

# *Ancient Literature: Survival and Rewriting*

**Piero Boitani**

**2016 Balzan Prize for Comparative Literature**

**Balzan GPC Adviser:** Peter Kuon

**Project Director:** Piero Boitani

**Deputy Supervisor for Part 1:** Corrado Bologna

**Substitute Project Head for Part 2:** Emilia Di Rocco

**Researchers:** Part 1: Francesca Galli, Daria Farafonova; Part 2 Sub-Projects: (1) Giulio Guidorizzi (coordinator), A.M. Bowie, E. Cook, L. Edmunds, D. Elmer, J. Pòrtulas, C. Tsagalis; (2) A. D’Agostino (coordinator), M. Capaldo, A. Cipolla, S. Romani, S. Lunardi, F. Conca; (3) Giacomo Berchi; (4) Michele Corradi; (5) S. Halliwell, M. Fusillo; (6) Silvia Montiglio; (7) P. Fedeli (coordinator), G. Vannini, A. Fo, P. Habermehl, R. Dimundo, B. Santorelli, A. Stramaglia, A. Cafagna; (8) A. Barchiesi and L. Graverini (coordinators), W. Keulen, L. Nicolini, S. Mattiacci, I. Marchiesi; (9) F.R. Berno, R. Pierini, C. Torre, Remo Bodei; (10) M. Lapidge, P. Chiesa; (11) C. Bologna, M. Mocan; (12) F. Santi, J.Y. Tillette, I. Caiazza, L. Pagani, M. Giani, V. Mattaloni

**Affiliated Institutions:** Part 1: Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI), Lugano; Part 2: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, Rome

**Period:** 2017-

Piero Boitani is Emeritus Professor of Comparative Literature at “Sapienza” University, Rome, from which he retired in 2018. He taught at the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) in Lugano until 2019. His research project on ancient literature is comprised of two sections: 1. Beginning and Creation: Re-Writing; 2. The Survival and Rewriting of Ancient Classics. The first was completed by the end of October 2019.

## **Part 1: Survival and Rewriting of the Bible: Beginning and Creation**

Institution: Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI), Lugano

Coordinator: Piero Boitani (Emeritus, Comparative Literature, “Sapienza” University, Rome; formerly Professor, USI)

Deputy supervisor: Corrado Bologna (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa; USI)

The subject of Creation for two postdoctoral scholarships stemmed from Boitani's long-term interest in the subject, including numerous publications. Two postdoc USI students received a 40% scholarship for two years beginning in 2017. Work between the two postdoc students was divided as follows: 1. The theme of Creation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; 2. The theme of Creation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Most interesting developments took place in the first nine months of research. Francesca Galli (fourteenth century) found fascinating new material on literary and figurative creations of the Empyrean before Dante. 'Scientific' descriptions of the 'third realm' elaborated by Franciscan masters and preachers with great experience in the fields of optics and perspective, such as John Peckham, Bartolomeo da Bologna, Roger Marston, Matteo d'Acquasparta, and the anonymous author of the Commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sententiae* of MS lat. 16407 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France), are the most interesting instances. A critical edition by Francesca Galli of Bartolomeo's work as well as of the French manuscript is in progress. Meanwhile, the results of the research have been published in an essay by Francesca Galli in *Strumenti critici*, 35 (2020), 159-181, "Quale forma di beatitudine? La rosa dantesca e le ricostruzioni geometriche del regno celeste." Another related article by Galli is being published, with explicit acknowledgement to Piero Boitani's Balzan Project, in *Micrologus* (2021, proofs available), "The Perspectiva ad Usum Praedicatorum in Late Thirteenth Century Florence. Some Observations Based on an Examination of Codex Plut. 17Sin. 8 from the Laurentian Library."

Daria Farafonova (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) looked at the Dantean sources of Michelangelo's conception of the artist. A precise comparison between the painter's *Rime* and his oeuvre in the Sistine Chapel on the one hand, and Dante's *Comedy* on the other, goes a long way to explain this conception. At the same time, Michelangelo's "spiritualism," his reliance on Savonarola, and Joachimite influences are capital in order to understand the relationship between human and divine creation in his ideas. The results of her research have come out, with explicit mention of Piero Boitani's Balzan Project, as "Michelangelo *artista divino*. Creazione e potenza," in *Strumenti critici* 34 (2019), pp. 269-300.

## Part 2: The Classics and Their Survival

Institution: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla

Coordinator: Piero Boitani (Executive Vice President, and Director of the Fondazione Valla's Classics series *Scrittori Greci e Latini*)

Substitute Project Head: Emilia Di Rocco (Comparative Literature, Università degli Studi di Roma "Sapienza")

This five-year project started in 2017 will lead to the publication of a series of volumes by the Fondazione Valla and Mondadori, in the series *Scrittori Greci e Latini*. It will fall into several sub-projects personally directed by Piero Boitani and entrusted to scholars worldwide for research and writing. Each volume will consist of the following: 1. drafting of the critical text and apparatus; 2. translation into Italian; 3. introduction and extensive critical commentary on the work, in the tradition of the Valla series; 4. a scholarly essay on the survival of the work (possibly incorporated in the Introduction).

### *Sub-Projects*

1. *Homer, Iliad*. This is a completely new edition in six volumes by an international team of younger and established scholars, coordinated by Professor Giulio Guidorizzi (formerly Turin), who will also do the translation and write the general introduction. The editors are Professors A.M. Bowie (Oxford); E. Cook (Trinity, Texas); L. Edmunds (Rutgers); D. Elmer (Harvard); J. Pörtulas (Barcelona); C. Tsagalis (Thessaloniki), each of whom is editing four books of the work. A seminar in which the entire team will discuss the edition and the commentary was held in 2018 in Milan. Publication is now foreseen for 2023.
2. *Troy after Troy*. Two volumes coordinated by A. D'Agostino (Milan), along the same lines as *Alessandro nel Medioevo occidentale*, published by Valla in 1997. It will collect classical Greek and Latin texts later than the *Iliad*, and English, German, Scandinavian and Slavic romances from the Middle Ages to the sixteenth century. M. Capaldo (Lincei), A. Cipolla (Verona), A. D'Agostino, S. Romani, S. Lunardi (Milan) and F. Conca will collaborate on the project.
3. *Stories of Ulysses*. Edited by Piero Boitani, with the collaboration of assistant Giacomo Berchi (doctoral student at Yale University). Three volumes that will collect works regarding the figure and vicissitudes of Ulysses after the *Odyssey*, in classical, medieval and modern literature, down to our own times, with original

- texts and translations into Italian, a general introduction, introductions to each work, and a commentary. The work for the first volume is in an advanced state; a great deal of material has been found in the Rome, Cambridge, and Yale libraries.
4. Protagoras and Gorgias, *Works*. Edited (text, translation, introduction, comment) by the young researcher Michele Corradi (Aix-Marseille).
  5. Pseudo-Longinus, *On the Sublime*. Text, introduction and commentary by Stephen Halliwell (St. Andrews), with a long essay by M. Fusillo (L'Aquila) on the very important *Nachleben* of this work. The text and introduction have already been received.
  6. Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, edited by Silvia Montiglio (John Hopkins, Baltimore) with an essay on its *Nachleben*.
  7. Petronius, *Satyricon*. Two volumes, coordinated by P. Fedeli (Bari and Lincei), critical text by G. Vannini (Perugia), translation by A. Fo (Siena), commentary by P. Habermehl (Humboldt), R. Dimundo (Bari), P. Fedeli (Bari and Lincei), B. Santorelli (Bari), A. Stramaglia (Cassino) and A. Cafagna (Bari).
  8. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass)*. Five volumes, coordinated by A. Barchiesi (New York University) and by L. Graverini (Siena), text L. Nicolini (Genoa), translation L. Graverini, commentary W. Keulen (Rostock), L. Nicolini, S. Mattiacci (Siena), I. Marchiesi (Hofstra, New York). An English edition is planned with Cambridge University Press. The first volume appeared in 2019; the second is planned for 2021.
  9. Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*. Three volumes edited by F.R. Berno (Sapienza), R. Pierini (Florence), C. Torre (Milan), introduction by Remo Bodei (received).
  10. *The Martyrs of Rome*, 3 volumes edited by Michael Lapidge (Cambridge), with translations by P. Chiesa (Milan). A collection of the most important stories of the Roman martyrs brought together and published for the first time in modern days, with an introduction and commentary by one of the major specialists in the field. Text and commentary have been received; they will now have to be translated.
  11. *Arks: Noah, Covenant, Memory*. Three volumes edited by Corrado Bologna (Scuola Normale Superiore and USI) and M. Mocan (Roma 3 and USI). Five archetypes of “arks” widely diffused in Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque culture are the focus of attention here – Noah’s Ark, the Ark of the Covenant, the Church, the Body of Christ, and “arks of memory”. The texts in the selection include: (I) Ambrose, *De Noe et arca*; Hugh of St. Victor, *De arca Noe*; (II) Hugh of St. Victor, *Libellus de formatione archae*; Richard of St. Victor, *De arca mystica* I-III; (III) Richard of St. Victor, *De arca mystica* IV-V; Giulio Camillo, *L’Arca del Patto*; Athanasius Kircher, *Arca Noe in tres libros digesta*.

12. *The Poetry and Philosophy of Chartres*. The editors of this anthology in two volumes are Francesco Santi (Bologna and SISMEL, Florence), J.Y. Tillette (Geneva), I. Caiazza (CNRS, Paris), L. Pagani, M. Giani, V. Mattaloni. The texts include: (I) Bernardus Silvestris (*Cosmographia*), Thierry of Chartres (*Tractatus de sex dierum operibus*), Alain de Lille (*Sermo de sphaera intelligibili*), William of Conches («*Anima mundi*»), and (II) Alain de Lille (*Anticlaudianus* and *De planctu naturae*). Some of the texts of these volumes deal with the themes of the Beginning and of Creation.

Finally, one or two Balzan-Valla-Lincei Annual Lectures on the classics and European literature and the world, to be held in Rome at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, and in Milan. The first three Balzan-Lincei-Valla Lectures were held at the Accademia dei Lincei in Rome on 23 November 2017 by Peter Dronke (Cambridge) and Piero Boitani (Sapienza); on 29 November 2018 by Silvia Montiglio (Johns Hopkins, Baltimore) and Alessandro Schiesaro (Manchester); and on 21 November 2019 by Barbara Graziosi (Princeton) and Alessandro Barchiesi (New York University). The first two were published by Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura.

A Valla Day was planned for 7 April 2020 in Milan, with lectures by Piero Boitani, Giulio Guidorizzi, and Gioachino Chiarini, but it had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 epidemic.

### **Publications**

Boitani, Piero and Peter Dronke. *La meraviglia*. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2018.

Montiglio, Silvia and Alessandro Schiesaro. *L'oblio e l'apocalissi*. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2019.

Graziosi, Barbara and Alessandro Barchiesi. *Il ritorno e le metamorfosi di un Provinciale*. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, forthcoming 2020.