

Maria Pavlova (St Hilda's College), "Il fior de Paganà". Saracens and their world in Boiardo and Ariosto', D.Phil Thesis in Medieval and Modern Languages, Trinity Term 2014, xx+284 pp.

Short Abstract

This study investigates the representation of Saracens in Boiardo's *Inamoramento de Orlando* and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, a subject that has attracted growing scholarly interest in recent years. Chapter I assesses the degree of realism in Boiardo's and Ariosto's portrayal of Islam and Islamic culture and locates the two poems in their historical context. Bringing to light unpublished archival material and other little-known historical sources, I argue that Boiardo and Ariosto drew inspiration from contemporary courtly culture which was characterised by openness towards the figure of the foreign prince. Chapter II explores Boiardo's engagement with earlier chivalric literature. It examines Boiardo's use of names and characters from earlier texts and evaluates the Saracens' contribution to the ideology that underpins the poem. It is shown that Saracens play an important role in promoting the 'Arthurian' chivalric ideals. Chapters III and IV analyse Ariosto's indebtedness to and departures from his predecessor, suggesting that there is a much greater continuity between the two *Orlandos* than is allowed by Cavallo and other scholars who are anxious to stress Ariosto's 'conservatism'. While chapter III is devoted to a wide-ranging analysis of the Saracen world in Ariosto, chapter IV deals with a topic that has recently generated much heated debate, namely the climactic confrontation between Rodomonte and Ruggiero and the ending of the *Orlando furioso* and how it should be understood, and I propose a new interpretation of the final canto by highlighting the concept of honour, a fundamental value for both Boiardo and Ariosto as well as for their early readers and for many chivalric authors alike. In my view, Rodomonte is the true winner of the duel. The significance of his 'moral' victory is examined in the study's final conclusion, where it is argued that it undermines Ariosto's encomiastic project.

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Long Abstract

This study investigates the portrayal of Saracens and their world in Boiardo's *Inamoramento de Orlando* and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. Over the past decade, this topic has attracted growing interest; a number of scholarly works, including a full-length monograph by Jo Ann Cavallo (2013), has been published, and contrasting interpretations have been put forward. The present study seeks to assess afresh the degree to which Boiardo's and Ariosto's representation of Saracens is indebted to Renaissance and late medieval perceptions of non-Christians. It also aims to evaluate the poets' debt to earlier chivalric tradition. One of its main objectives is to determine in what ways and to what extent the Saracen worlds of the two *Orlandos* can be said to mirror each other.

Chapter I examines the historical dimension of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso*. It starts with a discussion of works that focus on or touch upon the influence of contacts with Muslims on the European chivalric genre. Having drawn attention to the fact that the representation of Saracens in the *chansons de geste* is neither completely unrealistic nor invariably inspired by religious hatred, I proceed to analyse the portrayal of Islam and Islamic culture in the two *Orlandos*. Section 1.1 shows that, although Boiardo and Ariosto had a good knowledge of Islam by the standards of their time, their poems contain many of the stereotypical details that one finds in the *chansons de geste*. Ariosto's depiction of Islam is more realistic than Boiardo's, as is evident from his allusions to Islamic laws and his use of terms of oriental origin. In both poems, however, the Saracens' religious tenets and values are remarkably similar to those of the Christians, with some of their beliefs and practices bringing to mind the cults and practices of the ancients. Occasionally the poets add a few oriental strokes to their descriptions of Saracen culture. Section 1.2 tries to determine whether and to what extent Boiardo and Ariosto engage with contemporary discourses about the Ottomans and other Islamic nations. It is argued that, contrary to what has been claimed by Cavallo and others, the poems do not contain historical allegories or allusions to the Turkish threat. Bringing to light unpublished archival material (e.g. the correspondence between Ercole I and his agents) and other little-known historical sources (e.g. the affectionate letters exchanged between Francesco Gonzaga and the Turkish Sultan), I attempt to demonstrate that Boiardo and Ariosto draw inspiration from contemporary courtly culture, a culture that was characterised by openness towards the figure of the foreign prince. This makes it possible to say that many of Boiardo's and Ariosto's early readers believed in secular chivalry, and real-life encounters between Christians and Muslims bore some resemblance to chivalric romances.

Chapter II is devoted to a wide-ranging examination of Boiardo's engagement with the preceding chivalric tradition. Section 2.1 provides a general overview of *Paganìa* in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, counting Boiardo's Saracens, identifying the familiar names as well as the 'familiar faces' and commenting on the transformations that the latter

undergo. It is shown that Boiardo's Saracens are significantly more numerous than his Christians and that more than a third of the Saracen names are either borrowed from or inspired by earlier chivalric works. The section contains a mini case study of the name 'Gradasso', highlighting its Arthurian origins hitherto unknown. It is argued that Boiardo's treatment of characters who feature in earlier chivalric texts (Marsilio and his barons, Ogieri il Danese) is to a large extent consistent with their earlier representations. Section 2.2 analyses the Saracens' contribution to the chivalric ideology that underpins the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, showing that Boiardo's Saracens surpass Charlemagne's knights in *amore*, *cortesía* and thirst for *gloria* – values that lie at the heart of the poem's ideology – and that they are much more active on the poem's stage. Special attention is paid to Rugiero, the founder of the Este dynasty: through him Boiardo creates a bridge between the Saracen world and his audience, encouraging his Ferrarese readers to draw a parallel between their civilisation and Agramante's North Africa. Unlike other half-Saracen converts to Christianity from the chivalric tradition, Boiardo's Rugiero is deeply attached to his Saracen past. Section 2.3 assesses the significance of Agramante's and Rugiero's descent from Alexander in the light of the theme of antiquity in the chivalric tradition, with a special focus on the Italian versions of the *Aspramonte*, whose Saracen characters are related to Alexander. It concludes that, unlike Almonte in the *Aspramonte*, Boiardo's Agramante is worthy of his ancestor and that Rugiero's predicted conversion is a supreme gain for the Christian world, not least because through it the Christians will be able to access and share Alexander the Macedonian's heritage.

Chapter III investigates the elements of rupture and continuity between the portrayal of Saracens in the two *Orlandos*. Section 3.1 seeks to highlight the most obvious 'factual' differences between Boiardo's and Ariosto's *Pagania*. It shows that Ariosto remembers most of the Saracen characters who take part in Agramante's war in Books II and III of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, but that he devotes far more attention to the Christian world than did Boiardo. Section 3.2 looks at the theme of love from the perspective of Saracen characters, focusing in particular on the respective stories of Fiordispina, Issabella and Fiordeligi. It is argued that Ariosto keeps politics and religion out of most interfaith and interracial love stories and that he does not subscribe to the 'traditional' paradigm according to which Saracen damsels prefer Christian knights. Although the theme of love is not dominated by Saracen characters, Saracens make an important contribution to it. They are on the whole more idealistic and hence more 'Arthurian' lovers than their Christian counterparts, for they are capable of dying in the name of love. Section 3.3 is devoted to an analysis of Agramante's war, with a special focus on Marsilio and Agramante. It is argued that we should not read too much into the passages in which Ariosto compares the Saracens to various European powers, for there is not enough evidence to affirm that his Saracens are to be identified with the European rulers who transformed sixteenth-century Italy into a battlefield (as has been claimed by a number of scholars). Although Ariosto does not idealise his leading Saracen warriors, he does not degrade them either. Nor does he suppress their adventurous side, even if his treatment of Marsilio (who undergoes dramatic transformations in the *Furioso*, with Ariosto portraying him as a cunning politician) conjures up the phantom of the Battle of Rencesvals. Analysing the multi-faceted figure of Agramante, this section highlights the 'Arthurian' dimension of the war. An attentive reading of the closing chapter of Agramante's story reveals that rather than adopting a moralising posture vis-à-vis the Saracen ruler (as do Nicolò degli Agostini and Cieco da Ferrara when describing the defeat of the their Saracen characters, Agramante and Mambriano), Ariosto celebrates his unflinching courage and his readiness to die for the ideals that made him declare war on

Charlemagne in Boiardo's poem. By contrast, the leading Christian warriors return to the old ideology of 'bataglie sante' by the end of the *Furioso*.

Chapter III therefore suggests that there is a much greater continuity between the two *Orlandos* than has been conceded by Cavallo and other scholars who are anxious to stress Ariosto's 'conservatism'. This continuity is further stressed in Chapter IV, where I highlight the concept of honour, a fundamental value for both Boiardo and Ariosto as well as for their early readers and for many chivalric authors alike. A culminating point of my enquiry, chapter IV deals with a topic that has recently generated much heated debate, namely the climactic confrontation between Rodomonte and Ruggiero and how the ending of the *Orlando furioso* should be understood. I propose a radically new interpretation of the final canto by examining the final duel and the events that lead up to it from the perspective of the Saracen Other, seeking to give a voice to characters who have been frequently dismissed as 'barbarians'. In 4.1 I recall the on-going debate surrounding the figures of Rodomonte and Ruggiero and the closure of the *Furioso*, stressing the fact that for the vast majority of modern critics Rodomonte has signified a negative character and that, with the exception of Attilio Momigliano, scholars have attached little credence to the literal meaning of the speech in which he accuses Ruggiero of having betrayed Agramante. In order to verify the validity of Momigliano's claim that in the final canto Rodomonte emerges as superior to Ruggiero, I re-examine the events that lead up to the final confrontation between these two characters.

Section 4.2 focuses on the figure of Rod(a/o)monte, looking at his relationship with Agramante in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso*. It is argued that both Boiardo and Ariosto emphasise his devotion to his king and that Rod(a/o)monte bears a striking resemblance to his father Ulieno, a character from the *Aspramonte*. The theme of loyalty and betrayal is central to Ulieno's story and it surfaces as early as Rodamonte's first speech in the *Inamoramento*. I examine the episode in which Rodomonte leaves the Saracen camp after Doralice chooses to stay with Mandricardo, drawing attention to the reactions of early readers. It is shown that Rodomonte's decision to temporarily withdraw from the war does not amount to a betrayal. In section 4.3 I analyse Ruggiero's conflict of allegiances and his deep-rooted fear of being considered a traitor, a fear that haunts him until the very end of the poem and that is certainly not groundless if we read his story in light of the treatment of the theme of honour in texts such as the *Aspramonte*, the *Mambriano* and the *Libro del Cortegiano*. It is the fear of death that forces Ruggiero to convert to Christianity. God, for him, remains silent, while the chivalric code constitutes the supreme ideal until the very end, which is evident from the fact that Ruggiero's conversion does not change his worldview. In 4.4 I focus on the episode of the final duel, emphasising the symmetry between Rodomonte's first speech and his last speech. Re-examining Ruggiero's case in light of the comments of late Renaissance experts on chivalry (Giovanni Battista Olevano and Francesco Birago), I argue that he does not succeed in proving his innocence, for he abandoned Agramante in time of direst need, fully conscious of the fact that he was violating the chivalric code. By contrast, Rodomonte's heroic death amounts to a triumph of chivalric ethics, a triumph which marks the poem closure. Viewed from this perspective, the ending of the *Furioso* is far more indebted to Boiardo and the chivalric tradition than it is to the *Aeneid*.

Thus, chapter IV concludes that Rodomonte is the true winner of the duel, an interpretation that is bound to appear controversial to some readers. The significance of his 'moral' victory is examined in the study's final conclusion, where it is suggested that it undermines Ariosto's encomiastic project, which means that Ariosto's could have become disenchanted with Cardinal Ippolito well before 1517. The final conclusion stresses the fact that the portrayal of Saracens in *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the

Furioso is more influenced by the chivalric tradition than by contemporary history. The values that Boiardo's and Ariosto's Saracens embody are ultimately Western values, even if they are imagined (by the poets or their readers) to be equally important for historical Muslims. In this respect Boiardo and Ariosto's most important source is the *Aspramonte* rather than the *Spagna* or any other text: they highlight the most positive aspects of the Saracen world which they inherited from the *Aspramonte* and the chivalric tradition in general, where the figure of the Saracen Other is certainly not devoid of nobility.

To complement the four chapters and the general conclusion, the thesis also features two appendices with comprehensive lists of named and anonymous Saracen of the two *Orlandos*. These catalogues provide basic information about each Saracen character. They are designed to help the reader navigate through this study and it is hoped that they will prove a valuable tool for future researchers.

U N I V E R S I T Y O F O X F O R D

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‘Il fior de Paganìa’

Saracens and their world in Boiardo and Ariosto

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Preface

Preface

This study is the culmination of a journey that started in the summer of 2006 when I first read Ariosto's Orlando furioso and Boiardo's Innamoramento de Orlando (in this order). I spent several dreamlike weeks in the company of knights and damsels and, having turned the last page of Boiardo's 'bela historia', I was really glad that I had chosen to study Renaissance literature. But little did I know that eight years later I would be completing a doctoral dissertation on the portrayal of Saracens and their world in these very poems. Challenging yet fascinating and immensely rewarding, my chivalric adventure has been facilitated by many people along the way. Being about to licenziare, or 'send off', this work, I should like to express my gratitude to the numerous individuals whose help and encouragement made it all possible.

First of all, I should like to thank my supervisor, Professor Nicola Gardini, for his stimulating guidance and his unflagging faith in me. He allowed me the freedom to develop my ideas while giving warm support, insightful comments and constructive criticism. I also owe an immense debt of gratitude to other members of the Sub-Faculty of Italian at Oxford. Dr Marco Dorigatti has introduced me to the world of chivalric literature, inspiring me with his passion for Boiardo and Ariosto. I cannot thank him enough for everything he has taught me throughout the years, for his invaluable advice, for his incredible generosity, for his loyal friendship. I am also very grateful to Professor Martin McLaughlin for his keen interest in my research, his lucid observations and his willingness to help me with any problems I had.

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Maria Pavlova
Oxford, 10 October 2014

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

In his *I romanzi* (1554) Giovan Battista Pigna hails Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* as an international 'bestseller' (which in part it was):

[...] è stato il *Furioso* dal suo e nostro parlare nel francese tradotto e nello spagnolo, e in rima come sta e in prosa, e in verso greco, e in iscrittura tedesca. Ed è speranza che se fuor dell'Europa il comporre ha mai a venire in usanza, che gli Arabi ancora e i Turchi se l'abbiano a far famigliare, prima che a cosa altra si pongano.¹

Three decades later this will enable Camillo Pellegrini to claim that

[...] l'Ariosto è pur huomo di tanta fama, non solo in Italia, ma quasi nel mondo tutto, poi che il suo Orlando è stato tradotto in tante lingue, che non solo la Spagnuola, la Francese, & la Tedesca, ma altre, insino all'Arabica (se vero è quel che si dice) è stata vaga di cantarlo, o di ragionarlo: il che non è avvenuto (per quel ch'io sappia) di nessun altro libro nell'età nostra, et forse nelle passate.²

So far as we know, the *Furioso* has yet to be translated into Arabic or Turkish.³ It is highly unlikely, in any case, that an Arabic translation was attempted in the sixteenth

¹ Giovan Battista Pigna, *I romanzi*, ed. by Salvatore Ritrovato (Bologna: Commissione per i Testi di Lingua, 1997), p. 73.

² Camillo Pellegrini, *Il Carrafa o vero della Epica poesia* (1584), cited in Lionardo Salviati, DEGLI / ACCADEMICI / DELLA CRUSCA / DIFESA DELL'ORLANDO / FVRIOSO DELL'ARIOSTO. / Contra 'l Dialogo dell'Epica poesia di Cammillo Pellegrino, in APOLOGIA / DEL SIG. TORQVATO / TASSO. / IN DIFESA DELLA SVA / GIERVSALEMME / LIBERATA [...] (Ferrara: appresso Giulio Cesare Cagnacini, et Fratelli, 1585), ff. A 1r-G 8v: B 6v. See also Niccolò degli Oddi's *Dialogo in difesa di Cammillo Pellegrini* (1587), where Bartolo Sirilio states that 'poco importa, che l'Arabia sia stata vaga di cantarlo [the *Furioso*], ove a mala pena sa ciò che sia poesia [...]' (Niccolò degli Oddi, DIALOGO / [...] / IN DIFESA / DI CAMMILLO PELLEGRINI / CONTRA / GLI ACCADEMICI DELLA CRUSCA, in DELLE / OPERE / DI / TORQUATO TASSO [...] (Venezia: appresso Steffano Monti e N. N. Compagno, 1735), vol. II, pp. 413-460: 433).

³ We may note, however, that 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Ḥasan (عبد الفتاح حسن), a university lecturer and an *imam*, translated passages from the *Furioso* for his doctoral dissertation on the interplay between reality and fiction in Ariosto (Ain Shams University, Cairo, 2004). Erich Auerbach, who taught at Istanbul University between 1936 and 1947, encouraged his students to read the *Furioso*: in his *Introduction aux études de la*

century.⁴ Even so, the poem could have been read by Leone Africano (al-Ḥasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzān al-Fāsī, الحسن بن محمد الوزان الفاسي), a diplomat of the Sultan of Fez, who was captured by corsairs in 1518 and taken to Rome, where Pope Leo X persuaded him to convert to Christianity.⁵ By 1526 he had completed *Della descrizione dell'Africa et delle cose notabili che iui sono*, which was later published in Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Navigazioni e viaggi* (1550). Talking about the inhabitants of Quadres (Uadrás), a mountainous region which he believed to be located between Ceuta and Tetouan ('è habitato huomini di somma gagliardezza: i quali fecero di gran pruove nella guerra, che hebbero li Re di Granata con gli Spagnuoli'), Leone observes that

di questo monte fu uno, che si chaimava Hellul, il quale ha fatto similmente di grandi combattimenti con detti Spagnuoli. & il volgo d'Africa & di Granata tiene appo lui le historie scritte de fatti suoi. alcuni in prosa, et altri in verso: sì come fra gl'Italiani si tengono i fatti d'Orlando [...].⁶

The Arab author thus highlights the similarity between the Arab and Italian chivalric traditions, while at the same time telling his Italian readers that the deeds of Muslim heroes are no less worthy of admiration than those of Orlando.⁷

It is clear that neither Pigna nor Pellegrini saw Ariosto as a cultural bridge between East and West: by referring to the Arabs (or Turks) they merely wished to stress the

philologie romane (a handbook for Turkish students written in 1943 but published only in 1949) Auerbach states that Ariosto 'fut le plus grand poète épique de la Renaissance et un des poètes les plus purement artistes de tous les temps' (Erich Auerbach, *Introduction aux études de la philologie romane* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1961), p. 150).

⁴ Excerpts from the *Furioso*, however, were translated into Hebrew by Leone da Modena (1571-1648), a Jewish scholar and a *rabbi* who resided in Venice. Leone's rhymed translation was published by Simon Bernstein in 1932.

⁵ On Leone Africano see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: the Search for Leo Africanus* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008).

⁶ DELLA DESCRITTIONE DELL'AFRICA / Et delle cose notabili che quiui sono, / *Per Giouan Lioni Africano*, in NAVIGAZIONI / ET VIAGGI [...], ed. by Gioavanni Battista Ramusio (Venezia: nella Stamperia di Giunti, 1563), vol. I, ff. 1r-95v: 49v.

⁷ There is no famous warrior called Hellul or Hilal in Arabic accounts of the war between Granada and Spain. Yet the Banī Hilāl tribe (who migrated from Najd to the Maghreb in the eleventh century) is celebrated in the Banī Hilāl (بنی هلال) cycle of epic poems. According to Davis (2008), p. 118, Leone 'seems to have taken a name with epic resonance in North Africa and invented a culture hero in the war of Granada against Spain'.

poem's universal appeal. Yet the fact that they thought that the *Furioso* could be or could have been exported into the Islamic world is interesting. Miguel de Cervantes, we may recall, would later pretend that his *Don Quixote* had been originally written in Arabic by a chronicler called Cide Hamete Benengeli and then translated into Spanish by a *morisco*. By inventing a Moorish author and a Moorish translator, and claiming that he himself was merely an editor, Cervantes not only calls into question the boundary between truth and imagination (which is one of his novel's central themes), but also pays homage to Spanish Muslims (who had been expelled from the Iberian peninsula shortly after the Fall of Granada in 1492 but nevertheless remained an integral part of Spanish identity) and perhaps also to the figure of the Muslim or Saracen Other, a central figure in the European chivalric genre. Living in a country with a strong Islamic heritage, Cervantes knew, or rather felt, that a large part of the chivalric culture which had given birth to Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* was Islamic in origin.⁸

If Pigna, Pellegrini and other sixteenth-century scholars admitted the possibility that the *Furioso* could have a readership among Muslims, this must mean that they did not consider it to be a piece of crusade propaganda pervaded by religious hatred. As we shall see in the course of this study, sixteenth-century reactions to Ariosto's Saracen world were diverse.⁹ What is striking, however, is that they were often more positive than those

⁸ On the similarities between Christian and Muslim conceptions of chivalry see Ahmad 'Abd al Waliyy Vincenzo, 'La *futuwwa*: la cavalleria spirituale', in Idem, *Islam: l'altra civiltà* (Milano: Mondadori, 2001), pp. 261-281. Examining the *Ordène de Chevalerie* (a thirteenth-century *chanson de geste*), Vincenzo, p. 275, argues that 'Il carattere della cavalleria islamica era [...] ben noto ai cavalieri cristiani: così come il rituale cavalleresco aveva notevoli similitudini all'interno delle due cavallerie'.

⁹ Henceforth we shall use the term *Saracen* to refer to Muslims in chivalric texts both because, together with *pagano*, it is that most frequently used by authors (including Boiardo and Ariosto) and because, as we shall see in chapter I, there are important differences between literary Saracens and historical Muslims. For the ancients, *Sarakènoi* (in Greek) or *Saraceni* (in Latin) were the members of a nomadic tribe from Arabia which lived on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. In the high Middle Ages the term *Saracen* was often applied indiscriminately to all Muslims and even to all non-Christians. The word *Muslim*, by contrast, entered European languages relatively late. According to the *Grande dizionario italiano dell'uso*, ed. by Tullio di Mauro (Torino: UTET, 1999-2000), vol. IV, the first occurrence of *musulmano* dates back to 1557, the year of the publication of Cristoforo Armeno's *Peregrinaggio di tre giouani figliuoli del re di Serendippo*. In fact, it appeared already in 1548 ('Se qualche Musulmano venendo a morte vorrà far testamento [...]': Giovanni Antonio Menavino, I CINQUE LIBRI / DELLA LEGGE, / RELIGIONE, ET

of their modern counterparts. Suffice it for now to mention Francesco Patrizi's view that 'Nel Furioso molti sono i buoni, Ruggiero, Bradamante, Orlando, Carlo, Brandimarte, Fiodiligi, Isabella, & altri. E pur nel paganesimo, Agramante, Sobrino, Gradasso, Sacripante, Marfisa, et altri se bontà non hanno, sono per certo privi di malizia'.¹⁰

The Saracen warriors listed by Patrizi feature not only in the *Furioso* but also in Boiardo's *Inamoramento de Orlando*. A poem that has long lived in the shadow of its famous sequel, Boiardo's 'bela historia' is both a unique source of inspiration for Ariosto and a ground-breaking literary work. A discussion of Ariosto's Saracens would be incomplete, and inevitably superficial, if it did not take into account the representation of *Paganìa* and *pagani* in the *Inamoramento*.¹¹ One of the main aims of the present study is to determine in what ways and to what extent the Saracen worlds of the two *Orlandos* can be said to mirror each other.

It must be said from the outset that Boiardo's and Ariosto's portrayal of Saracens has become the subject of increasing scholarly attention in recent decades. The bibliography on this subject comprises a number of articles and book chapters as well as one full-length monograph. For the most part, these critics have argued that Boiardo's treatment of his Saracen characters is remarkably positive. In her recently published book entitled *The World beyond Europe in the Romance Epics of Boiardo and Ariosto* Jo Ann Cavallo, for example, contends that

VITA / DE' TVRCHI [...] (Vinegia: appresso Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1548), p. 230) and, with many variants, even in fifteenth-century texts ('insulmani' in Bernardino Zambotti's *Diario ferrarese*, 'monsormino' and 'masormino' in the *Trabisonda*, a chivalric poem first published in 1483, and 'musurmanno' in Luigi Pulci's *Morgante* and the *Ciriffo Calvaneo*). See Maria Pavlova, 'I saraceni nella letteratura cavalleresca del Quattrocento, dai rifacimenti di storie medievali all'*Inamoramento de Orlando*', in *Epic Connections / Rencontres épiques. Proceedings of the Nineteenth International Conference of the Société Rencesvals, Oxford, 13-17 August 2012*, ed. by Marianne J. Ailes et al. (Edinburgh: British Rencesvals Publications, 2015), 2 vols, vol. II, pp. 577-597. In addition to *saracino* and *pagano*, Ariosto also employs the term *moro* when referring to Saracen invaders: in the *Furioso* and other Renaissance texts (in Boiardo it appears only once, at III vi 7,2) it can variously mean 'North African', 'black African', 'Arab', 'Spanish Arab' or simply 'Muslim'. The term *arabo*, on the other hand, is used to designate the Bedouins.

¹⁰ Francesco Patrizi, PARERE / [...] / IN DIFESA DELL'ARIOSTO, in Tasso (1585), ff. L4r-N2r: M6r.

¹¹ *Paganìa* is a term that is used by chivalric poets (including Boiardo and Ariosto) to denote the lands (regardless of their geographical position) inhabited by Saracens or *pagani*.

Regardless of their provenance, Boiardo's characters are motivated by a range of passions – primarily love, ambition, empathy, and the desire for glory or revenge – but not by religious or ethnic differences. The narrative thereby breaks out of the binary opposition of Christians and Saracens typical of Carolingian epic, presenting a broader vision of the globe consonant with a number of ancient, medieval, and fifteenth-century historical and geographical texts that were capturing the attention of the Ferrarese court.¹²

Like Antonio Franceschetti, Denise Alexandre-Gras, Gerhild Fuchs and Angelo Pagliardini,¹³ Cavallo maintains that Boiardo does not draw a sharp line of distinction between Christians and Saracens and that there is much communication and interaction between characters of different faiths. Although, together with Antonio Panizzi, Michael Murrin, Fabio Cossutta, Pia Schwarz Lausten and Giovanni Ricci,¹⁴ she believes that the poem contains allusions to the Turkish threat, in her view the fear of the Turks does not prevent Boiardo from endowing his Saracens with noble traits. One of the most original features of Cavallo's study is that she distinguishes between Saracen characters of

¹² Jo Ann Cavallo, *The World beyond Europe in the Romance Epics of Boiardo and Ariosto* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2013), p. 4. Cavallo's monograph appeared as I embarked on the final year of my doctoral research.

¹³ See Antonio Franceschetti, 'Cristiani e pagani', in Idem, *L'Orlando Innamorato e le sue componenti tematiche e strutturali* (Firenze: Olschki, 1975), pp. 102-109; Denise Alexandre-Gras, 'Tre figure boiardesche di eroe saraceno: Ferraguto, Agricane, Rodamonte', *Annali d'Italianistica*, I (1983), 129-143; 'La tolérance envers les païens', in Eadem, *L'héroïsme chevaleresque dans le Roland Amoureux de Boiardo* (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 1988), pp. 300-317; Gerhild Fuchs, Angelo Pagliardini, 'La rappresentazione del pagano/musulmano nell'epica cavalleresca rinascimentale', in *Italia e Europa: dalla cultura nazionale all'interculturalismo*, atti del XVI Congresso dell'A.I.P.I., Cracovia, 26-29 agosto 2004, ed. by Bart Van den Bossche et al. (Firenze: Franco Cesati, 2006), vol. II, pp. 579-587; 'Raumkonzepte und Fremdbilder im Zusammenspiel. Zur Darstellungsweise des "Sarazenen" in Texten der italienischen Renaissance-Ritterepik', in *Grenzen und Entgrenzungen: historische und kulturwissenschaftliche Überlegungen am Beispiel des Mittelmeerraums*, ed. by Beate Burtscher-Bechter et al. (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), pp. 173-209; Angelo Pagliardini, 'Cristiani e pagani nell'epica cavalleresca italiana', *Carte di viaggio*, I (2008), 35-58. Similar views have been expressed in many studies devoted to other aspects of the *Innamoramento*.

¹⁴ Arguing that Boiardo and his contemporaries abhorred the Turks, Antonio Panizzi does not conceal his own dislike of all things Muslim: he goes as far as to say that the crusades were a necessary act of self-defence. See his 'An Essay on the Romantic Narrative Poetry of the Italians', in *Innamoramento de Orlando di Boiardo, Orlando furioso di Ariosto with an essay on the romantic narrative poetry of the Italians; memoirs and notes by Antonio Panizzi* (London: W. Pickering, 1830-1834), vol. I, pp. 50-52; 'Life of Boiardo', *ibid.*, vol. II, pp. lxxiv-lxxvii. And see also Michael Murrin, 'Agramante's war', *Annali d'Italianistica*, I (1983), 107-128; Fabio Cossutta, *Gli ideali epici dell'umanesimo e l'Innamoramento de Orlando* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1995), pp. 15-24, 439-464; Pia Schwarz Lausten, 'Saracens in Boiardo's *Innamoramento de Orlando*' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of Renaissance Society of America, Los Angeles, 19-21 March, 2009); Giovanni Ricci, 'Cavalleria e crociata nella Ferrara del Rinascimento. Un piccolo stato davanti a un grande impero', *Italien und das Osmanische Reich*, ed. by Franziska Meier (Herne: Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, 2010), pp. 75-86.

different origins, analysing them in light of medieval and fifteenth-century perceptions of various non-Christian peoples.

Cavallo does not idealise Boiardo's Saracens: she concludes her study by observing that 'The world depicted in the *Orlando innamorato*, in fact, is teeming with injustices both within and beyond Latin Christendom', but that 'the narrative outcomes often suggest that communication and increased knowledge can lead to the enlightenment of the individual and the improvement of human society at large'.¹⁵ By contrast, she sees Ariosto (to whom she devotes less attention) as a 'conservative' author: the *Furioso*, she argues, rests on a radically different worldview, as the war between the Christians and the Saracens 'increasingly takes on the connotations of a holy war', while the same Saracen characters 'are presented in a less favourable light and are judged more severely'.¹⁶ Cavallo's position is not surprising in the context of Ariosto's scholarship.¹⁷ This is a perspective that is shared, among others, by Pio Rajna and Marco Praloran, who had similarly emphasised the ideological differences between the two *Orlandos*.¹⁸ It would not be an exaggeration to say that the majority of scholars so far have assumed that Ariosto's Saracens are portrayed negatively, especially in the 'epic' second half of the poem, with some reading the poem in light of sixteenth-century anti-Muslim sentiments.¹⁹

¹⁵ Cavallo (2013), p. 256.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 4, 5.

¹⁷ For a review of scholarly interpretations of Saracens in the *Furioso* cf. Maria Pavlova, 'Ludovico Ariosto and Islam', in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History (1500-1600)*, ed. by David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 469-483: 476-478.

¹⁸ See Pio Rajna, *Le fonti dell'Orlando furioso* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1990), p. 59. According to Marco Praloran, 'In Boiardo [...] i grandi eroi non sono mai malvagi [...]', while in Ariosto 'via via si fa progressivamente viva una prospettiva ideologicamente orientata sugli eventi per cui i grandi guerrieri sono investiti da connotazioni etiche opposte [...]' (Marco Praloran, *Le lingue del racconto. Studi su Boiardo e Ariosto* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2009), pp. 171-172).

¹⁹ According to Roger Baillet, 'les païens sont représentatifs d'une barbarie orientale contre laquelle l'Arioste déclenche une offensive fort proche, dans ces buts et dans ces moyens, des guerres anti-barbaresques de son temps' (Roger Baillet, 'L'occidentalisme', in Idem, *Le monde poétique de l'Arioste: essai d'interprétation du Roland Furieux* (Lyon: Editions l'Hermès, 1977), pp. 385-424: 424). Similarly, Delphia Eboigbé maintains that 'his [Ariosto's] was an emphatically Christian humanism [...], since for him civilization was inseparable from its stronghold of Christian-chivalric values' (Delphia Elizabeth Robinson Eboigbé, 'The depiction of the Negro-African in the *Orlando Furioso*', in Eadem, *The Depiction of the Negro-African in Three Old French Chansons de Geste and two Renaissance Epico-Chivalric Poems*

And yet very different interpretations have been put forward too. For John Patrick Donnelly the *Furioso* ‘reveal[s] no prejudice based on a sense of the superiority of western culture over oriental civilization’,²⁰ while Vincent Cuccaro asserts that ‘Virtue, heroic valor, wisdom, loyalty, God, are not exclusively Christian, just as bestiality, madness, betrayal, evil, or Satan are not exclusively Pagan’.²¹ Fuchs and Pagliardini maintain that the boundary between Christians and Saracens is fluid in all three chivalric masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance (the *Morgante* and the two *Orlandos*). Moreover, recent years have seen the publication of studies that attempt to ‘give a voice’ to individual Saracen characters of the *Furioso*. Thus, according to Marco Dorigatti,

Il fascino di Sobrino [...] deriva anche dalle sue peculiari caratteristiche arabe, dal suo appartenere ad una stirpe dannata e demonizzata fin dalle *chansons* medievali, ma in cui riluce ancora – ed è questo il merito dell’Ariosto – l’ammaliante splendore della civiltà islamica, ossia di quell’aspetto che nel *Furioso* si cela talvolta sotto il nome di paganità (e che ancora attende di essere studiato).²²

Gian Paolo Giudicetti, on his part, goes as far as to claim that ‘Sono i personaggi apparentemente immorali o emarginati dalla trama a essere meglio in grado di rappresentare i valori estetici del poema’.²³ these are minor Christian characters, such as Ricciardetto, and ‘romance’ Saracen heroes, such as Rodomonte and especially Mandricardo, a carefree spirit who ‘sa interessarsi alla multiformità e alla bellezza del mondo’,²⁴ embodying ‘l’unione di distanza e sentimento che il testo considera ideale’.²⁵

[unpublished doctoral dissertation] (Bloomington IN: Indiana University, 1986), pp. 210-331: 299). We shall look more closely at the scholarly debate surrounding the ending of the *Furioso* in 4.1.

²⁰ John Patrick Donnelly, ‘The Moslem Enemy in Renaissance Epic: Ariosto, Tasso and Camoëns’, *Yale Italian Studies*, I, n. 2 (1977), 162-170: 163.

²¹ Vincent Cuccaro, ‘Christianitade, Paganità, cavalleria’, in Idem, *The Humanism of Ludovico Ariosto: from the “Satire” to the “Furioso”* (Ravenna: Longo, 1981), p. 146.

²² Marco Dorigatti, ‘Sobrino ariostesco e misconosciuto’, *Belfagor*, LXV, n. 4 (2010), 401-414: 413.

²³ Gian Paolo Giudicetti, *Mandricardo e malinconia. Discorsi diretti e sproloqui nell’Orlando Furioso* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 27.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 152.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 156. In an earlier study Giudicetti stated that ‘la rivalutazione di Mandricardo non ha luogo [...] per ragioni sociologico-politiche legate ai Cultural Studies, per una riscoperta spesso anacronistica della visione dell’Altro, il cavaliere pagano, nella letteratura rinascimentale, bensì per motivi che derivano

We may also add that the Saracen world of the *Furioso* has exerted a strong fascination on poets and writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Italo Calvino and, more recently, Salman Rushdie. Borges – whose lifelong interest in Islamic culture pervades his entire *oeuvre* – senses a deep affinity between the characters of the *Arabian Nights* and Ariosto's Saracens:

Alas que son la brusca noche, crueles
Garras de las que pende un elefante,
Magnéticas montañas cuyo amante
Abrazo despedaza los bajeles.

La tierra sostenida por un toro
Y el toro por un pez; abracadabras,
Talismanes y místicas palabras
Que en el granito abren cavernas de oro;

Esto soñó la sarracena gente
Que sigue las banderas de Agramante;
Esto, que vagos rostros con turbante
Soñaron, se adueñó de Occidente.

(Jorge Luis Borges, 'Ariosto y los árabes', 1960)²⁶

For the Argentine poet, therefore, far from being inferior to Christians, Saracens are a crucial part of the chivalric dream that inspired the *Furioso*.

The very fact that Boiardo's and Ariosto's Saracens have elicited starkly contrasting reactions calls for further enquiry into this aspect of the two *Orlandos*. Despite the proliferation of studies, many questions remain as yet answered. It remains to see, for

dalla struttura interna dei due poemi' (Gian Paolo Giudicetti, 'Mandricardo a cavallo di due poemi: il suo ruolo nel terzo libro dell'*Inamoramento de Orlando* e nell'*Orlando Furioso*', *Schifanoia*, XXXVI-XXXVII (2009), 103-144: 104). In general, scholars who view Ariosto's Saracens more positively tend to avoid the question of historical influence.

²⁶ 'Wings that are shaggy night, and cruel / claws that an elephant grip, / magnetic mountains that with loving / embrace can shatter a ship, // the earth sustained by a bull, the bull / by a fish; abracadabras, and old / talismans and mystic words / that in granite open caves of gold; // This the Saracen people dreamt / who followed Agramante's crest; / this the turban'd faces dreamed / and the dream now lords it over the West' ('Ariosto and the Arabs', cited from Jorge Luis Borges, *Dreamtigers*, trans. by Mildred Boyer and Harold Morland (London: Souvenir Press, 1973). In the preface to his *rifacimento* of the *Furioso*, Italo Calvino states that 'L'essere "di fé diversi" non significa molto di più, nel *Furioso*, che il diverso colore dei pezzi in una scacchiera' (*Orlando furioso di Ludovico Ariosto raccontato da Italo Calvino* (Torino: Einaudi, 1970), pp. XXIII-XXIV: XXIII). Qara Köz, the enigmatic heroine of Salman Rushdie's historical novel *Enchantress of Florence* (2008), is modelled on Ariosto's Angelica.

example, whether and to what extent Boiardo and Ariosto draw inspiration from contemporary history. Cavallo takes it for granted that the two poems are steeped in history. Trying to link the *Inamoramento* and the *Furioso* to various non-fictional texts and historical events, she devotes considerably less space and attention to the preceding chivalric tradition. And yet, a good knowledge of Boiardo's and Ariosto (possible) chivalric sources is essential for understanding their portrayal of *Paganìa*. Although Alexandre-Gras makes a number of pertinent observations with regard to Boiardo's departures from the 'traditional' representation of Saracens,²⁷ there is much scope for further research, considering the wealth and diversity of the chivalric genre.²⁸

The present study will attempt to analyse the portrayal of Saracens and their world in Boiardo and Ariosto in a systematic and comprehensive manner, paying due attention to both leading protagonists and minor characters (who, too, as Boiardo tells us at II xxvii 25,5, can embody 'il fior de Paganìa'²⁹). We shall start by examining afresh the historical dimension of the two poems. Then, we shall proceed to analyse Boiardo's engagement

²⁷ According to Alexandre-Gras (1988), p. 301, 'aucune autre oeuvre, avant de *Roland amoureux*, ne fait autant de place, et une place aussi belle, à des héros sarrasins'.

²⁸ Scholars of Renaissance and late medieval chivalric literature often claim that literary representations of Saracens become significantly more positive in later centuries. This view underpins William Wistar Comfort's and Antonio Franceschetti's articles (William Wistar Comfort, 'The Saracens in Italian epic poetry', *PMLA*, LIX (1944), 882-910; Antonio Franceschetti, 'On the Saracens in early Italian chivalric literature', in *Romance Epic: Essays on a Medieval Literary Genre*, ed. Hans-Erich Keller (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1987), 203-211). Similarly, Gloria Allaire argues that 'many elements of conventional Old French portrayals of the Saracen are solidly in place in late medieval Italian literature, with the exception that in Italian texts the Saracen characters do receive a more humanized, less evil or bestial representation than in the *chansons de geste*' (Gloria Allaire, 'Noble Saracen or Muslim adversary? The changing image of the Saracen in late medieval literature', in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other*, ed. David R. Blanks & Michael Frassetto (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 173-184: 181). However, what calls into question the validity of her study is the fact that her knowledge of the *chansons de geste* comes from Cyril Meredith Jones' 'The conventional Saracen of the songs of geste', *Speculum*, XVII (1942), 201-225, a dated and highly controversial work. In reality, much has been written about Saracens in the French chivalric tradition, with scholars debunking the myth that the Saracen Other is invariably demonised (cf. at least Paul Bancourt, *Les musulmans dans les chansons de geste du Cycle du roi* (Aix en Provence: Université de Provence; Marseille: Diffusion, J. Laffitte, 1982), 2 vols; Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: an Interpretation of the Chansons de Geste* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984). Thus, one should be very cautious when making general statements about 'Renaissance Saracens'.

²⁹ Unless otherwise stated, all quotation from the *Inamoramento de Orlando* are taken Matteo Maria Boiardo, *L'Inamoramento de Orlando*, ed. by Antonia Tisconi Benvenuti and Cristiana Montagnani, introduction and commentary by A. Tisconi Benvenuti (Milano-Napoli: Ricciardi, 1999), 2 vols.

with the chivalric tradition, looking at his indebtedness to earlier chivalric narratives while, at the same time, assessing the Saracens' contribution to the chivalric ideology that underpins the *Inamoramento*. Chapter III will be devoted to a wide-ranging analysis of Ariosto's *Paganìa*, while in chapter IV we shall consider a case study pertaining to a controversial and hotly debated topic: the duel between Rodomonte and Ruggiero and the ending of the *Furioso*. We shall use all the knowledge gained in the course of our investigation in order to offer a new interpretation of this fundamental episode.

Embarking on a journey through the chivalric universe of the two *Orlandos*, we must let the texts guide us, letting go of any preconceptions, including the widely-held assumption that Christian characters are bound to be portrayed as superior to their Saracen counterparts.³⁰

³⁰ Hence the decision to refrain from using Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and the postcolonial theory it has given rise to.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

Between history and imagination: the two *Orlandos* and contemporary perceptions of non-Christians

1.0. CHIVALRIC LITERATURE AND WESTERN ENCOUNTERS WITH MUSLIMS: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The extent to which the interactions between Christian Europe and the Islamic world influenced the development of the chivalric genre is a complex and multifaceted question. It is raised (directly or indirectly) in a large body of studies devoted to different texts from different chivalric literatures and periods, with scholars reaching varying – sometimes contradictory – conclusions. The fact that the birth of the Carolingian tradition coincided with the advent of the Crusades suggests that the crusading movement must have provided an impetus for the first *chansons de geste*. However, as was said earlier, the once widely held view that Old French epics are imbued with the crusading ideology has been challenged by a number of scholars, most notably by Norman Daniel who argues that ‘the songs are not Crusade propaganda [...] but they are good propaganda for a life of daring and adventure’.¹ According to Daniel, the *chansons de geste* contain highly distorted (and often comic) representations of Islam and Islamic culture, which either means that the poets were ‘in total ignorance, not only of Arabs and Islam, but of everything Christian writers said about them’, or that they were ‘completely indifferent to both’ and gave free rein to their imagination, aiming, first and foremost, to produce

¹ Daniel (1984), p. 267.

entertaining stories (the latter possibility being, as Daniel puts it, ‘surprising’ and the former downright ‘incredible’).² However, while stressing the fact that the *chansons de geste* are intentionally inaccurate and unrealistic, Daniel is careful not to say that the Crusades and contemporary perceptions of Muslims had no influence at all on chivalric literature: he observes, for example, that, as a general rule, Saracens are portrayed with more hostility in earlier poems and that occasionally one comes across texts (such as the Franco-Venetian *Entrée d’Espagne*) that are ‘fertile with surprises, clerical, intellectual’.³

Daniel’s seminal study is a sobering reminder that there exists a wide gap between the representations of Saracens and Islam in the *chansons de geste* and in non-fictional texts that were composed in the same period.⁴ Yet, while acknowledging this gap, other scholars have argued that, without attempting to provide a faithful portrayal of Muslims in the Holy Land and in Spain, the poems engage with Western attitudes towards Muslims (which, as suggested by recent scholarship, were not limited to religious hatred, not even at the time of the First Crusade) in creative ways. Concluding his two-volume monograph on Saracens in the *chansons de geste*, Paul Bancourt states that ‘les chansons de geste vivent d’une ambiguïté fondamentale entre l’imaginaire et le réel, le fictif et l’historique, le passé et l’actuel, ambiguïté non seulement consciente mais acceptée et entretenue par les trouvères’.⁵ Bancourt’s painstaking analysis of the presence of historical elements in heroic poems reveals that, as unrealistic as they may be, Old French epics reflected some aspects of the historical encounters between Christians and Muslims.⁶ According to Bancourt, the fact that Saracen knights become noticeably more

² Ibid., p. 93.

³ Ibid., p. 127.

⁴ Before looking at Saracens in the *chansons de geste*, Daniel conducted an extensive research on works on Islam by medieval Christian scholars. See his *Islam and the West: the Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960).

⁵ Bancourt (1982), vol. II, p. 1011.

⁶ For example, Bancourt points out that the titles of Saracen leaders often derive from Arabic words and sometimes correspond to real titles, that the conditions in which Christian prisoners are held in the *chansons*

chivalrous in poems composed in the last decades of the twelfth century is the ‘conséquence [...] d’une découverte accomplie par les Francs au cours de leurs contacts historiques avec les musulmans: celle de l’existence, chez les Arabes, chez Saladin, chez les princes ayyubides, de traditions chevaleresques proches de celles de la chevalerie chrétienne d’Occident’.⁷ More recently, Lynn Tarte Ramey, Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas and Sharon Kinoshita have published stimulating book-length studies of the figure of the cultural and religious Other in medieval French literature, with Gaullier-Bougassas focusing specifically on romances, a genre that had its heyday between the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries, which was a very eventful period in the history of relations between Islamic East and Christian West.⁸ All three studies are underpinned by the belief that literary works are inextricably linked to history inasmuch as they mirror the fears, attitudes and aspirations that characterized the socio-cultural contexts in which they were produced.⁹

The earliest chivalric poems composed by Italians date from the late thirteenth century, that is two centuries after the First Crusade and at a time when the crusading movement,

de geste are largely consistent with historical reality, that the *jongleurs* make references to combat tactics used by real Muslims.

⁷ Ibid., p. 1009. On the legend of Saladin in medieval French literature see Margaret A. Jubb, ‘Enemies in the Holy War, but brothers in chivalry: the crusaders’ view of the Saracen opponents’, in *Aspects de l’épopée romane: mentalités, idéologies, intertextualités*, ed. by Hans van Dijk and Willem Noomen (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995), pp. 251-259; Eadem, *The Legend of Saladin in Western Literature and Historiography* (Lewiston; Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000).

⁸ See Lynn Tarte Ramey, *Christian, Saracen and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (New York; London: Routledge, 2001); Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, *La tentation de l’Orient dans le roman médiéval: sur l’imaginaire médiéval de l’autre* (Paris: Champion, 2003); Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: PENN, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

⁹ Both Tarte Ramey and Gaullier-Bougassas look at the evolution of the image of the cultural Other in the course of the Middle Ages. Tarte Ramey’s rather succinct study draws parallels between themes raised in literary texts and changes in Western perceptions of historical Muslims without, however, outlining a clear chronological progression. By contrast, Gaullier-Bougassas’ substantial monograph pays special attention to chronology. According to the latter, twelfth-century romances abound in highly positive and very detailed descriptions of the Orient, as they mirror the Western dream of a union between East and West. This dream declined in the thirteenth century, which is reflected in both the disappearance of utopic elements from literary depictions of the Orient and the prominence given to the Holy War theme, still very conspicuous in fifteenth-century romances. As for Kinoshita, starting from the premise that the medieval Mediterranean was a multicultural, multiethnic and multiconfessional region, where constant wars did not preclude peaceful interactions, she contends that medieval literary works (from the *Chanson de Roland* to thirteenth-century texts) reflect the permeability and malleability of medieval notions of race and culture.

without being altogether extinguished, had largely lost its momentum. Most of the Christian characters and a significant number of the Saracen characters in Franco-Venetian and Italian chivalric texts (the latter having started to appear around the middle of the fourteenth century) are borrowed from the French chivalric tradition. Some of the most popular stories are in fact *rifacimenti* of French stories. In light of this, it is not surprising that, on the whole, the portrayal of Saracen culture in Italian poems and prose narratives owes more to the imagination of medieval *jongleurs* than to historical reality. As we shall see, some of the stereotypical, entirely unrealistic details that one finds in the *chansons de geste* are evoked by Italian authors too, including Boiardo and Ariosto. Yet this does not necessarily mean that Italian chivalric texts were fantasies completely divorced from contemporary views of Muslims. As Pio Rajna observes with regard to the flourishing of *cantari*, ‘chi poteva con diletto prestare orecchio a queste monotone e nojosissime narrazioni, doveva serbar viva dentro di sé la memoria delle crociate e l’odio contro i seguaci di Maometto’.¹⁰ Whether or not the authors of *cantari* always demonise their Saracen characters is debatable, but it is logical to assume that the high demand for such literature to some degree reflected the fact that the Italians were not indifferent to real Muslims.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the ‘golden age’ of the Italian chivalric tradition – the decades that gave birth to the *Morgante*, the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, the *Mambriano* and the *Orlando furioso*, as well as to a plethora of anonymous poems – was also a period when the relations between Italy and the Islamic world were particularly vibrant. The conquest of Constantinople by Mehmed II (1453) dramatically altered the international political map, bringing the East and the West closer together. The Turkish threat loomed over Christendom already in the second half of the fourteenth and the first half of the

¹⁰ Pio Rajna, ‘Rinaldo da Montalbano’, *Il Propugnatore*, III, n. 2 (1870), 58-127: 65.

fifteenth centuries, but after the capture of the capital of the Byzantine Empire the Ottomans became an integral part of Italian international politics, variously perceived as fearful enemies or as potential allies. At the same time, some city-states maintained diplomatic and commercial relations with other Islamic nations, such as the Egyptians (the Venetians' commercial partners since the early thirteenth century) or the Persians. The Italians probably had more first-hand experience of the Islamic world than any other European nation (with the exception of the Ottomans' East European neighbours and the Spanish who coexisted with Muslims until 1492, when Granada, the last Islamic kingdom on the Iberian peninsula, fell to the armies of Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon), but the degree and nature of interaction with the Ottoman Empire and/or other Islamic states and, more generally, the level of interest in non-Christian lands varied considerably from city to city. This must be taken into account when looking for possible allusions to contemporary historical events or traces of contemporary knowledge of Islam and Islamic culture in chivalric texts. Although it could be said that most Italian chivalric romances of the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance were to some extent bound up with the contemporary perceptions of Muslims, some texts were more directly engaged with historical reality than others.

There have been attempts to read specific Italian chivalric texts in light of the Turkish menace. Thus, Annalisa Perrotta has convincingly argued that the *Altobello*, a poem first published in Venice in 1476 and probably composed by a Venetian author in the 1470s, appears to have been inspired by the alliance between the Serenissima and the Persian shah, a friendship born out of their shared fear of the Ottomans.¹¹ A number of scholars (Panizzi, Ballet, Murrin, Cossutta, Schwarz Lausten, Ricci and most recently Cavallo) have tried to link Boiardo's and Ariosto's representations of Saracens to the anti-Turkish

¹¹ Annalisa Perrotta, 'Alleanze necessarie: cristiani, saraceni e persiani nell'*Altobello*', in *Il cantare italiano fra folklore e letteratura*, ed. by Michelangelo Picone and Luisa Rubini (Firenze: Olschki, 2007), pp. 127-144.

sentiments of their contemporaries. Not limiting herself to the Turks, Cavallo examines a wide range of medieval texts dealing with non-Christian peoples in an attempt to demonstrate that the *Inamoramento de Orlando* reflects the cosmopolitan culture of fifteenth-century Ferrara. While containing a wealth of interesting information and thought-provoking ideas, her study is weakened by an over-eagerness to spot references to specific historical events and figures in Boiardo's 'bela historia' as well as by the fact that Ariosto does not receive the attention that he deserves.

In what follows, we shall examine afresh the historical dimension of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Orlando furioso*, trying to establish whether, to what extent and in which manner these poems reflect fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century views of Muslims. We shall start by assessing the degree of realism present in Boiardo's and Ariosto's portrayals of Islam and Islamic culture. Then, we shall look at the 'questione turca', re-examining the possible influence of contemporary history on the two *Orlandos* in light of the complex perceptions of Turks in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Ferrara and Italy.

1.1. ISLAM AND ISLAMIC CULTURE IN THE *INAMORAMENTO DE ORLANDO* AND THE *ORLANDO FURIOSO*

One of the most glaring examples of the misrepresentation of Islam in the *chansons de geste* is that Saracen characters are invariably portrayed as polytheists worshipping a pantheon of gods. In addition to their main gods (the 'Saracen Trinity' formed by Machon, Apolin and Tervagan), the Saracens revere a plethora of other deities, including some Greco-Roman gods, such as Mars and Venus.¹² The Saracens erect images of these

¹² For a list of the Saracen deities in the *chansons de geste* see Bancourt (1982), pp. 355-356. Various hypotheses have been advanced as to the etymology of these bizarre names. See at least Paul Casanova, 'Mahom, Jupin, Apollon, Tervagant, dieux des Arabes', in *Mélanges Hartwig Derenbourg, 1844-1908*

gods as massive statues of precious metals that are kept in ‘mahomerics’ (mosques) and often paraded in front of the faithful. While it is possible that some of the poets genuinely believed that Islam was a polytheistic idolatry (after all, as Bancourt points out, Muslims are depicted as polytheists in the chronicles of the First Crusade),¹³ it is highly unlikely that all of them were ignorant of the principal tenet of Islam (‘la illah ila allah’ [لا إله إلا الله], ‘There is no god but God’), given that ‘serious’ medieval authors seldom describe Muslims as idolatrous pagans but rather portray them as heretics.¹⁴

The Italian Quattrocento and the first decades of the Cinquecento did not witness any significant advances in the understanding of the Islamic doctrine: the humanists tended to rely on the writings of medieval scholars, while travellers were not particularly interested in Islamic theology.¹⁵ However, all educated Italians must have known that Muslims

(Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1909), pp. 391-395; Leo Spitzer, ‘Tervagant’, *Romania*, LXX (1949), 397-408; Henri Grégoire, ‘L’étymologie de Tervagant (Trivigant)’, in *Mélanges d’histoire du théâtre du Moyen-Age et de la Renaissance offerts à Gustave Cohen, professeur honoraire en Sorbonne, par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis* (Paris: Libraririe Nizet, 1950), pp. 45-56.

¹³ Bancourt (1982), p. 357. See also John V. Tolan, ‘Saracens as pagans’, in his *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 105-169.

¹⁴ On Islam in medieval Christian thought see Daniel (1960) and Tolan (2002). Neither Dante nor Boccaccio perceive Islam as a form of paganism. For Dante Muhammad is a schismatic, a figure similar to Fra Dolcino from Novara; his portrayal in the *Commedia* seems to be influenced by the medieval legend according to which Muhammad was a Christian cardinal who founded a new sect out of spite after his rival had been elected a Pope. According to Nancy Bisaha, Petrarch could be implying that Muslims are polytheists in *Rvf XXVIII*: ‘Turchi, Arabi, et Caldei, / con tutti quei sperano nelli dèi’ (54-55) (see her *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 20). For a thorough review of scholarly works on Dante and Islam see Paulo de Ventura, ‘Dante and Islam’, in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), vol. IV, pp. 779-787. On Boccaccio see Janet Levarie Smarr, ‘Other races and other places in the *Decameron*’, *Studi sul Boccaccio*, XXVII (1999), 113-136; on Petrarch Enrico Cerulli, ‘Petrarca e gli arabi’, in *Studi in onore di Alfredo Schiaffini, Rivista di cultura classica e medievale*, VII (1965), 331-336; Nancy Bisaha, ‘Petrarch’s vision of the Muslim and Byzantine East’, *Speculum*, LXXVI, n. 2 (2001), 284-314.

¹⁵ In general, the history of Islam did not arouse much interest among the Italian humanists and only a small number of works specifically devoted to the Islamic faith were produced in this period. Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini penned a letter to Mehmed II, *Epistola ad Mahomatem II* (1461), in which he compared Islam and Christianity, stating among other things that both Muslims and Christians believed in the Old Testament. A close friend of Nicholas of Cusa (the author of *Cribratio Alchorani*, a commentary on the Qur’an composed around 1460), Piccolomini must have been well acquainted with the main medieval Christian writings on Islam, but he was not by any means an original thinker. Guglielmo Raimondo de Moncada, a Sicilian Jew who had converted to Christianity, translated a large section from the Qur’an and dedicated it (together with a list of Arabic terms and names and a few works on Islam) to Federico da Montefeltro. He was Pico della Mirandola’s Arabic tutor. Both Marsilio Ficino and Pico attempted to read the Qur’an. Egidio da Viterbo, a Catholic cardinal, commissioned a new Latin translation of the Qur’an in 1518, of which several manuscripts survive. However, the first Italian translation of the Qur’an (published

believe in one omnipotent Creator. Basic information on Islam was available not only in polemical works penned by Renaissance and medieval intellectuals, but also in ‘lighter’ texts, such as the immensely popular *Itinerarius* by Jean de Mandeville of which at least 12 Italian editions had been printed by the end of the fifteenth century.¹⁶ We have very good (irrefutable in the case of the Count of Scandiano) evidence to say that both Boiardo and Ariosto knew that Islam was a monotheistic religion. In Boiardo’s translation or perhaps ‘rifacimento’ of Riccobaldo Ferrarese (*Historia imperiale*, 1471-1473)¹⁷ there is a section on the birth of Islam, in which it is clearly stated that the Arabs ‘uno Idio confessano solo e sancia alcun pari’ and that ‘Maumetho [is] propheta di quello mandato ad essi [per salvarli], sì come Moyses a’ Iudei e Iesù Cristo a noi’.¹⁸ Riccobaldo (or indeed Boiardo) also mentions circumcision, the prohibition of pork and wine, Ramadan fasting and the fact that men can have up to four wives and divorce and remarry each of them up to three times. Moreover, he describes the punishments for adultery and theft as well as the rewards that await the faithful in the afterlife and briefly (and very inaccurately) narrates the story of the schism between Shia and Sunni Muslims.¹⁹

Thus, Boiardo undoubtedly had a good knowledge of Islam by the standards of his time. However, he deliberately chooses not to show it in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*.

by Andrea Arrivabene in 1547) was based on Robert of Ketton’s translation, known as *Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete* (1143), a crucial point of reference for late medieval ‘orientalists’.

¹⁶ ‘Chi gli [saracini] domanda de ciò che credeno egli rispondeno: «Noi crediamo in Dio creatore del cielo e dela terra e de tutte le altre cose el quale ha facto ogni cosa e senza lui niente è facto; e crediamo che vero sia quello che Dio ha dicto per li sancti propheti.»’ (John de Mandeville, *Itinerarius* (Bologna: per Ugo Rugerius, 1488), f. e iiiv). Mandeville provides a sympathetic summary of the Islamic beliefs, highlighting the common ground shared by Islam and Christianity. The *Itinerarius* features in the 1495 inventory of the Ducal Library in Ferrara.

¹⁷ The first two books of the *Historia imperiale* are available in a modern edition: *The ‘Historia imperiale’ by Riccobaldo Ferrarese translated by Matteo Maria Boiardo (1471-1473)*, ed. by Andrea Rizzi (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 2008). Books III and IV can be read in Ludovico Muratori’s edition in *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*, vol. IX (Milano: Soc. Palatina, 1726), pp. 289-420. As Rizzi explains in the introduction to his edition, the translation presents a number of critical problems. Since there are many departures from Riccobaldo’s extant works, especially in the final two books, some critics have argued that it is not a translation at all but rather an original work drawing on a range of medieval sources. For a comprehensive overview of critical opinions see Rizzi’s introduction.

¹⁸ Boiardo (2008), p. 168.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 168-170.

His and Ariosto's portrayals of the Islamic faith are deformed and unrealistic, not because of ignorance, but rather because of a centuries-old literary convention.²⁰ Because of this, both poets represent their Saracens as polytheists. Like in the *chansons de geste*, in both the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Orlando furioso* 'Macone' or 'Macometto' is one of the Saracen gods and not a prophet of God (as he is in Pulci's *Morgante* and in the *Trabisona*).²¹ Boiardo's Saracens sometimes invoke the name of 'dio Macone' in order to lend weight to their words or when they are in distress (I ii 12,1; vii 55,1; ix 62,1; xvi 29,5; xvii 32,6; xxii 50,4; II vii 56,6). By contrast, Ariosto never explicitly calls Macone a god, but his divinity seems to be implied: 'Quanti prieghi la notte, quanti voti, / [Fiordispina] offerse al suo Machon e a tutti i dèi' (XXIII 42,1-2 A; 44 B; XXV 44 C); '[Agramante] A suasion di lui [Rodomonte] rotto havea il patto / (così credea) che fu solennemente / gli dèi chiamando in testimonio, fatto' (XXXV 27,1-3 A; 16 B; XXXIX 16 C).²²

Discussing the representation of the Saracen religion in the *chansons de geste*, Daniel states that 'we must consider the possibility that the multiplicity of Saracen gods is [...] intended, not to deceive, but to amuse'.²³ Indeed, the Saracen religion is an inexhaustible source of humour in many French and Italian chivalric texts. The 'Saracen Trinity' is

²⁰ It is interesting to note that at least one fifteenth-century poem of the 'guerre contro il Turco' cycle assimilates contemporary history to the old convention by portraying the Turks as worshipping the Saracen gods of the *chansons de geste*. Maffeo Pisano's *Lamento di Costantinopoli* (first printed in 1487) features two references to 'idio Tre(i)vigante' (6,6 and 33,5) despite the fact that the *Lamento* is not about fictional Saracens but real Turks. This clearly testifies to the influence of the chivalric tradition on the ways in which real wars between Christians and Muslims were perceived in the Quattrocento. On the other hand, it would seem that this influence was declining. Many other 'guerre contro il Turco' poems feature only 'Macone' (or 'Maometto'). See Maffeo Pisano, *Lamento di Costantinopoli*, in *Guerre in ottava rima*, vol. IV: *Guerre contro i turchi (1453-1570)*, ed. by Marina Beer and Cristina Ivaldi (Modena: Panini, 1988).

²¹ See *Morgante*, XXV 195,7; *Trabisona*, XI 97,4-8; 98,1-2 [f. 72r] (*La Trabisona* (Bologna: per Ugo Rugerius, 1483)). In these poems Macone is similar to Christ insofar as he is both a prophet of the Saracen faith and one of the gods.

²² This and all subsequent quotations from the *Furioso* are taken from the 1516 edition (A): Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso secondo la princeps del 1516*, ed. by Marco Dorigatti, with collaboration of Gerarda Stimato (Firenze: Olschki, 2006). For B (1521) and C (1532) we shall use *Orlando furioso secondo l'edizione del 1532: con le varianti delle edizioni del 1516 e del 1521*, ed. by Santorre Debenedetti and Cesare Segre (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1960).

²³ Daniel (1984), p. 121.

effectively a grotesque version of the Christian Trinity, and that the Saracens ardently believe in gods with ridiculous names is comical. The fact that they worship idols, confident that these hefty pieces of gold take a personal interest in their lives, provokes a smile; their terrible fits of rage (during which they curse Macone and/or his divine ‘brothers’ and sometimes physically assault their statues) when they discover that the gods are deaf and indifferent, can be highly entertaining.²⁴ In short, the reader is invited to have a good laugh at the expense of the naivety and puerile credulity of the infidels. While in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* Saracen characters’ interactions with their deities are occasionally described in a comic fashion, Ariosto’s treatment of the Saracen religion is on the whole surprisingly ‘respectful’. It is worth pointing out, for example, that the *Furioso* contains only a handful of references to the Saracen gods. In the *Inamoramento de Orlando* Macone (Macometo, Macometto) is mentioned 66 times, Apollino (Appolino, Apolino) 7 times and Trivigante (Travigante) 6. In the *Furioso* Machone (Macometto, Maumete, Maumette) is invoked 10 times (9 in the 1532 version), Trivigante appears only twice (both in rhyme position), while his companion Apollino (not to be confused with the ancient god Apollo) is not honoured with a single mention. It suffices to compare these numbers with those in the much shorter *Spagna ferrarese* (Machone: 83; Apolino: 17; Trivichante: 25), Andrea da Barberino’s *Aspramonte* (Maometto: at least 73; Apollino: 13; Trevigante: 15) or Pulci’s *Morgante* (Macone: at least 84; Apollino: 19; Trivigante: 11) to see that Ariosto (and to a lesser extent Boiardo) does not attach much importance to Saracen polytheism.²⁵

²⁴ According to Michelle Houdeville, idol beating scenes also perform an edifying function insofar as they ‘consitu[ent], en même temps, un avertissement pour les chrétiens, tentés de se révolter en cas de revers, contre Celui qui n’a pas répondu à leurs prières’ (Houdeville, ‘Les sarrasins, miroir des chrétiens?’ in *La chrétienté péril sarrasin: actes du colloque de la Section française de la Société internationale Rencesvals, Aix-en-Provence, 30 septembre-1er octobre 1999* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l’Université de Provence, 2000), pp. 77-84: 80).

²⁵ Significantly, Apollino and Trivigante are banished from the universe of Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata*, a late Cinquecento poem conceived in accordance with the neo-Aristotelian concept of verisimilitude. On the representation of Islam in Tasso see at least: Alain Godard, ‘Le camp païen dans la

Moreover, it must be said that, though formally polytheists, both Boiardo's and Ariosto's Saracens often address their prayers (or curses) to God *tout court*, rather than to one of the Saracen gods.²⁶ Thus, at the sight of a centaur carrying a roaring lion, Boiardo's Fiordelisa cries out to 'Re celestiale' (I xiii 53,6), and Trufaldino calls upon God as his witness ('ma testimonio il ciel e Dio me sia', I xv 49,3) when trying to convince Orlando that he betrayed Angelica not out of ill-will but because of the folly of his companions. Boiardo's Rodamonte 'dice contro Dio parole altiere' (II vi 30,3) during a storm, and so does Ariosto's Rodomonte when spurring his men to climb the walls of Paris (XII 117,8 AB; XIV C). Having lost his kingdom, Ariosto's Agramante surrenders himself to the will of God, whose ways, as he asserts in his last speech, are mysterious, far beyond the understanding of mortals of whatever faith (XXXVII 44,1-4 AB; XLI C). Many other examples could be given.²⁷ The fact that Saracen characters seem to believe in one Supreme God, who is perhaps the embodiment of all other deities (and whom they invoke much more frequently than Apollino or Trivigante and, in the *Furioso*, more frequently than Macone), not only reduces the difference between the Christian and Saracen religions but also adds a touch of realism to the portrayal of Islam in both poems.²⁸

Jérusalem délivrée, in *Quêtes d'une identité collective chez les Italiens de la Renaissance*, ed. by Marina Marietti (Paris: Université de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 1991), pp. 309-429; Maria Pavlova, 'Torquato Tasso and Islam', in Thomas and Chesworth (2014), pp. 592-601.

²⁶ '[...] dans le *Roland amoureux*, le même vocable «Dio», peut désigner à quelques vers de distance le dieu de l'Islam ou celui des chrétiens (ce qui a de quoi décontenancer le lecteur)' (Alexandre-Gras (1988), p. 316).

²⁷ See also *Inamoramento de Orlando*, I iii 64,4; iv 70,1; 86,5; v 8,1; 57,8; 62,3; xi 48,3; xii 21,1; 69,1; 75,8; 77,5; xvi 11,1; 63,1; xvii 20,8; 55,8; xxii 35,2; 38,4; 39,8; 43,7; xxvii 49,6; xxviii 30,6; 40,5; 40,7; xxix 12,1; 39,7; 51,8; II i 43,1; 49,6; 58,7; ii 50,6; iii 25,7; 57,6; 67,5; iv 9,8; v 61,1; vi 58,4; ix 27,6; xii 50,4; xv 8,7; 29,5; xvi 21,7; 54,3; xvii 23,5; 43,2; xxvi 8,2; 54,8; xxviii 22,8; III iii 35,7; iv 3,8; v 43,6; ix 15,5; *Orlando furioso*, I 52,6 ABC; IV 28,1 ABC; IX 32,6, 45,5, 99,3 AB; X 44, 57, 111, C; X 68,1 AB; XII 64 C; XII 54,6, 58,6 AB; XIV C; XV 29,5, 43,5, 61,6, 64,5 AB; XVII C; XVI 51,3, 150,4, 169,3 AB; XVIII C; XVIII 121,4 AB; XX C; XXII 71,7 AB; XXIV C; XXIII 65,7 A; 67 B; XXV 67 C; XXV 28,5, 66,3, 119,1 AB; XXVII C; XXVIII 38,2, 42,5, 67,7 AB; XXX C; XXXIV 53,5 AB; XXXVIII C; XXXVI 52,3 AB; XL C; XXXVII 14,3 AB; XLI C.

²⁸ Although Maomet, Tregant and Apolin (together with another deity named Jopin) are often on the lips of Saracens in the *Entrée d'Espagne*, Ferragu tells Roland that he believes in one God: 'Ja cro je Alababir / che fist le monde e le puet definir' (3627-3628). This and other quotations from the *Entrée*

As far as idolatry is concerned, in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* we come across three statues of Macone: Grandonio has ‘d’or scolpito [...] un Macone’ inside his shield (I ii 50,4); besides himself with anger, Orlando cuts to pieces ‘un gran Macon di pietra marmorina’ (I xxvi 3,2) while waiting to confront his cousin Ranaldo; Orlando accuses Ranaldo of having stolen ‘al re Marsilio il suo Macone’ (I xxviii 7,6), which is an allusion to an episode in the *Inamoramento de Carlo Magno* (see Tissoni Benvenuti’s comments on this octave in her edition of the *Inamoramento*). There are no religious processions with images of Macone or other gods; a temple of Apollino ‘in Sericana a lato al mare’ (II xvii 43,4) and another Saracen temple in Tartary (III i 13,3) are mentioned but not described. In the *Furioso* there appear to be no idols at all, which again could be seen as a move in the direction of greater realism. Neither poet dwells on the Saracen forms of worship. Like the ancients, the inhabitants of the Isole Lontane, a Saracen kingdom ruled by King Manodante, make offerings to their gods: ‘chi promete a Macon pecore e boi, / chi darli incenso e chi argento si vanta’ (II xii 32,5-6). Similarly, Ariosto’s Dardinello promises ‘al suo Machon, s’udir lo puote, / che se morto Lurcanio in terra getta / ne la moschea ne porrà l’arme vuote’ (XVI 55,2-4 AB; XVIII C). Just like Christians, Saracens make vows to God when they face mortal danger.²⁹ In the *Furioso* the prayers of the inhabitants of Biserta echo those of the Parisians:

Dentro la terra [Paris] suonano a martello
con spaventevol fretta le campane;
nanzi alli altari, in questo tempio e in quello,
donne e fanciulli alzano al ciel le mane.
Se ’l thesoro paresse a Dio sì bello
come lo stiman le schiochezze humane,

d’Espagne are from *L’Entrée d’Espagne: chanson de geste franco-italienne*, ed. by Antoine Thomas (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1913), 2 vols. For an analysis of the theological conversation between Ferragu and Roland see Claudia Boscolo, ‘La disputa teologica dell’*Entrée d’Espagne*’, in *Les chansons de geste: actes du XVI^e Congrès International de la Société Rencesvals*, ed. by Carlos Alvar and Juan Paredes (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2005), pp. 123-134.

²⁹ Boiardo does not use the term ‘moschea’. Ariosto uses it once and employs the more archaic word ‘meschita’ on another occasion (XXXVI 33,6 AB; LX C). By contrast, in the *Morgante* the word ‘moschea’ recurs at least 8 times and ‘meschita’ once (but in the Dantesque sense of a tower).

questo era il dì che 'l santo Consistoro
fatto havria in terra ogni sua statua d'oro.

(*Orlando furioso*, XII 100 AB; XIV C)

Dentro a Biserta i sacerdoti santi
supplicando col popolo dolente,
battonsi il petto, e con dirotti pianti
chiamano il lor Machon che nulla sente.
Quante vigilie, quante offerte, quanti
doni promessi son privatamente!
quando in publico templi, statue, altari,
memoria eterna de' lor casi amari!

(*Orlando furioso*, XXXVI 13 AB; XL C)

It is obvious that Ariosto's irony – a smile tinged with sadness born out of genuine compassion – spares neither the Christians nor the Saracens. Saracens sometimes curse or threaten Macone and other gods, either as a display of bravado (suffice it to think of Rodamonte's rants or of Agramante's intention to conquer the world and then 'ancor nel Paradiso [...] far guera', II i 64,8) or in order to vent their frustration when something goes wrong (for example, at the news of the utter rout of his army, Boiardo's Marsilio 'ambe mani se bate in sula fronte / e forte biastemando il suo Macone, / facea le fiche al Ciel a pugne gionte', II xxiii 71,2-4). While similar outbursts of Boiardo's characters often border on the farcical, the curses of Ariosto's Saracens do not produce any comic effect, not least because the blasphemers (Rodomonte, Feraù, Mandricardo and Marphisa) do not seem to expect any response from the celestial being(s) whom they are insulting.³⁰ As we shall see in chapters III and IV, Ariosto's irony is much more pronounced in octaves devoted to the Christians' relationship with their God.

³⁰ Unlike Boiardo's Saracens, Ariosto's never lose their dignity when ranting against the supernatural powers. When Boiardo's Marphisa fails to unhorse Rinaldo, her disappointment is extreme: 'chiama iniquo Macone e doloroso; / cornuto e beco Trivigante appella. / «Ribaldi,» a lor dicea «per qual cagione / teneti il cavalier in sulo arcione?» // Venga un di voi, e làsciassi vedere, / e pigli a suo piacer questa difesa, / che io farò sua persona rimanere / qua giù riversa e nel prato distesa! / Voi non voliti mia forza temere, / perché là su non posso esser asciesa! / Ma se io prendo il camino, io ve ne aviso, / tutti vi occido, et ardo il Paradiso!» (I xviii 9,5-8; 10). After a similar unpleasant surprise, Ariosto's Mandricardo and Marphisa limit themselves to cursing Heaven: 'bestemmiò il cielo e li elementi il crudo / Pagan [Mandricardo], poi che restar la [Marphisa] vide in sella; / Marphisa, che pensò rompergli il scudo, / non men sdegnosa contra il ciel favella' (XXIV 80,1-4 AB; XXVI 83 C).

One may add that, while the Saracen religion is considered a false religion ('la legge falsa di Babelle', as Charlemagne calls it in the *Furioso*, XII 71,3 AB; XIV C), it is not represented as an evil cult actively supported by the devil.³¹ It is true that both Boiardo and Ariosto often send their dead Saracens to Hell, this being a *topos* in the chivalric tradition. However, they do not insist on the fact that the Saracens receive help from, and unwittingly carry out, the plans of the enemy of mankind.³² In the *Inamoramento de Orlando* there are a few Saracen villains who seem to put their trust in the devil rather than in Macone: the evil magician Balisardo 'chiama [...] el dimonio con tempesta, / Alïel, Libicoco e Calcabrina' when he sees that his end is imminent (II xi 42,1-2); the robber Barigazo 'al dimonio se racomanda [...]' when Brandimarte mortally wounds him (II xix 46,2). However, the vast majority of Boiardo's Saracens have no contact with the forces of evil.³³ Those infidels who claim to be able to communicate with their gods (for example, the King of Garamatha, a priest of Apollino, who on behalf of 'il dio grande, Apolino', II i 59,2, tells Agramante and his vassal kings that all of them will perish in France and then accurately predicts his own death) are able to read the future because they are well versed in astrology – a science held in high esteem by Boiardo and his Ferrarese audience – and not because they obtain this knowledge from the devil.³⁴

³¹ 'Babelle' or Babylon was traditionally seen as the centre of the infidels. See Bigi's comment to this line.

³² It must be said that this is also (partially) true of many other Italian chivalric works. Although religion plays an important role in the *Spagna* and in the *Aspramonte*, it would be wrong to claim that the authors of these texts go to great lengths to show that the war between Christians and Saracens is part of a titanic power struggle between God and Satan (as it will be in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*). The most negative representations of the Saracen religion are to be found in the *chansons de croisade* (a cycle of the *chansons de geste* dealing with the First Crusade), where Saracen are often referred to as 'followers of the devil' and those who kill them are said to cleanse the Earth from sin.

³³ We must bear in mind, however, that in both poems (and in the chivalric tradition in general) Christian and Saracen sorcerers and sorceresses (positive characters for that matter) often summon infernal spirits: suffice it to think of Angelica's, Malagigi's or Melissa's magic.

³⁴ In other chivalric romances it is not uncommon for Saracen idols to be inhabited by demons. In the *Entrée d'Espagne* Roland tells Ferragu that 'vos quatre Diex sunt fait par vos traïr, / par vos gaber et par vos eschirnir: / cels font vos armes as Diable tolir' (3620-3622). In the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* Ruggieri gives a similar lecture to Almonte: 'd'oro et d'argento son l'idole matte / dentro alle quale sta quel dell'inferno / che rispondon parole molte stratte' (VIII 26,4-6 [f. cviiiv]). Not long after, the author gives us a practical proof: Balante's silver Trevigante turns into a frightening demon when a Christian priest orders

Only on a handful of occasions do Boiardo and Ariosto mention the devil in connection with the Saracens' attempted invasion of France. Describing the panic that has gripped the hearts of the Parisians before the battle for Paris, Boiardo's narrator claims that even 'il demonio apena / se ralegrasse a tanta crudeltate' (III viii 8,3-4), but this comment does not imply that the Saracens are pawns in the hands of Satan. Full of admiration for Rodamonte's superhuman strength, the Count of Scandiano wonders 's'el fo piacer del Cielo eterno / donar tanta prodecia ad un Pagano, / o se 'l demonio ussito delo 'nferno / combatesse per lui quel giorno al piano' (II vii 2,1-4). In the *Furioso* the 'antiquo Aversario, / che fece Eva al divietato pomo alzar la mano' (XXV 13,1-2 AB; XXVII C) intervenes in the affairs of men once, when he brings the main Saracen warriors back to Agramante's camp so that they defeat Charlemagne while Rinaldo is away. This is, however, the devil's only appearance; otherwise, the Christians are to some extent helped by their God whereas the Saracens are left to their own devices.³⁵ Although it is true that in both the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso* Saracens knights are sometimes compared to demons, one should not read too much into such similes, as they are devoid of any religious significance. After all, Christian knights too are occasionally likened to spirits from Hell (as well as to dragons and snakes) because of their terrifying ferocity on the battlefield. Boiardo, for example, does not distinguish between Rinaldo and Rodamonte when they fly into a terrible rage: Christian and Saracen soldiers run away from the two duelists 'sì come dui demonii del'Inferno / fossero ussiti sopra dela terra' (II xv 3,1-2).

In both poems, the Saracen creed is to a large extent a mirror image of Christianity with some elements borrowed from ancient Paganism. Its hierarchical structure is unclear,

him to reveal his true essence. All quotations from the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* are taken from the following edition: *Le battaglie d'Aspramonte* (Venezia: Dionysius Bertochus, 1491).

³⁵ It is interesting to note that Ariosto's narrator once suggests that the Almighty is saddened by the loss of life in both camps: 'se non venia la notte tenebrosa / che staccò il fatto. et aquetò ogni cosa; // dal Creator accelerata forse, / che de la sua fattura hebbe pietade' (XVI 161,7-81 162,1-2 AB; XVIII C).

because, unlike the author of the *Spagna ferrarese*, neither Boiardo nor Ariosto explicitly say that Argalipha (Argaliffa) – a very marginal character – is the ‘Pope of the Saracens’.³⁶ However, both religions have priests who provide spiritual guidance and support to the faithful. Lending an Islamic touch to his representation of Saracen clergy, Ariosto mentions *muezzins* (‘de li Talacimanni un gridar d’alto’, XVI 7,6 AB; XVIII C) and the *qadi* of Biserta (‘E poi che dal Cadì fu benedetto, / prese il popolo l’arme, e tornò al muro’, XXXVI 14,1-2 AB; XL C).³⁷ Both Christians and Saracens have holy books: the Bible and the ‘Alcorana/o’. Ariosto stages a scene in which, in the presence of a Christian priest and a Saracen ‘Papasso’, Carlo and Agramante solemnly swear upon their respective holy texts not to interrupt the duel between Ruggiero and his future brother-in-law Rinaldo (XXXIV 81-86 AB; XXXVIII C).³⁸ The perfect symmetry between the two oaths reinforces the impression that the two religions are underpinned by similar fundamental values. Like Christians (and like real Muslims), Boiardo’s and Ariosto’s Saracens believe in God and the Devil, in Heaven and Hell. Although their never-ending adventures do not leave them much time to ruminate on the beatitude enjoyed by the souls in Paradise or on the torments that are meted out to sinners, the occasional references to the Saracen Heaven and Hell show that there is little difference between Christian and Saracen views on the hereafter. Thus, ready to die in a doomed attempt to free Prasildo, Iroldo tells Ranaldo that he is not afraid of physical death, as the Almighty saves the righteous: ‘sarami quel morir tanto iocondo / che io ne andarò di volo in Paradiso’ (I xvii 16,2-3). A few octaves later, having seen Ranaldo slaughter Rubicone’s

³⁶ See *Spagna ferrarese*, XVIII 5,2; 22, 6-7.

³⁷ *Qadis* (Islamic judges) performed a variety of religious (and even political) functions in different Muslim societies. In his *Itinerario* (first published in 1510) the Italian traveller Ludovico de Varthema describes a sermon delivered by a qadi in Mecca. See *Itinerario de Ludouico de / Varthema bolognese [...]* (Vinegia: per Francesco di Alessandro Bindone and Mapheo Pasini, 1535), f. 15r.

³⁸ The word ‘papasso’ appears in the *Morgante* too, where, unless preceded by the adjective ‘gran’, it means ‘a priest’ rather than ‘a Pope’ (*Morgante*, VI 15,6; XVIII 118,4).

men, Iroldo and his rescued friend come to believe that the mysterious knight is none other than ‘dio Macone’ in person:

Ciascun de’ doi Baron con le man gionte
come d’io adorarno in gionichione
e a lui divotamente in voce prompte
diceano: «O Re de il ciel, o dio Macone,
che per pietà in terra sei venuto
in tanta nostra pena a darci aiuto!

Per cagion nostra giù de il ciel lucente
hor sei disseso a mostrarci la faccia:
tu sei lo aiuto del’humana gente,
né mai salvarli il tuo volto si scia.
Fa’ ciascadun di noi ricognoscente,
dapoì che ce hai donata cotal gratia,
sì che per merto al fin si troviam degni
de star con teco neli eterni regni!».

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I xvii 32,3-8; 33)

It is worth noting that whereas Christian scholars stressed the sensuous delights of the Saracen Paradise, Boiardo’s characters are enraptured at the thought of being able to contemplate Macone for all eternity (‘star deco neli eterni regni’).³⁹ Though poking fun at the ‘gran simplicitate’ (I xvii 34,4) of the two Saracens, Boiardo neither demonises their religion nor represents it as purely concerned with earthly pleasures.⁴⁰ Prasildo’s and Iroldo’s Macone bears much resemblance to the figure of Christ in Christianity: if anything, their mistake shows that they have the potential to become devout Christians, which is immediately clear to Ranaldo who seizes this opportunity to convert them.

³⁹ In Boiardo’s (pseudo) translation of Riccobaldo the Islamic Paradise is described as a beautiful garden where ‘tra odori suavissimi staranno [the blessed souls] in conviti cum cope d’oro di preciose pietre adornate e tra belissime donçelle, <le quale sempre staranno> vergine, <abenché> siecho usino loro carnalmente, <e durarà quello diletto de luxuria quanto serà la voluntade sua [...]>’ (Boiardo (2008), p. 169). Similarly, Mandeville (1488), f. e iiv, tells his reader that for Muslims ‘paradiso è uno loco delicato nel quale loco se trova da ogni staxone de ciascaduna mainera de fructi e de fiume de lacte, mele e vino sempre corrente. E de aque dolce e che ivi sono case belle e nobile secondo el merito de ciaschuno adornate de pietre preciose d’oro e d’argento. E ciascuno haverà damiselle e sempre usará con loro e sempre le troverà più belle’. Pulci alludes to such visions of the Islamic Heaven in the *Morgante*, where the cynical atheist Marsilio promises his men ‘le fonte e’ fiumi di latte e di mèle’ (XXV 192,8) if they die for the sake of their religion.

⁴⁰ In the *Furioso* a similar mistake is made by a Christian: Senapo (Prester John) mistakes Astolfo for a new Messiah and, overcome by religious ecstasy, promises to build him a sumptuous temple and tries to kiss his feet (XXX 85-89 A; 90-94 B; XXXIII 114-118 C).

As for the Saracen Hell, there are references to ‘inferno’ as the place of eternal sorrow in the amorous laments of Iroldo, Prasildo, Brandimarte (when he despairs of ever finding his beloved Fiordalisa) and Angelica (I xii 51,5; 69,8; 79,7; xxi 47,8; xxviii 36,6). Moreover, the ‘cielo’ (‘Paradiso’)/‘inferno’ antithesis – meaningless concepts for an agnostic leaning towards atheism – features in Rodamonte’s blasphemous speeches (II i 65,7; xxii 49,7).⁴¹ It is towards the end of the *Furioso* that the term ‘inferno’ acquires clear religious overtones. Angrily rejecting Brandimarte’s advice to embrace the faith of Christ, Agramante accuses his former friend of being possessed:

Più presto crederò che tu, ch’in preda
sai che del Diavol sei, né speri aiuto,
voresti teco nel dolor eterno
tutto il mondo poter trarre all’inferno.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXXVII 43,5-8 AB; XLI C)

These lines have been criticised by Tasso, who in his *Apologia* (1585) observes that ‘paiano anzi di predicator Christiano, che di Cavalier saracino quelle parole [...]. Perché i Macometani n[on] sogliono usare simili persuasioni, ò simili spaventi; ma spaventeano con la morte, con gli incendi, e con le ruine, et in somma con le pene temporali’.⁴² Needless to say, Tasso’s comment about the inappropriateness of the reference to ‘dolor eterno’ does not point to his deep knowledge of the Islamic faith, but rather reflects the commonly held stereotype that Islam is a less spiritual religion than Christianity. At least one other sixteenth-century scholar (namely Giulio Guastavini) agrees with Tasso on this point.⁴³ Salviati, however, does not find Agramante’s attitude incompatible with Islam and reminds the author of the *Gerusalemme liberata* of the similarity between the two

⁴¹ In the *Inamoramento de Orlando* Rodamonte appears to be an agnostic rather than a hardcore atheist: ‘Se egli è alcun dio nel ciel (ch’io nol scio certo) / là stassi ad alto, e di qua giù non cura’ (II iii 22,1-2).

⁴² Cited from Lionardo Salviati, DELLO / INFARINATO / Accademico della Crusca / Risposta / ALL’APOLOGIA DI TORQUATO TASSO / intorno all’*Orlando Furioso*, e alla / *Gierusalèm liberata* (Firenze: per Carlo Meccoli e Salvestro Magliani, 1585), p. 81.

⁴³ See Giulio Guastavini, RISPOSTA / DI / GIULIO GUASTAVINI / ALL’INFARINATO / ACCADEMICO DELLA CRUSCA / INTORNO / ALLA GERUSALEMME / LIBERATA / DI / TORQUATO TASSO [1588], in Tasso (1735), pp. 461-560: 518-519.

religions: ‘Che minacce, e che spaventì dite voi? Qui non si tratta né di spaventì, né di minacce. Volete voi dir forse, che la legge Macomettana non crede, che dopo morte le buone opere sien ristorate, e le malvage punite per lo contrario?’⁴⁴

While the above-mentioned passages suggest that Christians and Saracens share identical conceptions of the afterlife, at least on one occasion the Saracen ‘inferno’ brings to mind the underworld of the ancients. At the beginning of Book III of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, an old man tells Mandricardo that the soul of his father Agricane will never find peace until Orlando, his murderer, is dead too:

L’anima del tuo patre è maledetta:
non pò el mal fiume alo Inferno passare,
perché scordata s’è la sua vendetta.
Sopra alla rippa stassi a lamentare,
stassi piangendo e tien la testa bassa,
che ogni altro morto sopra li trapassa.
(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, III i 8,3-8)

Here, the grey-haired Saracen seems to be referring to a place similar to Hades; Agricane’s suffering makes one think of the state of the unburied dead as described in the *Aeneid* (VI 325-330) and other ancient texts. Cavallo attempts to read the Tartar’s speech in light of the Mongol and Chinese religions, stating that Marco Polo’s Mongols ‘contracted marriages for their deceased children and burnt material possessions they believed would reach the newlyweds in the otherworld’ and that ‘in China it was traditionally believed that the spirit of someone who died in violence could not be pacified until his assassin was killed in turn’.⁴⁵ Although it is not impossible that Boiardo wanted to add a Chinese flavour to his representation of Mandricardo, there is not enough

⁴⁴ Salviati (1585), p. 81. In C the first two lines of the above-quoted passage read as follows: ‘Crederò ben, tu che ti vedi in preda / di quel dragon che l’anime devora’ (XLI 43,5-6). Having assumed that the ‘dragon’ metaphor refers to Christ, Tasso criticises it on the grounds that ‘i Macometani non biasmano Christo’. Salviati corrects Tasso’s mistake, pointing out that Agramante ‘intende del Diauolo, non di Giesù Cristo nostro Signore’ (idid).

⁴⁵ Cavallo (2013), p. 63. Cavallo has been unable to find a reference to the Chinese belief in the need to avenge those who suffered a violent death in any source that might have been known to Boiardo.

evidence to say that the octave quoted above consciously draws on medieval writings about the Mongols and the Chinese.⁴⁶

We have to bear in mind that in other chivalric romances, too, the Saracen religion takes on some of the traits of the religions of ancient Romans and Greeks, with Mars and other ancient gods being among the Saracen deities in many chivalric texts.⁴⁷ In the *Furioso* Medoro prays to the goddess Moon, asking the ‘santa Dea’ to show him ‘ove il Re mio giaccia fra tanti, / che vivendo imitò tuoi studi santi [i.e. hunting]’ (XVI 184 AB; XVIII C). Although the cult of the Moon was widespread among the Arabs during *asr Al-Jahiliyyah* (the ‘age of ignorance’ or the pre-Islamic period), in pre-Islamic mythology the Moon is a male god, which rules out any possible link with the goddess invoked by Medoro.⁴⁸ It is clear that Ariosto draws on Western sources, namely Nisus’ prayer to the Moon in *Aeneid* IX 403-409 and Dymas’ prayer in *Thebaid* X 365-370; the fact that the Saracen comes from Tolomitta (Ptolemais or Tolmeitha), a city whose history stretches

⁴⁶ Cavallo finds other allusions to Mongol religious beliefs in Boiardo’s portrayal of Tartars. She claims, for example, that Agricane’s invocation of the sky and the sun (‘ma siami testimonio il ciel e il sole / che darti morte me dispiace e dole!’ I xix 35,7-8) ‘recalls the Mongolian reverence for the “eternal blue sky” or “heaven” that was believed to keep watch over human events’. According to Cavallo, Agricane’s oath ‘not only supports the historical context of the episode but keeps the Christian-Saracen binary out of the picture’ (ibid., p. 55), while the fact that his son Mandricardo is referred to as ‘saracino’ (III i 5,3) ‘corresponds historically to the gradual spread of Islam in the Mongol Empire’ (p. 62). Such an interpretation seems far-fetched: had Boiardo wanted to dissociate Agricane from the Saracen faith he would have probably done this in a more explicit way. Agricane believes in Trivigante (I xiv 53,1) and is comfortable with his Saracen identity. There are Tartar characters in the *Altobello* and the *Trabisonda* and their religion is that of the other Saracens. In general, characters in chivalric romances are either Christians or Saracens: very rarely do authors refer to other non-Judeo-Christian religions. Boiardo must have known that the Chinese were ‘idolaters’; he could have read this in Marco Polo’s *Milione* or in Poggio Bracciolini’s *India recognita* (an account of Niccolò Conti’s travels in the East which constitutes the fourth book of Poggio’s *De varietate fortunae*, listed in the 1495 inventory of Ercole’s library). He must have known that the Circassians were Christians, as there were Circassian slaves in Ferrara. Yet his Angelica, Gradasso, Galaphrone and Sacripante are Saracens.

⁴⁷ The author of the *Entrée d’Espagne*, for example, mentions a temple of Mars: ‘Pelliais enfüirent a uns grant temple de Mart’ (13267). In the *Aspramonte* A Almonte hopes to receive help from ‘Marte deo delle battaglie’ (I xiii 16). See also the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*, XIII 9,6 [f. giiiiir]; XX 8,4 [f. niv], 61,1 [f. niiiiv]; XXII 1,2 [f. piiv], and *Mambriano*, XXXIII 53,6.

⁴⁸ Interestingly, the Arabs used the word ‘الله’ (‘Allah’) to refer to the Moon god. Today some radical Christian apologists claim that Muslims worship a false moon god or moon goddess.

back to Greek antiquity, further adds to the Greek atmosphere of this episode.⁴⁹ Medoro appears to be seized by genuine religious fervour: Ariosto stresses the fact that his words are animated by ‘tanta fede’ (185,2). The description of Agricane’s despair on the shore of the infernal river and Medoro’s heartfelt plea to the nocturnal goddess suggest that, in line with the preceding chivalric tradition, in Boiardo’s and Ariosto’s poems the boundary between the Saracen world and that of the ancients is somewhat blurred.⁵⁰ We shall explore the theme of antiquity in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso* subsequently, particularly in chapter II.

Turning now to the Islamic laws and customs and, more generally, to oriental elements in the portrayal of the religious Other, it must be said that on the whole there are scarcely any cultural differences between Christians and Saracens, which is of course not surprising in the context of the chivalric genre. Ariosto is more eager to show his knowledge of Qur’anic law. Thus, there is a reference to circumcision in one of the authorial digressions in the *Furioso*: recalling the battles for Bastia (31 December 1511 and 13 January 1512), the poet mentions the tragic death of Vestidello Pagano, a Ferrarese captain who ‘senza arme fu fra cento spade occiso / dal popul la più parte circonciso’ (XXXVIII 5,7-8 AB; XLII C), that is by Spanish soldiers who, as implied in these lines, were for the most part Muslim mercenaries. Moreover, Ariosto is the first or one of the very few Italian chivalric authors to say that the Qur’an forbids the consumption of wine. Rodomonte kills Issabella when, for the first time in his life, his sharp mind is clouded by alcohol: ‘Non era Rodomonte usato al vino, / perché la legge sua lo vieta e danna’ (XXVII 22,1-2 AB; XXIX C). Boiardo’s Saracens, by contrast,

⁴⁹ Cavallo (2013), p. 32, acknowledges the classical elements in the representation of Medoro: ‘Despite Medoro’s stated identity as a Moor, Ariosto systematically avoids characterizing him as African and fashions him instead as an heir to ancient Greek culture’.

⁵⁰ Interestingly, Nicolò degli Agostini blends Christian and mythological elements in his description of the afterlife in the *Sesto libro* of his *gionta* (II 36-46): Rinaldo finds a temple of Minerva, the final abode of the souls of the virtuous closed to Agramante and other Saracens (who are desperate to enter it but are unable to do so).

drink wine without any misgivings: it is the pungent words of a drunken ‘tamburino’ (‘ebriaco ognon il iudicava’, II xxviii 48,4) that spur Agramante to hasten the preparation for the military expedition to France.

In general, however, in both poems the lifestyle of Saracens is very similar to that of the Christians. Like Saracens in the *chansons de geste* and in most Italian chivalric romances, they are monogamous, if we do not count what seems to be an allusion to the Sultan’s harem and the Muslim slave trade in Issabella’s story (‘m’han promessa e venduta a un mercadante / che portar al Soldan me de’ in Levante’, XI 31 AB; XIII C).⁵¹ The most remarkable difference between Christian and Saracen damsels is that the latter are more mobile (especially in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*): unable to bear even a few months’ separation from their men, they follow the Saracen armies, which, as Pigna suggests in his *I romanzi*, could have a historical explanation. Attempting to historicise the figure of the warrior woman in chivalric romances, Pigna says that, during their military campaigns in Spain, the North African Arabs took their women with them to war and even allowed them to fight.⁵² However, neither Boiardo nor Ariosto can be credited

⁵¹ The *Guerrin Meschino* and the *Altobello* are notable exception to the general rule. Andrea da Barberino informs his readers that the sultan of Persia has more than 200 spouses because the Saracen religion permits polygamy (*Guerrin Meschino*, III viii 20-21). In the *Altobello* the Saracen king Valerano ‘è cento volte maridato: / quando vuol qusta [sic], quando vuol quella’ (III 40,5-6 [f. b. iv]); this is the reason why Fior de spina, the new object of his infatuation, does not want to marry him (*Altobello e il re Troiano suo fratello* (Venezia: per Gabriel di Grassi de Pavia, 1481)). Ariosto also mentions the fact that ‘appresso l’Indi neri / le donne che non han tanti rispetti, / vivon più liete in lor communi letti’ (XXXV 3,6-8 A [missing in later editions]).

⁵² ‘Quivi diremo che questo istesso terzo genere difende i romanzi, perciocché non tutte le donne fan gagliarde né a tutte dan carico di cavalleria, ma a quelle sole che o per fama o per autorità di libri esser armigere ritrovano. Da prima elle nelle battaglie traposte non erano, ma poi che nelle guerre di Spagna, che ottocento anni durarono, gli Arabi d’Africa le consorti e le meretrici loro trassero e lor diero il potere alla libera guerreggiare, molte, molto onoratamente riuscendo, mostraro che le donne nelle cose ch’a far si pongono non son niente da meno de gli uomini’ (Pigna (1997), p. 39). It must be said that medieval and Renaissance Italians did not seem to think that Muslim women were oppressed. Don Domenico, the author of the account of Meliaduse d’Este’s (1406-1452) travels in the Middle East comments on the freedom enjoyed by Syrian women: ‘in tuti luochi del mondo le donne non hanno buono tempo, salvo che in Soria. Mai non lavoranno, et si sono, in più dele chosse, sopra tuti li homini. Et vano dove se volgiono, et ponno andare peroché non ponneno essere acognossute: perché vano loro con lo so vixo coperto’ (Don Domenico Messore, *Viaggio del Sancto Sepolcro facto per lo Illustro Misere Milliaduxe Estense*, ed. by Beatrice Saletti (Roma: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2009), p. 45).

with being the first to introduce this ‘custom’ into chivalric literature: Saracen ladies accompany Saracen armies in earlier texts too, most notably in the *Aspramonte*.

While Boiardo’s giants and monsters have exotic appearances, the dress and manners of ‘human’ Saracens resemble those of their Christian counterparts, even if occasionally the poets add a few oriental strokes. Thus, some of Boiardo’s and Ariosto’s Saracens wear turbans: Baliverno, for example, is defined as ‘quel Saracin grosso / ch’avea rivolto al capo una gran fassa’ (II xxiv 32,5-6).⁵³ At one point, Falseta, a demon summoned by Malagigi, dresses up as a Persian ‘almansore’, pretending to be Gradasso’s ambassador:

le anelle ha nel’orechie e non in ditto,
e molto drapo al capo ha invilupato;
la veste longa e d’or tuta vergata
e di Gradasso porta l’ambassata.

Proprio pareva di Persia un almansore
con la spada di legno e col gran corno.

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I v 34,5-8; 35,1-2)

Boiardo’s vivid verbal portrait of Malagigi’s demon bears some resemblance to the painting of an Oriental scribe which might have been executed by Costanzo da Ferrara or Gentile Bellini and which is now kept in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.⁵⁴ Painted in the Persian style, it features a young man wearing a blue kaftan

⁵³ See also *Inamoramento de Orlando* II i 60,2; *Orlando furioso* X 84,1-2 AB; XII 80 C; XIV 50,4 AB; XVI C. Neither poet uses the term ‘turbante’ which appears to have entered Italian relatively late. According to Andrea Canova, the earliest known occurrence of ‘turbante’ is in a 1466 letter by Luigi Pulci (Andrea Canova, ‘Osservazioni lessicali su alcuni romanzi cavallereschi tra Quattro e Cinquecento’, a paper delivered at the conference *Carlo Magno in Italia e la fortuna dei libri di cavalleria*, University of Zurich, 6-8 May 2014).

⁵⁴ Jerry Brotton attributes it to Costanzo da Ferrara (see Plate 7 in his *The Renaissance Bazaar: from the Silk Road to Michelangelo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)), while other scholars claim that the painting’s authorship is uncertain. Alan Chong shows that it was most probably executed by Gentile Bellini: see his ‘Gentile Bellini in Istanbul: Myths and Misunderstandings’, in *Bellini and the East* (London: National Gallery; Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 106-129: 118. Bellini worked at the court of Mehmed in 1479-1480. As for Costanzo da Ferrara (who despite his name was not particularly well known in Ferrara), we know about his sojourn in the Ottoman Empire from Battista Bendedei’s 1485 letter to Eleonora d’Aragona, in which Battista says that Costanzo ‘è quello che mando gia piu anni la Maesta del S.re Re al gran Turcho quando li richiedetj gli mandasse vno pictore de quelli dal Canto di qua: et stetesì moltj anni e bene tractato da epso gran Turcho il quale etiam lo fece Cauliero’ (Maria Andaloro, ‘Costanzo da Ferrara. Gli anni a Costantinopoli alla corte di Maometto II’, *Storia dell’arte*, XXXVIII-XL (1980), 185-212).

embroidered in gold, a turban, and an earring. There is no evidence to say that Boiardo could have been inspired by this painting, but it is likely that Boiardo and his Ferrarese audience saw or heard stories about Persian ambassadors, given the strong diplomatic ties between the Serenissima and Uzun Hassan (more on this in the next section).

The most ‘oriental’ dress of the *Furioso* is that worn by Ruggiero during his stay on Alcina’s island. He is decked out in gold-embroidered silk and has gold hoops with giant pearls in his ears ‘qual mai non hebbon li Arabi né l’Indi’ (VII 54,8 ABC). Yet his normal attire does not strike the reader as particularly oriental and nor does the armour of most other Saracen superheroes (with the exception of Rod(a/o)monte’s invulnerable dragon-skin armour), even if at one point Ariosto draws attention to the ‘barbarica pompa’ of Agramante’s outfit (XXXIV 77,3-4 AB; XXXVIII C). No exotic armour is used in the joust organised by Ariosto’s Norandino, as the Syrians ‘haveano usanza / d’armarsi a questa guisa di Ponente’, perhaps because of the ‘vicinanza / che de’ Franceschi havean continuamente’ (XV 73,1-4 AB; XVII C).⁵⁵ In general, Saracen coats of arms are eye-catching but very few of them feature Islamic symbols or distinctively oriental images. Two notable exceptions are Isolieri’s and Mordante’s coats of arms: the former ‘tre lune d’oro avea nel verde scudo’ (I ii 46,2), while the latter featured ‘due lune vermiglie in campo d’oro’ (II xxix 17,5). The armour of ‘second-class’ knights and rank-and-file soldiers is by far inferior to that of Charlemagne’s soldiers. In a bid to encourage the allies to do their best, Ariosto’s Rinaldo reminds them that the enemy ‘gente male experta tutta parmi, / senza possanza, senza cor, senza armi’ (XIV 38,7-8 AB; XVI C). Boiardo’s Rugiero effortlessly kills a Genoese renegade, almost felling him into two halves, because the latter

⁵⁵ Needless to say, this does not correspond to historical reality. As Cavallo (2013), p. 173, points out, this ‘contradicts the fact that Westerners who remained any length of time in the Levant acclimatized to life there by adopting Arab dress’.

non avea intorno pecio di metallo,
 perché era armato pure a quella usanza
 moresca, dico, essendo genoese,
 ma con la fede avia cambiato arnese.

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, III vi 17,5-8)

It is worth pointing out that such disparaging comments can be found in non-fictional texts too. For example, talking about the Turkish, Arabic, Tartar and Syrian soldiers under the command of the ‘ammiraglio’ of Alexandria, Lionardo Frescobaldi (a fourteenth-century traveller who wrote a detailed account of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land) observes that ‘costoro non vanno armati del dosso né della testa, salvoché certi caporali, e radi di corazza e di panziera’.⁵⁶

At the banquet thrown by Charlemagne in the very beginning of the ‘bela historia’, Marsilio and his barons ‘non volsero usar banco né sponda, / anzi stérno a iacer comme mastini / sopra a tapeti comme è lor usanza’ (I i 13,5-7). Here, Boiardo is amused by the Saracens’ custom, as is the author of the *Entrée d’Espagne* in the episode in which Roland teaches the Persians to use individual plates (13961-13983). This comment apart, neither Boiardo nor Ariosto portray their Spanish and African Saracens as uncouth and uncultured. It is true that some of Boiardo’s Saracens are only interested in fighting (which is of course arguably by far the most important skill for a knight in a chivalric romance): the Tartar Agricane and his monstrous subjects (the Indians, Russians, Norwegians and other ‘barbarians’) are not particularly learned, which is not surprising taking into account the medieval and Renaissance stereotypes of these peoples.⁵⁷ Yet

⁵⁶ *Viaggio di Lionardo di Niccolò Frescobaldi fiorentino in Egitto e in Terra Santa con un discorso dell’editore sopra il commercio degl’Italiani nel secolo XIV*, ed. by Guglielmo Manzi (Roma: per Carlo Mordacchini, 1818), p. 76.

⁵⁷ In the famous nocturnal conversation with Orlando, Agricane admits that he has not received proper schooling: ‘io de nulla scientia sono esperto, / né mai, sendo fanciul, volsi imparare / e ròpi il capo al mastro mio per metro, / poi non se pòte un altro ritrovare / che mi mostrasse libro né scriptura, / tanto ciascun avia de mi paura’ (I xviii 42, 3-8). Whereas Marco Polo describes Kublai Khan’s Northern China as a flourishing civilisation, Boiardo’s contemporaries had little good to say about the Mongols they knew. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian travelers were not greatly impressed by Mongolian culture. For example, Ambrosio Contarini, a Venetian envoy to Persia whose memoirs were first printed in 1476-77,

Boiardo's North Africa is an important cultural centre, where such disciplines as philosophy (see the opening of Branzardo's speech at II i 39), astrology (see the prophecies of the king of Garamantha and Atalante) and navigational science (see the speech of the Moroccan captain Scobrano at II vi 7-9) are clearly flourishing. Boiardo's description of the North African civilisation can only be compared to the description of the Saracen Middle East in the *Entrée d'Espagne*: to my knowledge, no other fifteenth-century chivalric poet paints such a nuanced and captivating picture of the Saracens' accomplishments in different branches of knowledge.⁵⁸ Boiardo and his early readers certainly knew that Muslims made a very significant contribution to the history of philosophy, with the writings of Averroes and Avicenna (in the *Commedia* both of whom are among the souls relegated to Limbo) being an indispensable point of reference for medieval Western scholars. One may also note that there was a strong interest in Islamic astrology in Duke Ercole's Ferrara. Pellegrino Prisciani, a renowned Ferrarese astrologer, is greatly indebted to Abū Ma'shar (or Albumasar), a ninth-century Persian astrologer and philosopher, as well as to the *De revolutione annorum mundi* by Masha'allah ibn Atharī, an eighth-century Persian astrologer and astronomer. As has been shown first by Aby Warburg, it is Prisciani's astrological theories that underpin Francesco del Cossa's 'Salone dei mesi' in Palazzo Schifanoia.⁵⁹

Ariosto adds a further element to Boiardo's elaborate portrayal of Saracen culture.

Among the characters of the *Furioso* there are two poets, namely Olimpio da la Serra, 'un

was disgusted by the fact that the Mongols from the Kipchak Khanate spent most of their life on horseback and smelt of horses. See his IL VIAGGIO DEL MAGNIFICO / M. A. AMBROSIO CONTARINI / Ambasciatore della Illustrissima Signoria di Venetia al gran Signore / Vssuncassan Re di Persia nell'anno. M CCCCLXXIII, in *Navigazioni et viaggi*, ed. by Gian Battista Ramusio (Venezia: 1563-1606, reprint. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1967-1970), vol. II, ff. 112v-125v: 114r. Despite the huge gaps in his education, Agricane, as we shall see later, is portrayed very sympathetically.

⁵⁸ Although Saracen magicians and learned Saracen damsels feature in a variety of chivalric romances, they are usually portrayed in a rather sketchy manner.

⁵⁹ On Pellegrino Prisciani see Antonio Rotondò, 'Pellegrino Prisciani (1435ca.-1518)', *Rinascimento*, IX (1960), 69-110. On the Islamic influences on Francesco del Cossa's famous frescoes see Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999).

giovineto che col dolce canto, / concorde al suon de la cornuta cetra, / di intenerir un cor si dava vanto' (XIV 72,1-3 AB; XVI C), and Medoro. Both of them are Saracens. The former is a Spaniard while the latter is, as already mentioned above, from Tolomitta, a North African city. Slain before the very eyes of his friend Ferraù (who 'solea amar e haver in prezzo e stima', 73,2), Olimpico is partly modelled on Virgil's Creteus, an epic bard who falls in battle (*Aeneid* IX 774-777). As Marco Dorigatti points out, in the figure of the Saracen poet 'si rispecchia quella dell'autore, a cui pure incombe la necessità di temperare il «dolce canto» con il suono, ben altrimenti aspro, della battaglia'.⁶⁰ Medoro, on the contrary, is not a poet by trade, but his prayer to the Moon is imbued with lyricism, and the inscription which he makes at the entrance to a grotto – a passionate celebration of the joys of reciprocated love – is versified: 'Del gran piacer ch'in la spelonca prese, / questa sententia in versi havea ridotta' (XXI 107,5-6 AB; XXIII C). Medoro's 'epigramma' may well be the first written Arabic poem in Italian chivalric literature, even if a number of earlier chivalric texts feature Saracen singers and musicians.⁶¹ Having assured the reader that it must have been a very fine piece in the original Arabic ('che fusse culta in la sua lingua penso', 107,7), Ariosto provides an 'Italian translation' which takes up two octaves and, as befits a love poem, is replete with Petrarchan reminiscences. Its indebtedness to Petrarch is (perhaps unintentionally) ironic considering that the author of the *Canzoniere* had a very low opinion of Arabic poetry and, more generally, of all things oriental.⁶² Like Petrarch, Ariosto must have known that

⁶⁰ Marco Dorigatti, 'Borges, Ariosto e la vita segreta dei personaggi minori', in *Lettori e interpreti del Furioso. Atti della giornata di studio (Milano, 3 ottobre 2012)*, *Carte romanze*, I, n. 2 (2013), 377-406: 394.

⁶¹ In the *Entrée d'Espagne* the Saracen 'stormant' asks Roland whether he wants to listen to a song about Galiaine and Charlemagne ('mes sergant zantent plus cler e doz qe seraine', 11808) when he sees that his passenger is in very low spirits. In the *Cantari d'Aspramonte* and in the *Altobello* it is Saracen damsels who have angelic voices: in the former poem an anonymous Saracen girl plays the harp and sings about Paris' abduction of Helen (XIX 22-23), while in the latter poem Morandina, the daughter of King Morandino (whose other talents include astrology and medicine), sings about the death of Tristan (XXXII 157-163 [ff. oiiiv- oiiiir]).

⁶² In one of the *Epistole seniles* (XII, 2), Petrarch tells his interlocutor (Giovanni Dondi, a doctor) that the Arabs have never produced anything worthwhile: 'Arabes vero, quales medici tu scis, quales autem

poets and poetry existed in the real Islamic world.⁶³ Although both Olimpio da la Serra and Medoro are inspired by similar figures in ancient literature and Medoro's poems are patterned after Western literary models (as are Saracen songs in the preceding chivalric tradition), one could argue that Ariosto's respectful treatment of Arabic poetry reflects his openness towards the culture of the Islamic East, a culture about which he most probably knew very little (especially about its literary heritage), but which he did not deem to be inferior to that of the Christian West.⁶⁴

poetae scio ego. Nihil blandius, nihil mollius, nihil enervatius, nihil denique turpius, et quamvis animi hominum alii ad alia proniores sint, ut tu tamen dicere soles, in omnibus elucescit ingenium et quid multa – vix mihi persuadebitur ab Arabia posse aliquid boni esse'. It is highly unlikely that Petrarch had first-hand knowledge of Arabic poetry, but, as Charles Burnett suggests, he must have read Averroes's *Poetria Aristotelis*, in which one particular genre of Arabic poetry is criticised. See Charles Burnett, 'Learned Knowledge of Arabic Poetry, rhymed prose and didactic verse from Petrus Alfonsi to Petrarch', in *Poetry and Philosophy in the Middle Ages: A Festschrift for Peter Dronke*, ed. by John Marenbon (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 29-62: 47-51.

⁶³ There are reference to Arabic poetry not only in Petrarch and Averroes' *Poetria Aristotelis*, but also in a number of other medieval works. Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, an influential Christian apologist and a travel writer, claims that the Qur'an is a poem in his famous treatise on Islam, *Contra legem saracenorum* (circa 1300): '[...] è da sapere che Alcorano non è lege de Dio: perché non ha stillo ne modo consono alla lege de Dio che el stillo suo è metrico et rimilo con stillo in parole [*sic*] tutto blanditorio et in sententie fabuloso. Et che sia stillo de versi in tutto el libro è manifesto a chi legeno quello. Né tamen convenientemente io potria un exemplo di questo ponere perché li versi in Arabico fidelmente in latino del tutto translate non si potriano. Et li Arabi: et Saraceni grandamente de questo se gloriano ch'el sermone et stillo della sua lege sia in Rima composito [...]' (Paulus Angelus, Ricoldus de Monte Crucis, *Epistola ad Saracenos: cum libello cōtra Alcoranū: pro [per]uida: preuia[que] dispositione conversionis infidelīū* (Venezia: 1510), f. D2r). Fazio degli Uberti alludes to this passage in his *Dittamondo* (XIII 22-25).

⁶⁴ Having said that, many critics have noted the striking similarity between the Fiammetta novella (XXVI 1-74 AB; XXVIII C) and the frame story of *The Thousand and One Nights* (see, for example, Rajna (1900), pp. 436-440). However, there is no evidence that Ariosto could have known the Arabic story. *The Thousand and One Nights* was first translated into a European language in the eighteenth-century, and even though some scholars claim that it started to exert its influence on Western literature already in the Middle Ages (Irwin (2006) p. 43), for example, says that Boccaccio was probably familiar with it), thus far no concrete proof of this has been found. Ariosto himself attributes the authorship of the most bawdy story of the *Furioso* to his friend Giovan Francesco Valier (XXV 137,2-7 AB; XXVII 137,2-7 C), a Venetian diplomat and adventurer, who might have heard a version of the Arabic story. The Fiammetta novella also recalls Giovanni Sercambi's *De ingenio mulieris adultere*. According to Margherita Scampinato Beretta, who has recently re-examined the question of the poem's sources, Ariosto's and Sercambi's novellas 'dovevano quantomeno risalire entrambe ad un modello comune già occidentale, come attesterebbero i nomi di Astolfo e Fiammetta presenti nei due testi. Modello occidentale in relazione con quello orientale, non necessariamente quello proposto dalle *Mille e una notte*, forse più antico' (Margherita Scampinato Beretta, 'La cornice delle *Mille e una notte* ed il canto XXVIII dell'*Orlando furioso*', in *Medioevo romanzo e orientale*, ed. by Antonio Pioletti and Rizzo Nervo (Catanzaro: Soveria Mannelli, 1999), pp. 229-249: 236).

As far as Saracen cities and palaces are concerned, both Ariosto and Boiardo stress their opulence and beauty, as did many other chivalric authors before them.⁶⁵ Agramante's palace in Biserta is a splendid piece of architecture: 'il sol mai non ne vide un altro tale / di più ricchezza e più magnificenza' (II i 20,3-4). Its stairs are covered with golden carpets and its main hall is decorated with frescoes that illustrate the exploits of Alexander the Great, an important figure in Islamic culture who is even honoured with a mention in the Qur'an, namely in *Sūrah Al-Kahf* (سورة الكهف), 83-99, where he is described as a just ruler and a God-fearing Muslim. Whether or not Boiardo knew about Alexander's reputation in the Islamic world (he could have heard that Mehmed II was 'aspirante a gloria quanto Alexandro Macedonico'),⁶⁶ his main source must be (one of) the *Aspramonte* stories, where the Macedonian conqueror is said to be the founder of the North African dynasty to which belongs Agramante's grandfather Agolante. Moreover, as will be suggested in chapter II, other chivalric texts contain references to the cult of Alexander in *Pagania*, which could effectively mean that some of the medieval chivalric authors were aware of Alexander's fame in the Islamic lands.

Ariosto's descriptions of Saracen cities have a fairytale-like feel to them too, but they are slightly more precise and realistic. Thus, talking about Cairo, he notes that:

Non era grande il Chairò così allhora
 come se ne ragiona a nostra etade:
 ch'el populo capir, che ve dimora,
 non pôn diciotto mila gran contrade;
 e che le case hanno tre palchi, e anchora
 ne dormono infiniti in su le strade;
 e che 'l Soldano v'habita un castello
 mirabil di grandezza, e ricco e bello;

 e che quindice mila suoi vasalli,
 che son christiani rinegati tutti,

⁶⁵ The opulence of the East (be it Islamic or Byzantine) is a topos not only in chivalric texts but in Renaissance and medieval Western literature in general.

⁶⁶ See Zorzi Dolfin's *Cronaca* (Dolfin draws on the description of Mehmed furnished by his Italian physician, the Venatian Giacomo Langusto). The passage is cited in Jean Colin, *Cyriaque d'Ancône: le voyageur, le marchand, l'humaniste* (Paris: Maloine, 1981), p. 381.

con moglie, con famigli e con cavalli
ha sotto un tetto sol quivi ridutti.

(*Orlando furioso*, XIII 44; 45,1-4 AB; XV 63-64 C)

According to Luciano Serra, Ariosto's could be drawing on Lionardo Frescobaldi's *Viaggio in Egitto e in Terra Santa*.⁶⁷ Both Frescobaldi and Niccolò da Poggibonsi (another famous fourteenth-century traveler who recounted his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in his *Libro d'Oltramare*, 1346-1350) say that Cairo is overcrowded (like Ariosto, Frescobaldi observes that some people have to sleep outdoors) and mention the Sultan's castle and the Christian converts to Islam, whose number Frescobaldi estimates at twenty-five thousand and Poggibonsi at thirty thousand: 'Ha nella città del Cairo circa a venti-cinque migliaja di Cristiani rinegati';⁶⁸ 'Ora diremo de' tapini miseri che stanno in tale dannazione, quelli che 'l nostro Signore Gesù Cristo àno rinegato, chi per danari e chi per altra cagione, cioè per sua miseria; e di questi ci à trenta migliaia di persone rinegate'.⁶⁹ Even though Frescobaldi and Poggibonsi give the total number of renegades living in Cairo and Ariosto only counts the Mamluks, it is clear that there is a discrepancy between these travelogues and the *Furioso* (unless we assume that Ariosto's Mamluks had very small 'famiglie' and some of them were unmarried). Moreover, one cannot help but be struck by the difference in tone: while Poggibonsi's voice is laced with indignation, Ariosto talks about the 'christiani rinegati' in a matter-of-fact manner, without appealing to the readers' emotions.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Luciano Serra, 'Da Tolomeo alla Garfagnana: la geografia dell'Ariosto', *Bollettino storico reggiano*, numero speciale, IV (1974), 151-184.

⁶⁸ Frescobaldi (1818), p. 94.

⁶⁹ Niccolò da Poggibonsi, *Libro d'Oltramare*, ed. by Alberto Bacchi della Lega (Bologna: presso Gaetano Romagnoli, 1881), vol. II, p. 62.

⁷⁰ While Donnelly (1977), p. 165, claims that Ariosto does not appear to be scandalised, Cavallo (2013), p. 162, reads these lines very differently: 'Ariosto's blunt characterization of Mamelukes as "all Christian renegades" [...] not only brings to the fore a centuries-old Christian-Muslim conflict but creates the worrisome impression that in his day thousands of Christians were freely renouncing their religion en masse and joining forces with the Egyptian sultan'.

Whereas Ariosto's description of Damascus (a flourishing city erected on the banks of 'duo fiumi crystallini', dotted with ever-green gardens, with beautiful carpets covering the main street and rags hanging from all the doors and windows; a city enveloped in a cloud of fragrance, where women wear sumptuous dresses and luxurious jewellery: XV 18-21 AB; XVII C) is largely consistent with Poggibonsi's, his source for the Cairo stanzas has yet to be identified.⁷¹ There is no unanimity among Italian travellers as to the exact number of Mamluks in Cairo: for example, Meliaduse's secretary Don Domenico states that ten thousand Mamluks reside there and serve the sultan, while, in a 1501 letter to Vettor Querini, the Venetian Filippo Contarini mentions eleven or twelfth thousand Mamluks.⁷² In light of this, it is worth noting that there is a reference to fifteen thousand Mamluks in an as yet unpublished letter sent to Cardinal Ippolito d'Este by Giulio Sacrati possibly from Alexandria: telling Ippolito about a 'grandissima guerra' between the Turkish sultan and the 'sufi', or Persian shah, Sacrati says that the former had asked the sultan for help and that 'ge andò 15 milia mamaluchi'.⁷³ Although Sacrati does not say that the sultan only has fifteen thousand Mamluks, the fact that the letter features this number is interesting, all the more so considering that it must have been written around 1507, that is when Ariosto was composing his poem.⁷⁴ As the cardinal's secretary, Ariosto could have read it or heard about Sagrati's adventures abroad, undoubtedly an exciting topic of conversation for Ippolito's courtiers. Sagrati travelled from Venice to Negroponte and from there to Constantinople, hoping to go to Cairo, where he was planning to spend the 10 ducats Ippolito had given him. We do not know whether he ever

⁷¹ On Poggibonsi and Ariosto's description of Damascus see Cavallo (2013), p. 172.

⁷² Don Domenico (2009), p. 134. Contarini's letter was transcribed by Marin Sanudo: see Marin Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. IV, ed. by Nicolò Barozzi (Venezia: Visentini, 1880), pp. 167-170: 168.

⁷³ Archivio di Stato di Modena, Ambasciatori estensi, busta 15/ unica, Egitto, Giulio Sacrati, f. 1r.

⁷⁴ In this letter Sacrati mentions Kemal Reis, a famous Turkish corsair, and his journey to Alexandria: 'El Gran Signior Turco a mandado dui navili al Soldano carichi de metalo acioché el faccia fare da l'artelaria; el portator è stato Camali, el primo corsaro del mondo. El Gran Misto de Rodi si l'a abuto per spia e venuto fora con .60. vela per prenderlo [...]' (f. 1v). Sagrati seems to be referring to events that took place in August 1507.

reached Cairo; nor do we know much about him, apart from the fact that he must have been one of the gentlemen in Ippolito's household.⁷⁵ It does not appear that Sagrati had a precise destination and mission, but rather that he travelled for the sake of travelling, following his instincts much like Ariosto's Astolfo.

Finally, before moving on to the next section, it is appropriate to add here a note on Boiardo's and Ariosto's use of oriental terminology. Unlike Pulci, the Ferrarese poets use them sparingly. The vast majority of the oriental terms that we find in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso* feature in earlier chivalric romances too, which could either mean that Boiardo and Ariosto did not have much exposure to oriental languages or that they deliberately chose not to go beyond the conventional 'oriental lexicon' of the received chivalric tradition. Thus, the *Inamoramento de Orlando* contains the following vocabulary:

- alchena* ('henna', from the Arabic 'al-ḥinā' [الحناء], III vi 7,3);
- Alcorana* [*sic*] ('the Qur'an', 'al-qur'ān' [القرآن], I xxii 42,6);
- algalia* (a type of perfume, a Spanish word probably derived from the Arabic 'al-ghālīah' [الغالية], II xxviii 46,5);
- almansore* ('lord', from the Arabic 'al-manṣūr' [المنصور], 'the victorious', I v 35,1);
- Amirante* ('emir', from the Arabic 'amīr' [أمير], I i 4,7 and 6 more occurrences);
- alphana* (I iv 31,8 and ten more occurrences) and *afferante* ('horse', from the Arabic 'al-faras' [الفرس], I ix 62,3 and five more occurrences);
- Argalipha* ('the Caliph', from the Arabic 'al-khalīfah' [الخليفة], I iv 22,4 and 7 more occurrences);
- imitara* ('a sabre with a curved blade', from the Persian 'shamshēr' [شمشیر], I v 39,5 and 5 more occurrences);
- Soldano* ('Sultan', from the Arabic 'sulṭān' [سلطان], II xviii 6,3 and 2 more occurrences);
- talabalachi* ('tympan', from the Arabic 'ṭablah' [طبله], III viii 3,3);
- torcimano* ('translator', from the Arabic 'mutarjīm' [مترجم], I i 17,3).

⁷⁵ Sagrati refers to the cardinal's 'bande', which suggests that he took part in Ippolito's parties and other social activities. He finishes his letter on a truly affectionate note: 'con vero io non agio atrovado ancora una corte como a quella de Signioria Vostra et non spiero de atrovare non altro. Vivo et morto io sonto vostro minimo schiavo' (ibid., f. 1v).

Moreover, it is possible that the title *sobasso* (Doristella's first husband was 'sobasso [...] di Bursa', II xxvi 31,1) has an oriental origin,⁷⁶ while the name of Angelica's fortress, *Albracà*, brings to mind the Arabic word 'al-barakah' (البركة) which translates as 'blessing'.⁷⁷

As for Ariosto, he reuses some of the terms that appear in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*:

Alcorano, XXXIV 81,6 AB; XXXVIII C;
Alfana, II 51,6-7 ABC and 3 more occurrences;
Amirante, XII 16,3 AB; XIV C;
Argalifa, XII 16,3 AB; XIV C; XVI 44,3 AB; XVIII C;
scimitarra, XIV 72,7 AB; XVI C and 3 more occurrences;
Soldan, XI 31,8 AB; XIII C and 4 more occurrences;

and also adds some new ones, namely:

acque Lanfe ('perfume', from Arabic 'nakhah' [نكهة], XV 19,6 AB; XVII C);
amostante ('an Arab chief', possibly derived from the word 'emir', 'amīr' [أمير], VIII 85,7 ABC);
Cadi ('qadi' or 'judge', from the Arabic 'qāḍī' [قاضي], XXXVI 14,1 AB; XL C);
Calife (like 'Argalifa', 'the Caliph', from the Arabic 'al-khalīfah' [ال خليفة], XIII 77,2 B; XV 96,6 C)
Diodarro ('minister', from the Turkish 'defterdar', 'bookkeeper', XV 97,2 AB; XVII C);
Marano ('converted Jew', a racist insult derived from the Arabic 'muḥarram' [محرم], 'the anathematised', I 26,6 ABC; X 49,2 AB; XII 45 C);⁷⁸
Talacimanni ('muezzins', from the Persian 'dānīshmand' [دانشمند], 'the learned ones', XVI 7,6 AB; XVIII C).

⁷⁶ As Tissoni Benvenuti observes in her note to this line 'i lessici italiani non danno riscontri'. Giovanni Gherardini suggests that 'In vece di *sobasso* è forse da leggere *sobabo*, franc. *Soubab*, specie di Governatore o piuttosto di Vicerè in alcune provincie asiatiche'. See *Supplimento a' vocabolarj italiani proposto da Giovanni Gherardini* (Milano: Stamperia di Gius. Bernardoni di Gio. 1857), vol VI, p. 477.

⁷⁷ According to Giovanni Ponte, the siege of Albracà could be inspired by Genghis Khan's capture of Bukhara (Giovanni Ponte, *La personalità e l'opera del Boiardo* (Genova: Tilgher, 1974), p. 94). In her comment to I v 72, Tissoni Benvenuti states that Boiardo could have also thought of Balac in Marco Polo's *Milione*.

⁷⁸ Ludovico Castelvetro stresses that Ariosto's use of the term 'Marano' is anachronistic: '[...] Né si guardò di cadere nella predetta sconvenevolezza Lodovico Ariosto quando induce altrui a dir villania a Feraù, et perché era spagnuolo a nominarlo Marano la quale appellazione di villania non fu trovata se non dopo alcuni secoli ciò è se non quando i giudei habbitanti in Ispagna furono costretti dalla forza reale o contra loro volontà a mostrarsi di far Christiani, o andar tapinando per lo mondo' (Castelvetro, *POETICA / D'ARISTOTELE / VVLGARIZZATA, / ET SPOSTA* (Vienna: per Gaspar Stainhofer, 1570), f. 341v).

Many of these terms are not only part of the stock vocabulary of earlier Italian chivalric authors but also feature in the *chansons de geste*, having entered Old French at the time of the First Crusade: *almansore*, for example, corresponds to the Old French ‘almaçur’, *Amirante* to ‘amirafles’, *Argaliffa* to ‘Augalie’, *amostante* to ‘amustans’, *afferante* to ‘alferant’, *Soldano* to ‘Soldan’, *torcimanno* to ‘trucheman’. The word *simitara* (or *scimitarra*) features in Andrea da Barberino’s *Guerrin Meschino* and Pulci’s *Morgante* and *Ciriffo Calvaneo*. Other terms are more rare, but not entirely unknown to chivalric authors. In the *Morgante*, for example, we find *acqua lanfa* (XXV 216,2), *marrano* (XXVI 47,3 and 5 more occurrences) and *talacimanno* (XVII 133,4 and 4 more occurrences). The term *Cadi* does not seem to appear in any other chivalric text than Ariosto, but features in non-fictional writings, such as the above-mentioned *Itinerario* by Ludovico di Varthema.

As far as the names of Boiardo’s and Ariosto’s Saracen characters are concerned, we can say with certainty that Norandino’s name has an Arabic origin: ‘Norandino’ derives from the Arabic name ‘Nūr al-dīn’ (‘نور الدين’) which translates as ‘the light of religion’. Boiardo named his character after ‘Norandino padre del pregiatissimo Saladino’ (Nur al-din, atabeg of Aleppo, 1118-1174) who features in his translation of Riccobaldo ferrarese.⁷⁹ As for the remaining names, some of them have an Arabic flavour to them thanks to such prefixes as *al-*, *ag-*, *an-* and *ar-*: Agolante, Agricane, Albrizach, Alfrera, Alibante, Almonte, Alzirdo, Analardo, Archidante, Archiloro, Argalia, Arganio, Argante, Argesto, Argosto, Ariante.

1.2. THE *GRAN TURCO* AND INTERNATIONAL CHIVALRY

⁷⁹ Boiardo (1726), p. 351.

Having examined the representation of the Saracen religion and culture in the two *Orlandos*, the next question that naturally arises is: do the events recounted in the two poems have any basis in real history? Set during the time of Charlemagne, the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso* show very little concern for historical accuracy. Claiming to draw on ‘la vera historia de Turpin’ (*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I i 4,1), the poets certainly do not expect their readers to believe them. It is true that, while trying to demonstrate that Ariosto did not completely disregard the Aristotelian principle of verisimilitude, some sixteenth-century commentators maintain that the *Furioso* (and chivalric romances in general) has a historical dimension. For example, Simon Fónari invokes the authority of the Venetian historian Marco Antonio Sabellico to prove that ‘nel vero fur già nel mondo et Orlando, et Rinaldo, et gli altri Paladini, et fur valorosi et potenti nelle arme, et hebbero in molte imprese singolari et gloriose vittorie’,⁸⁰ while Orazio Toscanella asserts that the plot of the *Furioso* is inspired by Charlemagne’s wars with ‘il Re de i Sarracini appellato Atima’ and the Spanish ‘Re Amor; ò come altri vogliono, Machine; et dal volgo Marsiglio’.⁸¹ However, one only has to read the description of Charlemagne’s reign in Boiardo’s translation of the *Historia imperiale* to realise that Boiardo (and most probably Ariosto too) was well aware of the gap between chivalric literature and medieval history and had no intention to bridge it.⁸²

⁸⁰ Simon Fónari, *LA SPOSITIONE / [...] / SOPRA / L’ORLANDO FVRIO-/SO DI M. LVDOVICO / ARIOSTO* (Firenze: per Lorenzo Torrentino, 1549), p. 76. The fact that Sabellico thought the Carolingian legends had a solid historical foundation testifies to the appeal of the *Cronaca di Pseudo-Turpino*. Other historians, however, were more sceptical.

⁸¹ Orazio Toscanella, *BELLEZZE / DEL FURIOSO / DI M. LODOVICO ARIOSTO [...]* (Venetia: appresso Pietro dei Franceschi, & nepoti, 1574), f. 6r.

⁸² Riccobaldo’s (Boiardo’s) account of the battle of Rencesvals makes no mention of Saracens: ‘Andando l’esercito in lunga schiera e sottile disteso, come andare conveniva per la difficoltà del luogo stretto, i Guasconi per li aspri monti imboscati assalirono l’ultima schiera, la quale a guardia degl’impedimenti era deputata; e lanciandoli, e saggitandoli dal luogo superiore, li uccisero tutti fino ad uno, e involati i carriaggi, con maravigliosa prestezza per le deserte montagne si dispersero [...]. Furono in questa battaglia uccisi Girardo preposto della mensa Reale, & Anselmo Conte Palatino, e Rolando Prefetto del passo Britannico, & altri molti nobili Baroni’ (Boiardo (1726), p. 294).

While the issue of historical accuracy needs no further discussion, it remains to be seen whether and to what extent Boiardo and Ariosto engage with contemporary discourses about the Ottomans and other Islamic nations. This is what in this section we will attempt to do. Our starting point will be explicit references to contemporary history scattered throughout the two poems. In the *ekphrasis* of Brandimarte's 'bel pavaglione' (II xxvii 50,8) – a tent which a divine Sybil embroidered with 'gran fatti, en degne historie e peregrine' (52,4), including the glorious deeds of the 'duodeci Alfonsi' (52,7), that is the Alfonsos of the Aragonese dynasty – Boiardo alludes to the 1432 expedition against Tunisian pirates organised by Alfonso V of Aragon (1416-1458) and to the liberation of Otranto (1481) by the troops of Alfonso Duke of Calabria (1448-1495). Presenting Alfonso the Magnanimous' partially successful campaign (Alfonso failed to conquer the island of Djerba) as a dazzling victory, Boiardo calls him a conqueror of Africa: 'l'Africa vinta a lui stava davante / ingienochiata col suo popul rio' (54,5-6). However, the poet hastens to add that Alfonso's expansionist ambitions were focused on Italy, of which he 'avia preso un gran limbo' (54,7); 'Italia vinta' captivated the heart of the Aragonese ruler so that he forgot his native Spain (55). As for his grandson's victory over the Turks, Boiardo devotes two lines to it, saying that the Sybil's embroidery recounted 'si com'è Italia da' Turchi difesa / per sua prodecia sola e suo valore' (56bis,3-4).⁸³ Then, Boiardo moves on to his other exploits, such as the military triumph against Florence and its allies (one of whom was none other than Ercole I d'Este) at Poggio Imperiale and the many 'forteze roinate al fondo' (56bis,5-8).

It is clear that this encomium of Ercole's Aragonese relatives is not designed to alert the reader to the threat coming from North Africa and the Ottoman Empire. Describing

⁸³ This octave is reproduced in the critical apparatus of Tissoni Benvenuti's edition. This is because, according to the editor, it did not feature in any of the fifteenth-century editions of the first two books. The octave must have been composed after 1484 (the end of the war with Venice, in which Alfonso was an ally of Ferrara) and added to the first three-book edition of the poem, published in 1495. In Bruscaagli's edition, which is based on the Trivulziano manuscript, it features in the main text as octave 57.

Brandimarte's tent, Boiardo looks at contemporary history through the lens of secular chivalry: he portrays the two Alfonsos as perfect knights, paragons of prowess, valour and courtesy in all their undertakings. Their feats of arms against Muslim enemies deserve the highest praise, but their victories against fellow Christians are no less exceptional from the point of view of chivalry. It is interesting to note that in one of his political eclogues (composed in 1482-1483, that is during the war with Venice, in which Ferdinand of Naples took Ferrara's side) Boiardo compares Alfonso's re-conquest of Otranto to a victory over a terrifying dragon ('un drago sì crudel [...] / che tuta Ausonia avea già posta in pianto', *Pastorale* II, 41-42), but hails his triumph at Poggio Imperiale as the high-water mark of his military career, being 'tale / che non se amenta in terra la maggiore' (50-51).⁸⁴ One may add that even though in the *Pastorale* and the Latin *Pastoralia* Boiardo appears slightly more concerned about the bellicose intentions of the Turkish sultan than in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, he certainly does not consider the Turks to be the greatest scourge of his age: the claws of the Venetian lion – 'il maggior monstro mai non fo veduto' (*Pastorale* I, 164) – represent a far more serious danger for the future of the Italian peninsula and especially Ferrara.⁸⁵

The *Inamoramento de Orlando* contains little reference to contemporary historical events and one single allusion to the Ottomans. By contrast, deeply anchored in historical reality, the *Furioso* abounds in authorial digressions dealing with matters external to the *favola*. On two occasions Ariosto interrupts his story to lament the lack of crusading zeal in contemporary Europe. Recounting Astolfo's visit to Jerusalem, Ariosto says that the paladin visited the churches

c'hor con eterno obbrobrio e vituperio
a' Christiani usurpano i Mori empì.

⁸⁴ Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Opere volgari. Amorum libri, Pastorale, Lettere*, ed. by Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo (Bari: Laterza, 1962).

⁸⁵ See also *Pastorale*, I 43-44; X 139-141; *Pastoralia* I 6-11.

L'Europa è in arme, e di far guerra agogna
in ogni parte, fuor ch'ove bisogna.

(*Orlando furioso*, XIII 80,5-8 AB; XV 99 C)

Two cantos later, Ariosto delivers a passionate speech on this subject, a fiery diatribe against the unnecessary and unjustified bloodshed in Europe which spans over six and a half octaves (XV 73,7-8; 74-79 AB; XVII C). Decrying the violence of the Italian wars, he urges the Pope (arguably Leo X) and other Christian rulers to make peace and join forces against the common enemy:

S'esser voi Christianissimi volete,
e voi altri Catholici nomati,
perché di Chisto li huomini uccidete?
perché de' beni lor son dispogliati?
Perché Hierusalem non rihavete,
che tolto è stato a voi da rinegati?
perché Constantinopoli e del mondo
la miglior parte occùpa il Turco immondo?

(*Orlando furioso*, XV 75 AB; XVII C)

According to Tobias Gregory, 'It is a testament to the power of religion to limit one's horizons of solidarity that even a broad-minded and secular poet such as Ariosto, when roused, falls into the standard anti-Muslim vocabulary'.⁸⁶ Tobias claims that Ariosto's reasoning mimics that of Pope Urban II in ordering the First Crusade. However, a closer reading of the entire speech reveals that it is not religious fanaticism that prompts Ariosto to appeal to the European monarchs to launch a new crusade, but rather his earnest belief that a war with the Ottomans or the Egyptian sultan (who was defeated by the Turks in 1517, with Jerusalem falling under the jurisdiction of the Turkish sultan) would be a lesser evil than mutual slaughter between Christians, that a crusade could be a viable solution to the huge political crisis that has engulfed Italy. The poet has no illusions as to what the driving force of contemporary warfare is: acknowledging that wars are fought

⁸⁶ Tobias Gregory, 'Providence, irony and magic: *Orlando furioso*', in Idem, *From Many Gods to One: Divine Action in Renaissance Epic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 102-139: 132.

primarily for economic reasons, he tells the Swiss and the German that, if hunger forces them to take up arms, they should turn their gaze to the ‘ricchezze d’Asia [*del Turco BC*]’ (77,5).⁸⁷ Although the derogatory epithets applied to the Muslim enemy jar on the ear of the reader of the *Furioso*, we should bear in mind that they are to be expected in a call for a crusade. Ariosto’s real anger is directed not at the Mamluk occupiers of Jerusalem or the Turks but at the rulers of the Italian city-states and in particular Pope Leo X, who do nothing to chase away the foreign (Christian) aggressors:

O d’ogni vitio fetida sentina,
dormi, Italia imbrìaca, e non ti pesa
c’hora di questa gente, hora di quella
che già serva ti fu, sei fatta ancella?
(*Orlando furioso*, XV 76,5-8 AB; XVII C)

Ariosto thus is no religious fanatic, but a man who is worried about the fate of Italy and his native Ferrara. He will later raise the topic of holy war in his *Satire*, once again from the perspective of Italian politics. In *Satira II*, we are told that instead of pouncing on the lands of Romagna, Alexander VI would have done better to organise a crusade against the Ottomans: had he done so, he would have been able both to fulfil his duty as the Head of the Church (‘ove da tutta Europa avria soccorso / e faria del suo ufficio ufficio degno’, 215-216) and satisfy his personal ambitions; for the newly conquered territories could have been used to carve out states for his children and other relatives (‘d’Archivi o d’Epiroti / dar lor dominio [...] / de la Morea o de l’Arta far despòti’, 211-213).⁸⁸ Needless to say, this suggestion that crusading could be a solution to the problem of nepotism exudes Machiavellian cynicism; it leaves no doubt that for Ariosto peace on

⁸⁷ As Bigi points out in his note to octave 73, the numerous Petrarchan and Dantesque echoes ‘che si avvertono nella presente digressione, valgano a stilizzare ma non a nascondere l’atteggiamento spregiudicatamente realistico con cui l’A. affronta il tema della liberazione del Santo Sepolcro’.

⁸⁸ Ludovico Ariosto, *Carmina, Rime, Satire, Erbolato, Lettere*, ed. by Mario Santoro (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1989).

the Italian peninsula is much more important than the spiritual health of the Catholic Church.

There are three more references to the Turks in the historical digressions of the *Furioso*. Juxtaposing the ‘cortesia’ and ‘gentilezza’ of ‘li antiqui guerrier’ to ‘li empïi / costumi’ of ‘li moderni’ (2,1-4) in the proem to canto XXXIII AB (XXXVI C), Ariosto states that the atrocities perpetrated by the Slav mercenaries of the Serenissima during the 1509 war are equal to ‘tutti li crudeli atti et inhumani / ch’usasse mai Tartaro o Turco o Moro’ (3,1-2). Although the poet hesitates to blame the Venetians for the savage actions of their soldiers, he hints at the fact that they did nothing to restrain their mercenary troops, ‘credo contra ’l voler de’ Venetiani, / forse con sdegno ben del Leon d’oro’ (3,3-4 AB).⁸⁹ Hence, he effectively says that the Venetians are no better than the Tartars or the Turks whose cruelty on the battlefield is proverbial. Then, in the last canto of the *Furioso*, describing the images on the tent that Melissa brought from Constantinople, Ariosto mentions the wars between the Turkish sultan and the Hungarian king Mathias Corvinus, at whose court Ippolito lived between the ages of seven and fourteen (ca. 1486-1500):

o contra Turchi o contra l’Alemanni
 quel Re possente faccia expeditione,
 Hyppolyto gli è appresso, e fiso attende
 a’ magnanimi gesti, et virtù apprende.
 (*Orlando furioso*, XL 60,5-8 AB; XLVI 88 C)

Here, Ariosto does not distinguish between the Turks and the Germans. A chivalric glow is given to Corvinus’ military campaigns, which brings to mind the scenes depicted on Brandimarte’s tent. Ten octaves later, referring to the highest point of Ippolito’s career as a *condottiere*, namely the battle of Polesella (1509), Ariosto tells us that the cardinal defeated ‘la più forte armata / che contra Turchi o contra gente Argiva / da’ Venetiani mai

⁸⁹ The italics are mine. In C Ariosto rewrites these lines, removing the doubting note: ‘(non già con volontà de’ Veneziani, / che sempre esempio di giustizia fôro)’.

fusse mandata' (70,2-4 AB; 97 C). These lines further prove that the Venetians (as well as other Italian city-states) put more effort into fighting their Christian neighbours than into defending themselves from the Turks.

Thus, judging from the explicit references to historical reality in the two *Orlandos*, neither Boiardo nor Ariosto can be said to be profoundly preoccupied by the 'questione turca'. They acknowledge that the Ottomans are an important political power and that Islam is a traditional enemy of the West, but this is a far cry from saying that Europe or Italy are in danger of an imminent invasion.

Turning now to the actual stories, it is hard to make a convincing case that they convey an anti-Turkish message, especially if we consider the ways in which other chivalric authors draw attention to the Turkish threat. Before proceeding any further, it will be helpful to look at a selection of chivalric texts which appear to contain strong allusions to the Turkish problem. Let us examine three different cases: Andrea da Barberino's *Guerrin Meschino* and *Storia di Rinaldo da Montalbano*, the *Altobello* and the *Spagna ferrarese*.

There are several prominent Turkish characters in the *Guerrin Meschino* and in the *Rinaldo da Montalbano*, including the Turkish prince Torindo, a namesake of Torindo il Turco in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*.⁹⁰ In both romances Torindo is one of the sons of Astilladoro, king of Turkey, who, as we learn in the *Guerrin Meschino*, 'era signore della maggior parte di Romania e per forza tenea quasi tutta la Grecia' (I xv 23).⁹¹ This reflects the geo-political situation at the end of the Trecento, while the fact that Astilladoro's sons lay claim to 'sangue trojano' (*Guerrin Meschino*, I xxviii 8) is an

⁹⁰ We do not know for certain whether the *Rinaldo da Montalbano* was composed by Andrea da Barberino, but many scholars believe so. See Marco Villorosi, *La letteratura cavalleresca* (Roma: Carocci, 2000), p. 86.

⁹¹ This and all subsequent quotations are taken from Andrea da Barberino, *Il Guerrin Meschino*, edizione critica secondo l'antica vulgata fiorentina, ed. by Mauro Cursietti (Roma; Padova: Editrice Antenore, 2005).

allusion to the widespread belief that the Turks shamelessly bragged that they had descended from the ancient Trojans.⁹² In the *Guerrin Meschino*, Torindo and his brother Pinamonte travel to Constantinople to take part in the tournament in which the prize is the hand of Elisena, the daughter of the Greek Emperor. They are defeated by the titular hero, but they lie to their father that they have won, yet have been denied the prize because they are Turks. Astilladoro lays siege to Constantinople – a bad decision, as he loses the war and is forced to give up ‘tutte le terre che [...] tenea e avea tolte a’ Greci’ (I xxviii 4) to ransom his sons. Later, Meschino helps the Persians to wrestle the city of Persepolis from the clutches of Astilladoro’s brother Galismarte, while towards the end of the romance Astilladoro makes another attempt to capture Constantinople, this time with truly disastrous consequences, paying with his life for this act of folly. In the *Rinaldino da Montalbano*, Torindo and Pinamonte attack the Syrian king Alipandro (who is married to the Persian princess Elisena and who has converted to Christianity for the sake of his friendship with Rinaldino), but decide to return home when their troops are routed and ‘non ci è più uomo che possa durare alla forza di questo Rinaldino’ (p. 284).⁹³

It is safe to say that the pages devoted to Astilladoro and his Turkish relatives must have been inspired by the fears and dreams of Andrea da Barberino’s contemporaries and perhaps, to an extent, by real historical events too, given that the beginning of the Quattrocento was a turbulent period in the history of the Ottoman Empire. In 1402 the Turkish-Mongolian leader Tamerlane (or Timur) defeated the Turks in the battle of Ankara, taking Bayezid I as a prisoner. As a result, the Empire almost disintegrated,

⁹² Luca and Luigi Pulci too allude to this belief in the *Ciriffo Calvaneo*: the poem features a Turkish king called Sinettore who has descended from the Trojans and so claims to be the king of Ilium. For a discussion of the Trojan theme in the humanist writings see Terence Spencer, ‘Turks and Trojans in the Renaissance’, *Modern Language Review*, XLVII, n. 3 (July 1952), 330-333; James Hankins, ‘Renaissance crusaders: humanist crusade literature in the age of Mehmed II’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, XLIX (1995), 139-143; Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 22-64.

⁹³ *Storia di Rinaldino da Montalbano*, ed. by Carlo Minutoli (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1865).

sinking into an eleven-year civil war and losing some of its territories in the Balkans. This temporarily slowed the decline of Byzantium, rekindling the almost extinguished hope that Constantinople – the stronghold of the Orthodox Church – could be saved. Guerrino's/Rinaldino's victories over various members of Astilladoro's family seem to reflect precisely this hope.

Andrea da Barberino's (relatively) realistic portrayal of the Turks is, to my knowledge, unique in the context of the Italian chivalric tradition. Compared to the universe of the *Guerrin Meschino*, that of the *Altobello* has fewer points of contact with contemporary reality: the geography of *Paganìa* is vague and it is not clear what the political weight of Turkey is. However, as mentioned earlier, it is significant that Altobello and his elder brother Troiano – Saracen converts to Christianity and allies of the Christians – are Persians.⁹⁴ Moreover, it is equally significant that the poem features a plethora of Turkish princes and barons (Orlando for one kills many a 'gran turco'), including one truly powerful king, Pironello, who falls in love with Orlando's Alda and offers her the crown

⁹⁴ However, one must bear in mind that there are considerable differences between Altobello and Uzun Hassan, his possible historical counterpart. Both Altobello and Uzun Hassan are Persians and friends of the Christians, but whereas the former is an adolescent, the latter befriends the Venetians in his forties. Their life stories are very different, which means that the poem is not designed as a fictional transposition of real historical events. In her article Perrotta (2007), p. 143, observes that, since 'Hasan' means 'long' in Persian, Altobello's name could have been inspired by Uzun Hasan's. In fact, it is 'Uzun' that means 'tall' or 'long' in Turkish, while 'Hasan' [حسن] is a very common Eastern name of Arabic origin which translates as 'handsome'. Thus, 'Altobello' could effectively be a literal translation (or, more precisely, a calque) of Uzun Hasan's name. However, we do not know for certain whether the author of the poem was aware of the fact that 'Uzun Hasan' meant 'Alto Bello'. Caterino Zeno, a Venetian citizen and a relative of the Persian ruler (through his marriage to the niece of Uzun Hassan's wife) who was sent as an ambassador to Persia in 1472, writes in his memoirs that 'Ussuncassano [...] in lingua persiana vien a dire magno uomo' ('DEI COMMENTARII DEL VIAGGIO / IN PERSIA, / di M. Caterino Zeno il K. & delle guerre fatte nell'Imperio Persiano / dal tempo di Vssuncassano in qua', in Ramusio (1967-1970), vol. II, ff. 219v-229v: 220r). On the other hand, Demetrio Calcondila (a Greek humanist who emigrated to Italy in 1447 and lived there until his death in 1511) says in one of his works that 'Uzun' means 'long': see P.G. Maggi, 'Intorno il libro: *La Repubblica di Venezia e la Persia*, del dottor Guglielmo, Berchet', in *Reale Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere. Rendiconti*, vol. II (Milano: Tipografia di Giuseppe Bernardoni, 1865), pp. 43-56: 47. One should also take into account the similarity between the names 'Altobello' and 'Aldabella' (Alda bella): given that the young Persian knight has a very close relationship with Orlando's wife (the childless woman treats him as her own son, seeing him as a gift from God), it could be that the poet deliberately patterned his name after Alda's.

of Turkey, generously allowing her to keep her faith and baptise their future children.⁹⁵ The story of Pironello's infatuation with Alda and other wars and adventures narrated in the *Altobello* do not seem to reflect any specific historical events. Yet, without being an allegorical text, the *Altobello* draws inspiration from historical reality, echoing the feelings of the poet's contemporaries.

While the *Altobello* is by all appearances a new work, the *Spagna ferrarese* is a *rifacimento* of a legend that originated several centuries earlier, before the rise of the Ottoman Empire. None of its main Saracen knights is a Turk, but the fact that the anonymous poet keeps reminding his audience that there are Turks among the Saracen enemies could mean that he thought about the tragic fate of Byzantium. Thus, the Christians ask God to cleanse the Earth from 'Turchi e Affricanti e que' di Barbaria' (VI 14,6); they will fight to the last drop of blood 'per distruger Turchi e Africanti' (XXIII 16,5); they rejoice when 'Turchi e Soriani' (XXV 41,5) flee.⁹⁶ More strikingly, during the battle of Roncesvalles Orlando swears not to let a single Turk escape alive: 'Diceva Orlando: «Tutti in questo vallo / serete morti, chan turchi e mastini [...]»' (XXX 39,6-7).⁹⁷ Although earlier poets sometimes use the word 'Turk' as a synonym for 'Saracen', it is tempting to read Orlando's vehement speech as a poignant reminder of the Turkish danger, especially considering that the poem could have been composed shortly before or soon after the Fall of Constantinople.⁹⁸ While the exact composition date of the so-called *Spagna minore* remains as yet unknown, the beautifully illuminated manuscript of the *Spagna ferrarese* was produced precisely in the year 1453.

⁹⁵ Perrotta (2007) does not differentiate between Turks and other Saracens in her discussion of the *Altobello*.

⁹⁶ These and all subsequent quotations are taken from *Spagna ferrarese*, ed. by Valentina Gritti and Cristina Montagnani (Novara: Interlinea, 2009).

⁹⁷ These lines do not feature in the *Spagna maggiore*, which, as is argued by Franca Strologo, precedes the *Spagna minore*.

⁹⁸ For example, in the *Entrée d'Espagne*, Ferragu is variously referred to as 'l'Aufricant' (751), 'l'Arabis' (1225) and 'le Turc' (1250; 1280). On the 'questione turca' in the *Entrée d'Espagne* see Alberto Limentani, 'Venezia e il "pericolo turco" nell'Entrée d'Espagne', in *L'Entrée d'Espagne e i signori d'Italia* (Antenore: Padova, 1992), pp. 358-378.

Having briefly examined the ‘Turkish theme’ in Andrea da Barberino’s romances, the *Altobello* and the *Spagna ferrarese*, we can now turn our attention to the two *Orlandos*. According to Ponte, the geographical map of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* roughly reflects the political situation in the period between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries.⁹⁹ This is more or less true of the *Furioso* too (even if, as we shall in chapter III, Ariosto’s *Paganìa* is not a faithful copy of Boiardo’s). In both poems Turkey is merely one of the many small Saracen states. There are five Turkish knights in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, but none of them takes part in Agramante’s war, which explains why there are no Turkish characters in the *Furioso*. Ariosto, however, mentions the Turks twice in connection with Agramante’s attempted invasion of France. Commenting on the violence unleashed by the Saracen soldiers, he says that it could be a divine punishment for the sins of the Christians:

Deveano allhora haver li eccessi loro
di Dio turbata la serena fronte,
ch’ogni lor luoco scórse il Turco e il Moro
con stupri, uccision, rapine et onte [...]
(*Orlando furioso*, XV 6,1-4 AB; XVII C)

Taken out of context, this passage seems to imply that there are Turkish soldiers in the armies of Agramante and Marsilio. However, since this is not confirmed anywhere else in the poem, it could be argued that Ariosto uses the word ‘Turco’ as a kind of line-filler. Unlike the Christians in the *Spagna ferrarese*, Ariosto’s Christians feel no hatred towards the Turks; in fact, they do not even acknowledge their existence. Towards the end of the *Furioso* we learn that the Turks are one of the Saracen nations that are on friendly terms with the African king. When the war is lost, Sobrino tells his despairing king that they will be eager to help him re-conquer his kingdom: ‘Armeni, Turchi, Persi, Aràbi e Medi, / tutti in soccorso havrai, se tu li chiedi’ (XXXVI 39,7-8 AB; XL C). Significantly, Ariosto

⁹⁹ Ponte (1974), p. 88.

does not distinguish between the Turks and the Persians (who do not take part in Agramante's military campaign either). Nor does Boiardo: the Persian king Framarte, Gradasso's ally in the war with Marsilio, makes a fleeting appearance in canto IV of Book I, only to be killed by Rinaldo several octaves later. As for the Greeks, Emperor Vatarone's son Costanzo, the only Greek knight in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, is a minor character, and Leone, Costanzo's counterpart in the *Furioso*, features only in the 1532 edition. While Costanzo is a negative character ('il Greco... era di malicia pieno / come son tuti, d'arte e di natura', II xx 37,1-2), the portrayal of Leone and his family is ambivalent (it is worth recalling, for example, that Ruggiero's rival in love has no scruples about making recourse to dishonest means to get Bradamante).¹⁰⁰ In neither poem is the Byzantine Empire threatened by the Turks or indeed by Agramante.

Thus, not only do the universes of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso* bear little resemblance to the political map of the world in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, but neither poet associates Agramante with the Turks, at least not in any obvious way. Hence there is no evidence to argue that Agramante's war is an allegory of the expansionist ambitions of Mehmed II or that it is meant to remind the reader of the Turkish threat.¹⁰¹ To this we may add that most of Boiardo's Turkish characters are

¹⁰⁰ Boiardo's and Ariosto's representations of the Greeks are not particularly surprising. Negative stereotypes go back to Roman antiquity. It was during the First Crusade, however, that the relationship between the Byzantine and Western worlds seriously deteriorated. The 1204 Crusade (when instead of attacking Egypt the crusaders attacked and conquered Constantinople) soured the already strained relationship to such an extent that in the years preceding the Fall of Constantinople many Greeks thought that it would be better to live under Turkish occupation than to bow to the Pope.

¹⁰¹ Cavallo (2013) goes so far as to claim that Boiardo 'was not devising a vague historical allegory but rather linking his narrative to a contemporary context that would soon threaten the existence of Ercole's extended family' (p. 102). She maintains that 'Agramante's North African troops are depicted in such a way as to evoke Mehmed's Ottoman Empire', while 'the concomitant aggression of Marsilio's troops against Charlemagne's realm sounds very much like the corollary military action of Venice against Estense Ferrara during the period' (p. 129). Ruggiero, as Cavallo sees him, is partly modelled on Alfonso of Calabria, the saviour of Italy and Ferrara. Needless to say, such an interpretation strikes us as far-fetched, not only because Book II was conceived and composed before the outbreak of the war with Venice (which, as we learn at II xxxi 50-52, forced Boiardo temporarily to interrupt his story), but also because, as will become clear in the course of the present study, Ruggiero is very much attached to his Saracen origin. As far as the *Furioso* is concerned, Cavallo thinks that Ariosto's Saracens stand for the European powers that transformed Italy into a battlefield. As we shall see in chapter III, this argument is equally problematic.

portrayed sympathetically. Whereas Torindo, Balsaldo and Morbeco are positive characters, Caramano and Hosbergo may not be among Boiardo's favourite Saracens, but they are not hardened villains either. Torindo's brother, Caramano, disgraces himself when he ignominiously flees from the battlefield (II xviii 29-30), and Hosbergo, Doristela's first husband, 'gagliardo era tenuto e molto ardito, / ma certo che nel leto era un poltrone' (II xxvi 31,3-4). Boiardo does not tell us much about Balsaldo and Morbeco, a pair of friends who travel to the tournament in Cyprus, apart from the fact that Morbeco 'sopra gli altri si facea mirare' (II xx 19,6) until he was unhorsed by Norandino. However, Torindo, the king of Turkey, is one of the most memorable and charismatic minor characters of the poem.¹⁰² He distinguishes himself by his staunch loyalty to Sacripante. In canto XI of Book I the latter fights with Agricane, with a number of kings and barons, including Torindo, watching the duel. The Circassian king is getting the worst of it. He is losing blood, but will not admit defeat. It is worth quoting in full the story of his delivery:

Li altri Re intorno stavano a guardare
la gran bataglia piena di spavento:
a ciascadun un gran dalmagio pare
veder morir quel Re pien di ardimento;
ma sopra a tuto nol può comportare
Torindo il Turco, et ha molto tormento
di veder Sacripante in tal travaglia,
né scià come sturbar quella bataglia.

E tra li cavalier comencia a dire
come egli è certamente un gran peccato
veder quel franco Re cossi morire,
e seguia poi: «Ahi, populazo ingrato!
Potrai tu forse con li ochii soffrire
di veder morto quel che t'ha campato?
Noi fugivamo in rota e in sconfita:
esso ce ha reso e l'honore e la vita!

Deh, non abiate di color spavento,
ben che sia innumerabil quantitate:

¹⁰² As Cavallo points out, 'Boiardo rehabilitates the name of a non-Christian character previously used negatively in Carolingian epics' (ibid., p. 73).

diamo pur dentro a lor con ardimento,
 che loco li farem nui con le spate.
 Né vi crediate di far tradimento
 perché questa battaglia disturbate,
 che tradimento non si può appellare
 quel che se fa per suo signor campare!

Sia mia la colpa, se colpa ne viene,
 e vostre sian le lode tute quante!».
 Cossì dicendo più non si ritiene,
 ma con roina sprona il suo aferante.

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I xi 15-18,1-4)

This episode ties into the theme of loyalty and betrayal, one of the central themes in both Boiardo and Ariosto, not least because it underpins the respective stories of Rug(g)iero and Rod(a/o)monte (which will be explored in chapter IV). Torindo's superbly crafted speech saves Sacripante from imminent death, inviting the reader to ponder on the concept of betrayal which turns out to be more complex than it may appear at first. Later, Torindo's hatred of traitors will lead him to change sides: unable to accept the fact that Orlando has forgiven Trufaldino, who had tried to surrender Albracà to Agricane, he will turn his sword against Sacripante, Orlando and Brandimarte, and will be killed by the latter at II xxviii 29.

Endowed with a heightened sense of justice and impressive oratory skills, Torindo has little in common not only with his namesakes in the *Guerrin Meschino* and the *Rinaldino da Montalbano* but also with the figure of the Turk as it emerges from the writings of the humanists or from the 'Guerre contro il turco' cycle. So much so that he seems to be a kind of parody of the stereotypical Turk who is a bloodthirsty, treacherous and uneducated barbarian.¹⁰³ As will be shown in the chapters to come, the same is true of all

¹⁰³ On the Turks in humanist literature see at least Nancy Bisaha (2004); Hankins (1995); Meserve (2008). The treacherousness of the Turks is an important theme in the 'guerre contro il Turco' poems. In the *Lamento di Negroponte*, for example, the Turks have no scruples about violating the chivalric code. At first, they enter into an agreement with Tommaso Schiavo, a Christian traitor who promises to let them in into the besieged city. Then, they promise to spare the lives of the citizens if they surrender, but kill them all after the 'rocca' has been delivered up. Both betrayals are based on real events during the Turkish conquest of Negroponte in 1470.

the principal Saracen heroes of the two *Orlandos* as well as of a large number of minor Saracen characters of various origins.

The fact that Boiardo's and Ariosto's portrayal of the Saracen Other is largely positive may lead one to think that they turned a blind eye to contemporary perceptions of Muslims. Yet this is not necessarily so. We must bear in mind that not everyone hated the Turks in Ercole's and Alfonso's Ferrara. We know, for example, that one of the aristocratic Ferrarese families claimed to have Turkish blood in their veins. In an age when everybody was obsessed with genealogies, the Turchi family were proud of their (most probably invented) family tree; the crest of their coat of arms featured a Turkish archer ready to shoot an arrow.¹⁰⁴ In his wedding oration for Paula Strozzi and Zarabinus Turchi, whose wedding took place in the 1460s (merely a decade after the Fall of Constantinople), Ludovico Carbone did not forget to praise the groom's Turkish ancestors, three brothers (Zarabinus, Amorbasanus, and Panzanius) who were allegedly sent to Rome as ambassadors and who decided to convert to Christianity and stay in Italy.¹⁰⁵ Carbone's praise extends to the whole Turkish nation; he goes as far as to say that Mehmed II is one of the greatest emperors the world has ever seen. The renowned humanist admits that he was harsh on the Turks in a different speech, explaining that on that occasion he had to please the Pope.

The fact that the Turchi family boasted about their Turkish descent reveals that Ferrara was a tolerant place by the standards of the time. A 'retrovia cristiana', as Ricci tellingly calls it, Ferrara was not a major player on the international political arena: having briefly hosted the Ferrara-Florence Council (1438-1439), it remained in the shadow as far as the wars with the *Gran Turco* were concerned. Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pius II from

¹⁰⁴ Giovanni Ricci, *Ossessione turca in una retrovia cristiana dell'Europa moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), p. 93.

¹⁰⁵ See Anthony F. D'Elia, 'Genealogy and the Limits of Panegyric: Turks and Huns in Fifteenth-Century Epithalamia', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, XXXIV, n. 4 (2003), 973-991.

1458 to 1464), the only Renaissance Pope who genuinely believed that his mission on Earth was to launch a crusade against the Ottomans, doubted Borso's crusading zeal, well-aware of the fact that the latter merely wanted the Holy See to confirm his title as Duke of Ferrara.¹⁰⁶ The title was eventually confirmed by Paul II in 1471, and Ercole and his children did not have to pretend to be ardent crusaders. As we saw above, both Boiardo (in his political eclogues) and Ariosto (in the authorial digressions of the *Furioso*) deem the Venetians a much more serious enemy than the Turks. So did their patrons and many of their Ferrarese readers, especially those who belonged to the social elite. The advances of the Ottomans shocked Bernardino Zambotti, as is evident from the 1480/1481 entries in his *Diario Ferrarese*. He records, for example, the pact 'fra lo Re Ferando, Re De Ragona, la duchessa de Milano e suo Stado, il Re de Spagna, e' Fiorentini, il duca nostro e coherenti, a defensione de la fede e a destruxione del Turcho' in the aftermath of the conquest of Otranto.¹⁰⁷ In another entry, he mentions the miraculous apparition of St John 'a li Rodini suxo le mura quando combatevano con li Turchi, li quali za haveano buta' zoxo una parte de le mura'.¹⁰⁸ Convinced that Otranto is 'porto e schala al Turcho da pigliare tuta la Italia e cristianitade', he implores God to save it 'da mane de infedeli e de pessimi cani turchi',¹⁰⁹ and says that at the news of one of Alfonso's victories 'fu facto fallò e fोगi in Piazza per alegreza',¹¹⁰ and that there were public celebrations when Mehmed II died and Otranto was liberated.¹¹¹ These entries give the impression that anti-Turkish sentiments were strong in Ferrara.¹¹² In reality, the

¹⁰⁶ See Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, *I Commentarii*, ed. by Luigi Totaro (Milano: Adelphi, 1984), vol. I, pp. 510-515.

¹⁰⁷ Zambotti, p. 80 [27 August 1480].

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 83 [December 1480].

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 86 [end of February 1481].

¹¹⁰ Ibid., [8-9 March 1481].

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 93-94 [3 June 1481]; pp. 95-96 [16 September 1481].

¹¹² Baillet (1977) cites Zambotti's entry on the Fall of Granada (1492) to support his argument that Ariosto's portrayal of the non-Christian Other is shaped by the anti-Muslim feelings of his contemporaries (p. 390 n.).

situation was more complex.¹¹³ Upon receiving the news of the fall of Otranto, Ercole decided to wait and see. His agent Nicolò Sadoletto, a Ferrarese ‘oratore’ at the court of Naples, sent him encrypted letters which contained detailed accounts of the latest developments. In one of the dispatches (9 February 1481) Sadoletto tells Ercole that the Pope himself told the king of Naples to seek an alliance with Mehmed ‘solo per desfare venetiani’.¹¹⁴ In another dispatch (6 April 1481) Sadoletto encloses a copy of the ‘instructione’ given to Ferdinand’s ambassador to the *Gran Turco*: in it Ferdinand assures Mehmed of his friendship and warns him against trusting the Serenissima:

sua maestà [Ferdinand of Naples] prega et conforta epso signore [Mehmed] [...] a posta de cossi piccola cossa como è Otranto non voglia sforzare sua maestà da vedere de unire tute le potencie de cristiani contra lui, che sua maestà la faria malvolunteri per respecto de l’amore et amicitia predicta et per non dare questa consolacione a la Signoria de Venexia / et più \ perché se poi epso signore se volesse retrare et lassa(re) Otranto forse non bastaria ad retinere che tanta brigata non volesseno andare ali danni de epso signore, la quale cossa sua maestà non vorebe vedere anzi vorebe che l’amicitia et benivolencia tanto conservata havesse ad durare, et perciò sua maestà sino qua ha atteso solo ad defenderse debilmente [...] ¹¹⁵

It is clear that Ferdinand’s claim that the entire Christian world (with the exception of Venice) is eager to help him is a lie. His ‘amicitia et benivolencia’ towards Mehmed is perhaps largely insincere, but the very fact that he claimed to be Mehmed’s friend is remarkable, for it sheds important light on the complex relationship between the Turkish sultan and Italian rulers.

We do not know whether Ercole himself tried to establish diplomatic ties with the Ottomans. Yet his numerous agents kept him abreast of the events happening in that part of the world. For the most part, their letters (those that are preserved in the Archivio di

¹¹³ It is interesting to note that the conquest of Otranto is not mentioned in the anonymous *Diario ferrarese dall’anno 1409 sino al 1502* (which, however, records the Fall of Constantinople and the conquest of Negroponte).

¹¹⁴ Daniele Palma, *L’autentica storia di Otranto nella guerra contro i turchi. Nuova luce sugli eventi del 1480-81 dalle lettere cifrate tra Ercole d’Este e i suoi diplomatici* (Calimera: Edizioni Kurumuny, 2013), p. 216. Drawing on Ercole’s secret correspondence, Palma’s recently-published study offers an exceptionally thorough and fascinating analysis of the Otranto episode in the history of the Italo-Turkish wars.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

Stato di Modena and have yet to be published) merely report the latest news. However, in a letter sent from Ragusa [Dalmatia] on 30 May 1492, Nicolò Gondula tells Ercole that the sultan's son-in-law ('questo Sangiachbegho Mustaphabegh genero del Gran Turco e nostro vicino' who 'per havere animo preclaro [...] non pare essere Turco né de quelli barbari paesi') thinks highly of him and is willing to start a diplomatic relationship with Ferrara.¹¹⁶ Gondula does not explain in what circumstances he met Mustafa, but says that the latter, 'conoscendo me haver perlustrato varij regni [...] discorrendo oriente et occidente et parte septentrionali particolarmente', wanted to talk about Europe and Italy and mentioned, among other things, that, 'havendo già cominciato tractare amicitia: cola M.S. de Vinesia [...] manda uno Ambasciatore a Vinesia el quale vuole se transferisca al M^{co} Marchese de Mantova con presente de duo buoni Cavagli Turchi'. At this point, Gondula suggested 'che faresse visitare anche V.M.S. [Ercole] come socero e padre del Marchese' and the Turk 'si restò de mandare Cavagli adla V.M.S solo in signo d'amore'.¹¹⁷ 'S'i'ò errato', continues Gondula, 'mi riporto nella correction de V. Excell[...]: grande amore ad ciò m'ha inducto de quella la qual sempre conobbi essere vagha de gloria e stimo harrà piacere tenere pratica con questo S^{re}. El qual havuto tale informatione de V.M.S. e suoi antecessori che ad me non lice dire'.¹¹⁸

Indeed, 'vag[o] de gloria', the Duke of Ferrara prided himself on offering hospitality to high profile guests from all over the world: 'spesse volte', says Boiardo in the preface to his translation of Herodotus' *Histories* (completed before 1491), 'molti principi forestieri ho veduti in quella [ne la vostra corte] receptare e di Angeltera et di Spagna et di Ongeria,

¹¹⁶ See Archivio di Stato di Modena, Ambasciatori estensi, busta 15/ unica, Turchia Europea, Nicolò Gondula, f. 1r. Later (between 1499 and 1514, to be precise) Gondula would spy for Venice, sending the Consiglio dei Dieci encrypted letters from Ragusa. According to Marino Sanudo, his information was not always accurate. On his correspondence with the Serenissima see Paolo Preto, *Servizi segreti di Venezia* (Milano: Saggiatore, 1994), p. 239.

¹¹⁷ Gondula, f. 1r.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., f. 1r-1v.

et de le altre extremitate del mondo'.¹¹⁹ Having a diplomatic relationship with the Ottomans was both prestigious and useful, and many Italian states, including Florence, Naples and Venice, attempted at one time or another to initiate a dialogue with the *Gran Turco*. Yet one had to be careful, for being accused of plotting with the Turks against one's Christian rivals could damage one's reputation. Ercole was lucky insofar as he could reap the benefits of his son-in-law's friendship with Bayezid II without compromising himself. In 1491 Francesco II Gonzaga sent an ambassador (Bernardino Massaglia) to Constantinople with the following task: 'fare l'amizizia con la maestate de lo imperatore dil grande paese de Turchia' and also to buy some Turkish horses. Bayezid treated Francesco's envoy with courtesy and distinction ('lo quale [onore] non n'è stato fato ha veruno haltro inbasatore ne napoli ne firenze') and this visit marked the beginning of a long friendship, with letters and gifts travelling back and forth between Mantua and the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁰ When in July 1493 Bayezid's ambassador Kasim arrived in Mantua, the marquis, as Matteo Antimaco informs Isabella d'Este (who was visiting her family in Ferrara), 'lo ha facto onorare per tutto el dominio suo: comintiando ad Sermido e de mane in mane fine ad Mantua cum farli spese opulentissime et deputarli honorevole compaignie de tutti li potestati et vicari che sono dreto el Po'.¹²¹ In a letter dated 23 July 1493 Francesco tells the *Gran Turco* that he considers 'aver facto supremo aquisto essendo pervenuto el nome et desiderio mio ad notitia de la Maiestà Vostra in modo che per tutta Italia si diceva quella amarmi et havermi nel numero de li suoi chari' and, thanking him for the 'preciosi doni condigni ad ogni gran signore', calls himself Bayezid's 'schiavo'. 'Dio che è remuneratore del tutto', writes Francesco, 'retribuiscia

¹¹⁹ See Erodoto Alicarnasso Storico / tradotto da Matteo Maria Boiardo / Conte di Scandiano all'Ecc.mo Principe / Ercole di Ferrara / 1491, Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, HERODOTO MS ITAL. 1726 a. H.3.22, f. 3v.

¹²⁰ Excerpts from Massaglia's letter are cited in Hans Joachim Kissling, *Sultan Bâjezîd II. Beziehungen zu Markgraf Francesco II. von Gonzaga* (München: Max Hueber Verlag, 1965), pp. 6-7.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 21.

equivalentia a la Maiestà Vostra ch'io non mi cognosco sufficiente'.¹²² Similarly, congratulating the marquis on his victory against the French in the battle of Fornovo (6 July 1495), both Kasim and Bayezid commend him to God:

De la qual nova [the defeat of the French] el potentissimo Gran Signor e la Porta et tutti de qui hanno havuto gran contento per lo honore et gran nome che Vostra Signoria si ha acquistato: Et tutti dicono assai de le laudi de Vostra Signoria, la quale Dio mantegni: Io veramente come son al mondo de Vostra Signoria, tutto son in grande allegrezza, perché li homeni del mondo vedono al presente con lo effetto in Vostra Signoria essere la gaiardia et virtute che sempre mai io ho parlato, et al potentissimo Gran Signore et alli Signori Bassà, et a tutta la Porta, et de questo ne dago laude a Dio [...].

(Kasim to Francesco Gonzaga, 16 August 1495)¹²³

[...] havemo inteso de la sanitate et gloria vostra, et anche de la valorosità et prodeza vostra: simili opere attendevamo intender de li fatti vostri: Dio ve conservi in simili opere [...].

(Bayezid to Francesco Gonzaga, November 1495)¹²⁴

Thus, though professing different creeds, the authors of these affectionate letters invoke the universal God, the supreme Judge of the World who does not distinguish between Christians and Muslims but rewards the virtuous and punishes the wicked. Like Boiardo's and Ariosto's knights, Francesco and his Turkish friends claim to value courteous conduct and martial prowess above anything else. Their epistolary exchange is saturated with chivalric vocabulary ('ogni gran signore', 'honore', 'gran nome', 'gaiardia', 'virtute', 'gloria', 'valorosità', 'prodeza'), which shows that secular chivalric culture was not confined to chivalric romances.

Francesco's correspondence with Bayezid was particularly prolific during the period from 1492 to 1495, the year in which Bayezid's brother Cem died. One of the reasons why Bayezid cultivated this relationship was to keep an eye on his estranged sibling who spent the last 13 years of his life in Europe, prisoner of the Christians and hence a source

¹²² Ibid., pp. 24-25.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 53.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

of constant concern for the sultan.¹²⁵ After the demise of their father Mehmed II (1481), the two brothers fought for the throne and in 1482 Cem decided to seek protection from the Knights of Rhodes who, however, betrayed him and sent him to France. Between 1489 and January 1495 Cem resided at the Papal court in Rome, where he spent his time discussing politics and religion with his captors, writing poetry, hunting and indulging in other pleasurable activities. He liked the company of Juan de Borgia (son of Pope Alexander VI and brother of Lucrezia Borgia, later to become Alfonso's d'Este second wife) and the Romans could see them riding together, Juan dressed in Turkish clothes to honour his Muslim companion.¹²⁶ Bayezid paid large sums of money to Innocent VIII and his successor so that they did not release his brother and sent numerous spies to keep the situation under control.¹²⁷ In 1497 Francesco tried to help him repatriate Cem's body (Cem died in Capua on 25 February 1495, taken there by Charles VIII who had forced Alexander VI to hand him over to him). Although after 1497 their friendship became less intense (it could be that the marquis no longer wanted to flaunt his ties with the sultan: in 1501 Louis XII of France accused him of aligning himself with the Turks, whereupon Francesco assured him that he 'tien dal amistade' only 'per haver cavali'),¹²⁸ it lasted until Bayezid's death in 1512. This bond was certainly useful to Francesco's Ferrarese brothers-in-laws who, like the marquis, were fond of first-rate Turkish horses.¹²⁹ Giulio

¹²⁵ Much has been written on Cem Sultan. See at least Nicolas Vatin, *Sultan Djem: un prince ottoman dans l'Europe du XVe siècle d'après deux sources contemporaines* (Ankara: Imprimerie de la Société turque d'histoire [sic], 1997).

¹²⁶ Cem stands close to Lucrezia Borgia (represented as St Catherine) in Pinturicchio's *Disputa di Santa Caterina*, a fresco in the Borgia Apartments.

¹²⁷ In 1490, Andrea di Otranto, Ercole's agent in Corfu, writes that 'dicese che è passato secretamente stravesito uno gran subasci del gran Turcho et è andato ala volta de Roma dicese per vedere lo fratello de lo turcho' (Archivio di stato di Mantova, Ambasciatori estensi, busta 15/ unica, Turchia europea, Andrea di Otranto, f. 1v).

¹²⁸ Kissling (1965), p. 97.

¹²⁹ In 1504 and 1505, for example, Luca Antonio Alfani and Pietro Giacomo Meraviglia travelled to the Ottoman Empire to purchase horses for Ariosto's patron. Their as yet unpublished letters to the cardinal are preserved in Archivio di stato di Mantova, Ambasciatori estensi, busta 15/ unica, Turchia europea. In 1516 Ippolito's gentleman Francesco Zerbinato (Ariosto briefly mentions him at XXXVI 4 AB; XL C) travelled to the Republic of Ragusa. See Archivio di stato di Mantova, Ambasciatori estensi, busta 15/ unica, Turchia asiatica, Francesco Zerbinato.

Sacrati, whom we mentioned in 1.1, had a letter from Francesco with him when he embarked on his journey to Egypt. It saved him from prison or worse: in Negroponte, Sacrati tells Ippolito, ‘io fui preso e menato dananci a uno basà napalitano renegado e lì minato cridando che io fusse espione del re de spagnia’; trembling with fear (‘a li così grande paura de trominti strani io no sapeva in che mondo io fusse’), he showed the ‘basà’ ‘una lettera de bona leciencia dal marciso de Mantoa’ and, as if with the wave of a magic wand, the terrifying interrogator turned into a welcoming host (‘lui la poi me fece proprio honore con alcune promesse [...]’).¹³⁰ Several years later, when Francesco, then the commander of the army of the League of Cambrai, was captured by Venetian forces (August 1509), Isabella did not hesitate to contact Bayezid, asking him for help. And the sultan did not abandon his Christian friend in time of need: as Guicciardini narrates in his *Storia d’Italia*, Bayezid,

intesa la sua calamità, chiamato a sé il bailo de’ mercatanti viniziani che negoziavano in Pera appresso a Costantinopoli, lo ricercò gli promettesse che ’l marchese sarebbe liberato; e recusando il bailo di promettere quel che non era in potestà sua e offerendo scriverne a Vinegia, ove non dubitava si farebbe deliberazione conforme al desiderio suo, Baiset replicandogli superbamente essere la sua volontà che egli assolutamente lo promettesse, fu necessitato a prometterlo: il che essendo significato dal bailo a Vinegia, il senato, considerando non essere tempo a irritare principe tanto potente, determinò di liberarlo; ma per occultare il suo disonore, e riportare qualche frutto della sua liberazione, prestò orecchi al desiderio del pontefice.¹³¹

Francesco’s and Isabella’s dealings with the Turks show that interracial and interfaith friendships could happen in real life too, that the cult of secular chivalry which underpins Boiardo’s ‘bela historia’ and its famous sequel appealed to Boiardo’s and Ariosto’s aristocratic readers. Written for ‘signori e cavalier’ (*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I i 1,1), the two *Orlandos* draw inspiration from contemporary courtly culture, a culture that was characterised by openness towards the figure of the cultural and religious Other, or more

¹³⁰ Sacrati, f. 1r.

¹³¹ Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d’Italia*, ed. by Silvana Seidel Menchi (Torino: Einaudi, 1971), Book IX, Ch. VIII, p. 866.

precisely, towards the figure of the foreign prince. This culture was not confined to Ferrara and Mantua, but it was particularly vibrant in these cities. Many more real-life encounters between Christian and Muslim princes and nobles could be cited to show that Boiardo's and Ariosto's chivalric fantasies were after all not completely fantastic: the long list includes Meliaduse d'Este's meeting with the 'armiralgio da Damasco' during his travels in the Middle East,¹³² Mehmed's refusal to shelter one of the protagonists of the Pazzi conspiracy (the grateful Lorenzo il Magnifico had a medal portrait of the sultan cast to thank him for his cooperation),¹³³ Lorenzo's friendship with Ashraf Qaitbay (the Burji Mamluk sultan of Egypt who sent Lorenzo a giraffe in 1486),¹³⁴ and the extraordinary adventures of Gian Maria Angiolello from Vicenza (1451-1525).¹³⁵ It is telling that the court of the Turkish sultan and that of the Persian 'Sofi' are briefly evoked in the *Libro del Cortegiano*. Federigo Fregoso, a Genoese gentleman who spent his youth fighting North-African pirates (Ariosto refers to his travels at XXXVIII 20 B; XLII C) and later embarked on an ecclesiastic career, would have been happy to dwell on this subject:

Pensavo ancor, se 'l tempo mi fosse bastato, oltre alla diversità de' costumi che s'usano nelle corti de' principi cristiani nel servirgli, nel festeggiare e farsi vedere nei spettacoli pubblici, parlar medesimamente qualche cosa di quella del Gran Turco, ma molto più particolarmente di quella del Sofi re di Persia; ché, avendo io inteso da mercatanti che lungamente son stati in quel paese, gli omini nobili di là esser molto valorosi e di gentil costumi ed usar nel conversar l'un con l'altro, nel servir donne, ed in tutte le sue azioni molta cortesia e molta discrezione e, quando occorre, nell'arme, nei giochi e nelle feste molta grandezza, molta liberalità e leggiadria, sonomi diletato di saper quali siano in queste cose i modi di che essi più s'apprezzano, in che consistono le lor pompe ed attillature d'abiti e d'arme; in che siano da noi diversi ed in che conformi; che

¹³² See Don Domenico Messori (2009), p. 37.

¹³³ See Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and his Time*, trans. by Ralph Manheim and William C. Hickman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 384-388.

¹³⁴ Paolo Giovio's biography of Qaitbay is remarkably positive: see his *Elogi degli uomini illustri*, ed. by Franco Minonzio, trans. by Andrea Guasparri and Franco Minonzio (Torino: Einaudi, 2006), pp. 669-673.

¹³⁵ Angiolello was taken prisoner during the Negroponte campaign in 1470, learnt Turkish, became a friend of the Sultan's eldest son, Mustafa Çelebi, was employed by Mehmed after Mustafa's death in 1474, and later returned to Italy. See Niccolò Di Lenna, 'Ricerche intorno allo storico G. Maria Angiolello (degli Anzolelli) Patrizio Vicentino (1451-1525)', in *Archivio Veneto-Tridentino* (Venezia: a spese della R. Deputazione, 1924), pp. 1-56.

manera d'intertenimenti usino le lor donne, e con quanta modestia favoriscano che le serve per amore.¹³⁶

While Fregoso speaks of Persian courtly culture in highly enthusiastic terms, Boiardo implicitly compares Ercole to the rulers of ancient Persia both in the preface to his translation of Cornelius Nepos' *Lives of Eminent Commanders*¹³⁷ and in his 'volgarizzamento' of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, where Cyrus, 'saggio signore e [...] valoroso capitano', embodies the virtues that Boiardo wants to see in his patron.¹³⁸ Thus, Italian aristocrats were willing to learn about and even from Eastern princes, be they contemporary, medieval (suffice it to think of the glowing portrayal of Saladin in the *Historia imperiale* who, as will be shown in chapter II, shares many traits with Gradasso) or ancient. It goes without saying that not all Muslim rulers enjoyed a good reputation in Renaissance Italy and that different historical sources offer different assessments of such figures as Mehmed II or his son Bayezid. However, one can safely say that many of Boiardo's and Ariosto's contemporaries and early readers were neither Islamophobic nor Turkophobic.

1.3. CONCLUSION

The present chapter has attempted to highlight the historical dimension of the two *Orlandos*, suggesting that although Boiardo's and Ariosto's representation of Islam and Islamic culture cannot be deemed realistic, a number of realistic elements find their way

¹³⁶ Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano*, intr. by Amedeo Quondam, ed. by Nicola Longo (Milano: Garzanti, 2006), Book III, II, p. 262.

¹³⁷ 'Fu di osservato costume negli antichi Reami di Persia dare a' suoi Re le primizie di tutte quelle cose che or dalla natura or dalla fortuna gli fossero porte; imperciocchè a quegli orientali fu sempre in onorata riverenza il nome regale. La usanza de' quali, parendo a me per molte cagioni da lodare, ho sempre con diligenza seguita, e a te, inclito mio Signore, ho dedicato tutto quello (se ciò è qualche cosa) che dal mio piccolo ingegno è provenuto' (*Le vite degli eccellenti capitani di Cornelio Nepote tradotte da Matteo Maria Boiardo*, ed. by Olindo Guerrini and Corrado Ricci (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1908), p. 1).

¹³⁸ Cf. Boiardo, *La pedia de Cyro*, ed. by Valentina Gritti (Novara: Interlinea, 2014), p. 131.

into the two poems, with Ariosto showing a greater interest in real Islam than Boiardo. The Saracens' naivety in their relationship with the divine may provoke a smile (less so in the *Furioso*), but their religion is not demonised. Their religious tenets and values are remarkably similar to those of the Christians, indeed in many respects symmetrical, even if some of their beliefs and practices bring to mind the cults and practices of the ancients. Despite the fact that there are few cultural differences between Christian and Saracen characters (if we except a few deliberately monstrous figures), both poets occasionally adorn their descriptions of Saracen dress and cities with Islamic/oriental brush-strokes. Even more importantly, we have seen that, unlike other earlier and contemporaneous chivalric texts, the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso* do not seem to contain any allusions to the Turkish threat (or for that matter any historical allegories involving Muslim rulers). Yet it would be wrong to claim that the Ferrarese poets completely disregard contemporary discourses about the Ottomans and the Islamic world in general. The two *Orlandos* indirectly draw inspiration from contemporary reality, for many of their early readers believed in secular chivalry and real-life encounters between Christians and Muslims bore some resemblance to chivalric romances.

Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century perceptions of Muslims may have been diverse and at times contrasting, but pride in one's own culture did not necessarily preclude curiosity, respect or even admiration for other civilisations. That said, it remains true that Boiardo's and Ariosto's representation of *Paganìa* is also indebted to the chivalric tradition. Hence the subsequent chapters will explore the literary dimension of the figure of the Saracen Other, beginning with Boiardo's use of earlier chivalric texts and compilations: but we shall have to return to the subject of the present chapter in this study's final conclusion.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

Saracen chivalry in Boiardo's *Inamoramento de Orlando*

2.0. 'DA GOSTANTIN PER INFINO AD ORLANDO'

'«[...] se Marsilio è saracino', says the French Emperor, announcing his decision to help the latter against Gradasso, 'ciò non attendo; egli è nostro cognato / et ha vicino a Francia gionto il stato»' (*Inam.*, I iv 14,6-8). This statement might puzzle the modern reader, given that nowhere in the 'bela historia' does Boiardo explain why Marsilio, the ruler of Saracen Spain, is Charlemagne's 'cognato'. However, the poet's contemporaries knew that Charlemagne's wife Galerana (of whom we catch a brief glimpse at I i 22,1) was the daughter of King Galafrò who also fathered Balugante and Falsirone and Marsilio.¹ In Andrea da Barberino's *Reali di Francia* the young Carlotto (or Mainetto, as he calls himself in order to conceal his true identity) falls in love with the Saracen princess when hiding from his evil half-brothers at Galafrò's court. She runs away with him but is forgiven by her father as soon as he learns that their servant Mainetto is none other than Charlemagne ('Di questo Galafrò fu molto allegro, imperò ch'egli seppe come egli voleva tenere Galeana per sua legittima sposa'²). In chapter I we saw that friendships and even marriages between Christian and Muslim nobility were not completely unheard of in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy. Nor are they uncommon in chivalric romances that

¹ The earliest surviving text that contains references to her story is the twelfth-century *Historia Karli Magni et Rotholandi* (the Pseudo-Turpin chronicle). Later texts include the Franco-Venetian *Karleto* and Andrea da Barberino's *Reali di Francia* (see Book IV, chapters VII-XLIX).

² This and subsequent quotations are taken from Andrea da Barberino, *I Reali di Francia*, ed. by Giuseppe Vandelli and Giovanni Gambarin (Bari: Laterza, 1947), Book IV, ch. XLIX, p. 531.

precede, or are contemporaneous with, the *Inamoramento de Orlando*.³ The universe which sprang from the pen of the Count of Scandiano – one in which there is no sharp line dividing characters of different faiths – is steeped in the chivalric tradition, and especially in its Carolingian branch, the ‘croniche che son scritte in Parige: / da Gostantin per infino ad Orlando’.⁴ Yet this does not alter the fact that Boiardo’s representation of *Paganìa* is in many respects extremely innovative.

Examining Boiardo’s Saracens, this chapter will pursue the double task of highlighting the poet’s debt to earlier chivalric literature and of bringing to the fore the most original traits of his portrayal of Saracen chivalry. My discussion will be divided into three parts. I shall start with a general overview of *Paganìa* in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, counting Boiardo’s Saracens, identifying the ‘familiar faces’ and commenting on the transformations that they undergo. Section 2.2 will be devoted to an analysis of the Saracens’ contribution to the new (Arthurian) conception of chivalry that emerges from the ‘bela historia’. Finally, in section 2.3 I shall focus on the connection between the Saracen world and antiquity, exploring the significance of Agramante’s descent from Alexander the Great.

2.1. WHO’S WHO IN BOIARDO’S *PAGANÌA*

Two out of every three Boiardo’s characters come from *Paganìa*. While Boiardo does not always specify his heroes’ faith (which, in itself, points to the fluidity of the boundary

³ According to Cavallo (2013), pp. 125-126, ‘the traditional Carolingian epic pictured Marsilio as the perennial enemy of the Christsians’ and Charlemagne’s alliance with Marsilio would have reminded Boiardo’s audience of the complicated relationship between Ferrara and Venice.

⁴ ‘Forte m’alegro, figliol mie’ – says the author of the so-called *Cantare dei cantari* (1380-1420), inviting his audience to choose his vast repertoire of Carolingian stories – ‘pensando / le croniche che son scritte in Parige / da Gostantin per infino ad Orlando / e di Carlo Martello, e di Luige; / se v’è in piacere, i’ vel verrò contando / la cronica di punto ciò che dige / de paladini, e poi d’ogni pagano, / o volete in francesco o in taliano’. The *Cantare* was transcribed by Pio Rajna: see his ‘*Il Cantare dei cantari e il serventese del maestro di tutti l’arti*’, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, II (1878), 220–254, 419–437.

between Christians and Saracens), we can assume that, in the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, characters whom we encounter outside Charlemagne's empire are Saracens. If we count all the so-called infidels who feature in the *favola* of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, the total number is circa 210 (plus or minus 5).⁵ This number includes figures such as Galerana, i.e. Saracen converts to Christianity from earlier chivalric narratives, whose Saracen past was no secret to Boiardo's audience. To these 210 daughters and sons of *Paganìa*, we can add one Jew-turned-Christian-turned-Saracen (Marsilio's treasurer Baricheo who, having tried all three Abrahamic religions, 'né credeva in Macon né in Dio divino', II xxiv 59,6) and one Christian renegade, the Genoese citizen whose armour we briefly discussed in the previous chapter. By contrast, the number of Christians is much smaller: approximately 102, including Theodoro (whom several critics believe to be a Saracen)⁶ and the already mentioned Genoese traitor. Such a

⁵ For a list of Boiardo's named and nameless Saracens see Appendix I. The number quoted above is an approximation, for, although every effort has been made to count all Saracens, the total is set to vary depending on the specific edition being used. The following 5 Saracens figure in Boiardo's poem as edited by Angelandrea Zottoli (1937), Aldo Scaglione (1951; 1963) and Riccardo Bruscagli (1995): Arugalte (II xxx 6,4) [according to Bruscagli's note to this octave, Arugalte is a new character, but in the general index he is listed as a variant spelling of Agrigalte], Balivorne (II xxiv 32,5-8), Barolango (II xxx 6,4), Moridano (II xxx 53,5) and Pulicano (II xxx 52,1). However, according to Tissoni Benvenuti and Montagnani's critical edition (1999) followed by Andrea Canova's (2011), Arugalto, Balivorne, Barolango and Moridano, though present in the earliest extant edition (Venice, 1487), are to be considered errors of the archetype whose correct readings are as follows: Agrigalte, Baliverno, Bardarico and Soridano [a correction already introduced by Panizzi (1430-34)] respectively, given that Saracens with these names feature in earlier cantos. As for Pulicano, Tissoni Benvenuti and Montagnani opt for Puliano (a Saracen called Puliano was first introduced at II xvii 6,2), noting in their critical apparatus that the 1487 edition reads 'Plucano'. It is difficult to say to what extent these conjectures are founded. One cannot completely rule out the possibility that the poet may have wanted to have both Baliverno and Balivorne, Barolango and Bardarico, Moridano and Soridano etc, given that a minor character who appears only once is not a rare sight in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. Bavarte, Doriconte, and Languirano are only mentioned at II xxiii 73, which is precisely the octave where Baliverno makes his first appearance; since these Saracens do not die in that octave, the reader never finds out what happened to them, not until the *Furioso*. It is worth pointing out that, like the 1487 edition of Boiardo's poem, the one which was used by Ariosto must have featured Baliverno at II xxiii 73,7 (who remains alive) and Balivorne at II xxiv 32,5 (who is slaughtered by Rinaldo), considering that in the *Furioso* there is a character called Baliverno. We see him in the list of Marsilio's knights at XII 15 AB; XIV 15 C, together with Bavarte, Doriconte and Langhiran (Ariosto's spelling of Languirano). In general, we must bear in mind that some of Boiardo's Saracens have almost identical names and yet it is clear that we are dealing with distinct characters (e.g. Barigano and Barigazo, Uldano and Uldarno). Other chivalric authors too often give their characters similar sounding names: for example, in Andrea da Barberino's *Aspramonte* we find a Buteran and a Buterante, two Moadas and two Moadante.

⁶ Both Franceschetti (1975), p. 104, and Alexandre-Gras (1988), p. 308, assume that Theodoro, 'figliol del Re d'Harmenia' (II xxvi 22,5), is a Saracen because he converts to Christianity together with his

discrepancy (67% of Saracens versus 33% of Christians) is even more striking if one compares Boiardo's poem to other epic and chivalric texts. Thus, in the *Chanson de Roland*, the numbers of characters of different confessions are more or less equal: around 60 Saracens and 57 Christians. However, in the *Entrée d'Espagne*, the *Fatti de Spagna* and the *Spagna ferrarese* Christians outnumber the infidels. In the *Spagna* the difference is very slight (3 characters, like in the *Chanson de Roland*), but in the *Entrée d'Espagne* and the *Fatti di Spagna* it is more perceptible, with Christians constituting about 55-56% of the total number of characters. Similarly, in Andrea da Barberino's *Aspramonte* (henceforth referred to as *Aspramonte A*) Christians (54.5%) outnumber Saracens (45.5%). In the *Morgante*, there are more Saracens than Christians, but the gap is not as large as in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*: Saracens make up around 54% of the poem's characters.⁷

Out of more than 210 Saracens who populate the pages of the 'bela historia' around 30-35 characters come from earlier chivalric texts. The remainder appear to have been invented by Boiardo, even if many of the names already featured in the previous tradition. Sometimes it is difficult to say whether Boiardo merely borrows a name or whether the character in question is to be identified with his or her namesake in some other text. Having drunk from the Fiume dell'Oblivione, many a knight loses his memory, 'né sapria dir alcun quel che lui sia, / né se egli è Saracino o Christiano' (I ix 73,4-5). Among

sweetheart Doristela: 'la gratia dele dame fo cotanta / che dai monti d'Harmania ala marina / corse ciascuno ala legie divina' (II xxvii 35,5-8). However, Varano, the King of Hermania (Armenia) whom we meet in Book I, is not a Saracen but rather a Christian heretic: 'cristiano / (ben che macchiato è forte de heresia)' (I x 38,2). Varano cannot be Theodoro's father: the former dies in battle (I xiv 17,7), while the latter 'morto era [...] a corso naturale' (II xxvii 20,4). Yet one could perhaps still argue that, being an Armenian, Theodoro is a Christian heretic who eventually converts to Catholicism. Announcing the conversion of his wife Doristela and her sister Fiordalisa (both of whom grew up in the Saracen faith), Boiardo stresses that 'queste doe dame [...] / catolice èno entrambe e christiane' (II xxvii 34,2).

⁷ I have used the following editions: *La chanson de Roland*, ed. by Cesare Segre (Milano: Ricciardi, 1971); *Li fatti de Spagna: testo settentrionale trecentesco già detto "Viaggio di Carlo Magno in Ispagna"*, ed. by Ruggero Ruggieri (Modena: Società tipografica modenese, 1951); Andrea da Barberino, *L'Aspramonte, romanzo cavalleresco inedito*, ed. by Marco Boni (Bologna: per i tipi dell'Antiquaria Palmaverde, 1951).

Dragontina's victims are 'il forte re Adriano' (73,1), Antifor de Albarosia, 'il re Balano, quel mastro di guerra' (72,5) 'Chiarione, il franco Saracino' (72,6) and Oberto da il Leone. When the spell is broken, these characters remember who they are, but the reader – especially the modern reader – cannot be certain of anything. It is likely that all of them – not just Chiarione – are Saracens, given that we meet them in *Paganìa*. They keep together as a group and leave the narration in the same canto, namely in II ii, when Marphisa takes prisoners Chiarione and Adriano, unhorses Antifor de Alborosia, wounds Balano and kills Oberto da il Leone. Their names must have had a familiar ring for Boiardo's contemporaries. There is an Adrian (the noble son of the Saracen king of Val Perse who eventually converts to Christianity) in Raffaele da Verona's *Aquilon de Bavière* (set during the times of Charlemagne), an Adriano (the Saracen king of Pampolonia) in Andrea da Barberino's *Ajolfo del Barbicone* (a romance set during the reign of Charlemagne's son Louis and Carlo Martello, Louis' successor in Carolingian chivalric literature), an Andriano (the Saracen king of Mascona) in the *Drusiano dal Leone* (whose action takes place after the death of Charlemagne's paladins), another one (the late father of Ramondo, a young knight who admires Rinaldo) in the *Trabisona*, another one (Rinaldo's friend, the nephew of a Saracen ruler) in the *Innamoramento de Carlo Mano* and yet another one (a brave Saracen king who fights with Astolfo) in the *Antiphor de Barosia*.⁸ King Bal(l)ano is one of the most charismatic Saracen characters of the *Trabisona* (at first Rinaldo's fiercest enemy, but eventually his best friend), while Durastante's brother in the *Altobello* is called Chiarione ('e veramente lui era lustro e chiaro', states the anonymous poet, 'mior pagan de lui non adora Macone [...]', XXII

⁸ These namesakes of Adriano (as well as those of Balano and Chiarione) appear to have escaped Tissoni Benvenuti's attention. My discussion of the Saracens' names attempts to complement her detailed commentary.

4,2-3 [f. h vv]).⁹ As for Antifor de Albarosia and Oberto da il Leone, a Saracen king called Antiphor/Antafor de Barosia, ‘homo potentissimo sì de stato como anche de forze de corpo’, features in the eponymous poem which is mentioned by Isabella D’Este in a 1491 letter, while ‘dal Leone’ is a rather common ‘surname’ in chivalric literature.¹⁰ Several cantos after Oberto’s first appearance, Boiardo tells us that this ‘Baron de alto afare’ was both ‘ardito e sagio’ and that he ‘tuta la terra intorno ebe a circare, / comme se vede nel suo libro aperto’ (I xiv 41,3-6), implying that his adventures were circulating in some popular chivalric romance.¹¹

Whether or not Boiardo was thinking of specific characters from earlier texts, the names of these five knights link them to the chivalric tradition, where their namesakes are, for the most part, valiant and famous Saracen heroes. Boiardo’s Adriano, Antifor, Balano, Chiarione and Oberto are minor characters of whom we only catch fleeting glimpses; they live in the shadow of Agricane, Gradasso, Feraguto Sacripante and other leading protagonists. Yet the fact that each one of these seemingly insignificant characters may have a story to tell reinforces the impression that there is no lack of valour and prowess in the Saracen world.

⁹ In Pulci’s *Morgante*, too, there is a character called Chiarione, a noble Saracen innkeeper who becomes governor of a kingdom (XXI 19). It is interesting to note that a fair number of Saracens in the French and Italian traditions have names starting with ‘Clar’ or ‘Chiar’: we see Clarïen, Clarifan and Clarin in the *Chanson de Roland*, Chiaron in the *Spagna ferrarese*, Chiarello in Andrea da Barberino’s *Aspramonte*, Chiariella, Chiariello, Chiaristante and Chiarione in the *Morgante*. Needless to say, many Christian names start with ‘Chiar’, the most famous one being Chiaramonte. On other evocative names in the *Innamoramento* see Ruggero M. Ruggieri, ‘I “nomi parlanti” nel *Morgante*, nell’*Innamorato* e nel *Furioso*’, in his *Saggi di linguistica italiana e italo-romanza* (Firenze: Olschki, 1962), pp. 169-181.

¹⁰ The quotation is taken from the title page of the 1519 edition of the poem: *Antafor de Barosia* (Milano: Giovanni Giacomo da Legnano e fratelli, 1519).

¹¹ No traces of a romance entitled *Oberto dal Leone* have been found thus far, but a romance called *Drusiano dal Leone* (first printed in 1513) must have circulated in the second half of the fifteenth century. It is preserved in a late fifteenth-century manuscript: MS. Landau Finaly 212, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (see Villoresi (2000), p. 94). However, it is unlikely that Boiardo was thinking of *Drusiano*, given that, as mentioned above, it narrates the events that happened after the death of Charlemagne’s paladins. According to Tissoni Benvenuti’s note to I ix 73, ‘non si può escludere che Boiardo abbia inventato l’esistenza di questo libro di Oberto dal Leone, per prendersi gioco dell’aggiornata cultura cavalleresca del suo pubblico’, especially considering that his Oberto dies ‘quasi per caso’, being cut into two pieces by Marphisa.

It is worth pausing to consider the characters who seem to have been created from scratch by Boiardo but whose names are identical or very similar to the names one encounters in other chivalric narratives. They are:

- Agramante (King Agramonte di Taspi in the *Ajolfo del Barbicone*)¹²
 Albarosa (Albarisa di Gallozia in Andrea da Barberino's *Ugone d'Avernia*)
 Alibante (Abilante in the *Spagna ferrarese*, *Innamoramento di Rinaldo* and *Aspramonte A*)
 Angelica (Angelica in the *Libro di Rambaldo*, Angelina in the *Antiphor de Barosia*, Anzi(o)lela in the *Altobello*)
 Argalia (King Argalia/Arcalia in *Aspramonte A*, the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*, the *Altobello* and the *Ugieri il Danese*)
 Calabruno di Aragona (Calebrun d'Alessandria in *Aspramonte A*)
 Calidora (Calidor in the *Ajolfo del Barbicone*)
 Cardorano (Cordoan in *Aspramonte A*)
 Dardinello (Dodonello in the *Reali di Francia*, Dondonello in the *Tavola Ritonda*)
 Fiordalisa [Fiordelisa, Fiordehelisa] (Fiordalisa in the *Ajolfo del Barbicone*, Fioredalisa in the *Storia di Rinaldino da Montalbano*)
 Fiordespinga (Fior de Spina in the *Altobello* and in the *Fioretto dei paladini*)
 Folvo di Fersa (Fierse di Folva in the *Spagna ferrarese*)
 Galaphrone [Galafrò] (Galafrò in the *Reali di Francia*, Galafrone in the *Spagna ferrarese*)
 Gradasso (Gradasso in the *Sala di Malagigi*, the *Visione di Venus* and the *Antiphor de Barosia*; Gradosso in the *Tavola ritonda*)
 Grifaldo [Griphaldo, Gryphaldo, Gryfaldo] (Grifaldo in the *Altobello*)
 Griphone di Altaripa (Grifone in the *Ugieri il Danese*)
 Hordauro [Ordauro] (Ordorieri in Andrea da Barberino's *Storie nerbonesi*)
 Horisello [Horrisello] (Orsello in the *Storie nerbonesi*)
 Hosbego [Usbergo in the Trivulziano manuscript] (Lusbercho in the *Altobello*)
 Lampardo (Lampardo d'Africa in the *Rinaldino da Montalbano*)
 Lucina (Luciana in the *Morgante*, Lucia and Luciana in the *Drusiano dal Leone*)
 Malapresa (Malagrappa in the *Storie nerbonesi*)
 Malgarino (Malgaria in the *Buovo d'Antona* in octaves)
 Marigoto (Margotto in the *Cantari di Fierabraccia e Ulivieri*)
 Matalista (Mattalia in *Aspramonte A*)
 Mordante (Mordans in *Aspramonte A*)
 Orione (Orio in the *Buovo d'Antona*)
 Pandragone (Uter Pandragone is Artù's father in the *Tavola ritonda* and other Arthurian romances; Pandragone in the *Drusiano dal Leone*)
 Piliasi (Piliagi and Pilias in *Aspramonte A*, Pilagi in the *Spagna ferrarese*, Pilias in the *Reali di Francia*)
 Radamanco (Rodomanta/Radamanto in the *Morgante*)
 Rodomonte (Rodomanta/Radamanto in the *Morgante*)¹³
 Rubicone (Rubican in the *Storie nerbonesi*, Rubicante in the *Morgante* and in the *Altobello*)

¹² Antonio Panizzi (1830-34) notes that a certain Agramonte appeared in 'a very ancient chronicle' of the history of Naples (vol. II, 'Life of Boiardo', pp. i-cliv: xcix).

¹³ On the Pulcian origin of Rodamonte's name see Alberto Casadei: 'Nomi di personaggi nel *Furioso*', *Il nome nel testo. Rivista internazionale di onomastica letteraria*, II-III (2001), 229-37: 232. The etymology of this name is also discussed by Eugenio Ragni: cf. his 'Rodomonte e Gradasso: storia incrociata di due "ruganti"', *Letteratura Italiana Antica*, VIII (2007), 399-413: 401.

Sinagone (Sinagone in *Aspramonte A*, the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*, the *Fatti de Spagna* and the *Spagna ferrarese*)¹⁴

Spinella (Ospinel in *Aspramonte A*)

Stella (Stelle in the *Acquilon de Bavière*)

Tanfirione (Tanfurone in the *Ajolfo del Barbicone*)

Tibiano (Tidiano in the *Storie nerbonesi*)

Torindo (Torindo in the *Guerrin Meschino* and *Rinaldino da Montalbano*)

Urgano (Urgano lo Velluto in the *Tavola Ritonda*)

Ziliante (*Giliante* in the *Reali di Francia*, *Gilante* in the *Antiphor de Barosia*)

As we can see, Boiardo's drew inspiration from both Arthurian and Carolingian sources, with Andrea da Barberino's romances dominating the list. Challenging the long-held belief that Boiardo named his Saracens after his peasants at Scandiano, Antonio Panizzi argues that 'Most of the Saracen names mentioned by BOJARDO occur in the *Reali di Francia*, or in the other old books of this description'.¹⁵ More research would be needed to confirm or refute this hypothesis (Panizzi himself identifies only a handful of borrowings); but if we add to the names listed above the names of the characters taken from the tradition (including those of the five knights previously discussed), we can safely state that more than a third of the Saracen names that feature in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* (75, to be precise) are either borrowed from or inspired by earlier chivalric works.

The name 'Gradasso' – which, together with 'Rodomonte', has entered into the Italian language, giving rise to the idiomatic expression 'fare il gradasso' (to be a boaster, to brag) – deserves to be discussed in greater depth. Although it is generally assumed that it was coined by Boiardo, there is good evidence to say that, like most other Saracen names that we see in the opening canto of the 'bela historia' ('Angelica', 'Argalia',

¹⁴ Like Sinagone in the *Fatti de Spagna*, Boiardo's Sinagone is one of Marsilio's subjects. Both are killed by Oliviero (the former in the battle of Rencesvals, the latter at the beginning of Agramante's war), which is the reason why they cannot be one and the same character.

¹⁵ Panizzi (1830-34), vol. II, p. lxxix. As he explains, Ludovico Castelvetro was the first to claim that Boiardo turned to his peasants for inspiration. Another legend has it that the Count of Scandiano 'faceva suonare le campane ad ogni bel nome che trovava per i suoi personaggi: Fiordispina, Brunello, Sacripante, Gradasso, Rodomonte' (Alfonso Burgio, *Dizionario dei nomi propri di persona* (Roma: Hermes Edizioni 1992), p. 256). Needless to say, Boiardo could not always congratulate himself on coining a new name. On this bell-ringing tradition see Ernest H. Wilkins, 'The naming of Rodomont', *MLN*, LXX (1955), 596-599.

'Galaphrone', 'Lampardo', 'Urgano', as well as the names of the Spanish Saracens), it was borrowed from some other text. Two Gradassos are mentioned in what is probably the most archaic version of the *Sala di Malagigi* (the 39-octave version preserved in ms. 1091 of the Biblioteca Riccardiana di Firenze, transcribed by Benedetto Biffoli and dated 1460), a very short anonymous poem which contains an ekphrastic description of a sumptuous 'sala' whose walls are decorated with the portraits of famous warriors. The first Gradasso is mentioned among historical figures:

Pelleo v'era, Archita e Talamone,
Saul, Giosuè e 'l primo re del mondo,
il qual Roma ebbe ed ebbe Faraone,
e quel Neron che fu tanto profondo,
Enea, Camillo e 'l forte Cicerone
che di scienza fu tanto giocondo,
re Miliagro e 'l forte Saladino,
il re Gradasso e l'alto re Tarquino.
(*Sala di Malagigi*, 15)¹⁶

The second one appears in the company of Arthurian knights:

Della Ritonda v'era il buon Galasso,
re Runcivallo [Parcivalle] e 'l buon meser Galvano;
Brunor del Bruno che mantenne il passo,
e Lucanoro figliuol del soldano.
Dall'altra parte stava il re Gradasso,
e tutti stavon con lor spade in mano.
Sì come era ciascun che d'arme prova
la Tavola Vecchia era e poi la Nova.
(*Sala di Malagigi*, 17)

The *Sala di Malagigi* (its enlarged and slightly rewritten version) was printed at least 6 times before the close of the century: in 1471, 1480, 1483, 1495, and twice in 1500.¹⁷ I have been able to consult four of these editions: the first Gradasso is absent from all of

¹⁶ *La Sala di Malagigi. Cantare cavalleresco*, ed. by Pio Rajna (Imola: Tip. Galeati, 1871). This edition was a wedding gift for Rajna's friend and tutor Alessandro d'Ancona. Only a very limited number of copies was printed. Rajna attributes the poem's authorship to Antonio Pucci (circa 1310-1388).

¹⁷ See the *Incunabola Short Title Catalogue* of the British Library. All the above-quoted dates are approximate.

them (the last two lines of the stanza in question are completely different), while the second one features in the 1480 edition ('Della tavola ritonda il gran Galasso / [...] / el buon re Marco et l'alto re gradasso', 23¹⁸) as well as in the two 1500 editions ('Della tavola ritonda el gran galasso / [...] / el buon re Marco et l'alto re Gradasso', 23;¹⁹ 'Della tavola ritonda el gran Galasso / [...] / el buon re Marco e l'altro re Gradasso', 23²⁰). In the 1483 *Sala*, however, 'Galasso' is repeated twice: 'Dela tavola ritonda v'è il bon Galasso / [...] / el bon re Marco e l'alto re Galasso', 24).²¹ Nor is the *Sala di Malagigi* the only chivalric text to contain a reference to this Arthurian Gradasso. A version of the octave from the *Sala* features in the *Visione di Venus* – a short anonymous poem which, according to Alessandro d'Ancona, dates back to the second half of the fourteenth century or the first decades of the fifteenth century – as preserved in ms. 43 (a fifteenth-century manuscript produced in Venice and now preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale di Perugia):

De la tavola Rotonda el v'era el bon Galasso,
e Prencivallo e misiere Galvano,
Bruno del Bruno che mantenea el gran passo,
el re Lucanoro fiolo del Soldano;
da l'altra parte stava el re Gradasso,
tutti i erano con le lor spade in mano,
sì como ciascuno in le arme se prova:
el v'era la Tavola vechia e poi la nova.
(*Visione di Venus*, 15)²²

Yet another version appears in the *Cronaca di Rimini*. Describing the wedding of Roberto Malatesta and Elisabetta da Montefeltro (1475), the chronicler claims that in the 'rial sala [...] v'erano figurati gran parte delli famosi re e inperadori e baroni e cavalieri de cristiani

¹⁸ *La Sala di Malagigi* (Firenze: Sanctum Jacobum de Ripoli, circa 1480).

¹⁹ *La Sala di Malagigi* (Roma: Johann Besicken and Martinus de Amsterdam, circa 1500).

²⁰ *La Sala di Malagigi* (Firenze: Piero Pacini, circa 1500).

²¹ *La Sala di Malagigi* (Bologna: Jogann Schriber, circa 1483).

²² The *Visione* was published by Alessandro d'Ancona: *La Visione di Venus: antico poemetto popolare*, ed. by Alessandro d'Ancona, *Giornale di filologia romanza*, II (1878), 111-118.

e pagani, e d'altri valenti homini di scientia che sonno e stati al tempo anticho',²³ and inserts a poem which was probably recited at the nuptial celebrations and which mentions Gradasso together with his Arthurian companions:

[...] della tavola retonda el bon Galasso,
 Palamides e po' misser Brunoro,
 Astor scolpito stava per mutar passo,
 Re Marcho e Prencivalle fra costoro
 misser Galvano el alto re Gradasso
 tucto superbo v'era Lucanoro
 tucti nell'arme ciaschun fe' prova.
 La tavola vechia e poi la nova.²⁴

Thus, the authors and the *rifacitori* of these poems believed that Gradasso was a famous Arthurian knight. So did the author of the *Antiphor de Barosia* who, describing a duel between Rinaldo and Orlando, says that:

Parea in campo lo forte Galasso
 o vero Tristan o vero Lancilotto
 che liberato ogni tristo passo
 e chi ben fece pagare lo scotto
 quando occise lo forte re Gradasso
 et Feragasso conquistò debotto [...]
 (*Antiphor de Barosia*, XVIII 10,1-6 [f. E viv])²⁵

While there are hardly any traces of a knight called Gradasso in the extant Arthurian literature, a certain Gradosso appears in the *Tavola Ritonda* (a fourteenth-century prose romance): looking for an adventure, Lancilotto 'si ritrovò a un forte passo, lo quale era guardato da due forti gioganti; et facevalo guardare lo re Gradosso di Sansogna, per paura

²³ *Cronaca di Rimini*, cited in Angelo Turchini, *La signoria di Roberto Malatesta detto il Magnifico (1468-1482)* (Rimini: B. Ghigi, 2001), p. 438.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

²⁵ *Antiphor de Barosia* (Venezia: Melchior Sessa, 1531). Unfortunately I was not able to consult any earlier edition, but the 1531 may reproduce a text not very different from the 1493 one, as its last two lines read 'nel anni milli quattrocento tri e nonanta / al vostro honore la historia se stampa' (XLVII 80,7-8 [f. iir]).

che aveva del conte Liombardo'.²⁶ Interestingly, the word 'passo' – it invariably rhymes with 'Gradasso' in the different versions of the Arthurian stanza cited above – features in this passage too. It could be that Gradasso is a spelling variation of Gradosso and that this mysterious king of Sansogna is one of the central protagonists in some lost Italian romance. However, it is equally possible that Gradosso is a separate character.

We do not know whether Boiardo came across the name 'Gradasso' in the *Sala di Malagigi*, the *Visione di Venus*, the *Antiphor* or some other Arthurian chivalric text. He could have read the *Antiphor*, given that, as we saw earlier, there is an Antifor de Albarosia among the characters of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. On the other hand, the line 'Dal'altra parte el forte re Gradasso [...]' (*Inamoramento de Orlando*, III i 43,1) appears to be reminiscent of the line 'da l'altra parte stava il (el) re Gradasso' in the 1460 *Sala di Malagigi* or in the *Visione di Venus*. It is likely that Boiardo was familiar with the 'Arthurian stanza', too, but he could have read the *Sala* or another poem that contained this stanza after he had started composing Book I. Whatever his source may have been, the fact that the name of the king of Sericana has an Arthurian flavour to it is highly significant, considering that, as will be shown in 2.2, Gradasso's philosophy of life is very similar to that of Arthurian knights.²⁷

Having dealt with the 'familiar names', we can now turn our attention to the 'familiar faces'. These characters can be divided into two categories: those who (actively) participate in the 'bela historia', and those whom we never see (mostly because they are already dead) but whose past (mis)adventures are alluded to be the narrator or by other characters. The former group includes: the Amirante, the Argalipha (Argalifa, Argaliffa),

²⁶ *Tavola Ritonda*, ed. by Emanuele Trevi (Milano: RCS Libri, 1999), ch. 7, p. 109. Trevi based his edition on that prepared by Filippo Luigi Polidori (1864-1866) which for the first eleven chapters follows ms. I, VII, 13 of the Biblioteca Comunale di Siena (1478).

²⁷ As we saw earlier, there are other Arthurian names in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. It was not uncommon for authors of Carolingian romances to borrow names from Arthurian works and vice versa. In the *Altobello* we come across a giant called Galaso; in the *Tavola Ritonda* we see a Ferraguz.

Balugante (Balucante), Dudone, Falsirone (Falcirone), Feraguto, Galerana, Grandonio, Isolieri (Isoliero, Isolier), Malzarise, Maradasso, Marsilio (Marsiglio), Morgante, Ogieri il Danese, Rugiero, Serpentino, Sobrino and possibly Antiphor de Albarosia, Adriano, Ballano, Chiarione and Oberto da il Leone. The following Saracens fall into the latter category: Agolante, Almonte, Balante, Belisandra, Brabante, Caroggieri (Carogiero), Constantino, Durastante, Galaciella, Mambrino, Pantasilicor, Troiano and Ulieno di Sarza. It only takes a brief glance at this list to realise that most these characters come either from the *Spagna* (the Amirante, the Argalipha, Balugante, Falsirone, Feraguto, Grandonio, Isolieri, Malzarise, Maradasso, Marsilio, Morgante and Serpentino) or from the *Aspramonte* (Agolante, Almonte, Balante, Brabante, Caroggieri, Galaciella, Sobrino, Troiano and Ulieno). As for the remaining Saracens, Rugiero, the son of the Christian knight Rugiero II di Risa and the Saracen princess Galaciella, is probably not a completely new character: in the *Aquilon de Bavière*, 'si hanno di tanto in tanto notizie di *Galaciele* e del figlio *Rizer* [...] come se fossero molto noti ed amati'.²⁸ Dudone, Galerana and Ogieri il Danese – Saracen converts to Christianity – appear in many (indeed most) Carolingian chivalric narratives, with the *Castello di Teris* (Dudone) and Andrea da Barberino's *Reali di Francia* (Galerana and Ogieri) shedding light on their Saracen past.²⁹ The names of Belisandra, Constantino, Mambrino, Durastante and Pantasilicor are brought up during a heated quarrel between Rinaldo and Orlando (I xxvii 15-22; xxviii 3-12), as the best Christian knights accuse each other of various crimes. Belisandra is a Saracen princess whom Rinaldo and Orlando kidnap in the *Inamoramento de Carlo Magno*, while Constantino and Mambrino are two Saracens brothers whom

²⁸ See Tisconi Benvenuti's note to II i 70. Rugiero also features in Tito Strozzi's *Borsias*: see Eadem, 'Rugiero o la fabbrica dell'*Inamoramento de Orlando*', in *Per Cesare Bozzetti. Studi di letteratura e di filologia italiana*, ed. by Simone Albonico et al. (Milano: Mondadori, 1996), pp. 69-89: 77-81.

²⁹ To them we could perhaps add Bradamante (Bradiamante): she is born to a Saracen mother in the *Storie di Rinaldo*. As Rajna (1900), p. 52, points out, 'si è tentati di credere che non senza intenzione il Boiardo taccia della madre'.

Rinaldo kills in the *Cantari di Rinaldo*. Durastante's life and death (we shall return to this character in 2.2) are narrated in the *Altobello*. Among the many accusations (most – but, as we shall see, not all – of the accusations exchanged are completely baseless) that Orlando throws at his cousin is that of having treacherously murdered King Pantasilicor: 'né usata fo più mai tanta viltade, / perché esssendo pregon, da te fo impeso' (I xxviii 6,2-3). It is clear that Boiardo is referring to a character from an earlier chivalric work, yet one which has yet to be identified.³⁰

The dead warriors from the *Aspramonte* (whose grandsons, sons and nephews are the main protagonists of Books II and III) will be discussed in 2.3 and in the final chapter (where we shall look at the figure of Ulieno, Rod(a/o)monte's father whose inspiring presence is felt in both Boiardo's poem and its sequel). Let us now focus on the Saracens who step into the *Inamoramento de Orlando* well and alive, starting with Marsilio and his knights. None of them is a particularly prominent character. In general, it would seem that Boiardo treats them with less sympathy than most other Saracens. According to Denise Alexandre-Gras, 'prisonnier, à leur propos, de la tradition, Boiardo n'a pas songé à les racheter et à leur donner une vraie place parmi ses héros', leaving them in the 'ombre annonciatrice de la tragédie de Roncevaux'.³¹ This is true to an extent, but it is equally true that the dark shadow of Rencesvals does not swallow them completely, for Boiardo disperses the threatening clouds by changing and omitting some of the details which he would have found in the *Spagna ferarese* and other chivalric works featuring these characters.

Boiardo's Feraguto's and his 'previous lives' have been examined by Alexandre-Gras and Strologo, while Grandonio's literary past has been analysed by Serra and Tissoni

³⁰ In her note to the octave in question Tissoni Benvenuti observes that 'Un re pagano Pantalicornio si incontra nel *Persiano*, ma la vicenda non ha a che fare'; to which we may add that a Pantasilicor features in the *Buovo d'Antona* in octaves.

³¹ Alexandre-Gras (1988), p. 304.

Benvenuti.³² Their important studies show that Boiardo's portrayal of these characters is more negative than their representations in earlier texts. While in the *Vita Karoli Magni*, the *Entrée d'Espagne*, the *Fatti di Spagna* and the *Spagna ferrarese* Feraguto (Ferracutus, Feragu, Feragù, Feraù) is a formidable warrior, Boiardo's Feraguto loses his status of the strongest knight of *Paganìa* and becomes a half-comic figure. What is more, he loses the good looks he had in the *Spagna*: now he has black hair with red eyes and his face is all smeared with dirt. As for Grandonio, he is a valorous Saracen in the *Chanson de Roland*, one of the most likeable minor Saracen characters in the *Entrée d'Espagne* and a normal human being in the *Spagna maggiore*. However, the author of the *Spagna ferrarese* turns him into a giant, thus putting him into the category of evil Saracens. Influenced by the *Spagna ferrarese*, Boiardo portrays his Grandonio as a repellent giant and a coward.

Boiardo's treatment of Grandonio is not particularly surprising, given his tendency to follow the *Spagna ferrarese*. Feraguto's case is more interesting. Both Alexandre-Gras and Strologo underscore the fact that there is a strong parallel between Feraguto and Orlando: both of them are 'epic' characters in the earlier tradition and as a consequence are completely inexperienced in love. While they remain valiant knights in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, Boiardo cannot resist the temptation to poke fun at their clumsy amorous advances, depriving them of their epic grandeur. As we shall see in 2.2, both Feraguto and Orlando are outshone by other prominent members of the Saracen religion.

³² Alexandre-Gras (1983); Franca Strologo, 'Duels, discours et péripéties de l'ex-géant Feraù dans l'*Orlando furioso*', in *Lettres romanes* (2008) [special issue], 27-41; Eodem, 'I volti di Feraù: riprese e variazioni fra la *Spagna in rima* e l'*Inamoramento de Orlando*', *Studi italiani*, XXII, n. 1 (2009), 5-27; Luciano Serra, 'Letture boiardesche: storia poetica e geografica di Grandonio', in *Il Boiardo e il mondo estense nel Quattrocento*, ed. by Giuseppe Anceschi and Tina Matarrese (Padova: Antenorre, 1998), vol. I, pp. 143-74; Antonia Tisisoni-Benvenuti, 'Intertestualità cavalleresca', in "*Tre volte suona l'olifante...*": la tradizione rolandiana in Italia fra Medioevo e il Rinascimento (Milano: Unicopli, 2007), pp. 57-78: 66-76. Moreover, Cristina Montagnani makes some observations about the Spanish Saracens in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* (especially those who are mentioned at I i 10): see 'Introduzione' in her and Valentina Gritti's edition of the *Spagna ferrarese* (pp. 11-35: 20-28).

Turning to the Saracens who, to date, have received scant scholarly attention, Marsilio deserves to be dealt with first. Featuring already in the *Chanson de Roland*, he has a very long literary life behind him. In both French and Italian chivalric traditions Marsilio is neither a villain nor one of the ‘virtuous Saracens’ whose only fault is that of believing in false gods. If one had to describe him with one word, it would have to be ‘weak’. In the *Chanson de Roland* he is represented as terrified of the Franks and incapable of taking decisions. It is his vassal Blancandrins who advises him what to do and brings about the Rencesvals tragedy by playing on Gano’s hatred of Roland. Mortally wounded by Roland, Marsile endures a long agony in his palace in Saragossa, hoping that Baligant, the emir of Babylon, will save Spain. In the *Entrée d’Espagne* Marsille is petrified at the thought of a war with the Christians and attempts to persuade Charlemagne that he is his friend, offering him help should he decide to attack other Saracen kingdoms. His uncle Aupalie is angry with him for wasting time when he should have been the first to strike. In the *Fatti de Spagna*, too, Marsilio is reluctant to fight with the Christians. In the *Spagna ferrarese* he tells his barons that if Charlemagne wages war on them,

for de la Spagna converaci fugire
se noi non vorem morir ciertamente
per le mani de quel diavol chosante:
Orlando, figlio di Melon d’Angrante.
(*Spagna ferrarese*, I 22 5-8)

In light of his representation in the *Spagna* narratives, it is hardly surprising that the first time Marsilio is mentioned in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* he is in despair. Announcing that Gradasso has attacked Spain, Fiorde spina urges Feraguto (who is fighting with Orlando) to return home:

Il re Marsilio a te solo è rivolto
e te piagnendo solamente noma;
io vidi il vechio Re batersi il volto
e trar de il capo la canuta chioma.

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I iv 10,1-4)

Marsilio is being his usual self, even though this time the danger comes not from Charlemagne but from a fellow Saracen. Charlemagne, as we saw earlier, sends him help, but when Rinaldo disappears (carried away by Malagigi's spirits) and the Christian troops flee back to France (worried about his brother, Riciardeto decides to return home and the Christian army leaves in the dead of the night, without explaining anything to their Saracen allies), Marsilio

vene lui stesso, con basso visagio,
avanti al re Gradasso in gionechione:
de' Cristian raconta lo oltragio,
che fugito è Renaldo, quel giotone.
Esso promette voler far omaggio,
tenir il regno comme suo Barone [...]

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I vi 58 1-6)

Again, he behaves in a predictable manner, forgetting about self-respect and falling on his knees before a powerful enemy. Later he will join forces with Agramante who (like Charlemagne) is his relative, as we learn at II i 48,3 (even though the nature of their kinship remains unclear). His alliances with Gradasso and with Agramante recall his willingness 'd'essere con tutto suo sforzo in aiuto del re Agolante [Agramante's grandfather] contro al re Carlo' in *Aspramonte A* (I x 12-13). However, Boiardo's readers cannot blame Marsilio for turning his sword against Charlemagne, for the Christian abandoned him at the moment of greatest need, thus violating the chivalric code. His bitterness against his Christian brother-in-law is therefore both understandable and justified.

In the preceding chivalric tradition Marsilio is sometimes seen committing evil acts, such as murdering Charlemagne's ambassadors (for example, in the *Spagna ferrarese*, VI 26-35) or unlawfully stripping his vassal of his kingdom (*Entrée d'Espagne*, 10318-

10321). In the *Inamoramento de Orlando* he is once called (by a Christian character) a ‘perfido pagano’ (II xxii 38,7), which is an epithet he does not deserve. For Boiardo’s Marsilio may not cut a very impressive figure, but he is not a bad man. His affection for his family is touching: he adores his nephew Feraguto (‘Il Re, che più l’amava [Feraguto] assai che figlio, / oltre a megia hora lo téne abbracciato, / basandolo più volte [...]’, II xxiii 4,5-7) and has a good relationship with his siblings and children. This is consistent with his representation in other chivalric narratives: Charlemagne would not have wedded Galeana (Galerana) had Marsilio not supported his sister in her refusal to marry the middle-aged African king Bramante (*Reali di Francia*, VI xxvii). Talking about his relatives, it is interesting to note that Marsilio’s children in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* are different from those mentioned in earlier chivalric texts. Boiardo gives him a daughter, Fiordespinga, and one or two sons (Folicone and perhaps Matalista who is said to be Fiordespinga’s brother at I i 48). In the *Fatti de Spagna* his daughter is called Gaydamonte, in the *Spagna ferrarese* Candia, and in the *Morgante* Luciana. These ladies have little in common with Fiordespinga (who unknowingly loses her heart to a woman, Bradamante), apart from the fact that they too are unlucky in love. Gaydamonte and Candia bestow their affections on Orlando: the former damsel brings him food when he is fighting Saracens near Lucerna and even sends a messenger to Charlemagne to warn him of the danger his nephew is running; the latter accompanies Biancardino on his embassy to Charlemagne: ‘voglio andare a Carlo / sol per veder Orlando e per amarlo’ (*Spagna ferrarese*, XXVIII 4,7-8). While Orlando remains indifferent to both of them, Rinaldo does reciprocate Luciana’s love but soon grows bored of her. He visits her on his way to Rencsevals and later ensures that she is spared when the Christian soldiers start slaughtering the inhabitants of Saragossa.

According to Franca Strologo, 'Sull'assenza di Candia dal poema boiardesco rimane, che ci piaccia o no, un interrogativo irrisolto': indeed, it is strange that Boiardo does not even mention Candia despite the fact that she is one of the most prominent female protagonists of the *Spagna ferrarese*, the version of the *Spagna* which Boiardo is generally believed to have read.³³ One possible explanation is that the poet thought that the story of Candia's unrequited passion for Orlando was too closely linked to the tragic events of the last phase of the Spanish war. One could argue that Boiardo 'forgets' about Marsilio's courageous son Zabueri for the same reason. In both the *Fatti de Spagna* (where he is called Zambuello) and the *Spagna ferrarese* this young man steals the spotlight when he thrusts himself between his father and Orlando, dying a heroic death. Boiardo could have deemed Zabueri too marked by the Rencesvals tragedy to be included in the 'bela historia'. In this respect, it is worth pointing out that Biancardino – the cunning Saracen who corrupts Gano in the *Spagna* (Blanzandrino or Blanzardino in the *Fatti de Spagna*) and hence a character whom it is impossible to forget – is absent from the *Inamoramento de Orlando*.

Like Marsilio himself, his Saracen relatives retain some of their distinguishing traits in Boiardo's poem, but their negative qualities are downplayed. Like the author of the *Spagna ferrarese* (VI 14,3), Boiardo calls Marsilio's brother Balugante 'falso' (I vii 51,1), but this insult is hardly justified.³⁴ In fact, we remember him because of his deep affection for his son Serpentino (he cannot take his eyes off Serpentino during the joust in I ii) who, as Tissoni Benvenuti observes in her commentary to I ii 40, does not appear to be related to him in any of the surviving versions of the *Spagna*. Similarly, Marsilio's other brother Falsirone (whose name reveals much about his representation in the

³³ Franca Strologo, 'Le madri di Malagigi e Ferraù, le figlie di Marsilio e le *Spagne* di Boiardo e Ariosto', in *L'Orlando furioso e la tradizione cavalleresca*, *Versants*, LIX, n. 2 (2012), 27-48.

³⁴ Cavallo (2013), pp. 23-24, notes that Boiardo's portrayal of this character is more positive than his representations in the *Reali di Francia* ('nessuna verità si trovava in lui, crudele contro a' nimici, e degli amici non fu misericordioso', VI xxi) and the *Spagna*.

chivalric tradition) does not show his treacherous nature in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, where he remains a very marginal character.³⁵ The Amirante and Marsilio's uncle Argalipha, too, are little more than names, even if in the *Spagna ferrarese* (as well as in the *Fatti de Spagna*, the *Entrée d'Espagne* and the *Chanson de Roland*) the latter is a memorable character. As we saw in chapter I, in the *Spagna* he is the Pope of the Saracens; as such he allows himself to criticise the Spanish king for being too meek. Not only does Boiardo say nothing about his role within the Saracen religious hierarchy, but he also deprives him of his voice. Malzarise, the husband of Marsilio's 'suor carnale' (*Spagna ferrarese*, VI 43,1) and Isolieri's father, is mentioned only once in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* (II xxiii 71,7): it could be that Boiardo was not particularly impressed by his behaviour in the *Spagna*, where he refuses to free Astolfo when Orlando frees his son Isolieri. By contrast, Marsilio's nephews Isolieri and Serpentino – young and chivalrous Saracen knights one of whom (Isolieri) converts to Christianity in the *Spagna* and the *Fatti de Spagna* – receive some attention from the Count of Scandiano. Isolieri features among Marsilio's warriors at the beginning of Book I (disappearing after IV 67), but in Book II (where we only catch a few glimpses of him) he falls in love with Calidora and retreats into the world of Arthurian adventures.³⁶ As for Serpentino, he is described as a 'gioveneto adorno' (II xxiii 45,7) who takes part in various battles and is often praised for his courage.

As for the remaining Spanish Saracens, Maradasso, King of Andologia, and King Morgante are to be identified with King Moradasse and Margante, King of Siviglia, in the *Spagna ferrarese*. In both poems these are minor characters. In the *Spagna* Moradasse is

³⁵ Falsaron is a 'felun' already in the *Chanson de Roland* (1216). Though endowed with a brave heart, he has no scruples about violating the chivalric law: in the *Spagna ferrarese* he tells Marsiglio that he will kill himself if he does not have Charlemagne's ambassadors hanged (VI 25-26).

³⁶ According to Montagnani (2009), 'è forse l'episodio della conversione, sua e del padre, a [*Spagna ferrarese*] XII 34-36, che condiziona in qualche modo il suo destino nell'*Inamoramento*, quasi che Boiardo lo abbia già voluto allontanare dal terreno degli scontri più cruenti per preparargli una via di possibile riscatto e salvezza' (p. 22).

said to be 'valente' (XXVII 7,3) and a 'presto e fiero asalitore' (8,2), but his courage fades at the sight of Orlando: 'subitamente el volse il suo destieri / che già niente el voleva aspetare' (15,3-4), which does not save him in the end, for the enraged paladin follows him and eventually cuts him into two halves with a mighty blow of his Durlindana (16-19). Boiardo rewrites this dramatic episode, giving it a comic edge: his Maradasso too flees from Orlando and effectively manages to get away ('per tuto 'l campo Orlando lo seguia, / ma per niente lui non l'aspetava', 63,3-4). However, Boiardo's representation of Morgante contradicts his representation in the *Spagna*. Whereas in the *Spagna* he was said to be 'savio' because of his reluctance to fight with the Christians (XXVII 34), in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* Morgante is a 'falso pagano' (I vii 19,6), even if the poet has to admit that he is 'ben gagliardo e dura ha l'ossa' (I iv 54,5).

Thus, though indebted to the *Spagna* and other Carolingian texts, Boiardo's portrayal of the Spanish Saracens has a light-hearted touch. It could perhaps be argued that some of them (e.g. Marsilio and Balugante) are slightly more humane than they are in the preceding tradition. Similarly, as Dorigatti shows in his article on Agramante's grey-haired advisor, Boiardo highlights the sentimental streak in Sobrino (Subrino, Sobrin), an African Saracen who serves Agramante's grandfather in the *Chanson d'Aspremont* and its Italian *rifacimenti*.³⁷ S(o/u)brino's relationship with Agolante is warm and trusting in both *Aspramonte A* and the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*; focusing his affection on the grandson of his late lord, Boiardo's Sobrino assures Agramante that, as his 'servo antico' (II i 46,7), he puts his interests before anything else.

Given that Galerana appears only once, the only Saracens – or, more precisely, former Saracens – whom we have not discussed yet are Ogieri il Danese and Dudone. Boiardo

³⁷ Dorigatti (2010).

alludes to Ogieri's Saracen roots twice: in Book I, we learn that he has a Saracen cousin ('il forte Uldano... / che fu signor galiardo e ben cortese', x 30,6-7); in Book II, Sobrino tells Agramante that he saw Ogieri many years ago: 'conosco Gano e conosco il Danese, / che fo pagan, e par proprio un gigante' (i 51,1-2). The story of his conversion to Christianity is narrated in the *Reali di Francia*: the son of the 'valentissimo signore, chiamato il re Gualfedriano' (VI xxxiv), Uggieri accompanies his father to Saragossa to avenge Bramante who was killed by Galafrò's servant Mainetto (Charlemagne); 'invaghito de' belli costumi di Mainetto', Uggieri 'tanto innamorò della sua onestà, ch'egli si puose in cuore d'essere sempre di sua compagnia' (ibid.), a resolution to which he adheres. Having fought with Mainetto, the old king Gualfedriano returns home, while his son stays and embraces the Christian faith, becoming Charlemagne's best friend.³⁸ Uggieri (Ugieri, Ogieri) is represented as a valorous knight in a variety of Italian chivalric texts, including the *Spagna* and the *Aspramonte*. He is greatly respected by his Christian peers, yet one is left with the impression that he is haunted by the ghost of his Saracen past, for he seems to feel a constant urge to prove his loyalty to Charlemagne and the sincerity of his religious belief. Thus, in the *Aspramonte* (both Andrea da Barberino's version and the fifteenth-century version) it is he who is most outraged by the arrogant speech of Agolante's ambassador Balante: he would have killed Balante, had Namò, a Christian baron, not prevented him from doing so. Later, Uggieri kills Balante's son Gorante (Gurante): in the *Aspramonte A* this happens during a battle and Namò has to intervene to save Balante's life, as Uggieri turns a deaf ear to the Saracen's plea to spare

³⁸ Cavallo (2013) refers to Ogieri as 'Dane Ogieri', wrongly assuming that he comes from Denmark. In fact, the surname 'Danese' was acquired in the following way: 'venne nella corte di Carlo una lettera mandata d'Africa a Uggieri, la quale molto lo biasimava perché egli s'era battezzato; e in certa parte diceva: «O Uggieri, tu se' 'danés de l'alma'» (cioè tu se' dannato dell'anima). Per queste parole Uggieri se ne rideva, e mostrava la lettera a Carlo e a' baroni, tanto che per la corte si prese uno volgare, che, motteggiando, l'uno dicea a l'altro: 'Tu se' danés'. Per questo quando il papa battezzò Uggieri, egli volle essere chiamato Uggieri Danese' (*Reali di Francia*, VI xlix). However, in the French tradition (e.g. *La Chevalerie Ogier de Danemarque*) and in the *Entrée d'Espagne* (2375) Ogier is the son of the King of Denmark. On his Danish and Saracen origins see Pio Rajna, 'Uggeri il Danese nella letteratura romanzesca degl'italiani', *Romania*, II (1873), 153-169: 155-156.

him in exchange for his conversion; in the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* he kills Gurante after the boy has converted to Christianity, which prompts Balante to abandon Charlemagne.

Uggieri's intolerance towards Saracens shows that conversion can imply so radical a break with one's past that a feeling of compassion for one's former brothers in faith becomes synonymous with betrayal. Those who were born Christians can allow themselves the luxury of being patient and kind-hearted with Saracens; by contrast, a convert often perceives the religious Other as a threat to his newly-acquired identity. In the *Inamoramento de Orlando* Ogieri's religious zeal manifests itself on a number of occasions. For example, he attempts to stir up hatred between the Christian hosts and their Saracen guests during the Pentecostal joust in Paris. He unhorses a couple of Saracen knights, but when a Christian knight wants to pit his strength against him:

«Deh, non facciamo la guerra tra noi,»
diceva Ogieri «o popul batizzato!
Che io vedo caleffarci a' Saracini,
perché facciamo l'un l'altro tapini!».

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I ii 47,5-8)

Yet Boiardo's Ogieri does not commit any reprehensible or morally ambiguous actions. In fact, he commands our respect as he is a formidable knight. Grievously wounded, he springs from his bed and thrusts himself at the enemies as soon as he learns that Charlemagne has been taken prisoner and no one is left to defend Paris: 'Giamai non fu un Baron tanto valente!' (I vii 35,6). Likewise, he is the last and most heroic defender of Paris in Book III:

Tra' Christiani sol Danese Ugiero
fiè gran prodeze, la persona degna,
ché di quel stormo periglioso e fiero
riportò salva la real insegna.

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, III iv 47,1-4)

Orlando's and Rinaldo's feats of prowess in Agramante's war pale in comparison to Ogieri's heroism. For all his valour, in the previous tradition Ogieri is but one of Charlemagne's many paladins, and although he has his moments in the spotlight, he cannot compete with the French emperor's nephew or the son of Amone.³⁹ However, in Book III of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, Ogieri can be said almost to outshine the two cousins, both of whom, as will be shown in 2.2, lose part of their charisma. His unflinching courage is juxtaposed to the tearfulness of his friend Charlemagne who, instead of encouraging his troops to continue fighting, sinks into despair, making one think of Marsilio's behaviour in situations of danger ('A sassi mossa avria compassione / vegendol lachrimar sì rottamente', III iv 34,3-4).

As far as Ogieri's son Dudone is concerned, Boiardo's early readers would have known that he was the fruit of Ogieri's love affair with a giantess. In the *Dodonello di Mombello* Ogieri spends a night with a giantess and in the *Castello di Teris* she conceives a son, Dodone, who is raised in the Saracen faith but later meets his father and converts to Christianity.⁴⁰ The Saracen youth, assures us the author of the *Castello*, 'portava una maza nervata con piastre d'acciaro [...] non fu mai meglio fatto giogante, dalla natura umana e pieno d'ogni cortesia e gentileza e beleza'.⁴¹ Similarly, Boiardo's Dudone:

[...] quasi era gigante di statura,
dextro e ligiero, a meraviglia forte,
e con sua maza noderosa e dura

³⁹ In the *Regina Ancroia* he is said to be stronger than Astolfo, Angelieri, Ricardo and even Olivieri. In the eponymous poem (*Ugieri il Danese*) Ugieri at one point saves Charlemagne and all his barons. The story runs as follows: Charlemagne imprisons Ugieri because he has tried to kill Carlotto who had killed his son. Many years after, the Saracens declare war on France. When all the Christian knights have been defeated by Bravieri (a devil in human flesh who overpowers his opponents with loud shrieks), Ugieri is released from prison and kills the infernal Saracen by plugging his and his horse's ears, as the fairy of Verona advises him. He is a hero, but the fact that he is instructed by a fairy renders his feat less dazzling. Despite the poem's title, Ugieri is not its main protagonist: as Rajna (1873), p. 154, points out, 'il Danese non ha per nulla una parte più cospicua che Orlando, Rinaldo, od Ulivieri'.

⁴⁰ Marco Villoresi, 'Supplemento d'indagine su Dodone e altre notizie sui figli di Uggieri il Danese', in his *La fabbrica dei cavalieri. Cantari, poemi, romanzi in prosa fra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Roma: Salerno Editrice, 2005), pp. 75-100.

⁴¹ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 87.

a molti Saracin dete la morte;
 ma poi di tal bontà si dava il vanto
 ch'era apelato in soprano il Santo.

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II x 13,3-8)

Like his father, Dudone is a superb warrior and a devoted vassal to the French emperor. He is one of the few Christian knights who venture into *Paganìa* and participates in Arthurian adventures (even if he does so only because Charlemagne orders him 'ch'el trovi Orlando e 'l Sir de Montealbano', II vii 35,8). Less conspicuous than Astolfo or Oliviero, he nevertheless makes an important contribution to 'Christian chivalry' in Boiardo's 'bela historia'.

Ogieri and Dudone have a double identity: on the one hand, they consider themselves Christians; on the other hand, they have Saracen blood in their veins and they grew up into exceptional knights in *Paganìa*, among Saracens. Having converted to Christianity and entered Charlemagne's service, they have enriched the Christian world by injecting into it their 'Saracen' valour and energy. To this we may add that some of Boiardo's Christian characters spent their formative years in *Paganìa*. Malagigi – one of the most prominent sorcerers in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* (his Saracen counterparts are Angelica and Atalante) – learnt the art of magic from his adoptive mother, the Saracen Queen of Belfiore. In the *Cantari di Rinaldo* she finds him in a forest, where he is left when his parents are attacked by King Avilante. She raises the newborn baby as her own and maintains an excellent relationship with him even after his conversion to Christianity.⁴² Malagigi's brother Viviano (he too was left in the forest) is brought up by Avilante himself, but later disowns his adoptive father.⁴³ Similarly, in the *Ugieri il*

⁴² See, for example, *Cantari di Rinaldo* VI 30-32, where the Queen blesses Malagigi in the name of Trivigante, and Malagigi calls her his mother, knowing full well that she is not.

⁴³ Viviano dies in the *Cantari di Rinaldo* (whose events chronologically precede those recounted in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*), but Boiardo 'resuscitates' him: see Franceschetti (1975), p. 230, and Michael Sherberg, 'Matteo Maria Boiardo and the Cantari di Rinaldo', *Quaderni d'Italianistica* VII (1986), 165-181: 180.

Danese we learn that Grifone (together with his brother, Aquilante, Boiardo's Grifone takes part in various Arthurian adventures, including the frustrating fight with Orrilo and his crocodile in III iii) was stolen from his mother and grew up in Marsilio's Spain.⁴⁴ Even though Boiardo does not explicitly allude to these events, it is very likely that he and his audience were familiar with them, given the consumption of chivalric literature among all strata of society.

Thus, the Christian universe of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and other Carolingian texts is indebted and inextricably linked to the Saracen universe. With that said, it is now time to focus more closely on the debt that Boiardo's Christians owe to his Saracens, exploring the ways in which the latter – both the familiar faces and the new ones – contribute to the chivalric ideology that underpins the 'bela historia'.

2.2. SARACENS AND KING ARTHUR

The core values which constitute the ideology of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* include: readiness to accept challenges and to embark on adventures, courage, loyalty, *cortesía* and love. There has been some disagreement amongst critics as to which of these values are particularly important.⁴⁵ Moreover, much ink has been spilt over trying to explain how they influence one another and what actions and attitudes they inspire. At this stage, we shall not attempt a detailed description of the poem's ideology, for its main components will become clear in the course of the present discussion. Suffice it to say that this section will draw on the studies of Emilio Bigi, Franceschetti, Alexandre-Gras,

⁴⁴ For a discussion of Boiardo's references to the story of Aquilante and Grifone see Anna Montanari, 'Aquilante e Grifone', *Studi Italiani*, IX, n. 2 (1997), 5-25.

⁴⁵ For example, whereas some critics (e.g. Domenico de Robertis, Rajna, Bigi, Franceschetti, Alexandre-Gras) maintain that the cornerstone of the poem is a cult of love in its different manifestations, others claim that love is described superficially and that the poem is mostly about fighting (Liborio Azzolina, Angelandrea Zottoli).

Praloran and other Boiardo scholars. Its purpose is not to propose a completely new interpretation of the ideology of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* but rather to highlight the centrality of *Paganìa* within that ideology.

The very title of the poem points to the fact that love is one of its main themes. Love ‘costituisce il grande centro ideale intorno a cui si muovono, in linea di massima, i personaggi e le vicende dell’*Innamorato*’, states Franceschetti.⁴⁶ ‘Non si tratta di vere e proprie novità’, replies Villoresi (amorous episodes, as we saw in 2.1, already featured in such ‘epic’ texts as the *Spagna ferrarese*), but ‘non è esagerato affermare che solo con l’*Inamoramento de Orlando* l’eros entra prepotentemente sulla scena cavalleresca’.⁴⁷ Towards the middle of Book II, we come across the following assessment of the different ‘epochs’ or phases in the history of chivalry:

Fo gloriosa Bertagna la grande
una stagion, per l’arme e per l’amore
(onde ancor hoggi il nome suo si spande
sì ch’al re Artuse fa portar honore),
quando e bon cavaliere a quele bande
mostrarno in più batalie il suo valore,
andando con lor dame in aventura
et hor sua fama al nostro tempo dura.

Re Carlo in Franza poi tienne gran corte,
ma a quella prima non fo somiliante,
ben che assai fosse ancor robusto e forte
et avesse Renaldo e ’l sir d’Anglante:
perché tiène ad Amor chiuse le porte
e sol se dete ale bataglie sante,
non fo di quel valor o quella estima
qual fo quel’altra ch’io contava in prima.

Però ch’Amor è quel che dà la gloria
e che fa l’homo degno et honorato;
Amor è quel che dona la vittoria,
e dona ardir al cavalier armato.

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II xviii 1-3,1-4)

⁴⁶ Franceschetti (1975), p. 55.

⁴⁷ Villoresi (2000), p. 161. See also his ‘Le donne e gli amori nel romanzo cavalleresco del Quattrocento’, *Filologia e critica*, XXIII (1998), 3-43.

Thus, King Arthur's court – states Boiardo in one of the most famous authorial digressions of the 'bela historia' – was superior to Charlemagne's because in it knights were free to fall in love and their damsels accompanied them on their adventures. Several cantos later we learn that:

Avean usanza tuti i Re pagani,
la qual in questo tempo anco è rimasa,
che campeggiando o vicini o lontani
ma' le lor dame lasciavano a casa:
né sciò se lor pensier sian fermi o vani,
ché pur sta mal la paglia con la brasa;
ma d'altra parte anchor per Amore
l'animo cresce e più se fa di core.
(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II xxiii 11)

Boiardo draws a parallel, albeit an implicit one, between 'i Re pagani' and Arthurian knights. Marsilio's camp is graced by the presence of 'le Regine / quasi di tuta Spagna, e pur le bele' (12,1-2), among whom Fiordespina and Doralice, the daughter of King Stordilano and Rodamonte's sweetheart. Rodamonte carries her portrait embroidered on his banner and performs 'ogni giorno per lei [...] gran prove' (13,2). It must be stressed that this Saracen 'usanza' is not Boiardo's invention: when Agolante sails to Calabria he brings with him 'la reina con ventidue reine incoronate e più di mille donne' (*Aspramonte A*, I xiv 16-17). The banners of Ulieno di Sarza, one of Agolante's best knights, 'avevano il campo bianco e uno drago nero, e una pulzella che lo teneva a mano con una catena vermiglia, la quale fu figliuola di Lanfras, ed era Ulieno innamorato di lei [...]. Quello amore tolse a molti Cristiani la vita' (ibid., III lxxvi 5-8).⁴⁸ However, whereas in the *Aspramonte* Arthurian ideals are relegated to the margins of the narration (love is not a particularly important theme in this 'epic' story) and are represented in an ambivalent light (in general, 'chaste' Christians prove to be better knights than the Africans), in the

⁴⁸ Franceschetti (1975), p. 237, is the first to note the similarity between Ulieno's banner and Rodamonte's ('ch'era vermiglio, e dentro una Regina / qual avea posto il freno ad un leone: / questa era Doralice di Granata, / da Rodamonte più che il cor amata', II vii 28,5-8).

Inamoramento de Orlando they gain an unprecedented centrality, a new force and energy, wiping out the old ideology of 'bataglie sante'. It is Saracen characters who 'export' this new ideology into the Christian world, *Pagania* being the natural seat of the Arthurian element in Boiardo's poem.

It is not by chance that the most eloquent formulation of this Arthurian ideology is one given by Agricane: 'ogni cavalier ch'è senza amore / se in vista è vivo, vivo è senza core' (I xviii 46,7-8). These lines, as has long been pointed out, mirror the last tercet of the opening sonnet of the *Amorum libri tres* ('[...] chi nel fior de' soi anni / senza caldo de amore il tempo passa, / se in vista è vivo, vivo è senza core').⁴⁹ According to Dorigatti, 'È quantomai significativo, oltre che suggestivo, che sia Agricane e non Orlando a pronunciare questa sentenza programmatica [...] perché il saracino evidenzia proprio l'ideale che Orlando non saprà mai realizzare compiutamente ma rappresenta l'essenza più profonda dell'opera boiardesca'.⁵⁰ Orlando, as we shall see, is suffering from an identity crisis and hence loses his status as the paragon of chivalry. He and Rinaldo cannot always successfully compete with their Saracen counterparts.

Let us first make some general observations. Given that, as shown in 2.1, Boiardo's Saracens outnumber his Christians by a significant margin, it is not surprising that all the novellas of the poem take place in infidel lands and involve Saracen characters. It is

⁴⁹ Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Amorum libri tres*, ed. by Tiziano Zanato (Torino: Einaudi, 1998).

⁵⁰ Marco Dorigatti, '«Di novo se comencia la tentione»: il duello nell'universo cavalleresco del Boiardo', *Esperienze letterarie*, XL (2015), 71-93: 88-89. Much has been written about the duel between Orlando and Agricane, with the Saracen being viewed sympathetically by most critics. Franceschetti (1975) admits that Agricane's attitude to love and fighting coincides with the narrators', but, unwilling to contradict his assertion that the Christians are slightly superior to the Saracens, remarks that 'Boiardo, cavaliere del Rinascimento Ferrarese, non può non condividere gli ideali di cultura di Orlando, la sua *più compiuta perfezione*' (p. 108, my italics). According to Riccardo Brusagli, it is Orlando who articulates the new ideology of love in that episode. Brusagli cites I xviii 48,5-8, the lines that come after Agricane's speech and in which Orlando refers to his personal experience without saying that love is an essential ingredient of chivalry. The fact that Brusagli overlooks Agricane's succinct and eloquent summary of the vision of love which underlies the poem is indicative of the widespread assumption that it is the Christians who are more successful in living up to the new ideals and hence of voicing them. For Brusagli's analysis of the episode see 'Incontrare il nemico. La "gran bontà" degli antichi cavalieri', in his *Studi cavallereschi* (Firenze: Società Editrice Fiorentina: 2003), pp. 209-213.

through these stories woven into the narration that Boiardo develops the theme of love, exploring its complex nature. Not all of their protagonists act nobly, even if noble feelings prevail over base feelings. The novellas feature the lustful and perverse Marchino, the pragmatic Boccaccian Leodilla, the strong-willed Doristela, the courteous Iroldo and Prasildo and many other characters who represent different facets of love. However, in most cases amorous passion has an ennobling impact on the personality of the lover. The enamoured Saracens of the novellas together with the enamoured Saracens of the main narrative make up a rather long list: Agricane, Albarosa, Angelica, Ariante, Brandimarte, Calidora, Doralice, Doristela, Feraguto, Fiordelisa, Fiordespina, Folderico, Hosbergo, Iroldo, Isolieri, Larbino, Leodilla, Locrino, Lucina, Mandricardo (who does not give his heart to one particular lady, but who enjoys the physical aspect of love), Marchino, Menadarbo, Norandino, Ordauro, Origille, Polindo, Prasildo, Rodamonte, Rugiero, Sacripante, Stella, Tisbina and Uldarno. By contrast, the love-struck Christians are quite few: Astolfo (to an extent), Bradamante, Griphone, Orlando, Ranaldo and the Armenian Theodoro, who, in fact, is much closer to Saracens than to Christians.⁵¹

Although Boiardo fuses the Arthurian and Carolingian cycles in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, he does not transform Charlemagne's court into an Arthurian space. Christian women stay at home when their husbands go to fight the Saracens, which is what happens in most Italian chivalric romances.⁵² While Saracen damsels embellish and enliven Agramante's court in Biserta, Alda, Clarice, Galerana and Hermelina are briefly mentioned in the opening canto of Book I, but their presence at the feast is not really

⁵¹ I did not include Charlemagne, Namor and the other Christian courtiers in the list of the Christian lovers, for the spell which Angelica's beauty casts on them is soon broken. For the same reason, I did not include Marsilio, Balugante and Falserone in the list of the Saracen lovers.

⁵² In the *Spagna ferrarese* Charlemagne not only leaves Galerana at home when he leads his army into Spain but he does not maintain any contact with her for many years. Thanks to the magic book given to Orlando by the Soldano he learns that Machario di Maganza is about to marry the Empress. To save his honour and his empire Charlemagne makes an Ulysses-like return, transported to Paris by a devil (see cantos XIX-XX).

felt.⁵³ Before the arrival of Angelica and her brother – the intrusion of the Saracen ‘Arthurian’ forces – the atmosphere is not exactly festive: we see Rinaldo trying hard to conceal his anger at the jeers of Gano and his relatives. Apart from Bradamante (whose mother, as mentioned in 2.1, might be a Saracen princess), the only Christian damsels who are ‘active’ characters in the poem are Saracen converts, such as Fiordelisa or Doristela. These characters are Saracens when we first meet them and they retain their Saracen nature even after their conversion to Christianity which is ultimately a great ideological gain for Christian Europe: when Fiordelisa, Doristela and their lovers are baptized, their love stories become Christian love stories. Superficially, it might seem that it is the Saracens who benefit from receiving baptism, as they get access to the true religion and so save their souls. However, in light of Boiardo’s passionate celebration of the powers of love in the proem to canto xviii of Book II and in many other places, it is Christian culture that is enriched through these conversions, especially given that the converts’ new faith does not change their attitude to love.⁵⁴

The fact that Alda, Clarice and Galerana are mere names and the love theme of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* is dominated by Saracen damsels may not seem particularly surprising, for it was customary for female characters to belong to the Saracen world.⁵⁵ Yet there is one crucial difference: ‘traditional’ Saracen damsels (especially in chivalric narratives based on Old French poetry) tend to fall in love with Christian knights and convert *in order* to marry them.⁵⁶ Sometimes they have to cut all ties with, or even betray, their families in order to acquire for themselves a place within Christian society. For

⁵³ When Brandimarte arrives in the capital of the African kingdom and expresses a wish to try himself against Agramante, the latter ‘sta[...] a danzare / tra bele dame, sopra ad un verone’ (II xxviii 4,1-2). Later, when the African ruler organises a lion hunt, ‘molte dame montarno e destrieri / con l’archi in man, et habiti sì adorni [...]’ (21,1-2).

⁵⁴ The only notable change in Fiordelisa’s behaviour after her conversion is her tendency to pray very devoutly when there is some kind of danger. See II xiii 29-30; II xxv 40.

⁵⁵ Christian women, however, constitute a more active presence in the *Real di Francia*. Orlando’s wife Alda is a rather prominent female character in the *Altobello*.

⁵⁶ On the theme of interracial marriage in the *chansons de geste* see Bancourt (1982), vol. II, pp. 666-827.

example, in the *Cantari di Fierabraccia e Ulivieri* the Saracen princess Fierapace has to endure the death of her father to be able to marry her Christian sweetheart Guido. In the Old French *Fierabras*, Floripas (the French spelling of the princess' name) takes the initiative and even begs the Christians to kill her father.⁵⁷ In these and other poems, 'innamoramenti' serve two purposes: firstly, they show the superiority of Christian men over Saracen men, and secondly, the acquisition of women of royal blood (whose conversion is always voluntary) legitimises the acquisition of Saracen territories.⁵⁸ Marriage does not always crown interracial love in fifteenth-century Italian chivalric texts which are less concerned with the theme of territorial expansion. Yet, with the exception of Orlando, Charlemagne's paladins rarely miss an opportunity to have an affair with some pretty Saracen princess who sometimes dies of despair when her lover leaves her father's kingdom and sometimes reconciles herself to the separation, reminding herself that even one night with such a man was worth her virginity.

Rinaldo, Astolfo and Ulivieri have a long history of amorous conquests. In the *Cantari di Rinaldo*, for example, Rinaldo, albeit somewhat reluctantly, has an affair with Fioretta, the daughter of a Sultan, who nine months later gives birth to a son. In the *Regina Ancroia* it is narrated how this son (Guidone Salvagio) travels to Christian Europe to meet his father.⁵⁹ In the same romance Astolfo and Ricardo impregnate two Saracen noblewomen. In the *Sala di Malagigi*, a beautiful Saracen princess dreams of giving her virginity to Astolfo, whereas in the *Morgante* Ulivieri proves to be extremely popular with Saracen ladies, and so does Rinaldo who, as we saw in 2.1, wins the heart of Marsilio's daughter. A married man, Rinaldo can only offer nights of passionate love-making and his help with re-conquering lost kingdoms; in order to safeguard his

⁵⁷ See Suzanne Conklin Akbari's discussion of this character in her *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 173-89.

⁵⁸ See Kinoshita (2006), pp. 46-73.

⁵⁹ The name of the Saracen lady and the circumstances in which the child was conceived are (slightly) different in the two poems.

mistresses' honour, he sometimes marries them off to Saracen kings (preferably those who have converted to Christianity) who are happy to take them even if they are no longer virgins. In the *Altobello*, for example, Troiano marries Rinaldo's lady Fior de spina.

On the other hand, Saracen knights are often represented as luckless and even grotesque lovers. In the *Bradimonte sorella di Rinaldo* (first printed in 1498, but probably composed earlier), an ugly dark-skinned Saracen falls in love with the titular heroine, who agrees to marry him if he overpowers her in a duel. Predictably, Bradimonte kills her Saracen suitor. In the *Altobello*, Durastante, a valorous yet ugly Indian king, falls in love with Anzilela, the daughter of the Saracen King Anzelieri. Anzilela, however, prefers the Christian convert Altobello (whom we discussed in chapter I), for he is both stronger and more handsome than Durastante. Durastante's total devotion to his lady inspires respect (he loves her even after she has abandoned him: 'Se con mego Anzilela avesse / de perdanza non cureria un botone' (XXXV 57,1-2 [f. s viir])), but he is represented as inferior not only to Altobello but also to the chaste Orlando who, as Boiardo reminds us at I xxvii 7, kills him. Before dying, Durastante renounces his love: 'o falso amore, [...] / tu me tirasti dela dreta via / quando tu me mostrasti Anzilela' (160,5-7 [f. t iiiir])).

In contrast to the previous tradition, in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* all the happy male lovers are Saracens or, in the case of Griphone and Theodoro, more Saracens than Christians.⁶⁰ The only Christian knight who succeeds in igniting a strong passion in the heart of a Saracen damsel is Rinaldo. Even so, this probably would not have happened had the capricious Angelica not drunk from the magic fountain. Angelica's infatuation

⁶⁰ Alexandre-Gras (1988) says that love stories between Saracens is one of Boiardo's innovations and that Orlando's failure in love is all the more striking considering that many Saracen knights are successful lovers. Yet, in her opinion, this merely means that in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* 'il n'y a plus aucune différence, sur la surface du globe, entre la façon de vivre et l'amour... [because] l'amour concerne quiconque et ne connaît pas de suprématie raciale' (pp. 307-308).

with Rinaldo is the only story which to some extent follows the traditional pattern. Origille's passion for Griphone can also be considered as a variation on the Christian knight/Saracen damsel theme, but, as was said earlier, Griphone has a connection to *Paganà*, having grown up in Marsilio's Spain as Marsilio's adopted son. Bearing this in mind, it appears that Origille refuses to give herself to the champion of the Christian Church, choosing instead a lover who, despite now being a Christian, has been brought up in her (Saracen) culture. There are other cases of Saracen women feeling attracted to Christian men, but they do not amount to much, the attraction being caused by a short-lived rush of lust which is soon overcome and forgotten and does not lead to a carnal union. Thus, at I i 66-67, Astolfo's fresh beauty moves Angelica to pity and probably inspires unchaste thoughts in her, but she merely watches him, unwilling to go further.⁶¹ Twelve cantos later Fiordelisa is erotically attracted to the sleeping Rinaldo yet she remains faithful to her Brandimarte and, except for the narrator (and his audience), no one knows about this moment of temptation. Finally, in I xxi, Leodilla cannot hide her frustration when Orlando fails to appreciate her good looks and sleeps soundly while she is tossing and turning, unable to close her eyes because of her unreciprocated desire and anger. In light of the abundance of love affairs between Christian men and Saracen women in the tradition, Boiardo's treatment of his Christian knights is surprising: not only do they fail to set aflame the hearts of Saracen ladies, but they are also not particularly ardent lovers themselves.

When Angelica arrives in Paris all the men present at the banquet fall in love with her. However, out of all Christian paladins, this *coup de foudre* has a long-lasting effect only on Orlando who, as was said earlier, is not as passionate as Agricane (in fact, far from it). Rinaldo is immune to love from I iii to II xv and, after regaining his interest in women in

⁶¹ Astolfo, however, also conquers the heart of Alcina (who is a fairy): see II xiii 59-64.

general and in Angelica in particular, has little opportunity to prove himself as a lover, since at that point Boiardo gives most of his attention to Agramante's French campaign.⁶² The reawakened love makes him fight better, but this is not enough to make up for his past coldness and to recreate him as a truly Arthurian character. Astolfo is certainly able to live without Angelica. He is not a character whose feelings we are supposed to take seriously. Charlemagne, Namor and the remaining Christian paladins return to their senses very quickly. Orlando's awkwardness, inexperience and inability to give his whole being to his new role as a lover are understandable, given that in the preceding tradition he was depicted as a paragon of chastity more comfortable on the battlefield than in dealing with amorous advances from Saracen ladies.⁶³ Yet in the tradition he is unparalleled when it comes to epic wars and adventures which require fighting. By contrast, in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* his crisis of identity manifests itself not only in his defeats on the love front but also in his moments of hesitation in battles and adventures. A brief look at Orlando's relationships with Saracens in the tradition will show that Orlando is no longer the best champion of chivalry.

In many Italian poems and prose narratives, Orlando befriends 'good' Saracens. In the *Morgante* he converts and manages to control a sympathetic yet primitive Saracen giant, the titular hero Morgante. In the *Entrée d'Espagne*, the *Fatti di Spagna* and the *Spagna ferrarese*, offended by Charlemagne, Orlando leaves the Christian camp and sails to the Middle East, where he converts the Persian sultan together with his family and his

⁶² Cristina Montagnani points out that Rinaldo is indifferent to Angelica 'per effetto di magia, giacché il disamore contrasta sia con l'impianto ideologico del poema, sia con la natura passionale del personaggio' ('L'incantesimo del *sequel*: fra Boiardo e Ariosto', in *Boiardo, Ariosto e i libri di battaglia*, ed. by Andrea Canova and Paola Vecchi Galli (Novara: Interlinea, 2007), pp. 41-56: 43).

⁶³ On the evolution of the character in the Italian heroic tradition see Marco Dorigatti, 'Reinventing Roland – Orlando in Italian literature', in *Roland and Charlemagne in Europe: Essays on the Reception and Transformation of a Legend* (King's College London Medieval Studies, 1996), pp. 105-126; and also Marco Villaresi, 'Le varianti di Orlando: un personaggio e le sue trasformazioni', in *"Tre volte suona l'olifante": la tradizione rolandiana in Italia fra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Milano: UNICOPLI, 2007), pp. 72-93.

subjects, and befriends the Sultan's son Sansonet (Sansoneto, Sansonetto).⁶⁴ The young man literally falls in love with the Christian paladin and begs permission from his parents to follow him to Europe: 'mere, ce dit Sanson, n'aiés nulle doutance, / mais leisiés moi aler veoir les giens de France / por aprendre proueçe e largeçe e siançe' (*Entrée d'Espagne*, 14276-14278). In all three narratives Orlando's attitude towards the Saracen youth is protective and patronizing. He initiates him into chivalry and supervises his education. Sansonet, as is obvious from his name which is a diminutive of Sanson, is not a particularly strong knight. He is inferior to Orlando in everything and has to rely on him to survive in a world where danger lurks around every corner. In the *Innamoramento de Orlando* the situation is reversed: it is Orlando who needs Brandimarte to survive and not the other way round.⁶⁵ In II xi, Brandimarte kills Balisardo when the latter outwits Orlando and takes him prisoner. In the following canto, when both heroes are thrown into prison at Manodante's order, it is Brandimarte who suggests that they exchange identities so that Orlando can get out. All Orlando can do in that moment of crisis is invoke saints and make vows to every icon he can remember. Later on, Orlando panics when he realizes that he, Bradamante and their ladies are being followed by Torindo, Caramano and other enemies of Angelica:

ma Brandimarte se cura niente,
anci diceva al Conte: "Hor t'asicura,
che piacendoti far quel ch'io te dico,
quela canaglia non estimo un fico.

(*Innamoramento de Orlando*, II xviii 19,5-8)

⁶⁴ Another good example of a friendship between a Saracen convert and a Christian knight in which the Saracen is clearly inferior to his Christian companion is the friendship between Namo and Balante in the *Aspramonte* tradition.

⁶⁵ Alexandre-Gras (1978) devotes several pages of her monograph to Brandimarte who, as she convincingly shows, is endowed with an extremely important virtue – *prudenza* – which distinguishes him from most other Christian and Saracen characters and renders him more mature than Orlando (pp. 331-338). See also Maristella De Panizza Lorch, "Ma soprattutto la persona umana / era cortese": Brandimarte's cortesia as expressed through the hero's loci actionis in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, Book I', in *La corte e lo spazio. Ferrara estense*, ed. by Giuseppe Papagno, Amedeo Quondam (Roma: Bulzoni, 1982), vol. II, pp. 739-81.

Finally, when both friends arrive at the walls of besieged Paris and, thinking that all is lost, Orlando starts crying, it is yet again Brandimarte who helps him to break free from his puerile self-pity, urging him to dry his tears and start fighting (III viii 16-18). On his own, Orlando is reluctant to face difficulties on a number of occasions. In II vii he is almost persuaded to turn back when Falerina tearfully advises him not to go any further lest Haridano kills him, suggesting that his death would leave her inconsolable: 'il franco Conte a quel dolce parlare / a poco a poco si venia piegando / e destinava adietro ritornare' (50,1-3). He changes his mind eventually, but this initial hesitation is totally unacceptable in the Arthurian universe of Boiardo's poem. In II xx Orlando leaves Cyprus only because a treacherous Greek lies to him that the king will try to capture him, as Gano has told him that he is Orlando and not Rotolante from Circassia.

These episodes together with the paladin's ineptitude in love are good reasons to question Franceschetti's view that Orlando is the best knight in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*.⁶⁶ This is not to say that he is not a good knight. He most certainly is, for he does fight in many battles and duels and his deeds are often worthy of the narrator's and readers' admiration. Yet his crisis of identity prevents him from reaching the pinnacle of chivalry. The same is true of his cousin Rinaldo. Making Rinaldo drink from the spring that cures amorous desire, Boiardo suppresses an important part of his personality, destroying to a certain extent his charisma. For most of the 'bela historia' his distinguishing characteristic is his hatred of Angelica which lands him in all sorts of comic situations. Whereas in the tradition (from the *Renaut de Montauban* to the *Cantari di Rinaldo*, the *Morgante* and the *Trabisona*) he stands out as a noble rebel, an excellent (if short-tempered) knight who is unjustly persecuted by Gano and Charlemagne, in the

⁶⁶ 'Non c'è dubbio che Orlando rappresenti, almeno nei primi due libri del poema – ché, in seguito, il suo posto sarebbe forse occupato da Rugiero – l'eroe nobile per eccellenza, l'esempio perfetto del tipo di cavaliere vagheggiato dal Boiardo' (Franceschetti (1975), p. 127).

Inamoramento de Orlando Rinaldo remains a valorous knight, but loses his privileged status.

With Ogieri and Dudone coming from *Pagania*, Astolfo being a buffoon (which is largely consistent with his earlier representations) and the remaining Christian knights falling into the category of minor characters, Orlando and Rinaldo are the only high-ranking Christians who can be compared to the numerous Saracen emperors and kings.⁶⁷ On the Saracen side, the characters who distinguish themselves in chivalry include Agramante, Agricane, Brandimarte, Gradasso, Feraguto (the least charismatic of the high-calibre Saracens, as already suggested in 2.2), Mandricardo, Marfisa, Rodamonte, Rugiero and Sacripante. They are flanked by many lesser yet noble kings and barons. None of the main Saracen characters (with the possible exceptions of Rugiero and Brandimarte) is completely flawless. One can find minor faults with most of them (such as irascibility and neglect of their kingdoms), but these faults are not such as to bring about their downfall, which means that they are unimportant in the eyes of the author.⁶⁸ Agricane's death is an occasion to celebrate his nobility. Gradasso is a powerful king throughout the narration and Sacripante is upset, yet not devastated by the loss of his kingdom. He is prepared to part not only with material possessions but also with life for the sake of Angelica, her approving gaze being his only reward. As far as Agramante is concerned, we know that his war is doomed to failure, but the poem is interrupted at a point when *Fortuna* is smiling at the Saracens who still have Rugiero. Clearly, Boiardo wanted to postpone the punishment as long as he could.

⁶⁷ Rinaldo's cousin Malagigi, who is a central character in the Renaut/Rinaldo cycle, is not particularly prominent in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. Olivero makes his appearance on a number of occasions, but he remains in the shadow for most of the narration. He is no longer Orlando's main friend, as Brandimarte replaces him in that role.

⁶⁸ According to Cavallo, most of these characters are bad rulers, their stories being designed to admonish contemporary 'signori'. In her attempt to prove this assertion, she goes as far as to allegorize the giants whom she sees as corrupt officials in kingdoms neglected by their rulers. See Jo Ann Cavallo, *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso: from Public Duty to Private Pleasure* (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 2004), esp. pp. 15-44. In her latest book (2013), however, Cavallo provides a more positive evaluation of these Saracens (with the exception of Agramante).

Some authors of Italian chivalric narratives did in fact present their Saracen kings as irresponsible statesmen in order to show how one should not rule a state. As we shall see in 2.3, this happens in the *Aspramonte*.⁶⁹ It is possible that this trend influenced the way in which Gradasso is introduced in the opening canto, where he is told to be one of those 'gran signori' who jeopardize the security of their states to satisfy their whims.⁷⁰ Yet the moralistic intent is very weak; it surfaces only to fade away immediately. As the 'bela historia' unfolds, we realize that Gradasso lacks only a sweetheart to be a perfectly Arthurian knight.⁷¹ Just as it is Agricane who formulates the doctrine of love that informs the *Inamoramento de Orlando* (which confirms and corroborates what the author himself had stated at I i 2), it is the King of Sericana who delivers the famous speech that foregrounds the importance of glory in the lives of Boiardo's knights:

Et a lui [Charlemagne] disse: «Savio imperatore,
ciascun signor gentil e valoroso
de gloria cerca e pasciesi de honore:
chi atende a far ricchezza o aver riposo,
sancia mostrar in prima il suo valore,
merta de il regno al tuto esser depeso.
Io che in Levante mi potea possare,
sono in Ponente per fama acquistare [...]».
(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I vii 41)

Here, the voice of the protagonist merges with that of the poet. When Gradasso explains his philosophy of life to Charlemagne and his courtiers he not only draws the readers' attention to a crucial component of the chivalric code, as Boiardo recreates it, but also

⁶⁹ Cieco da Ferrara often does so in the *Mambriano*. In fact, Cavallo's approach would work very well with *Mambriano* which is built on an elusive dichotomy between the healthy Christian world and chaotic *Paganìa* plagued with bad rulers.

⁷⁰ 'E sì como egli advien a' gran signori / che pur quel voglion che non pòno avere, / e quanto son difficoltà maggiori / la disiata cosa ad otenere, / pongono il regno spesso in grandi erori, / né posson quel che vogliono possedere, / così bramava quel Pagan gagliardo / sol Durindana e il bon distrer Baiardo' (I i 5). While writing the this octave (the fifth of his poem) Boiardo was probably still not entirely sure as to the direction in which the narration would be going.

⁷¹ This is acknowledged by Jo Ann Cavallo and Charles Ross in their preface to *Fortune and Romance: Boiardo in America* (Tempe, Ariz.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998). They note that Gradasso is rather similar to Galehaut in the prose version of *Lancelot* (p. 9).

invites the Christians to make this new ideology their own. It is worth pointing out that Gradasso's eloquent speech echoes that of Saladin in Boiardo's translation of Riccobaldo. When his brother Safadino reproaches him for freeing and showering with presents a group of Christian knights who would not fight against fellow Christians, Saladin tells him that:

Se io fossi [...] desideroso di Regni e di Città, quello, che mi persuade faria [...]; ma mia disposizione è solo ad acquistare Gloria, e non Provincie [...] nè la morte del mio carissimo figliuolo, nè gli sdegni ricevuti da costoro [the Christians], nè il lungo assedio mi contengono, che la loro virtù non sia da me onorevolmente amata.⁷²

For Boiardo, then, desire to win fame must go hand in hand with *cortesìa*, and once again it is the Saracens who are responsible for the most remarkable acts of *cortesìa*. Gradasso overwhelms the Christians with his generosity, when he says that he will not establish a Saracen state in France and that he is ready to release Charlemagne and his barons. His adherence to the pact concluded with Astolfo is all the more commendable considering that earlier the Christians broke their agreement with Marsilio despite there having been no provocation on his part (I vi 56). Similarly, the extraordinary friendship between Iroldo and Prasildo is all the more moving in light of the problematic relationship between Orlando and Ranaldo. The Christians, too, can practice the art of *cortesìa*, but they never reach such heights in it. Ranaldo, upon hearing the story of Iroldo and Prasildo, volunteers to rescue the two friends, saying that he has never encountered such a friendship: 'un par di amici al mondo tanto certo / né hora se trova né mai fo trovato: / se io fosse il terciò, io me terìa beato' (I xvii 21,6-8). By contrast, in the previous tradition *cortesìa* is a Christian value and those Saracens who excel in it (figures like Saladin) are rare, if not exceptional.⁷³

⁷² Boiardo (1726), p. 392.

⁷³ One notable exception is Feraù in the *Spagna* tradition. His generosity to his Christian prisoners is in marked contrast with their arrogance. Usually, however, Saracen courtesy is triggered by a courteous act

One of the most celebrated features of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* is its vitality and dynamism, the sheer *joie de vivre* that exudes from the text. Even a superficial look at the poem shows that this vitality mostly comes from *Paganìa*, which is a much more active space than Christian Europe. In the tradition, Saracens are often (but not always) portrayed as reckless, eager to take risks but regretting their recklessness later on. In the universe of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* readiness to embark on new adventures is an admirable quality. Boiardo's Saracen characters do not know the feeling of inner insecurity which haunts Orlando. They cannot always get what they want, but at least they know what they want and put all their energy into the pursuit of the objects of their desire, even if they sometimes get distracted by other adventures. It is to a large extent their personal quests that move forward the narration. Agramante wants to emulate Alexander the Great; Agricane wants Angelica (dead or alive) and so does Sacripante; Gradasso wants Durindana and Baiardo; Mandricardo's happiness depends on possessing Durindana; Marfisa has made a vow to her Macone 'mai non spogliarsi sbergo e piastre e maglia / sin che tre Re non prende per bataglia' (I xvi 29,7-8). On the Christian side, only Orlando and Rinaldo (after regaining his ability to love in the middle of Book II) embark on similar quests.

A few words must be said about Boiardo's minor Saracen characters, as they undoubtedly contribute to the liveliness of the poem. They are given much more attention than minor Christian characters, many of whom are little more than names. In general, both Christian and Saracen knights can be divided into three categories: those who are described positively; those who are described negatively; and those who are given a neutral description. On both sides, the first group is the largest one, but Boiardo provides more information about the infidels. What is also interesting is that many Saracens who

from a Christian. In the *Aspramonte* narratives, Balante's fiery temper is softened by Namo's courtesy. In the *Spagna* narrative, Orlando gives Isolier a lesson in chivalry when he frees him, trusting his word that his father will free Astolfo.

belong to the second category are actually portrayed in contradictory terms. Baliverzo, for example, is both ‘forte e ardito’ (II xxii 19,4) and ‘perfido ribaldo’ (III viii 35,8); Dudrinasso is a ‘fior de Paganìa’ and (II xxvii 25,5) and a ‘perfido pagano’ (II xxx 6,6); Radamanco is ‘valoroso e franco’ (I xv 8,2) despite being a ‘malvaso gigante e traditore’ (ibid., 9,2). Boiardo is fascinated with giants and never tires of describing their appearance and feats on the battlefield. There are 21 Saracen giants in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and all but one die in the course of the narration. The lucky survivor is Gradasso’s vassal Alfrera, King of Taprobana, who plays an important role in Gradasso’s first military campaign by unhorsing many Christian as well as Saracen knights. Boiardo clearly admires his valour and does not have the heart to kill him. Though inferior to ordinary knights because of their inability to practice *cortesia*, Saracen giants are nevertheless more interesting than ‘Avino, Avorio, Otton e Belengero’ (II vii 18,8).⁷⁴ Avino, Avorio and their like could not be easily killed (without leaving a gap in the line), but Boiardo felt free to kill as many new Saracens (as opposed to those who feature in the *Spagna ferrarese* and so are destined to die in the battle of Rencesvals) as he wished. He did, however, spare the lives of many infidels: more than 100 Saracen characters are still alive at the point when the story is forcefully interrupted. Thus, even at the end of the poem the Saracens remain more numerous than their Christian counterparts whose number shrinks to about 62.

All the major wars of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* – the Albracà campaign, Gradasso’s invasion of Spain and France, Agramante’s invasion of Europe – are initiated by Saracens. In the second and third wars the Christians fare badly because of the absence of Orlando and Rinaldo. The Albracà war is a completely Saracen war, with only a

⁷⁴ Such groupings or quartets of characters are rather frequent in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. By fitting four Christian knights into a single line the poet seems to deprive them of their individuality. This technique is typical of the *cantari*, where minor Christian characters are often enumerated in a manner that certainly does not underscore their valour.

handful of Christian characters participating in it. When Orlando arrives in Albracà, he enters the active 'Arthurian' world of the Saracens and starts playing by their rules. The war starts without him and ends without him re-establishing Angelica in her state: because one night Angelica and her Christian defender flee to France, leaving Albracà to the enemy's fury. The castle is burnt and Angelica becomes the vagabond damsel she in the *Furioso*. The fact that the greatest Christian knight could not save Albracà shows that the Christians have little control over the events of the poem. They can travel through *Paganìa*, take part in adventures, occasionally kill a few Saracens, but *Paganìa* refuses to fall on its knees before them. They are merely guests, passers-by in its vast expanses.

Nor are Orlando and Rinaldo capable of defending the Christian empire against the African aggressors: 'se con tieco avrai questo Barone' – the grey-haired King of Garamantha tells Agramante, urging him to find Rugiero – 'in Franza acquistarei pregio et honore / e cacciarai più volte il re Carlone' (II i 70,2-4). It is *Paganìa* that has produced the knight 'che di prodeza in terra non ha pare' (69,6), the seed from which eventually the glorious Este dynasty will be born. Atalante is heart-broken at the thought that the Saracen world is to lose Rugiero:

«Tu la Affrica destrugi, o re Agramante,

poi che oltra mar tu porti la semente

d'ogni vertù che nosco dimorava!

De qui nascerà il fior d'altre gente [...]

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II xxi 59,8 - 60,1-3)

Born to a Saracen mother and a Christian father, Rugiero is brought up by the Saracen magician Atalante and steps into the 'bela historia' in Book II, when he comes down from the Mount of Carena to participate in the joust organised by Agramante. He asks Agramante to knight him ('Fami, signor, ti prego, cavaliere', 51,8), and the African ruler does so without a moment's delay ('e cossì sarà fato adesso adesso!', 52,6) and 'con

molta festa' (52,8). Rugiero's oath of allegiance – the most sacred oath that a knight can take – binds him to serve Agramante until either of them crosses the great divide. In chapter IV we shall see whether and in what circumstances Ariosto's Ruggiero breaks this oath. For now, suffice it to say that Boiardo's Rugiero is extremely attached to his Saracen origins, so much so that, had Agramante not promised him glory, he would probably have never discovered the land of his Christian ancestors.

It is true that we encounter children of Saracen women and Christian knights in other chivalric narratives. As mentioned in 2.1, Dodone (Dudone) is one of them. In the *Regina Ancroia*, too, there is a hero who superficially resembles Rugiero: Guidone Salvagio, Rinaldo's illegitimate son from an adulterous affair with a Saracen queen. The boy grows up unaware of the fact that his father is one of Charlemagne's paladins, but when his mother finally discloses the truth to him, he travels to France to meet Rinaldo and face him in a duel. Waiting for his father to turn up (upon seeing Rinaldo Guidone decides to convert), he fights with many Christians, but not even Orlando manages to defeat him, their strength being more or less equal. Thus, like Rugiero, he is an extremely promising young knight. Similarly, in the *Fatti de Spagna*, Galleant, the son of Olivero and a Portuguese princess, is portrayed as one of the best warriors in the world: it is he who inherits the Donindarna (that is Orlando's famous sword Durindana) after Rolando's death. What distinguishes Rugiero from Dudone, Guidone, Galleant and others is that Rugiero's Christian father is dead.⁷⁵ All of his living relatives are Saracens: he and Agramante are cousins, for Agramante's father Troiano was the brother of Rugiero's mother Galaciella. Rugiero knows the story of his birth. He knows that Agolante waged war on Charlemagne; that his son Almonte tried to conquer the Christian city of Risa but

⁷⁵ To these half-Saracens we can add Povero Avveduto in Andrea da Barberino's *Storie nerbonesi*: he even tries to kill his Christian father, but decides to convert to Christianity when a friend tells him that the Saracens will murder him after he has slayed all of his Christian relatives. This story forms the basis of the *Ciriffo Calvaneo*.

could not; that Agolante's daughter and Almonte's sister Galaciella fell in love with and married Rugiero II of Risa; that Rugiero II's evil brother Beltramo betrayed the city to the Saracens and that Almonte treacherously killed Rugiero II. We shall have more to say about these tragic events in 2.3. At this stage it is important to stress that Rugiero has no intention of avenging his father's death, for Agolante, Almonte and Beltramo are long dead and the other members of Rugiero's extended family are innocent. It is worth noting that, tracing his impressive genealogy to Bradamante, the 'terzo paladino' blames his Christian uncle for the death of his parents: 'Beltramo, el perfido inhumano, / tradite el patre [Duke Rampaldo, Lord of Risa] e il suo franco germano [Rugiero II]' (III v 33,7-8).

Thus, unlike Dodone, Guidone and other half-Saracen converts to Christianity, Rugiero does not feel the urge to discover his 'true' Christian identity. Africa is his home and he follows Agramante to France because he too is seduced by the dream of glory and eager to emulate their common ancestor Alexander. It is only when he meets Bradamante that he begins to think about his Christian roots. Love, rather than religion or the appeal of the Christian civilisation, draws him towards conversion.

Rugiero embodies all the virtues of *Paganìa*. Through him Boiardo creates a bridge between the Saracen world and his audience, encouraging his Ferrarese readers to draw a parallel between their civilisation and Agramante's North Africa. The connection between the Saracen Rugiero and Boiardo's patrons is so important that it deserves to be analysed in greater detail. Thus, we shall now proceed to examine the figure of Alexander the Great in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and its sources, hoping to shed new light on this overlooked aspect of the dynastic theme.

2.3. SARACENS AND ALEXANDER THE GREAT

As was said in chapter I, the link between Agramante (and hence Rugiero) and Alexander the Great was not invented by Boiardo, but rather inherited from the *Aspramonte*. Indeed, already in the twelfth-century *Chanson d'Aspremont* Agoulant lays claim to the empire built by the Macedonian conqueror and so do North African Saracens in various Italian *rifacimenti* of this *chanson de geste*. Boiardo, however, can be credited with the introduction of the Trojan theme, a theme that clearly resonated with his contemporaries' obsession with genealogies.⁷⁶ Scholars have explored the connection between Rugiero and Hector of Troy, suggesting that it serves a political purpose: it has been argued that by giving Rugiero an illustrious Trojan ancestor Boiardo celebrates the Este dynasty in a manner that is consonant with contemporary humanistic culture.⁷⁷ Yet Agramante's connection to Alexander has been interpreted very differently. According to Cavallo, it 'serves to reinforce the negative connotations of his aggressive military expedition'.⁷⁸ This section will attempt to assess the significance of Agramante's and Rugiero's descent from Alexander in the light of the theme of antiquity in the chivalric tradition, with a special focus on the *Aspramonte*.

To begin with, it will be useful to provide an overview of the ways in which antiquity is portrayed in medieval Carolingian narratives. Discussing the Trojan myth in the *chansons de geste*, Jean-Pierre Martin states that references to ancient Troy can be grouped into four categories: comparisons between the events of the poem and the events of the Trojan war; ekphrastic representations of the deeds of Greeks and Trojans or songs

⁷⁶ As Tissoni Benvenuti observes in her note to III v 30, the rulers of Risa do not have Trojan ancestors in any of the extant Italian versions of the *Aspramonte*. One could perhaps say that Boiardo slightly weakens the 'traditional' association between Saracens and antiquity, given that Rugiero's Trojan identity comes from his Christian father (who is a distant relative of Charlemagne).

⁷⁷ For a discussion of the dynastic theme in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* see Marco Dorigatti, 'Rugiero and the Dynastic Theme from Boiardo to Ariosto', in *Italy in Crisis, 1494*, ed. by Jane Everson and Diego Zancani (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), pp. 92-128; and also Idem, 'La favola e la corte: intrecci narrativi e genealogie estensi dal Boiardo all'Ariosto', in *Gli dei a corte: letteratura e immagini nella Ferrara estense*, ed. by Gianni Venturi and Francesca Cappelletti (Firenze: Olschki, 2009), pp. 31-54.

⁷⁸ Cavallo (2013), p. 88. Cavallo fleetingly acknowledges the fact that Alexander features in the *Aspramonte*.

about Troy incorporated into the narrative; Achilles' or Hector's armour owned by Christian and Saracen knights; Saracens knights with Trojan names.⁷⁹ Martin points out that Saracens are more involved with the Trojan myth than Christians despite the fact that the legend of the Trojan origins of the French was popular in the Middle Ages. Frescoes depicting the lives of ancient heroes are frequently found in the palaces of Saracen rulers, and armour that once belonged to the protagonists of ancient epics usually comes from *Paganìa*, even when it is used by Christian knights. Martin concludes that medieval poets make little difference between Saracens and ancient warriors because both the followers of Macon and the ancients worship false gods. The memory of the early days of Christianity, he argues, was still fresh in the High and Late Middle Ages, and by fighting Saracens Charlemagne's paladins also fight the remnants of paganism:

Le combat épique est moins celui de la Chrétienté contre un Islam que la *chanson de geste* ne cherche pas à connaître, que celui du bien contre le mal, du monde nouveau contre les résurgences du monde ancien. Dans le système idéologique, nos textes appellent sarrasin quiconque n'adhère pas à la révélation, de sorte que toute différence par rapport au christianisme ne peut être qu'un effet de l'idolâtrie, et que tout ennemi de la Chrétienté n'est pas seulement un persécuteur en puissance, mais aussi un survivant d'un passé que la prédication des apôtres et le témoignage des martyrs auraient dû abolir.⁸⁰

This is a plausible explanation of why Saracens have a more intimate relationship with antiquity than Christians. However, it must be stressed that medieval attitudes to antiquity were complex. Although the inferiority of the Greek and Roman civilisations to the Christian civilisation was not questioned, the ancients were all the same respected by many medieval intellectuals. Dante's guide in the *Commedia* is Virgil who cannot teach Dante how to be a good Christian but who can teach him how to be a good man and a great poet. It is interesting to note that Dante does not distinguish between virtuous

⁷⁹ Jean-Pierre Martin, 'Les références au mythe troyen dans les *chansons de geste* à sujet carolingien', *Bien dire et bien apprendre*, X (1992), 101-117. See also Martin, 'Les sarrasins, l'idolâtrie et l'imaginaire de l'antiquité dans les chansons de geste', in *Littérature et religion au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1997), pp. 27-46.

⁸⁰ Martin (1997), p. 46.

pagans and virtuous Muslims: Averroes, Avicenna and Saladin are relegated to Limbo together with Homer, Virgil and other ancient poets. It could be argued that Averroes and Avicenna are spared the torments of lower Hell because they died virtuous men having spent their lives studying classical texts. One should be careful when comparing the authors of the *chansons de geste* to Dante who had an exceptional education by medieval standards and who saw himself as a disciple of the ancients; but, just as in the *Commedia*, in Old French epics the connection between Saracens and antiquity is not portrayed in an entirely negative light. In the *Chanson de Roland* Baligant, ‘le viel d’antiquité /... [who] tut survesquiét e Virgilie e Omer’ (2615-2616), is the most likeable Saracen character: ‘Li amiralz ben resemblet barun; / blanche ad la barbe ensemment cume flur, / e de sa lei mult par est saives hom, / e en bataille est fiers e orgoillus’ (3172-3175). Unlike Marsile, he remains faithful to the chivalric code and his refusal to convert and death sadden the reader.

Antiquity is a more important presence in later *chansons de geste*, where the knowledge of ancient history and literature often ennoble Saracens who are represented not as uncultivated barbarians but as people who have built a sophisticated civilisation. In the *Entrée d’Espagne*, for example, Marsile’s barons often make references to ancient heroes in their speeches.⁸¹ They draw on ancient history to strengthen their arguments, which is something an educated person was expected to do in the fourteenth century. Sometimes their reflections on the deeds of the ancients help them to make sense of the present. On other occasions their obsession with the classical past prevents them from understanding the new Christian logic which governs Charlemagne’s expansionistic policies. More often than not their familiarity with the culture of the ancients makes them better knights. Courage, loyalty and endurance are fundamental heroic values in ancient

⁸¹ On allusions to antiquity in the *Entrée d’Espagne* see Leslie C. Brook, ‘Allusions à l’antiquité gréco-latine dans l’*Entrée d’Espagne*’, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, CXVIII, n. 4 (2002), 573-586. She does not, however, discuss the ideological significance of these references.

epics, and Saracens can grow in chivalry by constantly comparing themselves and others to ancient heroes. This is certainly the case of such characters as Feragu and Ysorez. On the other hand, the ancient world had its traitors, and the city of Troy fell through treachery. The *Entrée* does not have an ending, but we know that ultimately Marsile and his barons chose to imitate the Greeks rather than the Trojans.

The fact that one can always choose between Greeks and Trojans means that one can learn the wrong lesson from ancient history. Moreover, one can fail to live up to the heroic ideal of the ancients or one can try to imitate the ancients when one is clearly not in the position to do so. This is what happens in the *Aspramonte* when Agoulant (or Agolante) decides to invade the Christian empire, and this is particularly true of the representation of the Africans' attempt to conquer Europe in the Italian *rifacimenti*, where the theme of antiquity occupies a more prominent place.

In the *Chanson d'Aspremont*, Balant, a Saracen ambassador who arrives in Paris when Charlemagne and his barons are celebrating Pentecost, tells them that Agoulant considers himself Alexander's heir: 'qanke Alixandres conquest an son aage / viaut il tenir, c'est de son eritage' (428-429).⁸² Yet Agoulant's connection to Alexander is not mentioned again in the poem and the example of the Macedonian conqueror is certainly not the main reason behind the military campaign. Agoulant wages war on the Christians because he wants to exterminate Christianity: 'et Balant (an) jure Mahom et Tervagant, / bien sachoiz vos qu'il a tel maltalant, / Crestienté metra tot a neant, / por seul itant que an Deu es creant' (310-313). While Alexander the Great was famous for his cosmopolitanism and religious tolerance, his descendant is very narrow-minded when it comes to religion. The Saracens' hatred of Christianity is highlighted throughout the narration, which is of course what we expect of a poem conceived as a piece of crusade propaganda. The author

⁸² All quotations are taken from *Aspremont*, chanson de geste du XII^e siècle, présentation, édition et traduction par François Suard d'après le manuscrit 25529 de la BNF (Paris: Champion Classiques, 2008).

of the *Chanson d'Aspremont* is not very interested in the classical origins of Agoulant's empire; for him the present is more important than the past.

In the fourteenth-century Italian prose version of the *Aspramonte* neither Balante's speech nor Agolante's letter to Charlemagne mention Alexander the Great. Later, however, when Balante returns to his lord, he tells him that the French emperor

è maggiore signiore del monndo e fecemi troppo grande onore, e senpre chon lui mangiavo e factami servire al baroni che ciaschuno rasenbrava re e più son begli quegli che llo servano che non fue vostro padre Alesandro e tutto il suo palago è choperto di drappo d'oro [...] (*Aspramonte* BL, f. 7v).⁸³

Here, Alexander is the name of Agolante's father and it is hard to establish whether the anonymous author meant Alexander of Macedon or one of his descendants. If so, this would mean that in this romance the distance between Saracens and antiquity is completely abolished. This unspecified Alexander was, however, less handsome than Charlemagne's barons, and represents no threat to the Christian civilisation.

The *Cantari d'Aspramonte* have survived in a fragmentary state, and so we cannot assess the significance of the figure of Alexander in the complete version. Even so, Agolante's desire to emulate Alexander is alluded to in Charlemagne's letter to the King of Hungary:

Agolante, d'Africa un re arguto,
il pregiat[issim]o Almonte in sua compagnia,
Rissa m'à tolta e 'n Calavria è venuto.
Più che Alessandro vuol signoregiare [...].
(*Cantari d'Aspramonte*, XII 52 4-7)⁸⁴

The author disapproves of this ambition, not only because the African ruler attacks the Franks whose religion is true but also because it would be ill advised to jeopardise the

⁸³ The text of the anonymous romance is preserved in the MS Add 10808 held in the British Library.

⁸⁴ All quotations are taken from *Cantari d'Aspramonte inediti* (*Magl. VII 682*), ed. by Andrea Fassò (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1981).

security of one's state in an attempt to conquer another: so we are told in the opening octaves of *cantare V*. Agolante overestimated his military talents and was reckless to proclaim himself another Alexander. We do not know, however, whether he is related to the Macedonian conqueror.

In the *Aspramonte A*, on the other hand, Agolante's blood tie to Alexander is stressed at least four times. Balante tells Charlemagne that the whole world should belong to Agolante because it once belonged to his illustrious ancestor: 'egli à giurato di pigliare tutto il mondo, perché Alessandro ne fu signore e il re Agolante è del suo legnaggio, e del parentado del re Nettenabo d'Egitto; e però tocca a lui el reitagio' (II x 19-22). We hear this again from Agolante himself who tells Namò that 'Franza fu del mio antico Alessandro, figliuolo del re Filippo di Macedonia' (II xlv 33-34). Later Agolante repeats this in a conversation with Charlemagne (III xxxiii 26-27), and then Ulieno accuses Charlemagne of having usurped Agolante's lands (III lxvi 10-14). Thus, Andrea da Barberino suggests that the Africans went to war not only because their king wanted to follow in Alexander's footsteps but also because he genuinely believed that Europe was his by right of descent. This would have been a very powerful argument a century later, when the humanists went to great lengths to prove that Mehmed II had no right to conquer Constantinople because the Turks had nothing to do with the Trojans. Most of Andrea's contemporaries, however, did not think that one's descent legitimised one's rule or one's political ambitions if one was an infidel.

Alexander is not the only ancient hero who is held in high reverence in Agolante's Africa. Almonte sees himself as a new Aeneas, as is evident from the speech he makes when he and his soldiers are about to set foot on Italian soil:

O valoroso Enea figliuolo d'Anchisse, se gli iddei furono prosperevoli a farti acquistare questa parte d'Italia, siano prosperevoli a me che io l'acquisti, a cui per le terrestre forze e le promesse de l'altissima signoria del padre mio credo che i cieli con le loro forze l'abbiano disposto, come io

credo che gl'iddii immortali me l'abbino conceduto. E così piglio arme contro a chi difendere la vorrà, e con la speranza di Maometto e di Trevigante e d'Apollino e Iupiter, e' quali sono gl'iddei del padre mio e di Troiano e di me, e con l'aiuto di Marte deo delle battaglie (*Aspramonte A*, I xiii 9-16).

Soon, however, the reader learns that Almonte is no Aeneas and that he and his father Agolante bear little resemblance to the courteous Alexander of medieval romances.⁸⁵ Agolante will accept the help of the traitor Beltramo. Though initially opposed to this pact ('tutta la baronia lodarono che si mettesse a efezione [the pact], salvo che il re Almonte, che disse che questo era loro grande vergongna, ma non volle contradire a quello che 'l padre si contentava', I xxxv 10-12), Almonte too will break the chivalric code: he will kill Riccieri II of Risa (whom he could not overpower in a fair duel) by running him through with his lance from the back. It is certainly not Aeneas who taught Almonte how to deal treacherous blows.

It is not only in the *Aspramonte A* that Saracens fail to imitate the heroes of antiquity. In the *Spagna ferrarese*, it is Marsilio who claims to have Alexander's blood in his veins. While not being in a position to recover the lost empire, Marsilio is nevertheless proud of his descent, which he believes endows him and his relatives with 'gentileza'. When the Archaliffa of Baldarcha insists on hanging Charlemagne's messengers, Marsilio intervenes, making the following objection:

[...] Caro mio barbano,
tuti siamo d'Alesandro disesi,
del più potente signore soprano,
e più forti che sie in nostri paesi.
Nostro legnagio non fu mai vilano;
sempre for tuti gentili e cortexi
e lealtà usaro in ogni lato.
Traditor mai nessun non fu chiamato.

Non è usança che nissun messaggio
sie mai fatta nulla villania.

⁸⁵ Alexander is represented very positively in romances, but in other genres his portrayal is ambiguous. See George Cary, 'The conception of Alexander in late medieval and Renaissance Italy', in *Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1956, reprinted 1967), pp. 260-72.

A sua persona non de' far oltraggio
 perché sparli di te in sua diceria.
 Già non dice ello da suo coraggio,
 ma da parte di quel ch'el manda via.
 E per lui conpiacier ti convien farlo
 e sì spregiar per ubedir a Carlo.

(*Spagna ferrarese*, VI 22-23)

The reader warms to Marsilio after this noble speech, but a few octaves later the words are belied by deeds and the Christian ambassadors are hanged. The noble past is briefly evoked only to be cast aside, and the example of Alexander does not prevent the Saracens from acting dishonourably. Underscoring the baseness of the Saracens, the anonymous poet stresses the rupture between their civilisation and that of the ancients.

The fact that in the *Spagna* Alexander's descendants have degenerated from Alexander's courtesy may appear surprising, considering that the poem was produced at the time when humanistic studies flourished on the Italian peninsula. The humanists tended to think that one's descent shaped one's character, and this belief is at the heart of many panegyric works of the Quattrocento. The case of the *Spagna* shows that we should not expect fifteenth-century heroic poems to mirror the ideas which were central in contemporary humanistic literature. The advent of humanism did not give rise to dramatic changes in chivalric poetry: as far as popular literature is concerned, the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance was very smooth and most innovations were subtle. On the other hand, some fifteenth-century chivalric poets seem to have been more responsive to humanistic ideas. In the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* and the *Inamoramento de Orlando* the Saracens' connection to antiquity is presented differently from how it is depicted in the chivalric narratives which we have looked at so far.

Although Andrea da Barberino attaches more importance to the Macedonian origins of the African dynasty than the author of the *Chanson d'Aspremont* and possibly the author of the *Cantari d'Aspramonte*, he does not explain how Alexander founded that dynasty.

Nor does he have much to say about Alexander's exploits. By contrast, both Boiardo and the author of the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* offer fuller and more detailed information about the African kings' family tree. Boiardo devotes much more space to the Macedonian conqueror than the anonymous poet. His greater interest in the figure of Alexander could be said to reflect his humanistic interests, even if, as has been demonstrated by Bruscaagli, in recounting the Macedonian conqueror's life he draws on medieval rather than classical sources.⁸⁶ In any case, the quantity of 'classical' passages is not as important as the ways in which they are interwoven into the story. Both Boiardo and the anonymous poet seem to realise that making an ancient hero the founder of a Saracen dynasty amounts to acknowledging the right of that dynasty to rule over the territories which it has inherited from its illustrious forefather. They seem to accept the view that, with rare exceptions, nobility is passed from father to son. However, in the *Innamoramento de Orlando* the Africans are portrayed more positively than in the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*. Boiardo's Agramante is a charismatic ruler who takes after Alexander in courtesy and impetuosity; in the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* both Agolante and Almonte strive to appear courteous, but their refined manners are just a disguise for their weakness, and the political foundations of Saracen Africa are fragile, for it has always been ruled by kings born out of wedlock.

Let us first consider the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*. The fact that there is a connection between the Saracen rulers' inability to live up to their own standards of courtesy and heroism and their illegitimate birth, is not immediately evident but becomes quite clear in the course of the narration. We are told that:

Lo re Agolante con tutte suo genti
del sangue fo del Re de Macedonia:
nacque di Philippon come Viscandro
el qual fo decto padre d'Alexandro.

⁸⁶ Riccardo Bruscaagli, 'Prove di commento all'«Orlando Innamorato»', *Studi Italiani*, I (1989), 5-29.

(*Aspramonte*, V 41,5-8 [f. bviir])

Then the narrator adds:

Bastardi funno suoi antecessori
et Agolante ancora a tal richiesta,
ma tucti quanti fur di gran valori
per l'universo havevan gran podesta;
d'Affrica et d'Asia fur questi signori
come la loro historia il manifesta;
gli altri non hebbben come lui paese
però Agolante fo tanto cortese.

(*Ibid.*, 42)

Agolante's and his ancestors' illegitimate birth is a fact loaded with significance, for this is a secular reason why their rule over Africa and Asia will eventually be toppled. It explains why, despite their courteous treatment of the conquered peoples, they cannot accomplish what Alexander did. It may seem that the 'gran valori' of Agolante and his relatives outweigh their illegitimacy, but as the narration progresses the reader realizes that neither Agolante nor Almonte can in fact be compared to Alexander or any other ancient heroes. When Almonte is unhorsed by Rugieri II for the second time (instead of acknowledging Rugieri's superiority after the first defeat Almonte insists on repeating the duel) Rugieri feels nothing but contempt for the Saracen:

Vatene al padiglion ch'è quasi sera,
a la tua madre di' senza esser tardo
che ti dichiari el vero a tal maniera:
se legittimo sei over bastardo.

(*Aspramonte*, VIII 51,1-4 [f. diir])

Later on, Almonte is tormented by pangs of remorse over the death of Rugieri II (who, betrayed by his own brother, has been killed by a poisoned dart in Almonte's presence and with his full consent), and urges his barons to keep the betrayal secret from his father, because, if Agolante does find out, 'el mi direbbe vil tristo et bastardo' (XI 51,5 [f. fiir]).

In the same canto Almonte's sister Galaciella calls him a 'traditore vil tristo et bastardo' (58,1 [f. fiii^r]), claiming that he has brought shame on their family. We do not know whether Almonte is aware of the fact that all of his ancestors were illegitimate children and that his own father is no exception. In Almonte's case the word 'bastardo' may well be used in its literal sense, because Agolante's wife certainly cannot count conjugal faithfulness amongst her many virtues. She falls in love with Namor when he comes to the Saracen camp as an ambassador. Realising that she cannot have Namor she develops a passion for Don Chiaro's brother whom she marries, but only after a moment of hesitation during which she considers giving herself to Don Chiaro instead.

Had the author of the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* not drawn the readers' attention to the fact that the Macedonian descent of the Saracen royal house is rendered invalid by the stigma of illegitimacy, the poem would have probably been less satisfying to its fifteenth-century audience. In a period when it was generally believed that one's descent determined one's character the readers (or listeners) would have wondered why Agolante, and especially Almonte, are very far from being perfect knights. They would have felt uncomfortable with Almonte's numerous shortcomings, and the fact that he is a Saracen would have been an unconvincing explanation for his baseness. Having cast a shadow of illegitimacy on the Africans' descent from Alexander the Great, the poet could proceed with telling the story of the Africans' total and very humiliating defeat at the hands of the Christians without challenging the audience's faith in secular humanism.

In the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, by contrast, the legitimacy of Agramante's birth is never called into doubt, even though Alexander himself is effectively an illegitimate child. In reality he is the son of:

[...] l'astrologo prudente,
qual del suo regno se n'era fugito,
ch'una Regina in forma di serpente

avia gabbata, e prese il suo apetito [...]
(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II i 22,1-4)

As Brusagli points out, the legend that Alexander was fathered by the Egyptian ruler Nectanebo and not by Philip of Macedon was very popular in Italy during the Middle Ages.⁸⁷ We have seen that Andrea da Barberino also mentions Nectanebo as one of Agolante's ancestors without raising the question of illegitimacy. Boiardo does not attach any importance to this circumstance of Alexander's birth, for he is described as a totally exceptional man and as a virtually perfect knight by the standards of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*.

Arguing that Saracen kings are often represented as bad statesmen, Cavallo also says that Boiardo uses Alexander as an example of a bad ruler whose boundless arrogance brings much suffering to the world.⁸⁸ Taken out of context, the verses which she cites (e.g. 'poi ch'ebe il mondo tuto quanto aflito' II i 5,3) seem to support her argument, but in fact the positive elements far outweigh the negative ones in Boiardo's portrayal of the Macedonian conqueror. As we saw in the previous section, thirst for glory, as long as it goes hand in hand with *cortesia*, is certainly not seen as a negative quality in the universe of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. Alexander is effectively the founder and the paragon of the ideology that underpins the poem, an Arthurian knight who lived long before King Arthur. Like the Alexander of medieval romances, Boiardo's Alexander is the embodiment of *cortesia*, a prince who punishes traitors and generously forgives his defeated enemies. Moreover, he gives his heart to the beautiful Helidonia, which is the ultimate proof of his nobility. Like Gradasso, Alexander is not motivated by a lust for power. The driving force behind his conquests is his love of glory and his desire to make the most of life. Having defeated all the kings, he goes on to fight a basilisk and then

⁸⁷ Brusagli (1989).

⁸⁸ Cavallo (2004), pp. 34-44. See also Cavallo (2013), pp. 87-88.

‘conquers’ the skies by making two griffins to carry him, and he explores the darkest depths of the ocean, descending underwater in a glass case. He is primarily an impetuous knight always searching for new adventures. The fact that he built a huge empire is not sufficiently emphasized by Boiardo; the political significance of his victories is left in the shadow.⁸⁹ It is not during his lifetime but only after his death that the world is plunged into chaos: ‘poi tuto ’l mondo è in guerra e gran martoro’ (II i 29,8).

When Agramante delivers a speech in which he tries to persuade his vassal kings to take up arms against Charlemagne his principal argument is that a life without glory is not worth living:

doppo la morte sol fama ne avanza,
e veramente son color tapini
che d’agrandirla sempre non han cura,
perché sua vita poco tempo dura.

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II i 35,5-8)

These lines echo Gradasso’s speech which was quoted earlier. Agramante has decided to invade Europe not because the whole world once belonged to Alexander and he, Alexander’s heir, has a duty to regain the lost empire, but because he wants to be like Alexander, that is to devote his life to honourable pursuits and to win immortal fame. The speech is delivered in a palace adorned with frescoes that illustrate Alexander’s heroic feats, and Alexander is mentioned at its culminating moment:

né vi crediati che Alexandro il grande,
qual fo principio dela nostra iesta,
per far conviti de optime vivande
vincesse il mondo, né per star in festa.
Hor per tuto il suo nome si spande,
e la sua storia, ch’è qui manifesta,
mostra ch’al guadagnar d’honor si suda

⁸⁹ By contrast, his three sons are cast in the role of empire builders and perfect rulers: ‘e tre germani presser signoria / de Africa tuta (comm’i ho contato) / e la rivera dela Barbaria / e la terra de’ negri in ogni lato; / né per prodeza, né per vigoria, / né per gran séno acquistàr tuto il stato, / ma la natura sua, ch’è tanto bona, / tirava ad obedirli ogni persona’ (II i 11). These territories constitute Agramante’s empire; his rule over Africa is legitimate because his ancestors colonised the country with popular consent.

e sol s'acquista con la spada nuda.
(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II i 36)

'Honor' – a concept that will be explored in chapter IV – is a key word and a key concept in this speech and indeed the ideology of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* as well as of the *Furioso*. Although Agramante briefly mentions his desire to 'agrandir la legie di Macone' (II i 37,8) at the very end of his oration, it is clear that he is not motivated by religious fervour, religion being merely a pretext for sailing to France.

It must be said that, although the motif of revenge does not surface in the story of Boiardo's Agramante, the circumstances of his father's death would alone justify his military expedition. Introducing the African ruler, the poet recalls how his father Troiano (who, unlike Agolante and Almonte, did not stain his hands with a betrayal in any of the Italian versions of the *Aspramonte*⁹⁰):

[...] in Bergogna col Conte d'Anglante
combaté, e con dui altri sopra il piano:
ciò fo don Chiaro e 'l bon Rugier Vasalo;
da lor fo morto, e certo con gran fallo.
(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II i 14,5-8)

Here, Boiardo alludes to one of Orlando's first victories, a victory which the Christian paladin is very proud of (see, for example, I xviii 47,1-2) but which, to say the least, is ambivalent. In the *Aspramonte* A Orlando challenges Troiano to a duel (despite the fact that earlier Troiano knocked senseless both him and Don Chiaro); armed with the Durindarda, he chops off the Saracen's hands, but the wounded enemy carries him towards the river with the intention of drowning him. At this point Orlando's friends feel compelled to intervene: Riccieri Vassallo (not to be confused with Riccieri II of Risa)

⁹⁰ Although Andrea da Barberino describes Troiano as an arrogant man who 'non teneva nessuna religione in sé' e 'poca verità aveva in bocca' (III CIII 5-7), his greatest fault is extreme irascibility. In the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*, the widowed Galaciella tells Almonte that their brother Troiano would never have committed such a crime.

strikes Troiano on his helmet, while Ansoigi d'Avernia cuts off his head. In the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*, as in the passage cited above, Orlando is rescued by Rugieri Vassalo and Don Chiaro: the former, 'come buon christian nobile et caro' (XXI 79,2 f. oviiiiv), plunges his lance into the Saracen's stomach and the latter fells his head. Boiardo's disapproval of the manner in which Troiano was killed is shared by Rinaldo who calls it a 'tradimento' during his quarrel with Orlando in Book I.⁹¹ The fact that Boiardo draws attention to this inglorious episode twice contributes to calling into question the superiority of Christian chivalry over Saracen chivalry.

It is debatable whether Agramante succeeds in his attempt to imitate Alexander. On the one hand, his military campaign is doomed to failure and, as Atalante tells us at II xxi 53-60, will bring Africa to ruin. On the other hand, Agramante embarks on an exciting adventure and he and his knights encounter countless opportunities to show their valour. That is exactly the kind of life that the Macedonian conqueror loved. Since the *Inamoramento de Orlando* was interrupted by Boiardo's death, it does not end with the Saracens' defeat, but with their major victory, which means that, in this poem at least, Agramante does not see his Alexander-inspired dream shattered. As for his personal qualities, Boiardo's Agramante is a sympathetic character; he always respects the chivalric code and is not cruel on any occasion despite his 'crudel viso' (II i 15,4). He may not be as successful a conqueror as Alexander but, as far as *cortesía* is concerned, he proves to be Alexander's equal. The canto in which he first makes his appearance starts with a joyful announcement of the return of 'Alegreza e Cortesia' (II i 2,3) to the Este court following a period of war; Agramante's coming of age can be seen as the return of 'Alegreza e Cortesia' to North Africa after the turbulent period between the death of Brabante and that of Troiano.

⁹¹ 'Dàte forse arroganza il re Troiano? / Né ti vergogni di quella novella, / ch'anchor ferito a morte e senza mano / te trasse a tuo dispetto dela sela? / Tri insieme l'occidesti in su quel piano! / Va', ti nascondi! Va', vil femminella! / Tra li homini apparer haĩ ardimento, / e sei condotto a tanto tradimento?' (I xxvii 18).

Even if Agramante is destined to die, Alexander's heritage does not fade into oblivion with his death. In the unwritten ending of the poem, Rugiero's conversion guarantees the survival of ancient *virtus* through its assimilation into the Christian world. Whereas in all the versions of the *Aspramonte* which have been examined in this section Alexander's legacy is never exported outside *Paganìa* (it is true that Agolante's daughter marries a Christian knight, but both of them die), in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* it reaches Christian Europe and eventually contributes to the glory of the Este family.⁹² Far from wanting to show that ancient chivalry is inferior to Christian chivalry, Boiardo seems to suggest that the Christian world should embrace antiquity, drawing on ancient *virtus* in order to survive and realise its potential.

Rugiero has inherited half of his heroic qualities from his Christian ancestors who descended from Hector of Troy and the other half from his Saracen family descended from Alexander the Great. It is significant that in Book II Boiardo lays emphasis on Rugiero's connection to Alexander, whereas in Book III Hector appears to eclipse the Macedonian conqueror. Book II starts with a powerful eulogy of Alexander and a celebration of the Saracen world which has sprung from his seed. By contrast, in Book III Rugiero does not even mention his blood ties with Alexander the Great when he tells Bradamante about his illustrious ancestors. This can be interpreted as Boiardo's belated attempt to redeem Christendom, showing that it does not owe everything to *Paganìa*. Yet despite the fact that the poet's attention shifts from the legend of Alexander to the Trojan myth, in Book III, just like in Books I and II, the Saracens are in many way more remarkable than the Christians. The introduction of Mandricardo, the large number of adventures involving Saracens and the Christians' inability to defend Paris, all of this testifies to Boiardo's continuing fascination with *Paganìa*. Even if Rugiero decides that

⁹² Let's not forget that Alexander the Great is one of the forefathers of the Este dynasty in Tito Vespasiano Strozzi's *Borsias* (vi 371-373).

Bradamante does not need to know about his Saracen genealogy, at least for now, the reader cannot forget his connection to Alexander, given the number of times Alexander has been mentioned in Book II as well as the fact that both Rugiero and his Macedonian ancestor entered the narration in the same canto. By foregrounding Hector, Boiardo does not diminish the significance of Alexander; he merely seeks to correct the striking imbalance between Christians and Saracens by stressing that the Christian civilisation too was built on the remnants of an ancient civilisation.

2.4. CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to show that Boiardo's portrayal of *Paganìa* is greatly indebted to the chivalric tradition. Many of the Saracen names appear to be borrowed from (or inspired by) other chivalric texts, while Boiardo's treatment of the 'familiar faces' – i.e. figures such as Marsilio or Ogieri il Danese – is to a large extent consistent with their earlier representations. Love, glory and *cortesìa* are important values not only for Boiardo's Saracens, but also for their counterparts in the *Aspramonte*, the *Altobello* and other narratives, where one finds, albeit often in embryonic form, some of the key themes of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*.

What makes Boiardo's *Paganìa* unique is the fact that it does not have a complex of inferiority vis-à-vis Christian Europe. We have seen that *Paganìa* is a much more Arthurian space than Charlemagne's Empire, something which lends it a special significance in light of Boiardo's assertion that King Arthur's court was superior to Charlemagne's. The Saracens can be seen to surpass the Christians in number, love and *cortesìa*. They are much more active on the poem's stage than are Charlemagne's knights, *Paganìa* being the source of the celebrated vitality of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. While Orlando and to some extent Ranaldo are undergoing identity crises, most of the

leading Saracen characters feel confident in the universe of the poem and their desires shape the structure of the narration, enabling the 'bela historia' to advance incessantly. The Christians are drawn to *Paganìa* but do not feel completely at home in it, for it would not bend to their will. It is not the Christian Orlando who will ultimately save Charlemagne's France but the conversion of the Saracen Rugiero. His conversion is a supreme gain for the Christian world, not least because through it the Christians will be able to have access to Alexander the Macedonian's heritage.

It is difficult to explain why Boiardo makes *Paganìa* more receptive to the new chivalric ideology than Christian Europe. One possible explanation is that, fusing the Carolingian and Arthurian cycles in his poem, he found it easier to give the Arthurian spirit to the characters who were created *ex nihilo*. Indeed, he could not (and did not) introduce many new Christians, as his audience expected him to respect the tradition in his representation of Charlemagne's court, and in the tradition the number of Christian paladins was limited. By contrast, he must have felt freer to introduce new Saracens, for the chivalric genre as it had hitherto developed allowed this. Yet Boiardo could have made his Christians better lovers, considering that in many earlier and contemporary stories Rinaldo, Astolfo and other Christian knights enjoyed female attention in abundance. He could have made Orlando slightly manlier. But he did not. The true significance of Boiardo's exceptionally positive representation of *Paganìa* will become clearer once we have examined the ways in which Ariosto modifies the universe of the 'bela historia'.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

Saracen chivalry in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*

3.0. FROM BOIARDO TO ARIOSTO

Although Boiardo is never explicitly mentioned in the *Orlando furioso*, he had more influence on Ariosto than any other vernacular or classical author. Ariosto's debt to him goes far beyond his poem's subject matter.¹ So deep was his admiration for the Count of Scandiano that the task of bringing the 'bela historia' to an end became the labour of his life. The *Inamoramento de Orlando* was not only his starting point, but also an unending source of inspiration, a text which he must have consulted countless times during the composition of his own poem, especially its 40-canto version. Yet it is sufficient to look at the opening octaves of the *Furioso* to realise that Ariosto is not merely a competent imitator, but an original artist with a unique voice and an extremely complex worldview. Whereas the *Inamoramento de Orlando* is, in its essence, a celebration of secular 'Arthurian' chivalry – a set of values which is exported to Christian Europe from the exotic lands of *Paganìa* –, the ideological viewpoint of the *Furioso*, though undoubtedly influenced by that of its main source (we sense this already in the opening lines: 'Di

¹ On the presence of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* in the *Furioso* see Marco Dorigatti, 'Il boiardismo del primo *Furioso*', in *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*, ed. by Riccardo Bruscaagli and Amedeo Quondam (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1992), pp. 161-174; Michael Sherberg, 'Ariosto and Boiardo. Poetry and Memory', in Id., *Rinaldo: Character and Intertext in Ariosto and Tasso* (Saratoga, Calif: Anma Libri, 1993), pp. 13-42; Giuseppe Sangirardi, *Boiardismo ariostesco. Presenza e trattamento dell' 'Orlando Innamorato' nel 'Furioso'* (Lucca: M. Pacini Fazzi, 1993); Maria Cristina Cabani, 'Considerazioni sul boiardismo del *Furioso* e alcune riflessioni sull'uso degli strumenti informatici nelle indagini intertestuali', *Rivista di letteratura italiana*, XII (1994), 157-248.

donne e cavalier li antiqui amori, / le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto', I 1,1-2 ABC), is far from being straightforward. Ariosto's portrayal of human passions is more realistic; he is more interested in the complexities and ambiguities of human relationships, more aware of the gap between literature and real life. This affects the ways in which he represents both Christian and Saracen characters.

As the reader leaves the Arthurian world of the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and steps into the first canto of the *Orlando furioso*, he or she is bound to feel slightly disoriented. One needs time to get used to the new personalities of Boiardo's characters who, as has been observed by Rajna and other critics, now appear to be older, deprived of their adolescent spontaneity, at times surprisingly cynical.² Love shows its disturbing side when Sacripante, a model lover in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, suddenly decides to rape Angelica, telling himself that 'a-donna non si può far cosa / che più soave e più piacevol sia' (I 58,4-5 ABC).³ While Angelica expects him to continue to serve her faithfully and selflessly, Sacripante has changed; he is no longer a Petrarchan suppliant, but someone who is so overwhelmed by sexual desire that he does not care what his lady's wishes are, for he has convinced himself that she is no different from all other

² Rajna (1900), p. 55, for example, remarks that Ruggiero 'si direbbe invecchiato di dieci anni almeno'. Elaborating on Rajna's observation, Emilio Zanette adds that other characters seem to have aged too. See his *Conversazioni sull'Orlando furioso* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1959), pp. 9-60.

³ Ariosto creates an ironic contrast between Sacripante's tearful laments (41-44) and his decision to 'dar l'assalto' (59,2). In A the irony of the episode is further underlined by the fact that Sacripante greets his lady in a most respectful way: 'Pieno di dolce *affetto e reverente*, / alla sua donna, alla sua diva corse; / lo raccolse ella *più cortesemente* / che non faria se fusse in India forse' (54,1-4). In B and C, however, this octave is rewritten and the meeting between the two characters is charged with sensuality: 'Pieno di dolce e d'amoroso affetto, / alla sua donna, alla sua diva corse, / che con le braccia al collo il tenne stretto, / quel ch'al Catai non avria fatto forse'. According to Giraldis Cinzio, the emended version is inferior to the original one: '[...] si vede chiaramente che le rime della prima stanza erano quelle con le quali si doveva esprimere quel concetto, et che queste seconde furono tolte per necessità. Perché quella parola *riverente* mostra la grandezza della donna et il rispetto di Sacripante verso lei, il quale, quantunque tocco dagli stimoli d'amore, hebbe nondimeno riguardo al real grado della donna. [...] [il verso] «Che con le braccia al collo il tenne stretto», è pieno di una non convenevole lascivia, et si scuopre meno efficace'. See Giovan Battista Giraldis Cinthio, *Discorsi intorno al comporre rivisti dall'autore nell'esemplare ferrarese Cl. I 90*, ed. by Susanna Villari (Messina: Centro interdipartimentale di studi umanistici, 2002), p. 126.

women.⁴ Whilst his gentle, self-sacrificing love made him a perfect knight in the *Innamoramento de Orlando*, this all-consuming physical passion neither increases his strength nor enhances his *cortesía*. Soon after he has decided to 'pluck' Angelica's rose, he is unhorsed by Bradamante and, as if that was not enough to undermine Boiardo's belief in the fortifying and ennobling power of love, he encounters Rinaldo and, challenged to combat in canto II, fails to dismount, even though Rinaldo is on foot.

These and other similar episodes, in which Saracen knights fall short of the chivalric ideal as it emerged from Boiardo's poem (Mandricardo's kidnaps Doralice and gets hold of the mad Orlando's armour; Rodomonte does not intend to keep his promise to respect Isabella's chastity; Feraù (Ferraù, Ferrauto) tells outrageous lies about his past encounters with Orlando and rides away with the paladin's helmet when he accidentally finds it; Gradasso's fails to bring Baiardo to the spot of his duel with Rinaldo; Agramante breaks his oath), have led a number of critics to argue that Ariosto establishes a clear-cut boundary between Christians and Saracens, portraying the latter as inferior. Rajna, to quote but one of the adherents to this view, maintains that in the *Furioso* most of Boiardo's Saracens lose their charisma: 'Delle carezze fatte agli eroi cristiani si dovrà sentire il contraccolpo nella rappresentazione dei cavalieri saracini [...] basterà adorare Maometto per essere, o poco o tanto, messi in mala vista'.⁵

Taken out of context, isolated from the rest of the *favola*, the above-mentioned transgressions of the chivalric code may seem to support this view. However, as soon as one contextualizes them, it becomes clear that these Saracen knights do not do anything that deserves outright condemnation and are not necessarily more flawed than

⁴ '[...] sotto questa servitù amorosa, non incrinata nel *Furioso* da scappatelle con altre donne, diversamente da quanto invece era avvenuto nell'*Innamorato* (OI I, ix, 58) bolle il violento impulso sessuale che si coagula, non appena l'occasione si presenta propizia, nell'ossimorico "dolce assalto", nel disegno di violare l'amata Angelica' (Paola Casella, 'Il Funzionamento dei personaggi secondari nell'*Orlando furioso*: le vicissitudine di Sacripante', *Italianistica*, XXXVI (2006), 11-26: 18).

⁵ Rajna (1900), p. 59.

Charlemagne's paladins. Is Rinaldo a more noble lover than Sacripante? Not really: fully aware of the fact that Angelica hates him (the Circassian knight, on the contrary, believes that his passion is reciprocated, as the cunning damsel has been playing with his heart, encouraging him to hope that one day he might hold her in his arms), Rinaldo nevertheless pursues her relentlessly, hunting her as if she were wild game. In other words, by all appearances, he too is a potential rapist. Sacripante's fall in the brief clash with Bradamante is perhaps not as dishonouring as it might appear at first sight. As Angelica ventures to say in an attempt to console him, this mishap may be the fault of his horse: in fact the poor animal dies in the full speed collision with Bradamante's steed and Sacripante, as luck would have it, is trapped underneath. Bradamante's horse is thrown to the ground too, but it survives the fall and its owner manages to make it stand up. The damsel, it must be added, does not stop to offer him help, as a courteous enemy would have done. Unlike Boiardo's Astolfo who blames his horse every time he is knocked out off the saddle, the Circassian knight is truly shaken by what has happened, which shows that chivalry and honour are certainly not empty words for him:

Sospira e geme, non perché l'annoi,
 che piede o braccio s'habbia rotto o mosso,
 ma per vergogna sola, onde a' di suoi
 né pria né dopo el viso hebbe sì rosso.
 (*Orlando furioso*, I 66,1-4 ABC)

It is true that Sacripante does not dismount when Rinaldo challenges him to a duel, but, unchivalrous as it may seem, his behaviour is understandable if we only take into account his psychological state of mind. Sacripante has just suffered the greatest humiliation of his life; Angelica throws salt on a still bleeding wound when, upon seeing her Christian suitor, she suggests that they flee from him. Rather than politely asking the Circassian to return Baiardo (the clever horse which has not been stolen: it ran away to find Angelica) Rinaldo greets him with a torrent of verbal abuse:

gridò: – Scendi, ladron, del mio cavallo!
 Che mi sia tolto il mio, patir non soglio,
 ma ben fo a chi lo vuol caro costallo;
 e levar questa donna ancho ti voglio,
 che serebbe a lasciartela gran fallo:
 sì perfetto destrier, donna sì degna
 a un ladron non mi par che si convegna. –
 (*Orlando furioso*, II 3,7-8 ABC)

Sacripante's nerves are on edge, and Rinaldo's insults are the straw that broke the camel's back: blinded by rage, the Saracen forgets about the chivalric code and charges at his enemy to teach him a lesson.⁶ Only a saint would have treated Rinaldo with *cortesía* in such circumstances. The Christian knight, it could be argued, gets what he deserves, for he was the first to act discourteously. Nor can we say that Boiardo's knights always keep their sang-froid in such situations: the furious Rodamonte attempts to kill Baiardo after Rinaldo (angered by the fact that Rodamonte deals blows all around him, without looking where they fall) calls him a 'perfido ribaldo' and says that in his 'paese ardente e caldo [...] vertute e prodecia non vale' (II xiv 48,3-6). Rather than testifying to his disdain for the chivalric code, Rodamonte's extreme reaction shows that undeserved insults can make a knight lose his mind.⁷

⁶ It is interesting to note that Toscanella (1574) will later criticise Rinaldo, even though he usually takes the Christians' side. In his 'Allegoria' to canto II we are told that 'Per Rinaldo, che dice ladrone fuori di proposito à Sacripante; essendo debito di cavalleria di non ingiuriare altrui di parole se non giuridicamente, & (per così dire) sforzatamente; si dà ad intendere che l'huomo il quale si dà in preda al furore amoroso; passa à termini men che convenevoli, & biasemevoli' (p. 23). Commenting on *Fur.*, II 5, Toscanella adds that 'Rinaldo chiamò ladron Sacripante, non perché fosse sul suo cavallo, che molto ben sapea non essergli stato da lui rubato, che se n'era fuggito; ma perché hebbe invidia, che esso s'havesse Angelica; e così dalle parole alle mentite, dalle mentite all'arme vennero' (p. 25).

⁷ According to a number of critics, this episode would show that Rodamonte has no regard for the chivalric code. See Alexandre-Gras (1983), p. 136; Ragni (2007), pp. 407-408. Yet Rodamonte usually treats his Christian enemy with *cortesía*. For example, he patiently waits for Orlando (knocked out by Rodamonte's blow) to come back to his senses: 'Vero è che Rodamonte il Saracino / non lo tocava e stavà a mirare' (II xxv 21,5-6). Referring to this duel several cantos later, Boiardo declares that 'il bon Conte d'Anglante / avea d'un colpo la memoria persa, / quando il percosse il perfido Affricante' (xxix 26,3-5). Clearly the epithet 'perfido' is neither deserved nor significant: it is merely a line-filler. Nor should one attach excessive importance to some derogative epithets that are occasionally used by Ariosto (e.g. 'crudel Barbaro', XII 37,6 AB; XIV C; 'brutto Saracin', XXVII 13,1 AB; XXIX C).

Neither Rinaldo nor Sacripante apologises to the other when an infernal spirit interrupts their duel by telling them that Angelica is with Orlando. Fuming with anger and even fantasising about cutting out his cousin's heart, Rinaldo jumps onto Baiardo and gallops away without saying a word to Sacripante, let alone offering him a lift (as the 'cortese' Ferraù did in an analogous situation in canto I). Ariosto refrains from taking sides; his narrator does not intervene with moralizing comments, leaving us free to make our own conclusions. The episode is infused with comedy. It is highly ironic that none other than Rinaldo should accuse Sacripante of theft when it is he who has this sin on his conscience: Ariosto's early readers would have known that in times of financial hardship Amone's son frequently resorted to robbing wealthy travellers in order to support himself and his large family ('ma sciò ch'a Montecalban a nòte scura – exclaims Orlando in Boiardo's poem – né al chiaro giorno è la strata sicura!', I xxviii 6,7-8). The Saracen of course throws the accusation back in his face ('chi dicesse a te ladro, lo diria / (per quanto n'è la fama) più con vero', II 4,3-4), delighting the reader who expected such a reply. By comparing these lovelorn warriors to 'dui can mordenti /... / con occhi bieci e più che bragia rossi' (5,1-4) who fly at each other 'di rabbia ardenti, / con aspri ronchi e rabuffati dossi' (5,5-6), the narrator mocks both of them; this unflattering simile strips them of any heroic aura, suggesting that these brave warriors are behaving as irrational animals of a rather low species.

Thus, Ariosto does not idealise his leading characters. However, he does not degrade them either, at least not completely. It would be wrong to say that his Sacripante and Rinaldo are unchivalrous brutes. Despite the fact that some of their actions verge on the unchivalrous, neither of them takes chivalry lightly. They act discourteously not because they do not believe in *cortesia*, but rather because they lose self-control, blinded as they are by their rampant passion for Angelica. In the course of the narration, other characters,

both Saracen and Christian, will stray from the path of chivalry and virtue for the same reason, that is because of their inability to bridle their emotions. Yet one will not find any villains amongst the protagonists of the *Furioso*, just as there are no villains in the 'main cast' of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. Those who have no moral compass, who enjoy harming others, are all minor characters: Pinabello and his lady (a Christian couple), Origille and Martano (a Saracen couple), Cimosco, Gabrina and Marganorre (Christian evildoers). Similarly, only minor characters (in particular, Bireno, Odorico, Cilando and Tanacro, all of whom come from Christian Europe) commit abominable crimes in order to quench their irrepressible amorous desire. Interestingly, in the 1532 *Furioso* the Christian 'baddies' outnumber by far the Saracen 'baddies'.

But let us proceed with order. My analysis of Saracen chivalry in the *Furioso* will span two chapters. I shall start by looking at Ariosto's proportion of Saracens and by highlighting the most obvious 'factual' differences between Boiardo's and Ariosto's *Paganìa*. Section 3.2 will be devoted to the Saracens' *amori*. Then, I shall look at the portrayal of the Saracens who are involved in Agramante's war, paying special attention to the figure of Agramante. In chapter IV I shall explore the themes of honour and conversion, focusing on Ruggiero's conflict of allegiances and his deep-rooted fear of being considered a traitor, a fear that haunts him until the very end of the poem. His choices will be analysed in light of those made by Rodomonte, who is closer to Agramante than most other African knights and who, rightly or wrongly, accuses the founder of the Este dynasty of having betrayed his lord.

3.1. WHO'S WHO IN ARIOSTO'S *PAGANÌA*

Like the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, the *Furioso* is a densely populated poem. It contains hundreds of characters, with the total number exceeding 300 already in the first edition.

Ariosto uses most of the characters who are still alive when Book III of the *Inamoramento* is abruptly interrupted, and occasionally makes references to those who died (or were dead) in his predecessor's poem. At the same time, he introduces a significant number of new characters, many of whom come from Christian parts of the world and some of whom live in strange isolated spaces outside of both Christendom and *Paganìa*, such as the secluded kingdom of the 'femine omicide' or the remote island of Ebuda, where the gods of the ancients seem to be still worshipped. Although the Saracens occupy an important place in the universe of the *Furioso*, they no longer participate in nearly every adventure. Moreover, though painted with vivid colours on Ariosto's map, the vast expanses of *Paganìa* are the setting of only some of the stories woven into the rich fabric of the poem.

Let us start by considering some figures. As we saw earlier, Saracens and Saracen converts to Christianity, including those who died in other chivalric narratives and now live in the narrator's and other characters' memory, constitute approximately two-thirds of the cast of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. They are more than 210, while the Christians, that is those who were born into the Christian religion, are about 102. In the *Furioso* there is no such discrepancy between Saracens and Christians. Their respective numbers are more or less equal in the 1516 edition: roughly 140 Saracens and ex-Saracens, and around 147 Christians.⁸ In the 1532 version, however, the number of Christian characters increases by several dozens, as Ariosto adds four stories which are set in Christian lands, namely Olimpia's story, the Rocca di Tristano episode, the Marganorre episode and Ruggiero's adventures in Eastern Europe. In C, therefore, the Christians (195) outnumber the Saracens (141) by a considerable margin. Whilst Ariosto

⁸ These numbers include the characters who take part in the story and those who are merely mentioned by the narrator or other characters. I have tried to make note of all the nameless characters (hermits, servants, etc.) who make a small contribution to the narration. I have not counted the heroes of Arthurian romances (as they belong to a different cycle) or the Christian offspring of Bradamante and Ruggiero. See Appendix II for a comprehensive list of Ariosto's Saracens.

invents new Christian characters, there are no new Saracens in C: the number 141 is due to the fact the narrator briefly mentions Truffaldino (XXIX 41,2 B; XXXI C), the treacherous King of Baldaca who met an inglorious end in the Albracà war when Rinaldo tied him to the tail of his horse and dragged him to death (I xxvi 46-52). Ariosto's narrator assures us that Aquilante and Griphone (who defended the traitor in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*) no longer hold a grudge against Rinaldo. Whereas in A we were merely told that the 'discordie e liti' (XXIX 40,8) between these knights have been forgotten, in B and C the author adds an octave in which he explains their cause.

It could be that Ariosto was aware of the wide gap between Christians and Saracens in his predecessor's poem and tried to reduce it by paying more attention to the Christian world. If we read the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso* as two halves of one very long chivalric romance ('come in effetto sono', according to Tasso, for example⁹), the Christians' numerical superiority in C can perhaps be interpreted as a move towards greater symmetry. Although Ariosto does not let his infidels (and ex-infidels) dominate the list of characters, their number is still relatively large. Out of the 141 (counting Truffaldino) Saracens who feature in the *Furioso*, 93 are taken from Boiardo's poem, 5 are borrowed directly from other chivalric texts, and 43 seem to be invented by Ariosto. Boiardo therefore provides Ariosto with approximately two-thirds of his Saracen characters and all of the Saracen leading figures with the exception of Guidone Selvaggio, a Saracen convert to Christianity, whose case will be discussed later. The fact that Ariosto does not enlarge the 'main crew' can be explained by his concern for the poem's structure; even one more 'saracino Marte' could have created problems at the

⁹ Torquato Tasso, *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico*, ed. by Luigi Poma (Bari: Laterza, 1964), p. 15.

structural level, overcrowding the *favola* and making it harder to control all the narrative threads.¹⁰

Let us now look more closely at the Saracens who come from the *Inamoramento de Orlando* (or from the previous tradition via the ‘bela historia’). Almost a quarter of the 93 Macone worshippers who are lucky to feature in both poems are already resting in their graves (or in Argalia’s case, on the riverbed) when Ariosto reminds us of their exploits or calls them back to Earth as bodiless spirits. Apart from Truffaldino, these characters are: Aimonte (Ariosto’s spelling of Almonte in A), Galaciella, Troiano and their father Agolante; Mambrino, who, as was said earlier, features in the *Cantari di Rinaldo*; Agricane and Argalia, whose deaths are dark clouds on the bright sky of Book I; Argosto, Calabrun d’Aragona, Dudrinasso, Folvirante, Gualciotto, Larbino, Maricoldo, Martasino, Mirabaldo, Pinadoro, Sinagone, Tanfirione and Tardocco, all of whom fall in Agramante’s war in Books II and III.¹¹ While most of these 21 Saracen ghosts receive only a brief mention in the *Furioso*, Argalia takes part in a mini-episode in canto I, and the names of Agramante’s late father and uncle are frequently on the lips of the narrator and other characters.¹²

Having dealt with the dead Saracens, we can focus on those who do re-appear in Ariosto’s poem well and alive. Out of approximately 210 Saracens who feature in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, more than 100 have not yet departed to the world of shadows when the narration suddenly breaks off. In the *Furioso* we meet around two-thirds of these ‘survivors’. Apart from the main protagonists, these are above all Agramante’s and Marsilio’s entourage knights (Agricalte, Alzirdo, the Amirante, Analardo, Archidante, the

¹⁰ Nicolò degli Agostini, the author of another sequel to the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, does not invent any high-calibre Saracens either (if one does not count Scardaffo, a sympathetic giant modelled on Pulci’s *Morgante* who enters the narration in canto II of Agostini’s *Quarto libro* and leaves it in canto IX of the *Quinto libro*), even if he adorns the pages of his ‘gionte’ with many a minor Saracen character.

¹¹ The names are spelt as they appear in the 1516 *Furioso*.

¹² On Argalia’s role in the *Furioso* see Anna Fontes Baratto, ‘Fantôme et fantasme: l’apparition d’Argail dans le premier chant du *Roland furieux*’, *Chroniques italiennes*, LIX-XL, n. 2-3 (2002), 39-63.

Argalifa, Balinfronte, Balinverno, Baliverzo, Balugante, Bambirago, Baricondo, Bavarte, Branzardo, Brunello, Bucifaro, Dardinello, Doriconte, Dorilone, Doriphebo, Doristone, Falcirone, Farurante, Folicone, Folvo, Grandonio, Isoliero, Languirano, Malabuferso, Malgarino, Malzarise, Madarasso, Manilardo, Marbalusto, Matalista, Morgante, Prusione, Puliano, Serpentino, Sobrino, Soridano and Stordilano) as well as their and their enemies' ladies (Doralice, Horrigille), Ferraù's mother (Lanfusa), and the characters who take part in the digressive episodes of Book III (Lucina and Norandino; Marsilio's daughter Fiordespinia; Horrilo; Caligorante who is the chained giant we see in III iii 21,7).¹³ Ariosto proves to be a very attentive reader of Books II and III insofar as he mentions at least once nearly every Saracen character, however minor he or she might be, who is somehow involved in Agramante's war. Only a handful of such characters (four, to be precise) are left out and, if truth be said, none of them is particularly important. Thus, the old king of Fiessa (Fez) who recommended Brunello to Agramante, does not make it into the *Furioso*, but in Ariosto's defence it could be said that Boiardo forgets about him after II v 26. Scombrano, the experienced pilot who tries to persuade Rodamonte to wait a few days before setting sail for the Christian shores (II vi 5-9), is not in Ariosto's poem either, but it is not clear whether he survived the terrible storm which destroyed part of Rodomonte's fleet. In any case, he is merely a pilot, not a king or a knight. Some readers might be disappointed not to find Larbino's sweetheart Calidora amongst Ariosto's

¹³ Ariosto makes virtually no mistakes when re-introducing Agramante's and Marsilio's knights into his continuation of Boiardo's story. One could only remark that Boiardo's Alanardo becomes Analardo, Maradasso turns into Madarasso, and that Balinfronte (Ariosto gives Boiardo's Balifronte an extra 'n') is the king of Cosca rather than Mulga. As Bigi points out in his commentary to XIV 23,1, the latter error is probably due to the fact that in II xxii 22 Boiardo contradicts himself by giving Cosca to Cardorano, a king who is killed by Orlando. In this respect it could be said out that Ariosto corrects Boiardo at least on one occasion: in II xxviii 52 Agramante orders Bucifaro and Folco to stay in Biserta and look after his kingdom in his absence, but in III viii 11 we see both of them fighting by the gates of Paris; in the *Furioso* these knights do obey their lord's order and can be found in Biserta when Astolfo lays siege to the African capital. As far as spelling differences are concerned, they are relatively few: Rugiero becomes Ruggiero, Rodamonte turns into Rodomonte, and a few minor characters acquire or lose a consonant. Although most editors of the *Furioso* maintain that Ariosto's changes Boiardo's Argaliffa and Amirante into Largalifa and Lamirante, it is very likely that the letter *l* is merely an article (see Dorigatti's note to XII 16,3); if so, Ariosto's spelling would have remained faithful to Boiardo's.

Saracens, considering that her new lover is Isolieri (II xviii 4), one of Marsilio's knights. It could be, however, that time cured Isolieri of his passion, since there is no mention of Calidora in Book III (even if the fact that neither Doralice nor Horrigille appear in Book III does not prevent the poet from using these heroines in his *favola*). Finally, Ariosto does not take the trouble to tell us whether Astolfo's *blitzkrieg* in Africa affected Gordaneto, the King of the Arabs (and head of the nomad tribes), but this rebellious king is merely mentioned *en passant* in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*: Boiardo's narrator observes that he does not participate in Agramante's expedition, as he has not sworn allegiance to him (II xxii 32-33). Although Gordaneto does not feature in the *Furioso*, there are several references to the 'Arabi' over whom he is supposed to reign.¹⁴

Many more knights and damsels could have re-appeared in the *Furioso* given that they are not yet dead at the end of Book III. However, Ariosto ignores the vast majority of the characters who are not involved in the plotline which revolves around Agramante's war. Some of them, it must be said, seem to have been forgotten by Boiardo himself long before Book III. For example, the charismatic giant Alfrera, who is one of the most impressive warriors in Gradasso's army in Book I, is last mentioned in I vii 50. He probably died of shame or vowed to spend the rest of his days in some dark cave in his native Taprobana after he had had to flee the battlefield because his giraffe, 'bestia pigra molto per natura' (I vii 22,4), would not obey him. Although, as the narrator reassures us in II vii 40, Gradasso eventually forgave him, Boiardo must have deemed him unworthy of sailing to France again. Unsurprisingly, Alfrera does not feature in the *Furioso*. Nor do any of the following Saracens: Giasarte and Pilias (the son of the King of Arabia and the ruler of Rosia who are unhorsed by Astolfo in the joust in Paris at I iii 8-9); Spinella da Altamonte (Marsilio's subject who is last seen fleeing at I vii 19); Albarosa's brother

¹⁴ Ariosto's memory is particularly impressive if one compares the Saracen army in the *Furioso* to the Saracen army in Agostini's *Quarto libro*. Agostini's omissions include Alzirdo, Baliverno, Baliverzo, Bavarte, Doriconte, Doristone, Farurante, Folvo, Languirano, Malgarino and Marbalusto.

Horisello (last mentioned at I xiii 34); Pandragon, the King of Gotia (who is grievously wounded by Orlando at I xv 23-24); Tisbina, a Babylonian *femme fatale* (last mentioned at I xvii 12); Uldano, the King of Danna (who is unhorsed by Brandimarte at I xviii 28); Horigilla's suitors Ariante (last mentioned at II v 19), Locrino and Uldarno as well as the evil knight Horingo who killed her brother (all of them are knocked off their saddles by Orlando: 'poi tutti comme morti li abandona', I xxix 43,5); Polifermo, the King of Orgagna (last mentioned in II ii 40); Adriano, Antiphor, Balano and Chiarione (a group of Saracen knights who fight valorously in the Albracà war and whom we last see at II ii 60-62); Rupardo (Brandimarte's enemy who besieges the Roca Silvana, as we are told at II xiii 12-13); Folderico's wife Leodila (last mentioned at II xiii 46-49, when we learn that she is Brandimarte's sister) and her lover Hordauero (Boiardo leaves him at I xxv 22 and we never find out whether he married Leodila); Caramano (Torindo's cowardly brother who manages to get away from Brandimarte at II xviii 30); the corsair Taridone (who, however, might be already dead when he is mentioned in II xix 22); Balsaldo and Morbeco (two Turkish knights who take part in the tournament in Cyprus at II xxii); Fiordelisa's abductor Fugiforca (last seen in II xxvii 31), her pleasure-seeking sister Doristela (last mentioned at II xxvii 32), their mother Perodia (last mentioned at II xxvii 38) and Doristela's faithful servant Gambone (who waves us goodbye at II xxvi 50).

It is impossible to know whether Boiardo planned to use any of these Saracens at some stage in Book III, but Ariosto decided that there was no need to continue their stories or indeed to remind the readers of their adventures. Only a very small number of similar characters briefly appear or are referred to in his poem: Hiroldo, Prasildo and a few members of Brandimarte's family, all of whom converted to Christianity in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. These characters are relegated to the fringes of the universe of the *Furioso*. The inseparable friends (they leave Boiardo's poem at II xiv 7) are

mentioned twice: when they are freed from Atlante's steel castle (IV 40 ABC) only to be lured into the sorcerer's second trap (XX 20 AB; XXII C).¹⁵ We never find out what dream they had been pursuing or what happened to them after a blast of Astolfo's horn had broken the enchantment. In the new poem, Hiroldo and Prasildo are merely two names, but the fact that they join the ranks of Ariosto's Saracens and ex-Saracens means that their story moved him; the friendship between Cloridano and Medoro – Saracen soldiers – is perhaps inspired *also* by their devotion to each other (as well as by Virgil, of course). As far as Brandimarte's family is concerned, his servant Bardino (last seen in II xiii 44) travels to Africa to tell him that his father Monodante has passed away and that his brother Giliante (who sails back to Damagir at II xiii 53, leaving the 'bela historia') wants him to come home and rule their kingdom (XXV 73 A; 62 B; XXXIX 62 C). Moreover, Dolistone, Fiordiligi's father, is implicitly referred to in XXXIX 181 AB (XLIII 184 C).

Having briefly looked at Boiardo's Saracens, we must say a few words about the five characters whom Ariosto takes directly from the tradition, namely Bianzardino, Chiariello, Gostanza, Guidon Selvaggio and Sansonetto. Bianzardino, as we saw in 2.1, is the Saracen who persuades Gano to betray Orlando and Charlemagne in the texts that deal with the Roncesvalles tragedy; Chiariello (Chiarello), Mambrino's brother, comes from the *Cantari di Rinaldo*, his name featuring in many other chivalric stories (for example the *Mambriano*: see I 15,2); Gostanza (Costanza) and her son Guidon Selvaggio feature in a number of anonymous fourteenth-century poems and prose romances, including *Regina Ancroia*, *Guidon Selvaggio* and the *Storie di Rinaldo*; as for Sansonetto (Sansonet), he is one of the 'good' Saracens of the *Spagna* narratives, who first appears in the *Entrée d'Espagne*. The inclusion of these characters points to the fact that Ariosto was

¹⁵ Iroldo and Prasildo also feature in Agostini's *Quinto libro*: in canto XIV they invite Feraguto to stay in their crystal palace, where there is a garden with a magic spring whose waters make one turn into whatever creature one wishes.

relatively well-versed in the Carolingian branch of the chivalric tradition and that, in any case, he read beyond the *Inamoramento de Orlando*.¹⁶ However, he does take liberties with some of the borrowed characters, rewriting parts of their stories and showing a surprising lack of concern for chronology, an attitude which would have scandalised Boiardo's fifteenth-century readers.

Ariosto's treatment of Bianzardino and Chiariello does not seem particularly original, for both of them are minor characters. They are mentioned once each: Bianzardino parades his troops in front of Agramante and Marsilio at XII 14,6-8 AB (XIV C), while at XVIII 6,1-2 AB (XX C) we are reminded that Rinaldo killed Chiariello and conquered his kingdom. In the *Chanson de Roland* Blancandrin rules over Valfonde, while the author of the *Fatti de Spagna* gives him Valnoyra. He is just a 're' in the *Spagna ferrarese* and in the *Morgante*. Ariosto makes him lead soldiers from Avila, Plancencia, Salamanca, Zamora and Palencia, adding those from Asturga in C. There are no references to the sinister role that he will play in the final stage of the war between Charlemagne and Marsilio, which means that Ariosto introduces this Saracen character because he happens to remember him rather than out of a desire to link his poem to the Roncesvalles narratives. Compared to Bianzardino and Chiariello, Guidon Selvaggio and Sansonetto receive much more attention from the poet. What is particularly interesting is that both of them appear now more 'Christian' than they are in the chivalric texts from which they were taken. Despite the fact that in the *Spagna* narratives Sansonetto converts to Christianity during Orlando's last adventure in the East, Ariosto's Sansonetto is already a

¹⁶ Praloran is perhaps too quick to dismiss Ariosto's use of the Carolingian branch of the chivalric tradition as largely unoriginal: 'In generale l'*Inamoramento de Orlando* è il foyer attraverso il quale passa una parte della tradizione cavalleresca fino al *Furioso*, la parte 'debole', quella dei cantari, quella dell'epica carolingia, quella dei poemi cavallereschi tardo quattrocenteschi e – perché no? – lo stesso *Morgante* del Pulci. In questa linea, più popolareggiante, pochi sono i margini che differenziano l'uso ariostesco delle fonti, da quello boiardesco, se non nel senso che la selezione in Ariosto sarà di gran lunga maggiore. Ma quello che passa sembra in sostanza passare attraverso Boiardo' (Praloran (2007), p. 150). Some aspects of Ariosto's engagement with the Carolingian chivalric tradition have been studied by Daniela Delcorno Branca: see her *L'Orlando furioso e il romanzo cavalleresco medievale* (Firenze: Olschki, 1973).

Christian and Charlemagne's vassal when he meets Astolfo and showers him with presents. 'Orlando lo converse a nostra fede, / e di sua man battesimo ancho gli diede' (XIII 76,7-8 AB; 95,7-8 C), declares the narrator, using the past tense where it would have been more correct to employ the future tense. Guidone's case is even more complex and intriguing. As we saw in 2.2, in the *Regina Ancroia* he sails to Europe to find Rinaldo (who had an affair with his mother Costanza many years ago); after having defeated a fair number of Christian knights and fought with his own father, he embraces Christianity.¹⁷ Not only is Ariosto's Guidone the son of Amone (and therefore Rinaldo's half-brother), but he does not seem to mind at all that his relatives are Christians. In fact, he is very proud to belong to the Chiaramonte family:

Io son Guidon, che ne le ripe estreme
del freddo Euxino partorì Gostanza
del medesimo, onde usciste, inclyto seme,
che per quanto il sol scopre ha nominanza.
Per voi [Rinaldo] veder e li altri nostri insieme,
io mi parti' da la materna stanza [...].
(*Orlando furioso*, XXIX 31,1-6 AB; XXXI C)

Although he fights with Rinaldo and other Christian knights, he does not do so on purpose but rather, 'giusta il costume degli Erranti, domanda giostra, e l'ottiene'.¹⁸ When he realizes that the knight who has made him swear is Rinaldo, he is filled with joy and immediately apologizes for having dared to challenge him to a duel. Having been reunited with his paternal family, Guidone helps them to drive the Saracens out of France, but, surprisingly enough, there is no mention of his conversion to Christianity. While the readers who are familiar with the *Regina Ancroia* would know that Gostanza is a Saracen queen and that her son has been raised in the Saracen faith, those who meet Guidone for

¹⁷ According to Rajna (1900), p. 417, 'l'Ariosto conobbe di certo l'*Ancroia* in rima, ma ben difficilmente il testo in prosa, che fa corpo colle *Storie di Rinaldo*, e più improbabilmente ancora l'inedito poema del codice Ricciardiano'.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 418.

the first time might assume that he has always been a Christian, that 'le ripe estreme / del freddo Euxino' are perhaps inhabited by people who believe in Christ. The narrator's silence is puzzling and leaves room for different interpretations.

At this point we can remark that one of Boiardo's ex-Saracens becomes a born and bred Frenchman in the *Furioso*. In chapter II we said that Boiardo expected his audience to know that Dudone's mother was a Saracen giantess. Ariosto, however, turns a blind eye to the allusions to the hero's Saracen past and claims that his mother is none other than Beatrice's sister: Ruggiero 'sa che Armelina, che prodotto havea / Dudone, era sorella di Beatrice, / che fu di Bradamante genitrice' (XXXVI 80,6-8 AB; XL C). Dudone's Saracen childhood is obliterated and his family tree is ennobled, for he is no longer marked by signs of monstrosity. It is of course possible that Ariosto was simply not aware of the fact that he was a Saracen in the chivalric tradition, and so could not see Boiardo's references to the *Castello de Teris* (or to some other romance that relates Dudone's story). But it is equally possible that he deliberately ignored these references. To this we must add that he dispels all doubts regarding Bradamante's mother, stating clearly that the female founder of the Este dynasty was born to Christian parents who were happily married when they conceived her.¹⁹

A quick glance at the geography of the *Furioso* will reveal that Ariosto is not only far more interested in the Christian world than Boiardo, but that he is bold enough to 'correct' the map which was drafted by his predecessor. Whereas in the *Innamoramento de Orlando* Christian Europe is very small in comparison to the lands of the infidels, in the *Furioso* it grows in size, so much so that it absorbs some of the territories of Boiardo's *Paganìa*. Thus, in the countless army that Rinaldo leads to France there are soldiers from the remotest corners of Northern Europe:

¹⁹ 'L'Ariosto fa senz'altro la fanciulla figliuola di Beatrice, ossia della moglie legittima di Amone. Poté essere ignoranza: fu più verisimilmente proposito. Essere regolati d'una progenitrice bastarda, non doveva garbare gli Estensi' (ibid., p. 52).

Non dà soccorso a Carlo solamente
 la terra Inglese e la Scotia e la Irlanda,
 ma vien di Svetia e di Norvega gente,
 da Tile, e sin da la remota Islanda:
 da ogni terra, in somma, che là giace,
 nimica naturalmente di pace.

(*Orlando furioso*, IX 76,3-8 AB; X 88,3-8 C)

Ariosto departs from real history, as the first attempts to convert the peoples who lived in the area of modern-day Sweden took place after Charlemagne's death, while the Christianisation of Norway only began in 1000 AD. Chivalric romances, as we stressed in chapter I, are full of anachronisms and inaccuracies, but what is interesting about this particular case is that in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* neither Sweden nor Norway have discovered the true faith yet. Their kings are Agricane's vassals and hence Saracens:

Vede là il forte Re dela Gotia
 che Pandragon per nome era chiamato;
 vedi lo Imperator dela Rossia,
 che ha nome Argante, et è sì smisurato;
 vedi Lurcone, et il fier Santaria:
 il primo è di Norvega incoronato,
 il secondo de Sueza, e proximana
 ha la bandera de il Re de Normana.

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, I x 12)

Boiardo's Lurcone, Santaria and Brontino (the King of Normana) are all killed by Orlando five cantos later (Brontino dies in I xv 22, Santaria in 34, Lurcone in 38), but the Christians do not colonise these kingdoms.²⁰ Mandricardo, Agricane's son and successor, proves to be a strong and charismatic emperor. It is to him and not to Charlemagne that the new rulers of Sweden and Norway should have sent troops. It remains unclear whether Ariosto was aware of the fact that he was contradicting the *Inamoramento de Orlando* or whether he simply forgot to reread the cantos devoted to the Albracà war.

²⁰ As Tissoni Benvenuti explains in her note to I x 12, Normana too is part of modern-day Sweden.

It is worth noting, however, that although these Northern peoples believe in Christ, their appearance is monstrous and their lifestyle is that of barbarians:

Sedice mila sono, o poco manco,
da le spelonche usciti e da le selve;
hanno piloso il viso, il petto e il fianco,
e dossi e braccia e gambe, come belve.
Intorno a quel stendardo tutto bianco
par che quel pian di lor lance s'inselve:
così Moratto il porta, il capo loro,
che vuol pingerlo poi con sangue Moro.
(*Orlando furioso*, IX 77 AB; 89 C)

The Christian world is therefore characterized by much diversity, with Ariosto creating a kind of hierarchy of Christian peoples.²¹ The presence of Northern 'barbarians' in the army that defends Paris is all the more interesting if one considers that Ariosto's Saracens are on the whole much less monstrous than Boiardo's. While in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* Saracen armies abound in giants and monstrous Saracens, in the *Furioso* the vast majority of Saracens look human. Even Marbalusto, a 'gigante' in Boiardo's eyes (II xxx 5,8), for Ariosto 'quasi era gigante' (XIV 17,4 AB; XVI C). There are ugly creatures in Ariosto's *Paganìa*, but he does not tell us whether they worship Macone. It is debatable, for example, whether the bloodthirsty giant Caligorante is a Saracen; some readers might think that he is too bestial to have a faith, to be considered a more or less rational creature. Similarly, if Boiardo's Horriolo seems to be a follower of Macone (he is called a 'Pagano' three times), Ariosto's Horriolo, 'che d'un folletto nacque e d'una fata' (XII 47,8 AB; XV 66,8 C), is difficult to classify. Fairies, after all, worship their own god, Demogorgone, as Boiardo tells us at II xiii 27-28.

²¹ 'Nei termini del codice cavalleresco e umanistico si potrebbe dire che al "furore" delle genti settentrionali è opposta la "cortesia" delle genti meridionali. È infatti la componente letteraria cortese-cavalleresca, nella sua versione umanistica, a privilegiare nella rappresentazione ariostesca la "dolce" terra dei paladini di Carlo Magno, i paesaggi ameni d'Italia, e la Spagna con i suoi ambienti romanzeschi' (Walter Moretti, *Ariosto narratore e la sua scuola* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1993), p. 83).

Before moving on to examine the 43 Saracens who seem to have been invented by Ariosto we must make one more observation about the geography of the *Furioso*. As was shown in 2.3, Boiardo establishes a strong connection between Saracens and the ancients, even if his Christians too benefit from the heritage of antiquity through the figure of Hector of Troy. While Ariosto's Saracens remain close to the ancient world (in chapter I we stressed Medoro's 'Greek roots'), Ariosto never mentions the fact that Agramante has descended from Alexander and, more significantly, the Macedonian conqueror does not feature in Ruggiero's family tree.²² One could perhaps argue that, by throwing a cloak of silence over the glorious origins of the African dynasty, the poet makes Ruggiero's Christian ancestry appear more illustrious than his Saracen ancestry.²³ On the other hand, it is highly plausible that he expected his readers to remember that Ruggiero's genealogical tree rests on both Hector of Troy and Alexander of Macedon. It is also worth noting that the map of the *Furioso* features some places which have not changed much since the days of antiquity, and which do not appear to be part of *Paganìa*. The inhabitants of the island of Ebuda believe that Proteus' wrath will be terrible should they fail to feed the Orca with the tender flesh of maidens. The 'femine omicide' stay true to the laws established by their Cretan foremothers. Although Ebuda borders with Christian territories (Ireland) and the kingdom of men-haters is geographically close to Saracen

²² For example, as is evident from Melissa's angry speech, Alexander is only one of Ruggiero's role models: 'Quest'è ben veramente alto principio / onde si può sperar che serai presto / un Pyrrho, un Alexandro, un Iulio, un Scipio!' (VII 59,1-3 AB). In C these lines are slightly revised and Alexander comes first in the list of ancient warriors ('a farti un *Alessandro*, un Iulio, un Scipio!', 59,3), but we cannot say that his example is particularly important to Ruggiero.

²³ It could be that Ariosto thought that being related to Alexander the Great was not as prestigious as being related to Hector of Troy. In Cieco da Ferrara's *Mambriano* Alexander is an ambivalent figure. In line with his representation in medieval romances and in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, he is admired for his courage. His story is very inspiring, particularly to young knights such as Rinaldo's son Ivonetto, who is upset when Rinaldo does not allow him to take part in a joust: 'Non hai tu letto d'*Alessandro Magno*, / che per sprezzar in gioventù gli affanni / quasi di tutto il mondo fe' guadagno, / prima che avesse trentadue anni? / e tu non vuoi, onde io forte mi lagno, / che vestir possa gli armigeri panni / ora che mi appropinquo, come sanno / tutte le genti, al sestodecimo anno' (XXXV 95). On the other hand, as Orlando tells Astolfo, '*Alessandro* fu certo uom di gran pregio, / ma i vizi deturparno la sua immagine' (X 73,1-2). These and all subsequent quotations from the *Mambriano* are taken from Francesco Cieco, *Libro d'arme e d'amore, nomato Mambriano*, ed. by Giuseppe Rua (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1926).

lands, the poet does not say whether the religion of Christ or that of Macone have reached these secluded states. All we know is that the laws or customs which go back to pre-Christian times still govern the life of the people who live there.²⁴

Turning now to the Saracens whose literary lives start in the *Furioso*, even though there are no primary characters in this category, we do find memorable figures such as Cloridano and Medoro and Issabella. The Saracens invented by Ariosto comprise: Agramante's and Marsilio's kings and knights (Arganio, Balastro, Buraldo, Caico, Calamidor da Barcelona, Chelindo, Clarindo, Corineo, Finadurro, Libanio, Malaguro, Mosco, Ormida, Rimedonte, Tesira), rank-and-file soldiers (Altheo, Attalico, Casimiro, Cloridano, Dorchino, Etarco, Gardo, Margano, Medoro, Olimpio da la Serra), the knights taking part in the joust of Damascus (Carmondo, Corimbo and Tirse from Apamia, Ermophilo, Ombruno, Salinterno, the rulers of Lodicea, Seleucia and Sidonia) and a few nameless minor characters. Moreover, Ariosto gives Horrigille a new lover, Martano, and mentions several times the powerful sultan of Egypt, Agramante's neighbour. While in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* the Egyptian sultan is one of Agramante's vassal kings (Menadarbo, the sultan of Egypt and Syria, is killed by Brandimarte in II xviii 26-27), in the *Furioso* Egypt is an independent state, and so Agramante's power is slightly diminished. As far as female characters are concerned, we see only two new faces: Fiammetta and Issabella. Whereas the Saracen identity of the latter is beyond any doubt, the former seems to be a Saracen because Valencia, the kingdom where she and her childhood sweetheart Greco first met, is part of Marsilio's Spain.²⁵

²⁴ It is interesting to note that the connection between the Saracen world and ancient paganism is completely abolished in Agostini's *gionta*: not only does Agostini pass over in silence Agramante's and Ruggiero's descent from Alexander, but in his *Quinto libro* pagan gods openly support the Christians. When the remnants of Agramante's army board their ships to sail back to Biserta, the gods unleash a terrible storm in which all the infidels perish.

²⁵ Boiardo's Doriphebo is the King of Valencia, as we learn at II xxiii 49,2-3. Ariosto's Marsilio retreats to Valencia after Agramante's defeat (XXXV 85 A; 74 B; XXXIX 74 C).

While only two new Saracens damsels appear in the *Furioso*, a relatively large number of Christian damsels and women enter the *favola*. The fact that Ariosto's Christian heroines are actively involved in various 'digressive' episodes is rather surprising and innovative in the context of the Carolingian branch of the chivalric tradition. As we saw in chapter II, it is unusual for Christian women to have leading roles in romantic adventures (even if occasionally Orlando's Alda enters the spotlight). In the *Furioso*, however, they can compete with Saracen heroines. That said, it is time to move on to the next section and to examine the Saracens' *amori*.

3.2. 'LI ANTIQUI AMORI': THE SARACEN PERSPECTIVE

The following Saracens and Saracen converts to Christianity contribute to the theme of love in the *Furioso*: Angelica, Brandimarte, Doralice, Feraù, Fiordeligi (Fiordiligi), Fiordispina, Guidon Selvaggio (who is said to have a loving relationship with one of his wives on the island of 'femine omicide'), Horrigille, Issabella, Lucina, Mandricardo, Martano, Medoro, Norandino, Rodomonte, Ruggiero and Sacripante, as well as Fiammetta and her childhood sweetheart Greco.²⁶ Though united by the bond of a common faith, these characters have very different personalities. They experience love in different ways and with varying degrees of intensity: Brandimarte, Fiordeligi, Issabella, Lucina, Norandino are models of conjugal affection; the surprising union between Angelica and Medoro is open to various interpretations; Feraù's passion for Angelica is not always convincing and neither is Ruggiero's for Bradamante; Sacripante, as we saw

²⁶ Interestingly, half of the Saracen heroines (Doralice, Fiordispina, Issabella and possibly Fiammetta) come from Marsilio's Spain. As we shall see, only one of them is chaste. According to Remo Ceserani, 'Dalla [...] cultura ispano-aragonese, cara anche a Isabella [d'Este], Ariosto prende varie volte maliziosamente le distanze', especially with the bawdy story of Fimmetta, who lives in Valenza, the city of the Borgia family. See Remo Ceserani, 'Due modelli culturali e narrativi nell'*Orlando Furioso*', *GSLI*, CLXI, 516 (1984), 481-506: 504-505.

above, is no longer content to worship Angelica from a distance; Fiordispina's affair with Ricciardetto has comic overtones, while Fiammetta's salacious story is designed to make the reader smile; the opportunistic Doralice and Mandricardo inspire mixed feelings; the perfidious Horrigille and the cowardly Martano earn the readers' contempt. These characters enable the poet to explore the many facets of love and its psychological states. The same can be said of the Christian characters whose *amori* are sung in the *Furioso*. Among them, too, there are individuals capable of self-sacrifice (e.g. Ariodante), cynical villains (Gabrina) and normal flawed human beings. One of the most obvious differences between the theme of love in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and in the *Furioso* is that in the latter poem it is not dominated by Saracens. Ariosto's Christian lovers are significantly more numerous than Boiardo's. The long list includes: Adonio, Anselmo, Argeo, Ariodante, Astolfo, Bradamante, Dalinda, Gabrina, Ginebra (Ginevra), Griphone, Melissa, Odorico di Biscaglia, Orlando, Pinabello di Maganza, Polinesso, Ricciardetto, Rinaldo, the knight who offers Rinaldo to drink from the enchanted chalice and his wife, Zerbino, as well as Arbante, Bireno, Cilandro, Drusilla, Leone, Oberto di Ibernica, Olindro di Lungavilla, Olimpia and Tanacro in C. Moreover, it is worth stressing that some of the amorous stories involve only Christian characters (for example, those of Ginebra, Olimpia and Gabrina, the 'novella del nappo' and that of judge Anselmo).

At first glance it may seem that Ariosto is more conservative than Boiardo. Issabella, one of the few Saracen lovers created from scratch, has many 'sisters' in the earlier chivalric tradition: as was shown in 2.2, late medieval chivalric romances abound in Saracen damsels who elope with handsome Christian knights, leaving behind their Saracen past. Similarly, Fiordispina's fling with Ricciardetto reminds us – as Cavallo puts it – of 'late Carolingian narratives in which lusty Saracen princesses desire paladins who pass through their land and sometimes have love affairs with them but do not establish

lasting, legitimate ties'.²⁷ These two stories of interfaith and interracial love contribute to 'redeem' Christian men: they are now better lovers than they were in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, even if we cannot say that they surpass Saracen men as they do not only in most pre-Boiardan chivalric narratives but also in Ciego's *Mambriano*.²⁸ While Issabella and Fiordispina bestow their affections on Christian knights, other Saracen heroines (Angelica, Doralice, Fiordeligi, Horrigitte and Lucina) lose their heart to fellow Saracens, with Angelica rejecting the best Christian champion and instead offering herself as well as her kingdom to an obscure African soldier.²⁹ The fact that Medoro – 'un vilissimo Barbaro' in the eyes of Malagigi and Rinaldo (XXXVIII 36,4 A; 39 B; XLII 39 C), but, in reality, an eloquent poet whose unwavering loyalty to his lord Dardinello is virtually without parallel in the universe of the *Furioso* – weds the most beautiful and coveted Saracen damsel shows that Ariosto's treatment of the love theme is anything but conservative.³⁰

Leaving aside the dynastic couple (we shall return to Ruggiero and Bradamante in chapter IV), let us look more closely at interracial love affairs in the *Furioso*. What distinguishes Fiordispina from the 'lustful Saracen princesses' in fifteenth-century

²⁷ Cavallo (2013), p. 133.

²⁸ In the *Mambriano*, Saracen damsels tend to prefer Christian knights: Rinaldo has a passionate affair with Mambriano's mistress Carandina and then marries her off to Mambriano; Astolfo wins the heart of Nilvia and manages to persuade another Saracen beauty, Androsilla, that he is a much better match for her than her Saracen suitor Carmenio; Pinamonte, an elderly Saracen, is besotted with Bradamante. It is no wonder that Ciego's Christians surpass his Saracens in *cortesía*.

²⁹ Agostini's Angelica too marries a Saracen man: she loses her virginity (but not her heart) to Dardinello (who has converted to Christianity), with Orlando blessing their union. Whereas Dardinello is head over heels in love with his beautiful wife, Angelica would have preferred Orlando had he not been married already: 'Ma se fusse alcun che dir volesse, / com'esser pò, che Angelica pregiata / l'ardito Dardinello amar potesse, / havendo di Merlin l'acqua gustata / ch'amor discaccia, e le sue pene espresse? / Rispondo che la dama delicata / amava 'l vago giovinetto ardito / con intention di torlo per marito' (*Quinto libro*, XIV 45 [f. 81v]). In general, however, Agostini's Saracen lovers are not inferior to their Christian counterparts. Like in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, Saracens feature prominently in love episodes. At the same time, however, the theme of love loses its centrality in Agostini's *gionta*. All quotations of Agostini's *Quinto libro* are taken from the *editio princeps*: Nicolò degli Agostini, *Il Quinto Libro Dello innamoramento de Orlando Cosa / Noua [...]* (Venezia: Zorzi di Rusconi Milanese, 1514).

³⁰ It is Medoro's low birth rather than his Saracen faith that scandalised many of Ariosto's early readers. Surveying a number of sixteenth-century sequels to the *Furioso*, Brusagli shows that Ariosto's continuators found it hard to accept that Medoro did not have an illustrious family tree, and either portrayed him negatively or made him discover his 'true' royal identity. See his 'Medoro riconosciuto', in Brusagli (2003), pp. 75-101.

chivalric texts is that she believes that her beloved is a woman whose sex has been changed by virtue of magic water with the full consent of 'Machon e [...] tutti i dèi' (XXIII 42,2 A; 44 B; XXV 44 C). It is Brandimarte's feminine beauty – not her prowess – that she falls in love with. Ariosto's debt to Boiardo is obvious: 'Io non credo che fabula si conte / che più di questa historia bella fosse' (25,5-6 A; 27 BC), says Ricciardetto referring to Bradamante's encounter with Fiordispina, an encounter that takes place in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. It is worth noting that it is Ricciardetto who takes the initiative:

Di Fiordispina gran notitia hebbi io
in Siragoza, e già la vidi in Francia;
e piacquer molto allo appetito mio
li suo' begli occhi e la polita guancia:
ma non lasciai fermarvisi il disio;
che l'amar senza speme è sogno e ciancia.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXIII 47,1-6 A; 49 B; XXV 49 C)

Ricciardetto, then, heard about this Spanish beauty before the war with Agramante, when she was still in Saragossa; yet he thought that he had no chances of winning her over until his twin sister Bradamante told him about her bizarre adventure. Thus, Ariosto's Saracen princesses are not easily accessible for Christian knights.

A number of critics have attempted to read the Fiordispina story in light of the clash between Christendom and *Pagania*. Orazio Ariosto, for example, a sixteenth-century admirer of the *Furioso*, suggested that one should not judge Ricciardetto too harshly because 'l'inganno [...] è fatto à Donna di diversa religione, e nimica, se ben Regina'.³¹ According to Cavallo, the fact that the love affair does not lead to marriage means that 'the poet seeks to reinforce socially correct national and religious identities'.³² Yet, had Fiordispina converted to Christianity and married Ricciardetto, this would have had

³¹ Orazio Ariosto, DIFESE / DELL'ORLANDO / FVRIOSO / DELL'ARIOSTO, in Tasso (1585), ff. N 3r-P 2v; O 5r-v.

³² Cavallo (2013), p. 133.

repercussions for the on-going war: her conversion would have been a severe blow to her father Marsilio and his ally Agramante who would have perceived it as a betrayal. Unwilling to merge the *armi* and *amori* themes, Ariosto keeps religion (and politics) out of Fiordispina's story, a story whose protagonists embody 'una poesia [...] individuale e divertita',³³ determined as they are to go with the opportunities that life throws at them: 'Era Ricciardetto in età che l'haver fatto altrimenti sarebbe nel poema apparito fallo di sconvenevolezza – states Lionardo Salviati – sì come anche in Fiordispina, il non aver mostrato di credere à cantafavola sì incredibile [...] sarebbe da molti stata tenuta sciochezza'.³⁴

While Fiordispina's adventure is entertaining, Issabella is a tragic heroine. The daughter 'del Re mal fortunato di Gallitia' (XI 4,2 AB; XIII C) first notices Zerbino, a valorous Christian knight, at a joust in Baiona. Having set her heart ablaze ('poi che far prove in campo vidi / miracolose di cavalleria, / fui presa del suo amore [...], 7,1-3), Zerbino too falls in love:

E perché vieta la diversa fede
(essendo egli christiano, io saracina)
ch'al mio padre per moglie non mi chiede,
per furto indi levarmi si destina.

(*Orlando furioso*, XI 10,1-4 AB; XIII C)

So far, the story follows a familiar pattern (that of the 'star-crossed' lovers). Yet, as in Fiordispina's case, Ariosto does not dwell on the 'traditional' theme of a Saracen damsel 'betraying' her parents. Maricoldo, Issabella's father, is dead: he was killed in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* (II xxiii 60-61). Issabella does not know about his demise, nor that the knight who slayed him is Orlando, who (ironically) saves her from the brigands and to whom she recounts her vicissitudes. Having left the narration in Boiardo's poem

³³ Giudicetti (2010), p. 49. According to Giudicetti, Ariosto juxtaposes Ricciardetto's light-hearted attitude to life to Ruggiero's less appealing *gravitas* (ibid., pp. 49-52).

³⁴ Salviati (1585), in Tasso (1585), f. C 8r-v.

(Ariosto reminds us of his demise at XII 13,7-8 AB; XV C), Maricoldo cannot disown his daughter in the *Furioso*. He is virtually absent from Issabella's story, even if she feels a pang of sadness at the thought of him ('*mal fortunato*', explains Bigi in his commentary to XIII 4,2 C, 'è da intendere [...] nel senso che aveva avuto la sfortuna di perdere la figlia').

What distinguishes Issabella from most Saracen princesses who give themselves to Christian knights in earlier chivalric works is the strength of her love. As we have seen, Saracen ladies tend to be quite pragmatic: if they cannot have their first choice (e.g. Rinaldo, a married man), they marry their second choice (who sometimes has to accept the fact that his bride is no longer a virgin). By contrast, Issabella is a paragon of constancy and faithfulness. She is ready to die in the name of love, as she assures the mortally wounded Zerbino:

[...] – Non vi pensate già, mia vita,
far senza me quest'ultima partita.

Di ciò, cor mio, nessun timor vi tocchi
ch'io vuo' seguirvi o 'n cielo o ne lo inferno:
convien ch'un spirto e l'altro insieme scocchi,
insieme vada e insieme stia in eterno.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXII 80,7-8, 81,1-4 AB; XXIV C)

'A me pare – observes Orazio Toscanella – che sia non solamente gran segno d'animo virile, ma grandissimo lo sprezzar la morte, et sprezzarla in tanto, che non si habbia paura di darsela con le proprie mani'.³⁵ Issabella does not kill herself with Zerbino's sword, because a hermit intervenes and persuades her to turn her thoughts to the Christian God. However, her conversion to Christianity – or rather her intention to convert – can hardly be said to be convincing, with her garrulous 'saviour' bearing the brunt of Ariosto's irony. Religion does not fill the void that Zerbino's demise has left in her life. Her suicide

³⁵ Toscanella (1574), p. 200.

is postponed, but not for long. It will not be long before she tricks Rodomonte into killing her, thereby rejoining her beloved in Heaven (with God unconcerned that, in order to get there, she has intentionally allowed herself to be killed). It has been argued that Ariosto ‘refashions the neophyte Isabella as a Christian martyr who prefers death to the violation of her chastity’.³⁶ Yet it is not religion that prompts Issabella to devise a way to end her days, but her promise of eternal fidelity to ‘quel cavallier ch’in braccio spento / le havea crudele e dispietata sorte’ (XXVII 11,5-6 AB; XXIX C). It is his name rather than that of Jesus Christ that she utters as her severed head hits the ground:

Quel [capo] fe’ tre balzi; e funne udita chiara
voce, ch’uscendo nominò Zerbino,
per cui seguire, astutia strana e rara
s’imaginò a schernire il Saracino.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXVII 26,1-4 AB; XXIX C)

Issabella, thus, literally follows Zerbino to the grave, with God being so impressed with the self-sacrifice of this Saracen woman (Issabella has not yet received baptism) as to decree that her name – ‘il nome inclyto e degno’ (29,6) – be given to none but the most exceptional members of her sex. With these lines the poet pays homage to Isabella d’Este, the sister of Cardinal Ippolito and one of his most enthusiastic early readers. And it is telling that Issabella’s story is ultimately woven into the encomiastic thread of the *Furioso*: by comparing the Marquess of Mantua to his Saracen heroine, Ariosto implicitly suggests that her many virtues are effectively Saracen virtues, thus reinforcing the connection between *Paganìa* and his patrons and extending it beyond the genealogical theme.

Issabella is not the only Saracen lady who loses the will to live after the tragic loss of her beloved. Fiordeligi does not survive her husband for long, either. She wastes away

³⁶ Cavallo (2013), p. 135.

soon after the death of Brandimarte who drew his last breath with her name on his lips.³⁷ As we saw in 2.2, Boiardo's Fiordelisa becomes a very devout Christian (and Catholic) after her conversion, with the author poking fun – albeit in a good-humoured manner – at her newly acquired religious zeal (which manifests itself in long prayers). Bringing her story to a close, Ariosto shows that faith is not enough to help her overcome her despair, something which points to God's silence within the universe of the *Furioso*. His Fiordeligi confines herself to Brandimarte's tomb:

E vedendo le lachryme indefesse,
et ostinati a uscir sempre i sospiri,
né per far sempre dire uffici e messe
mai satisfar possendo a' suoi disiri;
di non partirsi quindi in cor si messe
fin che del corpo l'anima non spiri:
e nel sepolchro fe' fare una cella,
e vi si chiuse; e fe' sua vita in quella.

Orlando, per voler quindi levarla,
mandò poi messi, e vi tornò in persona:
se viene in Francia, vuol compagna farla
di Galerana, e pension darle buona;
e vuol sin alla Lizza accompagnarla,
quando tornare al padre suo prepona;
edificar le vuole un monasterio,
quando servire a Dio faccia pensiero.

Ella sta nel sepolchro; e quivi attrita
da penitencia, orando giorno e notte,
non durò lunga età, che di sua vita
da la Parca le fur le fila rotte.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXXIX 180-182,1-4 AB; XLIII 183-185 C)

In C Issabella's and Fiordeligi's example is followed by Drusilla (the main heroine of the Marganorre episode), but in AB they are the only characters who willingly renounce life when the pain of loss becomes intolerable.³⁸ Their deaths can be described as 'Arthurian',

³⁷ According to Angelo Monteverdi, 'Dalla morte del prode e fedele Brandimarte, dal contegno della sua Fiordiligi, prevediamo quale sarà la morte di Orlando [as narrated in the *Spagna*] e la sorte della sua Alda', even if 'quando Orlando si sente morire [...] il ricordo di Alda nella sua memoria non torna' (Angelo Monteverdi, 'Lipadusa e Roncisvalle', *Lettere italiane*, XIII (1961), 401-409: 407, 408).

³⁸ Lydia's suitor too 'dal dolor vinto, / e dopo un lungo dimandar mercede, / infermo cadde, e ne rimase extinto' (XXXI 43,2-4 AB; XXXIV C). This story, however, appears to be set in antiquity. Orlando's

if we recall that Tristan and Iseult – the most famous couple in Arthurian literature – depart this world together, inseparable in death as they were in life. Although, as mentioned above, the 1516 *Furioso* features a plethora of noble Christian lovers, the most powerful manifestations of love – love that defeats the instinct of self-preservation – are to be found in the stories of Issabella and Fiordeligi. While it is true that Ariosto's Christian lovers believe themselves to be capable of dying of broken heart (Ariodante tries to commit suicide by hurling himself into the sea; Bradamante descends into a pit of despair when she suspects that Ruggiero has left her for Marphisa, as does the knight from the 'novella del nappo' when his wife betrays and then rejects him), in actual fact none of them actually does. Christians on the whole are more resilient to life's blows, which may be seen as a positive trait, yet one which at the same time renders them less idealistic figures than some of their Saracen counterparts.

3.3. AGRAMANTE'S WAR

Having considered the Saracens' contribution to the theme of love, we can now broach the theme of war. Far from being merely the backdrop against which the individual love stories of Ariosto's knights and damsels unfold, the conflict between Agramante and Charlemagne is an important narrative thread in its own right. As Leonzio Pampaloni puts it, 'La guerra come avventura, azzardo, occasione, è forse più chiara nei Saraceni, non

sinking into madness can perhaps be seen as a form of death. Boiardo's clumsy lover becomes a tragic figure; his all-consuming obsession with Angelica inspires our respect and compassion, even if he loses his charisma when he regains his wits and steps back into his role of the 'chaste Orlando', the best Christian champion. In the *Furioso*, Orlando eclipses Feraù who gives equal importance to the quest for Angelica and that for Orlando's helmet. By contrast, Agostini's Feraguto is portrayed as an ardent lover: 'Io son sì di costei d'amor ferito / ch'io mi sento senza essa al fin venire / [...] / el bel volto angelico et polito / al tutto vincer voglio o ver morire' (X 33,1-6 [f. I 1r]). See Nicolò degli Agostini, *Quarto libro*, in *Tutti li Libri De Orlando. / Inamorato. / Del Conte de Scandiano Mattheo / Maria Boiardo [...]* (Venezia: Giorgio de Ruscini, 1506).

essendo coperta da motivazioni religiose'.³⁹ Indeed, characters such as Gradasso, Mandricardo, Marphisa and Rodomonte treat the war as an opportunity to win glory, to establish new records, to become *primi inter pares*.

On the other hand, at times Ariosto adopts a moralising stance. His heightened awareness of the unbridgeable gap between fictional and real wars creates an emotional barrier between him and his heroes, preventing him from idealising them. Rodomonte, for example, is represented as a superb warrior – a 'guerriero artista'⁴⁰ – yet one who is also a bad *condottiere* whose lack of judgement results in the unnecessary loss of life, as his soldiers are burnt in the ditch where he forces them to descend (XIII 1-5 AB; XV C). Ariosto at once admires his 'gran valor' (XIV 25,7 AB; XVI C) and upbraids him for his recklessness. At the same time, it would be wrong to argue that the poet approves of the pragmatism displayed by some of his Christian characters (namely Rinaldo and Charlemagne) whose *prudenza* sometimes verges on cynicism.⁴¹

Ariosto makes numerous references to the military conflicts that rocked the Italian peninsula during the years when he was composing his poem, drawing frequent parallels between the events that happen in the *favola* and those taking place in real history.⁴²

³⁹ Leonzio Pampaloni, 'La guerra nel *Furioso*', *Belfagor*, XXVI (1971), 627-652: 628.

⁴⁰ De Sanctis (1954), p. 108.

⁴¹ One of such cynical actions is Rinaldo's surprise attack on the Saracen camp. Under the cover of darkness Rinaldo ruthlessly slaughters those who, 'sonnolenti, timidi et inermi, / poteano a tal guerrier far pochi schermi' (XXIX 51,7-8 A; 52 B; XXXI 52 C). His behaviour is more unchivalrous in BC, as is evident from the changes to the following two lines: in A the paladin 'trovò l'ascolta d'Agramante; / e la trovò dormir e fe' prigionie' (50,5-6); in B we read 'trovò l'ascolta d'Agramante / dormir sicura, e uccise e fe' prigionie' (51,5-6); in C no Saracen is left alive: 'Trovò dormir l'ascolta d'Agramante: / tutta l'uccise, e non ne fe' un prigionie' (51,5-6). While the narrator does not criticize Rinaldo explicitly, some readers will remember that, starting his solitary quest, Orlando decides not to stain his hands with the blood of sleeping enemies: 'di tanto core è il generoso Orlando / che non degna ferir gente che dorma' (IX 4,1-2 ABC). Medoro too kills many sleeping Christians, but his actions are mitigated by the fact that he is a simple soldier rather than one of the best knights.

⁴² See Stefano La Monica, 'Realtà storica e immaginario bellico ariostesco', *La Rassegna della letteratura italiana*, LXXXIX (1985), 326-358; Emanuela Scarano, 'Guerra favolosa e guerra storica nell'*Orlando Furioso*', in *Studi offerti a Luigi Blasucci dai colleghi e dagli allievi pisani*, ed. by Lucio Lugnani, Marco Santagata, Alfredo Stussi (Lucca: Maria Facini Fazzi, 1996), pp. 497-515; Paul Larivaille, 'Guerra e ideologia nel *Furioso*', *Chroniques italiennes*, XIX (2001), 1-20, digital version: <http://chroniquesitaliennes.univ-paris3.fr/PDF/web19/Larivailleweb19.pdf>. On history in the lost

Interesting as they are in their own right, we should not read too much into the passages in which he compares the Saracens to various European powers (for example, the proems to XII AB, XIV C, and XXXVI AB, XL C).⁴³ There is one crucial difference between the Italian wars and Agramante's *impresa*: over the former loomed the hideous beast of *Avarizia* (the source of all the evil in the world, as the poet tells us in XXIV 31-50 AB, XXVI 31-53 C); the latter is not fought for material gain.⁴⁴ While rank-and-file soldiers have their hearts set on plundering, Agramante, Charlemagne and their knights (including Rinaldo who, though still plagued with financial problems, seems to have broken free from his 'criminal past') fight for quite different reasons.

Let us now look at the figures of Agramante and Marsilio – the initiator of the war and his closest ally – who have received significantly less scholarly attention than their knights.⁴⁵ As was shown in chapter II, Boiardo's Agramante is a charismatic young leader

manuscript of the first *Furioso* see Marco Dorigatti, 'Il manoscritto dell'*Orlando furioso* (1505-1515)', in *L'uno e l'altro Ariosto in corte e nelle delizie*, ed. by Gianni Venturi (Firenze: Olschki, 2011), pp. 1-44.

⁴³ Fiorato, for example, maintains that '[...] tra i "giovenil furori d'Agramante" o il brutale furore di Rodomonte, e la "furia francese" degli invasori oltramontani, c'è una relazione tematica e simbolica evidente, "[...] se alle antiche, le moderne cose [...] denno assomigliarsi]" (Charles Adelin Fiorato, 'La «gallica face» nell'*Orlando Furioso*', in *La corte di Ferrara e il suo mecenatismo, 1441-1598* (Modena: Panini, 1990), pp. 159-176: 161). According to Larivaille (2001), p. 4, '[...] si potrebbe [...] parlare di una proiezione della realtà contemporanea sulla materia cavalleresca, una proiezione basata su una duplice equivalenza fra cristiani e italiani da una parte, e dall'altra fra saraceni e barbari: spagnuoli, tedeschi, svizzeri, francesi, tutti "lupi di più ingorde brame" venuti "da boschi oltramontani a divorarne" (XVII, 4), metamorfosati ma agevolmente riconoscibili nelle rapaci arpie liberate dalle spelonche dove le aveva rinchiuso Astolfo [...]'. Similarly, for Cavallo (2013), p. 207, the defeat of the Saracens is 'a wish-fulfilment fantasy not simply of western Europe triumphing over Ottoman aggressors but of Italy over European invaders, and of Ferrara over neighbouring enemies on the peninsula'. This view, however, does not take into account the fact that Ariosto compares his Saracens to Alfonso's troops too. In the proem to canto XII AB/ XIV C he draws a parallel between Agramante's costly victory and the Battle of Ravenna (1512). As Stefano Jossa suggests, 'È notevole, infatti, che i ferraresi siano paragonati ai saraceni, non solo per l'ovvia ed evidente omogeneità della situazione (entrambi vincitori infelici), ma anche, forse, perché sono i perdenti, i nemici della storia (entrambi vinti in proiezione)' (Stefano Jossa, *Ariosto* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), p. 71).

⁴⁴ According to Moretti (1993), p. 85, 'le guerre che vi [in the *Furioso*] si combattono non assumono le dimensioni cruento di una conflittualità moderna, non essendo rivolte all'affermazione del potere o alla conquista della ricchezza: i contrasti militari fra cristiani e musulmani sono riducibili alle forme ludiche della tradizione letteraria medievale e umanistica, alle avventure romanzesche nelle quali si celebra la concezione rinascimentale dell'uomo e delle sue "virtù" creative'.

⁴⁵ On Ariosto's Agramante see Corina Anton, 'Un principe o un tiranno? Il capo saraceno nell'*Orlando furioso*', in *Limba, cultură și civilizație la începutul mileniului al treilea*, ed. by Yolanda Catelly, Simona Maziliu, Fabiola Popa, Diana Stoica (București: Politehnica Press, 2008), pp. 26-32). I have not been able to consult Anton's study which, to my knowledge, is the only article-length study of the figure of the African king.

who, though not as strong as Rugiero or Rodamonte, is worthy of his Macedonian ancestor. Marsilio, on the contrary, is an old man prone to teary fits of despair. In the *Furioso*, too, Agramante eclipses Marsilio, but the Spanish ruler undergoes a personality change. No longer a comic character, Ariosto's Marsilio is endowed with wisdom, a quality which he lacked in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and which in the folly-ridden universe of the *Furioso* is as highly valued as it is rare. He who used to weep and shake fists at the sky whenever *Fortuna* turned its back on the Saracens, keeps his sang-froid when Dardinello's death sends waves of panic through Agramante's troops:

Li Mori fur quel giorno in gran periglio
 che in Paganìa non ne tornasse testa;
 ma il giuoco a tempo sa lasciar Marsiglio,⁴⁶
 et se ne va con quel che in man gli resta.
 Restar in danno tien miglior consiglio
 che tutti i denar perdere et la vesta:
 meglio è ritrarsi et salvar qualche schiera
 che, stando, esser cagion ch'el tutto pèra.
 (*Orlando furioso*, XVI 156 AB; XVIII C)

It is Marsilio who saves the Saracen army that day:

Quel Re [Agramante] che si tenea spacciato al tutto,
 né mai credea più riveder Biserta,
 [...]
 s'allegro che Marsilio havea ridotto
 parte del campo in sicurezza certa:
 et a ritrarsi cominciò, e dar volta
 alle bandiere, et fe' sonar raccolta.
 (ibid., XVI 158 AB; XXVIII C)

Agramante has much respect for both Marsilio and Sobrino who are described in the Saracen camp as 'li dui più antiqui e saggi' (XXXIV 37,8 AB; XXXVIII C). However, while Sobrino genuinely cares about his king, Marsilio puts the interests of Spain before anything else, as is evident from the speech in which he advises his ally to ignore the

⁴⁶ In C this line reads: 'ma 'l saggio re di Spagna dà di piglio'.

news that the Nubians are ravaging his African kingdom, and to continue fighting Charlemagne ('per util di Spagna dicea cose / poco al bisogno d'Aphrica', XXXIV 48,7-8 AB; XXXVIII C).⁴⁷ He abandons Agramante after the latter has interrupted the duel between Ruggiero and Rinaldo. At this point we learn that he is not only a cunning politician but also a deeply religious man: Agramante has broken an oath sworn on the *Alcorano* and Marsilio does not feel guilty about leaving him, 'sì la religïon gli preme al core' (XXXV 28,2 A; 17 B; XXXIX 17 C).⁴⁸ Marsilio's religiosity as well as his concern that Charlemagne might want to take revenge ('ch'alla sua Spagna il fio pagar non tocche', 85,2 A; 74 BC) conjure up the phantom of the battle of Rencesvals, a phantom which Boiardo strove to banish from his 'bela historia'.

As far as Agramante is concerned, although he does not undergo any dramatic transformations, Ariosto adds new complexity to his portrayal. Recalling the events narrated in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* (more specifically in II xxii), the poet claims that the African king crossed the sea in order to 'vendicar la morte di Troiano' (I 1,7 ABC). Virtually absent from the story of Boiardo's Agramante, the motif of revenge can be found in other chivalric works. For example, in the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* Guernieri is killed in an attempt to avenge his father, his death prompting his brother Agolante to sail to Europe. In the *Mambriano* the eponymous hero is resolved to make Rinaldo (and Charlemagne) pay for the death of his uncle Mambrino (who in the *Cantari di Rinaldo* had declared war on Charlemagne because Rinaldo slayed his brothers). What distinguishes Agramante from Agolante and Mambriano, however, is that, unlike Guernieri and Mambrino, his father Troiano was indeed killed *a tradimento*. An attentive reader would remember Boiardo's comment at the beginning of Book II (which we

⁴⁷ For an analysis of Sobrino's speech during the war council in Arles see Dorigatti (2010), pp. 408-409.

⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that Pulci's Marsilio, too, is an extremely able statesman (which, as we saw in the previous chapter, contrasts with his representation in many other chivalric works), but, unlike his namesake in the *Furioso*, he is an atheist: 'Era Marsilio un uom che in suo segreto / credea manco nel Ciel che negli abissi' (*Morgante*, XXVI 118,1-2).

discussed in 2.3), suggesting that the circumstances of Troiano's demise effectively legitimise Agramante's *impresa*. Ariosto leaves his listeners (or readers) free to draw their own conclusions. Later on, his Agramante does not appear to be obsessed with revenge or to hate Charlemagne or Orlando.⁴⁹ In B and C Ariosto even makes it clear that he does not seek his enemy's death: when asking Marsilio and others for advice, he talks about capturing, not killing, the French emperor.⁵⁰ Moreover, in none of the three editions does he wish to confront Orlando: it is *Fortuna* that will bring Agramante to the island of Lipadusa, where he will be killed by the man who also killed his father.

Ariosto does not suppress Agramante's adventurous side. The African king takes part in the battle of Paris, fearlessly flinging himself into the thick of fighting: 'Caciosi in la battaglia il Re Agramante, / d'uccider gente et far gran prove vago' (XIV 75,1-2 AB, XVI C).⁵¹ And 'gran prove' he does show, so much so that even Rinaldo is impressed:

Rinaldo, che havea mente a porre in terra
 hor questo hor quel che più vedea gagliardo,
 la spada contra il Re Agramante afferra,
 ch'un pezzo egli mirò con fiero sguardo,
 che sol più che mille altri facea guerra;
 e se gli spinse adosso con Baiardo:
 lo fere a un tempo et urta di traverso,
 sì che lui col destrier manda riverso.

(*Orlando furioso*, XIV 84 AB, XVI C)

⁴⁹ The narrator will say again that Agramante was 'ostinato alla vendetta' (XXXV 31,5 A, 20 B, XXXIX 20 C) when he left Africa, but Agramante himself will not talk of this. According to Pampaloni (1971), p. 627, '[l']accenno iniziale ad Agramante [...] rimane abbastanza in ombra nel corso bellico'. Other critics, however, tend to exaggerate the significance of the first octave. Santoro, for example, states that 'Nel *Furioso* Agramante è l'artefice della spedizione; ma la sua iniziativa viene spogliata di quella brama inesausta e inesauribile di gloria, di avventura e di guerra, e ancorata ad un motivo personale di vendetta. E i Mori lo *seguono*, coinvolti passionalmente nel suo disegno di vendetta e di distruzione' (Mario Santoro, *Ariosto e il Rinascimento* (Napoli: Liguori, 1989) p. 28).

⁵⁰ 'Or sopra ciò vostro consiglio chieggiò: / se partirmi di qui senza far frutto, / o pur seguir tanto l'impresa deggio, / che prigion Carlo meco abbi condotto' (XXXIV 40,1-4 B, XXXVIII C). In A these lines run as follows: 'Hor sopra ciò vostro consiglio chieggiò: / s'in Aphrica tornar come io ne venni, / o pur seguir tanto l'impresa deggio, / che i Gigli abbatta, e l'Aquila dispenni' (XXXIV 40,1-4). Although it is not quite clear what he means by 'bringing down the fleur-de-lis', it does not seem to involve spilling Charlemagne's blood.

⁵¹ In C Agramante's entry into the battle is slightly less impetuous: 'Entrò ne la battaglia il re Agramante, / d'uccider gente e di far pruove vago'.

Undeterred by this fall, Agramante jumps back into the saddle and confronts Zerbino, who appears to be more or less his equal in terms of physical strength (XVI 40,1-4 AB; XVIII C).⁵² This episode is reminiscent of the joust at the foot of Mount Carena in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, where Agramante fights valorously and does not lose heart if others prove to be stronger than him. It is worth noting that Ariosto has great respect for ‘ordinary’ Saracen knights whose courage is all the more impressive considering that they have neither supernatural strength nor enchanted armour. One of such knights is Agramante’s and Ruggiero’s younger cousin Dardinello, a promising adolescent who bears little resemblance to his father Almonte. Boiardo describes him as ‘dextro nel’arme come avesse l’ale, / molto cortese, costumato e belo’ (II xxii 26,4-5). In the *Furioso* this ‘fanciullo’ (XVI 148,7, 150,1 AB; XVIII C) boosts the morale of the African troops by personal example and meets his death at the hands of Rinaldo.⁵³ Unafraid of the legendary paladin, Dardinello tells him that he values honour above life: ‘Sia quel che vuol, non potrà alcun biasmarmi / che mai traligni alla progenie mia’ (150,4-5). These words could serve as an epitaph for many of Ariosto’s Saracen characters, including the young and hot-headed Alzirdo, King of Tremisen, and the old but still ‘gagliardo’ (even if Boiardo claims the contrary at II xxix 12,1-4) Manilardo, King of Noricia, who face Orlando at X 78-79, 86-88,1-2 AB; XII 74-75, 82-84 C. Ariosto’s sympathetic treatment of these Saracens contributes to the continuity between the two *Orlandos*, for, as was shown in chapter II, the *Inamoramento de Orlando* features dozens of dauntless second-

⁵² His courage did not go unnoticed by sixteenth-century readers: in his ‘Argomento’ to canto XVI Girolamo Ruscelli states that ‘IN Carlo poi, et in Agramante s’ha un rarissimo essemplio di due valorosissimi Re, l’uno in combattere, l’altro in valorosamente difendere vna Città’ (*ORLANDO FVRIOSO. / DI M. LODOVICO ARIOSTO / TUTTO RICORRETTO, E DI NVOVE FIGURE / ADORNATO [...]* (Venezia, appresso Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1556), p. 159).

⁵³ Rinaldo has no compassion for the Saracen’s youth: ‘– Meglio è (gridò) che prima io svella et spenga / questo mal germe, che maggior divenga. –’ (147,7-8). According to Giudicetti (2010), p. 147, ‘Carlo Magno e Rinaldo risultano [...] tendenzialmente indifferenti al lettore, anche perché non si esimono, come Rinaldo quando uccide Dardinello, dal compiere azioni ciniche, spietate’.

level knights. On the other hand, Ariosto is perhaps slightly less generous with eulogistic adjectives, with some of his minor Saracen characters receiving none.⁵⁴

Returning to Ariosto's portrayal of Agramante, it must be said that valiant as he is, the African king does not completely live up to the ideal of a just ruler. His hanging of Brunello (who served him faithfully in Boiardo's poem) is a morally ambivalent action, even if he does so to please Marphisa, and Sobrino himself advises him to 'sacrifice' the virtuoso thief.⁵⁵ Moreover, he fails to make peace between his quarrelling knights and he interrupts the duel between Ruggiero and Rinaldo, breaking his word and thus violating the chivalric code (these episodes will be discussed in detail in chapter IV). For Ariosto, though, his greatest 'crime' is the fact that he orders the bridges over the Rhône to be cut when retreating into Arles after the final crushing defeat, which leads to many of his soldiers being slaughtered. Genuinely outraged, the poet condemns this order in no ambiguous terms:

[...] Ah sfortunata plebe,
che dove del tyranno utile appare,
fu sempre in conto di pecore e zebe!
Chi s'affoga nel fiume e chi nel mare,
chi sanguinose fa di sé le glebe:
molti perîr, pochi restâr prigionî;
che pochi (a farsi taglia) erano buoni.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXXV 82,2-8 A; 71 B; XXXIX 71 C)

Here, Ariosto's gaze falls on the anonymous mass of rank-and-file soldiers whose lives have almost no value in the eyes of kings and famous knights. It is worth stressing that,

⁵⁴ Although, as we saw in 3.1, Ariosto remembers almost every single minor Saracen knight who appears in Books II and III of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, many of them are merely names in the *Furioso*. Thus, with the exception of Feraù, Marsilio's barons (i.e. Isoliero, Serpentino, Balugante) are now even more marginal characters than they were in Boiardo. The same is true of some of Agramante's less prominent knights (i.e. Malabuferso). However, Ariosto cannot be accused of not being attentive to small details. Most often he is: for example, he highlights the negative traits with which Boiardo endowed Baliverzo and Puliano.

⁵⁵ It is true that Agramante wanted to hang Brunello also in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* (see II xxi 35-38), but there he earnestly believed that his vassal had violated the chivalric code. For an analysis of Brunello see Luciano Serra, 'La sublimazione del grottesco: Brunello', in *Il Boiardo e la critica contemporanea*, ed. by Giuseppe Anceschi (Firenze: Olschki, 1970), pp. 489-497.

lashing out against Agramante, Ariosto does not contrast his cruelty to the Christians' clemency (as Cieco da Ferrara often does in the *Mambriano*),⁵⁶ but rather tells the reader that Charlemagne's troops only spared those Saracens who were capable of paying a ransom ('a farsi taglia').

On their way back home, Agramante's subjects call him 'superbo', 'crudele' and 'stolto' (XXXV 86,5-6 A; 75 B; XXXIX 75 C). However, there is a fair degree of exaggeration in these rants, for he is certainly not a bloodthirsty tyrant and his shortcomings are insignificant compared to the cruelty of Saracen kings in other chivalric texts.⁵⁷ An attentive reading of the closing chapter of Agramante's story reveals that rather than adopting a moralising posture vis-à-vis the Saracen ruler Ariosto celebrates his unflinching courage and his readiness to die for the ideals that made him declare war on Charlemagne in Boiardo's poem. Agramante decides not to head straight to Biserta, but to disembark at a different port and then march to the capital of his kingdom:

Ma suo fiero destin, che non risponde
a quella intention provida e saggia,
vuol che l'armata che nacque di fronde
miracolasamente ne la spiaggia [...]

(*Orlando furioso*, XXXV 89,1-4 A; 78 B; XXXIX 78 C)

Ariosto emphasises the fact that the sudden appearance of the enemy's fleet could not have been foreseen. In order to imagine such an event one has to believe in miracles and Agramante, like Ariosto himself, does not. Even though the *Furioso* is full of magicians and enchanted objects, the poet does not hide his skepticism with regard to astrology, occultism and divine intervention in human affairs. It is not by chance that, though proud

⁵⁶ Cieco's Orlando, for example, is convinced that 'più s'acquista indulgenza porgendo, / che non si fa con la spade uccidendo' (XIX 28,7-8) and he and Rinaldo often surprise the Saracens with their clemency. Importantly, they manage to prevent their soldiers from plundering, as is evident from the episode of the conquest of Utica (XVII 63-72). There are instances when the Christians act cynically (see, for example, XXIII 96), but such episodes are few and do not undermine the strong juxtaposition between the Christians' magnanimity and the Saracens' savagery.

⁵⁷ On one occasion Cieco's Mambriano has his own men impaled (*Mambriano*, XIV 85-86), while crucifixion is practiced in the kingdom of Fierabraccia's father in the the *Cantari di Fierabraccia e Ulivieri*.

to be the female founder of the House of Este, Bradamante does not fully trust Melissa (see XI 74 AB, XIII 76 C; XXX 21 A, 25 B, XXXII 25 C; XXXVIII 23 A, 26 B, XLII 26 C). Ariosto's voice is tinged with irony when he tells us of the favours with which the Christian God showers his faithful, such as the transformation of stones into horses ('Oh quanto a chi ben crede in Christo lece!' XXXIV 33,5 AB; XXXVIII C) and that of branches into a first-class fleet, not to mention Archangel Michael's comic search for Discordia.

Unlike his counterparts in the *Mambriano* and in Agostini's *gionta*, Agramante is not alone in the hour of tribulation.⁵⁸ When all seems to be lost, the faithful Sobrino stays by his side and prevents him from killing himself. Not a word of reproach escapes Sobrino's lips: he puts on a mask of optimism even if 'dentro di sé Sobrino avverte l'inutilità di ogni iniziativa e l'inevitabilità della catastrofe'.⁵⁹ Had Ariosto wanted to end Agramante's story on a moralistic note, he would have made all his friends and vassals turn their back on him. Yet Gradasso, whom *Fortuna* has brought to the island of Lipadusa, is happy to see him:

l'uno e l'altro signor s'abbraccia al sciutto;
ch'erano amici, e poco inanzi furo
compagni d'arme al Parigino muro.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXXVI 46,6-8 AB; XL C)

Gradasso left Agramante after he had got hold of Baiardo (XXX 67 A; 71 B; XXXIII 95 C). His decision to sail home at a time when the Saracens were suffering heavy losses strikes us as at odds with his Arthurian personality. The King of Sericana, one could say,

⁵⁸ After the Christians have routed his troops, and his Saracen friends have surrendered to the victors, Mambriano flees into a forest. There he meets a kind-hearted shepherd who offers him some milk, but instead of thanking him for his hospitality, he hangs him. Likewise, Agramante in Agostini's *Quinto libro* is a lonely figure. Sobrino retreats to a forest to fight Grifone, having criticised his lord for his failure to follow his advice. Sacripante is killed. Rodamonte, whom Agramante believes to be dead, simply goes away together with Gradasso and Feraguto, and shortly afterwards Mandricardo leaves too, as he feels no obligation to stay when everyone else has abandoned Agramante.

⁵⁹ Dorigatti (2010), p. 411.

temporarily lost his adventurous spirit, forgetting that his quest for Baiardo was but a pretext for showing off his valour. However, his willingness to help Agramante as the story is drawing to a close proves that he is neither a coward nor a traitor and, more importantly, that he still believes in the Arthurian values. He brings with him a fresh breeze of optimism, dispelling the clouds of gloom which have gathered around Agramante. Gradasso is confident that he will be able to kill Orlando: ‘mi pare al tutto un ottimo rimedio / haver pensato a farti uscir di tedio’ (XXXVI 48,7-8 AB; XL C). His cheerfulness fills Agramante with hope (‘ben so ch’in arme ritrovar compagno / di te miglior non si può in tutto il mondo’, 53,3-4) and even Sobrino, helping the reader to ‘recover’ from the highly distressing description of the Christian conquest of Biserta.⁶⁰

According to Cavallo, ‘The systematic degradation of Saracen heroes and the progressive development of the plot towards a holy war narrative’ point to Ariosto’s complete break with Boiardo.⁶¹ In fact, far from being degraded, Agramante, Gradasso and Sobrino show boundless courage in the face of adversity, remaining true to the spirit of Boiardo’s ‘bela historia’. Agramante’s refusal to convert (we shall analyse this episode in the next chapter) testifies to his faithfulness to the values he professed the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. His conduct in the Lipadusa duel is impeccable. Defying his ‘fiero destino’, he fights until the bitter end, that is until the invulnerable Orlando severs his head with the enchanted sword Balisarda, acting as an instrument of the mysterious forces that govern History.

3.4. CONCLUSION

⁶⁰ It is difficult to agree with Giudicetti (2010), p. 95, who claims that Agramante’s conversation with Gradasso ‘avviene sotto l’ombra della sconfitta e della rassegnazione’. According to Girolamo Ruscelli’s ‘Argomento’ to canto LX in the Valgrisi 1556 edition of the *Furioso*, ‘IN Agramante s’ha l’esempio d’un continuamente forte, saggio, et valoroso Signore. In Sobrino d’un sapientissimo et amorevolissimo consigliere. In Gradasso d’un sincerissimo amico, et fermo, et stabile in ogni fortuna’ (p. 447).

⁶¹ Cavallo (2013), p. 204.

This chapter has sought to shed light on the elements of rupture and continuity between the portrayal of Saracens in the two *Orlandos*. We have seen how Ariosto, always careful not to contradict his predecessor, remembers most of the Saracen characters who take part in Agramante's war in Books II and III of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. He does introduce, however, a few dozens of new Saracens, among whom a couple of truly memorable characters. At the same time he pays more attention to the Christian world than does Boiardo. While Saracens make a significant contribution to the *favola* of the *Furioso*, they no longer can be said to have a dominating presence. The number of Saracens shrinks, while that of Christians grows; in the last edition, in particular, Christians outnumber the so-called infidels by a significant margin. Ariosto's Christians are much better lovers than Boiardo's. However, far from subscribing to the 'traditional' paradigm according to which Saracen damsels prefer Christian knights, Ariosto makes Angelica marry Medoro and, in general, keeps politics and religion out of most interfaith and interracial love stories (with the notable exception of Ruggiero's and Bradamante's union). At first glance, there are few differences between Ariosto's Christians and Saracens. The poem's ideology rests on a dynamic tension between chivalric ideals and a more realistic worldview; the vast majority of Ariosto's knights and damsels fall into the category of 'normal flawed human beings'. However, it could be argued that his most idealistic characters are daughters and sons of *Paganìa*. Issabella and Fiordeligi, for example, will go as far as to depart this life in the name of love. Agramante, Gradasso and Dardinello die in order to remain true to the values they upheld in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, while Orlando, Rinaldo return to the old ideology of 'bataglie sante' by the end of the *Furioso*, and so does Marsilio who starts the preparations for the final war of his life.

Agramante's death does not mark the end of the Saracens' story. He is survived by his best champions: Ruggiero and Rodomonte. It is to these two crucial figures that we must turn our attention in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

Rodomonte and Ruggiero. A matter of honour^{*}

Peggio far non si può sotto le stelle,
che tradir la sua patria e il suo signore.
(Francesco Cieco da Ferrara, *Mambriano*, III 79,1-2)

4.0. THE DUEL BETWEEN RODOMONTE AND RUGGIERO: A CASE STUDY

Bringing Boiardo's 'bela historia' to a close, Ariosto stages the events which Boiardo promised to narrate in Book III. By the last canto of the *Furioso* the prophecies of the King of Garamantha and Atalante are (mostly) fulfilled. Agramante is defeated. Ruggiero, 'la semente / d'ogni vertù' (*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II xxi 60,1-2), has converted to Christianity and has married Bradamante, thus becoming the founder of the Este dynasty. Charlemagne throws a sumptuous party for the newlywed couple. True to his reputation, 'Più de li altri valor mostra Ruggiero, / [...] / e così in danza, in lotta et in ogni opra / sempre con molto honor resta di sopra' (XL 74,5-8 A; 73 B; XLVI 100 C). The atmosphere is joyous and serene. And yet, as the curtain is about to fall on the last act of the story that began in Book II of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, a stranger interrupts the wedding feast. Rodomonte of Sarza has come to Paris incognito in order to accuse his former brother-in-arms of having betrayed their lord Agramante. What follows is one of the most dramatic as well as enigmatic duels of the entire poem, a 'pugna incerta' (86,2

^{*} This chapter is a revised version of my article: cf. Maria Pavlova, 'Rodomonte e Ruggiero. Una questione d'onore', *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana*, XLII (2013), 135-177.

A; 85 B; 114 C) that will culminate in Rodomonte's death. This death is of fundamental importance for understanding not only the ending of the *Furioso* but also the poem as a whole.

Building on the insights gained in our analysis of Boiardo's and Ariosto's *Paganà*, the present chapter is thus devoted to a case study of special significance, namely the final confrontation between Rodomonte and Ruggiero whose overall meaning is not only perplexing but ultimately controversial. We shall examine the climactic duel and the events that lead up to it from the perspective of the Saracen Other, seeking to give a voice to the characters who have been frequently dismissed as 'barbarians'. The culminating point of our enquiry, this case study is intended to shed new light on Ariosto's representation of Saracens and their world.

4.1. THE ENDING OF THE *ORLANDO FURIOSO*

Before delving into the story of the strongest sons of Saracen Africa, we must briefly recall the on-going debate surrounding the figures of Rodomonte and Ruggiero and the closure of the *Furioso*, which has recently become one of the most hotly contested topics in Ariosto scholarship. Since the mid-sixteenth century, countless critics have commented on this climactic duel and its meaning. Barely ten years after the publication of the 1532 edition, Tullio Fausto da Longiano and Lodovico Dolce compared it to the single combat between Aeneas and Turnus at the end of Book XII of Virgil's *Aeneid*.¹ According to early commentators, then, Ariosto in this episode is not merely a 'vero imitator di

¹ According Tullio Fausto da Longiano, the author of the first commentary on Ariosto's classical sources (which can be found in the Francesco Bindoni and Mapheo Pasini 1542 edition of the *Furioso*), 'Per Ruggiero e Rodomonte combattenti nel fine de l'opera, e morte di Rodomonte: Enea, e Turno combattenti, e morte di Turno in ultimo de la Eneide' (cited in Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of Orlando Furioso* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 49). See also Lodovico Dolce's 'Allegoria' to canto XLVI as well as his *Brieve dimostrazione di molte comparationi et sentenze dall'Ariosto in diversi autori imitate*, in *ORLANDO FVRIOSO / DI M. LVDOVICO ARIOSTO [...]* (Venetia, appresso Gabriel Iolito di Ferrarii, 1542), ff. 251v and **iiiiv, respectively.

Virgilio',² but also a more refined poet: Girolamo Ruscelli, for example, claims that the victory of the Christian hero is less problematic than that of Aeneas inasmuch as, unlike Turnus, Rodomonte does not elicit the readers' compassion.³ This view is shared by a number of modern scholars, such as Joseph C. Sitterson and James Lawrence Shulman.⁴ The ending of the *Furioso*, it has been argued, is modelled on that of the *Aeneid*, with the last cantos advocating Christian values and showing a pronounced moralising tendency.⁵ In this perspective, Rodomonte becomes a character represented 'sotto il seme delle negatività',⁶ an 'eroe capovolto',⁷ an antihero.

Not surprisingly, the word 'male' frequently surfaces in scholarly discussions of the last canto: for Marcello Turchi, Rodomonte stands for the 'violenza del male che assume concreti aspetti di sconvolgente terribilità di cataclisma',⁸ according to Roger Baillet, the Saracen knight 'devient le héros de l'ombre, l'un des obstacles majeurs de la croisade contre le Mal';⁹ Daniela Delcorno Branca calls Rodomonte the 'ultima sopravvivenza del male',¹⁰ while Alberto Casadei asserts that the ending of the poem 'testimonia, eticamente, la vittoria necessaria del bene sul male' and also 'certifica che il lieto fine

² Fornari (1549), p. 758.

³ 'Nella morte poi di Rodomonte, & nell'ultima vittoria di Ruggiero, con che si finisce il libro, restano molto meglio edificati, & più sereni gli animi de' lettori & de gli ascoltanti, che in quella di Turno presso à Vergilio, poi che Rodomonte era venuto con tanto torto & con tanta temerità à disfidar Ruggiero; là ove il misero Turno non havea di nulla offeso già mai Enea, anzi era da lui disturbato nello stato, & nella moglie, fuor d'ogni colorata non che giusta ragione, se non quella del voler de' fati, che comunque ella fosse, ò non dovea presupporci per nota à lui, ò non lo fa però meno degno di compassione' (Girolamo Ruscelli, 'Argomento' to canto XLVI, in the 1556 Valgrisi edition of the *Orlando furioso*, p. 520).

⁴ Joseph C. Sitterson, 'Allusive and elusive meanings: reading Ariosto's Vergilian ending', *Renaissance Quarterly*, XIV (1992), 1-9: 13; James Lawrence Shulman, "'Sferza e sprona": the flight from authority in the *Orlando Furioso*', in Idem, *The Pale Cast of Thought: Hesitation and Decision in the Renaissance Epic* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), pp. 23-55: 51-54.

⁵ For an overview of scholarly works on the so-called caesura separating the 'romance' and the 'epic' parts see Giudicetti (2010), pp. 43-47.

⁶ Marco Praloran, *Tempo e azione nell'Orlando furioso* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1999), p. 105.

⁷ Giuseppe Della Palma, 'L'eroe capovolto: Rodomonte', in Idem, *Le strutture narrative dell'Orlando furioso* (Firenze: Olschki, 1984), pp. 110-125.

⁸ Marcello Turchi, *Ariosto o della liberazione fantastica* (Ravenna: A. Longo, 1969), pp. 370-377: 373.

⁹ Baillet (1977), p. 403.

¹⁰ Daniela Delcorno Branca, 'La conclusione dell'*Orlando furioso*: qualche osservazione', in *Boiardo, Ariosto e i libri di battaglia*, ed. by Andrea Canova and Paola Vecchi Galli (Novara: Interlinea, 2007), pp. 127-137: 128.

precedente non coincideva affatto con un acquietamento irenico, bensì con una tregua, cui ancora potranno seguire lotte scatenate da nuove e diverse pazzie'.¹¹ A descendant of Nimrod, the arrogant tyrant who supervised the construction of the Tower of Babel, Rodomonte has been compared to Capaneus, Mezentius, Dante's Filippo Argenti and even Milton's Satan, a rebellious angel invested with an aura of sinister grandeur.¹² For Cavallo, 'all the force of his violence is [...] directed specifically against those of the Christian faith'.¹³ David Marsh and Peter Marinelli believe that, through him, Ariosto was adumbrating the Turkish threat,¹⁴ while Peter De Sa Wiggins suggests that Rodomonte is a symbol of the destructive fury that transformed Ariosto's Italy into a battlefield.¹⁵

And yet, many critics agree that Rodomonte is a memorable – and charismatic – character,¹⁶ with some going as far as to claim that he is superior to his opponent from the

¹¹ Alberto Casadei, 'Il finale e la poetica del *Furioso*', *Chroniques italiennes*, XIX (2011), online version, 9-10. A similar view was held by Tommaso Porcacchi, whose 'Allegoria' to canto XLVI contains the following observation: 'Per Rodomonte, che su 'l più bel della festa viene a disturbar le nozze et à combatter con Ruggiero, siamo avertiti à considerar che niuna felicità in questo mondo pieno di miserie ci può venir compita et perfetta' (ORLANDO FVRIOSO / DI M. LODOVICO ARIOSTO [...]) (Venezia: appresso Domenico Farri, 1580), f. NN 2r. Porcacchi's allegories first appeared in the *Furioso* printed by Domenico and Giovanni Battista Guerra in Venice in 1568).

¹² See John M. Steadman, 'A Milton-Ariosto parallel: Satan and Rodomonte ("Paradise Lost", IV, 181)', *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, LXXVII, n. 5-6 (1961), 514-516; Baillet (1977), p. 401. According to Peter De Sa Wiggins, 'If the Good were apparent in Ariosto's world beset with illusion, Rodomonte could be regarded as a Miltonic Satan, but as it is, he must be regarded as exhibiting the blindness in many tragic figures of Renaissance and classical literature' ('The *Furioso*'s third protagonist', *MLN*, XCVIII (1983), 30-54: 40). Peter V. Marinelli, however, sees Rodomonte as an infernal monster: '[...] because Ariosto remembered the Vergilian interpreters' association of Turnus with the devil, and because he darkens and brutalizes Turnus' energy in Rodomonte, depriving him of heroic qualities in his blood-lust against women and children, we see through to the primal attack on human felicity in Eden' (*Ariosto and Boiardo: the Origins of Orlando Furioso* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), p. 213). As for more recent studies, Cavallo states that Rodomonte 'want[s] to live and die as a god unto himself' (Jo Ann Cavallo, 'The pathways of knowledge in Boiardo and Ariosto: the case of Rodamonte', *Italica*, LXXIX, n. 3 (2002), 303-20: 314; Cavallo (2013), p. 121), while Giuseppe Mazzotta views this character in light of the advent of Protestantism: 'through Rodomonte's tragedy of freedom, Ariosto unveils Luther's tragic understanding of faith, which is nonetheless capable of shattering Erasmus's rational, limited understanding' (Giuseppe Mazzotta, 'Italian Renaissance Epic', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic*, ed. by Catherine Bates (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 93-118: 110).

¹³ Cavallo (2013), p. 118.

¹⁴ David Marsh, 'Ruggiero and Leone: revision and resolution in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*', *MLN*, XCVI (1981), 144-151: 151; Marinelli (1987), p. 213.

¹⁵ See De Sa Wiggins (1983) and also Idem, *Rodomonte*, in *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and Design in the Orlando Furioso* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 41-66.

¹⁶ According to Giuseppina Fumagalli, this 'gagliarda creatura' is 'curata [...] come poche altre' even if the poet cannot be said to be emotionally involved (Giuseppina Fumagalli, 'La «bella istoria» di

aesthetic point of view.¹⁷ It has even been suggested that he is endowed with some positive traits, such as courage and sentimentality. After all, this ‘colosso dall’anima sensibile’¹⁸ builds a tomb for Issabella, whom he unwittingly kills and who then becomes the object of his adoration. Thus, for a number of scholars, Rodomonte is a barbarian – another word that is frequently used in studies devoted to this figure – who is perhaps capable of noble sentiments, but who lives in his own world and is, in essence, a primitive creature. The ending of the *Furioso*, argues Mario Santoro, ‘suggell[a] la naturale conclusione del destino del “barbaro”: il quale, nella assoluta, e generosa, fedeltà ai suoi “valori”, è incapace di una presa di coscienza della realtà, incapace quindi di misurarsi con l’esperienza’.¹⁹

Thus, it would be wrong to claim that Rodomonte is universally seen as an embodiment of evil. Francesco De Sanctis admires his audacity and superhuman strength,²⁰ while Emilio Zanette contends that Rodomonte – ‘un forte che non mente e non manca mai a se stesso’ – never loses the reader’s sympathy and interest, not even in the last canto, where Ariosto allows him to ‘grandeggiare accostandolo a Turno’.²¹

Rodomonte di Sarza’, in her *Unità fantastica dell’Orlando Furioso* (Messina-Milano: Giuseppe Principato, 1933), pp. 68-117: 116).

¹⁷ ‘La figura del vincitore di fronte a quella del vinto – states Giuseppe Raniòlo – ha un eroismo alquanto artefatto e quasi direi di prammatica’ (Giuseppe Raniòlo, *Lo spirito e l’arte dell’Orlando Furioso* (Milano: Mondadori, 1929), p. 75). See also Franco Pool, *Interpretazione dell’Orlando furioso* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1968), p. 180. Among the readers who found Ariosto’s Ruggiero somewhat disappointing (psychologically incoherent, cold or too ‘bourgeois’) are Torquato Tasso (of whom more later), Thomas Greene (‘Ruggiero, who is meant to embody the most serious heroic ideals of the poem, is lamentably a failure, neither noble, nor believable nor finally very interesting’: see his ‘Ariosto and the earlier Italian Renaissance’, in Idem, *The Descent from Heaven: a Study in Epic Continuity* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 104-143: 142-143) and Giudicetti (2010).

¹⁸ Calvino (1970), p. 155.

¹⁹ Mario Santoro, ‘Rodomonte: la defezione della “ragione”, in Idem, *Ariosto e il Rinascimento* (Napoli: Liguori, 1989), pp. 263-274: 273; and see also Ragni (2007).

²⁰ ‘Rodomonte ed Orlando sono i due caratteri più originali; ma Orlando non interessa sempre; tranne quando è pazzo, e quando è pazzo è confuso con gli uomini ordinarii. Rodomonte interessa sempre, come un’attrice ottima in mezzo ad una compagnia mediocre’ (Francesco De Sanctis, *La poesia cavalleresca* (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1954), p. 142). His charisma is due to the fact that he is ‘in uno stato perpetuo di pazzia’, ‘lo spirito individuale spinto sino alla follia’ (ibid., pp. 141, 143).

²¹ Emilio Zanette, *Rodomonte*, in Zanette (1959), pp. 349-395: 387, 389. Ragni (2007), p. 412, too, argues that thanks to the Virgilian reminiscences Rodomonte ‘ottiene dal nostro intimo un crisma di vittima’, because, like Turnus, he is ‘arrogante negli atteggiamenti, violento, ma sventurato, anzi vessato da uomini e dèi’. See also Giuseppe Ravegnani, ‘Vita, morte e miracolo di Rodomonte’ [1929], in *L’ottava*

Giudicetti, in turn, maintains that the African warrior is ‘portatore di caos e di vivacità nel poema’ and that, together with Mandricardo, he is viewed positively by the poet.²²

However, despite these attempts to ‘redeem’ Rodomonte, few interpreters take his last speech seriously, not least because Rodomonte himself withdrew from the war long before Ruggiero’s conversion. ‘[...] noi comprendiamo e giustifichiamo lo sposo di Bradamante’, states Zanette, ‘ma il saracino non è l’uomo da comprenderlo [...] egli stesso ha abbandonato Agramante, eppure è convintissimo di non averlo tradito’.²³ According to Giudicetti, Rodomonte stays true to his personality – that of a charismatic troublemaker –, while Ruggiero fulfils his duty, assuming his role as the founder of the glorious Este dynasty: his is a morally sound choice, consonant with the (for the critic, alas, not wholly Ariostan) values of the second half of the *Furioso*. For Giudicetti, therefore, ‘la vera accusa che il colosso pagano rivolge a Ruggiero è quella di esser venuto meno a se stesso, di aver tradito il proprio lato cortese e avventuroso’.²⁴

Thus, most of Rodomonte’s ‘apologists’ attach little importance to the literal meaning of his last words. But one critic stands out. Far from dismissing the accusation of betrayal as groundless, Attilio Momigliano affirms that Ariosto concedes the moral victory to Rodomonte who – paradoxically – proves to be a better knight than his Christian opponent:

Non gli passa nemmeno per la mente che il suo popolo ormai è sconfitto, che il duello non giova: Ruggiero ha abbandonato i suoi, e dev’essere punito. Il vincitore del duello sarà Ruggiero, ma

d’oro. La vita e l’opera di Ludovico Ariosto. Letture tenute in Ferrara per il Quarto Centenario della morte del Poeta (Milano: Mondadori, 1933), pp. 203-223: 223 (later republished in Idem, *Dieci saggi dal Petrarca al Manzoni* (Genova: Emiliano degli Orfini, 1937), pp. 37-72).

²² Giudicetti (2010), p. 168.

²³ Zanette (1959), p. 389.

²⁴ Giudicetti (2010), p. 176. See also the entry ‘Rodomonte’, in *Dizionario Bompiani delle opere e dei personaggi di tutti i tempi e di tutte le letterature* (Milano: Bompiani, 1983), vol. XI, pp. 549-550: 550 (‘in quel momento, quando la pace è tornata sulla terra, dopo la disfatta, la morte o la conversione di tutti i guerrieri Saraceni, e rinsaviti ormai sono tutti i cavalieri, egli impersona solo tutto il mondo ribelle dei Saraceni, o meglio lo spirito avventuroso ed exlege, che ha impresso all’azione del poema quel moto senza posa che ne forma l’incanto’) and David Quint, ‘The death of Brandimarte and the ending of the *Orlando furioso*’, *Annali d’italianistica*, XII (1994), 75-85: 83.

l'eroe rimane Rodomonte, che getta la vita per punire un traditore. Qui il cavaliere è, più che il cristiano, il pagano.²⁵

Needless to say, Momigliano's interpretation is as surprising as it is original. His thought-provoking view deserves to be further explored, all the more so considering that later interpreters of the figure of Rodomonte and his role in the *Furioso* appear to have for the most part ignored it.²⁶ Not only does Momigliano stress Rodomonte's nobility, but he deems him superior to Ruggiero. Such a claim might appear altogether absurd if we recall that the dynastic theme – suffice it to think of the beautifully embroidered tent which Melissa brings from Constantinople – assumes a central importance in the final canto. Nevertheless, the very fact that some critics have felt the need to defend Ruggiero, to justify his decision to convert, reveals that his innocence is not so obvious. If the *Furioso* was not a Christian poem, seems to be saying Andrew Fichter, Ruggiero's conversion would amount to a betrayal.²⁷ 'No reader can deny that there is a certain literal truth in the charge', asserts De Sa Wiggins, 'whether it is taken to apply strictly to Ruggiero's relations with Agramante or whether it is taken in a more general sense. The charge is outrageous only because it comes from Rodomonte and because it is unjust to Ruggiero's intentions'.²⁸

²⁵ Attilio Momigliano, *Rodomonte*, in Idem, *Saggio su l'“Orlando Furioso”* (Bari: Laterza, 1928), pp. 279-307: 292.

²⁶ Nancy Lazzaro subscribes to Momigliano's reading, citing his conclusion and adding that 'Rodomonte, paradossalmente pagano, molte volte segue una logica più vera, più onesta degli altri: e alla fine deve morire': see Nancy Lazzaro, 'Rodomonte e Ariosto nella battaglia di Parigi. Lettura dell'episodio', in *Forma e parola. Studi in memoria di Fredi Chiappelli*, ed. by Dennis J. Dutschke et al. (Roma: Bulzoni, 1992), pp. 235-254: 251. Giuseppe Raniolo (1929), p. 75, seems to make an indirect reference to Momigliano's opinion: 'Nemmeno ci rende pensosi, come qualcuno ha creduto, il valore di quella lotta, cioè l'ideale della fedeltà cavalleresca, affermato da Rodomonte contro il fedifrago Ruggiero. La sfida lanciata dal re di Sarza, a mio avviso, non è altro che il capriccio orgoglioso e crudele di un barbaro'.

²⁷ 'In one of his aspects Rodomonte is Ruggiero's old carnality; in another Rodomonte is Ruggiero's former adherence to justice in its Old Law formulation as righteousness without charity. Like Ruggiero before his baptism, Rodomonte sees only the literal dimension of justice and so challenges Ruggiero on the grounds that he has betrayed his sworn allegiance to the pagan cause' (Andrew Fichter, 'Ariosto: the dynastic pair, Bradamante and Ruggiero', in Idem, *Poets Historical: Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 70-111: 104).

²⁸ Peter De Sa Wiggins, 'Ruggiero', in De Sa Wiggins (1986), pp. 67-108: 107.

As insightful as Momigliano's study of Rodomonte is, it does not offer an exhaustive analysis of the final duel. Momigliano does not dwell on the theme of loyalty and betrayal, nor does he discuss the relationship between Rodomonte and Agramante or that between Ruggiero and his lord and cousin. In order to verify the validity of his view, it is necessary to examine afresh the respective stories of Agramante's best champions, which is what we aim to do presently.

4.2. RODOMONTE

As we saw in previous chapters, the main African knights of the two *Orlandos* are related to the Saracen protagonists of the *Aspramonte*. Having briefly considered Troiano and Galaciella in chapter II, we must now look at Rod(a/o)monte's father. Rodamonte, states Boiardo, 'fo figliol del forte Ulieno' (II i 16,8), Agolante's vassal who took part in his expedition against Charlemagne, and 'pose tuta Franza in abbandono' (17,4). Ulien (Ulieno, Uliano) is one of the most important African characters in the twelfth-century *Chanson d'Aspremont* and its Italian *rifacimenti*, his most distinctive trait being his steadfast loyalty to his lord. Though an implacable enemy of the Christians, Ulien, like Baligant in the *Chanson de Roland*, is a perfect knight whose only handicap is not knowing Jesus Christ: 'a grant merveille i ot bel chevalier, / s'il se feïst lever et baptissier' (7370-7371); 'S'Uliens fust an Damedex creant, / miauz ne valut Olivier ne Rolant' (8539-8540). His death – the Saracen army is routed, but Ulien decides to sell his life dear and is killed by Richier, Duke Berengier's nephew – is one of the gravest blows that destiny deals to Agoulant. In the *Aspramonte A* Ulieno is slain by Ricciari Vassallo, while in the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* he loses his life in a duel with Orlando.

Impressed by his valour, the Christian paladin promises to spare him if he converts to Christianity, but the Saracen's reply is an emphatic 'no'.

A paragon of loyalty, Ulien has a strong sense of justice. In the *Chanson d'Aspremont* he urges Agoulant to punish Aprohant and Maragon, Saracen kings who abandoned Eaumont (Almonte) in mortal danger. Lashing out against the traitors, he challenges to a duel anyone willing to defend them; his speech persuades the king to execute the two cowards. In the *Aspramonte A*, too, it is Ulieno who convinces Agolante that Asperante and Margone deserve the death penalty. In the fifteenth-century version, Uliano inveighs against Balante who, having decided to renounce Macone during his first encounter with Namo, deserts in the dead of night, abandoning Agolante at a moment when the African camp is torn by internal strife. Uliano's attempt to console Agolante, who sinks into despair upon learning of Balante's betrayal, is touching: 'non temere, signor, né pensar rio: / se ognun ti lassa, non lasseroti io' (XIX 164,7-8 [f. niv]).

In referring to Ulieno in his 'bela historia', Boiardo stresses his physical strength, arrogance and *gagliardia* (II i 17,1-6; 52,4; xiv 34,6-8), qualities that he passed on to his son Rodamonte. In chivalric romances sons often take after their fathers. No wonder, therefore, that the profound bond of friendship and loyalty between Agramante and Rodamonte mirrors that between Agolante and Ulieno, with the former relationship being less formal and deferential, given that there is hardly any age difference between the characters in question. Agramante is 22 years old, while Rodamonte too is a 'garzon' (I 16,5), 'un giovene arguto' (52,3). He is the only knight, so Boiardo tells us, who is not afraid of looking Agramante straight in the eye, which means that right from the beginning Rodamonte is presented as his king's friend, a vassal who serves Agramante not out of fear or need but out of affection and admiration. The two Saracens could even be relatives: although Boiardo does not explicitly mention any kinship between them, in

the *Aspramonte* A Ulieno di Sarza²⁹ is ‘nipote del re Agolante, nato della bella Gorianda, sorella carnale del re Agolante’ (III xc 24-25).³⁰ If so, Rodamonte is Agramante’s and Ruggiero’s second cousin.

Rodamonte’s affection for his lord manifests itself in the speech he delivers before Agramante and the 31 kings whom Agramante has summoned to Biserta in order to discuss his plan to ‘passar in Franza / e far la guerra contra il re Carlone’ (37,6-7). Branzardo and Sobrino – grey-haired Saracens who have not forgotten Agolante’s disastrous expedition – are convinced that the proposed war is a ‘mala impresa’ (43,1). Rodamonte is the fourth speaker to take the floor; fuming with rage, he proclaims that Agramante’s wish is his wish also, challenging to a mortal combat anyone who is unwilling to follow the king’s banners:

Non vi dimanda consiglio il signore,
se ben la sua proposta aveti intesa,
ma per sua riverenza e vostro honore,
sieco il passaggio ala real impresa!
Qualunque il nega, al tuto è traditore:
sì che ciascun da me faccia difesa
qual contradice al mandato reale,
ch’io lo desfido a guera capitale!
(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II i 55)

This is Rodamonte’s first speech. Speaking with a gradual crescendo of indignation, he accuses of betrayal those who dare to disobey Agramante. It is worth noting that the theme of betrayal (present, as we saw, in Ulieno’s story) accompanies the intrepid King of Sarza from his first appearance in Boiardo’s poem. Many critics have pointed out that Rodamonte’s behaviour during the first military council reveals his boundless arrogance.³¹ Indeed, his speech is most insolent, especially its first two-thirds (53-54),

²⁹ In the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*, instead, Uliano is King of Alessandria.

³⁰ To this we may add that Ulieno (Ulien) is said to be the nephew of Agolante in the *Cantari d’Aspramonte* (IV 7,2) and in the *Chanson d’Aspremont* (8363).

³¹ See, for example, Bruscaagli e Tisssoni Benvenuti’s comments on the octaves in question in their respective editions.

where the impertinent youth implies that Branzardo and Sobrino suffer from senile dementia. It is clear that Rodamonte considers himself superior – by a long shot – to the other 31 kings. And yet, even if Boiardo good-humouredly observes that Rodamonte ‘fo superbo et orgoglioso tanto / che dispregiava il mondo tuto quanto’ (52,7-8), it would be wrong to argue that ‘sul piano intellettuale e morale egli [sia] un ribelle che non ammette nessuna legge’.³² For he does recognise Agramante’s authority. In fact, this barrage of insults and threats is triggered by the realisation that the others have deliberately misinterpreted Agramante’s words, failing to treat their king and commander in chief with due respect. Exaggerated though it may seem, his reaction is understandable, and it is significant that his speech (in which the key terms *signore*, *honore* and *traditore* are rhyme words) echoes that of Agramante when, earlier, he urged his vassals to follow him, ‘se cura vi tien del vostro *honore*, / s’io debo aver di voi giamai speranza, / se amati ponto me, vostro *signore*’ (37,3-5).

Rodamonte, therefore, proves to be an attentive listener, the only knight who correctly understood his king’s address. His affection for him is such that he will not allow anyone to criticise him. After Agramante has spoken again, reiterating his intention to sail to France, Rodamonte springs to his feet and swears to stay by his side come what may (‘et io te giuro per tute le bande / tenir con tieco la mia mente salda’, 65,5-6), thereby setting an example for the other kings, who take the same oath. It is interesting to note that during a similar assembly in the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* Uliano stood up and advised Agolante to make his barons swear allegiance to him, adding that they will all be happy to give their life to their lord.³³ All those present at the meeting enthusiastically agree, and Agolante starts the preparation for his expedition.

³² Alexandre-Gras (1983), p. 136.

³³ ‘Levossi in piedi lo bon re Uliano / et inverso Agolante alzò lo ciglio, / dicendo: – O signor mio caro et soprano, / voglio che ’l mio parlar fie con artiglio. / Almonte mi perdona e ’l re Troiano / se altrimenti qui hor ti consiglio. / L’amor che porto a te già non s’amorza: / dico che qui si mostri ogni tua forza // et che

More arrogant than his father (later we discover that the blood of ‘Nembroth, il fier gigante’, xiv 32,7, is boiling in his veins), Rodamonte has a total disregard for courtly etiquette. The wise words of the older councillors make him laugh. He wants to be the first to face the enemies (‘in Ciel e nel’Inferno il re Agramante / seguirò sempre, o passarogli avanti!’, i 65,7-8), and – it is worth adding – he does not believe in Rugiero (‘Del mio ardito signor mi maraviglio, / che queste cianze possa sopportare!’, iii 24,1-2). He threatens to sail to France with or without the others (‘Stative adunque, e non sia che si mova! / Di là dal mar io vuò solleto gire’, 35,5-6) and then fulfils his threat, leaving ‘senza combiato’ (36,2). His behaviour might seem disrespectful to say the least, but in reality his lord does not mind his being uncereemonious.³⁴ Agramante does not seem to take offence, because he knows that Rodamonte loves him and because both of them are young and believe that glory is the highest ideal worth living for. They are friends, and their informal relationship can perhaps be compared to that between Boiardo and his patron, Ercole I. Rodamonte storms out of the palace in Biserta without even saying goodbye to Agramante, and yet he considers himself an obedient vassal, as is evident from the speech he makes as he is about to weigh anchor for the Christian lands:

«Soffia, vento,» dicea «se sai soffiare,
che questa nòte pur ne vuò gire!
Io non son tuo vasal, e non del mare,
che mi possiati a forza retenire:

raccogli [sic] tucti i tuo campioni / c’havete in tucto quanto l’universo, / principi et duchi con conti et baroni, / che guerra fanno far per ogni verso, / che ad uno ad un in le vostre magioni / vo li vediate per lungo et traverso. / Fategli, signor mio, per tale inditio, / che giurin esser pronti a tal servitio. // Benché mestrier non facia tal tractato, / tucti i baron certo vi serviranno, / perché più fidelmente siati amato / niun non curarà recever danno, / per mantenervi nel presente stato / sufferirano ogni sudore et affanno’ (V 36-38 [f. bviir]). Tissoni Benvenuti does not mention this episode in her commentary to Rodamonte’s speech (II i 52-53), which, in her opinion, echoes that of Mardonio in Herodotus’ *Histories*, as well as that of Grandonio in the *Spagna ferrarese*.

³⁴ Some late sixteenth-century commentators saw that beneath his veneer of arrogance, Rodamonte feels a deep affection for Agramante. If, for Camillo Pellegrini, Boiardo’s Rodamonte is all ‘temerità e fierezza’, while Ariosto’s is ‘rispettoso verso Agramante più d’altro cavaliere’, Orazio Ariosto (1585), f. O 7r, maintains that ‘E dal Boiardo, e dall’Ariosto è sempre introdotto Rodomonte rispettoso e riverente verso il Re Agramante, e massimamente in quello che spetta alla destruttione de’ Christiani’. See also Lionardo Salviati, *LO ’NFARINATO / SECONDO / OVVERO DELLO ’NFARINATO / ACCADEMICO DELLA / Crvsca [...]* (Firenze: per Anton Padovani, 1588), pp. 214-216.

solo Agramante mi può comandare,
et io contento son de l'obedire;
sol de obedir a lui sempre mi piace
perch'è guierero e mai non amò pace».

(*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II vi 4)

Rodamonte is right. Agramante does scorn peace: he will get over the self-predicted death of the King of Garamantha and will cross the sea to fight with the Christians, even if before doing so he will need to find Rugiero. If Rodamonte had offended him, he would not have burst into tears at the news that some of the African ships returned to Biserta but that the fate of the King of Sarza was unknown: 'Il Re turbato incomenciò gran pianto, / stimando che sia morto Rodamonte' (xxii 35,1-2).

As we saw in chapter II, Rugiero too develops a warm relationship with his maternal cousin. Agramante is convinced that Rugiero – allegedly the most accomplished knight in *Paganìa* – would never break his oath of allegiance, and so dismisses the second part of the prophecy, according to which Rugiero will eventually convert to Christianity.³⁵ In Biserta the sixteen-year old 'terzo paladino' throws himself into the whirlpool of courtly life, swept away by a rapid succession of amusements and showered with honours and presents. When Brandimarte (whom *Fortuna* brings to the African shores) blows his horn to challenge Agramante to a duel, the latter comes onto the balcony 'apogiandosi al colo al bel Rugiero' (xxviii 4,7), who by now has filled the void left by Rodamonte's departure. Only Brandimarte (whose courage wins him Agramante's respect) and Rugiero are allowed to wear the royal colours: 'd'azuro e d'oro [...] il quartiere' (43,8).

Rodamonte's and Rugiero's paths cross in Book III of the *Inamoramento*, when Rugiero asks Bradamante (who needs to leave in order to succour Charlemagne) if he can fight Rodamonte in her stead. Although the two Africans are equals in terms of physical strength, at one point Rugiero manages to knock his opponent senseless. Conforming to

³⁵ Dorigatti (2009), p. 46, notes 'la possibile contraddizione insita nel fatto che Rugiero doveva sconfiggere Carlo Magno [...], e ciò nonostante convertirsi al cristianesimo'.

the law of *cortesía*, he does not take advantage of Rodamonte's state but waits until he comes round, a gesture that deeply moves the King of Sarza: 'Ben chiaramente hagio veduto / che cavalier nonn'è di te migliore, / ní tieco aver potrebbe alcun honore' (III v 12,6-8). Overflowing with emotions, the arrogant Rodamonte proclaims himself a lesser knight than Rugiero ('di me fa el tuo parere in ogni banda, / come el maggior al suo minor comanda', 13,7-8), thus revealing another side of his personality, namely his admiration for *cortesía* and *gagliardia* in others. Although several critics have argued that the encounter with the future progenitor of the Este dynasty marks a watershed in Rodamonte's story, it is clearly an exaggeration to claim that Ruggiero gives him a life-changing lesson in chivalry.³⁶ As was mentioned in 3.0, in Book II Rodamonte knocked out Orlando and refrained from attacking him, acting as befits a courteous knight.³⁷ If anything, his readiness to admit Rugiero's superiority shows that he is prone to extremes of emotion.

Both Rodamonte and Rugiero serve Agramante faithfully, even if they do not miss the opportunity to participate in 'Arthurian' adventures. The last time we hear about the 'terzo paladino' is when a hermit tells Bradamante that he has been carried away by demons (III viii 57). As for the King of Sarza, although he now acknowledges that Rinaldo and other Christian knights are worthy enemies (so much so that he comes close to doubting the success of Agramante's *impresa* in an interior monologue at II xv 28-30), he continues to worship his personal god – his sword – and to revere his king. At the end of Book III he shows his military prowess in the battle of Paris. Then he takes part in the

³⁶ According to Cavallo (2002), p. 310, the encounter with Rugiero 'change[s] his way of seeing and his way of acting' (see also Cavallo (2013), pp. 117-118). Similarly, Alexandre-Gras (1983), p. 139, maintains that this duel is fundamental for Rodamonte's moral growth, insofar as it marks the 'ultima tappa della sua evoluzione'.

³⁷ As for the fact that Rodamonte was initially reluctant to give Bradamante leave to return to the French emperor, one could note that the Christians treated him discourteously when he disembarked on the French coast: Rodamonte's horse has drowned in the sea (II vi 56,1-2) and so he 'sol et a piede la bataglia prende' (64,8), fighting with countless Christians, among whom Bradamante e Rinaldo. Bradamante does not even consider dismounting.

military parade, having recently returned from Africa ('tre giorni inante' according to *Orlando furioso*, XII 25,8 AB; XIV C), where Agramante had sent him to recruit new soldiers.

Thus, Rodomonte steps into the universe of the *Furioso* when, planning to resume the offensive after a winter lull, Agramante inspects his troops. It is significant that Ariosto mentions his journey to Africa, not so much because he, who thought he was able to conquer France within three days, is forced to return home for reinforcements, as because Rodomonte crosses the sea *on his king's order*. In perfect continuity with his predecessor, messer Ludovico highlights the essence of Rodomonte's soul: his touching devotion to Agramante who must consider himself lucky to have him, given the sorrowful state of the Saracen army.

As we saw in chapter III, Rodomonte – 'in nessun atto vile' (XVI 22,5 AB; XVIII C) – distinguishes himself in the battle for the French capital, with the poet hailing him as the greatest African warrior of all times: 'Aphrica, in te par a costui non nacque, / ben che di Anteo ti vantì e d'Hanniballe' (24,3-4). His courage bordering on recklessness, his ferocity and his unshakable self-confidence, all of these traits are ingrained in him by Boiardo and highlighted by Ariosto. But if Rodomonte does not undergo dramatic transformations (like most other Boiardan heroes do, he appears to be slightly older and more mature in the *Furioso*), the universe which surrounds him is no longer the same. Relegated to the margins of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, death and suffering are part of the human condition in its famous sequel. Rodomonte will die in the *Furioso*'s last octaves; but before the last act of his drama, before the Saracens' final defeat and the destruction of Biserta, he will have to drink of the bitter cup of rejection. A crucial turning point in his story is his quarrel with Mandricardo, the Emperor of Tartary, a dispute over the fickle Doralice which will be resolved in Mandricardo's favour, and

what is more with Agramante's consent. After this humiliation Rodomonte will leave the Saracen camp, withdrawing from the war. In order to decide whether he violates the chivalric code, we must look more closely at this episode.

Having learnt of Mandricardo's abduction of Doralice, Rodomonte loses no time in order to find them and punish the Tartar. Yet not even his lady can make him forget about his duty to Agramante. He interrupts his duel with Mandricardo when a royal messenger informs them that the African ruler is in grave danger. Rodomonte decides that settling his score with his enemy can wait, putting his loyalty to the king before his personal problems. It may not be a coincidence that on that occasion Ariosto calls him 'figlio d'Ulïeno' (XXII 112,4 AB; XXIV C), thus reminding us of the fact that Rodomonte holds on to his father's values.³⁸ Were this not enough, Rodomonte has to curb his fiery temper once more. Although Mandricardo has promised to return promptly to the Saracen camp, he stops to try and win another damsel who happens to be Marphisa. It is Rodomonte who intervenes to calm this brawl, persuading the enraged virago to postpone the duel: in a humble voice he begs her 'che voglia in aiuto del figliuolo / del Re Troian con essi lor venire' (XXIV 83,3-4 AB; XXVI 86 C), succeeding in enlisting her help.

Mandricardo will forget his promise yet again and challenge Ruggiero over the right to wear the Trojan eagle. Even though Rodomonte, too, will lose his self-control and fly at the 'terzo paladino', he will only succumb to this temptation after an intense inner struggle, after having made a formidable effort to tame his pride.

We shall return to the second encounter between the two African knights later. The quarrel between Rodomonte and Mandricardo breaks out again once the Saracens have inflicted a crushing defeat on the Christians. This time the contenders turn to Agramante,

³⁸ It is worth noting that while in AB the messenger 'pose d'Agramante e di Marsiglio / lettere in mano al figlio d'Ulïeno' (XXII 112,1-4), in C we read 'diede insieme lettere del figlio / del re Troiano al figlio d'Ulïeno' (XXIV 112,3-4). Hence the allusion to the *Aspramonte* is stronger in the last edition. The epithet 'figlio di Ulïeno' is used three times in AB and four times in C.

and a judicial duel is to take place. Agramante, however, would prefer to avoid the spilling of blood, for the death of either of such supreme warriors would weaken his army. At the last moment he finds a solution that initially satisfies everyone: to allow Doralice herself to choose between the two knights. And the Spanish beauty surprises everyone when she voices her wish to stay with Mandricardo, to whom – but only the reader knows this – she has already offered her virginity. Rodomonte seizes his sword, but Agramante orders him to put it down, something which, coming from so high, ‘*cader fece al suo furor la vela*’ (XXV 109,8 AB; XXVII C). An obedient vassal, Rodomonte therefore ‘*per reverentia cede*’ (110,3) and rides away, without anyone attempting to stop him.

Is Rodomonte right to feel betrayed? At first glance, Agramante’s behaviour is impeccable: he did everything he could to persuade the two rivals to make peace, treating them ‘*da signor giusto e da fedel fratello*’ (103,4); then he prevented Rodomonte from breaking the pact and attacking Mandricardo. It is the King of Sarza, suggests the narrator, who ‘*di ragion passa[...] il segno*’ (124,3 AB; 125 C), blinded as he is by his wounded pride. And yet, the author’s verdict (a courtier himself, Ariosto held no illusions as to contemporary courts) is perhaps not so categorical.

A closer reading reveals that, unlike Boiardo’s Agramante, Ariosto’s does not seem to consider Rodomonte his close friend. Surprisingly, he is not particularly preoccupied about his vassal’s honour. Agramante asks Mandricardo and Rodomonte to give up the Spanish princess (103,5-8), as if both of them were merely her suitors. Doralice, however, is betrothed (or, to be precise, already married) to Rodomonte, for earlier we were told that she was ‘*maritata*’ to her African lover, ‘*ben che di ciò la fama anchor non vola*’ (XII 40,3-4 AB; XIV C). It is unlikely that Agramante does not know about this marriage, but in any case, as was shown in 2.2, the King of Sarza was never secretive about his passion

for King Stordilano's daughter. Ariosto tells us that 'ognun sapea ciò ch'egli havea già fatto / per essa in giostre, in torneamenti, in guerra' (XXV 106,1-2 AB; XXVII C). Viewed from this perspective, and in light of the mentality of Ariosto's early readers, Agramante's conduct is both tactless and puzzling. As the anonymous author of the *Pareri in duello* observes,

Nel gettar le sorti delle querele, qual prima combatter si dovesse, mi par che si facesse torto à Rodomonte. Et questo dico per più rispetti: che la querela era più importante; era prima nata; era cominciata a combattere; et era stata interrotta per servire Agramante: il che a Rodomonte acquistar dovea non poco favore. Ma ho ancor da dire, che questa non era querela da combattere, essendo manifesto, che Doralice sposa di Rodomonte da Mandricardo era stata rapita, convenendosi a ciò più vendetta, o castigamento, che Duello. Né era tal quistione da rimettere al giudizio della Donna: che havendo ella da rimaner moglie d'un di loro, era conveniente, ch'ella elegesse di darsi, anzi a colui, che l'haveva havuta intera, che corrotta ad un'altro [...].³⁹

Thus, according to the sixteenth-century critic, Agramante was wrong, as he should have punished the one who, in effect, was Doralice's abductor. At the very least, he should have allowed Rodomonte to defend his honour in a one-to-one combat.⁴⁰ Instead, not only does he trample under foot his old friend's feelings, but he also makes a political blunder, given that he does not distinguish between 'un suo Aphricano' (102,8 A, where the indefinite article underscores the fact that, for Agramante, Rodomonte is merely one of his many vassals⁴¹) and Mandricardo, a foreign king and a not very reliable ally who, as we have seen, has always put his personal interests before those of Agramante.⁴² To this we may add that Mandricardo is an unpopular figure in the Saracen camp: apart from Doralice (who, as the poet maliciously suggests, is not heart-broken), nobody will shed tears when Ruggiero kills him.

³⁹ *Pareri in Duello d'incerto Autore*, in ORLANDO FVRIOSO / DI M. LODOVICO ARIOSTO [...] (Venetia: per. Gio. Andrea Valvassori, 1566), p. 326.

⁴⁰ Zanette (1959), p. 361, stresses the absurdity of the situation: 'il re Agramante non aveva una proposta più seria da fare per risolvere il caso?'.

⁴¹ In BC the poet uses the definitive article: 'il suo Africano'.

⁴² It is true, however, that in the *Inamoramento de Orlando* Mandricardo saves Agramante's life in the battle of Paris (III viii 47-48,1-2).

The question that naturally arises is whether Agramante could have allowed Rodomonte to challenge Doralice's choice without breaking the chivalric code. Although the author of the *Pareri in duello* seems to rule out this possibility,⁴³ it must be stressed that the King of Sarza refuses to adhere to the pact because he is convinced that Doralice's decision is 'ingiusta e falsa' (108,3), given (as he knows, and we do) that she is his legitimate wife. In other words, it is the moral law that makes him break his word. As for the Emperor of Tartary, he is willing to oblige his rival (his laconic reply being 'Vada pur come ti pare', 109,2), which means that he, too, believes that the cuckolded husband has the right – or rather the obligation – to insist upon resuming the duel. Since Mandricardo does not have any objections, Agramante would be in the position to annul the initial agreement. However, at this point he loses his patience: tired of Doralice and her lovers, he puts an end to the whole matter, moving on to the other quarrels which in his eyes are no less important than the present one.

Trying to come to terms with what has happened, Rodomonte finds solace in thoughts of revenge. Having decided to return to Africa, he wishes terrible calamities to befall Agramante.⁴⁴

Desidera veder che sopra il regno
gli cada tanto mal, tanta procella,
ch'in Aphrica ogni casa se funesti,
né pietra salda sopra pietra resti;

e che spinto del Regno, in duolo e in lutto
viva Agramante, misero e mendico;

⁴³ 'Pure in questa querela tanto v'ha di buono, che ritornar volendo Rodomonte a combattere, Agramante giudicò, che non poteva chiamare *Più Mandricardo per quella querela*: Che essendo ella già stata compromessa, et civilmente decisa, non poteva esser ritornata al giudicio dell'arme' (*Parere in duello*, p. 326).

⁴⁴ The fact that Rodomonte – 'per via di donna' – decides to return to Africa does not necessarily mean that he breaks the chivalric code. According to Girolamo Muzio, the author of an influential treatise on the art of duelling, under certain circumstances it may be permissible to challenge one's lord to a duel: «A' quale hora adunque il Signore accuserà il suddito, o il servitore di qual conditione che egli si sia di fede violata o per via di donna o di tradimento di stato, con la persona propria gliele haverà à provare: et il medesimo far anchora quando il suddito o il servidore accuserà il suo Signore» (IL DVELLO / DEL MVTIO / IVSTINOPO/LITANO [...]) (Vinegia: appresso Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari e Fratelli, 1550), f. 85v).

e che esso sia che poi gli renda il tutto,
 e lo riponga in l'alto seggio antico,
 e de la fede sua produca il frutto:
 e gli faccia veder ch'un vero amico
 a dritto e a torto esser devea preposto,
 se tutto il mondo se gli fusse opposto.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXV 124,5-6; 125 AB; XXVII 125-126 C)

Laden with hurt, anger and resentment, Rodomonte's internal monologue nevertheless conveys a sense of hopefulness. Agramante has turned his back on his most loyal friend, but his ingratitude has not severed the bond between them. Though the wound is still bleeding, Rodomonte has already decided to forgive his king, which reveals how deep his affection for him is. Later, claiming that Tasso is incapable of portraying 'pensier da eroi', Galileo Galilei will advise him to reread this very passage:

vi manderei da Rodomonte nel c. 27, st. 125, a sentire quello che dice, sdegnato contro di Agramante per non l'aver egli, a dritto o torto, voluto preporre a Mandricardo; e letto che voi l'avessi, e con infinito stupore della grandezza dell'animo di colui, vi esorterei a ristupirvi di nuovo, e poi a tacere, come disperato di poter mai trovar concetti di quella sorte.⁴⁵

Nor is Galileo the only critic to show admiration for Rodomonte's attitude. According to Lodovico Muratori, the description of the Saracen's state of mind is among the most beautiful passages in the entire poem: 'non poteva nascere un più nobile, un più bel desiderio in cuore ad un Cavalier, prode, sdegnato, e desideroso di vendicarsi, quanto il bramare, che Agramante fosse spogliato del Regno, e che toccasse a lui il riporlo in trono'. For Muratori, 'un tal sentimento, un tal costume, un tale affetto'⁴⁶ is not only 'nuovo, raro, maraviglioso, e sublime', but it is 'più maraviglioso, più raro, e più nobile [...] che quel d'Achille',⁴⁷ given that the ancient hero is blinded by his thirst of revenge.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Galileo Galilei, *Considerazioni al Tasso*, in *Scritti letterari*, ed. by Alberto Chiari (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1970), pp. 487-635: 571.

⁴⁶ See *Della perfetta poesia italiana, spiegata e dimostrata con varie osservazioni da Ludovico Antonio Muratori*, in *Opere / del proposto / Lodovico Antonio / Muratori* [...] (Arezzo: per Michele Bellotti, 1769), vol. IX, p. 115.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

As far as Doralice is concerned, Rodomonte erases her from his heart. Issabella's beauty will soon make him forget his first love, and her heroic death will teach him that conjugal fidelity is not a myth. Ignoring Agramante's pleas to return, and turning down the offer of 'una cugina sua, figlia d'Aimonte' together with the 'regno di Oran [...] per dote' (XXX 5,3-4 AB; XXXII C), Rodomonte will live by Issabella's tomb until his duel with Bradamante. But even so, he will not cease to help the Saracens: all the Christian knights whom he overpowers on the bridge built in memory of Issabella are treated as prisoners of war and sent to Africa.

4.3. RUGGIERO

Though saddened by Rodomonte's departure, Agramante does not seem to realise that he has lost his best champion. In his opinion, his best knight is none other than Ruggiero to whom we must now turn our attention. Picking up the story of the 'terzo paladino', Ariosto reminds us that Agramante dotes on his younger cousin. Upon discovering that Ruggiero is held captive by Atlante, Agramante, 'ch'ama Ruggiero e più d'ogn'altro ha a core' (III 69,8 AB; 70 C), sends Brunello to free him from the enchanted castle. Brunello narrowly escapes hanging when he fails his mission.

It is in a state of extreme agitation that Agramante watches the duel between Ruggiero and Mandricardo (who fight over the right to wear the Trojan eagle). When Ruggiero kills the Emperor of Tartary, the relief of the African king knows no bounds:

Che dirò del favor, che de le tante
carezze e tante affettuose et vere,

⁴⁸ Salviati (1588), p. 216, too maintains that 'chi legge ben que' luoghi truova, che ne anche in quella furia quel Saracino si spogliò in tutto dell'affetto verso il Re suo, poiché desiderava di vederlo mal condotto per averlo à rimettere egli in istato'. As for modern scholars, Zanette (1959), pp. 363-366, does not conceal his admiration for the King of Sarza. By contrast, Santoro (1989), p. 267, argues that Rodomonte's logic is that of a barbarian and his 'progetto immaginario [...] passa il segno della ragione'.

che fece a quel Ruggiero il Re Agramante,
 senza il qual dar al vento le bandiere,
 né vòlse mover d'Aphrica le piante,
 né senza lui si fidò in tante schiere?
 Hor che del Re Agricane ha spento il seme,
 stima più lui che tutto il mondo insieme.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXVIII 70 AB; XXX C)

Agramante, maintains the poet, has always believed that Ruggiero's participation was crucial to the success of his expedition against Charlemagne.⁴⁹ However, he does not merely see him as the means to defeating the Christians; his friendship for Ruggiero is 'ver[a]', that is genuine, borne out of his admiration for Ruggiero's chivalric accomplishments. Like his predecessor, Ariosto underscores the warmth of their relationship. Ruggiero is seriously wounded in the fight with Mandricardo, and Agramante surrounds him with his care, doing everything he can to help his recovery:

Con molta diligentia il Re Agramante
 fece colcar Ruggier ne le sue tende;
 che notte e dì veder sel vuole inante:
 sì l'ama, sì di lui cura si prende.
 Al letto il scudo e l'arme tutte quante,
 che fur di Mandricardo, il Re gli appende.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXVIII 74,1-6 AB; XXX C)

As for Ruggiero, Agramante is not equally central in *his* life. Despite the prophecy of the King of Garamantha, his contribution to Agramante's war is in actual fact modest, as he has been far too eager to pursue Arthurian adventures. While Rodomonte served his king with almost religious zeal, Ruggiero was not in a hurry to return to Paris after taking leave of Logistilla. Very marked already in the 1516 edition, the contrast between Ruggiero's and Rodomonte's attitude to Agramante is further emphasised in BC: after the episode in which Rodomonte postpones his duel with Mandricardo, Ariosto adds two new octaves (XXIII 5-6 B; XXV C), in which Ruggiero too encounters Agramante's

⁴⁹ Boiardo's Agramante, if truth be told, wanted 'ad ogni modo trapassare' (II iii 37,4), but here Ariosto implies that Agramante would not have set sail for France without the 'terzo paladino'.

messenger. Unlike Rodomonte, he turns a deaf ear to his king's plea, because he has promised to rescue a young man who is about to be burnt at the stake.⁵⁰ It is true that the poet tries to justify his decision, observing that, 'da molti pensier ridotto in forse' (6,1), Ruggiero 'né luogo avea né tempo a pensar atto' (6,4).⁵¹ However, it is obvious that he has only a tepid affection for Agramante, all the more so considering that at this point he does not yet know that the young man in question is Bradamante's twin brother Ricciardetto.

Even after saving Ricciardetto, Ruggiero does not return to the Saracen camp, but instead undertakes to free Malagigi and Viviano. Then he decides to find his horse Frontino (whom Rodomonte took from Bradamante's maid Hippalca), judging that 'biasmo e dishonor gli fia / se tôrlo a Rodomonte non s'affretta' (XXIV 62,6-7 AB; XXVI 65 C). Ruggiero's and Rodomonte's paths cross again when Rodomonte and Mandricardo are on their way to Paris. The rightful owner of Frontino immediately challenges Rodomonte to a duel, but the latter reminds him of their duty to Agramante, which prompts Ariosto (who is both moved and bemused) to compare Rodomonte to Job: Rodomonte, stresses the poet, would have gone to the ends of the earth to fight with Ruggiero ('trecento miglia sarebbe ito e mille / [...] a comperar tal lite', 92,1-2 AB; 95 C), but now feels compelled to miss this splendid opportunity, 'tanto il desiderio che si giugna / in soccorso al suo Re gli par honesto' (90,3-4 AB; 93 C).

Ruggiero, however, places his personal honour above that of Agramante: he agrees to postpone the duel, but on condition that Frontino be immediately returned to him (Rodomonte, as the reader knows, refrained from giving Mandricardo a similar ultimatum

⁵⁰ By contrast, in A, where these two octaves are missing, Ariosto proceeds straight to narrate Ricciardetto's rescue.

⁵¹ If, in B, Ruggiero has no time to think because of the damsel who is showing him the way ('ch'ad or ad or in modo *l'affrettava*, / che nessun tempo d'indugiar gli dava', 6,7-8 B), in C it is Ruggiero who tells the damsel to hasten her pace ('ch'ad or ad or in modo *egli affrettava*, / che nessun tempo d'indugiar le dava').

with regard to Doralice); moreover, he accuses the King of Sarza of having committed ‘gran fallo’, staining his hands with ‘cosa indegna a un hom forte’ (94,1-2 AB; 97 C). Predictably, these insults make Rodomonte’s blood boil, for he considers them completely unjustified: it is true, as for Frontino, that ‘tôrlo a una donzella gli par[eva] fallo’ (XXI 34,5 AB; XXIII C), but the discovery that the horse’s owner was Ruggiero changed everything. Rodomonte did not steal Frontino; he took it precisely to challenge to a single combat a ‘sì gran campion’ (35,8) after the sharp-tongued Hippalca had wounded his pride by observing that Ruggiero ‘più di te val [...] / né lo pareggia al mondo altro guerriero’ (35,3-4).⁵² Ruggiero knows that Frontino was merely a pretext for facing him, Ruggiero, and yet he hurls abuse at his fellow African, provoking him to start a fight.

If Rodomonte is not a new Job, it is equally true that in the *Discordia* episode Ariosto ‘lo describe che egli habbia più rispetto à detto Re, che non hebbe non sol Gradasso, Mandricardo e Marfisa, ma Ruggiero, com’egli vassallo et cavaliere di Agramante’.⁵³ As far as Ruggiero is concerned, by now the reader knows that he no longer wishes to serve Agramante until his last breath: having been freed from the enchanted palace – Atlante’s last attempt to save him from his destiny –, he had promised Bradamante to receive baptism in order to ask her father Amone for permission to marry her. Standing in the middle of the narration (XX AB; XXII C), this episode marks an important watershed in his story: one could say that his coldness towards Agramante is ultimately due to the fact that, in his heart, he has decided to convert to Christianity. And yet, on the other hand, he continues to consider himself Agramante’s knight. As he explains in a long letter to Bradamante (which he writes on the eve of liberating Malagigi and Viviano), he feels

⁵² As for their duel in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, on that occasion Rodomonte forgot to ask his opponent’s name.

⁵³ So argues Camillo Pellegrini in his *Il Carrafa o vero della Epica poesia* (1584). The passage is cited in Salviati (1588), p. 214.

morally constrained to remain with his king until he finds ‘convenienti / cagion, che parran giuste, di dar volta’ (XXIII 87,5-6 A; 91 B; XXV 91 C).⁵⁴

It is the ideal of knightly honour that makes Ruggiero postpone his conversion, which shows that the concept of secular chivalry – at least until this point in the story – is as important for Ariosto as it was for Boiardo.⁵⁵ We have seen that some of Boiardo’s Saracens (Agricane, Brandimarte and Fiordalisa, Iroldo and Prasildo) have renounced Macone. These conversions cannot be called morally ambiguous, because the characters in question were free to dispose of themselves inasmuch as they were not bound by any feudal or other tie. Different, however, is the case of Balante in the *Aspramonte*, a character whom we referred to numerous times in the course of this study without dwelling, however, on his relationship with his lord. Agolante, as was mentioned earlier, entrusted him with an embassy to Charlemagne; yet, overwhelmed by the splendour of the Christian court, Balante decides to embrace the Christian faith, but he tells his Christian friend Namò that he cannot do so before the end of the war. Whereas in the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte* Balante betrays his king (we have alluded to this episode when discussing the figure of Ulieno), in the *Aspramonte A* he remains faithful to him until he is captured by the Christians.⁵⁶ Far from condemning his reluctance to abandon Agolante, Andrea da Barberino portrays him as a tragic hero.⁵⁷ Moreover, Cieco da

⁵⁴ It is worth observing that in BC Ariosto substituted *parran* with *sian*: ‘cagion, che sian giuste’. The former reading seemed to betray the fact that Ruggiero’s main concern was to appear noble in the eyes of the others, all the more so considering that in this letter he talks a lot about public opinion.

⁵⁵ By contrast, Agostini’s Rugiero converts before the end of the war because of his ‘irresistible’ love for Bradamante. For a brief discussion of the differences between the conversion of the ‘terzo paladino’ in Ariosto and Agostini see Rosanna Alhaique Pettinelli, ‘Tra il Boiardo e l’Ariosto: il Cieco da Ferrara e Niccolò degli Agostini’, *Rassegna della letteratura italiana*, LXXIX (1975), 232-278: 247-249.

⁵⁶ Agolante, observes Andrea da Barberino, has treated Balante as his own son: he raised him, dubbed him a knight, gave him a wife, granted him many kingdoms and the sword Trenzadia (*Aspramonte A*, II xvi 10-11).

⁵⁷ ‘El dux Namò domandò Balante s’egli si voleva battezzare. Rispuose: “O signor duca, abbia pietà di me! Io non vorrei essere tenuto traditore contro allo amirante Agolante, ond’io ti priego che tu mi lasci tornare a lui, e domanderogli licenza, e tornerò a battezzarmi”. Disse Uggieri: “Tu parli follemente, imperò che tu non puoi essere ripreso di questo; però che l’uomo qual’è nell’altrui forze non è in sua libertà. Tutto questo carico voglio sopra di me”’ (ibid., III xxviii 5-11).

Ferrara too seems to subscribe to the view that it is morally wrong to leave one's lord in a moment of extreme danger, whatever the reason for this might be. For example, Carminiano, Mambriano's vassal, asks to be baptised, but immediately after having been admitted into the bosom of the Christian Church, announces his decision to return to the Saracen camp to help his king. And not only do the Christians accept his decision but they even applaud it: 'Turpino per tal grazia il benedisse, / dicendo che da uom giusto facea' (XVII 12,5-6).⁵⁸

We may add that even outside the realm of chivalric literature we come across similar statements with regard to the concept of honour. Suffice it to recall the following passage from Federico Fregoso's speech in the *Cortegiano*:

[...] purché un gentilomo non lassi il patrone quando fosse in su la guerra o in qualche avversità, di sorte che si potesse credere che ciò facesse per secondar la fortuna, o per parergli che gli mancasse quel mezzo del qual potesse trarre utilità, da ogni altro tempo credo che possa con ragion e debba levarsi da quella servitù, che tra i boni sia per dargli vergogna [...].⁵⁹

If Fregoso is right, Ruggiero's fear of being considered a traitor – fear that we sense in his letter to Bradamante – is neither surprising nor groundless:

– Vorrei (le soggiungea), quando vi piaccia,
 levar al mio signor l'assedio intorno
 acciò che l'ignorante volgo taccia,
 il qual direbbe, a mia vergogna e scorno:
 Ruggier, mentre Agramante hebbe bonaccia,
 mai non l'abbandonò notte né giorno;
 hor che Fortuna per Carlo si piega,
 egli col vincitor l'insegna spiega.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXIII 86 A; 90 B; XXV 90 C)

What is surprising, however, is Ruggiero's haste to convert, especially considering that Agramante (as was demonstrated in 3.3) is a much better king than Mambriano. If Andrea

⁵⁸ Carminiano will leave Mambriano only after his final defeat and his flight into the forest: 'Carminian, di tal fuga avveduto, / disse ai figliuoli: / Noi abbiam serbata / la fede a Mambrian, come è dovuto, / fino a la fin per fargli cosa grata: / ora che lui s'è d'animo perduto / e che gli ha totalmente abbandonata / l'impresa, al buon Rinaldo se n'andremo / e fedelmente a lui obbediremo' (*Mambriano*, XXIII 91).

⁵⁹ Castiglione (1981), p. 152.

da Barberino's Balante intends to remain a Saracen 'mentre che dura questa guerra' (II XLVIII 38-39) and Carminiano takes part in the decisive battle, Ruggiero promises Bradamante to receive baptism within 15 or 20 days, deeming it sufficient to 'comparir [...] una volta, / sì che de li Aphricani alloggiamenti / la grave ossediõ per me sia tolta' (XXIII 87,2-4 A; 91 B; XXV 91 C). In his defence one could say that he does not appear to be wholly convinced by his own reasoning: the sheer length of his letter (7 octaves)⁶⁰ as well as its repetitiveness suggest that Ruggiero is more perturbed than he is willing to admit. In 20 days' time he will still be in the Saracen camp. Nor will he abandon Agramante when Bradamante arrives in Arles, where the Saracen army will have retreated after Rinaldo's (unchivalrous) attack.

To Bradamante's immense relief, Marphisa is revealed to be Ruggiero's long-lost sister. At the same time, Ruggiero seems to have found a 'cagione giusta' (at least in the eyes of the two warrior-women) to break all ties with his Saracen past. Atlante's voice tells his adoptive children that their father Ruggiero II of Risa was killed by Aimonte and Troiano, who are also responsible for Galaciella's death: 'la fêr, perché s'havesse ad affogare, / s'un debil legno porre in mezo il mare' (XXXIII 64,7-8 A; 60 B; XXXVI 60 C).⁶¹ This revelation is highly surprising, considering that Troiano, as was mentioned in chapter II, is not involved in the treacherous conquest of Risa in any of the versions of the *Aspramonte*,⁶² while Almonte sends his sister to Africa in order to *save* her from their

⁶⁰ In BC Ruggiero's uneasiness is further stressed in the octaves devoted to his recollection of his encounter with Agramante's messenger (XXIII 81-82 B; XXV C).

⁶¹ Earlier in the narration, Bradamante accused Ruggiero of serving the man whose father had killed his father: 'Fu morto da Troian (non so se 'l sai) / el padre tuo, ma fin a' sassi il sanno: / e tu del figlio di Troian cura hai / che non riceva alcun dishnor né danno' (XXVIII 83,1-4 AB; XXX C).

⁶² Cavallo (2013), p. 79, affirms that Atlante's claim that Troiano and Agolante are guilty of the murder of Ruggiero's parents 'flies in the face of literary history, since in previous versions neither took part in the surreptitious attack on Reggio negotiated by Beltramo and Almonte'. This is not exactly so, for as we mentioned in 2.3, it is Agolante who negotiates with the traitor in the *Aspramonte A*.

father's wrath.⁶³ Although it cannot be ruled out that Ariosto might have followed some now lost version, it is more likely that he (or his characters) deliberately 'twisted the facts' in order to justify Marphisa's conversion and her resolution to kill Agramante.

Ruggiero, however, does not give in to Bradamante's and Marphisa's exhortations to convert and enter Charlemagne's service. More determined than ever to fulfil his duty, he replies 'che da principio questo far devea; / ma per non haver ben note le cose, / come hebbe poi, tardato troppo havea' (XXXIII 84,2-4 A; 80 B; XXXVI 80 C). He then reiterates his promise 'di trovar un modo' so that he can 'partir con ragion' [*con suo onor* in C]; (85,2-3 A; 81 B; 81 C). And here we must notice that Ariosto not only approves of his choice (which shows that the author's position does not always coincide with that of his Christian characters), but he also comes close to contradicting what was stated earlier by Atlante, namely that Troiano too was guilty of the murder of Ruggiero II of Risa. The following authorial comment suggests that the (main) guilty party is Ruggiero's and Agramante's uncle, namely Aimonte:

Fece Ruggiero il debito a seguire
il suo signor, che non se ne potea,
se non con ignominia, dipartire;
che ragion di lasciarlo non havea.
E se Aimonte gli fe' il padre morire,
tal colpa in Agramante non cadea;
ch'in molti effetti havea con Ruggier poi
emendato ogni error de i maggior suoi.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXXIV 5 AB; XXXVIII C)

Thus, praised by the author as well as by sixteenth-century commentators, Ruggiero returns to Arles.⁶⁴ When under the cover of darkness Rinaldo's troops attacked the Saracen camp, Ruggiero was grievously wounded. Now, however, *Fortuna* has granted

⁶³ Almonte tries to save his sister in the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*, while Andrea da Barberino leaves the ending of Galiziella's story deliberately ambiguous, saying that she could have been sent to Africa by Almonte.

⁶⁴ Suffice it to mention here Lodovico Dolce's 'Allegoria' to canto XXXVIII in Gabriele Giolito's 1542 edition: 'per Ruggiero, il quale, ancora che amasse Bradamante, non perciò nell'avversa fortuna volle abbandonare il suo re, contiensi la fede di ottimo cavalliero' (f. 204v).

him the opportunity to change the course of the war: following Sobrino's advice, Agramante proposed to Charlemagne to put an end to bloodshed through a judicial duel between Ruggiero and a Christian knight of Charlemagne's choice. The two rulers solemnly swear not to interrupt the single combat, while their respective champions swear to enter the service of the enemy king should their own lord break the oath. The duel will be interrupted by Agramante. And yet, instead of swearing allegiance to Charlemagne, Ruggiero will follow his king to Africa.

But the truth lies deeper, and we must focus more closely on this episode, as it is of fundamental importance for understanding the events that follow. First of all, it must be stressed Agramante breaks the pact because his champion 'pigro era a menar le mani' (XXXV 14,3 A; 3 B; XXXIX 3 C). Ruggiero does not want to kill or wound Rinaldo, his lady's brother. The reader may sympathise with him, but from the point of view of the chivalric code (not to mention the tie of kinship and friendship between him and Agramante) his behaviour is, to say the least, morally ambiguous. As the author of the *Pareri in duello* will later point out, 'Vero è che Ruggiero si mostrò Cavalier di non salda fede, ché, o non doveva accettare il carico del combattere, o doveva combattere con tutte le sue forze'.⁶⁵

In light of this, it is ironic that the African ruler interrupts the combat following the apparition of 'Rodomonte' (or rather, of Melissa disguised as Rodomonte): Agramante did not let his old friend challenge Doralice's decision, and now he himself breaks an oath sworn on the holy 'Alcorano', committing the sin of perjury. It is difficult to say if the *real* King of Sarza, rather than Melissa's impersonation, would have advised him to do so... In any case, we should not be too quick to condemn Agramante, for he is not the only character to violate the chivalric code in this episode: 'L'intervento della magia –

⁶⁵ *Pareri in duello*, p. 461.

observes Giovanna Rizzarelli – sovverte ogni logica interna allo scontro codificato e soprattutto rende difficile capire chi non abbia rispettato le regole, se realmente Agramante o i suoi avversari per i quali Melissa è intervenuta'.⁶⁶ On the other hand, at least one sixteenth-century interpreter went so far as to affirm that 'il rompere il giuramento per la libertà de' suoi sudditi, e per la reputazione de' suoi regni, massimamente contro à popoli d'altra legge, si può forse scusare à grande equità'.⁶⁷

The interpreter in question is Lionardo Salviati, the principal founder of the Accademia della Crusca. In his opinion, Agramante's action is perhaps less outrageous than it seems at first, while Ruggiero has a moral obligation to remain with Agramante, even if that leads him to break his oath twice.⁶⁸ In replying to objections vented by Tasso (who claimed that the progenitor of the Este dynasty committed a most grievous sin 'prepone[ndo] il suo Re al suo Dio, che è quello stesso, che è adorato da i Christiani, et una apparenza di fede alla fede et alla religione, et l'humane opinioni alle divine ragioni'⁶⁹), Salviati underscores the fact that the hero's decision is dictated by the moral law: 'Quando si giura di far cosa, che non convenga, non si dee il giuramento osservare e à Ruggiero non conveniva, come à civile huomo, abandonar nel maggior bisogno il Re suo'.⁷⁰ This is all the more true because Ruggiero 'si poteva chiamare Affricano, perché era nato, nutrito, e vivuto in Affrica; nato di madre Affricana, e allevato da Affricano; suo padre, né altro suo parente Cristiano non aveva mai conosciuto'.⁷¹

These are precisely the thoughts that run through Ruggiero's mind. While foregrounding his fear of dishonour ('molti diran che non se de' osservare / quel ch'era

⁶⁶ Giovanna Rizzarelli, «Cominciar quivi una crudel battaglia». Duelli in ottave nell'*Orlando furioso*, in *Per violate forme. Rappresentazioni e linguaggi della violenza nella letteratura italiana*, ed. by Fabrizio Bondi, Nicola Catelli (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2009), pp. 79-100: 92-93.

⁶⁷ Salviati (1585), p. 180.

⁶⁸ After the interruption of the duel, Ruggiero and Rinaldo 'replicâr con nuovi giuramenti / d'esser nemici a chi mancò di fede' (XXXV 20,1-2 A; 9 B; XXXIX 9 C).

⁶⁹ Tasso (1585), f. A8v.

⁷⁰ Salviati (1585), p. 28.

⁷¹ Ibid.

ingiusto e illecito a giurare', XXXVI 67,7-8 AB; XL C), Ariosto also, and for the first time, draws attention to his affection for Agramante: 'Ruggiero ama Agramante, e se si parte / per ciò [that is because of the violation of the pact] da lui, far grande error si stima' (65,3-4 ABC). Moreover, a few stanzas later we learn that Ruggiero has warm feelings towards the seven African kings who had been captured by Dudone: 'Ruggier li amava, e sofferir non puòte / lasciarli in la miseria in che trovalli' (74,1-2 ABC). Thus, the dynastic hero is more attached to the Saracen world than we thought. At this point his story takes on dramatic overtones: profoundly shaken by Agramante's defeat, Ruggiero comes to resemble Andrea da Barberino's Balante who feels emotionally attached to his king and his brothers-in-arms despite his desire to convert.

Unlike Balante, however, Ruggiero is not completely convinced of the truth of the Christian religion. In reality, though considering himself a believer, like the vast majority of Boiardo's and Ariosto's characters, he has never been particularly devout, neither before nor after his falling in love with Bradamante. Amorous passion has made him renounce Macone ('Non che in l'acqua, ma nel fuoco / per tuo amor porre il capo mi fia poco', XX 35,7-8 AB; XXII C), but it has not led him to Christ. Far from imploring God to help him fulfil his destiny, he continues to live in a world governed by *Fortuna*, hoping that sooner or later it will allow him to marry Bradamante. In fact, he appears to have doubts as to whether the Creator takes any interest in human affairs.⁷²

Having said that, Ruggiero does recognise God's hand in the chaos of life. Together with the above-mentioned seven African kings, he will set sail for Africa in order to join Agramante, but their ship will be struck by a terrible storm. Fearing that the ship might hit a rock ('Oh fallace de l'huomini credenza! / Campò il naviglio che devea perire' (XXXVII 23,1-2 AB; XLI C), the crew and the passengers pile into a lifeboat which,

⁷² This is the impression we get from the (irreverent, to say the least) speech in which he declares his willingness to rescue Ricciardetto: 'habbia chi regge il ciel cura di questo, / o la Fortuna, se non tocca a lui' (XX 57,3-4 AB; XXII C).

overcrowded as it is, sinks. Fighting the furious waves, Ruggiero comes to the conclusion that this storm is Christ's revenge for his reluctance to abandon the Africans:

Gli ritornano a mente le promesse
che tante volte alla sua donna fece;
quel che giurato havea quando si messe
contra Rinaldo, e nulla satisfece.
Sì che pentito, a Dio che non volesse
punirlo qui, tre volte e quattro e diece
disse; e votosse di core e di fede
farse christian, se ponea in sciutto il piede;

e mai più non pigliar spada né lancia
contra a' Fedeli in aiuto de' Mori;
ma che ritorneria subito in Francia
e a Carlo renderia debiti honori;
né Bradamante più terrebbe a ciancia,
e verria a honesto fin de li suoi amori.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXXVII 48-49,1-6 AB; XLI C)

This time Ruggiero keeps his promise: having reached a tiny island, he encounters a hermit who, after having reproached him for his spiritual indolence, teaches him the rudiments of Christian doctrine and then administers the sacrament of baptism.⁷³ On the surface, it would seem that, identifying with this servant of Christ, the author unequivocally condemns the Saracen past of the 'terzo paladino'. And yet one perceives a sense of detachment in the octaves devoted to Ruggiero's spiritual purification: his conversion 'si compie come un colpo di scena teatrale, frutto di avvenimenti esteriori e di moventi estranei alla coscienza religiosa'.⁷⁴ The poet's gaze captures neither Ruggiero's internal crisis nor the infusion of grace into his soul. He limits himself to registering his hero's passive submission to his destiny.

From the psychological viewpoint, it is above all the terror of death – physical demise rather than eternal damnation – that makes Ruggiero promise to God (who, it must be

⁷³ According to Giudicetti (2010), p. 55, this hermit is 'l'unico eremita del poema non ridicolizzato'. It can be pointed out, however, that the hermit who features in the Caligorante episode (XIII 23-29 AB; XV 42-48 C) is also more or less 'respectable'.

⁷⁴ Ezio Levi, 'L'*Orlando furioso* come epopea nuziale', *Archivum romanicum*, XVII (1933), 459-493: 483. See also Pool (1968), p. 180.

said, does not speak to him directly, as He did in Issabella's case) to cut all ties with his king. From this perspective, he joins the multitude of Saracen knights from the previous tradition who choose to convert to Christianity when faced with the prospect of death. Yet, at the dawn of his heroic career, burning with the desire to descend from the Mount of Carena and take part in Agramante's joust, Rugiero declared himself ready to die in the name of chivalry ('sarebe la mia zogia e 'l mio conforto / star sieco un'hora, et esser dapoi morto', II xvi 37,7-8). Moreover, praising the dynastic hero for his resolution to remain with Agramante, Ariosto himself proclaimed on more than one occasion that death with honour was to be preferred to life with disgrace: 'l'honor è di più pregio che la vita, / ch'a tutti li piaceri è preferita' (XXXIV 4,7-8 AB; XXXVIII C).

If, threatened with death, Ruggiero forgets about the chivalric code, Agramante can make his own the words allegedly uttered by Francis I of France: 'all is lost save honour'.⁷⁵ It may not be a coincidence that at this point in the narration the respective stories of Ruggiero and his king run parallel: using the technique of *entrelacement*, Ariosto leaves the former (still a Saracen) in the tempestuous sea to tell us about the preparations for the Lipadusa duel. On the eve of the combat, Brandimarte tries to persuade the African ruler to convert to Christianity, telling him that if he does so, Orlando will reinstate him as king of Africa. Whereupon Agramante thus replies, giving yet another example of his sense of dignity:

Che a vincere habbia o perdere, o nel regno
tornare antiquo o sempre starne in bando,
in mente sua n'ha Dio fatto disegno,
il qual né veder io posso, né Orlando.
Sia quel che vuol, non potrà ad atto indegno
di Re inchinarmi mai timore; e quando
fussi certo morir, vuo' restar morto,
prima ch'al sangue mio far sì gran torto.

(*Orlando furioso*, XXXVII 44 AB; XLI C)

⁷⁵ Admired by Ariosto, Francis I is an important presence in the historical digressions of the *Furioso*, especially in A. See Dorigatti (2011).

With Agramante's voice still echoing in the reader's mind, the poet suddenly 'remembers' about the drowning Ruggiero ('Ma mi paria, Signor, far troppo fallo / se [...] lasciassi / tanto Ruggier nel mar, che v'affogassi', 46,6-8) and resumes the suspended story. Far from being fortuitous, the juxtaposition of these two narrative strands adds to the complexity and ambiguity surrounding the theme of conversion. Agramante does not have the sin of pride on his conscience;⁷⁶ he is willing to surrender to the divine will, but Brandimarte's proposal (which is, in essence, an injunction to surrender, appealing to the Saracen's *prudenza*) does not touch his heart. The courage with which he chooses to sacrifice his life in order to stay true to his values earns him our respect, making us forget about his shortcomings as a ruler. Already in the sixteenth century his noble speech was applauded by commentators such as Simon Fónari, Clemente Valvassore and Lionardo Salviati:

In Agramante, che non solamente non accetta la conditione offertagli da Brandimarte, ma contro a' lui gravemente se ne accende, et con parole sdegnose, et irate il rimprovera, si dipinge la fortezza dell'animo, che i Re nell'avversa fortuna debbono saldamente mantenere, et più tosto andare alla morte certa, che cosa commettere indegna, et fuori del real decoro.⁷⁷

Agramante will die in the Lipadusa duel, while Ruggiero, together with Orlando (who decapitated his king) and the other Christian paladins, will return to France to swear allegiance to Charlemagne and marry Bradamante. But whereas in the first two editions his lady's parents are happy for her to wed such a renowned warrior, in C the dynastic

⁷⁶ 'In fact – observes Cuccaro (1981), p. 147 –, even in terms of man's relationship with the divine, Agramante is not presumptuous as are many paladins, including the newly converted Brandimarte. In the recognition of man's limitations with respect to divine design he is indeed more human and more wise than his counterpart'.

⁷⁷ Fónari (1549), p. 666. Clemente Valvassori expressed a similar view in his 'Allegoria' to the canto in question: 'Nel rè Agramante, che non volle ritornare nel perduto stato, offertogli sotto conditione, laquale gli pareva essere contro l'honor suo, si mostra che gli animi forti sempre sono a sé stessi simili, se bene si veggono caduti in estrema fortuna' (ORLANDO FVRIOSO / DI M. LODOVICO / ARIOSTO [...] (Venetia: per Gio. Andrea Valvassore, 1553), f. 200r). Finally, according to Salviati (1588), p. 188, this is one of the most eloquent speeches in the entire poem: 'Puossi sentir parlar più magnanimo, più reale, più eroico, e più accompagnante il decoro della persona, che quel d'Agramante a Brandimarte'.

couple meet yet another obstacle: Amone has already promised Bradamante to Leone, the son of the Greek Emperor, and will not change his mind, given that Ruggiero, for all his valour, is destitute: ‘il qual non ch’abbi regno, / ma non può al mondo dir: questa è mia cosa’ (XLIV 36,5-6 C). Thus, shortly after his conversion, Ruggiero learns that, far from being an idyllic realm of Arthurian chivalry, Charlemagne’s court is infected with the worm of *avarizia*.⁷⁸ This discovery is all the more bitter, considering that Agramante was eager to fulfil his every wish and that no African baron has ever ridiculed his poverty...

It is generally believed that the purpose of the Leone episode is to ennoble the dynastic hero, to render him more interesting and more charismatic. Thus, Ruggiero’s penultimate adventure is supposed to celebrate his *cortesía*. Ruggiero’s rival happens to save his life; the fear of appearing ungrateful forces the future founder of the Este dynasty to renounce Bradamante. For, however painful this may be,

pur non è mai per dir che se ne penta;
che prima ch’a Leon non ubbidire,
mille volte, non ch’una, è per morire.
(*Orlando furioso*, XLV 57,7-8 C)

Be it an act of madness or nobility, ‘Ruggiero’s adherence to the law of chivalry signals a continuing struggle against any adoption of the Christian foundational narrative’.⁷⁹ The sacrament of baptism has not changed his worldview, nor have the long conversations with the hermit strengthened his faith: having lost Bradamante, Ruggiero does not turn to God, but sinks into despair (a mortal sin in the Christian faith), ‘né vede, altro che morte, chi finire / possa l’insopportabil suo martire’ (XLV 86,7-8). Needless to say, this renders even more ambivalent the episode of his conversion: Ruggiero, one could argue, wants to

⁷⁸ As Morretti (1993), p. 76, points out, by adding the Leone episode the poet ‘coglie l’occasione [...] per “protestare”, con voce energica, contro i falsi valori che la società contemporanea antepone agli ideali cortesi e cavallereschi (il possesso, l’utile)’.

⁷⁹ Shulman (1998), p. 43.

depart this life in the name of *cortesía*, because earlier he did not have the courage to die in the name of faithfulness to his lord.

4.4. FROM BISERTA TO PARIS

Thanks to Melissa's timely intervention, however, Ruggiero will not die and his story has a happy ending (or so it seems). With the last obstacle overcome, he can finally marry his lady. Ruggiero appears to have finally found peace of mind, but on the last day of his sumptuous wedding celebrations – day 9, to be precise – a knight dressed in black interrupts the closing banquet. This knight is Rodomonte, and so the paths of Agramante's best champions cross again. But this time one of them has to die, given the gravity of the accusation that Rodomonte levels at his former brother-in-arms in the presence of Charlemagne and his entire court: Ruggiero, maintains the King of Sarza, has betrayed Agramante, his legitimate lord, and he, Rodomonte (who has remained true to his oath of faithfulness to the end) has come to confront the traitor.

As we saw earlier, Rodomonte defeated many a knight on the bridge in memory of Issabella. Then, after having been unhorsed by Bradamante, he confined himself to 'una grotta scura' (XXXII 54,2 AB; XXXV 52 C) to expiate his fault, an undeserved punishment, given that the warrior woman had used Argalia's lance (even if she was unaware of its magic powers). In A, Rodomonte heads towards Paris as soon as he learns that Ruggiero has converted to Christianity and Agramante is dead. In C, where the dynastic marriage is delayed because of Bradamante's parents, Ariosto informs us that, after the humiliating defeat, the King of Sarza swore 'non porsi arme intorno, / né stringer spada, né montare in sella' for 'un anno, un mese e un giorno' (XLVI 102,3-5 C) and that he kept his oath, 'Se ben di Carlo in questo mezzo intese / e del re suo signore ogni

successo' (103,1-2). This does not mean, however, that Rodomonte was disloyal or abandoned his lord. We must recall that his intention was to wait until Agramante lost his kingdom, and then help him regain it. Rodomonte could not have foreseen that, instead of going into exile, his friend would challenge Orlando (cured of his madness just in time for the Lipadusa duel). It is futile to speculate on what Rodomonte would have done had the duel taken place before his very eyes. The fact remains that the news of his king's confrontation with Orlando could have reached his cave only after Agramante's death, too late, that is.

Having served his self-imposed penance, Rodomonte thus comes to Paris to challenge Ruggiero whom he deems responsible for the Saracens' defeat. On arrival he feels no need to observe courtly etiquette: he neither dismounts, nor bows down before Charlemagne, nor shows 'segno alcun di reverentia' (XL 76,2 A; 75 B; XLVI 104 C). It should be noted, however, that he is not breaking the chivalric code. After all, it was Charlemagne himself who unwittingly authorised this intrusion:

Libera corte fa bandir intorno,
dove sicuro ognun possa venire;
e campo franco sin al nono giorno
concede a chi contese han da partire.

(*Orlando furioso*, XL 47,1-4 AB [74 C])

A tense silence settles in the air. Followed by the anxious gazes of the guests, the stranger rides straight to the groom (who is seated at the left hand of his new lord) and announces the purpose of his visit:

– Son – disse – il Re di Sarza, Rodomonte,
che te, Ruggiero, alla battaglia sfido;
et vuo' provarti, prima che tramonte
questo sol d'hoggi, che rebelle e infido
al tuo Signor sei stato, e traditore;
né questo merti, né alcun altro honore.

Ben che tua fellonia si veggia aperta,

ch'essendo hor tu christian non pòi negarla;
 acciò si possa ancho saper più certa,
 in questo campo vengoti a provarla:
 e se persona hai qui che faccia offerta
 di combatter per te, voglio accettarla.
 S'una non basta, accetto quattro e sei,
 provando lor che traditor tu sei. –

(*Orlando furioso*, XL 77,3-8, 78 A; 76-77 B; XLVI 105-106 C)

This is Rodomonte's last speech. Brimming with indignation, it brings to mind his very first speech, the one that he delivered back in Biserta, when, speaking in front of Agramante and the 31 vassal kings, he challenged to a duel anyone who dared to disobey their lord. The thematic similarity between the two speeches is highlighted by the verbal echoes between the first of the two octaves cited above and that of *Inamoramento*, II i 55: not only does Ariosto borrow the rhyme words *traditore* and *honore*, but also the key terms *signore* and *[de]sfidare*. This specular resemblance between the speeches that open and close Rodomonte's character trajectory creates a sense of circularity, foregrounding the fact that, despite all the blows that life has dealt him, he has remained true to himself, true, that is, to the values instilled in him by his father Ulieno.

But here, in Paris, Rodomonte is alone among enemies. If his first speech was peppered with sarcasm, now his voice is charged with immense bitterness. His hatred and contempt for Ruggiero are such that he does everything to humiliate him in front of the Christians: Rodomonte declares himself willing to fight with anyone who might offer to replace Ruggiero, thereby implying that the latter – undoubtedly one the most valorous knights – is in reality but a Martano-like coward. On the other hand, for all his apparent arrogance, Rodomonte does not insult the Christians: it is true that they killed his king, but they did not violate the chivalric code, at least not in this war (if one disregards Rinaldo's surprise attack as well as the intervention of supernatural forces). It is worth noting that in the 1532 version of Rodomonte's speech Ariosto lays even more emphasis on the fact that, far from being driven by religious hatred, Rodomonte subscribes to the

ideals of lay chivalry: '[...] *e che non merti, che sei traditore, / fra questi cavallieri alcuno onore*' (76,7-8 B; 105 C).

As for Ruggiero, he wastes no time in protesting his innocence, even if first he asks for his new king's permission to do so:

Ruggier a quel parlar ritto levosse,
e con licentia rispose di Carlo
che mentiva egli, et qualunqu'altro fosse,
che traditor volesse nominarlo;
e che col Signor suo sempre portosse
in modo ch'a ragion non può biasmarlo;
e ch'era apparecchiato sostenere
d'haver in questo fatto il suo dovere:

e ch'a difender la sua causa era atto,
senza tôrre in aiuto suo veruno;
e che sperava di mostrargli in fatto
che assai n'havrebbe e forse troppo d'uno.

(*Orlando furioso*, XL 79-80,1-4 A; 78-79 B; XLVI 107-108 C)

Ruggiero's speech strikes us as being permeated by a sense of vagueness and uneasiness. His reaction is very different from that of Boiardo's Rugiero, who was besides himself with anger when Marchesino and Pinador dared to accuse him of betrayal.⁸⁰ According to Giudicetti, in his reply 'si nota una sfumatura di esagerazione e di affanno, un'accumulazione di scuse eccessiva, quasi a lasciar trasparire un senso di colpa'.⁸¹

Ruggiero claims to have fulfilled his duty towards Agramante. And yet, his evasive, awkward words do not prove his innocence, especially if one re-examines his case in light of the comments of late Renaissance experts on chivalry.⁸² But while for some the fact

⁸⁰ A group of African knights attacked Bradamante, prompting the courteous Ruggiero to rush to her defence: 'E Marchesino e Pinador cridarno: / «Tu te farai, Rugier, qua puoco honore! / Contra Agramante èi fato traditore!». // Come quella parola e oltraggio intese, / il giovenetto non trovava loco: / e' sì nel cuore e nel viso s'accese / che sfavillava gli ochi come un foco, / e messe un crido: «Gente discortese! / Lo esser cotanti vi gioverà puoco! / Traditor sete voi, io non sono esso, / e mostrerò la prova adesso adesso!»' (III v 52,6-8; 53).

⁸¹ Giudicetti (2010), p. 176.

⁸² The late sixteenth century witnessed the composition of a plethora of treatises on duels and chivalry. For their discussions of duels in Ariosto and Tasso see Francesco Erspamer, '«E pon la lancia in resta»: per una tipologia del duello nei romanzi', in Idem, *La biblioteca di don Ferrante. Duello e onore nella cultura del Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1982), pp. 137-179: 171.

that Agramante breaks an oath sworn on the ‘Alcorano’⁸³ releases Ruggiero from the obligation to serve his king (Ruggiero, however, does not mention this circumstance in his speech), others believe that Agramante’s violation of the oath is ultimately unimportant. As Giovanni Battista Olevano puts it,

Ruggiero serve al suo Rè fino all’ultimo estermínio, e morte di quello: poscia, spinto da spirito migliore, à miglior legge, et à miglior Principe si accosta. Rodomonte, indomito sprezzatore de’ pericoli, e sempre di nuove brighe desideroso, v’ à ritrovarlo, e sfidandolo gli dice, come intende di provargli con l’armi in mano ch’egli, havendo abbandonato il suo Signore, è stato un traditore. Ruggiero, che con dire ch’egli haveva servito il suo Rè fino alla morte, facilmente lo haverebbe potuto sgannare, e forse fuggir contesa, conoscendo l’orgoglio dell’inimico, per non mostrar viltà, lo mente: onde si stabilisce l’abbattimento.⁸⁴

In line with what we have argued thus far, Olevano seems to believe that Ruggiero had the moral right to convert to Christianity and enter Charlemagne’s service, but only *after* Agramante’s death. So did Sobrino, who asked to be baptised *after* the Lipadusa duel.⁸⁵ By maintaining that Ruggiero remained loyal to Agramante ‘fino all’ultimo estermínio, e morte di quello’, Olevano suggests that his contention with Rodomonte could have been resolved ‘per via di pace’,⁸⁶ if only Ruggiero had mentioned this circumstance,⁸⁷ but that Ruggiero accepted the duel challenge ‘per non mostrar viltà’.

On the other hand, according to Francesco Birago, ‘Ruggier non fu traditore,

⁸³ ‘[...] così ode Ruggiero, che Rodomonte lo chiama traditore, e pur sapeva, che così era convenuto, che se veniva impedito, dovesse farsi Cavalliero di Carlo. Agramante havea rotto i patti, che havea fatto con Carlo, e però Ruggiero havea il vero, e la ragione della parte sua; e quando dice à Rodomonte “tu menti”, la sua mentita è vera, e data veramente’ (Camillo Baldo, *DELLE MENTITE / DISCORSO* [...] (Venezia: per Bartolomeo Fontana, 1634), pp. 31-32).

⁸⁴ Giovanni Battista Olevano, *TRATTATO / [...] / NEL QVALE CO ’L MEZO DI CINQVANTA / Casi vien posto in atto pratico il modo di ridurre à pace ogni forte / di priuata inimicitia, nata per cagion d’Honore [...]* (Venezia: appresso Giacobbo Antonio Somascho, 1603), vol. I, p. 23.

⁸⁵ According to Giuseppe Monorchio, Sobrino’s conversion, too, is dictated by opportunism: cf. Giuseppe Monorchio, *Lo specchio del cavaliere: il duello nella trattatistica e nell’epica rinascimentale* (Ottawa: Canadian Society for Italian Studies, 1998), p. 101n.

⁸⁶ Olevano (1603), p. 23.

⁸⁷ ‘Dira Ruggiero à Rodomonte: “Rodomonte, essendo io assicurato, come non per mala volontà, che mi portaste, ma che, come mal informato dell’attioni mie, mi chiamaste traditore, e che ora, accertatovi del vero, mi tenete per fedele al mio Principe, non voglio che la mentita, ch’io vi diedi, vi sia di carico alcuno; anzi vi dico, che se bene diceste quello, che non era vero, non però mentiste: onde desidero, che mi siate amico come prima”. Risponderà Rodomonte: “Ruggiero, i falsi altrui riporti, e non altra cagione, ch’io m’havessi, m’indussero à dar nota tale ad un Cavalier honorato, e leale, come voi sete; però, rincrescendomi d’havergli creduto, vi sarò amico come prima”’ (ibid., p. 26).

presupposto anco, che abbandonato havesse il suo Rè vivendo'.⁸⁸ Though convinced of the opposite (i.e. that Ruggiero's conduct has always been that of a loyal vassal), Birago goes to great lengths to prove that the accusation of betrayal is groundless from whatever angle one looks at it (which naturally gives rise to the suspicion that, without admitting it, he has doubts as to Ruggiero's innocence):

io dico, che non colui, che si diparte dal servizio del suo Principe, senza licenza, et senza disubligarsi dal giuramento di fedeltà, et vada al servizio del suo nimico, non è, né si può dimandar traditore; ma sì ben ribello, perché traditore è colui, che insidia nella vita, nell'honor, à chi di lui si fida, overo se manca di sua fede à chi serve, ò sia naturale o adventitio signore, in cosa alla sua fede comessa, per la qual ne seguiti pregiudizio, ò nell'honore, ò nello stato, overo nella vita sua, over de' figliuoli, come rivelar secreti, dar' a' nemici fortezze raccomandate alla custodia sua, et sua fede, et altre simil cose; et in questi casi Ruggier non si trova, sì ché traditor Ruggier non è [...].⁸⁹

Rodomonte, to be precise, does accuse Ruggiero also of having been 'rebelle' to his lord, if only in the 1516 edition (77,6 A). And it is difficult not to agree with him, given that the episode of Ruggiero's spiritual enlightenment chronologically precedes the Lipadusa duel and Agramante's death. It is only after his conversion that Ruggiero learns of his king's demise. It is true that Ruggiero has not betrayed Agramante, if we accept Birago's definition of betrayal. But it is equally true that he abandoned him in time of direst need, fully conscious of the fact that he was violating the chivalric code.

Ruggiero, thus, tries to justify his behaviour, without, however, mentioning his conversion and his belief in the truth of the Christian religion.⁹⁰ All the knights present at the banquet take his side: Orlando and many others offer to fight in his stead, 'mostrando

⁸⁸ Francesco Birago, DISCORSI / CAVALLERESCHI / [...] / *Ne' quali con rifiutare la dottrina Cauallerescha / del Sig. Giouambatista Oleuano. / S'insegna ad honoreuolmente racchettare le Querele / nate per cagion d'honore [...]* (Milano: per Gio. Battista Bidelli, 1622), p. 23.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

⁹⁰ This omission did not escape the attention of Hyonjin Kim, 'From *La chanson de Roland* to *Orlando Furioso*: the Evolution of the Saracenic Other in the Carolingian epic', *Horizons*, II (2011), 97-111: 106-107. It is worth pointing out that unlike Ariosto's Ruggiero, Nicolò degli Agostini's proclaims that the Christian faith is superior to the Saracen faith when Sobrino asks him whether he has converted: 'Rispose a lui Rugier con humil voce / – Egli è il ver sì, Sobrin, ch'io son christiano / e credo in quel Signor che morì in croce / sol per ricuperar il seme humano / ch'era sbandito a la tartarea foce / e lassato ho Macon bugiardo e vano; / e per star in tal fede anchor più saldo / sposata ho la sorella di Rinaldo' (*Quinto libro*, I 28).

ch'essendo egli nuovo sposo / non devea conturbar le proprie nozze' (81,1-2 A; 80 B; 109 C). But, strangely enough, Rodomonte's speech does not provoke outrage: if anything, the prevailing feeling is fear inasmuch as the memories of his feats in the battle of Paris are still fresh. Nor does anyone dare to accuse Rodomonte of lying; and this silence, one could argue, betrays a certain embarrassment. From this point of view, Bradamante's reaction is telling: she should not be too concerned, given that earlier she had confronted both Rodomonte (on the bridge) and Ruggiero (in the Leone episode), easily overpowering the former, but being defeated by the latter. Now, however, she is so consumed with worry that she begs Ruggiero to let *her* fight 'quella pugna incerta' (86,2 A; 85 B; 114 C). On the one hand, her feelings are those of a loving wife who trembles at the thought of the slightest danger facing her husband. On the other hand, the description of her state of mind is characterised by a sense of uneasiness (conveyed by the use of negative constructions, the imperfect subjunctive and the verb *credere* which, in the *Furioso*, is closely associated with the theme of the fallibility of human judgement), as if, without wanting to admit this even to herself, Bradamante were not entirely convinced of her husband's innocence:

Tremava, più ch'a tutti li altri, il core
a Bradamante; non ch'ella credesse
ch'el Saracin di forza, e del valore
che vien dal cor, più di Ruggier potesse;
né che ragion, che spesso dà l'honore
a chi l'ha seco, Rodomonte avesse:
pur star non puote senza gran sospetto;
che di temere, amando, ha degno effetto.

(*Orlando furioso*, XL 85 A; 84 B; XLVI 113 C)

And so the duel begins. While for many scholars the final octaves of the *Furioso* are underpinned, on the one hand, by Ruggiero's valour and *cortesía* and, on the other, by Rodomonte's brute force and treacherousness, for some the King of Sarza proves to be

superior to Ruggiero. In fact, a close reading reveals that Ariosto exalts Ruggiero's prowess in a half-hearted way, casting his enemy in a surprisingly more heroic light.

Without examining the duel in all its details, suffice it to say that the two duellers are not in a condition of parity: while Ruggiero avails himself of Hector's armour, the horse Frontino and the enchanted sword Balisarda, Rodomonte had left his dragon skin at Issabella's tomb and for this reason:

Egli havea un'altra assai buona armatura,
non come quella a gran pezzo perfetta:
ma né questa né quella, né più dura
a Balisarda si sarebbe retta;
a cui non osta incanto né fatura,
né finezza d'acciar né tempra eletta.
Ruggier di qua e di là sì ben lavora,
ch'al Pagan l'arme in più d'un luoco fora.

(*Orlando furioso*, XL 92 A; 90 B; XLVI 120 C)

Thus, Ruggiero wins in no small part thanks to Balisarda and the superior quality of his armour, without which, as Ariosto himself has to admit, Ruggiero would have been killed (94,7-8 A; 93 B; 122 C).⁹¹ 'In tutto lo svolgersi del duello – observes Zanette –, malgrado la evidente disparità delle condizioni, resta sempre dubbio quale dei due sia il più forte: figuriamoci se i vantaggi fossero stati dalla parte del pagano, o anche solo equilibrati!'⁹² Ariosto underscores not only Rodomonte's superhuman force, but also his agility (cf. 100,1 A; 99 B; 128 C⁹³) and, more importantly, his sheer courage. The King of Sarza fights fiercely until his last breath; unlike Gradasso (who is paralysed with terror when he sees the invulnerable Orlando decapitating Agramante), he is not in the least intimidated, not even by the invulnerability of his adversary. So much so that Ruggiero's 'senno' and

⁹¹ In the *Aspramonte A*, too, Ulieno is stronger than Riccieri; but the latter knight wins because of his strategic sense rather than the quality of his armour (III xc 20-40).

⁹² Zanette (1959), p. 393. Praloran (1999), p. 122, too notes that 'a causa della inferiorità delle armi del suo avversario, vero *leitmotiv* del duello, Ruggiero è in vantaggio'.

⁹³ Having been unhorsed by Ruggiero (who, however, had been the first to fall), Rodomonte lands on his feet thanks to 'sua sorte [*forza C*] o sua destrezza' (100,1 A; 99 B; 128 C). The amendment in C contributes to bringing into greater relief Rodomonte's prowess.

‘valor’ (105,8 A; 104 B; 133 C) – that is the fact that he is well-versed in freestyle wrestling, which enables him to overpower the Saracen when the latter is greatly weakened by the loss of blood –, are eclipsed by Rodomonte’s heroism.⁹⁴

Rodomonte, as De Sanctis puts it, ‘non è vinto da Ruggiero ma dal fato’,⁹⁵ which effectively means that Ruggiero’s reputation for martial prowess is exaggerated. What is true in any case is that Ruggiero’s victory does not clear him of the accusation of betrayal: the accuser dies but the accusation stands. Nor does his *cortesía* redeem him, for in this duel it is forgotten by both knights. Ruggiero, for example, takes advantage of the fact that Rodomonte’s sword is broken.⁹⁶ Moreover, he is the first to pull out a dagger. And when Rodomonte collapses, Ruggiero

Alla vista de l’elmo gli appresenta
la punta del pugnál c’havea già tratto;
et che si renda, minacciando, tenta,
e di lasciarlo vivo gli fa patto.
Ma quel, che di morir manco paventa
che mostrar di viltade un minimo atto,
si torce e scuote, et per por lui di sotto
mette ogni suo vigor, né gli fa motto.

[...]

Pur si torce e dibatte sì, che viene
ad expedirsi col braccio migliore;
e con la destra man ch’el pugnál tiene,
che trasse *anch’egli* in quel contrasto fuore,
tenta ferir Ruggier sotto le rene [...].

(*Orlando furioso*, XL 109-111,1-5 A; 108-110 B; XLVI 137-139 C)

⁹⁴ According to Marina Beer: ‘Alla conclusione del poema Ruggiero uccide lo “smisurato”, antiquato cavaliere Rodomonte in un combattimento che è un capolavoro di astuzia “moderna”. E proprio il gigantesco cavaliere viene costretto a combattere appiedato, dissanguato e viene ucciso in un corpo a corpo sanguinoso tanto feroce quanto poco cavalleresco: e muore come il suo modello virgiliano Turno, da vero eroe dei barbari guerrieri vinti’ (Marina Beer, *Romanzi di cavalleria. Il Furioso e il romanzo italiano del primo Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1987), p. 113).

⁹⁵ De Sanctis (1954), p. 144.

⁹⁶ According to Berlingero Gessi, ‘non la [this *cortesía*] praticò Ruggiero contra Rodomonte, ò per havere ricevuta l’ingiuria gravissima di traditore, ò perché tentava di ferirlo ancorche atterrato, ò per essere la sfida di Rodomonte offesa di Carlo’ (LA / SPADA DI HONORE / LIBRO PRIMO / DELLE / Osserruazioni Caualesche / DEL SENATOR / BERLINGERO GESSI [...]) (Bologna: per l’Erede del Barbien, 1671), p. 329).

It is unreasonable to accuse Rodomonte of acting treacherously (as a number of scholars have done), if he too pulls out his dagger, especially considering that he has not for a moment stopped fighting. As for Ruggiero's offer to spare him if he surrenders, is it a courteous gesture? Yes, but only on the surface. For only Rodomonte's surrender could have saved Ruggiero's reputation, where surrender would have meant acknowledgment of being in the wrong. By retracting his accusation, Rodomonte would have legitimised Ruggiero's conversion, while Rodomonte's conversion to Christianity would have shown that, on the scale of values of the *Furioso*, religion occupies a higher place than chivalry, as it does in many other chivalric texts. Rodomonte, however, remains true to his values until the bitter end. He thereby succeeds in proving that Ruggiero has betrayed their lord, paying with his life for this moral victory: Rodomonte's death (Ruggiero kills him with his dagger, driven by the instinct of self-preservation⁹⁷) amounts to a triumph of chivalric ethics, a triumph which marks the poem's closure, leaving Ruggiero with a tacit feeling of guilt which will now haunt him forever. If so, the poem does not have a happy ending, at least not completely.

Nor would it be fair to accuse Rodomonte of failing to see God's hand in Ruggiero's victory, for God seems absent from the final duel of the *Furioso*. It is significant that Ruggiero does not solicit or invoke God's help, while the poet 'forgets' to mention divine grace, without at the same time forgetting to draw attention to the role of *Fortuna* ('Ruggier, c'ha la Fortuna per la fronte [...]', 107,5 A; 106 B; 135 C). In light of God's silence, the 'squalide ripe d'Acheronte' (112,5 A; 111 B; 140 C), the last abode of Rodomonte's rebellious soul, must bring to mind the underworld of the ancients rather

⁹⁷ According to Rizzarelli (2009), p. 100, 'Il gesto compiuto da Enea e da Ruggiero, in apparenza assai simile, si carica di un valore assai diverso, da un lato abbiamo il compiersi di una scelta tragica, ma necessaria, presa per vendicare i torti subiti e la morte di Pallante, dall'altro il manifestarsi di una disposizione ferina alla violenza che riconosce l'incolumità individuale quale unica legge'.

than images of Dante's Christian Hell,⁹⁸ all the more so given that both Boiardo and Ariosto foreground a strong connection between Saracens and classical antiquity. After all, as we saw in chapter I, the 'inferno' where Agricane's soul is said to reside bears an unmistakable resemblance to Hades. It is in this world of shadows that Rodomonte will finally be reunited with his friend and lord, thus fulfilling the promise he made in Biserta:

Et io te giuro per tute le bande
 tenir con tieco la mia mente salda:
 in Ciel e nel'Inferno il re Agramante
 seguirò sempre, o passarogli avanti!
 (*Inamoramento de Orlando*, II i 65,5-8)

4.5. CONCLUSION

Thus, it seems fit to conclude this chapter by recalling Attilio Momigliano's verdict, namely that 'Qui il cavaliere è, più che il cristiano, il pagano'. We cannot help but acknowledge that Momigliano's reading of the final duel is both insightful and even-handed (even if it goes against the grain of established criticism). Indeed, the concept of knightly honour is the ideological cornerstone of the respective stories of Rodomonte and Ruggiero, the supreme value for both knights. However, whereas Rodomonte sacrifices his life in order to remain faithful to his king (similar, in this sense, to Cloridano and Medoro), Ruggiero breaks the chivalric code when, threatened with death, he converts to Christianity, severing the bond of kinship, friendship and feudal allegiance between him and Agramante. What proves that Rodomonte's accusation is not groundless is that

⁹⁸ And this notwithstanding the fact that Ariosto's line 'Alle squalide ripe d'Acheronte' echoes Dante's 'su la trista riviera d'Acheronte' (*Inf.*, III 78). As Hyonjin Kim (2011), pp. 107-108, points out, 'The last four lines of *Orlando Furioso*, which describes [*sic*] Rodomont's death, are sadly insufficient either to demonize him or to reestablish the absoluteness of divine justice [...]. Rodomont's soul has not gone to hell; it has flown – at least metaphorically, if not literally – "to Acheron's sad shore," and thus to Hades, the classical underworld beyond the river'.

Ruggiero's conversion does not change his worldview inasmuch as even in the final cantos he continues to believe in and live according to the principles of lay chivalry.

In light of this, the claim that the last canto of the *Furioso* rests on the dichotomy between good and evil is, to say the least, misleading. Nor should we read too much into the Virgilian reminiscences that are scattered throughout the climactic duel (and indeed the whole poem).⁹⁹ It is true that, like Aeneas, Ruggiero has been assigned a dynastic mission and that there is a resemblance between Turnus (an unlucky hero, the victim of the gods) and Rodomonte; but that is not enough to turn the *Furioso* into an epic poem. The profound differences between Ariosto's and Virgil's heroes make any similarities pale in comparison.¹⁰⁰ At the core of the ending of the *Furioso* lies the theme of betrayal; absent from the final confrontation between Aeneas and Turnus, it is one of the central themes in the *Aspramonte*, a crucial text for both Boiardo and Ariosto. Viewed from this perspective, the ending of the *Furioso* is far more indebted to Boiardo and the chivalric tradition than it is to the *Aeneid*, with Rodomonte repeating the destiny of his father Ulieno, and Ruggiero (who, devoid of Aeneas' *pietas*, is a tormented hero¹⁰¹) bringing to mind Andrea da Barberino's Balante, who converts to Christianity with a heavy heart, feeling deep remorse for abandoning his lord.

Needless to say, Ariosto's treatment of Ruggiero has profound implications for the encomiastic dimension of the poem. If Boiardo establishes a connection between his chivalrous African Saracens and the rulers of Ferrara, his successor renders it most

⁹⁹ As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, many scholars maintain that Virgil's presence lends an epico-didactic tenor to the last canto of the *Furioso*. For an overview of studies of Virgil in the *Furioso* see Corrado Confaloniere, 'Quale Virgilio? Note sul finale del *Furioso*', *Parole rubate*, VII (2013), 56-66.

¹⁰⁰ It is worth noting that Daniel Javitch has recently published a stimulating article on the 'romance' elements in the last cantos of Ariosto's poem, in which he argues, among other things, that the points of contact between the final canto of the *Furioso* and the *Aeneid* are of lesser significance than is generally assumed: see his 'Reconsidering the last part of the *Orlando Furioso*: romance to the bitter end', *Modern Language Quarterly*, LXXI (2010), 385-405: 401-404.

¹⁰¹ Eleonora Stoppino is right to maintain that Bradamante dominates the genealogical theme: see her *Genealogies of Fiction: Women Warriors and the Dynastic Imagination in the 'Orlando furioso'* (New York, Fordham University Press: 2012), p. 13.

ambivalent by foregrounding the theme of betrayal. We shall have more to say about this aspect of Ariosto's representation of Saracens in this study's final conclusion.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

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The wider picture: Saracens and their world

We started our discussion by noticing that in the eyes of Cavallo and a number of other scholars the *Inamoramento de Orlando* is characterised by religious tolerance and cultural openness vis-à-vis the Other, while the *Furioso* is more ‘conservative’ insofar as it ends with the degradation and death of most of its Saracen heroes. However, having reached the end of our enquiry, we cannot but conclude that this view is inaccurate and that in fact there is a profound continuity between the two *Orlandos*. It is true that in the *Inamoramento* the Saracen presence is more conspicuous than in the *Furioso*. With the leading Christian knights undergoing identity crises, the Saracens’ enthusiastic commitment to ‘Arthurian’ values (i.e. *amore*, *cortesía*, the pursuit of *gloria*) makes them the principal promoters of the ideal of chivalry. This constitutes one of the most innovative aspects of Boiardo’s portrayal of *Paganìa*. For there are noble Saracen knights in earlier chivalric texts too, but, however positively they may be represented, they do not surpass Charlemagne’s paladins, neither in martial prowess nor in love. Even in romances where the boundary between Christians and Saracens is relatively fluid and religion does not occupy a central place (for example, Pulci’s *Morgante* or the *Trabisona*) the most accomplished knights (usually Orlando or Rinaldo, or both) invariably come from Christian Europe.

Unlike Boiardo, Ariosto does not shield his protagonists from the evils of the world, such as suffering and death. While Boiardo's wars, including the offensive launched by Agramante, resemble jousts where knights of Rodamonte's or Mandricardo's stature can cover themselves in glory without running the risk of being killed, many Saracen characters in the *Furioso* die. By 'killing off' Agramante, Gradasso and Rodomonte, and putting Biserta to fire and sword, Ariosto, it would seem, respects Boiardo's wishes, while at the same time breaking away from the spirit of his 'bela historia'. Yet, this is so only apparently: in reality, by choosing death, his Saracens demonstrate their faithfulness to the very values that they upheld in the *Inamoramento*. By contrast, leading Christian characters such as Orlando (who returns to his 'traditional' role as the implacable enemy of Saracens) or Rinaldo (who renounces his love for Angelica) revert to the old Carolingian ideology of 'bataglie sante'. Hence the impression that Boiardo's 'Arthurian spring' (as Brusciagli might, and did, call it) has all but faded away.

It has been argued that the last cantos of the *Furioso* are tinged with sadness. According to Giudicetti the predominantly 'epic' second half of the poem is aesthetically inferior to the first half, while D. S. Carne Ross goes as far as to claim that Ariosto should have rewritten the ending.¹ It is true that a melancholic feeling hovers over the poem's closure, but it is neither 'botched'² nor marked by the triumph of a 'la virtù morale, religiosa, matrimoniale' that 'tocca meno il lettore di quanto l'abbiano toccato le attrazioni centrifughe che hanno dominato la prima parte del *Furioso*'.³ Far from it, in fact. The beauty of the *Furioso*'s ending lies precisely in its ambivalence, as the exit (from life as well as the narration) of such characters as Issabella, Fiordeligi, Agramante,

¹ See Giudicetti (2010). According to Carne-Ross, 'The mistake, which is radical and disastrous, is to graft-on to an open-structured poem a closed-structured ending' (D. S. Carne-Ross, 'The one and the many: a reading of the *Orlando Furioso*, cantos 1 and 8', *Arion*, III, n. 2 (1976), 146-219: 205).

² *Ibid.*, p. 211.

³ Giudicetti (2010), p. 242.

Gradasso and Rodomonte raises difficult questions about love, friendship, loyalty and chivalry, and also about History and God.

Why, then, to return to the question prompted by chapter IV, did Ariosto finish the *Furioso* with a confrontation between Rodomonte and Ruggiero? By allowing Rodomonte to challenge his former brother-in-arms Ariosto foregrounds the point of view of the Other. Readers may well (and do) disagree, but the King of Sarza has been given the opportunity to uphold and defend the chivalric code. From this perspective, the ending of the *Furioso* can be said to foreshadow that of the *Gerusalemme liberata*. According to Sergio Zatti, the *Liberata* is ‘the first great example of solidarity with the “pagan enemy”’, as, subscribing to the ideals of honour and secular humanism, Argante, Solimano and other Saracen warriors espouse an alternative ideology to that which governs the behaviour of the Christians.⁴ What Zatti and others intend to suggest is that, while rejoicing at the Christians’ victory, Tasso views the vanquished with respect and secret admiration. Something similar can be said of Ariosto. Yet, unlike Tasso, Ariosto celebrates the Christian values in a half-hearted and almost reluctant way. God, for him, remains silent, while the chivalric code constitutes the supreme ideal until the very end, which is evident from the fact that Ruggiero’s conversion does not change his worldview. If so, it is Rodomonte who wins the final duel: morally, if not martially, that is.

Yet Ruggiero has converted to Christianity in order to fulfil his dynastic mission, and so, one would be tempted to say, Rodomonte’s moral victory threatens and undermines Ariosto’s encomiastic project, suggesting that Ariosto’s could have become disenchanted with Cardinal Ippolito well before 1517.⁵ It may not be a coincidence that in the first of his *Satire*, written soon after the completion of the *Furioso*, Ariosto addressed Ruggiero

⁴ Sergio Zatti, ‘Christian uniformity, Pagan multiplicity’, in *The Quest for Epic: From Ariosto to Tasso* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 135-159: 154.

⁵ Casadei (2011), p. 6, amongst others, reaches a similar conclusion in his discussion of the ekphrastic description of Melissa’s tent: ‘l’Ariosto crea [...] i presupposti per una duplice lettura delle sue ottave più apertamente encomiastiche, ben prima dell’outing delegato alle *Satire*’.

in a reproachful manner, venting on him his disillusionment with the Este family. In this respect, it is worth noting that the founder of the Este dynasty has failed to live up to the ideal celebrated in the octaves devoted to Ippolito, whose noble deeds are embroidered on the tent which Melissa has brought from Constantinople:

In questa parte il giovane si vede
col sfortunato Duca de l'Insubri:
hora in pace a consiglio con lui siede,
hora armato con lui spiega i colubri,
e sempre par d'una medesima fede,
o ne' felici tempi o ne' lugùbri;
gli è compagno in la fuga e ne l'exiglio,
nel duol conforto, e scorta nel periglio.
(*Orlando furioso*, XL 67 AB; XLVI 94 C)

The Cardinal and the 'Duca de l'Insubri', that is Ludovico il Moro, were relatives, just like Ruggiero and Agramante. This octave, one could infer, contains a tacit reproach directed at Ruggiero who abandoned his cousin in the moment of greatest calamity. On the other hand, Ariosto's early readers knew that Ippolito's loyalty to his brother-in-law was not perhaps as strong as the poet claimed. After all, Ippolito did abandon the Duke of Milan when the latter was captured in the Battle of Novara (1500). Moreover, an attentive reading reveals that the theme of betrayal lurks in the encomiastic octaves: suffice it to think of the allusion to the conspiracy plotted by Don Giulio d'Este (68 AB; 95 C), an allusion 'which [...] strikes a dissonant note in its festive context', undermining the idealised image of the Este family.⁶

The motif of betrayal is not completely absent from the dynastic theme in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*, either: there are traitors (Beltramo, Almonte) and victims of betrayal (Hector of Troy, Astyanax, Rampaldo of Risa, Rugiero II of Risa, Alexander the Great, Troiano) in both the Christian and Saracen branches of Rugiero's family tree.

⁶ Albert Russell Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 381.

However, for Boiardo these events belong to the past. The glorious deeds of Rugiero, Agramante and Dardinelo – the younger generation of Africans whose blood will flow on in the veins of their Este descendants – distract the reader's attention from the dark moments in Rugiero's family history.

As has been shown in this study, Agramante's dazzling court surpasses that of Charlemagne, while the Saracen Rugiero is a paragon of chivalry. Long overlooked by Boiardo scholarship, the connection between Saracen Africa and the Este family is an eloquent proof of Boiardo's unprecedented openness towards the Saracen world. Similarly, for all his shortcomings as a ruler, Ariosto's Agramante is a much more charismatic figure than the French Emperor. It is worth recalling that both he and his younger cousin Dardinello die in order to defend the honour of the African dynasty to which they belong: 'Sia quel che vuol – exclaims the latter –, non potrà alcun biasmarmi / che mai traligni alla progenie mia' (XVI 150,4-5 AB; XVIII C); 'Sia quel che vuol – declares Agramante, echoing his words –, non potrà ad atto indegno / di Re inchinarmi mai timore; e quando / fussi certo morir, vuo' restar morto, / prima ch'al sangue mio far sì gran torto' (XXXVII 44,5-8 AB; XLI C). What has escaped the attention of Ariosto scholars is that their 'sangue' is also (albeit in part) the blood of Ariosto's patrons. This alone renders untenable the view that the *Furioso* ends with the Christians' victory over Oriental barbarism; quite the contrary, these heroic deaths may be seen as part of the encomiastic thread of the *Furioso*. Yet Ruggiero compromises his and his descendants' honour by converting to Christianity before Agramante's death. Relegated to the margins of Boiardo's 'bela historia', the theme of betrayal is once again brought to the fore in the ending of the *Furioso*.

It must be stressed that the values that Boiardo's and Ariosto's Saracens embody are ultimately Western values, even if they are imagined (by the poets or their readers) to be

equally important for historical Muslims. On the one hand, the sympathetic representation of Saracens does not blatantly contradict the ways in which real Muslims were perceived in the period in question, for, as was indicated in chapter I, there existed a chivalric dimension to the interactions between the Italian nobility (including Francesco Gonzaga and, to an extent, his Ferrarese relatives) and the rulers of the Islamic world. Moreover, there are realistic elements in Boiardo's and especially Ariosto's portrayal of Islam and Islamic culture. Yet the figure of the Saracen Other as projected by these chivalric works is, in essence, a literary construct. Contrary to what has hitherto been claimed by Cavallo and others, there is no concrete evidence to prove that these poets were thinking of real wars with the Turks or other historical events. The fact remains that the *Inamoramento de Orlando* and the *Furioso* are more indebted to the chivalric tradition than they are to contemporary history.

In this respect, looking back at the previous chapters it becomes clear that Boiardo and Ariosto's most important source is the *Aspramonte* rather than the *Spagna* or any other text. Not only are their main Saracen characters related to the principal African knights from the *Aspramonte*, but both poets engage with many of the themes present in the story of Agolante's unsuccessful attempt to invade Christian Europe. Like Boiardo's knights, the Saracen protagonists of the *Aspramonte* believe in the ennobling power of love and dream of winning immortal glory. If Agramante is proud of his descent from Alexander of Macedon, so are Agolante, Almonte and Troiano. Rod(a/o)monte bears a striking resemblance to his father Ulieno and it is in the *Aspramonte* that the theme of conversion – fundamental in Rug(g)iero's story – is explored with great depth and sensitivity.

Thus, we may conclude by restating our belief that Boiardo and Ariosto highlighted the most positive aspects of the Saracen world which they inherited from the *Aspramonte* and the chivalric tradition in general, where the figure of the Saracen Other is certainly

not devoid of nobility. What is striking about the two *Orlandos*, however, is that the point of view of the Saracen Other often appears to coincide with the authorial point of view. As this study has attempted to demonstrate, by reading the two Ferrarese poems from the perspective of the Saracens and their world one can gain fresh insights into their meaning. Such an approach may well prove controversial, for it entails calling into question some of the most firmly held tenets in Boiardo and Ariosto scholarship. But just by stimulating further debate, it will enrich our understanding of the *Inamoramento*, the *Furioso*, and indeed the chivalric genre as a whole.

Appendices

APPENDIX I

A catalogue of Boiardo's Saracen characters¹

i. NAMED CHARACTERS

1. ADRIANO: 'il forte re Adriano' (I ix 73,1); Dragontina's prisoner; valorously fights in the Albracà war until II ii 62, when he is taken prisoner by Marphisa.
2. AGOLANTE: King of Africa in the *Aspramonte*, father of Almonte, Troiano and Galaciella, Agramante's and Rugiero's grandfather; 'con tanto furore, / con tanti armati in nave e nela sella / coperse sì di gente insino in Puglia / che al vòto non capea ponto de aguglia' (III v 31,5-8); died in the *Aspramonte* war.
3. AGRAMANTE: a 22-year-old 'gioveneto altiero' (II i 16,1); son of Troiano and hence Ruggiero's cousin; King of Africa who rules over 32 vassal kings; dreams of emulating his ancestor Alexander of Macedon and so wages war on Charlemagne.
4. AGRICANE: 'Re di Tartaria' (I ix 38,7); rules over many Saracen peoples; passionately in love with Angelica who has rejected him; besieges Albracà and dies in a duel with Orlando who baptises him (I xix).
5. AGRIGALTE: 'il Re del'Amonia' (II xvii 25,1) and hence one of Agramante's vassal kings; 'fior de Paganìa' (II x); takes part in Agramante's war.
6. ALANARDO: 'Conte in Barzelona' (II xxiii 49,1) and hence one of Marsilio's vassals; takes part in Agramante's war.
7. ALBAROSA: 'la dama delicata' (I xiii 35); Horisello's sister and Polindo's lady; refuses to betray her brother is killed by the evil Trufaldino (I xiii 36-45).
8. ALBINA: wife of Manodante, King of the Isole Lontane; Brandimarte's and Ziliante's mother; converts to Christianity.
9. ALBRIZACH: 'il falso nigromante' (I xvi 15,7); offered an enchanted helmet to Agolante; probably a character in some version of the *Aspramonte*.
10. ALFRERA (ANFRERA): 'un gran gigante, Re di Taprobana, / che ha una zyraffa sotto per alphana' (I iv 31,7-8); Gradasso's subject; disgraces himself when his giraffe takes fright and carries him away from the battle field (I vii 23); Gradasso eventually forgives him (I vii 40,5).

¹ This catalogue is based on Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti's and Cristina Montagnani's edition of the *Inamoramento de Orlando*. The names of the Saracens who are absent from this edition but who feature in Boiardo's poem as edited by Angelandrea Zottoli (1937), Aldo Scaglione (1951; 1963), Riccardo Brusagli (1995) are preceded by an asterisk. See note 5 in 2.1.

11. ALIBANTE DI TOLEDO: Marsilio's subject: 'non avea la gente saracina / di lui maggior ladron e più scaltrito: Orlando per traverso l'ha partito' (II xxiv 58,6-8).
12. ALMONTE: a character from the *Aspramonte*; Agolante's son who participated in the *Aspramonte* war and treacherously killed Riccieri II of Risa; was killed by Orlando who now has his sword Durindana, his helmet and his 'insegna'; Agramante's and Rugiero's uncle.
13. ALZIRDO: 'il Re de Tremisona / [...] / ha franca persona' (II i 66,1-3); crosses the sea with his king Agramante.
14. AMIRANTE: Marsilio's subject; a character from the *Spagna* with a long literary life.
15. ANGELICA: daughter of Galaphrone, King of Cataio, who sends her and her brother Argalia to Paris to destroy France; 'a dir di lei la veritate, / non fu veduta mai tanta beltade' (I 21,7-8); a central character insofar as many male protagonists (Agricane, Orlando, Rinaldo, Sacripante) are madly in love with her.
16. ANTIFOR DI ALBAROSIA: Dragontina's prisoner; 'fier Antifor' (II ii 35,1) fights in the Albracà war until until II ii 61-62, when he is unhorsed by Marphisa.
17. ARCHIDANTE: 'il Conte di Sanguinto' (II xxv 16,1); takes part in Agramante's war and is knocked off his horse by Bradamante at II xxv 16-17.
18. ARCHILORO: 'Archiloro il negro, che è gigante' (I xvi 28,4); Galaphrone's subject; fights in the Albracà war until Agricane cuts off his hands (I xvi 50-51).
19. ARGALIA: Galaphrone's son and Angelica's brother; pretends to be Leone da il Leone when he arrives in Paris in the opening canto of the 'bela historia'; 'il forte cavalier di vaglia' (I ii 1,3); is killed by Feraguto (I iii 52-67); before dying asks Feraguto to throw his body into a river; allows Feraguto to take his helmet.
20. ARGALIPHA (ARGALIFA, ARGALIFFA): 'Lo Argalipha di Spagna' (I iv 22,4); a character from the *Spagna* with a long literary life, Marsilio's subject.
21. ARGANTE: 'lo Imperator dela Rossia' (I x 12,3) and hence Agricane's vassal; 'largo sei palmi ha tra le spalle il peto; / mai non fu visto un capo tanto grosso! / Schiazato il naso, e l'occhio picolino, / e il mente acuto, quel bruto mastino!' (I x 29,5-8); is mortally wounded by Orlando at I xv 24-25.
22. ARGESTO: 'smisurato' (I i 75,4); one of the giants who comes with Angelica and is killed by Feraguto at I i 78-79.
23. ARGOSTO DI MARMONDA: 'il Pagan fiero' (II xvii 24,7); Agramante's vassal; 'stimato è guerrier molto soprano' (II xxii 16,2); follows Agramante to France and is killed by Rinaldo at II xxx 15.
24. ARIANTE (ARRIANTE): one of Origille's lovers; hopes to marry her; 'tanto animoso e di member aiutante / che forse un altro par non s'atrovava' (I xxix 23,3-4); is condemned to death (II xxix 33).
25. *ARUGALTO: appears in a list of Saracen knights at II xxx 6,4.

26. ATALANTE: 'un barbasor, el qual è nigromante' (II i 73,7); Atalante's adoptive father who loves him and does not want him to die in France.
27. BALGURANO: a Saracen killed by Orlando at II XXIV 23.
28. BALANO: 'il re Balano, quel mastro di guerra' (I ix 72,5); Dragontina's prisoner; valorously fights in the Albracà war until II ii 60, when he is wounded by Marphisa.
29. BALANTE: 'il franco re Balante' (I xxviii 11,3); a character from the *Aspramonte* who converts to Christianity and deserts his king Agolante; Rinaldo accuses Orlando of his death at I xxxviii 11; father of Boiardo's Pinadoro.
30. BALIFRONTE: 'il nero Balifronte' (II xxii 27,7); King of Mulga and hence Agramante's vassal; 'perfido vechiaro' (II xxx 40,8); mortally wounded by Charlemagne at II xxx 53, but is seen well and alive in Book III.
31. BALISARDO: a giant at the service of King Manodante; 'malvagio incantator e negromante' (II ix 57,8) whom Manodante orders to capture Orlando (II xi 49-50); captures Rinaldo and his companions (Iroldo, Prasildo, Dodone) with a net and sends them to the Isole Lontane, but is killed by Brandimarte who wants to rescue Orlando (II xi 42).
32. BALIVERNO; a Saracen soldier mentioned at II xxiii 73; killed by Rinaldo: 'E Baliverno, quel Saracin grosso / ch'avea rivolto al capo una gran fassa, / de cotal colpo toca con Fusberta / che gli ha la faza insin al colo aperta' (II xxiv 32,5-8).
33. BALIVERZO: 'il Re de Nomandia' (II xviii 21,1) and hence Agramante's subject; follows his king Agramante to France; described as 'forte and ardito' at II xxii 19,4, but in Book III becomes a 'perfido ribaldo' (III viii 35,8).
34. *BALIVORNE: a Saracen killed by Orlando at II xxiv 32,5-8.
35. BALORZA: King of Ethiopia and Gradasso's vassal; 'un cigante arguto, / che quasi un palmo avia la boca grossa'; ordered to capture Feraguto (I iv 35,1-2); killed by Rinaldo at I iv 64-65.
36. BALSALDO (BASALDO): a Turkish knight who travels to Cyprus to take part in a tournament at II xx.
37. BALUGANTE (BALUCANTE): a character from the *Spagna* with a long literary life; Marsilio's brother and Serpentino's father; 'falso Balugante' (I vii 51,7).
38. BAMBIRAGO: 'il Re d'Arzila' (II xvii 20,1) and hence Agramante's subject; takes part in Agramante's war.
39. BARBOTA: a highway robber killed by Brandimarte at II xxvi 55.
40. BARDARICO: king of Canara and hence Agramante's subject; 'terribil di persona e ben armato' (II xxii 31,2); takes part in Agramante's war and is killed by Rinaldo at II xxx 18.
41. BARDINO: Brandimarte's and Manodante's servant; 'pichiato in faza e rosso di colore, / coi denti radi e col naso chiazato' (II xi 47,6-7); 'e quel Bardin per disperacione / che 'l Re [Manodante] il battete dal cippo ale piante, / fosse per ira

- o per sua falsirone, / ciò non so dir, ma via fogì Bardino, / e Bramador [Brandimarte] portò, quel fanciulino' (II xiii 37,4-8); sold Brandimarte to the Count of the Roca Silvana; forgiven by Manodante at II xiii 44.
42. BARDULASTO: 'Re dela Alganzera' (II xvii 8,2) and hence Agramante's subject; 'ribaldo, / di cor malvagio e di persona fiera' (II xvii 8,3-4); wounds Rugiero 'a tradimento' at II xvii 32; takes flight but Rugiero follows him and kills him at II xvii 35.
 43. BARICONDO: King of Majorca (II xxiii 8,8) and hence Marsilio's subject; Orlando throws him and his horse 'in un fasso' at II xxiii 62.
 44. BARIGANO: King of Bernica and Rasa; 'ha notrito il Re [Agramante] da picolino' (II xxix 20,2); Bardalusto's cousin; hates Rugiero who killed Bardalusto; is killed by Bradamante at III v 50.
 45. BARIGAZO (BARIGAZIO): 'figliol di Taridone; / corsar fo il patre et esso era ladrone' (II xix 22,7-8); 'proprio un gigante ala sembianza pare' (II xix 32,3); Brandimarte is impressed by his strength and tries to persuade him to return to honest life at II xix 37-39; mortally wounded by Brandimarte, he refuses to receive baptism and dies within an hour (II xix 46).
 46. *BAROLANGO: features in a list of Saracen knights at II xxx 6,4.
 47. BAVARDO (BAVORDO): a king whose tomb is mentioned at I xxiv 37; could be a character from some chivalric romance.
 48. BAVARTE: a Saracen king and Marsilio's subject mentioned at II xxiii 73.
 49. BELISANDRA: a Saracen princess, Charlemagne falls in love with her in the *Inamoramento de Carlo Magno*; mentioned in Orlando's angry speech (I xxviii 5).
 50. BORDACCO: 'Re di Damasco: schiata de cigante' (I x 41,3); comes to Albracà together with Sacripante; challenges Agricane to a duel and is killed by him (I x 27-30).
 51. BRABANTE: 'il possente Brabante, / che in Spagna occiso fo da Carlo Mano' (II i 14,1-2): a character from the *Reali di Francia*, where he is Agolante's brother; Agramante's and Rugiero's relative.
 52. BRANDIMARTE (BRAMADORO): son of Manodante, King of the Isole Lontane and his wife Albina; Ziliante's brother; 'un Saracin, che un altro sì perfeto / non ha la tera che è dal mar voltata' (I ix 49,5-6); Orlando's faithful companion; converts to Christianity out of his own initiative; participates in many adventures; befriends Agramante.
 53. BRANZARDO: 'quel vechion, Re di Buggia' (II i 38,6); tries to persuade Agramante not to sail to France; is left in charge of Agramante's kingdom (II xxviii 51).
 54. BRONTINO: King of Nomana and hence Agricane's subject first mentioned at I x 12; is killed by Orlando at I xv 22.

55. BRUNALDO: 'Imperator di Tribisonda' (I x 38,8); comes to Albracà with Sacripante to defend Angelica; is killed by Radamanco at I xiv 18.
56. BRUNELO (BRUNELLO): 'Egli è ben picoletto di persona, / ma di malicia a maraviglia pieno, / e sempre in calmo e per zergo ragiona; / longo è da cinque palmi o poco meno / e la sua voce par corno che sona. / Nel dir e nel robbar è senza freno; / va sol di nòte e 'l di non è veduto; / curti ha i capilli, et è negro e rizuto' (II iii 40); a virtuoso thief who steals Angelica's ring and to whom Agramante grants the kingdom of Tingitana; finds Rugiero and narrowly escapes hanging when everybody assumes that he has killed Bardulasto.
57. BUCIFARO: new King of Alganzerà (II xxii 17-19); 'di prodecia è tra' Baron il terzo [after Agramante and Rodamonte]' (II xxii 19,2); is supposed to remain in Africa to help Branzardo look after Agramante's kingdom (II xxviii 52-53), but is in the Saracen army at III viii 11).
58. CALABRUN DI ARAGONA: 'l franco Calabrun, Re di Aragona' (II xxiii 49,5); Marsilio's subject; killed by Orlando at II xxiii 58.
59. CALIDORA: a damsel who tells knights not to look into the enchanted 'fontana' at II xvii 60; Larbino's and Isolieri's lady.
60. CARAMANO: 'il forte Caramano, / che de Torindo è suo carnal germano' (II ii 33,7-8); wants to kill Angelica; disgraces himself when he ignominiously flees from the battlefield at II xviii 29-30.
61. CARDON (CARDONE): an Indian king and hence Gradasso's vassal; all black 'e comme cane baglia' (I vi 63,6); is killed by Danese at I vi 67.
62. CARDORANO: King of Cosca and hence Agramante's vassal; described as 'forte' at II xxix 15,1 and 'tuto peloso' at II xxxi 22,4 (octave in which he is said to be King of Mulga); is killed by Orlando at II xxxi 22.
63. CAROGGIERI (CAROGIERO): 'passò in Italia con molti guerrieri: / tutti for morti con pena dolente' (II i 42,5-6); probably a character from the *Aspramonte* (perhaps to be identified with Gualtieri in the fifteenth-century *Aspramonte*); Mordante's father and Agramante's and Rugiero's relative.
64. CHIARIONE: 'il franco Saracino' (I ix 72,6); Dragontina's prisoner; fights valorously in the Albracà war until II ii 61, when he is taken prisoner by Marphisa.
65. CONSTANTINO: Mambrino's brother, a character from the *Cantari di Rinaldo*, where he is killed by Rinaldo; mentioned at I xxvii 21.
66. CORBINO: Origille's brother killed by Horingo (I xxix 16).
67. DANIFORTE: King of Tunisia and hence Agramante's vassal, 'homo saputo e di molto consiglio, / gran siniscalco dela real corte' (II xxix 3-4); sails to France with Agramante; 'pecio di carogna' (III vi 19,6); wants to kill Bradamante when her horse dies but is outwitted by her; killed by Bradamante at III vi 27.
68. DARDINELO (DARDINELLO): Almonte's son, Agramante's and Rugiero's cousin; 'dextro nel'arme come avesse l'ale, / molto cortese, costumato e belo, / né si

- potrebbe aponervi alcun male' (II xxii 26,4-6); Boiardo predicts his death at II xxix 14.
69. DOLISTONE: King of Laleze (Latakia); father of Doristela and Fiordelisa; is reunited with his daughters and converts to Christianity.
 70. DORALICE: daughter of the King of Granada; 'era stimata il fior dele dongiele' (II xxiii 12,4); Rodamonte's lady.
 71. DORICONTE: a Spanish Saracen mentioned at II xxiii 73.
 72. DORIPHEBO (DORIFEBO): 'il fier Pagano, / qual porta di Valenza la corona' (II xxiii 49,2-3); takes part in Agramante's war.
 73. DORILONE: King of Septa and hence Agramante's vassal; takes part in Agramante's war; 'copioso di thesoro' (II xxx 41,6).
 74. DORISTELA: King Dolistone's daughter and Fiordelisa's sister; her first husband is a Turk; later marries her childhood sweetheart Theodoro and converts to Christianity.
 75. DUDONE: a Saracen convert to Christianity whose story is narrated in the *Castello di Teris*; in Boiardo he is one of Charlemagne's most valorous knights.
 76. DUDRINASSO: King of Libicana and hence Agramante's sujet; 'fior de Paganìa' (II xvii 25,5); yet described as 'perfido pagano' at II xxx 6,6); 'larga la boca avea più d'una spana, / grosso e membruto, e come un corbo nero. / Orlando l'assali con Durindana / et ispicoli il capo tuto intiero [...]' (II xxxi 24,3-6).
 77. DURASTANTE: King of India, a character from the *Altobello* mentioned at I xxviii 7.
 78. FALSERONE (FALCIRONE): a character from the *Spagna* with a long literary life; Marsilio's brother and Feraguto's father.
 79. FARALDO: 'Re de Arabia' (I iv 32,7); a valorous knight killed by Ranaldo at I iv 45.
 80. FARURANTE DI MAURINA: 'feroce è lui, ma mal accompagnato' (II xxii 21,5-6); Agramante's vassal; takes part in Agramante's war.
 81. FERAGUTO: a character from the *Spagna* with a long literary life; Marsilio's nephew and one of the main Saracen knights in Boiardo's poem; in love with Angelica; 'cima di posancia' (I ii 1,4); 'Aben che Feragù sia gioveneto, / bruno era molto e de orgoliosa voce, / terribile a guardarlo nelo aspetto: / li ochii avea rossi con bater veloce. / Mai di lavarsi non ebe diletto, / ma polverosa ha la faccia feroce. / Il capo acuto avèa quel Barone, / tutto riciuto e ner comme un carbone' (I ii 10).
 82. FIORDELISA (FIORDELISA, FIORDEHELISA): Brandimarte's lady, Dolistone's long-lost daughter and Doristela's sister; one of the main Saracen women in the poem; converts to Christianity and becomes very religious.
 83. FIORDESPINA: Matalista's sister (I i 48) and Marsilio's daughter (III viii 63); falls in love with Bradamante in the last canto of Boiardo's 'bela historia'.

84. FOLDERICO: Leodila's jealous husband in the novella narrated in I xxi-xxii.
85. FOLICONE: 'del Re [Marsilio] bastardo, e Conte d'Almeria' (II xxiii 9,6); does not look like a Spaniard because he is blond and fair-skinned (II xxiii 9); 'ben vi posso accertar ch'egli è galiardo!' (II xxiii 48,4).
86. FOLVIRANTE: '(Questo non è spagnol, ma di Levante, // ben che al presente sia Re di Navara, / che 'l re Marsiglio a lui avea donata [...])' (II xxiii 71,8; 72,1-2); killed by Ranaldo at II xxiv 32.
87. FOLVO: King of Fersa and hence Agramante's vassal; is supposed to stay in Africa to help Branzardo look after Agramante's kingdom (II xxviii 53) yet in Book III takes part in the siege of Paris (III viii 11).
88. FRAMARTE: King of Persia and Gradasso's vassal; 'il Re da valimento' (I iv 34,3); 'cade morto ala pianura' at I iv 48,1.
89. FRANCARDO: an Indian Saracen; King of Elissa and Gradasso's vassal; killed by Charlemagne at I vii 9.
90. FUGIFORCA (FOGIFORCA): a highway robber who attacks Brandimarte, Doristela and Fiordelisa; taken to King Dolistone (II, XXVI, 60); confesses that he had stolen Dolistone's daughter, Fiordelisa (II xxvii 4-7); forgiven when the family is reunited (II xxvii 31).
91. GALACIELLA: character from the *Aspramonte*, where she is Agolante's daughter and the wife of Rugiero II of Risa; Rugiero's late mother and Agramante's aunt in Boiardo's poem.
92. GALAPHRONE (GALAFRONE): Angelica's and Argalia's father; King of Cataio; 'è potente e rico oltre a misura' (I xvi 27,8); takes part in the Albracà war.
93. GALERANA: a character from the *Reali di Francia* with a long literary life; Charlemagne's wife and Marsilio's sister.
94. GAMBONE: Hosbergo's slave; 'a riguardar è proprio un vituperio: / l'un occhio ha guerso e l'altro lacrimoso, / troncato ha il naso et è tuto rognoso' (II xxvi 33,6-8); betrays his owner by helping Doristela and Theodoro; narrowly escapes being executed.
95. GIASARTE: 'Giasarte il brun' (I iii 8,6); son of the King of Arabia; takes part in Charlemagne's joust and is unhorsed by Astolfo (I iii 8-9).
96. GORDANETO: king of the Arabs (Bedouins); his people are so savage that they do not obey him (II xxii 32).
97. GRADASSO: 'di la dal'India, un gran Re di corona, di stato e di richeze sì potente / e sì galiardo dela sua persona / che tuto il mondo stimava niente' (I i 4,3-6); King of Sericana; one of the main Saracen protagonists of the poem.
98. GRANDONIO: 'il re Grandonio, faccia di serpente' (I i 10,3); a character from the *Spagna* with a long literary life; King of Volterna and Marsilio's vassal.

99. GRIFALDO (GRIPHALDO, GRYPHALDO, GRYFALDO): King of Cetula and Agramante's vassal; ordered to hang Brunello and is happy to execute the order (II xxi 39); killed by Oliviero at III viii 41.
100. GRIPHONE DI ALTARIPA: Stela's husband; treacherously killed by Marchino who falls in love with Stela (I viii 28-34).
101. GUALCIOTO DI BELLAMARINA: Agramante's vassal; 'forte nel'arme e di consiglio saggio' (II xxii 23,4); sails to France with Agramante and is killed by Brandimarte at III viii 40.
102. HARIDANO: a giant who guards Morgana's lake, throwing damsels and knights into it; 'horrenda creatura' (II vii 36,5); whoever fights with him is seven times less strong than him (II vii 37); killed by Orlando at II viii 12.
103. HORDAURO (ORDAURO): Leodila's lover.
104. HORIGANTE: 'di Malica signor era il Pagano' (II xxiv 62,1); killed by Orlando at II xxiv 60.
105. HORINGO (ORINGO): kills Origille's brother Corbino (I xxix 16); condemned to death (II xxix 33).
106. HORRISELLO: Albarosa's brother, Trufaldino's enemy.
107. HOSBERGO: Doristela's first husband; 'turcomano fo de natiōne; / gagliardo era tenuto e molto ardito, / ma certo che nel letto era un poltrone' (II xxvi 31,2-4); extremely jealous; killed by Brandimarte at II xxv 39.
108. IROLDO: a Saracen from Baghdad, Tisbina's lover and Prasildo's friend.
109. ISOLIER (ISOLIERO, ISOLIERI): a character from the *Spagna* with a long literary life; Marsilio's nephew; King of Pampaluna; 'possente e destro cavalieri' (I ii 45,8); in love with Calidora.
110. LAMPARDO IL VELUTO: a giant who comes with Angelica; killed by Feraguto at I i 76-77.
111. LANGUIRANO: a Saracen king and Marsilio's subject (II xxiii 73,5-6).
112. LARBIN: 'un Re gentil, acorto e pien d'ardire' (II xvii 60,6); Calidora's lover; falls victim to the enchanted 'fontana' and dies (II xvii 61).
113. LARBIN: 'Larbin di Portugalo, il fier garzone' (II xxiii 48,5); Marsilio's vassal; 'il re Larbin avia molta aroganza, / come han tuti e Portugesi il core' (II xxiii 54,5-6); is killed by Ranaldo at II xxiii 55-57.
114. LEODILA: Folderico's wife and Ordauro's lover; Manodante's daughter; dislikes her jealous old husband who is madly in love with her.
115. LOCRINO: Origille's suitor; condemned to death (I xxix 33).
116. LUCINA: daughter of the King of Cyprus and Norandino's lady; 'a maraviglia bela' (II xix 54,3); rescued from an Orco by Gradasso and Mandricardo (III iii 37-60).

117. LURCONE DI NORVEGA: Agricane's vassal; 'perfido' (I x 27,6); killed by Orlando at I xv 34.
118. MALAPRESA: a giant who hates the Dama del Verzier (III i 51); 'portava in mano un gran baston ferato / con la cathena, el malandrin feroce; / in capo avea di ferro un bacineto, / negra la barba e grande a mezzo il peto' (III i 59,5-8); wounded by Mandricardo and finished off by a 'sargente' at III i 61-62.
119. MALCOMPAGNO: a highway robber who attacks Brandimarte and Fiordelisa at II xix 16.
120. MALGARINO: a Spanish knight who serves Falserone (II xxiii 29).
121. MALZARISE: an important character in the *Spagna*; Marsilio's vassal in Boiardo; mentioned only at II xxiii 71.
122. MAMBRINO (MEMBRINO): a character from the *Cantari di Rinaldo* where he is killed by Rinaldo; Rinaldo wears his enchanted helmet (I iv 82).
123. MANDRICARDO: Agricane's son; 'tanta forza e tal ardire avia / che mai non vesti l'arme el più soprano / et era Imperator di Tartaria; / ma fo tanto superbo et inhumano [...]' (III i 6,2-5); one of the principal Saracen protagonists of Book III.
124. MANILARDO: King of Norizia and hence Agramante's vassal; 'fior de Paganìa' (II xvii 25,5); not very 'gagliardo' (II xxix 12).
125. MANODANTE: King of the Isole Lontane; father of Brandimarte, Ziliante and Leodila; 'era di natura humano' (II xii 22,1); loses both sons but is happily reunited with them in II xiii; converts to Christianity.
126. MARADASSO: 'il Re de Andologia' (II xxiii 5,4); Marsilio's vassal; takes part in Agramante's war.
127. MARBALUSTO: newly crowned King of Orano and hence Agramante's vassal; 'l'anima dannata, / che sieco ha tante gente maledete / e per menarle meglio ala spiegata, / la Franza tuta in preda gli promete' (II xxii 22,2-6); sails to France with Agramante; 'gigante' (II xxx 5,8).
128. MARCHESINO (MARCASINO, MARTASINO): new King of Garamantha and hence Agramante's vassal; 'non avia il mondo un altro più orgoglioso. / Groseto fo costui, ma picolino / dela persona e destro e ponderoso, / rosso di faza e di naso aquilino, / oltra a misura altiero e forïoso' (II xxix 46,2-6); killed by Bradamante at III vi 14.
129. MARCHINO: 'il sir de Aronda' (I viii 30,6); falls in love with Griphone's wife Stela; kills Griphone; kills his own wife (who tricks him into eating their children) and Stela (whose corpse he rapes); is killed by the King of Orgagna (I viii 48).
130. MARFUSTO: one of the three giants who capture Leodila; is killed by Orlando at I xx 31-36.
131. MARICOLDO: 'Re de Galegi' (II xxiii 6,1); Marsilio's subject; a giant who does not have a horse because he is too heavy; killed by Orlando at II xxiii 61.

132. MARIGANO: 'Conte de Girona' (II xxiii 49,4); killed by Rinaldo: 'fugie al'Inferno l'anima diserta, / rimase in tera il corpo maledeto' (II xxiii 65,5-6).
133. MARIGOTO: 'il Re di Satalia' (II xviii 22,5); 'sembrava proprio al corso una saetta' (II xviii 23,1); killed by Brandimarte at II xviii 24.
134. MARPHISA (MARPHYSA): 'non ha cavalier tutto il Levante / che la contrasti sopra dela sella, / tanto è gagliarda, e ancor non è men bela' (I xvi 28,6-8); one of the principal Saracen protagonists of the poem; Angelica's implacable enemy.
135. MARSILIO (MARSIGLIO, MARSIGLIONE, MARSILIONE): a character from the *Spagna* with a long literary life; King of Saracen Spain; one of the most prominent Spanish Saracens; allies himself with Gradasso in Book I; joins forces with Agramante in Book II.
136. MATALISTA: Fiordesquina's brother and therefore Marsilio's son or nephew; 'franco Saracino' (I iv 22,3); last appears at I iv 54.
137. MENADARBO: 'Soldano / che tiene Egypto e tuta la Soria' (II xviii 6,3-4); had been in love with Angelica, but she rejected him and he traveled to Albracà to kill her; is killed by Brandimarte at II xviii 29.
138. MIRABALDO: 'Re di Borga, e di gran iesta' (II xvi 28,5) and hence Agramante's vassal; sails to France with Agramante and is killed by Rinaldo at II xxx 12.
139. MORBECO: a Turkish knight; together with Balsaldo travels to Cyprus to take part in a tournament; 'sopra gli altri si facea mirare' (II xx 19,6) until he is unhorsed by Norandino.
140. MORCOLPHO: a giant; 'servia in corte il re Marsiglione' (II xxiv 31,2).
141. MORDANTE: King of Tolometta and hence Agramante's vassal; Caroggieri's illegitimate son; 'grande e di persona fiero' (II xxix 17,8); sails to France with Agramante; wounds Bradamante; he and Pinadoro 'non han di vergogna alcuna cura' (III vi 29,6); is killed by Rugiero at III vi 31.
142. MORGANTE: a Saracen king; Marsilio's vassal; 'falso pagano' (I vii 19,6).
143. *MORIDANO: features in the list of Saracen knights at II xxx 53,5.
144. MULLABUFORSO (MULABUFORSO, MULABUFERSO): 'Re de Phyzano, / fier di persona e d'ogni cosa esperto' (II iii 17,1-2); searched for Rugiero but could not find him; sails to France with his king Agramante; 'franco Saracino' (II xxxi 41,5).
145. NARBINALE: 'Conte de Algira, quel Saracin fiero / ('ben ch'abia altro mestier, che fo corsale, / era ancor dextro e forte in sul destriero)' (II xxv 19,2-4); participates in Agramante's war; killed by Bradamante at II xxv 20.
146. NORANDINO: 'era Re di Damasco il giovineto / [...] / ardito e forte e di nobil aspeto / quanto alcun altro fosse in quel confino' (II xix 53,1-4); in love with Lucina, the daughter of the king of Cyprus; befriends Orlando and invites him to go with him to the tournament in Cyprus (II xix 57-60).

147. OBERTO DA IL LEONE: Dragontina's prisoner at I ix 72; fights valorously in the Albracà war until he is killed by Marphisa at II ii 65.
148. OGIERI IL DANESE: a Saracen convert to Christianity; the story of his conversion is narrated in the *Realì di Francia*; in Boiardo he is one of Charlemagne's most valorous knights.
149. OLIBANDRO: Sarcipante's brother; Sacripante learns about his death at II iii 9.
150. OLIVALTO: 'il sir de Carthagena' (II xxv 16,2); killed by Bradamante at II xxv 16.
151. ORIDANTE (HORIDANTE): one of the three giants who captured Leodila; 'terribil e crudel e di gran possà' (I xx 14,6); killed by Brandimarte at I xx 30-31.
152. ORIGILLE (HORIGILLA, HORIGILA, HORRIGILLA, ORIGILLA): a perfidious damsel because of whom four Saracen knights are condemned to death; rescued by Orlando who is attracted to her; tricks Orlando twice and every time is forgiven; in love with Griphone, Aquilante's brother; reveals the true identity of Orlando and Brandimarte to Manodante (II xii 5) in exchange for Griphone's liberation; false ill and is convalescent when Griphone goes to the tournament in Cyprus (II xx 7).
153. ORILO (HORILLO): 'Quel desleale è nominato Horillo / e non ha tutto el mondo el più fellone; / tiene una torre in su il fiume del Nillo, / ove una bestia a guisa di dragone / (che là viene appellata el cocodrillo) / pascie di sangue humano e di persone. / Per stranio incanto è facto el maledetto / che de una Fata nacque e d'un foletto' (III ii 46); Griphone and Aquilante try to kill him.
154. ORIONE: 'il Re de Machrobia, ch'è gigante, / ch'è tutto negro comme un carbon spento' (I iv 34,4-5); Gradasso's vassal; is completely naked but has a very tough black skin (I v 1); killed by Rinaldo at I v 5.
155. PANDRAGON: 'Re dela Gotia' (I x 12,1); Agricane's vassal; 'degno di gran fama' (I x 48,5); grievously wounded by Orlando at I xv 23-24.
156. PANTASILICOR: a Saracen king from some chivalric romance; Orlando says that Rinaldo hanged him 'a tradimento' (I xxviii 6).
157. PARICONE: 'Conte de Alva [...] / Renaldo lo tagliò tutto a traverso' (II xxiv 39,1-2).
158. PARTHAN: 'Di Cordoba era el Conte' (II xxiv 37,5); Marsilio's vassal; killed by Rinaldo at II xxiv 38.
159. PERODIA: wife of King Dolistone; mother of Doristala and Fiordelisa; converts to Christianity at II xxvii 35.
160. PILIASI: 'la Rosia / tutta avia presa, e sotto Tramontana / tenea gran parte dela Tartaria' (I iii 9,1-3); takes part in Charlemagne's joust and is unhorsed by Astolfo.
161. PINADORO: 'il Re di Costantina' (II xvii 6,1) and hence Agramante's vassal; Balante's son; 'vago di faccia e di cor arrogante, / maggior del patre, e più dextro e più forte' (II xvii 11,3-4); fights with Orlando at II xxix 34; Orlando defeats him

- and lets him go; accuses Rugiero of betraying Agramante at III v 52; he and his companion attack Rugiero at III vi 29; 'Rugier li tolse el capo dale spalle' (III vi 32,8).
162. POLIFERNO (POLIFERNE): King of Orgagna; 'di stato è posente e di thesoro / et è gagliardo sopra ala campagna' (I x 11,3-4); receives hundreds of damsels every year from a treacherous old man (I xiv 29); in Poliferno's absence his kingdom is governed by the witch Falerina; all travelers who happen to enter the kingdom are fed to a horrible dragon; last mentioned at II ii 40.
 163. POLINDO: Albarosa's lover; Trufaldino's victim (I xiii 36-45).
 164. PRASILDO: a Saracen from Baghdad, Tisbina's lover and Prasildo's friend.
 165. PRUSIONE: 'Re del'Isole Alvarichie' (II xvii 19,2); Agramante's vassal; sails to France with Agramante.
 166. PULIANO: 'Re de Nasamona' (II xvii 6,1) and hence Agramante's vassal; sails to France with Agramante; 'franco' (II xxix 10,8).
 167. *PULICANO: fights with Ottone at II xxx 52,1-2.
 168. RADAMANCO (Radamanto in Bruscagli): a giant; King of 'Mosca la grande e la terra Comana' (I x 10,8) and hence Agricane's vassal; takes part in the Albracà war; 'valoroso e franco, / et era longo da il capo ale piante / ben vinti pedi, e non è un dito manco' (I xv 8,2-4); 'il malvaso gigante e traditore' (I xv 9,2); killed by Orlando at I xv 21.
 169. RANCHERA (RANCHIERA): one of the three giants who captured Leodila; killed by Orlando at I XX 30.
 170. RODAMONTE: 'figliol del forte Ulieno' (II i 16,8); King of Sarza and Agramante's vassal and friend; 'più fier garzon de lui non fo giamai!' (II i 56,3); in love with Doralice; sails to France before Agramante; one of the main Saracen protagonists of Books II and III.
 171. RUBICONE: Falerina's soldier; 'seicento libre pesa quel poltrone, / superbo, bestiale e de gran possa; / nera la barba avea come un carbone / et a traverso al naso una percossa; / li ochi avia rossi e vedea sol con uno. / Mai sol nascente nol trovò digiuno' (I xvii 24,3-8); killed by Rinaldo at I xvii 27.
 172. RUGIERO: 'il terzo paladino' (II i 4,4); son of Rugiero II of Risa and Galaciella; Agramante's cousin; raised by the Saracen magician Atalante; 'di prodeza in terra non ha pare' (II i 69,6); is destined to convert to Christianity; one of the main Saracen protagonists of Books II and III.
 173. RUPARDO: Brandimarte's personal enemy; 'crudele et inhumano' (II xiii 12,6); besieges Roca Silvana in Brandimarte's absence (II xiii 13).
 174. SACRIPANTE: 'Re de Circassia' (I v 64,1); Angelica's most devoted suitor; 'altro non ha nel cor che quella dama' (I xi 14,5); one of the main Saracen protagonists of the poem.
 175. SANTARIA: King of Sueza and Agricane's vassal; killed by Orlando at I xv 38.

176. SARITRONE: 'il Re de Mongalia' (I x 10,2) and hence Agricane's vassal; 'non ha il mondo un Baron tanto franco' (I x 10,3); killed by Orlando at I xv 21.
177. SAVARONE: King of Media; travels to Albracà with Sacripante; 'franco' (I x 46,4); killed at I xiv 17.
178. SCOMBRANO: captain of the ship which takes Rodamonte to France; 'vechione, / esperto di quella arte e proveduto' (II vi 5,3-4); tries to persuade Rodamonte to wait for better weather.
179. SERPENTINO DELLA STELLA: a prominent character in the *Spagna* with a long literary life; Balugante's son and Marsilio's nephew; 'il gioveneto adorno / ch'avea fatate l'arme tutte intorno' (II xxiii 45,7-8).
180. SINAGONE: 'Re di Calatrava' (II xxiii 5,5) and hence Marsilio's vassal; killed by Oliviero at II xxiii 34.
181. SOBRINO: a character from the *Aspramonte*, where he serves Agolante; 'Re di Algoco et ha molto sapere' (II i 44,4); 'Sobrin di Garbo' (II xvi 26,5); Agramante's faithful adviser; tries to dissuade his king from travelling to France; crosses the sea with Agramante.
182. SORIDANO (SORRIDANO): 'Re dela Hesperia' (II xvii 30,1) and hence Agramante's subject; 'rossi ambi gli ochi e 'l viso foribondo, / costui ch'è deto, e i labri grossi avia' (II xxii 6,5-6); sails to France with Agramante; 'franca persona' (II xxx 53,5).
183. SPINAMACCHIA: a highway robber; attacks Brandimarte and Fiordelisa at II xix 16.
184. SPINELLA DA ALTAMONTE (SPINELA): Marsilio's subject; takes part in Charlemagne's joust; fights in the war between Charlemagne and Gradasso and is last seen fleeing at I vii 19.
185. STELA (STELLA): wife of Griphone di Altaripa; is killed by Marchino.
186. STORDILANO: Doralice's father; King of Granada and hence Marsilio's vassal; takes part in Agramante's war; Orlando throws him and his horse 'in un fasso' at II xxiii 8.
187. STRACIABERRA (STRACIABERA): 'Re de Lucinorco' (I vii 6,7) and Gradasso's vassal; 'mai non fu la più bruta creatura: / dui denti ha de cinghial fuor dela boca, / sol nela vista ' ognon mette paura' (I vi 64,2-4); killed by Oliviero at I vii 7.
188. TANPHIRIONE (TRANSEŖION): King of Almasila; 'anci nomar si può Re del diserto' (II xxii 7,2); Agramante's vassal; 'horrenda creatura, / che escie oto palmi e più sopra al'arzone / et ha la barba insin ala cintura' (II xxxi 25,2-4); killed or wounded by Orlando at II xxxi 25.
189. TARDOCO: 'Re d'Arzila' (II xvii 20,1) and hence Agramante's vassal; takes part in Agramante's war; killed by Sigieri at II xxx 25.
190. TARIDONE: Barigazo's father; a corsair.

191. TIBIANO: king of Cyprus and Rhodes; organises a tournament to find a suitable husband for his daughter Lucina; searches everywhere for Lucina and is reunited with her at III iii 54.
192. TISBINA: a damsel from Baghdad; Iroldo's and Prasildo's lady.
193. TORINDO: King of Turkey; travels to Albracà with Sacripante to defend Angelica; saves Sacripante's life (I xi 15-18); outraged when Orlando forgives Trufaldino, who had tried to surrender Albracà to Agricane; turns his sword against Sacripante, Orlando and Brandimarte; killed by Brandimarte at II xxviii 29.
194. TROIANO: a character from the *Aspramonte*; Agramante's father and Rugiero's uncle; 'il feroce re Troiano, / qual in Bergogna col Conte d'Anglante / combaté, e con dui altri sopra il piano: / ciò fo don Chiaro e 'l bon Rugier Vasalo; / da lor fo morto, e certo con gran fallo' (II i 14,3-8).
195. TRUFALDINO: King of Baghdad ('Babilonia e Baldraca la grande', I x 40,6); 'falso traditore' (I x 40,8); takes part in the Albracà war and tries to betray Angelica; is forgiven by Orlando but Ranaldo kills him at I xxv 46-52.
196. TURLONE: a giant who travels to France with Angelica (I i 75); mortally wounded by Feraguto (I i 81-82).
197. ULDANO: 'Il re di Danna' (I x 13,3); Agricane's vassal; 'ha molto valore' (I x 13,4); takes part in the Albracà war; unhorsed by Brandimarte at I xviii 28.
198. ULDARNO: Origille's lover; tells Orlando their story (I xxix 1-37).
199. ULIENO: Agolante's vassal in the *Aspramonte*; 'forte Ulieno' (II i 16,8), Rodamonte's father.
200. UNGIANO: King of Roase; travelled to Albracà with Sacripante; 'molto posente' (I x 39,4); 'forte campione' (I x 46,2); killed by Radamanco at I xiv 18.
201. URGANO: one of the giants who travel to France with Angelica; killed by Feraguto at I i 78.
202. URGIN: 'savio de Liferno' (II xxiii 73,8); takes part in Agramante's war; killed by Orlando at II xxiv 62.
203. URNASSO: an Indian king and Gradasso's vassal; 'dispietato' (I vi 63,7); killed by Danese at I vii I.
204. VALIBRUNO: 'il Conte di Medina' (II xxiv 58,2) and hence Marsilio's vassal; killed by Orlando at II xxiv 58.
205. ZAMBARDO: a giant who guards a bridge at I v 80; killed by Orlando at I vi 14.
206. ZILIANTE: Manodante's and Albina's son; Bradimarte's brother; Morgana's favorite prisoner; 'gioveneto bianco e belo, / nel viso colorito e delicato, / negli ati e nel parlar dolcie e iocondo' (II ix 28,5-7); Manodante wants to exchange him for Orlando; rescued by Orlando and reunited with his parents.

ii. ANONYMOUS CHARACTERS²

1. AN OLD MAN: an old man who 'ogni ano dava di tributo / cento dongielle al forte Re de Orgagna' (I xiv 29,5-6).
2. AN OLD MAN: 'un vechio maladeto' (I xx 1,6) who kidnaps Fiordelisa (I xx 5-8); 'era quel vechio di mala semenza, / incantator e di malicia pieno; / per Macometo facea penitenza, / credendo gir con lui nel ciel sereno' (I xx 2,1-4).
3. A BOY: a boy who cries for help at I xxii 50.
4. THREE GIANTS: three giants who attack Leodila and her husband at I xxii 55-56.
5. KING OF GARAMANTHA: Agramante's vassal; 'era sacerdote di Apollino: / sagio (e' deli anni avia più de nonanta), / incantator, astrologo e indovino' (II i 57,3-4); predicts the Saracens' defeat; advises Agramante to find Rugiero; accurately predicts his own death.
6. KING OF FIESSA: 'Il Re di Fiessa, ch'è tutto canuto' (II iii 39,1); Agramante's vassal and Brunelo's master.
7. COUNT OF ROCA SILVANA: 'Conte de Roca Silvana' (II xiii 10,8) who leaves his fortress and all his possessions to Brandimarte.
8. A MUSICIAN: the drunk musician who reproaches Agramante for delaying his expedition against Charlemagne (II xxviii 44-48).
9. AN OLD MAN: 'un vechio disperato' (III i 7,3) who calls Mandricardo 'codardo e ville' (III i 10,5), telling him that he should avenge Agricane's death rather than kill his own people.
10. A SARACEN SOLDIER: 'un moro in su un gianeto bianco' (III vi 7,2) killed by Bradamante.
11. A SARACEN SOLDIER: 'un Arbo' (III vi 7,6) killed by Bradamante.

iii. CONVERTS TO THE SARACEN FAITH:

1. BARICHEO: 'ha il tesor di Marsilio in suo domino: / costui primeramente fo giudeo, / e dapoì cristian, poi saracino, / et in ciascuna legie fo più reo, / né credeva in Macon né in Dio divino' (II xxiv 59,2-7); killed by Orlando.
2. A GENOESE RENEGADE: killed by Rugiero at III vi 17.

² Listed in the order of their appearance in the poem.

APPENDIX II

A catalogue of Ariosto's Saracen characters¹

i. NAMED CHARACTERS

1. AGOLANTE: a character from the *Aspramonte*; Agramante's and Ruggiero's grandfather.
2. AGRAMANTE: 'sì diè vanto / di vendicar la morte di Troiano / sopra re Carlo imperator romano' (I i 6-8 ABC); loses the war and is killed in the Lipadusa duel.
3. AGRICALTE: King of Amonia; killed by Rinaldo at XIV 81 AB; XVI C; later 'resurrected'; Dudone's prisoner at XXXVI 73 AB; XL C; freed by Ruggiero; perishes in a storm while sailing back to Africa.
4. AGRICANE: mentioned by Angelica at VIII 43 ABC.
5. AIMONTE (Almonte in BC): 'fiero Aimonte' (I 30,8 ABC): Agolante's son in the *Aspramonte*; Dardinello's father, Agramante's and Rugiero's uncle.
6. ALTHEO: a Saracen soldier killed by Lurcanio at XVI 54 AB; XVIII C.
7. ALZIRDO (ALCIRDO): 'El re di Tremisen, ch'era tenuto / tra li Africani cavallier perfetto' (X 73,6-7 AB; XII 69 C); challenges Orlando; killed by Orlando at X 79 AB; XII 80 C.
8. AMIRANTE: Marsilio's subject; mentioned at XII 16 AB; XIV C.
9. ANALARDO: Marsilio's subject; mentioned at XII 16 AB; XIV C.
10. ANGELICA: Galaphrone's daughter; 'colei c'ha tutto il mondo a sdegno, / e non par ch'alcun sia di lei degno' (I 49,7-8); marries Medoro; one of the principal female protagonists of the poem.
11. ARCHIDANTE: 'il Sagontino conte' (XII 16,4 AB; XIV C); Marsilio's subject.
12. ARGALIA: Angelica's late brother; his spirit speaks to Ferraù at I 26-29 ABC.
13. ARGALIFFA (ARGALIFA): Marsilio's subject; mentioned at XII 16 AB; XIV C.
14. ARGANIO: Agramante's subject; one of the new captains; leads soldiers from Libicana (XII 18-19 AB; XIV C).

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are taken from the 1516 edition (A). In 1521 (B) only the names of two Saracen characters, already dead, were substituted (Bambirago > Baliverzo, Balastro > Clarindo; both were already present A); with the exception of Truffaldino, no other Saracen was added in the 1532 edition (C). For further information cf. 3.1.

15. ARGILON DA MELEBEA: a knight killed by Guidone Selvaggio on the island of the 'femine omicide'.
16. ARGOSTO: Agramante's vassal who died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 18 AB; XIV C.
17. ATLANTE DI CARENA: Ruggiero's adoptive father; a magician; driven by 'superchio amore' (VII 43,2 ABC), tries to save Ruggiero from his destiny by luring him into various traps; dies of grief when all his attempts to protect Ruggiero fail.
18. ATTALICO (Artalico in C): a Saracen soldier wounded by Ariodante in XIV 65 AB; XVI C.
19. BALASTRO: leads the troops of the late King Tardocco; killed by Lurcanio at XVI 45 AB; XVIII C; later 'resurrected'; Dudone's prisoner at XXXVI 73 AB; XL C [err. cor. B: Clarindo]; freed by Ruggiero; perishes in a storm while sailing back to Africa.
20. BALINFRONTE: leads soldiers from Cosca (XII 23 AB; XIV C).
21. BALINVERNO: mentioned among Marsilio's knights at XII 15 AB; XIV C.
22. BALIVERZO: 'Vien Baliverzo, il qual vuo' che tu tolga / di tutto 'l gregge pel maggior ribaldo' (XII 24,3-4 AB; XIV C); 'd'ogni vitio vago' (XIII 6,8 AB; XV C).
23. BALUGANTE: Marsilio's brother; leads 'popul di Leone' (XII 12,1 AB; XIV C).
24. BAMBIRAGO: King of Arzilla; unhorsed and killed by Rinaldo at XIV 81 AB; XVI C; later 'resurrected'; Dudone's prisoner at XXXVI 73 AB; XL C [err. corr. B: Baliverzo B]; freed by Ruggiero; perishes in a storm while sailing back to Africa.
25. BARDINO: 'un cavallier de la famiglia / del Re di Damogir, Re Monodante, / ch'era venuto un gran numer di miglia, / quando per mar, quando per terra errante, / cercando Brandimarte' (XXXV 51,3-7 A; 40 B; XXXIX 40 C); finds Fiordeligi.
26. BARICONDO: Marsilio's subject; leads soldiers from Majorca (XII 13 AB; XIV C); killed by the Duke of Chiarenza at XIV 69 AB; XVI C.
27. BAVARTE: Marsilio's subject; mentioned at XII 16 AB; XIV C.
28. BIANZARDINO: an important character in the *Spagna* with a long literary life; in Ariosto's poem leads soldiers from Avila, Piagenza, Salamanca, Zamora and Palenza (XII 14 AB; XIV C).
29. BRANDIMARTE: converted to Christianity in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; 'Orlando amava a pare / di se medesimo' (VIII 88,1-2); sets off to find Orlando; Rodomonte's prisoner; takes part in the battle for Biserta; tries to persuade Agramante to convert; dies in the Lipadusa duel.
30. BRANZARDO: stays in Biserta to look after Agramante's kingdom; exchanges Dudone for Bucifaro (who has been captured by the Christians); when Biserta falls, 'perduta ogni speranza, ogni conforto, / si uccise di sua mano il Re Branzardo' (XXXVI 35,3-4 AB; XL C).

31. BRUNELLO: King of Tingitana and Agramante's vassal; falls out of favour when he loses Angelica's magic ring; Agramante hangs him to please Marphisa.
32. BUCIFARO: 'Re de l'Algazera' (XXXV 30,7 A; 19 B; XXXIX 19 C); together with Branzardo stays in Biserta; 'Prigion rimase Bucifar gagliardo' (XXXV 32,7 A; 21 B; XXXIX 21 C); 'Fu Bucifar de l'Algazera morto / con esso un colpo da Olivier gagliardo' (XXXVI 35,1-2 AB; XL C).
33. BURALDO: Agramante's subject; one of the new *condottieri* mentioned at XII 18 AB; XIV C.
34. CAICO: Agramante's subject; new king of 'de la gente d'Almansilla' (XII 23,5 AB; XIV C).
35. CALABRUNO: King of Aragona killed in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; father of Chelindo and Mosco in Ariosto.
36. CALAMIDOR DA BARCELONA: Marsilio's subject; 'un che reputato fra' gagliardi' (XIV 60,3 AB; XVI C); 'credendo acquistar gloria e corona' (XIV 60,6 AB; XVI C), he, Chelindo and Mosco attack Zerbino and kill his horse; when Zerbino kills his horse, 'lascia il cavallo, et via carpone / va per campar, ma poco gli successe; / che venne caso che'el duca Trasone / gli passò sopra, e col peso l'opresse' (XIV 64,1-4 AB; XVI C).
37. CALIGORANTE: a monstrous giant defeated and tamed by Astolfo during his travels in the Middle East.
38. CARMONDO: 'del mar grande Almiraglio' (XV 99,4 AB; XVII C); Norandino's subject; takes part in Norandino's joust in Damascus and is defeated by Griphone.
39. CASIMIRO: a Saracen soldier killed by Ariodante at XIV 65 AB; XVI C.
40. CHELINDO: one of the 'duo figliuol bastardi / del morto Calabrun, Re d'Aragona' (XIV 60,1-2 AB; XVI C); 'credendo acquistar gloria e corona' (XIV 60,6 AB; XVI C); he, Mosco and Calamidor da Barcelona attack Zerbino and kill his horse; killed by Zerbino at XIV 62 AB; XVI C.
41. CHIARIELLO: a character from the *Cantari di Rinaldo*, where he is killed by Rinaldo; mentioned at XVIII 6 AB; XX C.
42. CLARINDO: Agramante's subject: leads the troops from Bolga (XII 24 AB; XIV C).
43. CLORIDANO: a soldier in the African army; Medoro's friend; born in Tolomitta; 'cacciator tutta sua vita, / di robusta persona era et isnella' (XVI 166,1-2 AB; XVIII C); together with Medoro tries to retrieve the body of their lord Dardinello; slaughters many a sleeping Christian; killed by the Christians.
44. CORIMBO: a Saracen from Apamia; takes part in Norandino's joust in Damascus and is defeated by Griphone (XV 96 AB; XVII C).
45. CORINEO: Agramante's 'fido amico' (XII 23,4 AB; XIV C); leads the troops from Mulga.

46. DARDINELLO: 'Re de la Zumara [...] / el nobil Dardinel figlio d'Aimonte' (XVI 47,1-2 AB; XVIII C) and hence Agramante's and Ruggiero's cousin; he and Orlando have the same coat of arms; fights valorously in the battle of Paris, trying to inspire his troops by personal example; Rinaldo challenges him to a duel; killed by Rinaldo at XVI 153 AB; XVIII C; 'fa passar con lui / l'ardire et la virtù di tutti i sui' (XVI 153,7-8 AB; XVIII C).
47. DORALICE: beautiful daughter of Stordilano, King of Granada; Rodomonte's fiancée or wife; kidnapped by Mandricardo; grants her virginity to her kidnapper; persuades Mandricardo and Rodomonte to postpone their duel; when Agramante allows her to choose between Rodomonte and Mandricardo 'ella abbassò gli occhi vergognosi, / e disse che più il Tartaro havea caro: / di che tutti restâr maravigliosi' (XXV 107,4-6 AB; XXVII C); when Mandricardo is killed by Ruggiero 'Doralice istessa, che con duoli / piangea l'amante suo pallido et bianco, / forse con l'altre ita sarebbe in schiera [to congratulate Ruggiero], / se di vergogna un duro fren non era' (XXVIII 71,5-8 AB; XXX C).
48. DORCHIN: a Saracen soldier killed by Lurcanio at XVI 54 AB; XVIII C.
49. DORICONTE: a Spanish Saracen mentioned at XII 16 AB; XIV C.
50. DORILONE: leads the troops from Setta (XII 22 AB; XIV C).
51. DORIPHEBO: Marsilio's subject; leads the Catalans (XII 11 AB; XIV C).
52. DUDRINASSO: King of Libicana who died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 19 AB; XIV C.
53. ERMOPHILO: Norandino's subject; in charge of 'la militia del Re' (XV 99,3 AB; XVII C); takes part in Norandino's joust in Damascus and is unhorsed by Griphone.
54. ETARCO (Etearco in BC): a Saracen soldier killed by Ariodante at XIV 65 AB; XVI C.
55. FALSIRONE: 'el fratel di Marsilio [...] / ha seco armata la minor Castiglia' (XII 12,3-4 AB; XIV C).
56. FARURANTE: Agramante's subject; 'drieto a quello / eran cavalli e fanti di Maurina' (XII 21,3-4; XIV C); Dudone's prisoner at XXXVI 73 AB; XL C; freed by Ruggiero; perishes in a storm while sailing back to Africa.
57. FERAÙ (FERRAÙ; FERRAUTO): Marsilio's nephew and one of the main Saracen protagonists of the *Orlando furioso*; in love with Angelica; the object of his other quest is Orlando's helmet; 'potea, fra quanti altieri / mai fusser, gir con la corona in testa' (X 42,5-6 AB; XII 38 C).
58. FIAMMETTA: a promiscuous girl from Valencia.
59. FINADURRO: Agramante's vassal; King of Canaria and Marocco; killed by Zerbino at XVI 45 AB; XVIII C.
60. FIORDELIGI (FIORDILIGI): converted Saracen; Brandimarte's wife; 'Era questa una donna che fu molto / da lui [Brandimarte] diletta, e ne già raro senza; / di costumi,

- di gratia e di bel volto / dotata, e d'accortezza e di prudenza' (VIII 89,1-4 ABC); dies of grief shortly after Brandimarte's demise.
61. FIORDISPINA: Marsilio's daughter; in love with Bradamante; has an affair with Ricciardetto believing (or pretending to believe) that her lover is Bradamante turned into a man.
 62. FOLLICON D'ALMERIA: 'di Marsiglio il gran Bastardo' (XII 16,1 AB; XIV C); King of Granada (XIV 67 AB; XVI C); unhorsed by Fieramonte and taken prisoner at XIV 69 AB; XVI C.
 63. FOLVIRANTE: King of Navarra killed in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 11 AB; XIV C.
 64. FOLVO: Agramante's subject; stayed in Biserta to look after Agramante's kingdom in his absence; dies shortly after the Fall of Biserta: 'con tre ferite, onde morì di corto, / fu preso Folvo dal Duca dal Pardo' (XXXVI 35,5-6 AB; XL C).
 65. GALACIELLA: 'la disperata figlia d'Agolante' (II 32,4 ABC); Ruggiero's mother; Atalante says that she was killed by Aimonte and Troiano.
 66. GALAFRONE (GALAPHRONE): Angelica's father; occasionally mentioned but never seen.
 67. GALERANA: Saracen convert to Christianity; Charlemagne's wife.
 68. GARDO: a Saracen soldier killed by Lurcanio at XVI 54 AB; XVIII C.
 69. GOSTANZA (Costanza in C): Guidone's mother; had an affair with Rinaldo's father Amone; mentioned at XXIX 31 AB; XXXI C.
 70. GRADASSO: King of Sericana; one of the principal Saracen protagonists of the poem; 'Era cortese il Re di Sericana, / come ogni cor magnanimo esser suole' (XXIX 100,1-2 A; 101 B; XXXI 101 C); helps Agramante; sails home after he gets hold of Rinaldo's horse Baiardo; dies in the duel of Lipadusa.
 71. GRANDONIO DI VOLTERNA: Marsilio's subject; takes part in Agramante's war; 'el più superbo cavallier di Spagna' (XXXII 71,2 AB; XXXV 69 C); fights with Bradamante at XXXII 71-74 AB; XXXV 69-72 C).
 72. GRECO: a young man from Valencia; Fiammetta's childhood sweetheart.
 73. GUALCIOTTO: King of Bellamarina who died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 25 AB; XIV C.
 74. GUIDONE SELVAGGIO (SILVAGGIO): a character from the *Regina Ancroia*; Rinaldo's brother in Ariosto's poem; prisoner of the 'femine omicide'; fights in the war on the Christian side.
 75. HIROLDO (IROLDO): one of the knights trapped in Atlante's enchanted tower (IV 40 ABC); later mentioned among the prisoners of the palace of illusions (XX 20 AB; XXII C).
 76. HORRIGILLE: Griphone's lady; betrays Griphone with the cowardly Martano.

77. HORRILO: a sorcerer and a 'ladron [...] / ch'a paesani e peregrini nuoce, / e sin al Chairo, ognun rubando, scorre' (XIII 46,2-4 AB; XV 65 C); fights with Griphone and Aquilante; killed by Astolfo.
78. ISOLIERO: leads the troops from Navarra (XII 11 AB; XIV C); saves Brunello's life when Agramante's wants to hang him (XII 20 AB; XIV C).
79. ISSABELLA: daughter of the King of Gallitia; one of the main female Saracen protagonists of the *Orlando furioso*; falls in love with Zerbino; runs away to marry her beloved; captured by brigands; freed by Orlando; inconsolable after Zerbino's death; tricks Rodomonte into killing her.
80. LANFUSA: a character from the *Spagna ferrarese*; Feraù's cruel mother; wants to give Viviano and Malagigi to Bertolagi di Baiona.
81. LANGHIRANO: 'Langhiran gagliardo' (XII 16,5 AB; XIV C); Marsilio's subject.
82. LARBINO: King of Portugal; died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; King Tesira's relative (XII 13 AB; XIV C).
83. LIBANIO: Agramante's subject; new king of Constantina; mentioned at XII 21 AB; XIV C.
84. LUCINA: Norandino's wife; captured by an Orco; her husband refuses to abandon her.
85. MADARASSO: leads soldiers from Malaga and Siviglia; mentioned at XII 12 AB; XIV C.
86. MALABUFERSO: Agramante's subject; 'Re di Feza' (XIV 76,3 AB; XVI C); fights in Agramante's war.
87. MALAGUR: Marsilio's subject; 'havea l'astutie pronte' (XII 16,6 AB; XIV C).
88. MALGARINO: Marsilio's knight; lost his kingdom and was welcomed by Marsilio; mentioned at XII 15 AB; XIV C.
89. MALZARISE: Marsilio's knight; lost his kingdom and was welcomed by Marsilio; mentioned at XII 15 AB; XIV C.
90. MAMBRINO: a character from the *Cantari di Rinaldo*; his armour now belongs to Rinaldo and Danese (XXXIV 79 AB; XXXVIII C).
91. MANDRICARDO: Agricane's son; Emperor of Tartaria; 'né in Ponente era, né in tutto Levante, / di più forza di lui, né di più core' (XII 30,3-4 AB; XIV C); one of the main Saracen protagonists of the poem; helps Agramante against Charlemagne; kidnaps Doralice; killed by Ruggiero with whom he fights over the right to wear the Trojan eagle.
92. MANILARDO: King of Noricia; 'già fero e gagliardo, / hor miglior di consiglio che d'aiuto' (X 73,3-4 AB; XII 69 C); heroically confronts Orlando (X 86-88 AB; XII 82-84 C); Dudone's prisoner at XXXVI 73 AB; XL C; freed by Ruggiero; perishes in a storm while sailing back to Africa.

93. MARBALUSTO: King of Oran; 'quasi era gigante' (XII 17,4 AB; XIV C); 'persona povera / [...] di cor, ma d'ossa et polpe ricca' (XIV 47,3-4 AB; XVI C); killed by Rinaldo at XIV 48 AB; XVI C.
94. MARPHISA (MARFISA): a warrior woman whose name was 'così temuto per tutto Levante / che facea a molti ancho arricciar le chiome' (XVI 126,2-3 AB; XVIII C); Ruggiero's sister; converts to Christianity and enters Charlemagne's service as soon as she finds out that her father was Ruggiero II of Risa; one of the main Saracen protagonists in the poem; swears to kill Agramante to avenge her father's death.
95. MARGANO: a Saracen soldier wounded by Ariodante at XIV 65 AB; XVI C.
96. MARICOLDO: King of Gallitia; died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 13 AB; XIV C.
97. MARSILIO (MARSIGLIO): King of Saracen Spain; one of the oldest and wisest Saracens in Agramante's army; abandons Agramante when the latter breaks his oath not to interrupt the duel between Rinaldo and Ruggiero.
98. MARTANO: Horrigille's lover; a cowardly and treacherous knight from Antioch; steals Griphone's armour and slanders Griphone before Norandino; captured by Aquilante and punished by Norandino.
99. MARTASIN: late 'Re de' Garamanti' mentioned at XII 17,8 AB; XIV C.
100. MATALISTA: Marsilio's subjects; leads soldiers from Toledo, Calatrava and Guadiana; 'l'audace Matalista' (XII 14,5 AB; XIV C); unhorsed and taken prisoner at XIV 69 AB; XVI C.
101. MEDORO: an African soldier and a poet; Cloridano's friend; born in Tolomitta; 'fra la gente a quella impresa uscita / non v'era faccia più gioconda et bella' (XVI 166,5-6 AB; XVIII C); he and Cloridano try to retrieve the body of their lord Dardinello; grievously wounded; found by Angelica who falls in love with him; marries Angelica.
102. MIRABALDO: King of Bolga who died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 24 AB; XIV C.
103. MONODANTE: King of the Isole Lontane; Brandimarte's father; dies and leaves his kingdom to Brandimarte.
104. MORGANTE: Marsilio's knight; lost his kingdom and was welcomed by Marsilio; mentioned at XII 15 AB; XIV C.
105. MOSCO: one of the 'duo figliuol bastardi / del morto Calabrun, Re d'Aragona' (XIV 60,1-2 AB; XVI C); 'credendo acquistar gloria e corona' (XIV 60,6 AB; XVI C), he, Chelindo and Calamidoro da Barcelona attack Zerbino and kill his horse; killed by Zerbino at XIV 61 AB; XVI C.
106. NORANDINO: King of Damascus; Lucina's husband; refuses to abandon his wife when she is captured by an Orco; organises a joust in Damascus; unjustly punishes Griphone but later makes amends.

107. OLIMPIO DA LA SERRA: Marsilio's subject; Feraù's friend; 'un giovinetto che col dolce canto, / concorde al suon de la cornuta cetra, / di intenerir un cor si dava vanto, / anchor che fusse più duro che pietra. / Felice lui, se contentar di tanto / honor sapeasi, et scudo, arco e pharetra / haver in odio, et scimitarra e lancia, / che lo trarro a morir giovene in Francia!' (XIV 72 AB; XIV C).
108. OMBRUNO: takes part in Norandino's joust in Damascus; killed by the lord of Seleucia; 'ognun n'hebbe pietà, perch'era molto / buon cavallier, né un altro sì cortese / era in Damasco o in tutto quel paese' (XV 87,6-7 AB; XVII C).
109. ORMIDA: one of the new African *condottieri*; mentioned at XII 18 AB; XIV C.
110. PINADORO: died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 21 AB; XIV C.
111. PRASILDO: 'nobil cavalliero' (IV 40,2 ABC); one of the knights trapped in Atlante's enchanted tower; later mentioned among the prisoners of the palace of illusions (XX 20 AB; XXII C).
112. PRUSIONE: Agramante's subject; 'il Re de l'Alvaricchie' (XII 27,1 AB; XIV C); killed by Rinaldo at XIV 81 AB; XVI C.
113. PULIANO: Agramante's subject; King of Nasamona; dares to confront Rinaldo: 'Re Puliano sol non muta guancia, / che questo esser Rinaldo non connosce; / né pensando trovar sì duro intoppo, / gli move il destrier contra di galoppo' (XIV 44,5-8 AB; XVI C); killed by Rinaldo at XIV 45-46 AB; XVI C; Dudone's prisoner at XXXVI 73 AB; XL C; freed by Ruggiero; perishes in a storm while sailing back to Africa.
114. RIMEDONTE: King of Getulia (XII 23 AB; XIV C); Dudone's prisoner at XXXVI 73 AB; XL C; freed by Ruggiero; perishes in a storm while sailing back to Africa.
115. RODOMONTE: King of Sarza; a central protagonist; 'in nessun atto vile' (XVI 22,5 AB; XVIII C); one of the strongest knights in the African army; devoted to Agramante; leaves the African camp after Doralice rejects him and Agramante does not allow him to challenge her decision; accuses Ruggiero of having betrayed Agramante; the poem ends with his death.
116. RUGGIERO: the dynastic hero; participates in many romance adventures; unwilling to abandon Agramante; converts to Christianity and marries Bradamante; has to face Rodomonte in the final canto of the poem.
117. SACRIPANTE: King of Circassia; one of the main Saracen protagonists of the poem; in love with Angelica, 'la donna c'havea ognhor fissa nel core' (XXXII 58,2 AB; XXXV 56 C).
118. SALINTERNO: 'gran Diodarro e Maliscalco regio' (XV 97,2 AB; XVII C); takes part in Norandino's joust in Damascus and is killed by Griphone: 'El colpo (excerto 'l Re) fu a tutti caro; / ch'ognuno odiava Salinterno avaro' (XV 98,7-8 AB; XVII C).

119. LORD OF SELEUCIA: participates in Norandino's joust; one of the best knights 'con destrier buono e con arme perfette' (XV 100,4 AB; XVII C); fights with Griphone.
120. SANSONETTO DA MECCA: a prominent Saracen character in the *Spagna*; 'oltra l'etade, / (ch'era nel primo fior), molto prudente; / d'alta cavalleria, d'alta bontade / famoso, e reverito fra la gente. / Orlando lo converse a nostra fede, / e di sua man battesimo ancho gli diede' (XIII 76,3-8 AB; XV 95 C); welcomes Astolfo; Astolfo, Marphisa, Aquilante and Griphone let him win a joust.
121. SERPENTINO: King of Gallitia after Maricoldo's death; has enchanted armour; fights with Rinaldo and Bradamante.
122. LORD OF SIDONIA: unhorsed by Griphone in Norandino's joust (XV 93 AB; XVII C).
123. SINAGONE: died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 14 AB; XIV C.
124. SOBRINO: King of Garbo; Agramante's advisor; 'né più di lui prudente Saracino' (XII 24,8 AB; XIV C); remains with Agramante until the end; fights in the duel of Lipadusa; converts to Christianity after the death of his king.:
125. SORIDANO: leads soldiers from Hesperia; grievously wounded by Rinaldo at XIV 81 AB; XVI C.
126. STORDILANO: King of Granada; Doralice's father.
127. SULTAN OF EGYPT: Agramante's powerful neighbour; Sobrino advises Agramante to ask him for help.
128. TANFIRIONE: died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 23 AB; XIV C.
129. TARDOCCO: died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XII 22 AB; XIV C.
130. TESIRA: 'Fe' Portugal, tolto Larbin dal mondo, / suo Re Tesira, di Larbin parente' (XII 13,5-6 AB; XIV C).
131. TIRSE: a knight from Apamia; unhorsed by Griphone in Norandino's joust (XV 96 AB; XVII C).
132. TROIANO: Agramante's father; Ruggiero's uncle.
133. TRUFFALDINO: died in the *Inamoramento de Orlando*; mentioned at XXXI 41 BC.
134. UGIERI IL DANESE: Saracen convert to Christianity; one of Charlemagne's knights.
135. ULIENO: Rodomonte's father.
136. ZILIANTE (GILIANTE): Monodonte's son; Brandimarte's brother; sends a messenger to Brandimarte after the death of their father.

ii. ANONYMOUS CHARACTERS²

1. A SARACEN KNIGHT: 'uno Amostante' killed by Orlando 'pochi anni inante' (VIII 85,7-8 ABC).
2. A KNIGHT FROM GRANADA: a 'Granatin' (XII 42,2 AB; XIV C) who is entrusted with bringing Doralice to the Saracen camp.
3. A KNIGHT FROM DAMASCUS: the knight who tells Griphone the story of Norandino and Lucina (XV 25-68 AB; XVII C).
4. DORALICE'S DWARF: 'un Nano piccolino' (XVI 28,6 AB; XVIII C) who tells Rodomonte that Mandricardo has kidnapped his lady.

iii. CHARACTERS FROM THE *INAMORAMENTO DE ORLANDO* ALLUDED TO BUT NOT NAMED

1. DOLISTONE: Fiordelisa's father alluded to at XXXIX 181 AB; XLIII 184 C.
2. TIBIANO: Lucina's father alluded to at XV 66 AB; XVII C.

² Listed in the order of their appearance in the poem.

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ii. PRINTED TEXTS

A B C. These letters denote the three original editions supervised by Ariosto, and in particular:

A = ORLANDO FVRIOSO DE / LVDOVICO ARIO-/STO DA FER-/RARA. // Con gratia e priuilegio. [Colophon] Impresso in Ferrara per Maefstro Giouāni / Mazocco dal Bondeno adi .xxii. / de Aprile .M.D.XVI.

B = ORLANDO FVRIOSO DI LVDO/VICO ARIOSTO NOBILE FER/RARESE RISTAMPATO ET / CON MOLTA DILIGENTIA / DA LVI CORRETTO ET / QVASI TVTTO FOR/MATO DI NVO/VO ET AMPLI/ATO // CON GRATIE ET PRIVILEGII. [Colophon] Finiffe Orlando Furioso de Ludouico Ariosto: Stampa-/to in Ferrara per Giouanni Battista da la Pigna / Milanefe. A di .XIII. de Febraro .M.D.XXI.

C = ORLANDO FVRIOSO DI / MESSER LVDOVICO / ARIOSTO NOBILE / FERRARESE NVO/VAMENTE DA / LVI PROPRIO / CORRETTO E / D'ALTRI CANTI NVO-/VI AMPLIATO CON / GRATIE E PRI/VILEGII. // [Colophon] Impresso in Ferrara per maestro Francesco Rosso da Va-/lenza, a di primo d'Ottobre .M.D.XXXII, [*sic*]

- The text of A is quoted from Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso secondo la princeps del 1516*, ed. by Marco Dorigatti, in collaboration with Gerarda Stimato (Firenze: Olschki, 2006); whereas the text of BC is quoted from the following edition: Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso secondo l'edizione del 1532: con le varianti delle edizioni del 1516 e del 1521*, ed. by Santorre Debenedetti and Cesare Segre (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1960).
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