

“WIT LARDED WITH MALICE” Translating Shakespeare’s Culinary Language

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Abstract – Evidence of Shakespeare’s interest in food preparation and cooking is recurrent throughout his works, though the difficulties provided by the translation of such figurative language have attracted much less interest among scholars. Building on some earlier research (Scarpa 1995a, 1995b) and some more recent publications (Fitzpatrick 2007, 2011) on the language of food, taste and cooking in Shakespeare’s plays, the paper discusses some instances of the translation into Italian by different translators of this often very culture-specific knowledge and terminology in terms of the difficulty of translating such imagery in the target language when trying to maintain the language of food. This specialized language may in fact be considered to fall into the Bard’s language of “things” and, as such, stands most in danger of becoming archaic and posing a problem for translators with a different historical and cultural background. The examples will mainly be drawn from the two practical operations of the baking of bread, cakes and pastry, and the preparation and cooking of meat. It will be argued that the translation approach most suited to all food references in Shakespeare’s plays is a reader-centred approach and in the conclusion some remarks will also be made on other reader-centred approaches to Shakespeare’s language outside the boundaries of Translation Studies which can have a positive impact on revitalizing Shakespeare for a contemporary audience.

Keywords: Shakespeare translation; language of food; translation of figurative language; reader-centred translation approach.

1. Introduction

Shakespeare’s interest in food preparation and cooking is evident throughout his works, as shown by his critics as early as 1935 – i.e. the long list of imagery on food, taste and cooking provided in Caroline Spurgeon’s classic *Shakespeare’s Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Spurgeon 1982) – until the two much more recent works by Joan Fitzpatrick focusing specifically on the language of food (2007, 2011). However, the difficulties provided by the translation of such language, which very often brings together different levels of meaning, have attracted much less interest among scholars. This is notwithstanding the fact that Shakespeare is one of the most widely translated writers and the most frequently performed playwrights in world literature;

and the challenge of translating his works has attracted leading writers and many prominent leaders of culture and politics (cf. Delabastita 2009, p. 264). As a general rule of thumb, in Shakespeare's plays the many references to food and cooking occur mostly (but not exclusively) in the comedies and in the 'Falstaff plays' and also as comic relief in the tragedies. These references can be used either literally or figuratively, to describe one thing in terms of something different in order to achieve a rhetorical effect. The sheer difficulty of translating into a foreign language literal references to foodstuffs such as "venison pasty" (*Merry Wives of Windsor* 1.1, pp. 178-179), "carbonado" (*King Lear* 2.2, pp. 35-36) and even a seemingly unassuming "biscuit"¹ (*As You Like It* 2.7.38) is compounded, in the case of figurative language, by the fact that the figurative meaning of the source language (SL) might not work in the target language (TL) and also by the frequent link of the food image to a web of connected meanings in the source text (ST) which often cannot be reproduced in the target text (TT).

Building on some earlier research on the language of food, taste and cooking in Shakespeare's plays (Scarpa 1995a, 1995b), the main objectives of this study are the following two:

- 1) To investigate the meaning(s) of some instances of non-casual language on the preparation and cooking of foodstuffs that would have been familiar to most Shakespeare's contemporaries but are not readily comprehensible by a modern English-speaking audience, who has lost the ability to understand many of Shakespeare's references to Elizabethan foodstuffs and ways of cooking, let alone by a modern Italian audience, whose experience of the world is totally different from that of the Elizabethans not only in terms of historical background but also, just as crucially, linguistically and culturally.
- 2) To see some instances of how Italian translators dealt with this specialized – and often very culture-specific – language of "things", which most runs the risk of becoming archaic and irrelevant.

After describing the reader-centred translation approach taken here to be the most suited to all references to food in Shakespeare's plays and tracing it back to its sources in the recent history of Translation Studies, some instances of the translation into Italian of culinary language will be discussed in terms

¹ A "biscuit", in Shakespeare's time, was "a thin and flat unleavened bread made from flour and water or milk" (Fitzpatrick 2011, p. 47) and stands here for "hardtack", which was part of soldiers' and sailors' daily food rations and was sometimes referred to by different names like "sea biscuit" or "ship's biscuit"; "The Royal Navy was among the first to mass-produce biscuits for sailors. Often made using just salt, water and wheat flour, which contains protein, vitamins and a fair amount of calories, biscuits were often baked as many as four separate times. Once in storage, if kept dry, the biscuits would keep indefinitely" (Mallett 2012).

of the difficulty of translating such imagery in the TL when trying to maintain the language of food. Examples will mainly be drawn from the two practical operations of the baking of bread, cakes and pastry, and the preparation and cooking of meat. In the conclusion, some remarks will also be made on other reader-centred approaches to Shakespeare’s language outside the boundaries of Translation Studies which can have a positive impact on revitalizing Shakespeare for a contemporary audience.

2. Translation Approach

Shakespeare mostly wrote for entertainment. This entails that, especially if the translation of his work is meant to be an adaptation for the stage rather than simply be read, when translated into a different language the TT should *work* in the target culture just as the original play worked for Shakespeare’s contemporaries. As in all theatre translation, the performance aspect of the text and its relationship with an audience must be the central preoccupation of the translator, who should adapt the ST as deemed necessary in order to preserve the ‘playability’ of the TT (Bassnett 1991, pp. 122-123). In a contemporary production of a Shakespearean text for an Italian audience, this means that any obscure highly-cultural references should ideally be made accessible to the new audience just as they were to Shakespeare’s contemporaries. Given the major shifts in place and time being involved, this could indeed be a very complex translation task entailing the substitution of another system of references for the one on which the ST was based.

This translation approach lies at the opposite end of an ideal spectrum from a SL-oriented approach, which is more suited to drama translation ‘for the page’, where the translator merely reproduces the highly cultural language of food by achieving accuracy at the linguistic level and providing the necessary background information in footnotes. Instead, in the case of a translation ‘for the stage’ such as the one envisaged here, the best approach for references to foodstuffs and culinary operations that do not have any obvious equivalents in the TL is a TL-oriented approach, where the translator finds functional equivalents in today’s Italian culinary culture having a communicative value in their own right.

Given the vastly different audiences of sixteenth-century England and twenty-first-century Italy, the translator’s approach should consequently be socio-cultural, with adjustments being considered as a necessary measure to satisfy the linguistic requirements of ‘performability’ (cf. Anderman 2009, p. 92). This entails that problematic references to food and its preparation should be ‘adapted’ and ‘actualized’ and any instances of tension between the comprehensibility and idiomaticity of the TT, on the one hand, and its relation to the ST, on the other, be resolved in favour of the first.

Being hinged on the performability of the translation for a contemporary Italian audience, the approach to the translation of Shakespeare's images of food envisaged here is also going to be relativistic, as drama is viewed as an integral part of a theatrical production rather than as mere literature, where the words spoken are only one of the elements to be considered.

It should be noted, however, that in the specific case of the language of food and its preparation the creative interventions needed to ensure a successful performance in translation are usually only minor adaptations of the ST, with such references being mainly relegated to only a few words. The instances where food references take the form of iterative imagery and punning requiring a more extensive re-creation by the translator are, in fact, only occasional. With this fact in mind, the translation approach taken here is far from being innovative and can be traced back to many sources in the recent history of Translation Studies in the English-speaking world.

The most influential is the "principle of equivalent effect", an expression first coined by Emil V. Rieu (1953; Rieu and Phillips 1954), founder (with Sir Allen Lane) and general editor from 1944 to 1964 of the Penguin Classics, to describe his approach to translating Homer. Rieu's translation in prose of the *Odyssey* launched the series and went on to sell some three million copies, very possibly because his ambition for the series was that of publishing "new and accessible translations", as can be read in the text "About Penguin Classics" in the Penguin Classics website:

It is the editor's intention to commission translators who can emulate his own example and present the general reader with readable and attractive versions of the great writers books in modern English, shorn of the unnecessary difficulties and erudition, the archaic flavour and the foreign idiom that renders so many existing translations repellent to modern taste.
(<http://www.penguinclassics.co.uk/about/>)

To make sure this accessible style of translation was carried out in the series, Rieu preferred consistently professional translators to academics, as the latter tended to be "enslaved by the idiom of the original language", sacrificing fluency in the process. In the 1991 revised edition of E.V. Rieu's translation by his son, Dominic C.H. Rieu, some of the liberties his father had taken with Homer's text were amended, though "some of his racier colloquialisms" were kept "to retain the joie de vivre of his version" (Rieu 2003). In his Preface, D.C.H. Rieu also refers to his father's "towering skill" and "his mastery of words" in conveying "the subtle nuances of a complex passage".

E.V. Rieu's reader-centred translation approach for the Penguin Classics originated the expression "Penguinification [of Plato]", which was coined by the classicist Trevor J. Saunders to refer to the 'aids' he himself had used when translating Plato's *The Laws* for Penguin Books in 1970

(Saunders 1975, pp. 39-40, as quoted by Pangle 1980) to make the resulting translation sound as unlike a translation as possible. More crucially, the equivalent-effect approach was taken as an exemplification of the principle of “dynamic equivalence” theorized by E. A. Nida (1964, p. 159) in Bible translation aiming at “complete naturalness of expression”. The main concern of the translator aiming to produce a *dynamic* (or ‘functional’) equivalence, rather than a formal one, is not so much matching the TL message with the SL message but rather a dynamic relationship between target reader and target message. This relationship should be substantially the same as that between the original readers and the original message. Nida considered E. V. Rieu’s translations as “the most effective translations of Homer’s *Odyssey* and *Iliad*” and “full of life, vigor, and punch” (Nida and Taber 1982, p. 133) because they reproduced “the liveliness and spontaneity characteristic of Homer’s style” (Nida 1964, p. 157).

Much closer to our time, however, E.V. Rieu’s approach of making a text fit with the expectations of the TL audience has been held in a somewhat lower esteem by exclusively literary translation theorists, especially on the other side of the Atlantic. Peter Connor (2014, p. 425) has called it an “annexationist philosophy of translation” and Lawrence Venuti has branded it as the type of “domesticating” translation dominating British and American literary translation culture, where an “invisible” translator is expected to produce a translated text that reads fluently and has “the appearance [...] that the translation is not in fact a translation but the ‘original’” (Venuti 1995, p. 1).

In a reader-centred translation approach to theatre such as the one envisaged here, however, the “visibility” of a translator producing a “foreignizing” translation bringing the lexical and cultural differences of Shakespeare’s language of food into an Italian translation would be detrimental to the performability of the play. In other words, Venuti’s ethical and political deconstructionist approach is just not suitable for drama translation, just as it is not for technical and scientific translation (Scarpa 2008, p. 325). In both cases, the positive ethical values should in fact be considered “domestication” and “invisibility”, as the translator’s main loyalty lies with the TL audience rather than with the ST author.

3. Some Instances of Translation of Food References

In this section, some examples of the reader-oriented translation approach described above and considered to be the most suited to achieve a TT that ‘works’ in the TL will be discussed. More specifically, the examples have been assigned to three different groups, based on the extent to which the variously successful functional equivalents used by translators to translate a

highly cultural food reference in the ST were drawn from today's Italian language of food. The sources for the Italian translations will be two collections of Shakespeare's complete works: the first (Shakespeare 1960) is a collection of translations by the same translator and the second (Shakespeare 1976-1991) is an edited collection of translations by different translators. All instances will be discussed by comparing the translations of the same SL quotation by two different Italian translators.

4. Translation within food domain: *same* foodstuff/culinary operation

In a TL-reader oriented translation approach to theatre, the possibility to use a functional equivalent in the TT which is not only drawn from the food domain but also refers to the same (or a similar) foodstuff or operation as the ST is, of course, the ideal translation strategy to aim for, as the translator's loyalty can be equally split between the SL author and his TL audience. The first instance is drawn from the tragedy *Titus Andronicus* and is one of the relatively few cases where the same image of food is extended throughout a whole paragraph. As in a cookbook narrative, the whole procedure of pie-making is described in a very detailed and extremely gruesome way by Titus baking Chiron and Demetrius's bodies into a pasty; Titus then serves the captured Goth, Queen Tamora, the pie bearing her two sons, concealing the real contents of the pastry until she starts helping herself to the unsavoury dish:

Hark, villains, I will *grind your bones to dust*
 And with your blood and it I'll make a *paste*,
 And of the paste a *coffin* I will rear,
 And make two *pasties* of your shameful heads.
 (...)
 Let me go *grind their bones to powder small*,
 And with this hateful *liquor temper it*,
 And in that *paste* let their vile heads be *bak'd*.
 (...)
 So, now bring them in, for I'll *play the cook*,
 And *see them ready*, against their mother comes.²
 (5.2.186 ff.)

Though the particular ingredients employed here (human bones, blood and heads) are rather unconventional ones, still Titus' madness rests on a sound and realistic knowledge of how to make a pie. For a start, ground bones from the charnel-house instead of wheat were used as adulterants of bread as late

² Here, as in all other quotations, the emphasis is added.

as the 1750s (Wilson 1973, p. 262) and this might well have also been the case with Elizabethan bakers. Likewise, animal blood was employed to colour black puddings and darken pottages and sauces (Wilson 1973, p. 90). The “coffin” Shakespeare mentions here was a normal term to call the pie-crust which, most appropriately in this particular instance, maintains its main funereal meaning, much as in the implied quibble on “coffin” (‘model’, ‘paste’, ‘cover’) in *Richard II*.³

The reason behind the culinary sense of this rather gloomy item might be provided by the fact that in the medieval fish-pie, the pastry “coffin” or shell was regarded as merely as a free-standing container and was not always eaten. As evidence of the popularity of meat pies in medieval Britain, in 1378 a special ordinance of Richard II (which, given the previously quoted instance, is a remarkable coincidence!) controlled the prices charged by cooks and pie bakers in London for their roasted and baked meats. For open pies or tarts, the pastry coffin was baked blind and then filled (Wilson 1973, pp. 42, 124, 253-254), as exemplified in a 1597 recipe of “Spinach Flan”: “Take three handful of Spinnage [...] and lay it in your Coffin, when it is hardened in the oven, then bake it” (Brears 1985, p. 28). In both the Italian translations of Titus’ demented monologue, the terminology of pie-making is successfully kept:

Lodovici (Shakespeare 1960)

Ascoltate, furfanti: io *delle vostre ossa farò un macinato*, da cui, intriso nel vostro sangue, *ricaverò una pastafrolla*; e da questa *pastafrolla* due *pasticci*, *farciti* con le vostre teste di svergognati;

[...] faremo delle loro *ossa una farina fine fine* da *impastare con questo liquido* ripugnante: e rivestite di questa *pasta*, farò *cuocere al forno* le loro due teste stramaledette.

[...] Portateli in casa. Io ora *vado a fare il cuoco* e voglio *che sia pronta questa vivanda* per quando verrà la loro madre imperiale.

Tessitore (Shakespeare 1978b)

Udite, scellerati: *triturerò le vostre ossa fino a ridurle in polvere*, le *impasterò* insieme al vostro sangue,

e poi con quella *pasta* io *stenderò una sfoglia*

e farò *due crostate* con quelle vostre teste infami,

[...] Lascia che io *triti in polvere* minuta le loro ossa

e le *impasti con questo liquido* abominevole;

in tale *pasta* le loro teste abiette saranno *cotte al forno*.

[...] Ecco, adesso trasportateli dentro, che io *farò da cuoco*,

e vedrò che essi *siano preparati a dovere*

³ “And nothing can we call our own but death, /And that small *model* of the barren earth/Which serves as *paste and cover* to our bones” (Richard II, 3.2.152).

per quando verrà qui la loro madre.

However, the two non-culinary terms “powder” and “dust” are, if anything, over-translated by Lodovici who uses the two baking ingredients *macinato* [meal] and *farina* [flour], whilst the same two terms were both translated by Tessitore simply as *polvere* [dust], a term that – like its ST counterparts – does not strictly belong to the kitchen. On the other hand, Tessitore’s translation of the expression “of the paste a coffin I will rear” via the culinary collocation *stenderò una sfoglia* is much more idiomatic than Lodovici’s rather stilted *ricaverò una pastafrolla*, possibly because Tessitore is a female translator and consequently is more likely to know the terms for cooking than a male translator.

The second example is taken from *Troilus and Cressida*, a play where the references to food that are tainted by a peculiar disgust for greasy ill-served dishes and food remnants are particularly numerous – to such an extent that Spurgeon notes that this play was probably written “at a time when the author was suffering from a disillusionment, revulsion and perturbation of nature, such as we feel nowhere else with the same intensity” (Spurgeon 1982, p. 320). Spurgeon’s observation could also apply, more generally, to why *Troilus and Cressida* has always been considered by critics as one of the ‘problem’ plays both concerning its attribution to a specific genre (comedy, tragedy, history etc.) and its ambivalence, which Katan (1993) has explained in terms of “the lack of conversational success between the characters of the play”. In the example, Thersites denounces Agamemnon’s brother, Menelaus, calling him a bull because he has the horns of a cuckold:

to what form but that he is, should wit *larded* with malice and malice *forced* with wit turn him to? To an ass were nothing: he is both ass and ox. (5.1.63)

Lodovici (Shakespeare 1960)

in quale altra cosa da quello che è potrebbe trasformarlo l’intelligenza *lardellata* di malizia, o la malizia *farcita* d’intelligenza?

Squarzina (Shakespeare 1977a)

Che altra forma, se non la sua, potrebbe assumere la furbizia *lardellata* di malignità, o la malignità *infarcita* di furbizia?

“Larding” and “forcing” are two operations for preparing meat. The first refers to the insertion in lean meat of small strips of bacon or fat (“lardons”) before cooking in order to fatten or enrich the piece of meat. A special larding needle, called a “lardoine”, is used for these techniques. In Shakespeare, “larding” has the figurative meaning of ‘to supplement or enrich with something for improvement or ornamentation’ (e.g. ‘a literary work larded with mythological allusions’), which the literal translation

lardellata used by both translators does in fact not have in Italian, though the resulting original (‘foreignizing’) metaphor works rather well in both Italian translations. As observed by Fitzpatrick (2011, p. 388), in this example “the culinary image of wit ‘larded’ with malice leads to the other culinary image of malice ‘forced’ with wit, that is ‘forced’ or ‘stuffed’, as in “force-meat stuffing”, where “stuffing” refers to the Elizabethan culinary habit of stuffing the intestine of an animal roasted whole (typically, a suckling pig) with a pudding, i.e. a forcemeat made of meat, spices, blood, onions, fat and breadcrumbs, which nowadays is simply called “stuffing” and survives in the ‘black pudding’ (cf. Fitzpatrick 2011, p. 250). These expressions are used by Shakespeare especially in reference to Falstaff’s considerable bulk and have been successfully translated via the literal translations *farcita* and *infarcita* having the same (standard) figurative meaning also in Italian (e.g. ‘*discorso infarcito di citazioni dotte*’, [speech stuffed/larded with eloquent quotes]).

Another instance of a figurative use by Shakespeare of the operation of ‘stuffing’, this time by using the synonym “cram”, is in *Winter’s Tale*, where pregnant Hermione’s playful plea to Leontes hinged on an image of feeding and slaughtering animals may have a sexual meaning:

I prithee tell me: *cram*’s with praise, and make’s
 As *fat* as tame things. One good deed dying tongueless
 Slaughters a thousand waiting upon that.
 Our praises are our wages. (1.2.91-94)

Lodovici (Shakespeare 1960)

Per favore: *inzepami* di elogi come s’ingozza un’oca *all’ingrasso*. Lasciare senza lode un merito sarebbe come soffocare i mille e mille che ne potrebbero seguire. Gli elogi sono il nostro salario.

Lombardo (Shakespeare 1981)

Dimmelo, ti prego: *inzepateci* di lodi;
ingrassateci come animali da cortile: una sola
 buona azione, se muore taciuta,
 ne uccide mille che potrebbero seguirla.
 Le lodi sono la nostra mercede.

Both the Italian versions use the literal translation *inzeppare*, which in Italian has the standard figurative meaning of ‘stuffing someone with food’, in combination with a reference to the fattening up of an animal (both the prepositional phrase *all’ingrasso* and the imperative *ingrassateci*), and in this specific context easily acquires the additional double entendre of the original “cram”. All in all, both the Italian translations of the imagery of food evoked here by Shakespeare are to be considered very successful, though the Italian verb *inzeppare* does not have the extra layer of meaning in reference to the culinary operation of stuffing meat [It. (*in*)*farcire*]. Consequently the

juxtaposition of the feeding of a live animal and the stuffing of a slaughtered one has been necessarily lost in translation.

4.1. Translation within food domain: different culinary/foodstuff operation

Adapting the ST image to the Italian food culture by using a functional equivalent drawn from the food domain but referring to a different foodstuff or operation from the ST is an alternative translation strategy which has been used to overcome difference between the two cultures. In the following example drawn from *All's Well*, Parolles' statement contains a culinary image which the translators had no choice but adapt to the Italian food culture:

I will confess what I know without constraint:
If ye pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more. (4.3.141)

Lodovici (Shakespeare 1960)
 Tutto! Tutto quello che so: ma senza tortura. Ché *se mi triturate come carne da salsicce*, non potrei dirvi una sillaba di più!

Melchiori (Shakespeare 1977b)
 Confesserò tutto quello che so senza coercizioni. Anche *se mi riducete a un colabrodo*, non potrete cavarne altro.

Neither the noun “pasty” nor the operation of its “pinching” have direct equivalents in Italian cooking, a pasty being “A pie where the filling is encased in pastry, which forms a parcel within which the filling is cooked; unlike a pie, a pasty usually contained only one filling and venison was popular”,⁴ whilst “pinching” refers to “the manner in which the crust of the pasty would be sealed” (Fitzpatrick 2011, pp. 321-322). Even in today’s recipe books, “pinch” is the verb still used to define the finishing touches to crimp the edges of pastry or to make decorative leaves out of it.⁵ The simile “if ye pinch me like a pasty” was translated by both Italian translators using a different kitchen-related image having in both cases the idiomatic meaning ‘to make mincemeat of someone’: Lodovici’s was drawn from the operation of preparing sausages, while Melchiori’s is an Italian standard metaphor using the image of a kitchen tool (the colander). Though both very effective, i.e. suited to a reader-oriented translation which has to work on a stage,

⁴ Cf. “venison pasty” in *Merry Wives of Windsor* (1.1, pp. 178-179), which was quoted in Section 1, and its translations as *pasticcio di cacciagione* by Ludovici (Shakespeare 1960) and *pasticcio di selvaggina* by Costa Giovangigli (Shakespeare 1982b), where *pasticcio* is the closest functional equivalent of “pasty”, though being only remotely related to it.

⁵ Cf. “Now take up the two opposite edges of your pastry circle to meet in the middle over your filling. Pinch or crimp the edge with your fingers in the middle of your pastie and along both edges to seal” (recipe of Turkey and Stuffing Pasty at <http://www.smallwalletbigappetite.com/2012/11/turkey-and-stuffing-pasty-sundaysupper.html>).

Lodovici’s translation seems to be the most successful here because he uses a standard metaphor that has the added bonus of referring to the operation of making sausages, which is typical of the Italian culinary culture though not being uniquely so.

A similar adaptation has been carried out in the following example from *Troilus and Cressida*, where Ajax refers to manipulating the proud Achilles:

AJAX: I will *knead* him: I will make him *supple*.

NESTOR: He’s not yet through warm: *force* him with praises. Pour in, pour in; his ambition is dry. (2.3.235)

Lodovici (Shakespeare 1960)

Me lo *rimpasto* io, me lo riduco *dolce dolce*.

Squarzina (Shakespeare 1977a)

Io *ne faccio polpette*, io lo *svito*.

The verb “knead” here has a literal meaning, “to firmly manipulate dough by stretching and pressing as a preparation for making bread or cake” (Fitzpatrick 2011, p. 242), and is also used figuratively. Pastry dough should in fact be handled as little and as lightly as possible in order for the dough to become “firm and elastic” (Dixon 1983, p. 382), i.e. ‘supple’, and therefore rise well in the oven. Here the figurative kneading of bread dough has been translated by Lodovici using the same culinary image in Italian. On the other hand, Squarzina’s adaptation into the operation of making meatballs works rather less well in this specific context. Making meatballs is definitely a less gentle an operation than kneading, and is hardly suited to the psychological manipulation of Achilles that Ajax has in mind. More crucially, this image does not work with the even subtler scheme devised in the play by the Machiavellian Ulysses to make Achilles jealous of Ajax when Ajax is sent to fight the Trojan champion Hector in a man-to-man combat instead of him. To translate the adjective “supple”, Lodovici used an image of taste (‘sweet’) that also works rather well with the deviousness of Ulysses’ intentions, whilst Squarzina’s image of the unscrewing of a screw or a lid is equally effective but totally unrelated to food, a key domain for the imagery of *Troilus and Cressida*.

In this particular instance, the non-casualness of this food image can in fact be seen in the two other related images referring to the cooking of meat that Ulysses uses a few lines earlier to describe Achilles’ arrogance:

a) “the proud lord” /That *bastes* his arrogance with his own *seam*” (2.3.124-125) (where “seam” means ‘grease’) and

b) the argument against Ajax going to Achilles as this would “*inlard* his fat-already pride” (2.3.134-135)

In the following example taken from *Henry IV Part 1*, in making clear that he is no soldier and would prefer to avoid confrontation, Sir John uses the term “carbonado”, which in contemporary English cookery has survived only as a near-synonym of beef stew or casserole in “Carbonnade of Beef” and refers to broiled or grilled chunks of meat, fish or poultry which were very popular during Elizabeth’s reign (Wilson 1973, p. 100):

Well, if Percy be alive, I’ll pierce him. If he do come in my way, so; if he do not, if I come in his willingly, let him make *a carbonado* of me. (5.2.56-8)

Lodovici (Shakespeare 1960)

Se è vivo, voglio averlo perso, Percy. Se me lo troverò sulla mia strada, pazienza. Ma che io vada a mettermi di mio sulla sua strada – e che son scemo? – perché di me faccia *una marmellata!*

Dallagiacomma/Gorlier (Shakespeare 1979)

Bene, se Percy è vivo, lo perseguiterò. [Translator’s footnote] Se lui capita sulla mia strada, è un fatto. Diversamente, se io capito sulla sua strada di mia spontanea volontà, faccia pure di me *un grigliato misto*.

The operation to tenderize meat in the preparation of carbonadoes by scoring across and broiling meat is used by Shakespeare to refer figuratively to cutting one’s opponent with a blade (cf. Fitzpatrick 2011, pp. 74-75), and in this particular instance means ‘slash me all over and grill me’ (cf. the footnote in the Arden edition of *Henry IV Part 1*). Of the two Italian translations of this image, Dallagiacomma and Gorlier’s is the most successful because it manages to keep the figurative meaning of the original expression by using creatively an image drawn from the same operation of grilling meat. The standard Italian metaphor used by Lodovici, on the other hand, though taken from the domain of food (‘to make jam of somebody’) is totally unrelated to the specific cooking operation of the original. Where Lodovici’s translation scores better than the other, however, is in the non-casual assonance of “Percy” with “pierce” in the same quotation, which he recreates in the new assonance of “Percy” and *perso*, the past participle of *perdere* [lose]. Rather less creatively (or usefully) for a play which has to be performed on a stage, Dallagiacomma and Gorlier solve this phonetic translation problem simply by adding an explanatory footnote: “NOTA Falstaff gioca sul nome Percy e sul verbo ‘to pierce’ [*trafiggere, passare da parte a parte*]”.

An interesting example of the creation by the translator of new images related to food and its preparation in modern Italian food culture is provided by the following, drawn from *Twelfth Night* (2.3.124), containing an exchange between anti-Puritan Sir Toby and the Clown:

“Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more *cakes* and ale?”

“Yes, by Saint Anne, and *ginger* shall be hot i’th’ mouth too”.

Lodovici (Shakespeare 1960)

“Credi proprio, perché sei virtuoso tu, che non ci debba essere al mondo né *focaccia*, né birra?”

“Sì, per la faccia di Giuda, e anche *zenzero* da soffiarsi in bocca.”

Costa Giovangigli (1978a)

“E perché sei virtuoso tu, spero che spariscono *pizze* e birra?”

“Sicuro, per Sant’Anna, e *spezie* e *peperoncino*”.

In both Italian translations, Shakespeare’s reference to a sweet food (“cakes”) – most probably standing here for the classic English “Shrewsbury cakes”, which were often spiced with ginger – has been turned into a reference to typically Italian savoury foods (*focaccia* and *pizze*). Of the two, the most successful reader-oriented translation for the stage is Costa Giovangigli’s, who translates “cakes” with *pizze*, a more thoroughly ‘domesticating’ translation being difficult to imagine. Because the link between cakes and ginger would be necessarily completely lost in translation, Costa Giovangigli has also omitted any reference to ginger, which for an Italian audience is a spice mainly connected to Asian cooking, and has replaced the familiarity of Shrewsbury cakes to the Elizabethan (and contemporary) SL audience with a typically Italian hot spice (*peperoncino*). An added bonus in his translation is the collocation *pizze e birra* [pizzas and beer], which works very well in the TL culture where the traditional drink to be had with pizza is in fact beer (rather than wine). In Lodovici’s more literal translation, on the other hand, an Italian audience would be more at a loss in making any connection between *zenzero* and *focaccia* (the flat savoury bread typically seasoned with herbs and olive oil) though, admittedly, *focaccia* has the advantage of being more culturally neutral than *pizza*, a food hardly congruent with Elizabethan England.

4.2. Domain of the translation totally unrelated to food

In this last section, one example from *Henry IV Part I* will be discussed to illustrate the strategy of translating a food image by using a functional equivalent drawn from a non-food domain, which is arguably the translation strategy that – all in all – Italian translators resorted to only when absolutely necessary. Also in this example the SL food image is hinged on Shakespeare’s figurative use of the culinary operation of ‘larding’ lean meat, which he uses mostly (but not exclusively) in reference to Sir John’s fatness. In both the Italian translations the reference to larding, used by Prince Hal to describe Falstaff running away, was replaced by an image drawn from

agriculture, where the barren soil is manured by Falstaff's sweat:

Falstaff sweats to death
And *lards* the *lean* earth as he walks along. (2.2.103)

Lodovici (Shakespeare 1960)
Falstaff si suda l'anima e *del suo grasso concima* il suolo lungo il suo passaggio.

Dalla Giacoma/ Gorlier (Shakespeare 1979)
Falstaff suda da morire
e *concima* la *sterile* terra nel suo andare.

Consequently in both translations the image of larding lean meat has been completely neutralized, though a more literal translation of “lards” using the verb “lardella” would have been an equally transparent and not an excessively bold option (*Falstaff si suda l'anima/suda da morire e del/con il suo grasso lardella il suolo/la terra...*). The translation into Italian of the adjective “lean” in reference to the earth, however, poses a much greater translation problem: in Lodovici's translation “lean” was completely omitted with “lean earth” being simply translated as *il suolo* whilst the reference to Falstaff's bulk that was implicit in the verb “lards” was successfully nominalized (*e del suo grasso concima il suolo*). On the other hand, in Dalla Giacoma and Gorlier's translation the implicit reference of the original is made even more implicit, as *concima* simply means ‘manures’, ‘fertilizes’, with the result that Shakespeare's quibble is made even more indirect than in the original (‘Falstaff is sweating copiously and therefore he must be fat’). From the perspective of making the effort of keeping Shakespeare's imagery and at the same time making it work in the Italian translation, the most successful of the two translations is consequently the first.

5. Concluding discussion

Food references in Shakespeare's plays are instances of the socio-cultural differences that translators from different cultures and time periods have had to confront in order to allow the target audience full enjoyment of the play whilst at the same time being as true as possible to Shakespeare's original words (Anderman 2009, p. 95). This study has discussed some examples of the technical problems encountered by translators into Italian in relation to such references and the more or less successful solutions they have found, at times creating new images and verbal associations related to food and its preparation in modern Italian food culture, such as in the cases of *pasticci/crostate* and *pastafrolla* / *sfoglia* to translate respectively “pasties” and “paste” (which in Shakespeare means ‘pie crust’), *grigliato misto*

translating “carbonado”, and *focaccia*”/“*pizze* and *spezie e peperoncino* for “cakes” and “ginger”. The homely images contained in these references can be included in the customs and habits that differ markedly between Shakespeare’s original English audience and the audience of the target culture but also, more often than not, a modern English audience, who can no longer be expected to understand such images as readily as the audience of his time. As Delabastita (2009, p. 265) points out, “many of the problematic features [of Shakespeare’s language] [...] have at times disturbed Shakespeare’s English-speaking readers and rewriters as well, appearing no less perplexing, alienating or unacceptable to them than to his overseas readers and translators”.

This goes a long way into explaining the increasing importance in contemporary theatre-productions of modern-language versions in English of Shakespeare’s works, providing veritable examples of intra-lingual translations which aim to redress what can be called the “paradox of Shakespearean translation”, whereby an English-speaking audience – including the editors, critics and theatrical directors and adapters as well as other English-speaking rewriters of Shakespeare mentioned by Delabastita – is somehow more at a disadvantage in understanding Shakespeare’s original language than a non-English audience, which is able to enjoy his works translated into the less alienating and more modern language of an inter-lingual translation. This point was already made by Katan (1993) about the reduction of processing effort for the Italian reader operated by the translators of *Troilus and Cressida*, who have consistently optimized the relevance of the implicatures in the conversation exchanges between the play’s characters, with the result that “the modern Italian audience has preferential access to Cressida’s beliefs, without though, sacrificing any of the possible weak implicatures – the poetic effect”.

An example of simplified versions of Shakespeare plays in English is provided by the Bandanna Books. In the website of the books (<http://www.bandannabooks.com>), the claim is that: “The total intention is to arouse, not to assume a reader's interest, to place the book firmly within its historical, biographical and social context and, where possible, to point out its relevance to the present day” and also “to connect directly with the earnest reader”. To do this, all the apparatus of commentary, expert analysis, elaborate background and notes that has been created by “the scholarly crowd [...] eager to preserve Shakespeare's language as much as possible, including ‘thee’, ‘thine’, ‘ye,’ and the rest” has been eliminated in the books of the series, because “the reader's experience is paramount; anything that distracts from the story is eliminated. If obscurities can't be resolved within the text, they are spelled out in the glossary. My question: do you buy a book to read other people discuss Shakespeare — or to read Shakespeare?”. Particularly interesting is also the Bandanna Shakespeare Playbooks series:

designed as workbooks for directors and producers, with ample space for sketching, making notes, placement of sets, designing the playbill, preparing a budget, fundraising, setting a timeline (i.e., deadlines), costumery, auditioning, entrances and exits, stage management, producing, synopsis, keylines, set design, with downloadable customized scripts for the major parts — all the details that actually go into a production. Text is somewhat modernized (no thees and thines — unless it rhymes) and includes glossary. High school, college, or independent theater company will find the playbooks invaluable for two reasons: to envision the play, and to keep track of details.

The increasingly close links between this type of reader-centred intra-lingual translations and inter-lingual translations of Shakespeare's works are beginning to be picked up also by English-speaking Shakespeare scholars, among whom Ton Hoenselaars (2006, p. 50) has pointed out that “a more universal recognition of the merits of the Bard and/in translation has developed”, as well as a new realization that translation and adaptation are more akin to one another than had long been acknowledged; translation may be defined as a mode of adaptation, while adaptation may convincingly be defined as a form of translation in a metaphorical sense“. A new channel of communication and possible research collaboration seems consequently to have been opened up between the academic communities of different nations in the disciplines of Shakespeare Studies, Cultural Studies and Translation Studies, with the latter being the means by which Shakespeare can be revitalized also for a contemporary English audience.

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