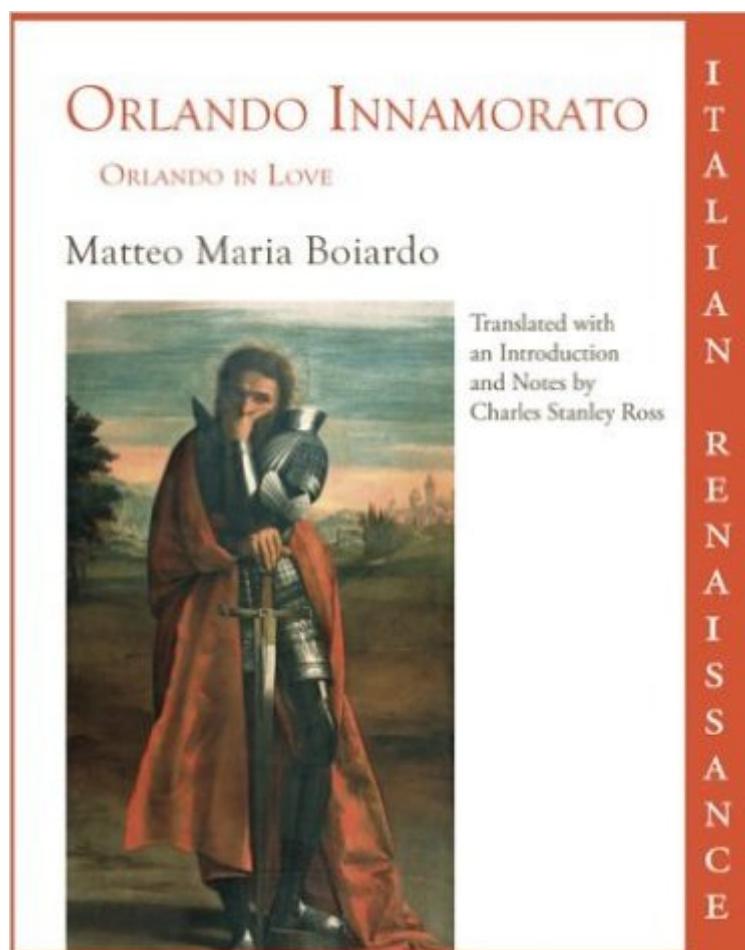


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Orlando Innamorato = Orlando In Love



Synopsis

Like Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, Boiardo's chivalric stories of lords and ladies first entertained the culturally innovative court of Ferrara in the Italian Renaissance. Inventive, humorous, inexhaustible, the story recounts Orlando's love-stricken pursuit of "the fairest of her Sex, Angelica" (in Milton's terms) through a fairyland that combines the military valor of Charlemagne's knights and their famous horses with the enchantments of King Arthur's court. Today it seems more than ever appropriate to offer a new, unabridged edition of Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, the first Renaissance epic about the common customs of, and the conflicts between, Christian Europe and Islam. Having extensively revised his earlier translation for general readers, Charles Ross has added headings and helpful summaries to Boiardo's cantos. Tenses have been regularized, and terms of gender and religion have been updated, but not so much as to block the reader's encounter with how Boiardo once viewed the world. Charles Stanley Ross has degrees from Harvard College and the University of Chicago and teaches English and comparative literature at Purdue University. "Neglect of Italian romances robs us of a whole species of pleasure and narrows our very conception of literature. It is as if a man left out Homer, or Elizabethan drama, or the novel. For like these, the romantic epic of Italy is one of the great trophies of the European genius: a genuine kind, not to be replaced by any other, and illustrated by an extremely copious and brilliant production. It is one of the successes, the undisputed achievements." -C. S. Lewis

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Customer Reviews

Orlando Innamorato is an absolutely beautiful story. It is in the same style as Orlando Furioso (by Ariosto), which is its sequel. We follow Charlemagne's paladins as they traverse the world, pagan and Christian, looking for adventure, fame, and especially love. The Saracen princess Angelica has captured the heart of the brave and chivalrous Orlando and he will do anything to earn her love. The only problem is that she remains uninterested. It also seems that nearly every knight in the Christian and Saracen world desires her too! The Christians and Muslims are almost constantly at war, so this is another obstacle in the way of poor, lovesick Orlando. With this premise, Boiardo narrates a story of epic proportions that is enchanting, funny, exciting, and always beautiful. He combines irony, allegory, romance, chivalry and much more to create a masterpiece. The stories contained are similar to the Arthurian legends, but are, in my opinion, livelier and more exciting. I agree with C.S. Lewis when he wrote: "Our oblivion of these poets (i.e. Boiardo and Ariosto) is much to be regretted...because it robs us of a whole species of pleasures and narrows our very conception of literature." This edition is beautifully rendered into verse, but it is abridged. The complete poetic text of the story is not present. However, the translator always summarizes (in narrative form) those parts he leaves out. There is also a useful introduction and extremely helpful annotations that explain difficult passages in the story. I highly recommend this book, especially if you are a fan of Orlando Furioso or Pulci's Morgante.

Look--if you're going to read the Innamorato (in verse and not abridged), this is what you're going to buy, like it or not. Oh, but you **will** like it. The verse is fine so far as it goes, and it's probably best that Ross avoids rhyme on the whole (rhyming maybe some 5% of the time), especially since he uses the tetrameter as his line, which can be fairly restricting. However, this particular edition of the translation has more errors than you'll be used to seeing in a book. Probably 90% of the errors seem to be a result of the editing of the manuscript to regularize tense (you'll see remnants of the old edition that weren't excised when the new bits were put in); the other 10% are mere typographical errors. The errors don't really detract from the enjoyment of being able to read Boiardo, but if I ever read the Innamorato again, I'll probably pencil in corrections. If you think you won't like stumbling on such errors now and then (they really are few, when you think about it), I'd suggest trying to locate an older (1980's) edition of the text.

Knowing the history of this book, or rather this Italian Romance, it is sad that it has been forgotten by many and only recently translated. I'm not sure I've ever read a "classic" or "great book" which was more outright fun and entertaining than this one. The legend of Orlando and Ranaldo and

others is hilarious almost as often as it is heroic. The interactions portrayed between Christendom and the Islam and Pagan world is fascinating and I think unique as with the portrayal of women as several times displaying equal prowess with the men. You can't find half the magic, power, love, or enchantments in King Arthur as you can in Orlando. The fights and wars and adventures are really fantastic or at least on par with the various Arthurian tales I have read before. This is a must read for anyone who has enjoyed King Arthur, fantasy novels (as this seems to be the archetype), or those interested in a oft-forgotten classic of Christendom and the west.

Parlorpress.com is going to put out a new and full translation in the Fall of 2003. I like this abridged edition for my pocket version. I enjoyed starting from this book to see if the tales also had anything to do with Estensi/Ferarra history...and find it was written as a pleasant pastime for the recovering Duke Ercole...'read slowly on a sunny summer day in a room full of open windows...' Charles Ross did wonderful research. I have seen commentary by C.S. Lewis on Boiardo and the epic tale and read Fortune and Romance essays edited by JoAnne Cavallo. But C.Ross is excellent for a short history of the time, as well. For independent background on the D'Estensi (D'Este family) and interaction from Feltrino Boiardo (grandfather) to Matteo Maria, these texts are also good: Edmund Gardner's Dukes and Poets of Ferarra; Ferarra the Style of Renaissance Depotism by Werner L. Gundersheimer and Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder by Anthony Grafton (not much in this title about Boiardo: I used it to confirm or reference related information on Ferarra). The Boiardo information from Edmund Gardner's book is also still cited by literature scholars, from what I've seen.

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