Introduction

Nadia Fusini, Iolanda Plescia

Memory
Nadia Fusini

I knew that the time would come when we would have to ask ourselves: what does the title of our journal, *Memoria di Shakespeare*, enclose and encompass, and hide and at the same time preserve, like a shell its pearl? The title was searched out and finally chosen by the person who founded this journal, our beloved Maestro, Agostino Lombardo, who, as his death approached, chose to entrust his creature to the care of one of the dearest amongst his pupils and students, Rosy Colombo, who took on the task, preserving the journal in its fundamental lines, as indeed already expressed in its title. I remember heated discussions in which Agostino Lombardo involved all his pupils and students at the time. For a while he even thought of a title inspired by Eliot, *La figlia che piange*, which, however, frightened many of us female pupils, women, daughters, who were by no means in the mood for crying…

Memoria di Shakespeare seemed to all of us then, and still does, more 'correct', more to the point. It contained the necessary, the right ambiguity, which now, in this Introduction, I would like briefly to comment on. Without, however, abolishing the halo of rich indeterminacy that literary language thrives on, as anyone who has learned the lesson of William Empson knows.

But let us proceed in order. In the title *Memoria di Shakespeare* one must note before all else the complexity of the task to which our Maestro was inviting us: clearly, in creating such a journal, we were called upon to keep Shakespeare's memory alive, not to let Shakespeare die, now or ever. "Remember Shakespeare, do not let him disappear from the lecture halls of our universities, here in Italy", Lombardo exhorted us.

You might well ask yourselves: but why? Was there a risk at the very end of the second millennium, when Lombardo called us to our task, that Shakespeare would disappear from the canon of world literature? Was there then, is there today at the beginning of the third millennium, a risk that we might have to stop teaching Shakespeare? A risk that Agostino Lombardo – far-sighted, visionary as he was – had already foreseen?

Difficult to believe, I agree, that Shakespeare might disappear from the heritage of our tradition; but is that really impossible? Aren't there already active teams of politically correct censors who would like to stop us from reading *Othello*? Or *The Merchant of Venice*? And for how many more years will anyone still be able to read Shakespeare in his early modern English? Will Shakespeare be translated into basic English, as we already translate and betray Dante into modern Italian?

But more to the point and more specifically, in naming his journal *Memoria di Shakespeare,* Agostino Lombardo was imposing on us the task of reflecting on the very idea of memory itself, starting with Shakespeare as its object. We know that the genitive case (*Memoria di…*) is always ambiguous in and of itself – are we dealing with an objective genitive? Or a subjective genitive? If subjective, the invitation will exhort us to deal with Shakespeare's own memory: how much he remembers; and therefore our task as scholars shall be to investigate the mnemonic capacity of our author: how much he actually and voluntarily uses the past, understood as the literary heritage he has at his disposal; if and how he is aware of how much literary matter, the language, the imagination, the tradition of antiquity, deposits in him. In this case, we may be asked to count and recount the conscious, voluntary quotations from past literary material that he preserves in his language, even in the form of "scraps, orts, fragments", which we scholars in the guise of antiquarian academics, or superfine investigators, will need to trace and retrace in order to reconstruct the heritage he conveys to us. And to interpret the ways in which he transforms it. A beautiful task, I do not deny it. Like true detectives, which we scholars sometimes aspire to be as interpreters of literary texts, we try to seek out traces of the presence of tradition in our author.

But if objective, that genitive will turn the search towards another sense, towards a tracing of the unconscious memory and persistence of the classical past in Shakespeare, in the direction of recovering that

which surfaces involuntarily, because the language carries it, floats it in the lines or in the words he puts into the mouths of the characters he invents. For what else do we mean by 'memory', if not a legacy of images and figures from the past that metamorphose into new images through a process of recovery and re-use, of 'renewal', in fact; that proceeds by transporting fragments of 'memories', recollections that are often involuntary? Not only the result of a programmatic recovery, but undoubtedly a booty, a patrimony, a heritage of tradition to be drawn upon with freedom and respect, but without inhibitory restraints on the imagination.

Because the creative energy which moves Shakespearean language, as every scholar knows if he or she will observe faithfully, gives birth to new figurations thanks to echoes and cross-references that are not necessarily intentional, learned quotations, the result of an antiquarian attitude, I repeat; but rather images, characters, names in which a legacy of the past is deposited, and which, distorted or transformed, relaunches the creative imagination into the future. Here then is the question: what is there of Medea in Lady Macbeth? (Fusini 2023)? What's left of the Roman Coriolanus in Shakespeare's Coriolanus, what's left of Pyramus and Thisbe in the *Midsummer*?

Further, the question concerns not only the cultural heritage that Shakespeare reinvests and recycles, which indeed he does with unparalleled ease and audacity. Rather, we are interested in how and how much, from the genetic heritage that accumulates in a language more language is generated, and how that heritage grows precisely because it hybridizes…

That is how questioning "la memoria di Shakespeare" becomes a way of projecting Shakespeare into the future, anticipating the many ways in which Shakespeare is alive not only in the time past, and time present, but in the time future. Because, yes, we think it impossible to think of a time in which Shakespeare will not be here. No, we cannot think of a time when we will fully experience the death of Shakespeare. In any case, however, can there ever be a fully experienced experience of death?

There is a difference between *Gedächtnis* and *Erinnerung*, we learnt from Heidegger. A difference that is already there, in the generous, impetuous, hasty response of Hamlet, when Lord Death comes to him via the ghost of the father. At his father's intimation that he might not

remember, that he might forget what the father commands, instantly Hamlet the son answers: "Remember thee? / Yea, from the table of my memory / I'll wipe away all trivial fond records, / All saws of books, all pressures past […] And thy commandment all alone shall live / Within the book and volume of my brain, / Unmix'd with baser matter" (*Hamlet*, I.v.97-104, Shakespeare 1998). Admirable response, which suggests the way the living should, shall ever and ever respond to the dead, so that the intimation becomes a commandment, a task, a duty, an alliance.

We who live after Shakespeare, don't want Shakespeare to die. We don't want to face a time in which we might live in such a mood of impoverishment and deprivation. We know of course that it is the Other that is always dead, and that precisely from that inhuman ascertainment that is the Other who is dead, springs guilt, and the entire discourse of mourning is generated. Death is never to us simply the death of the Other: we have the problem of justifying our survival. That is why death is so indecent: it exhibits our erection over the Other's prostration. If we cannot tolerate death, it is precisely because we have come so far from the kind of primitive, direct triumph of life, which says yes to survival. We want to maintain our allegiance with the dead one, not win over him. In quoting Ovid, Shakespeare helps him to live, and in reading Shakespeare quoting Ovid, we ourselves live with them. In so doing, in fact, we do not let the dead die, and if anything we let the dead invade our life and triumph over it. So Life and Death constantly intermingle, and we have nightmares, hallucinations, ghosts… Metamorphoses of all kinds.

In the plural, *Metamorphoses* is the title of Ovid's book, a work famous like few others in the world. And very many, plural are the changes, the transformations it describes. In the singular it is an essential and in many ways salvific concept, because if there is metamorphosis, the still-image of death does not prevail. In both cases, whether in the title of the book or in the concept, the appeal of the word lies in the movement to which it alludes. And it is certainly not a coincidence that in the Renaissance era, an era that above all else adores the sinuosity of movement, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is so plundered in poetry, in painting. In a seminal book in the history of literature, *The Gods Made Flesh. Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (1986), Leonard Barkan rightly began his exploration of the Ovidian text from Velazquez's painting, *The Spinners*, or the fable of

Arachne, which brilliantly exposes the principle that weaves together the Ovidian text, namely a weaving of Chinese boxes. Or if you like, matryoshka-style, in the Ovidian text stories spring up one after the other in an exhilarating proliferation, moving and stirring and pervading and impregnating the mind of the poet, who feeds off ancient fables to his own mind, and the mind of the reader. Something not dissimilar happens to the mind of the poet Shakespeare, who in his writing very often uses the same process of *mise en abyme*.

Indeed, it is so; Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a book that has had an enormous influence on the art of the West, an influence equal to the Bible, the other great text of the literature of the West that nurtured our literary language. In Shakespeare's case, we readers are presented with an astonishing miracle: we discover that a writer can also be a ventriloquist. That is, Shakespeare speaks in Ovid's voice: it is Ovid's voice that resonates in his poetry, and prose. Shakespeare's, though, is not an operation of imitation, but one of recreation. Shakespeare paraphrases, rewrites, interprets, changes, transforms, and in so doing invents a new language, which intoxicates us with pleasure. *Encore et encore*.

Shakespeare is Shakespeare, we know how dismissive he can be *vis-à-vis* his sources, how free he feels in changing, how free he feels in sifting, in ordering afresh the material and especially in reading into the source an internal nexus that is often lacking in the source itself.

In the case of the Roman plays, Shakespeare chooses his authority, Plutarch; but he treats him with astonishing nonchalance. He has no scruples about creating an entirely new personality for a minor character and, in the process, no hesitation in disregarding the hints that he finds and asserting quite the reverse. We know, I repeat, not only that he alters greatly the characters of Plutarch's narrative, but that he also makes completely new additions. And we accept this. Shakespeare is Shakespeare, I repeat: Shakespeare is a writer – he finds his theme in the process of writing, as always is the case with a true writer. Not even for a moment, I believe, in writing *Julius Caesar*, or *Coriolanus*, did Shakespeare think he might want to write a political play, like Brecht would do.

If in *Julius Caesar* it is indisputable that Shakespeare depends on Plutarch, at the same time it is impossible to exaggerate how much

he alters and adds. And it is absolutely fascinating to observe the instinctive skill with which he transforms narrated episodes into the form of dialogues and scenes. He has to choose and decide certain critical points and not others and dramatize those, and rearrange around them what he considers of greater importance, and of course to bridge in some way the gaps in between. He has to select the pregnant moments, he has to decide which are going to be the ganglia in which a number of threads, or filaments gather.

The selection, the assortment and the filiation of the data are all important. What he leaves out, of course, is just as important. Or the way in which he manipulates the flight of time. Or the way he breaks and re-arranges certain data that in Plutarch are given in a different sequence, into a narrative sequence, a paratactical, anonymous sequence. The description of the prodigies, the apparition of the ghosts, the strangeness of the portents acquire a more intense awe, a dramatic quality precisely because Shakespeare individualizes them. Just to give an example, in Act I, scene iii we have Casca meeting Cicero, and describing to him with gusto and in full detail the terrible night preceding Caesar's death. Shakespeare clearly takes pleasure persisting in the extraordinarily pregnant description, and if he does so it's because he uses Casca's panic in a dramatic way, in order to induce in us spectators and readers the same fears. It really is as though we feel them ourselves.

Equally interesting is how freely, while writing the *Dream*, he uses his source – which is Lucius Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* or *The Golden Ass*. Before writing *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Sister M. Generosa is absolutely sure and convinces us that Shakespeare must have read the story either in the original Latin, or its translation by William Adlington, published in 1566. Surely, she maintains, there is "a paralleling of ideas" (Generosa 1945, 198). For sure he quotes the story of Psyche, as though he had certain archetypal traits in mind; so much so that the Shakespearean dream becomes in part an example of what Northrop Frye designates as displaced myth (Frye 1961). My impression is also that Shakespeare does not organize the play so much in order to match the structure of the myth, but rather that he plays with the mosaic of the myth after having broken it down into its original pieces. The pleasure for Shakespeare being that of re-arranging them in the way that suits him best.

That of *heredity*, *heritage*, is a political and philosophical theme – how smoothly the past passes into the future through the loins of the Father. Again, it is the Oedipal theme: a central theme to the very idea of canon. With his usual independence in drawing material from his sources, Shakespeare mostly avoids borrowing literal phrasing, so to speak, from the story of *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius, but from his use of certain terms it is clear that he knows the Latin text. He certainly knows William Adlington's preface to his 1566 translation, which was reprinted for the third time in 1596. In Shakespeare's rewriting, aspects of Venus and Psyche are fused together in the person of Titania. While Cupid plays a triple role and appears in Oberon, Puck, in the Indian boy. Oberon is manifestly a Cupid figure. His lieutenant Puck has additional properties beyond his folk characteristics. When Venus calls Cupid to take revenge on Psyche, who did not pay her due attention, Apuleius describes his nature in terms that suggest traits that not by chance reappear in Puck.

Shakespeare, as the exemplary modern poet, creates uniformity out of multiplicity. Since he cannot put the entire world on the stage, he must compress it into a single, awesome event. But the unity he arrives at, when he succeeds, is not purely ideal, it is creative, imaginative, in the sense that it is the only necessary means by which he is able to bring forth a self-sustaining aesthetic illusion. It has nothing to do with the dictates of neoclassicism, and ultimately depends on the power of the poet – and that he is in the deepest sense – to transcend any category of perception and insist on his own measure of time and space. Even where Shakespeare seems to take too many liberties, with his telescoping of time and abrupt accelerations of action, it turns out that he is being faithful to ordinary human experience. Time and space, we know, are not absolute. The internal clock ticking as the drama unfolds may not be synchronized with the watches we wear as we sit in the playhouse – but Shakespeare is able thereby to convey a deeper psychological truth.

Contrary to Greek tragedy, born of myth that remains abstract and universal, Shakespeare's theatre, the roots of which lie in the popular carnival plays of the Renaissance, discloses his turbulent world in all its vibrancy and individuality and disparity. But although Sophocles and Shakespeare, Aeschylus and Shakespeare, Euripides and Shake-

speare – just to repeat comparisons already made – may be outwardly dissimilar, we know, we have been taught to meditate on that difference. They share a spiritual kinship that all geniuses share: they are true not only to nature, but also to the culture from which they emerge. It's not by chance that they all have been interpreted as mouthpieces of the collective soul of their different nations, expressing universal thoughts and sentiments, manners and morals. And in each case, for each of them, their art has been considered a development of indigenous species of expression. Though their purpose – the manufacture of theatrical illusion, the creation of creatures of the mind – is the same, their means are necessarily different. Nevertheless, each dramatic form has its own legitimacy, and so might any other literature that is independent and faithful to its national character. The individual quality of each drama, of each separate universe, without a doubt accompanies time and place and composition throughout all the plays. So yes, we might call Shakespeare Sophocles' brother, or Euripides' brother, or Aeschylus' brother, but precisely only where and when we realize how dissimilar he is, only to be inwardly wholly like them.

The creative energy that moves Shakespeare's language – as every scholar knows – gives birth to new figurations thanks to echoes and references that are not necessarily intentional, cultivated quotations, the result of an antiquarian attitude; but rather images, characters, names in which an inheritance of the past is deposited, which, distorted, re-launches the creative imagination in the future. Here then is the question that I ask again: what is there of Medea in Lady Macbeth? What is there of the Roman Coriolanus in Shakespeare's Coriolanus? What is there of Pyramus and Thisbe in the short *entr'acte* in *Midsummer*? The question is not only relative to the cultural heritage that Shakespeare reinvests and recycles, as indeed he does with unparalleled ease and audacity. Rather, we are interested in how and how much it is generated from the genetic heritage that is accumulated in a language. And we wonder about how that heritage grows and hybridizes.

We know: Shakespeare is a poet. Not only because he is the author of the *Sonnets*, the *Venus*, and the *Lucrece*. No, Shakespeare is "the maker, the ποιητης, he is the myriad-minded creator of Imogen and Iago" (Rylands 1952, 99). Quite rightly so. George Rylands describes perfectly well the kind of poetic energy which is proper

to Shakespeare's language, where every word is a picture, "a motion picture". The word 'energy', he adds, is never to be found in Shakespeare, "but in 1599 we find it as a technical term for vigor of expression". "Of course Shakespeare harnessed his poetic energy to lifting the Globe Playhouse, Hercules and his load too", insists Rylands (Rylands 1952, 99). But what is more interesting to us is the way his imagination works, how his nature is "subdued to what it works in, like the dyer's hand" (Sonnet 111).

So much so that every word in Shakespeare can become the atom of poetic energy informing his plays. Every word, every image, goes through a metamorphosis. A word – like the word 'honour' in *Julius Caesar* – can become the atom of poetic energy informing the play, as any attentive reader can notice.

Quite rightly so. But here again, 'honour' comes from Plutarch, but Shakespeare plays it in another tune. 'Metamorphosis' is essentially Ovid, but in another key. In both cases, be it Plutarch, or Ovid, they are Plutarch and Ovid refracted through Shakespeare, and so made new, made different, redirected or 'turned' (Tanner 2010, 116). This concept of 'turning' introduced by Tanner helps us to understand the creative movement through which language goes in the 'ripresa', be that re-take, or re-collection. In the movement there is an obliquity, and a fertility, that at the same time repeats, and varies. Change is implicit in the return. So much so that Tanner can affirm few pages after that Shakespeare gives us quintessential Ovid, but "in another key". (Tanner 2010, 118). Tanner grasps the mystery, or rather approaches with confidence and instinct – this is the gift of the great reader he is – the beating heart of the metamorphosis taking place in Shakespeare's writing, or rather his re-writing. Rather than quoting, Tanner understands, Shakespeare reactivates the creative mechanism of the poetic word.

It is precisely this movement that interests me, the way in which Shakespeare takes, re-takes, repeats and varies themes and motives – the movement itself of repetition consisting precisely in a kind of psychological experiment, if you like. Or better, in a linguistic experiment. Or even better still, in an act of symbolization, which we constantly repeat from the moment we are born. In this sense, literature is a sort of mirror. As kindly Hamlet teaches us while talking to the actors, the text – which he presents to the actors, his piece of writing, the very words

he has invented for them to recite on scene – is, yes, a sort of mirror, but not in the sense that it reflects an external reality, but in the sense that it is made of "words, words, words" (and the tone here is important. One must remember the tone of contempt he uses with Ophelia…) but… But precisely those words in this case will make something happen – even unmask regicide. Yes, words can be daggers…

Yes, words move, words kill, words make things happen…

Precisely those same words will move us readers, us spectators… We readers and spectators know and feel and recognize that for the time of our reading, for the time of our being there watching, we become Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ophelia, Hamlet… We readers, we spectators are involved in an act of symbolization. In an act of symbolic repetition. In this sense, the action I the spectator see on stage, or the words I the reader read on the page are mirrors in which I the spectator, I the reader reflect myself. Or more precisely, they give me to myself. Isn't this magic? Isn't it narcissistic in itself, the movement that the words initiate?

But more to the point, is it not the very movement of our coming into the world?

Is it not how we human beings position ourselves in relation to the symbolic dimension?

That is precisely, Lacan would suggest, how we as infants find our way into the human community via the power of the signifier. It is also how through repetition, through narcissistic projection in the mirror, in search of the Same, we may happen to meet the Other, and following the trace of the Same may stumble on *différance*.

Before Tony Tanner, Coleridge insisted on the particular aspect of the relation of Shakespeare to the past. On the way he 'turns' what he takes into something else. That is what Coleridge calls Shakespeare's peculiar excellence; that is, his capacity to repeat and change at the same time. So much so that throughout the whole of "his splendid picture gallery", we find individuality everywhere, mere portrait nowhere. In all his various characters, Coleridge claims, we still feel ourselves communing with the same human nature, which is everywhere present "as the vegetable sap in the branches, sprays, leaves, buds, blossoms, and fruits, their shapes, tastes, and odors". Speaking of the effect, i.e. his works themselves, "we may define the excellence of *their* method as consisting in that just proportion, that union and interpenetration of the universal

and the particular, which must ever pervade all works of decided genius and true science", so Coleridge asserts (Coleridge 1907)[1].

For *Method*, Coleridge explains, implies *a progressive transition.* Not by chance this is the meaning of the word in the original language, the Greek *Μεθοδος* literally being *a way,* or *path of transit.* "Methodical" in this context, Coleridge explains, is a term that is quite interesting in itself, because in a world of continuous change, there cannot be transition without continuity, transition meaning not a dead arrangement, but an arrangement that has in itself a principle of progression. For what truly deserves the name of *Poetry* in its most comprehensive sense is precisely the movement that originates in the mind of the poet, a movement that in itself is an instinct; or if you like in itself is nothing but the form, in which the idea, the mental correlative of what finds expression, first announces its incipient germination in the poet's own mind, and thence proceeds the striving after unity of principle through all the diversity of forms, with a feeling resembling that which accompanies our endeavors to recollect a forgotten name; when we seem at once to have and not to have it; which the memory feels, but cannot find.

We all experience that, don't we? asks Coleridge. And we say yes, it is so. And yes "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet" would reply to Shakespeare's Theseus, as his thoughts present to him the one form, of which they are but varieties. Very much in the same way "water and flame, the diamond, the charcoal, and the mantling champagne with its ebullient sparkles, are convoked and fraternized by the theory of the chemist", as Coleridge explicates. And insists furthermore: isn't this, in truth, "the first charm of chemistry, and the secret of the almost universal interest excited by its discoveries?" (Coleridge 1907).

More to the point, we might continue, is it not the same sense of a principle of connection proper to the mind of the poet? In Shakespeare nature becomes poetry, through the creative power of a fertile mind which has that very special metamorphic, miraculous power. A mind divine in this, that both creates and is created. A mind poetic, in the very Greek sense of the word. The poet is a maker, for he 'makes' in the very actual sense of using materials of the past: recycling.

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1   I paraphrase throughout this final section from various passages from Coleridge 1907.

Memory, voluntary and involuntary: the essays
Iolanda Plescia

It is the purpose of this concluding section of the introduction to take up the preceding reflections and provide a brief presentation of the essays which we are very pleased to publish here. My co-editors, Nadia Fusini and Massimo Stella, and I began planning this issue of *Memoria di Shakespeare* a few years ago, during a conversation about translation. All three of us have practiced or taught translation: Fusini, translator into Italian of Shakespeare, Virginia Woolf, and many other authors of English literature, is also the general editor of the Feltrinelli Shakespeare series, which is publishing new editions of the entire Shakespeare canon; Massimo Stella has especially translated from ancient Greek, producing a new Italian version of *Oedipus Rex*; I have translated Shakespeare and taught Shakespearean translation for a number of years. Our journal has paid special attention to Shakespeare's relationship to his sources over the years, culminating in an important issue edited by Silvia Bigliazzi in 2023 on *Senecan Shakespeare* (Bigliazzi ed. 2023). It seemed to us, however, that the special kind of textual transmission that we call translation might be a good way to think about the issue afresh: it is stimulating to think of Shakespeare as being engaged in a broad sense in *translatio*, i.e. the transposition of themes, motifs, plotlines, and characters into a new culture, whilst early modern England as a whole was immersed in the activity of *translatio imperii* and *translatio studii*, developing its own sense of national identity in dealing with the inspiration, but also the burden, of the past, and with classical models of empire and power still emanating from the linguistic prestige of Latin.

The category of translation offered useful parallels in coming back to the age-old question of Shakespeare's relationship to his classical sources, for our own experience in the field had taught us that while critics have often rightly emphasized the idea of choice, selection, deliberation, translation is also a question of involuntary memory. It is also a question of blurred recollections of other translations of the same texts, turns of phrase in our "lessico famigliare", our everyday vocabulary, of the sources behind the 'original', of new sources – personal readings, favourite authors – lurking behind the newly produced target texts. Here, of course, we are really talking about influence, "a secret, invisible, and insensible flowing" (as Bigliazzi

has it commenting on Miola 2003, in Bigliazzi 2023, vii). Or, as Nadia Fusini aptly puts it in the opening words of this introduction, dedicated to the foundational and operational motto of our journal, itself devoted to memory: "that which surfaces involuntarily, because the language carries it, floats it in the lines or in the words [Shakespeare] puts into the mouths of the characters he invents" (viii-ix).

On a practical level, translation also often relies on a sort of 'muscle memory', an experience which allows the translator to 'solve' linguistic units as a whole, relying on similar problems encountered in the past, and introducing the original elements that make the new text distinctive (on this, see in particular Laetitia Sansonetti in this issue). We would like to suggest that this process bears similarities to the ways in which authors work with sources, and that it is useful to conceptualize this kind of metamorphosis following Jakobson's well-known tripartite structure, as instances of interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic transposition (Jakobson 1959): the essays here included explore, in fact, how Shakespeare used sources translated into English, or through languages of mediation such as French and Italian, as well as the ways in which the source material is transformed into the language of drama, a wholly new semiotic system which still relies on words but also goes well beyond them (Elam 1980).

Our two opening essays are a perfect case in point for this final problem, focused as they are on *Troilus and Cressida* and the archetypal war story of Troy, to remind us, as Monica Centanni has it, that "Shakespeare is presenting a version that is new and unprecedented, because the questions and problems that the dramatist has to face are different from those of a writer or a poet. Shakespeare does not have to tell a story: he has to make it happen in the theatre" (Centanni 2024, 12). In "*Troilus and Cressida*: Classical Past and Medieval Heritage", Piero Boitani shows us into Shakespeare's workshop from the privileged vantage point of a lifetime of study devoted to the Troilus and Cressida story, providing a brief and poignant interpretation of two selected junctures. "Suspended between Homer and Chaucer" (2), the play in fact offers two key moments (III.ii, V.ix) that are re-read by Boitani as the product of an unreconcilable relationship between source materials, which creates conflict and, as a result, supremely theatrical moments: one which effectively "destroys" the courtly love code of the Middle Ages (6), another which completely deconstructs,

and again – Boitani insists on this word – "*destroy[s]* classical epic after having *destroyed* medieval courtly love" (8, my emphasis). The utter lack of reverential attitude towards the classical / medieval past is what lends particular "realism" and "modernity" (8) to this play, but change and transformation can also be seen as the necessary by-product of movement between different semiotic systems, in which omissions are as significant as inclusions with regard to plot construction and genre definition (a notable problem in *Troilus and Cressida*). Writing from her point of view as a classicist, Monica Centanni ("The Gauntlet of Mars, the Glove of Venus: A Reading of William Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*") considers not only the direct sources which critics have long debated, but also theoretical sources, such as writing and treatises, which Shakespeare and his contemporaries may have known and used "to derive a set of coordinates that functioned as 'instructions for writing a drama'" (13). Achilles' tent, Troilus' gift to Cressida, places and objects are used by Shakespeare to 'make theatre', Centanni newly shows: but here again, conflicts among sources, or subsequent innovations to tradition, are just as fruitful for the dramatist – for example, the two different versions of Troilus as having been killed while still a child by Achilles, or in a martial context as a warrior, during a duel (after Achilles had been rejected as a lover by Troilus). The latter enables a version of Troilus as a "son of Mars" (40), as well as a further innovation by Shakespeare who gives us a Troilus who effectively does not die at the end of the play: "everything is still open, everything is possible" (42), and it is the theatre that makes it so.

Two successive essays go on to consider the linguistic texture of Shakespeare's comedic writing and his poetic production, to uncover clues to his relationship with his sources which rely on linguistic choices – or, perhaps, at times hazy school-day memories? – rather than, or in addition to, structural elements. In "A *Magnus Amator* in Illyria: Shakespeare and the Memory of Plautus", Michael Saenger investigates links between the *Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night* and Plautus' *Menaechmi*, drawing on his fertile past work on *interlinguicity*, the existential condition of being 'between' languages, or "the cohabitation of multiple languages within a conversation, a sentence, or a creative work" (46). Saenger argues that Shakespeare may have been indebted to Plautus in a linguistic as well as a thematic sense, showing that the word "great" (*magnus*) "carries demonstrable lineage between the two

plays" (45): the life of a word from the past on Shakespeare's stage reveals gaps between the 'original' and its English translations (65), spaces which it is important to explore. It is through this exploration that the questions asked in this essay come to the fore, questions that can be said to run through the issue as a whole: "[W]hat texts were on the table when Shakespeare was writing? What texts were plausibly operating in his recent or distant memory? On what levels was a text recalled: by words, plot, thematic structure, or some other aspect of its verbal life? If one source text affected more than one Shakespearean text, was the first act of poetic recollection part of the memorial experience that was the basis of the creation of the second? That is to say, was the remembering remembered?" (46). In "'Venus and Adonis' (1593): Shakespeare's Translation Memory", Laetitia Sansonetti, drawing on her own extensive expertise in translation and polyglossia in early modern England, turns to Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* to reflect on the extent to which Elizabethan translation practices, themselves a product of schoolroom training, with its insistence on memory techniques and exercises in repetition and translation, informed the narrative poem adapted from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. She shows how our own terror and fascination with the 'machine' turn in translation, as well as "current breakthroughs in computer assisted translation" can be thought of "as developments in storage and information retrieval" (71), problems which were of course well known in the Renaissance: translation memory relies on a mental archive which early modern scholars were intent on honing and developing in the classroom. Sansonetti shows how Shakespeare alludes to schoolroom exercises and in particular to the "double translation" method encouraged by Roger Ascham, arguing that "[Shakespeare] composed his poem thanks to memories of grammar-school translations of Ovid, and aimed to trigger similar memories in his readers" (70). It is a perspective that contemplates but also goes beyond Shakespeare's personal memory to consider how the author relied on shared memory and collective cultural practices.

Two further essays delve into the question of time and temporalities, from different perspectives, enriching our understanding of the past as something that does not merely resurface in a new work of art but which is constitutive of its present and future. Carla Suthren ("A Wrinkle in Time: Shakespeare's Anachronic Art") proposes an investigation of the "anachronic" as a vocabulary that "might be usefully brought to

bear on the complex temporality (or temporalities) involved in classical reception, which necessarily 'remembers' the classical past in one form or another" (95-96). Here remembrance is seen as an active process in the dynamics that creates the conditions for a relationship between the present reader and the ancient text (97): Suthren looks at the links between *The Winter's Tale* and Greek romance, perceptively suggesting that a "chain" of reception or substitution effectively "brings the past into the present" (98), and that in Shakespeare's play the oracle from Apollo and the 'statue' in the final scene can be read as moments which "fetch" or "create" textual memories of the classical past, "projecting it into the future" (96). Such a moveable connection between temporalities can constitute an interesting point of departure to read Martina Treu's wide-ranging essay, which is written from a very different perspective, that of a historian of the contemporary reception of classical theatre, but which also benefits from the reminder that the past is always with us. In "From Greece to Straford, and Back. Teatro dell'Elfo: Half a Century with Shakespeare and the Classics", Treu turns to the Italian theatre scene to look at the collective history of the Teatro dell'Elfo in Milan and the ways in which adaptions from classical texts have intertwined, throughout the entire life of the theatre, with Shakespearean plays, creating interesting echoes and remembrances, allusions rather than direct quotations. The essay discusses the unifying aesthetic and theoretical premises of fifty years of scenic practice, aiming not to identify "causal links" between classical and Shakespearean adaptations, but focusing on the "new life" that those adaptions have found on stage at different turning points of the theatre's activity (118).

Finally, the essay which concludes the monographic section of this issue is published in Italian as an homage to the bilingual history of *Memoria di Shakespeare*, which began with Agostino Lombardo as an Italian-language journal, and then evolved thanks to the tireless work of Rosy Colombo into a new online life, where it has attracted an international readership and has therefore published essays mostly in English. Our co-editor Massimo Stella offers an essay on the relationship between Shakespeare and the classical past in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, which addresses many of the questions posed in the preceding essays by showing how it is in language – in this case in the words *immortal* and *falliable* with their respective antonyms, *mortal* and *unfalliable* – that we can find evidence of recep-

tion of the past not only as textual memory of the classical tradition, but also as 'real presence': one that can be glimpsed, rather than openly viewed, through word play, puns, lapses (of the tongue and of memory), and through linguistic error. It is a fitting conclusion to our work on this issue, in which we have been interested in memory, recollection, tradition as ghosts that are not only conjured up voluntarily, but that constantly resurface uninvited, silently co-habiting within texts, and with us, modern readers or spectators of Shakespeare.

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