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JO ANN CAVALLO

**BOIARDO'S EASTERN PROTAGONISTS
IN GIUSTO LODICO'S "STORIA DEI PALADINI DI
FRANCIA"**

“The words and voices are from the past.
But to quote is not only to see them as
before and beyond, but to bring them to
the present and take them to yourself.”
Ruth Finnegan, *Why Do We Quote?*

In refashioning the pillars of Italian medieval and Renaissance chivalric poetry in his prose compilation *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, Giusto Lodico engaged with his sources in a manner that ranged from direct citation of words and phrases, on the one hand, to the insertion of newly invented narrative material, on the other. This essay focuses on one aspect of this adaptative process – Lodico's presentation of three Eastern protagonists invented by Matteo Maria Boiardo – in order to gain some insight into how this mid-nineteenth-century Sicilian writer used both quotation and creative elaboration to convey a particular world view to his readers. The *Orlando Innamorato* offers an apt test case because of its

multifaceted depiction of both traditional and newly minted characters originating beyond the borders of Western Europe.¹ In seeking to tease out the underlying attitudes behind Lodico's direct citation and original development of Boiardo's Asian characters, this comparative analysis focuses primarily on questions of gender (Angelica), and genre (Gradasso), as well as genealogy and geography (Marfisa).

An initial issue to address is which edition of Boiardo's poem use in the comparison. Francesco Berni's *rifacimento* was still printed regularly throughout the nineteenth century, but Antonio Panizzi's famous London edition of 1830-1831 was followed by editions published in Lipsia (1833) and Venice (1842).² Although the text of the *Storia dei paladini* closely follows Berni's *rifacimento*, Lodico may have also consulted an edition not reworked by the Florentine poet. For the purpose of this essay I have opted to provide quotations from an early nineteenth-century edition of Berni's *rifacimento* as well as Panizzi's edition. My analysis will thus also draw attention to some of Berni's earlier interventions when relevant.

1. *Giusto Lodico*

Lo Dico's refashioning of the *ottava rima* verses of the *Orlando Innamorato* and other chivalric texts into modern prose recalls the prolific fifteenth-century Florentine Andrea da Barberino and anticipates the twentieth-century authors Gianni Celati and Italo Calvino who creatively adapted the *Orlando Innamorato* and *Orlando Furioso*, respectively. First

¹ See J. Cavallo, *The World beyond Europe in the Romance Epics of Boiardo and Ariosto*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2013.

² See N. Harris, *Bibliografia dell' "Orlando innamorato"*, Modena, Panini, 1988, vol. I, pp. 255-266 and pp. 283-287.

published between 1858 and 1860, the work was an immediate success.³ Its popularity led to an extended version by Giuseppe Leggio with the revised title *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Re Pipino fino alla morte di Rinaldo*, first published in 1895-1896 and frequently reprinted in the following decades.⁴ Sicilian puppeteers universally adopted the *Storia dei paladini* as the principal source of their repertory, and copies of the text also circulated in both northern Italy and the Americas.⁵

In contrast to its unparalleled status in Sicilian popular culture, the *Storia dei paladini* was virtually ignored in academic circles since its inception. The folklorist Giuseppe Pitrè, while acknowledging its appeal among the masses, quipped that a man of learning would need the patience of Job to get through it:

“Io non so chi degli uomini di lettere in Sicilia abbia mai svolto questi quattro volumi per la semplice curiosità, almeno, di vedere il filo della storia e i libri dei quali giovossi il compilatore: nè di ciò oso farne colpa a nessuno, perché ci vuole una gran pazienza, una pazienza veramente giobbica, per leggere tante migliaia di fitte pagine di quest'uomo, illustre presso i leggicchiatori d'un libro solo, ma punto conosciuto dai dotti, coi quali egli non ebbe mai da far nulla.”⁶

³ See G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, Palermo, Gaudiano, 1858-1860, 4 voll. Very few copies are extant worldwide of this first edition, which I was able to consult thanks to Rosario Perricone, director of the Museo internazionale delle marionette Antonio Pasqualino, and to the Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo. All citations are from this edition.

⁴ See G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Re Pipino fino alla morte di Rinaldo*, a cura di e con aggiunte di G. Leggio, Palermo, Giuseppe Leggio, 1895-1896, 3 voll..

⁵ See J. Cavallo, *La Bibbia dei pupari nella terra del Maggio: “La Storia dei Paladini di Francia” ed altre edizioni cavalleresche popolari siciliane nella tradizione maggistica toscano-emiliana*, in “Il Cantastorie”, 43, s. III, 68, 100, gennaio-giugno 2005, pp. 53-55.

⁶ G. Pitrè, *Usi e costumi, credenze e pregiudizi del popolo siciliano*, Catania, Clio, n.d., vol. I, p. 186 (originally published as Id., *La letteratura cavalleresca popolare in Sicilia*, in “Romania”, XIII, 1884, pp. 315-398). Pitrè went on to acknowledge that he had undertaken the massive task of reading the work.

It is only more recently that a small number of scholars of Sicilian puppet theater have given serious attention to the *Storia dei paladini*, not only identifying its many medieval and Renaissance sources and pointing out storylines that appear to have been invented by Lodico himself, but also more closely examining instances of creative elaboration and charting the text's overall impact on Sicilian popular culture.⁷

We may gain an initial sense of Lodico's *forma mentis* in the two-page prologue that encapsulates his aims, the only extant document in which he speaks directly to his readers. He begins by asserting his didactic motivations: the majority of the stories are intended "pel sostegno della cattolica Chiesa" and to fashion "un cuore veramente morale, e religioso". Yet the division that Lodico then goes on to delineate is not that between Christians and "Infedeli", "pagani" or "Saraceni" (as the non-Christians are interchangeably called), but rather between "l'orgoglio, e la superbia" on the one hand and humility on the other. After warning us that we shall see characters "all'apice della potenza" who fall "negli abissi", Lodico references the Gospel in providing the moral dictum that "l'umile sarà esaltato, e chi si esalta sarà umiliato". He then explains that he is following "un'ordine logico progressivo" in uniting stories that have been passed down for centuries, including by contemporary storytellers who, however, have only a vague notion of the entire cycle. Acknowledging that he has privileged verisimilitude over poetic flourish, Lodico humbly positions himself as a mediator of "debole ingegno" who, eschewing elegant speech and metaphors, aims to entertain those who would like to hear enjoyable stories and whose minds have not been equipped to approach the "libri de'

⁷ See A. Pasqualino, *L'opera dei pupi*, cit., pp. 66-68; Id., *Il repertorio epico dell'opera dei pupi*, in "Uomo e cultura", II, 1969, pp. 59-106; Id., *Rerum palatinorum fragmenta*, a cura di A. Napoli, Palermo, Edizioni Museo Pasqualino, 2018; A. Carocci, *Il poema che cammina: La letteratura cavalleresca nell'opera dei pupi*, Palermo, Edizioni Museo Pasqualino, 2019, pp. 29-64.

dotti” directly.⁸ Thus an initial focus on religious creed is immediately superseded by distinctions regarding both moral character and social status along a symbolically vertical axis. In both cases, the lowly is given greater value: humility is praised in opposition to pride and the unlearned populace is the intended recipient of Lodico’s literary efforts.

2. *Strangers in Paris*

It is unlikely that Lodico’s nineteenth-century working-class readers had any more direct contact with the inhabitants of far Eastern lands than Boiardo’s fifteenth-century courtly audience, but that does not mean that either constituency would have lacked interest in the world beyond their homeland. Prior to Angelica of Cathay’s emergence on the Parisian scene, Boiardo describes the preparations for an international joust proclaimed by Charlemagne. Whereas the *Innamorato*’s narrator imagines he is addressing an aristocratic elite gathered around him, Lodico inserts a crowd of common people into the fictional account and imagines the festivities from their point of view. In so doing, he underscores the active role of “il popolo” as onlookers several times in the space of a single sentence (“vago di mirare”, “quanto più osservava”, “vedeva”, “sene vedeano”, “la vista”, “guardavano”).⁹ This narrative variation will allow Lodico to elaborate on Boiardo’s original as he records the reaction of the local inhabitants to the foreign visitors in the streets.

The attention of Boiardo’s narrator is drawn to the paramounted steeds decked with remarkable trappings as well as gold and other jewels:

⁸ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d’Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., 1858, vol. I, n. p.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 1859, vol. III, p. 9 (VII, 1).

“ [...] i gran destrier con paramenti,
con *foggie disusate, altere e strane;*
e *d'oro, e gioie tanti adornamenti*”;

“ [...] corsier con paramenti,
con *fogge nuove peregrine e strane:*
d'oro e di gioje tanti addobbamenti”.¹⁰

Lodico likewise remarks on the elaborately adorned horses – indeed almost verbatim – but he reduces Boiardo’s (and Berni’s) triple adjectives to a single one underscoring their novelty rather than their exoticism: “mille e mille cavalli [...] di *nuove fogge* vestiti [...] taluni [...] anche *d'oro e di gioie adorne*”.¹¹ At the same time, he adds a detail missing in both Boiardo’s original and Berni’s *rifacimento*. The onlookers’ attention is drawn first of all to “i diversi costumi” worn by the foreigners. The people’s excited observation of the foreign visitors gives Lodico the occasion to convey their state of mind not as fear or distrust, but rather as increasing curiosity: “Il popolo vago di mirare [...] andava di qua e di là girovagando, e quanto più osservava quegli stranieri, tanto più la curiosità gli destava”.¹² This envisioning of a wide-eyed crowd actively seeking to learn more about whatever is new and coming from afar fits well with Lodico’s tendency to convey more information about Boiardo’s Eastern protagonists than was provided in the original poem.

In this opening scene, the sheer exceptionality of the spectacle leads both authors to turn to the impossibility topos. Yet whereas for Boiardo the vision was beyond what anyone’s voice could describe (“Che no’l potrian

¹⁰ M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, in “*Orlando Innamorato*” di Boiardo – “*Orlando furioso*” di Ariosto, with an essay on the romantic narrative poetry of the Italians, Memoirs and Notes by A. Panizzi, London, William Pickering, 1830, vol. II, p. 4 (I, i, 11, 3-5); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Boiardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, Società tipografica de’ Classici Italiani, 1806, vol. I, p. 6 (I, 14, 3-5). My emphasis.

¹¹ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d’Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 9 (VII, 1). My emphasis.

¹² *Ibidem*.

contar le voci umane”, “Che non bastano a dirli voci umane”),¹³ Lodico maintains instead that the sight was too much for the people’s eyes to take in (“da abbagliare la vista”).¹⁴ The encounter with representatives from foreign and luxuriant cultures is thus not only intensely relished, but also potentially overwhelming. Even more so than in the original poem, then, this festive moment anticipates the appearance of a stupifying princess from the Far East who astounds all the men present in Charlemagne’s banquet hall.

3. *Angelica*

Angelica of Cathay’s arrival in Paris is one of the most iconic moments in Italian literary history – quoted and imitated in subsequent fiction, not only via the character of Armida in Torquato Tasso’s epic *Gerusalemme Liberata*, but also, spilling over into the historical novel, via the Angelica-characters in Tomasi di Lampedusa’s *Il Gattopardo* and, most recently, Salman Rushdie’s *The Enchantress of Florence*. The scene also remains one of the most frequently staged episodes in Sicilian puppet theater today. Although the *Storia dei paladini*’s rendition of Angelica’s appearance closely follows the *Innamorato* precedent, Lodico nonetheless also refashions the princess’s initial actions and interactions in meaningful ways.

First of all, in line with his attentiveness toward the more humble classes shown in his prologue and description of the local population in the streets, Lodico makes a point to state that among those who arrived in Paris

¹³ M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p. 4 (I, i, 11, 6); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 6 (I, 14, 6).

¹⁴ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d’Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 9 (VII, 1).

for the joust were not only non-Christian foreigners, as in the *Innamorato*, but also the lowest-ranking castellans: “non trascurarono a venire sin’anco i più infimi castellani, oltre di molti signori di pagania”.¹⁵ He then makes sure that both categories of outsiders are acknowledged in the context of Angelica’s proposed joust. Whereas Angelica’s original challenge to all males presentis expressed through the conventional binary opposition of Christian and Saracen (“Pagano, o Battezzato”, “cristiano o saracino”),¹⁶ Lodico’s Angelica expresses eligibility through the general categories of status and faith: “di qualunque grado sia e di qualunque fede”.¹⁷ Her invitation thus transcends not only religious creed but social class as well.

Another area in which Lodico intervenes in the narrative is to provide a new motivation for Galafrone’s plan to capture all those present at Charlemagne’s court. Although Boiardo offers no specific explanation as to why the ruler of Cathay is so keen to imprison knights from across the globe that he sends his two beloved children on this mission, Berni hints at Galafrone’s desire to showcase his victory as a motivating factor: “E de le spoglie loro orni il suo regno. / Quest’è di Galafron tutto il disegno”.¹⁸ Lodico, therefore, could have simply followed suit, especially since the prologue maintains that his work condemns the vice of hubris. Instead, he devises a concrete incentive for the Cathayan sovereign, imagining that he wants to take revenge on the Christians for having killed so many of his men in a previous war: “nemicissimo dei cristiani, da molto tempo ha nudrito in cuore un’antica vendetta per molti suoi congiunti uccisi nella

¹⁵ Ibidem, pp. 8-9 (VII, 1).

¹⁶ M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p. 8 (I, i, 27, 5); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 10 (I, 30, 5).

¹⁷ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d’Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 11 (VII, 1).

¹⁸ *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 14 (I, 46, 7-8).

guerra di Mambrino”.¹⁹ Since Mambrino’s earlier invasion of France was itself a response to Rinaldo’s having killed his brothers, Lodico thereby brings to the fore the potentially unending nature of revenge. This motive, moreover, connects Boiardo’s new Eastern characters to an earlier storyline from another source,²⁰ supplies Galafrone with a credible motivation to make his current action more plausible, and provides an epic background for the romance features of Angelica’s unexpected appearance and challenge.

The principal area in which Lodico introduces meaningful variation, however, concerns gender roles. Boiardo underscores Angelica’s agency right from the opening canto when she enters Charlemagne’s royal hall proposing a joust with her brother and offering herself as the prize. Lodico tempers Angelica’s self-reliance while bolstering the protective status of her male sibling. The first hint of this process is the use of two new verbs in the description of Angelica’s entrance:

“Però che in capo de la sala bella,
quattro giganti grandissimi e fieri
intrarno, e lor nel mezzo una donzella,
ch’era *seguita* da un sol cavalieri”;

“Però che in capo de la sala bella
quattro giganti ognun piu grande e fiero
entraro, e loro in mezzo una donzella
accompagnata d’un sol cavaliere”;

“ [...] giunsero nella sala quattro terribili giganti che in mezzo *teneano* una donzella *scortata* da un solo cavaliere.”²¹

¹⁹ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d’Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 12 (VII, 1).

²⁰ See *I cantari di Rinaldo da Monte Albano*, a cura di E. Melli, Bologna, Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1973.

²¹ M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p. 6 (I, i, 21, 1-4); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Boiardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 9 (I, 24, 1-4); G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d’Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 10 (VII, 1). My emphasis.

The use of “scortata” rather than “seguita” or “accompagnata” gives greater agency to Angelica’s brother, while the addition of the verb “teneano” (predicate of the “giganti” who thereby become the subject of the clause) suggests the giants’ power over Angelica’s position. This subtle shift in control will become more apparent as events unfold.

When we come to learn of Galafrone’s plan to capture the knights, both Boiardo and Berni underscore Angelica as the key to her father’s success:

“Ma sopra tutto Angelica polita,
volsè, che seco in compagnia n’andasse;
perchè quel viso, che ad amar invita,
tutti i Baroni a la giostra tirasse,
e poi che per incanto a la finita,
ogni preso Barone a lui portasse”;

“Ma non si fida tanto in cosa alcuna,
quanto in quella beltà ch’al mondo è una.

Per compagnia gli ha dato la sorella
acciò che col bel viso e modi accorti
conduca i paladini armati in sella
dietro a se in campo innamorati e morti.”²²

Lodico, by contrast, diminishes Angelica’s importance with respect to her father and brother in two ways. First, prior to mentioning Angelica’s role, he alludes to a new Arthurian-like episode of his own devising in which Galafrone acquired the magical weapons of the lance and ring after his exceptionally valorous son Argalia came of age. According to Lodico, the Cathayan king obtained the lance by disarming a statue erected in a cave three centuries before, at the same time securing the ring which had

²² M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol.II, p. 11 (I, i, 40, 1-6); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 14 (I, 45, 7-8 e 46, 1-4).

been placed on the statue by the wizard Atlante. While this additional background information aligns with Lodico's tendency to furnish explanations to make the plot more comprehensive and believable for his curious readers, it also diminishes Angelica's upcoming role by first drawing the reader's attention to Galafrone and Argalia. Second, when Lodico does turn to the princess, he embeds the mention of her in a sentence focused primarily on Galafrone's handing down of the magic objects to his son. As a result, Angelica's attractive face is treated as an additional weapon rather than as the uppermost factor in the king's strategy:

“Or Galafrone tutto ha donato al giovane Argalia con animo di spedirlo in questa terra, e dopo averlo ben armato gli diede in compagnia la sorella acciò con quel vago e singolare sembiante potesse condurre i paladini al suo valore per indi mandarli nelle Indie al padre.”²³

Lodico's reduction of Angelica's role with respect to her male relatives becomes even more sustained in the following episode of the attempted rape, following a precedent set by Berni. In Boiardo's original, Malagise seeks out Angelica with the intention of killing her on the spot after having foreseen the danger of Charlemagne's death and the Frankish court's demise. Finding her asleep, however, he is so overwhelmed by her beauty that he forgets his mission and plans to assault her sexually. Although he uses magic intended to place the giants and maiden into a deep sleep, thanks to the spell-breaking ring Angelica wakes up when the wizard attempts to embrace her and acts quickly to restrain him (“Tenialo stretto in braccio tutta fiata”). By contrast, Argalia is comically presented as bumbling and slow-witted: “Argalia sonnacchioso si sveglione, / e

²³ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 12 (VII, 1).

disarmato uscì del padiglione”.²⁴ The sleepy and unarmed knight first delays approaching them out of despair and subsequently starts beating Malagise with a club while yelling about his sister’s honor rather than engaging in effective action. Angelica, on the other hand, remains focused and instructs her brother to adopt a more efficient strategy:

“Subitamente che egli ebbe veduto
con la sorella quel cristian gradito,
per novità gli fu il cor sì caduto,
che non fu d’appressarsi a loro ardito;
ma poi che alquanto in sè fu rivenuto,
con un troncon di pin l’ebbe assalito,
gridando: ‘tu sei morto traditore,
che a mia sorella fai tal disonore.’

Essa gridava ‘Legalo, germano,
pria ch’io lo lasci, che egli è negromante’.”²⁵

Berni’s *rifacimento* already provides a precedent for Lodico to refashion the episode by rehabilitating Argalia at the expense of Angelica’s resourcefulness. Rather than call for her brother, the maiden simply screams in fear. At the sound of her cries Argalia awakens and rushes to the tent. The fact that he is unarmed has nothing to do with his sleepiness, no longer mentioned, but rather conveys the speediness with which he comes to his sister’s aid:

“E al grido si sveglia l’Argalia:
salta del padiglion senz’armadura,
e verso *la sorella sua* s’invia:
vedela *in braccio al cavaliere stretta*,
e vagli addosso pien d’ira e di fretta.”²⁶

²⁴ M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p. 13 (I, i, 47, 6-8).

²⁵ *Ibidem* (I, i, 48 e 49, 1-2).

²⁶ *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 16 (I, 54, 4-8).

Presenting the struggle between Angelica and Malagigi from Argalia's perspective, not only does Berni imagine that the brother arrives without delay but now it is the maiden who is grasped tightly by the "cavaliero." Nonetheless, at least for the sake of narrative consistency, it was necessary for Angelica to be the one pinning down Malagigi in order for Argalia to be able to tie him up. Therefore, without any explanation as to how the switch came about, Berni goes on to note that Angelica "teneva quel cristiano / che gli duol d'esser stato sì arrogante".²⁷

Lodico paraphrases Berni's assertion that Argalia acted swiftly and likewise depicts Angelica as a damsel in distress held by the "cavaliero": "Argalia quantunque lungi da quel luogo, corse senz'armi, e scorgendo quel cavaliere che teneva stretta la sorella diede di piglio ad un bastone e gridando si pose a percuoter Malagigi". He follows Berni, moreover, in making the switch without explanation: "Angelica intanto pregò il fratello che legasse subito colui, mentre essa lo teneva stretto fra le braccia". In keeping with his penchant for narrative detail, Lodico also adds that "Malagigi faceva forza per sfuggire dalle mani di Angelica; però costei lo teneva in modo stretto che la forza di Sansone sarebbe stata vana".²⁸ Perhaps overcompensating for Malagigi's earlier alleged hold on the damsel, these additions restore – albeit belatedly and temporarily – the maiden's prominence in the episode.

In the *Innamorato*, Angelica continues to act with quickness and confidence. After ordering her brother to tie up the wizard, she confiscates the latter's book of spells, conjures up his demons, and then authoritatively commands them to transport him to Cathay with a message to her father that she is the one responsible for his capture:

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 17 (I, i, 56, 5-6).

²⁸ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 14 (VII, 2).

“Da la mia parte ce lo presentiate,
che di sua presa io son stata cagione:
dicendo a lui, che poi che questo è preso,
tutti gli altri Baron non curo un ceso.”²⁹

Thus the maiden not only remains in complete control, but also wants her father to know about it. In this instance Berni follows suit in highlighting Angelica’s agency through her actions and instructions to the demons:

“E da mia parte a lui lo presentiate:
dite ch’ il presi, e son d’ opinione
ch’ ormai con queste genti battezzate
far non bisognerà lunga quistione.
Io sol aveva paura di questo;
or ch’ egli è preso, stimo poco il resto.”³⁰

Lodico, however, shifts some of the merit even here from Angelica to her brother. He first slows down the action, claiming that Argalia’s encouragement was necessary for Angelica to continue summoning the demons (“quella incoraggiata dal fratello proseguì a scongiurare”); he then implies Angelica’s fear by depicting her voice as trembling (“con tremante voce”).³¹ When the maiden begins to speak, her original words to the demons in the first person singular (“io voglio che portiate”, “io vo’ che voi portiate”)³² disappear and are replaced by the simple imperative (“prendete”). Moreover, whereas Boiardo’s Angelica not only takes credit for the wizard’s capture but also asserts the magnitude of her achievement

²⁹ M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p.14 (I, i, 52, 5-8).

³⁰ *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 18 (I, 59, 3-8).

³¹ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d’Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 14 (VII, 2).

³² M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p. 14 (I, i, 52, 1); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p.18 (I, 59, 1).

for Galafrone's entire enterprise, Lodico's maiden is, on the contrary, self-effacing. She omits stating her role in the capture, and her prognosis of the situation replaces the first-person singular with a plural verb that implicitly includes her brother ("stimiamo lieve impresa superare gli altri").³³

Lodico's Argalia continues to steal the limelight from Angelica in the aftermath of the averted crisis. In Boiardo's original and Berni's *rifacimento*, it is Angelica who subsequently awakens the giants with Malagise's book. In the *Storia dei paladini*, however, it is Argalia who awakens the giants with the spell-breaking ring that in the meantime he has inexplicably reappropriated.³⁴ Nevertheless, at the very end of the episode, the awakened giants apparently hear a version of events that corresponds more closely to Angelica's role in Boiardo's original than to either Berni's or Lodico's own refashioning. In recording the giants' reaction, Boiardo and Berni had simply noted their awe at the danger averted ("Ogn'uom stringe la bocca ed alza il ciglio, / forte ammirando il passato periglio", "Maravigliati, anzi attoniti stanno / Come quei che del fatto nulla sanno").³⁵ Lodico, while not specifying exactly who debriefs the giants, points out that their amazement is due specifically to their learning what Angelica had accomplished: "come poterono udire quanto Angelica avea fatto rimasero stupefatti".³⁶ Thus, despite giving Argalia a greater role than even Berni did while relating the action, in the end Lodico appears to

³³ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 14 (VII, 2).

³⁴ See M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p. 14 (I, i, 53, 5-6); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 18 (I, 60, 5-6); G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 14 (VII, 2).

³⁵ M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p. 14 (I, i, 53, 7-8); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 18 (I, 60, 7-8).

³⁶ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 14 (VII, 2).

overcompensate for a second time by making Angelica the undisputed champion, even if it contradicts his own account of events.

Whereas part of the difference between Boiardo and Lodico can be attributed to Berni's prior variations, Lodico goes further than Berni to assert Argalia's valor and to paint Angelica as a damsel in distress rather than in charge of her own defense. At the same time, however, at two conclusive moments he seems to go out of his way in the opposite direction to credit Angelica for her agency, first for exhibiting Samsonian strength holding down Malagigi and subsequently for having acted as the primary agent in his capture. This double presentation of Angelica as both utterly iconoclastic and yet in need of her male sibling may reflect a tension between Lodico's aim to stay true to the spirit of the original poem and his compliance with the gender norms prevailing in both the depiction of most female characters in his chivalric sources and the conception of women in his own culture.

4. *Gradasso*

Gradasso is introduced in the *Innamorato*'s opening stanzas as an example of those powerful lords who put their kingdoms at risk in a vain attempt to acquire something beyond their reach. Although his stated intention to win Ranaldo's horse and Orlando's sword evokes a romance motif, his invasion of territories at the head of a large army on his way from south east Asia to France recalls instead the vast militia and extensive destruction typical of the epic. Gradasso continues to alternate between the two genres in the course of the poem. He takes on a decidedly romance character after conquering Paris, acknowledging that his true goal is not to vanquish kingdoms but to attain Baiardo and Durlindana, and he chivalrously departs without further ado after losing to Astolfo in a duel.

Moreover, when he later decides to return to Paris, he leaves behind his army and travels alone, repeatedly participating in romance adventures along the way. Nevertheless, once back in France he seems destined to become involved in the epic storyline of Agramante's war. Picking up the threads of Boiardo's unfinished poem, Ariosto will increasingly align Gradasso with the epic plot to the point that he will be one of the three Saracens representing Agramante's north African kingdom in the final battle of Lipadusa.³⁷

Boiardo's Gradasso is so confident in his own abilities that he believes he can not only attain Durlindana and Baiardo, but also conquer Christendom and even the entire earth single-handedly:

“Perchè *lui solo* a combatter s'avvanta
 contra al re Carlo ed a tutti i guerrieri,
 che son credenti in nostra Fede Santa;
 ed *ei soletto* vincere e disfare,
 quanto il Sol vede, e quanto cinge il mare”;

“Perchè *sol egli* a combatter si vanta
 contra il re Carlo e tutti i suoi guerrieri
 che credon ne la fede nostra santa;
egli soletto vincere e disfare
 quanto il sol vede, e quanto cigne il mare.”³⁸

Lodico echoes Boiardo in emphasizing Gradasso's unlimited confidence in his own valor: “asseriva che *egli solo* bastava per annientare la potenza di Carlo e dei suoi seguaci”, “si congedò disponendosi a partire *solo*”, “*egli solo* volea il vanto di combattere contro Orlando e Rinaldo”.³⁹

³⁷ See L. Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, a cura di C. Segre, Milano, Mondadori, 1976, pp. 1064-1072 (XLI, 68-102).

³⁸ M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p. 3 (I, i, 7, 4-8); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 5 (I, 10, 4-8). My emphasis.

³⁹ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 8 (VII, 1).

He even reinforces the point by imagining Gradasso's exclamation in response to a general who doubted his army's ability to defeat Frankish forces: "*To solo* basto a mettere in rovina tutto il mondo".⁴⁰ Indeed, Lodico's Gradasso is not only prone to hyperbolic boasts, he is so infected with "superbia" that he compels his subjects to adore him under the name of a new Mars: "La superbia compagna sempre della vittoria avea cotanto inorgoglito il cuor del terribile Gradasso sino a farsi adorare da' suoi sudditi sotto il nome del novello Marte".⁴¹

Boiardo does not provide any specific motivation for Gradasso's desire for Rinaldo's horse and Orlando's sword beyond his overreaching personality. Given the centrality of *hubris* to Gradasso's character as well as the attention given to this character trait more generally in the prologue, Lodico could have easily chalked up the king's intention to single-handedly attain Baiardo and Durlindana to foolish pride. Alternatively, he could have likened Gradasso to his distant relative Galafrone, whose treacherous plan was attributed to an ongoing cycle of revenge in the epic mode. Yet neither Gradasso's inflated ego nor any perceived offenses committed by Charlemagne's paladins are to blame for his reckless trek across the globe. Instead, Lodico devises a completely different motivation for Gradasso that is presented through an elaborate new romance plotline set in Asia.

Although Boiardo does not divulge anything about Gradasso's history prior to the king's departure from Sericana, he does provide one piece of information in line with the desire to attain Orlando's sword and Rinaldo's horse. As it turns out, the king already possesses armor that once

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Ibidem, pp. 5-6.

belonged to none other than Samson.⁴² Lodico, attributing this biblical affiliation to Berni in a footnote, devises an episode in which Gradasso wins Samson's armor and subsequently learns of the existence of the famous sword and horse, thereby tying together in one story all three chivalric objects.⁴³

In the *Storia dei paladini's* initiatory adventure, Gradasso comes upon Samson's enchanted armor hanging from the top of an "abete", guarded by four valorous giants under the command of a fairy named Sibilla. After defeating the giants, Gradasso's task is to cut down the tree with one stroke at the point in which the trunk is the thickest.⁴⁴ This adventure not only depicts him in the guise of a romance hero prior to his departure for Paris, but it more specifically likens him to the *Innamorato's* own Frankish protagonist Orlando.

Gradasso's undertaking recalls specific narrative details from Orlando's romance adventure in the garden of Falerina in Orgagna. Both gardens are presided over by a *maga* who enters into conversation with the hero. In the *Innamorato*, Falerina initially harbors no love for the paladin, who previously received instruction from a book given to him by another damsel, but she ultimately offers to help him after his victory. Lodico's garden is under the control of Sibilla who advises Gradasso what he must and must not do throughout the adventure. The entrance to both gardens is blocked by fearsome creatures that the hero must confront in order to penetrate the space: both the dragon outside Falerina's garden and the giants outside Sibilla's garden are referred to by the same term

⁴² See M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol. II, p.79 (I, iv, 71, 3); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 89 (IV, 79, 3).

⁴³ See G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 6 (VII, 1).

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

(“guardiano”, “guardiani”). Moreover, giants likewise appear inside Falerina’s garden: after defeating various creatures, including four monstrous animals, Orlando must overcome first a single giant and then two giants who attack him simultaneously).⁴⁵

Both adventures culminate in the cutting down of a tree in a similar gesture. In order for Boiardo’s Orlando to destroy the enchantment, he must cut a branch from the top (“un ramo di cima”) of a tree but his strategy is to cut it all down at once right from the trunk. Lodico’s Gradasso is instructed to cut down the trunk of a tree that holds Samson’s armour at its top (“alla cima”).⁴⁶ Failure spells death in both cases, yet both knights are able to cut the tree in one fell swoop. In addition, in both cases the knight’s successful tree-cutting leads the fairy to reveal a new opportunity for him to demonstrate his valor: Falerina tells Orlando about the men and women imprisoned in Circassia whereas Sibilla tells Gradasso about Orlando’s sword and Rinaldo’s horse. These declarations prompt both knights to set out on a new mission.

Gradasso’s adventure likewise has elements in common with Mandricardo’s exploits at the *Innamorato*’s Fonte della Fata.⁴⁷ Here, too, there is a fairy who is in command and who points the hero toward a new goal once he successfully completes his initial task. After Mandricardo has fought to acquire Hector’s armor, which was also hanging from a tree (one that, however, did not need to be cut down), the fairy tells him that he must attain none other than Orlando’s sword. This will subsequently place

⁴⁵ See M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1831, vol. IV, pp. 90-93 (II, iv, 74-85); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. II, p.312-315 (XXXIII, 73-84).

⁴⁶ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d’Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 6 (VII, 1).

⁴⁷ See M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1831, vol. V, pp. 194-216 (III, i 15 – ii, 38); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. IV, pp. 160-185 (LXI, 18 – LXII, 43).

Gradasso and Mandricardo at odds with each other near the Fonte del Riso where they find themselves fighting over a sword that is out of their reach. Lodico's invention of this new episode for Gradasso thus does more than raise his stature as a chivalric romance hero on par with Orlando and provide a concrete motivation for his goal to win Orlando's sword and Rinaldo's horse. It also creates a more compelling backstory for the eventual rivalry between Gradasso and Mandricardo since now both characters undergo romance challenges before being told by fairies to acquire the coveted sword.

This adventure is not, however, the only romance backstory that Lodico devises to introduce Gradasso. Indeed, the king of Sericana had previously traveled to Russia to liberate a princess from the clutches of a giant and thereby win her for himself. Fortune would have it that he finds her in the woods as she is in the process of being liberated by another knight in combat. He thus challenges the victor to battle with a statement of his intentions: "da che mi sono invaghito di colei per cui tu combatti, lasciai il mio impero per venire a conquistarla".⁴⁸ Travelling from afar and challenging another knight to single combat in the middle of a forest for the love of a lady indubitably mark Gradasso as an Arthurian-style knight-errant from the outset.

The outcome of the ensuing battle, however, somewhat deflates Gradasso's stature. Although he believes he can overcome the entire world, as noted previously, the king is knocked to the ground by his opponent, the valorous knight Cladinoro. Moreover, he would have been killed had not the lady, a Russian princess named Rosetta, stopped Cladinoro from delivering the fatal blow. And since it turns out that Cladinoro is in love

⁴⁸ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., 1858, vol. II, p. 284 (V, 9).

with a different damsel, Gradasso gets to marry the girl despite having lost the duel. After a wedding in Russia, Gradasso happily brings his bride back to live with him in Sericana. Thus, when he decides to set out for France to obtain a horse and sword from two Frankish paladins, he is already familiar to Lodico's readers as an intrepid (albeit not invincible) chivalric romance hero.

Boiardo recounts that although the king of Sericana plans to win Durlindana and Baiardo on his own, he has nevertheless elected to take along with him 150,000 knights for no apparent reason ("nè questi adoperar facea pensieri", "non perchè avesse già di lor mestieri").⁴⁹ Although Lodico follows suit in underscoring the superfluousness of the vast numbers with a near paraphrase ("non già perchè ne avesse bisogno"),⁵⁰ he also introduces some variation. First, in keeping with the compilation's greater acknowledgment of the non-elite, Lodico specifies that the troops are comprised of both knights and infantrymen ("cavalieri e pedoni").⁵¹ Second, whereas Boiardo does not offer any explanation for Gradasso's ostensibly gratuitous entourage, Lodico again inserts a story to provide a credible explanation. As it turns out, Rosetta is concerned for her husband's safety after hearing of his plans because she knows from experience that he can be overcome in battle. Indeed, she alludes to his earlier defeat to another knight, realistically deflating all the rhetoric about his vaunted ability to conquer the world. It is in order to allay his wife's fears that Gradasso comes up with the idea of amassing a multitude of

⁴⁹ M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1849, vol. II, p. 3 (I, i, 7, 3); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. I, p. 5 (I, 10, 3).

⁵⁰ G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. III, p. 8 (VII, 1)

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

soldiers: “e poichè tu temi che io ne vada solo, per compiacerti porrò tanta gente in campo da far impallidire tutti i cristiani”.⁵²

Whereas in the *Innamorato* Gradasso's praiseworthy display of chivalric comraderie when he loses to Astolfo increases his standing as a romance figure, Lodico's added background stories establish the king's romance pedigree and vulnerability right from the very start. These early adventures, moreover, pointedly privilege Gradasso's romance connotations in the *Innamorato* rather than looking ahead to the character's more pronounced turn to epic in Ariosto's continuation. The character of Gradasso in the *Storia dei paladini* was evidently so likable that puppeteers were loath to relate his treacherous stabbing of Brandimarte from behind in the *Furioso's* battle of Lipadusa.⁵³ Instead, traditional puppet plays customarily depicted the warrior Sobrino carrying out this deed so uncharacteristic of a chivalrous romance hero.

5. *Marfisa*⁵⁴

Unlike the other non-European protagonists invented by Boiardo, Marfisa is not associated with any particular territory or country. All we are told about her when she appears in Albraca as Galafrone's ally is that she is a warrior queen whose prowess is unmatched in the East and that she has

⁵² Ibidem.

⁵³ See L. Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, cit., p. 1071 (XLI, 99).

⁵⁴ An earlier version of this section was presented as *Marfisa trasfigurata: Boiardo, Ariosto e Giusto Lodico* at the conference *L'“Orlando Furioso”: figure dell'ambiguità dell'epica cavalleresca*, organized by the Museo internazionale delle marionette Antonio Pasqualino, Palermo, November 19-20, 2009.

sworn not to remove her breastplate until defeating in battle the great kings Gradasso, Agricane, and Charlemagne.⁵⁵

In his 1505 continuation of Boiardo's poem, Niccolò degli Agostini recounted that Marfisa was the twin sister of none other than the famous Ruggiero who would give rise to the Estense dynasty.⁵⁶ Boiardo had already recounted the birth of Rugero and an unnamed twin on the coast of Libya when retelling the tragic love story of the north African female warrior Galaciella and the Christian knight Rugero based on an Italian version of the medieval French epic *Aspremont*. He gives no indication, however, that the unnamed infant would turn out to be Marfisa. Ariosto accepts Agostini's twist to the story and further develops the background narrative of Marfisa's transfer from Northern Africa to Persia as well as her vicissitudes in that eastern realm. According to Ariosto's *Atlante*, Marfisa was kidnapped at a young age by "una masnada / d'Arabi".⁵⁷ After her baptism and 'rebirth' as a Carolingian paladin near the end of the *Furioso*, Marfisa herself fills in the rest of her story in a brief but shocking summary. After the Arabs abducted her at the age of seven, they sold her as a slave to the king of Persia. She later killed the unnamed sovereign to preserve her virginity when she became his intended sexual prey. Subsequently, she slaughtered his entire court and drove out all the ruler's wicked progeny, and by the age of eighteen had seized seven more kingdoms to boot.

⁵⁵ See M. M. Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, cit., 1830, vol.III, p. 125 (I, xvi, 28-30); *Orlando Innamorato di Matteo M. Bojardo rifatto da Francesco Berni*, cit., vol. II, p. 10 (XVI, 27-29).

⁵⁶ See N. degli Agostini, *Orlando innamorato del S. Mateo Maria Boiardo, Conte di Scandiano, insieme co i tre Libri di Nicolo de gli Agostini, nuovamente riformato per M. Lodovico Domenichi*, Venezia, Comin da Trino, 1560, vol. II, p. 45 (IV, x, 71, 7-8).

⁵⁷ L. Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, cit., p. 943 (XXXVI, 63, 3-4).

The *Storia dei paladini's* modification of Marfisa's early biography takes us back to her infancy with a story that contradicts the *Furioso's* claim that the maiden had been kidnapped by Arabs and sold as a slave as a young girl. According to Lodico, after Galaciella dies giving birth to her twins on the shores of Northern Africa, Atlante takes charge of ensuring the survival of the orphaned infants. As he travels about searching for a wetnurse, he encounters King Miriante of Persia who had been participating in the African king Agolante's war in Aspramonte. When the Persian king asks to adopt one of the babies, Atlante willingly cedes the female to him. Marfisa is thus raised in the Persian court with all the privileges of a member of the royal family.⁵⁸ While the maiden is young, the king tries to instill in her a love for needlework, yet she displays the nature of her mother by showing more interest in learning to use the lance and sword. By the age of fifteen she not only surpasses her master, but convinces him that she could overcome the most valorous knights around.

Whereas the only thing we know about Ariosto's Persian king is that he attempted to violate Marfisa's virginity and paid for his lechery with his life, Lodico provides a much fuller picture of the maiden's vicissitudes once she comes of age. First, Lodico specifies that it is only once Miriante has become old that he decides he wants to marry Marfisa, thus giving the impression that his desire for the maiden is a sudden lapse in judgment due to old age: "Or accadde che Miriante già divenuto vecchio si pose ad immaginare di volere tenere per isposa Marfisa".⁵⁹ The king thereby claims to have bought her in Africa and raised her with the intent of marrying her. Second, Lodico develops Marfisa's character through rational thinking reported in the maiden's own words. Upon hearing that the king is

⁵⁸ See G. Lodico, *Storia dei paladini di Francia cominciando da Milone conte d'Anglante sino alla morte di Rinaldo*, cit., vol. II, p. 98 (IV, 15).

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

compelling her to become either his queen or his concubine, she reflects on her situation rather than acting instinctively. Given the affront to her honor, she concludes that Muhammad would not accuse her of patricide: “Maccone avrà veduto l’animo perfido del mio supposto genitore, e se il mio ferro crollerà sul capo di lui non potrà con ragione incolparmi di parricidio”. After verifying that Miriante is not her biological father, Marfisa further reasons that justice would indeed be served by killing him and preserving her virginity: “Giacché sei cotanto crudele da voler macchiare l’onore di una fanciulla che allevasti come figlia, è giusto che tu muoia, ed a me rimanga quel fiore verginale che ho finora meco tenuto”.⁶⁰

The circumstances following Miriante’s death likewise depart from Ariosto’s precedent in order to offer a more nuanced portrait of both Marfisa and her environment. Rather than killing others indiscriminately in a fit of rage, Lodico’s Marfisa claims that an unknown Indian woman had killed the king during the night and aims to assume the rulership of the kingdom as the legitimate heir without further violence. Contrary to the *Furioso*, moreover, there is no driving out of the king’s progeny because he is otherwise childless. The inhabitants turn against Marfisa, however, after a rumor spreads that she killed the sovereign in an attempt to seize power and an old minister claims she was a slave purchased by Miriante rather than his daughter. Resisting arrest, Marfisa single-handedly kills all those who assault her until the population is seized with such fear that it judges her to be innocent (“giudicolla innocente”) and proclaims her their queen: “Viva la nostra regina Marfisa”. With the cessation of violence, Marfisa “da regina fu condotta in gran trionfo alla reggia”.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ibidem, pp. 99-100 (IV, 15).

⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 101 (IV, 15).

Lodico gives further concrete form to Marfisa's backstory through a detailed account of her actions as ruler. Rather than going on to seize seven additional kingdoms as in the *Furioso*, she is initially focused on ruling well: "cominciò a governare da prudente per cattivarsi l'animo dei suoi sudditi".⁶² Like a wise sovereign, Marfisa fortifies the Persian city of Heris (located in today's northern Iran) by building high walls and she enlists the finest youth into the military so as to assemble an army of 150,000 knights and infantrymen within a month. When she does expand her kingdom, it is not due to an unstoppable violent impulse as in the *Furioso*, but instead to the ill-advised aggression against her on the part of the other sovereigns. Miriante's cousin creates an alliance with neighboring kings in order to attack the city of Heri and depose Marfisa, but their army of 300,000 men is defeated. It is her victory over these allied forces that leads Marfisa to become the empress of vaster territories, and she also rules in a way that earns the consent of the people. Marfisa's greater attention to the chivalric code in this extended episode is more in line with the original character invented by Boiardo than the irrational warmonger that emerges in the latter pages of the *Furioso*.

Lodico's backstory not only develops a more Boiardan version of Marfisa while elaborating and transforming an occurrence alluded to by Ariosto, it also offers a more multifaceted depiction of the non-Christians who interact with her. Instead of a stereotypically lecherous sultan, we encounter a caring adoptive father who loses his moral compass in his old age. The local inhabitants, absent in Ariosto's version except as abstract kingdoms to subdue, here are shown with all their strengths and weaknesses: at first easily deceived by a resentful minister, they are practical in accepting Marfisa's sovereignty and subsequently cognizant of

⁶² Ibidem.

her merit to the point of being happy under her rule. In the end, it is the people's approval, rather than Marfisa's military might, that gives legitimacy to her power.

When in the *Storia dei paladini* Marfisa arrives in Albraca as an ally of Galafrone (that is, at the moment in which Boiardo first introduces her in his poem), the reader is already familiar with her genealogy and her backstory. Lodico recalls both her current role as a great Eastern ruler and her identity as the daughter of a Christian hero ("figlia del prode Ruggiero di Risa"),⁶³ thereby keeping her Christian provenance fresh in the reader's mind. Indeed, Lodico's anticipation of Marfisa's future Christian identity may be one of the reasons he creates a detailed backstory distancing her from Ariosto's more extreme and violent character.

In sum, Lodico creatively departs from his source material in refashioning Marfisa's early history in the *Storia dei paladini*. Although he follows the essentials of her genealogy and backstory as devised by Agostini and Ariosto – relating her origins not as a flashback or subsequent disclosure but rather as part of the events occurring in real time prior to the onset of the *Innamorato* narrative – he creatively elaborates the narrative in order to offer a more nuanced, Boiardan portrayal of both Marfisa and the non-European world around her.

In conclusion, although in the prologue Lodico dismisses any claim to originality and insists that the stories he has brought together in chronological order are the same ones passed down for centuries, his own personal point of view nevertheless comes across in both the material he chooses to include and in his original narrative contributions. The question then becomes what is the attitude communicated through Lodico's

⁶³ Ibidem, vol. III, p. 163 (VII, 25).

presentation of Boiardo's Eastern protagonists. His addition of psychological motivations and background stories make the plot more realistic and verisimilar along the lines of a nineteenth-century novel. Yet the present textual comparison has aimed to examine how his narrative choices and elaborations also affect the representation of the non-Christian world. Lodico does not appear interested in Orientalizing or demonizing the Eastern protagonists invented by Boiardo. On the contrary, he treats them as unique individual characters with universal personality traits that are understandable to him and his intended audience. In the case of Angelica, he alternates between conveying the unconventional autonomy of Boiardo's princess and refashioning her in line with the gender norms prevailing in his day. While he follows the narrative action closely, sometimes with almost verbatim phrasing, he also creates moments that lessen the damsel's agency while enhancing her male sibling's role. In presenting Gradasso, a character that alternated between epic and romance in the *Innamorato* and veered toward an epic denouement in the *Furioso*, Lodico invents an initial cluster of adventures that establish his fundamental adherence to the romance genre from the outset. His presentation of Marfisa's backstory is more constrained since two of Boiardo's continuers had already imagined her genealogy and early history. While not erasing the main outline of the storyline he inherited, Lodico nevertheless freely refashions Marfisa's history in a way that replaces Ariosto's snapshot of a lecherous and despotic East with a more developed and balanced account of both the warrior maiden herself and her adopted Persian environment in keeping with the cosmopolitan spirit of the *Innamorato*.

Lodico's work is of interest not only because of its inestimable popularity for over a century through its readership, public recitations, and implementation as the authoritative text for Sicilian puppet theater, but also

as a window into mid-nineteenth century Sicilian culture and as a chapter in the reception of Boiardo and other medieval and Renaissance chivalric authors.

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