

The character based on Thomas Nashe in 'The Three Parnassus Plays' was named Ingenioso and in the third of the trilogy he appears in dialogue with a character called Gullio. Their conversation bears some remarkable similarities to the quarrel outlined here.

The issue at stake is patronage, and Ingenioso's failure to make an impression on this strutting courtier, who, we are carefully informed, possesses a different fine suit for every day of the week and the ghost of Florio's Torquato character is resurrected when he boasts of his chests of fine linen saying: "I am never seen at courte twice in one sute of aparell." In 'Pierce Penniless' Nashe had commented on 'The Pride of the Italian' in a sequence about general European types saying "of all things he counteth a mighty disgrace to have a man pass jostling by him in haste on a narrow causey and ask him no leave, which he never revengeth with less than a stab." In this 'Parnassus' scene, Gullio describes how he nearly drew his rapier on a man for 'passinge by me in the Moore fildes unsaluted', suggesting he is what Nashe would have regarded as a typical Italian. In another exchange Ingenioso says "Amonge other of youre vertues I doe observe youre stile to be most pure, youre English tonge comes as neere Tullies as anie mans livinge." to which Gullio replies "Oh Sir, that was my care, to prove a complet gentleman, to be tam Marti quam Mercurio; in so muche that I am pointed at for a poet in Pauls church yard.."

When the penniless poet offers verses written in a variety of styles, Gullio far prefers the writing style of Mr. Shakespeare and his speech is littered with quotations from the plays.

Gullio speaks scornfully of 'Liteltonians', that is people who learned elementary French from the language tutor Claude Hollyband's 'French Littleton', which is worth comparing with the comment Florio makes in the opening address to his translation of Montaigne's essays: "seven or eight of great wit and worth have assayed but found these Essayes no attempt for French apprentices or Littletonians." As the scene draws to a close Gullio exclaims "O sweet Mr Shakspeare, Ile have his picture in my study at the courte." and hurries off the stage to keep a dinner engagement with a Countess and two Lords whom he feels he mustn't disappoint. There's a reference to Gullio being a star-turn at the fencing school, which virutally quotes a dialogue in Florio's 'Second Fruits' about taking lessons at Saviolo's school, and a sly reference to Sidney's Arcadia, with which, as we have seen, he was associated - in fact I can count ten things in this little scene just 3 pages long which connect Gullio to Florio and his books.

Records show 'The Returne from Parnassus (Part II)' was first performed in the Christmas season of 1601 at the University, but it was not published until 1606 and the text for scenes like this may have evolved somewhat in the interim to update it for the fresh amusement of subsequent Cambridge audiences. By 1606 Florio's translation of the essays had been in print for three years and was at the height of its fame and he had recently been given an important Court appointment and would indeed have had his own study at Court.

I think it is reasonable here to postulate that while Ingenioso has long been identified as a caricature of Thomas Nashe, Gullio should be recognised as a representation of Florio and it follows that this quarrel, since buried under four centuries of dust, was a familiar source of merriment among their contemporaries.