

# *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. Caiazzo, 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. The situation with Part 2 is as follows (August, 2023).

## **Part 2: The Classics and Their Survival**

Institution: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla

Coordinator: Piero Boitani (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). Due to the epidemic and the slow, contemplative work humanities scholars, the project has gone beyond the original five-year limit, and will possibly require an additional four years as new sub-projects have cropped up and older ones have passed away.

### ***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. The project is ongoing. Two complete sets of commentaries have been received and will have to be translated into Italian. However, neither the *Iliad*'s text with apparatus, nor the translation of the text, nor the general Introduction, nor the other commentary sets (four more) are yet available.
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. This dormant project has been replaced with the very important project No. 13.
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). The expected completion date is 2025.
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 work was published as a Valla edition in 2021, and an English version was published by Oxford University Press in 2022.
6. Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, edited by Silvia Montiglio (John Hopkins, Baltimore) with an essay on its *Nachleben*. The first volume was published in 2022, and the second should come out in 2024.
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). The work is still ongoing, and very near completion.
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 will come out in September 2023.
9. Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*. Three volumes edited by F.R. Berno (Sapienza), R. Pierini (Florence), C. Torre (Milan), introduction by Remo Bodei. The sub-project has been 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. The first volume will be published in 2024.
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*. The material has been received and is being edited. Publication is foreseen starting with 2025-26.
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. Caiazzo (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. The work is ongoing, with completion foreseen for the end of 2023-beginning of 2024.
  13. A replacement of sub-project 2, this highly important project will undertake a vast anthology of *Presocratics* in three volumes, edited by Laura Gemelli (formerly Zürich). Based on her own edition by Tusculum (then De Gruyter), this will be a completely new major set, updated and much enlarged, with a revolutionary approach to the subject. The first volume is scheduled to appear in November 2023, and the second in 2024.
  14. A new project on the *Oracoli caldaici*, edited by Luciano Albanese (Sapienza, Rome) and comprising for the first time ever *all* the relevant texts. The project will be ready by January 2024, with publication foreseen in 2025.
  15. An edition of Boethius, *De consolazione Philosophiae* by Peter Dronke, with translations by Michela Pereira and Piero Boitani, came out in 2023.
  16. An edition of the *Melos amoris* by the 14<sup>th</sup>-century English mystic Richard Rolle was completed by Domenico Pezzini just before he died. Together with Adele Simonetti, Piero Boitani personally worked on the Introduction, and the text is now ready to go to press.

### **Lectures**

Finally, the second part of Boitani's research project called for 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). They were published by Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura. There was then a hiatus due to the Covid epidemics, and the lectures started again in November 2022 with Anton Bierl (Basel) and Francesco Stella (Siena). They are now with the press, no longer the Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, but the Edizioni della Normale.

The Valla Day planned for 7 April 2020 in Milan, with lectures by Piero Boitani, Giulio Guidorizzi, and Gioachino Chiarini, had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 epidemic. The next Valla Day will be held in Rome at the Accademia dei Lincei on 23 November 2023.

### **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, 2020.