

## Italian Chivalric Literature and Digital Humanities

Literatura caballeresca italiana y humanidades digitales

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### ABSTRACT

There is an ever-growing number of Digital Humanities initiatives that explore Italian chivalric literature and its reception in the theatrical and visual arts, from combined digital and print projects that include Italian-language narratives within a panorama of world epics to interactive websites focused on a single epic text. This essay spotlights digital resources that I have found especially fruitful for the study and teaching of Italian chivalric works as well as two websites that I'm in the process of developing and other in-progress digital initiatives that have come to my attention.

### KEYWORDS

Italian, traditions, epic poetry, chivalric, Ariosto, medieval, Renaissance.

### RESUMEN

Hay un número cada vez mayor de iniciativas de Humanidades Digitales que exploran la literatura caballeresca italiana y su recepción en las artes performativas y visuales: desde proyectos que incluyen narrativas en lengua italiana dentro de un panorama de epopeyas mundiales hasta páginas web interactivas centradas en un solo texto épico. Este artículo se centra en los recursos digitales que he encontrado especialmente útiles para la investigación y la enseñanza de las obras caballerescas italianas, así como en dos páginas web que estoy en proceso de desarrollar, más otros proyectos digitales en progreso que me han llamado la atención.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

Literatura caballeresca italiana, tradiciones, épica, caballería, Ariosto, Edad Media, Renacimiento.

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Much has changed in the world of digital humanities—as in the world at large—since the early 1990s, but I still recall my excitement at first hearing about Marco Dorigatti and David Robey's project of a machine-readable text of Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* that would allow for word

searches.<sup>1</sup> I marveled at the unexpected connections that could be discovered, close analyses undertaken, and page-turning efforts saved by this technological advancement. This occurred just before the explosion of the World Wide Web on the scene, so the floppy disc containing the compilation had to physically traverse the Atlantic Ocean to reach my Macintosh desktop computer.<sup>2</sup>

Thirty or so years later, it is hard to remember conducting research before the internet.<sup>3</sup> For younger scholars, it must be hard to even fathom. Focusing specifically on Italian chivalric literature and its performance and artistic traditions, we find an ever-growing number of digital initiatives on the horizon—from combined digital and print projects that include Italian epic texts within their purview to interactive websites focused on a particular epic narrative. Moving initially from the global to the singular, this essay spotlights digital resources that I have found especially fruitful for the study, teaching, and enjoyment of Italian chivalric epics as well as two websites that I'm in the process of developing and exciting in-progress ventures that have come to my attention.

A brief reflection on what I have in mind by both *chivalric literature* and *Italian* may be in order before proceeding. The Catalan *literatura de cavalleries*, like the Spanish *literatura caballeresca* and the Italian *letteratura cavalleresca*, aptly characterizes European vernacular works with epic and/or romance features. There is less of a tendency in Anglophone literary studies to use the English cognate, *chivalric literature*, even though this would avoid the somewhat artificial classification of either *epic* or *romance* for works that do not fit neatly into one or the other category. As a case in point, Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, along with works inspired by their example, are commonly referred to by the double term *romance epics* since they seamlessly merge the two genres. In this essay, I consider *chivalric literature* to be works written in either prose or verse that are characterized by the components Ariosto highlights at the opening of his poem: «Le donne, i cavallier, l'arme, gli amori, / le cortesie, l'audaci imprese» [«ladies, cavaliers, love and war, / courtesies and brave deeds»]. This includes works that are on both ends of the epic-romance spectrum and everywhere in-between.

Most of the websites discussed below involve chivalric literature originally written in some version of the language that has come to be known as Italian. Yet I am also including under the umbrella of *Italian* works written in Franco-Italian. Also called Franco-Venetian, this was a literary language used by writers in some parts of northern Italy from the middle of the thirteenth century to the end of the fourteenth century. There is a vibrant community of scholars working on Franco-Italian texts who are encouraging the dissemination and study of this material through a number of digital projects.

1. Robey and Dorigatti introduced the Oxford Text Searching System to scholars and students of Italian chivalric literature in an essay on Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and Pulci's *Morgante* in machine-readable form (Robey and Dorigatti, 1990). Robey's essay of the same year on analyzing Italian Renaissance poetry through machine-readable texts brings into play Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* as well as the *Morgante* and *Orlando innamorato* (Robey, 1990).

2. Today that file can be downloaded from the Oxford Text Archive site in various formats and sizes ([ota.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/repository/xmlui/handle/20.500.12024/1100](http://ota.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/repository/xmlui/handle/20.500.12024/1100)).

3. Perhaps that is not entirely true. I do remember, for example, fumbling through the card catalogue at Yale's Sterling Library looking for a writer named *Boezio* following my first class in graduate school—Umberto Eco's course on medieval aesthetic theory taught in Italian—and being frustrated at not finding a single card for a figure who had sounded so fundamental.

### Global perspectives

WORLD EPICS (<http://edblogs.columbia.edu/worldpics>)

Since 2019, I have been developing a collaborative website devoted to oral and literary epics from across the globe, from the ancient world to today. The site features adaptations of epic narratives in film, music, puppetry, theater, and visual art. It also aims to showcase websites and teaching resources developed by colleagues, and is continuously updated with new introductions to epics, news, announcements of opportunities, and links to online epic-related materials. Currently there are separate webpages on over eighty epic narratives (or narrative traditions), each with concise introductions written by experts in the field, accompanied by suggested additional resources, from essential bibliography to images, performances, lectures, and relevant websites. Several of the contributors (listed on the About page) have supplied content linked to their essays in *Teaching World Epics*, a recent volume in the Modern Language Association's Options for Teaching series (Cavallo, 2023).

The spirit of the website is polycentric and comparativist. Users can search for epics by time period or location. Searching by time period can invite intriguing comparisons when similar publication dates place epics from different cultures side by side, such as Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581) in-between Luis Vaz de Camões' Portuguese *Os Lusíadas* (1572) and Pedro de Oña's Peruvian *Arauco domado* [*Tamed Arauco*] (1596). To venture a comparison of texts composed in the most disparate parts of the world during the same time period, one might juxtapose Giovanni Boccaccio's *Teseida* (ca. 1340) with the anonymous Chinese *Three Kingdoms* and Ethiopian *Kebra Nagast*, likewise composed in the fourteenth century. Searching instead by location allows for an overview of the trajectory of epic narratives within distinct geographical regions. Additional Italian chivalric texts included on the website to date are Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and Tullia d'Aragona's *Il Meschino, altramente detto il Guerrino*.

The homepage contains featured events and resources, as well as separate columns announcing adaptations, news & events, and recent publications. The currently featured event is the *World Epics in Puppet Theater: India, Iran, Japan, Italy* project, which included an online mini-symposium on the theme of exile, screenings of puppet plays, and Q&A sessions with puppeteers. The puppet play from Italy was *Rinaldo, imperatore di Trebisonda*, performed by the Marionettistica dei Fratelli Napoli of Catania, and discussed at the mini-symposium by the puppeteer and scholar Alessandro Napoli.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the homepage's top menu includes links to Syllabi that colleagues have begun to share on the site.

When teaching, I have used the website most in conjunction with Columbia's global core seminar *Nobility and Civility: East and West*.<sup>5</sup> The syllabus of this interdepartmental course includes selections from Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* in conversation with Mesopotamian, Indian, Iranian, Japanese, African, and French chivalric texts, among other works.

NATIONAL EPICS (<http://nationalepics.com>)

Another collaborative website devoted to epic narrative on a global scale is *National Epics*, currently being developed together with a multi-volume project edited by David Wallace of the Uni-

4. The play and presentation are also available directly at the following link: <http://edblogs.columbia.edu/worldpics/worldpicsin-puppettheater-italy>

5. The syllabus can also be found on the website at: <http://edblogs.columbia.edu/worldpics/nobility-and-civility/>

versity of Pennsylvania. The printed version, to be published by Oxford University Press, will contain over ninety chapters. Authors of the chapters are also contributors to the website, and they use the platform's flexibility to share resources and discuss critical issues. The website's homepage presents a world map with the countries included in the project highlighted in various colours. Clicking on the country brings the visitor to a page with a brief reflection on how that territorial entity has shaped or is shaped by epic narratives that «tell its story to the world».

The site's page on Italy currently contains a paragraph by Jane Tylus that begins with the question: «Is it possible to conceive of a national epic before the nation as such exists?» Tylus evokes the similarities and differences between Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* and Alessandro Manzoni's *Promessi Sposi* before turning her attention to two texts that «show an Italy more fractured than united»: Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* and Tomasi de Lampedusa's *Il Gattopardo*.

### European horizons

*CHARLEMAGNE: A EUROPEAN ICON* (<http://www.charlemagne-icon.ac.uk/>)

This network project, led by Marianne Ailes at the University of Bristol, examines the appropriation of Charlemagne material from chronicle and epic in different linguistic cultures of medieval Europe. Accompanying the seven volumes to be published in the Bristol Studies in Medieval Cultures Series, the website contains a host of additional features, including virtual exhibitions, activities, events, research groups, further reading, and even an embedded Twitter feed.

*IDERITAS* (<http://iderita.uniroma1.it>)

Subtitled «Repertorio di lessico e immagini dell'identità e dell'alterità nella letteratura dell'Europa medievale», the digital component of this project, developed between 2013 and 2018, was the creation of a database of vocabulary (in Italian, French, and Occitan) and images related to identity and alterity in different genres, including chivalric literature, between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Among the faculty from different universities coordinating the project, Annalisa Perrotta and Lorenzo Mainini (Sapienza-Università di Roma) covered the genres of epic and romance.<sup>6</sup> The site is still a work-in-progress.<sup>7</sup> The texts currently featured include the late fourteenth-century *Spagna in rima*, an important chapter in the history of Carolingian narratives circulating in Italy. Users can search by different categories, such as semantic field (e.g., *religione, società*), language, genre, and works. Selected passages are accompanied by notes and bibliography to provide further context.

*PROGETTO MAMBRINO* (<http://www.mambrino.it>)

Begun in 2003 on the initiative of Anna Bognolo at the University of Verona, Progetto Mambrino features mid-sixteenth century Italian chivalric romances published in Venice that are either translations of or inspired by Spanish narratives. The project is named after Mambrino Roseo da Fabriano, the protagonist of this cultural and entrepreneurial initiative, whose name in turn re-

6. For the record, the other colleagues coordinating the project are Federico Saviotti (Università di Pavia), Giovanni Strinna (Università di Sassari), and Giuseppe Mascherpa (Università di Pavia, now Università di Sassari).

7. The corresponding volume edited by Perrotta and Mainini, however, entitled *Confini e parole: Identità e alterità nell'epica e nel romanzo*, was published in 2020; available online at: <https://www.editricesapienza.it/node/7972>

calls that of the formidable knight who lost his life—and his famous helmet—to the Frankish paladin Rinaldo. Mambrino's helmet, perhaps most famous today for its importance to Don Quixote, is an apt symbolic connector between the Spanish and Italian chivalric works that underlie this digital project. The website, which is currently undergoing a major renovation, provides a wealth of information, including a useful chart outlining the relationship between Spanish and Italian cycles, early editions with links to the libraries and catalogues containing them, and a bibliography of publications as well as student theses related to the topic.

The *Progetto Mambrino* publishes the journal *Historias Fingidas*, which focuses primarily on Spanish chivalric literature and its permutations throughout Europe. In 2019, Bognolo edited an issue of the journal (n. 7) stemming from a seminar held in Verona the previous year entitled *Letteratura cavalleresca e cultura digitale*.<sup>8</sup> In particular, the section «Narrativa cavalleresca e Digital Humanities: progetti in corso» draws attention to in-progress initiatives devoted mostly to Spanish texts.<sup>9</sup>

In the coming months the *Progetto Mambrino* will launch a digital library as part of the larger portal *Mapping Chivalry*.<sup>10</sup> The library will contain a bibliographic database, digital scholarly editions (starting from the Amadís de Gaula cycle), high resolution images, and semantic databases. Concept maps and other research tools will highlight relationships between texts as well as between relevant elements such as characters, motifs, and places. One of the principal areas of interest remains translations, continuations, and imitations in Italian of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish romances.

### The Italian tradition

*eBOIARDO. Epics of Boiardo and Other Italian Authors: a Resource Database Online* (<http://edblogs.columbia.edu/eboiardo>)

*eBOIARDO* is a website that I created in 2016 in conjunction with my Columbia University courses on the romance epic (especially *Renaissance Chivalric Epic and Folk Performance Traditions*). The main focus is on theatrical, musical, and artistic representations based on Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and other Italian Renaissance romance epics. Users can reach the following categories from the main menu on the homepage: Authors, Puppet Theater, Epic Maggio, Adaptations, Art, Music, Maps, and Student projects. The majority of the videos feature Sicilian puppet theater and the epic Maggio of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines, including scenes from several plays and some interviews that I filmed between 2001 and the present. There are also online renditions of various chivalric episodes by contemporary storytellers, including the arrival of Angelica in Charlemagne's court by Mimmo Cuticchio, Enrico Messina, Michele Neri, and Paolo Panaro (under Adaptations).

Since my intention was to provide material for analysis and classroom discussion, from the Author menu users can refine their search according to specific episodes. Thus, the page dedi-

8. The issue is available online at: <http://historiasfingidas.dlss.univr.it/issue/view/11>

9. In addition, a special issue edited by Stefano Bazzaco, «Digital Humanities e studi letterari ispanici» (2022), includes two essays focused on chivalric literature: <https://historiasfingidas.dlss.univr.it/issue/view/5>

10. For further details on this collaborative in-progress initiative, see Bognolo and Bazzaco (2019) as well as Bognolo (2022). The new website, which will be active beginning in 2024, will be found at the following link: <https://mambrino.mappingchivalry.dlss.univr.it>.

cated to Astolfo's journey to the moon ranges from a sixteenth-century fresco in Palazzo Besta di Teglio (Valtellina) to recent musical renditions by singer-songwriters as diverse as Jovanotti and Vinicio Capossela. Moreover, given that the episode remains popular in Sicilian puppet theater today, students may compare two similar scenes of Astolfo on the moon in *Viaggio di Astolfo sulla luna* (2003), by the Giovane Compagnia Figli D'Arte Cuticchio (Palermo), and *Amore e follia di Orlando* (2009), by the Marionettistica dei Fratelli Napoli (Catania).

*LIBRI CAVALLERESCHI IN PROSA E IN VERSI* (<http://lica.unipv.it/index.php>)

*LICAPV*, that is, *LIBRI CAVALLERESCHI IN PROSA E IN VERSI*, developed by Anna Maria Montanari, is devoted to the identification of cantari and chivalric romances published in Italy in the fifteenth century. The website offers a partial digitalization of the recently printed catalogue (Montanari and Stoppino, 2022). Initially conceived as a replacement for MELZI-TOSI, this database is an indispensable tool for anyone researching the earliest printed editions of Carolingian, Arthurian, and classical narratives. Given the porousness of the genre, the catalogue includes novelistic and mythological incunabula as well. The editions are described in meticulous detail in order to facilitate the identification and comparison of texts that were often adapted, revised, and renamed in the budding business of book production. Thus, the full bibliographical information for each text is supplemented by descriptions of the volume's format and consistency, incipits and explicits in semi-diplomatic transcriptions, a list of later editions, and a concluding bibliography. Users may search not only by the titles and authors of the works but also by the names of the publishers, the place of publication, the years (1472-1510), and the format (*ottava rima* or prose).

*GALASSIA ARIOSTO* (<http://www.galassiaariosto.sns.it>)

This digital archive, begun in 2012 under the direction of Lina Bolzoni of the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, is not currently accessible.<sup>11</sup> The project allowed users to study illustrations from the *Orlando Furioso* in comparison with those from Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Moderata Fonte's *Tredici canti del Floridoro*, and other illustrated chivalric poems published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Andrea Torre, likewise of the Scuola Normale Superiore, describes the project in the context of a theoretical reflection on the convergences between the advent of book printing and the digital revolution (Torre, 2021: 53-59).<sup>12</sup> Giulio Andreini also discusses the project's development, including its goals, challenges, and methodologies, from his perspective of project manager and user experience designer (Andreini, 2018). His piece contains various images, including the site's homepage.

### Individual chivalric authors: Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso

CENTRO STUDI MATTEO MARIA BOIARDO (<https://boiardo.letteratura.it/>)

The Centro Studi Boiardo has a website intended to be of interest to both researchers and the general public. In addition to bibliographies of Boiardo's works and critical studies divided into

11. Clicking on the project's web address takes the user to a message from the Scuola Normale stating that the site is not available at present. Plans are underway, however, to revive the site.

12. Torre's essay provides an extensive bibliography of studies connected to the Galassia Ariosto project and, more generally, to the intersection of digital humanities and the Italian Renaissance. Moreover, the volume that includes the essay, *Rinascimento digitale*, is dedicated entirely to the latter topic (Genovese and Russo, 2021).

useful categories, the site has a link to readings of passages from the poem executed in conjunction with Scandiano's yearly *FestivaLove* (under Other Activities).<sup>13</sup> The eighteen readings, available online in fourteen videoclips covering an average of thirty stanzas each, are presented by eighteen different individuals, including actors, teachers, students, and local residents. The passages range from the arrival of Angelica in the opening canto of Book I to the Fonte del Riso episode in the penultimate complete canto of Book III, both read by Maria Roveran. Since the selections are all relatively brief (ranging from about eight to twenty-eight minutes each), they can easily be used in the classroom or assigned to students.

ORLANDO FURIOSO ATLAS (<http://www.furiosoatlas.com>)

Daniel Leisawitz at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania has led a team of student research assistants in developing the *Orlando Furioso Atlas*.<sup>14</sup> This digital mapping project, begun in 2016 and completed in 2022, contains interactive maps for each of the poem's forty-six cantos to help readers visualize and interpret the myriad episodes that unfold across the expanse of the known world of Ariosto's time. For this Neatline project, Leisawitz used a scan of Martin Waldseemüller's *Universalis Cosmographia* map of 1507 to allow users to follow the itineraries of characters across the continents as they were envisioned during the period. Each canto map contains both a chart of the characters' journeys and a hyperlinked text of the canto.

The possibility of reading a highlighted copy of each canto of the *Furioso* in either Italian or English should make this interactive site especially attractive to students. While scrolling through the stanzas, users can click on the highlighted text to access a close-up of the location in question on the map right on the same page. One may also use the map as the point of departure: clicking on any point will bring users to the corresponding passage in the poem. It is also possible to type in a place name from the *Furioso* to locate it on the map. Additionally, the site contains other period maps such as Sandro Botticelli's map of Dante's *Inferno* and selections from Benedetto Bordone's *Isolario* and depictions of characters' journeys in areas particularly rich in geographic or intertextual significance.

In his presentation of the project on the site's homepage, Leisawitz reflects on the aim of these interactive maps: «Our use of sixteenth-century maps seeks to portray this worldview-in-flux, and it is our hope that by reelaborating Ariosto's poem in spatial terms, we may better understand the interaction of the real and the imaginary in the poetic text as patterns and meanings emerge which have heretofore gone unnoticed».

IL POEMA IMMAGINATO: VISIONI DELL'ORLANDO FURIOSO TRA XX E XXI SECOLO (<http://www.arabeschi.it/collection/visioni-orlando-furioso-xx-xxi-secolo>)

An online photo gallery of select artwork based on the *Furioso* is part of the second issue of *Arabeschi* (July-December 2013), an open access online journal dedicated to the intersection of literature and visual studies. The editors of the gallery—Fabrizio Bondi, Alessandro Giammei, Giovanna Rizzarelli, and Andrea Torre—introduce this virtual exhibition, which offers full descriptions, commentary, and bibliography for over fifty images.

13. The direct link is <http://www.festivallove.it/index.php/orlando-innamorato/>.

14. For more details on the genesis, structure, and potential scholarly and pedagogical uses of the *Orlando furioso Atlas*, see Leisawitz (2019).

L'ORLANDO FURIOSO E LA SUA TRADUZIONE IN IMMAGINI (<http://www.orlandofurioso.org>)

This project, like *Galassia Ariosto*, was created under the direction of Lina Bolzoni. It is not currently available, but plans are underway to revive the site. Begun in 2006, it featured four key sixteenth-century editions of the *Orlando Furioso* with special attention to their iconographic and paratextual apparatuses. The website also included a rich gallery of works of art inspired by Ariosto's poem. In his essay «Il *Furioso* on the Web», Andrea Torre describes the project in detail, addressing in particular the scholarly motivations behind an «Ariosto visualizzato», the theoretical, methodological and technical aspects of this innovative approach, and the kinds of interdisciplinary analysis facilitated by the website's unique features (Torre, 2008).

ORLANDO FURIOSO IN VALTELLINA (<http://www.orlandofuriosoinvaltellina.it>)

L'Associazione Bradamante is an association of volunteers founded in 2008 in the Valtellina, a valley in the Lombardy region of northern Italy with deep ties to Ariosto and chivalric literature through its artistic and cultural patrimony, most notably Renaissance fresco cycles with scenes from the *Furioso*. Although their primary focus is on devising and organizing in-person events and encounters in the Valtellina, the images and information provided on the association's website constitute an ever-evolving digital component. Among the association's recent initiatives was their collaboration in the creation of a series of videoclips explicating and commenting select Ariostean frescoes in Palazzo Besta di Teglio.<sup>15</sup> In 2023, the association inaugurated the *Furioso Festival in Valtellina*, with a rich program of events that included Mimmo Cuticchio's Sicilian puppet theater performances of *L'infanzia di Orlando*, *Il gran duello di Orlando e Rinaldo per amore della bella Angelica*, and *La pazzia di Orlando*. The association is contemplating the inclusion of more digital aspects in future editions of the festival.

CANTAR MAGGIO CON ARIOSTO (<http://www.liceochierici-re.edu.it/pagine/cantar-maggio>)

There are no doubt numerous projects devoted to the *Orlando Furioso* that either have a digital component or whose results are available in digital format, yet they do not always reach a wide audience. A final Ariostean project I would like to mention involved eleven classes at an artistic secondary school, the Liceo Artistico Gaetano Chierici of Reggio Emilia, Italy. As the project's full title indicates, *Cantar Maggio con Ariosto: Un percorso alla scoperta del maggio tra storia ed epica* focuses on the intersection between Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and the singing of epic *maggi*, traditional folk operas popular in the nearby Apenninic mountain towns. This multipronged initiative, devised and coordinated by Mariagiuseppina Bo, teacher of Italian and history, consisted of many different kinds of student projects inspired by the *Furioso* across different disciplines (humanities, design, and science laboratories), including original poetry in the meter of the epic *maggio*, fantastic stories that were then animated through the use of different editing programs (stop-motion technique, Adobe Animator, Adobe Premiere, illustrated voice-over, and others), drawings, terracotta, ceramics, and costumes that could be used as everyday clothes. Visits to several Ariostean sites by the students, excerpts of *maggio* performances, interviews, and guest lectures were filmed so as to become public history. The concluding presentation of the project is available on youtube.

15. This student digital project, *Palazzo Besta racconta l'Ariosto*, was undertaken by the Polo liceale Città di Sondrio with the collaboration of various entities. The seven videoclips concerning the frescoed stories of Ginevra, Gabrina, Angelica, and Astolfo on the moon are currently available on the youtube channel of the Direzione regionale Musei Lombardia: <https://www.youtube.com/@direzioneregionalemuseilom925>

com and the 325-page publication outlining the project's various facets is in the form of an e-book that can be downloaded from the school's website.<sup>16</sup> This initiative is an example of an innovative academic project that encouraged students to learn about Italian Renaissance chivalric literature and a local folk theater tradition while at the same time exercising their own creativity and making use of digital technology to either produce or document their work.

*TASSO ONLINE* (<https://www.torquatotasso.org>)

Emilio Russo at the Sapienza University of Rome is developing a monographic portal dedicated to Tasso that will begin making material public by the end of 2023. The website will contain texts by Tasso in their various stages of completion as well as further materials relevant to Tasso studies intended to be of use to a wide range of users, from specialists in the field to students and the general public. For the purpose of research, it will provide such resources as descriptions of manuscripts, reproductions of ancient editions, and Tasso's own annotations. In addition, it will offer a biography of Tasso, didactic materials, and examples of the reception of Tasso in music and the figurative arts. Resources currently available online, including manuscripts and printed editions, will be accessible directly through the site.

*TASSO IN MUSIC PROJECT* (<http://www.tassomusic.org>)

This project, under the direction of Emiliano Ricciardi at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, aims to create a complete digital edition of the musical settings of Torquato Tasso's poetry between 1570 and 1640. The website includes a list of the many extant stanzas set to music from the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, as well as Tasso's other works (*Rime*, *Aminta*, *Ecloghe*, *Rinaldo*, *Lagrime della Beata Vergine*, *Re Torrismondo*, and *Gerusalemme conquistata*), with information about the musical settings, poem, and literary sources. The *Music browsing* and *Literary browsing* tabs allow the user to search by isolating a number of specific categories, including genre, composer, location, publisher, number of voices, clef, and dedicatee.

### Franco-Italian works

*RIALFrI - DIGITAL REPERTORY OF MEDIEVAL FRANCO-ITALIAN LITERATURE* (<http://www.rialfri.eu/en/>)

The first objective of *RIALFrI*, a project directed by Francesca Gambino at the University of Padua, was to create a database that would make widely accessible all available medieval Franco-Italian literature texts composed in Northern Italy between the thirteenth- and fifteenth-century. In addition to texts, the website includes a complete bibliography of the field, reproductions of manuscripts and early books, introductory notes to individual texts, linguistic analyses, and philological apparatuses. As a dynamic digital library, *RIALFrI* complements published editions by giving editors and collaborators the possibility to intervene, for example, by reporting the latest advances in scholarship, modifying and correcting texts, revising older editions, updating bibliographies, and responding to questions.

16. The direct links are: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9llj0iPEcQY&t=10s> and <http://www.liceochierici-re.edu.it/pagine/e-book>, respectively.

HUON D'AUVERGNE DIGITAL ARCHIVE (<http://www.huondauvergne.org>)

This digital archive, edited by Leslie Zarker Morgan (Loyola University Maryland) and Stephen McCormick (Washington and Lee University), is a treasure trove for the study and enjoyment of Franco-Italian epic in *chanson de geste* format that was hugely popular in its time but little known today. The site contains a digital edition and facsimile of all four extant manuscripts as well as an English language translation of the earliest one, the Berlin manuscript of 12,224 lines from 1341 (see Additional Digital Resources below). A comprehensive bibliography is divided into the categories of (1) manuscripts and early print editions; (2) reference works; and (3) secondary material.

### Puppetry

PUPPET PLAYS (<http://puppetplays.eu>)

Launched in 2020 under the direction of Didier Plassard at the Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3, this digital project is intended to «mettre en lumière un repertoire fragmenté et presque invisible» (<http://puppetplays.eu>). More specifically, the platform will place online for the first time a large selection of published and unpublished plays for puppets and marionettes written in Western Europe since 1600. The plan is to create (1) a database with a rich set of metadata (presentation, full bibliographical references, literary and theatrical information, list of characters, keywords, and a brief summary of the dramatic action) for around 1,000 plays, and (2) a digital anthology consisting of three hundred plays that are both representative and currently difficult to access. In the French version (the English one is currently being translated), it is already possible to search the database via keywords, an interactive map of Europe, a timeline, and many other criteria, including language, author, and animation technique. The website will also include additional resources, such as excerpts of video and audio recordings of performances, when available, and publications (a conclusive monography, two doctoral theses, the proceedings of two international conferences organized under its auspices, and other related studies). While the platform itself will be accessible in French and English, it will gather and present texts in every Western European language.

Among the platform's digitized texts, there will be scripts from Northern Italian hand puppet theater (*il teatro dei burattini*) and southern Italian and Sicilian rod marionette theater (*l'opera dei pupi*). Both folk traditions feature Italian chivalric literature in their repertory, in particular, Giusto Lodico's *Storia dei paladini di Francia* (1858-1860), which is in turn a prose adaptation of several Renaissance chivalric texts, including Tasso's *Rinaldo*, Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and Pulci's *Morgante*. There will also be some texts from the Belgian rod marionette theater, with the stories of Roland, Ogier le Danois, Ourson Tête de fer, and other paladins of Charlemagne.

This free access resource is intended to be of use to a broad spectrum of users, from academics and students, to artists and puppeteers, to the general public. The possibility of examining first-hand scripts from many different puppeteers will no doubt encourage new comparative analyses and should also put to rest the misconception that traditional puppet plays were mere reductions and simplifications of canonical Italian chivalric narratives and thus unworthy of critical attention.

### Student Projects

The students in our classrooms today are the potential digital content creators of tomorrow. In «Digital Approaches to the Italian Romance Epic in the Classroom», Allison DeWitt discusses the challenges and possibilities of integrating digital mapping projects into a course on Italian chivalric literature so that the students themselves become designers rather than simply users. The chapter discusses some existing digital mapping tools and includes concrete suggestions for: (1) creating a digital timeline of stories and mapping various locations; (2) devising and creating a digital map based on each character's place of origin and travels; (3) drawing out the chronology of the chivalric epic's often intricate and interlaced events; and (4) accessing artistic representations and staged performances of selected scenes. While noting inherent complications related to mapping literary texts, DeWitt finds digital mapping to be an especially fruitful student project to gain a greater understanding of chivalric texts that feature myriad characters in movement across vast territories. As a result, students not only ideally engage with the texts in a completely new way, but they also apply critical thinking and analysis to digital tools and methods.

Two student digital projects were born from DeWitt's presentation of her research to students in my 2017 graduate seminar on Boiardo and Ariosto. Catherine Bloomer (PhD, Columbia, 2023) created a plot of Marfisa's timeline using TimelineJS, an open-source tool that allows anyone to build visual and interactive timelines using media from a variety of sources. Bloomer featured Marfisa's actions from the *Orlando Innamorato* and *Orlando Furioso* in two series of slides: each slide contains a title summarizing the action, the corresponding stanza numbers, a one-paragraph description of Marfisa's activity, and an evocative illustration with a caption. Bloomer reflects back on her project: «I found that the experience of building this timeline demonstrated and revealed the Marfisa narrative in greater detail and clarified her life as a chronological whole. The process allowed me greater insight into both Ariosto's and Boiardo's character development of Marfisa, the mythos of her background upon which they both build, and the use of her character as an often comedic but also forceful and effective intervention in the larger narrative».

Tylar Colleluori (PhD, Columbia, 2023) opted to create family trees for Brandimarte and Fiordelisa, two characters invented by Boiardo who have very eventful biographies and intricate family relations. The online chart currently presents the parents and siblings of both characters in the form of a concept map. The idea behind the project was to create an interactive genealogy, one that would allow users to explore the plot of the epic through the characters' relationships with each other, the revelation of which often serves as an important narratological generator for Boiardo. Colleluori experimented with numerous digital avenues, including Adobe and Padlet, and decided to host the project on Prezi for the time being because it allows for a degree of interactivity from the user. Hoping to return to the project at some point, she reminds us that it is not always easy to find the right program to implement one's vision: «This was a challenging project, most of all because I had not found a digital medium that lent itself well to the depiction of these familial, yet fictional, relationships. I think being able to map an overview of the genealogical webs that Boiardo weaves throughout the *Innamorato* would concretize for the reader the ways in which these lineal links are often central to the progression of the poem's plot».<sup>17</sup>

Another in-progress student digital project that has come to my attention is that of Salvatore Taibi, currently a PhD student at Rutgers University. *Mapping Orlando Innamorato* (<http://or->

17. The above two projects can be found under Student Projects on the eBOIARDO website: <https://edblogs.columbia.edu/eboiardo/adaptations/student-projects/>

[landoinnamorato.org](http://landoinnamorato.org)) was his final project for a recent course on Digital Humanities with Lisa Tagliaferri. Inspired by the online *Orlando Furioso Atlas*, Taibi envisions eventually creating a site that will allow users to read the *Innamorato* while tracking the characters' movements throughout each *canto*. At present, the website contains the full text of the *Orlando Innamorato* in both Italian and English as well as images of two maps from the early sixteenth century.<sup>18</sup> His reflection on the experience highlights some of the challenges faced by humanists working within the digital world: «It has proven to be a much more difficult task than I imagined. I've come to realize that the best digital projects are completed by teams of scholars—humanists and computer scientists/coders working together and in sync with a coordinated end-goal in mind—and that with the right amount of “firepower” a project can produce a professional *and* aesthetically pleasing result». Taibi found the most challenging part to be learning the various computer languages and programs, specifically those most useful for a mapping project, such as Python, Omeka and Neatline. «Nevertheless», he goes on to say, «I feel that the benefits to seeing a completed project, such as witnessed with the *Orlando Furioso Atlas*, are well worth the price of admission».

### **Additional Digital Resources: Digital Collections, Online Catalogs, Academic Journals**

The innovative digital projects described above go beyond anything that could be replicated in printed form, and many of them have required the close collaboration of researchers, technical designers and developers, and graduate student assistants. Yet the ongoing digitization of manuscripts and published volumes, while less glamorous, is an essential service that makes possible the research that we all do today. Primary Italian texts in digital format can be found at *Biblioteca Italiana* (<http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it>), *Biblioteca della Letteratura Italiana* (<http://www.letteraturaitaliana.net>), and *LiberLiber* (<http://www.liberliber.it/online>). These editions are not the latest versions and generally lack a critical apparatus, but they offer users the world of Italian literature, including a wide selection of chivalric texts in different formats, in an instant and at no additional cost. An audio version of the entire *Orlando furioso* (2010), for example, is available through *LiberLiber*.<sup>19</sup>

The internet, moreover, is not only a means to make widely accessible physical texts, whether manuscripts or published volumes, but is also being increasingly used as the primary venue for scholarly work. The digital platform has proven particularly appealing for recent translation projects. A. S. Kline's Open Access Poetry Archive, *Poetry in Translation*, provides high-quality downloadable translations, free for non-commercial use, of many classical texts, including his own verse translations of Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.<sup>20</sup> Max Wickert's *Outriders Poetry Project* website not only provides selections from his published translation of the

18. These are Martin Waldseemüller's *Universalis Cosmographia* map of 1507 (the map used in the *Orlando Furioso Atlas*) and the *Carta marina navigatoria Portugallen navigationes atque tocius cogniti orbis Ter* of 1516.

19. The direct link to the audiobook, based on Cesare Segre's edition for Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, is: <http://www.liberliber.it/online/autori/autori-a/ludovico-ariosto/orlando-furioso-segre-audiolibro>.

20. Kline, who has translated most of the works available on the website, notes in his bio that he writes «predominantly for the Internet» ([http://www.poetryintranslation.com/Admin/Bio.php#author\\_bio](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/Admin/Bio.php#author_bio)). The direct links to the *Innamorato* and the *Furioso* translations are <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasboiardo.php> and <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasariosto.php>, respectively. Printed copies can also be purchased.

*Gerusalemme Liberata*, but also contains his 500-page English-language abridgment of three chivalric works available only on the site: Andrea da Barberino's *The Royal House of France (I reali di Francia)* and *Aspramont (L'Aspramonte)* and the anonymous *The Exploits in Spain (Li Fatti di Spagna)*.<sup>21</sup> Leslie Zarker Morgan has included a partial translation of the *Geste Francor* along with her comprehensive introduction to the work in her entry for the *ORB Online Encyclopedia* (Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies).<sup>22</sup> Shira Schwam-Baird's translation—as well as Morgan's and McCormick's original language editions—of *Huon d'Auvergne* are available on the *Huon d'Auvergne Digital Archive* (see Franco-Italian Works above).<sup>23</sup>

One may find resources related to Italian chivalric literature online through various libraries as well as cultural and bibliographical sites. *Internet culturale: cataloghi e collezioni digitali delle biblioteche italiane* (<http://www.internetculturale.it>) is under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Culture and the Istituto centrale per il catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche. One may also come across resources of various kinds searching by author or title in *Cultura italia: L'aggregatore nazionale del patrimonio culturale italiano* (<https://culturaitalia.it>), a project promoted and managed by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and elaborated with the academic consultancy of the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa.

Various academic journals provide digital versions of scholarship devoted to Italian chivalric literature. Most notably, *Letteratura cavalleresca italiana / Italian Chivalric Literature* (<http://www.torrossa.com/en/resources/an/4436725>), created in 2019, is a journal with an online version available through purchase or subscription. Essays examine Italian chivalric literature in poetry and prose, including Franco-Italian literature, from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. The journal *AOQU: Achilles Orlando Quixote Ulysses* (<http://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/aoqu>), created in 2020 by four scholars based at the University of Milan who specialize in Italian epic poetry, offers open access to its digital version. While this resource includes studies on epic narratives across cultures and time periods, the Italian tradition from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries is heavily represented.

In sum, scholars venturing into Digital Humanities have taken advantage of the new technology not only for the fundamental work of creating databases, but also for the dissemination of visual materials and videos, the construction of interactive tools, and the development of new approaches to the material. A feature that many of the above digital projects have in common is the aim to be of use to a wide audience, from experts in the field, to students at all levels, to the general public. Another is the attention that they draw to other related projects through pages listing external links.<sup>24</sup> This spirit of sharing widely, toward potential users of all kinds and toward fellow content creators, is facilitated by the platform provided by the World Wide Web. Also remarkable is the fact that so many projects, developed presumably independently, are so complementary without being redundant. Given the continuous advances in digital technology and the ever-increasing digital humanities projects over these past thirty years, all signs point to an ever more vibrant future for the field of Italian chivalric literature.

21. The direct link is: [http://www.outriderspoetryproject.com/uploads/4/6/1/4/4614234/\\_the\\_royal\\_house\\_of\\_france.pdf](http://www.outriderspoetryproject.com/uploads/4/6/1/4/4614234/_the_royal_house_of_france.pdf).

22. The direct link is <http://www.arlima.net/the-orb/encyclp/culture/lit/italian/morganintro.html>.

23. The direct link is <http://www.huondauvergne.org/b-translation>.

24. The top menu on the eBOIARDO homepage contains a Links section with the websites featured in this essay: <https://edblogs.columbia.edu/eboiardo/websites/>. The list will be updated regularly as new projects come to my attention.

### Links

- Cantar Maggio con Ariosto* (<http://www.liceochierici-re.edu.it/pagine/cantar-maggio>)  
 Centro Studi Matteo Maria Boiardo (<https://boiardo.letteratura.it>)  
*Charlemagne: A European Icon* (<http://www.charlemagne-icon.ac.uk/>)  
*eBOIARDO. Epics of Boiardo and Other Italian Authors: a Resource Database Online* (<http://edblogs.columbia.edu/eboiardo>)  
*Galassia Ariosto* (<http://www.galassiaariosto.sns.it>) [currently unavailable]  
*Huon d'Auvergne Digital Archive* (<http://www.huondauvergne.org>)  
 IDERITAS (<http://iderita.uniroma1.it>)  
*Libri Cavallereschi in Prosa e in Versi* (<http://lica.unipv.it/index.php>)  
*National Epics* (<http://nationalepics.com>)  
*Orlando Furioso Atlas* (<http://www.furiosoatlas.com>)  
*L'Orlando furioso e la sua traduzione in immagini* (<http://www.orlandofurioso.org>) [currently unavailable]  
*Orlando Furioso in Valtellina* (<http://www.orlandofuriosoinvaltellina.it>)  
*Il poema immaginato: Visioni dell'Orlando furioso tra XX e XXI secolo* (<http://www.arabeschi.it/collection/visioni-orlando-furioso-xx-xxi-secolo>)  
*Progetto Mambrino* (<http://www.mambrino.it>)  
*Puppet plays* (<http://puppetplays.eu>)  
 RIALFrI - Digital Repertory of Medieval Franco-Italian Literature (<http://www.rialfri.eu/en/>)  
*Tasso in Music Project* (<http://www.tassomusic.org>)  
*Tasso Online* (<https://www.torquatotasso.org>)  
*World Epics* (<http://edblogs.columbia.edu/worldepics>)

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- [cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/aispi/pdf/bib\\_07/07\\_040.pdf](http://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/aispi/pdf/bib_07/07_040.pdf)
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