is available in the Historical Archive of Chur- the Capital of the Swiss Canton of Grisons].

42 I like to imagine (I apologize with the readers for this my personal fantasy!) little John (ten years old) in 1562 asking his father, in a starry night on the mountain Soglio: "Where is Jane now?" And Michelangelo answering (in the words addressed by Juliet to Romeo- Act III, scene ii, 21-23): "Jane has been transformed into 'little stars, and she makes the face of heaven so fine that all the world is in love with night'". And this is the sweetest way to answer to a child who asks where a loved person is after death.

43 See P. Castellina, op. cit., p. 56 and Eric Ives, Lady Jane Grey, 2009.

44 Florio's grandiose dream (which they shared with Samuel Daniel, respectively John's brother-in-law and Michelangelo's son-in-law) went far beyond the transfer to England of classical and Renaissance Italian and Continental culture: their great dream was to spread all over the world, through the nascent English colonial empire and the English language, their wide culture and works. Yates points out that the two projects (refining the English tongue and English colonization) were closely linked in Samuel Daniel's mind (brother of John). Yates had fully understood and described what there was behind Shakespeare affair. In eight verses of Daniel's *Misophilous* (957-964), specifically reported by Yates (op.cit., p.60) there is a prophetic vision of colonization, of the expansion of the British Empire, of America and their cultural and linguistic domination (Tassinari, John Florio, cit., p.45).

"And who, in time, knows whither we may vent/ *The treasure of our tongue*, to what strange shores/This gaine of our best glory shall be sent, /*T'inrich unknowing Nations with our stores?/What worlds in th'yet unformed Occident [the Americas]/May come refin'd with th'accents that are ours?/Or, who can tell for what great worke in hand/The greatnesse of our stile is now ordain'd?*"

Even the Florios (as it is evidenced, in an amazing way, in John's dedicatory epistle in his dictionary of 1611!) had closely linked the elevation of English language with English colonization. In this dedication (see it in the link <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/florio/006small.html>), John Florio claims to have followed in the footsteps of the Italian "fathers" (Christopher Columbus) and to have been at Queen Anne's respectful service, just like Columbus was under the orders of the glorious Isabella of Castile; in addition, Florio produced his dictionary with the same spirit of an oceanic traveler ("*with a travellers minde*") and also discovered (but staying "*at home*") about a half of a New World ("*neere Halfe of a New world*"), a new world which was obviously constituted by new words and not by new geographic territories. Indeed, in the dictionary of 1611, John Florio added a large number of words (to the original 46,000 Italian words of the dictionary dated 1598), reaching about 74,000 Italian words translated into approximately 150,000 English words! The Virginia's territory in the "New World" (the first English colony in America before 1607), the newly discovered continent, was named in honor of the "virgin" Queen Elizabeth I; similarly, this dictionary, which is also "about half of a New World" (discovered by Florio), was boldly called by John Florio "Queen Anna's New World of Wordes", as under Queen Anne's protection and patronage. Even the Florios were the promoters of a '*cultural colonization*', which did not involve a physical journey (as they remained "*at home*"), but which was not, for this reason, less important! They were ready to spread their words, their culture and their works around the world, making them the universal cultural heritage, through the new universal English language and colonization.

The Playwright could not but have an English name, in order to permit that the "Shakespeare" affair takes off! All the authors of the 'Shakespeare' affair were fully aware of how the issue needed to be managed. Ben Jonson himself, in the First Folio states that " ... art alive still, while thy Booke doth live.," John, like his father, wanted the book to live a long time, to be known all over the world through the English tongue that was becoming a new universal language through the colonization that John himself had advocated! Only an English name, however, could have been clearly associated with the literary works, to be spread through colonization, around the world in the English language which had been refined by the Florios! In the First Folio of 1623, the pseudonym Shakespeare was finally joined to the works of the Playwright (see Tassinari, John Florio, cit, p.79 et seq.).

religious peace inside (as well as autonomy from Roman religious power, which culminated in the victory over Invencible Armada, which sought to restore Catholicism in England), opening a new era, the "Golden Age" of the Elizabethan period.

It is not a fairy tale, but the painful story of a real historical event in the context of the so-called "English crisis of 1553". The blood is actually spilled blood⁴⁵ the pangs of death are the real ones of two people destined to death. The audience feels all this and enormously suffers. "There is great pain in Romeo and Juliet, great anguish, great suffering, which also involves the audience, helpless and dismayed."⁴⁶ The work is the poetic "Monument" (in the sense that Horace, the Latin poet, intended, as well as Ben Jonson - who had "set himself up as the English Horace"⁴⁷ - intended in the First Folio) *that makes immortal and imperishable the tragic historical vicissitudes of these two innocent young people*, two martyrs who have helped to open a new era of peace and the flourishing of the work of the Playwright.

According to one of the greatest scholars of Italian literature of the twentieth century, Natalino Sapegno⁴⁸, the works of an author works may be "fully understood" only through "an examination of his human and cultural formation, which takes account of all the data, including psychological of his personality and all of the components that shape his personality" to be able to interpretate his work "capable of reflecting all the nuances and perhaps the contradictions of his real experience", given that, *without author's life being placed in its historical context "the suffering and the fantasies of the poet would not exist, nor would artistic works,... nor reflection of feelings" in poetic creations.*

Michelangelo was emotionally, personally and deeply involved in Lady Grey's life, as well as he was involved in the particular facts that characterized the "crisis of 1553". Michelangelo had lived these events and had narrated them in his Italian work on Jane Grey and then he replicated these events in the immortal tragedy Romeo and Juliet; thus, in cooperation with his son John, since no work has been found in English language that explicitly was published under Michelangelo's name.

This drama recounts real historical events and emotions that had been actually experienced firsthand by the Author, including the tragedies of people (such as Jane Grey) directly known by the Author, as well as the religious pacification of a people after so many contrasts and deaths; and the same Author benefited of such pacification⁴⁹.

We would like to conclude these notes with the words quoted in a letter from Florence by Lady Laurana de ' Medici (later converted, thanks to Jane, to the evangelical Christian faith), a victim of Anglican Cranmer's persecution; Laurana had been imprisoned in the Tower of London and released by Lady Jane during his brief reign, along with another prisoner, Edward Courtney, with whom

45 Perosa, op.cit.,p. XI.

46 Perosa, op.cit.,p. X.

47 See J. Bate The Genius of Shakespeare 2008, p. 26.

48 See *Letteratura italiana* (directed by Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno), vol. VII, p. 736 and vol. I, p. IX, Italy, Garzanti editions, 1982.

49 This is also the thesis stated by Christopher Morris in his book, *The Tudors*, BT Bastford Ltd. London, translated into Italian by Enrico dal River, dall'Oglio publisher, Varese, 1963. Morris argues that "the poetry of the Elizabethan age drew its booming at around the end of the reign, when the nation's confidence in itself was really rapidly growing." Morris (see p. 46-48 of the aforementioned book translated into Italian) believes that "It was not a coincidence that the battles of Marathon and Salamis were followed by so readily literary creations of Aeschylus and Sophocles." He says that the victory in 1588, against the Spanish Armada (the last attempt to restore the Catholic religion in England and to remove to that country also any gained religious autonomy) had the same importance for the birth of Shakespeare's plays (whose name, as it is well known, appeared for the first time in 1593 in the poem "Venus and Adonis"); the flourish of Shakespeare's theater needed a religiously peaceful and a prosperous society. Morris also refers to a passage from the Treatise on Money by Keynes (JM Keynes, A Treatise on Money, London, 1930, vol. II, p.154), which states that "the greater part of the greatest writers and artists from around the world flourished when the ruling class lived in an atmosphere of joyful carefree, of euphoria and freedom from economic worries ..." And this flourishing period was due primarily to the religious pacification of the country, no longer torn by internal strife, as well as no longer subject to external aggressions!

Laurana had fallen in love; the story of these two lovers had touched Jane, who had made both of them released⁵⁰. Lady Laurana wrote the following, in the letter sent to Lady Anne Grey (Jane's cousin): *"Blessed martyrs! Excellent and noble Jane! Lord Guildford happy as well, since you are forever united to your lovable partner, without ever feeling the pain of separation and grief of absence! You are united to her in a so high state of bliss that is more than whatever our ability to describe it!"*⁵¹

A Michelangelo and John Florio's "fan"

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ANNEXES:

1 Michelangelo Florio's portrait

2 The title page of the work in Italian language by Michelangelo on Lady Grey's life and death ("Signora Giovanna Graia"), published in 1607

3 The original binding of the manuscript *Regole de la lingua thoscana* written by Michelangelo and dedicated to Jane in the summer 1552 (see Yates, p. 8 and footnote 3), concomitantly with John Florio's birth

4 Jane Grey's portrait [with her Latinized name IANA/IOANNA GRAYA]

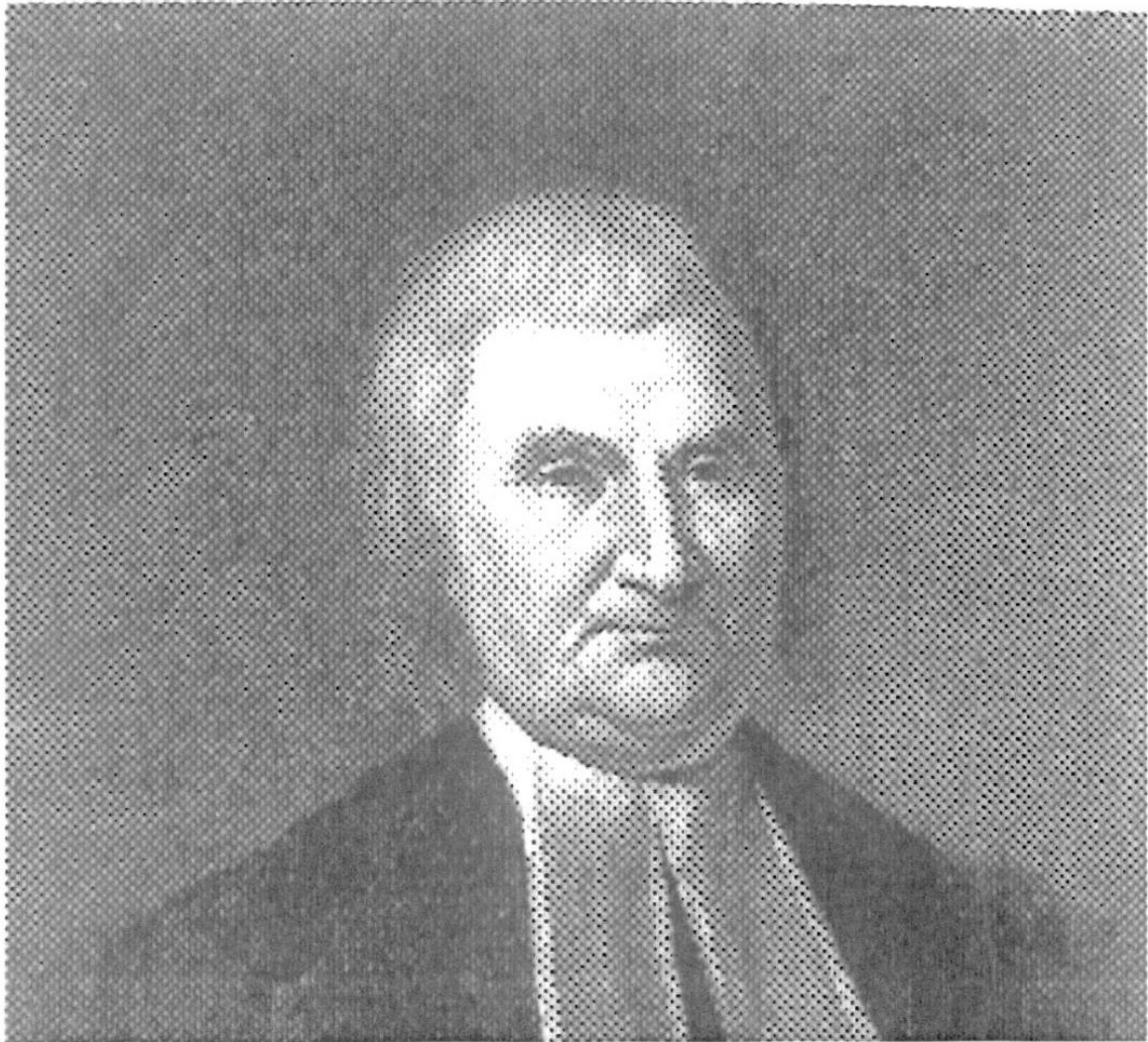
5 John Florio's portrait [with his Latinized name IOANNES FLORIUS]

ANNEX 1

⁵⁰ This vicissitude is told by P. Castellina, op. cit., p.56 and footnote 43, who makes reference to the book by Ida Ashworth Taylor, *Lady Jane Grey and Her Times*, Hutchinson, 1908, p.61 e ss. Laurana was one of the people released by Jane. The most recent and complete study on Lady Jane Grey is the book, above cited, by Eric Ives, *Lady Jane Grey*, 2009, where an exhaustive bibliography is also mentioned.

⁵¹ Taylor, op.cit., p.140 ss.; the passage is also reported by Castellina, op. cit., p.92.

Michelangelo Florio



Michelangelo Florio's portrait, reproduced at p. 102 of the book by Paolo Castellina "La vicenda di Lady Jane Grey", without any further indications.

HISTORIA DE LA VITA E DE LA

morte de l'Illustriss. Signora GIOVANNA

GRATA, già Regina eletta e publicata d'Inghil-

terra: e de le cose accadute in quel Regno dopo la morte

del Re Edoardo V I. Nella quale secondo le Divine

Scritture si tratta de i principali articoli de la

Religione Christiana. Con l'aggiunta

d'una dottiss. disputa Theolo-

gica fatta in Ossonia, l'

Anno 1554.

L'argomento del tutto si dichiara ne l'Anno-

timento seguente, e nel Proemio de l'Auctore M.

Michelangelo Florio Fiorentino, già Predicatore famo-

so del Sant' Euangelio in più città d'Italia,

et in LONDRA.

Più, tre tavole comodis. da ritornare le cose più notabili.

*Nel sappiamo, che a quegli che amano Iddio tutte le cose si operano
in bene, a quegli certamente, che facendo il suo proposito sono
fatti chiamati. Rom. 8.*



ACADIVC

Stampato appresso Richardo Pittore, ne

l'anno di Christo 1607.

Ex Legato Cl. Viri PROSPERI MARCHANDI

The title page of the work by Michelangelo on Lady Grey's life and death, published in 1607 and also containing a theological dispute held in Oxford in 1554; such page précises that the Author is "Michelangelo Florio Florentine, a famous preacher, who had already preached the Holy Gospel in many Italian towns and in London".



Annex 3- The manuscript *Regole de la lingua thoscana*, in its original elegant binding, a manuscript “hitherto, completely overlooked” (Yates, p.7). The manuscript (currently in the British Museum- Yates, op.cit.,p.7), also contains a dedication, in which Michelangelo saluted Jane as "illustrious and learned lady" and praised her father's "indulgence, kindness and courtesy " (see Ives , Lady Jane Grey , 2009, p. 66 and therein , Illustration [Plate] 25). The *Regole* had been written by Michelangelo, dedicated and presented to Jane in the summer 1552 (see Yates, p. 8 and footnote 3), concomitantly with John Florio's birth (see footnote 4 of this our article). See such picture also in the link <http://books.google.it/books?id=KZCMGgJzO2IC&pg=RA1-PA69&lpg=RA1-PA69&dq=regole+lingua+thoscana+original+binding&source=bl&ots=mVQFDcFPyF&sig=3be1UXni4M8nOnPge2x-OUI6IJA&hl=it&sa=X&ei=AId6Uo6UN6eC4ASj3oBI&ved=0CDkQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=regole%20lingua%20thoscana%20original%20binding&f=false>

ANNEX 4- Jane Grey's portrait, in the engraving of 1620 preserved in the British Museum, available on the website http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lady_Jane_Grey_van_de_Passe.jpg The portrait shows a very sensitive maiden.



According to the fashion of the time, even this portrait [preserved in the British Museum, see- http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?assetId=509992&objectId=3105069&partId=1], as well as IOANNES FLORIUS's portrait, contains some Latin words: "IANA [i.e. IOANNA] GRAYA decollata, Regia stirps tristi cinxi diademate crines / Regna sed omnipotens hinc meliora dedit," "JANE GREY decapitated, [I], royal lineage, put on my hair a sad crown / but the Almighty then gave me better Kingdoms [i.e. the Kingdom of Heaven]".

IANA is IOANNA's Latin abbreviated translation, the female corresponding name of IOANNES; Michelangelo had translated into Italian as GRAIA her English surname GREY; the portrait [as for the surname] shows the same Michelangelo's translation, but with the "y" instead of "i" [GRAYA].

ANNEX 5 -John Florio's portrait, in the engraving of 1611 (published on his coeval dictionary), available in the website <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/florio/015small.html>



According to Yates, IOANNES FLORIUS's portrait represents "a sharply cut face, with neatly pointed beard, mobile mouth, horizontal nervous furrows across the brow, and wide open eyes...The expression is alert, intelligent and guarded". The following lines of Latin appear beneath the portrait: In virtute sua contentus, nobilis arte, Italus ore, Anglus pectore, uterque opere/Floret adhuc, et adhuc florebit; floreat ultra/FLORIUS, hac specie floridus, optat amans/Tam felix utinam (Content with his own worth, noble in his art,/ Italian in tongue, English at heart, both at once in his work/ he flourished still and will flourish in the future./ He who loves him desires that FLORIUS, florid in this portrait, may continue to flourish./May he continue to be so content). Reference is made to John's bilingual capability and to his motto "Chi si contenta gode", "He enjoys, who is content with little".