

Bound by Philipp Selenka (1803–1850) of Wiesbaden (bindings 438 × 310 mm)

### Tasso, Torquato

Sorrento 1544 – 1595 Rome

### La Gerusalemme Liberata di Torquato Tasso. Tomo I [–II].

### Parma, ‘Nel Regal Palazzo co’ tipi Bodoniani’, 1794

Two volumes, FOLIO (428 × 285 mm), I: (175)ff. signed π<sup>2</sup> (title-page; *All'Augustissimo Cattolico Monarca delle Spagne Carlo IV di Borbone*, subscribed by Bodoni) \*<sup>4</sup> (verses, *Sacra Real Maestà*) 2π<sup>2</sup> (*Giambatista Bodoni al Lettore*) 3π<sub>1</sub> (sub-title, *La Gerusalemme Liberata*) 1–41<sup>4</sup> 42<sup>2</sup> (Cantos I–X) and paginated (18) 1–331 (1). II: (170)ff. signed π<sub>1</sub> (volume title-page) 1–41<sup>4</sup> 42<sup>6</sup> (– blank 42<sub>6</sub>, cancelled; Cantos XI–XX) and paginated (2) 1–337 (1).

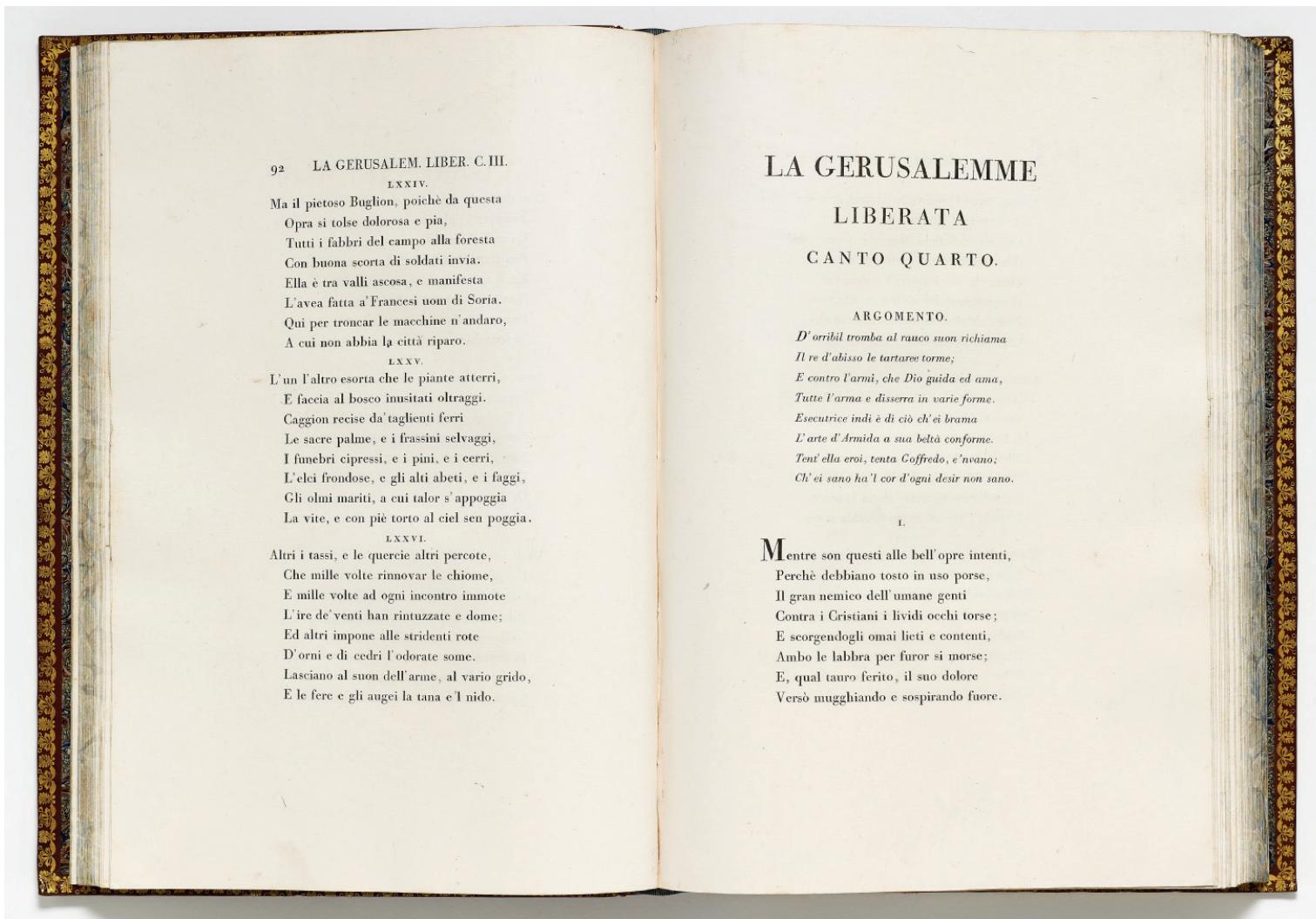
PAPER laid paper, watermark PB

Uniformly BOUND in contemporary Russia leather, covers framed and panelled in blind and gilt, with gilt dentelles; marbled page edges; blue silk page markers (engraved ticket on green paper pasted in upper corner of front free-endleaf in each volume: *Verfertigt bei Ph. Selenka in Wiesbaden*)

A MAGNIFICENT PRODUCTION of the Bodoni press, offering a new text based on the editions printed in 1581 and 1584, and on some autograph notes by Tasso collected by the editor, Pier Antonio Serassi (1721–1791).<sup>1</sup> The work is dedicated by the printer (in *versi sciolti*, composed on his behalf by Count Carlo Gastone della Torre di Rezzonico) to Carlos IV, King of Spain, who in 1793 had bestowed upon Bodoni an annual pension of 6000 Reali and the title ‘Typographer to His Majesty’.

Sometime in the early 1790s, Bodoni conceived the idea of printing by subscription uniform editions of the four Italian poets Tasso, Dante, Petrarch and Ariosto. He detailed his plans in a prospectus circulated in 1793 (printed in English and Italian):

<sup>1</sup> For Serassi’s emendations, see *La Gerusalemme liberata: ridotta a miglior lezione; aggiuntovi il confronto delle varianti tratto dalle più celebri edizioni* [by Michele Colombo] (Florence 1824), I, pp.327–334; II, pp.335–340, 436–438. The editor’s manuscript is lost; see Daniele Rota, ‘Vita e opere di Pier Antonio Serassi attraverso il suo carteggio inedito presso la Civica Biblioteca di Bergamo’ in *La cultura fra Sei e Settecento: primi risultati di una indagine*, edited by Elena Sala Di Felice and Laura Sannia Nowé (Modena 1994), pp.263–264: ‘Attorno alla provenienza del manoscritto di quest’opera, esistono tuttora incertezze e perplessità non facilmente risolvibili’.



Bodoni's Tasso, 'in foglio grande, carta reale fina' (page height 428 mm)

'Two Editions of each [author's work] will come out at the same time... Of the First in grand Folio, on a superfine, chosen paper and polish'd, there will be only fifty copies struck off... Of the same Edition in common Folio, on fine royal paper and polish'd, one hundred & fifty Copies will be printed... Of the second Edition in grand Quarto, on superfine chosen paper and polish'd, there will be 100 Copies... And of this Edition in common Quarto, on fine royal paper, polish'd, there will be two hundred Copies... And each Copy, if the subscriber chuses [sic] shall have a page of frontispiece with his name, surname and additions, which will be a lasting proof of the original propriety of the Book'.<sup>2</sup>

The first text to be printed was the *Gerusalemme liberata*. On 22 July 1794, Bodoni informed a correspondent that the work was well-underway ('ho quattro torchi occupati attualmente nella stampa della Gerusalemme liberata') and that it would appear in September 'in cinque diverse forme, tutte eleganti e nitidissime'.<sup>3</sup> In fact, four (not five) editions were produced, and the quantities printed were not as specified in the 1793 prospectus.

The earliest bibliographers of the Bodoni press, Francesco Fusi<sup>4</sup> and Giuseppe De Lama,<sup>5</sup> writing in 1814 and 1816 respectively, maintain that the four editions were printed in this order:

- (1) in two volumes, with three cantos printed on each page, *foglio grande* (page height 470 mm, or smaller),<sup>6</sup> on laid paper with PB watermark (*carta reale fina, detta di Napoli*), 130 copies printed (100 copies reserved for subscribers or so-called 'Associati', and 30 for sale to others);

<sup>2</sup> A copy of the sixteen-page prospectus (without title-page, drop-heading *A Biblio fili*) is in the British Library, shelfmark 111g.65(2). Subscriptions were to be directed to Giacomo Blanchon, a bookseller in Parma.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to an unknown correspondent, published by Luigi Servolini, 'Bodoniana: venticinque lettere inedite del Maestro della Tipografia Moderna' in *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 1960, p.294 (Lettera IX).

<sup>4</sup> Francesco Fusi, *Bibliografia od Elenco ragionato delle opere contenute nella collezione de 'Classici italiani'* (Milan 1814), p.180: 'la prima, in foglio reale, in volumi 2...; la seconda, in foglio mezzano e in carta velina, in volumi 3; la terza, in foglio piccolo e in carattere diverso dalla prima, in carta fina e in volumi 2; la quarta, in quarto reale, in volumi 2'.

<sup>5</sup> De Lama, *op. cit.*, II, pp.100–101. Although De Lama describes the three-volume edition before the two-volume edition, he avers that the latter appeared first ('che fece prima dell'altra').

<sup>6</sup> • 470 mm: *La Collezione bodoniana della Biblioteca Civica di Saluzzo*, edited by Giancarla Bertero (Collegno [Turin] 1995), p.144 no. 73 • 460 × 305 mm: London, British Library, 831.l.16, the copy of Jean-Andoche Junot (1771–1813), with preliminary printed leaf 'De la Bibliothèque | du Colonel Général des Hussards | Junot | Grand-Officier de l'Empire, | I.<sup>er</sup> Aide-de-Camp de l'Empereur | Napoleon I.<sup>er</sup> | ... 1806' inserted at the front of both volumes. The copy is uncut on paper watermarked PB.

- (2) in three volumes, with two cantos printed per page, *foglio mezzano* (page height 450 mm, or smaller),<sup>7</sup> on wove paper (*velina*), 100 copies printed;<sup>8</sup>
- (3) in two volumes, *foglio piccolo* (page height *circa* 390 mm),<sup>9</sup> on wove paper (*di Londra*);
- (4) in two volumes, *quarto* (page height *circa* 300 mm), on laid paper (*reale fina detta di Napoli*).

Fusi and De Lama were followed by other bibliographers,<sup>10</sup> with the consequence that nineteenth-century collectors generally paid higher prices for copies of the two-volume folio edition than for the three-volume folio edition.<sup>11</sup> Although no information appears to have come to light contradicting their claim for priority of the two-volume edition, modern bibliographers and collectors have tended to prefer the three-volume edition.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> • 450 mm: *La Collezione bodoniana della Biblioteca Civica di Saluzzo*, *op. cit.*, p.144 no. 72 • 450 × 285 mm: Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Coll. Bod. 142/2; *Giambattista Bodoni nell'Europa neoclassica*, catalogue of an exhibition held at Biblioteca Palatina, Parma, September-October 1990, edited by Corrado Mingardi and Leonardo Farinelli (Parma 1990), p.132 no. 8 • 445 × 285 mm: copy offered by Libreria Antiquaria Pregliasco (Turin), 'Convivio Settembre 2009', item 70 (€7500) • 438 × 270 mm: copy bound (after 1806) for Eugène de Beauharnais and his wife, Augusta-Amalia of Bavaria, sold by Sotheby's, Milan, 17 December 2003, lot 244 (€9600), 'La prima carta di ciascun volume, di solito bianca, reca a stampa la seguente dicitura: "Quest'edizione appartiene alla biblioteca particolare di S.A.I. Eugenio Napoleone di Francia Vice-Re d'Italia Arci-Cancelliere di Stato dell'Impero Francese Principe di Venezia ecc. ecc. ecc"' • 420 × 460 mm: London, British Library, 75.i.7.

<sup>8</sup> In a letter to Antoine Augustin Renouard, Bodoni wrote 'Della Gerusalemme del Tasso io ne ho fatta una edizione in tre volumi in carta velina a due ottave per pagina; e se ne sono tirate cento copie esattamente; e voi potreste a questa applicarci i vostri rami' (letter cited by Giani, *op. cit.*, p.52).

<sup>9</sup> • 390 mm: *La Collezione bodoniana della Biblioteca Civica di Saluzzo*, *op. cit.*, p.144 no. 74 • 364 × 238 mm: copy sold by Swann Auction Galleries, 2009, lot 389.

<sup>10</sup> Giuseppe Maria Mira, *Manuale teorico-pratico di Bibliografia* (Palermo 1861–1863), I, pp.389–390: 'Questa edizione fu eseguita in tre qualità di carta, cioè in vol. 2. in foglio piccolo in carta fina, in vol. 3. in foglio in carta mezza velina, ed in vol. 2. in foglio mass. in gran carta reale. Quest'ultima è la migliore'. Ulisse Guidi, *Annali delle edizioni e delle versioni della Gerusalemme Liberata* (Bologna 1868), p.52, likewise assigns priority to the two-volume edition in folio.

<sup>11</sup> Jacques-Charles Brunet, *Manuel de libraire et de l'amateur de livres* (Paris 1814), III, p.298: '2 vol. gr in-fol' valued 220 fr., '3 vol. in-fol.' valued 170 fr., '2 vol. gr. in-4' valued 60 fr. Gabriel Peignot, *Manuel du bibliophile: ou Traité du choix des livres* (Dijon 1823), pp.265–266, provides similar valuations.

<sup>12</sup> See Giani, *op. cit.*, p.52, valuing the three-volume edition 100 Lire and the two-volume edition 60 Lire, and discriminating between copies of the latter issued to subscribers and 'lo stesso senza la carta che porta il nome dell' associato e la giustificazione della tiratura'.

Since very few copies with printed leaves identifying the recipient are known, and copies without those preliminary leaves are comparatively abundant, it appears that Bodoni was unsuccessful in attracting subscribers, and the edition of 130 copies sold slowly.

Copies known to the writer include the following:

- no. 7: ‘Sua Altezza Reale l’Arciduca Ferdinando III. Granduca di Toscana’<sup>13</sup> • no. 40: Magliabechi (Florence)<sup>14</sup> • no. 91: ‘Il Chiarissimo Signore Giuseppe Serassi celebre fabbricatore d’organi in Bergamo’<sup>15</sup>
- Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Bod. 770–771<sup>16</sup> • Parma, Biblioteca Palatina / Museo Bodoniano, Coll. Bod. 141/1–2 • Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Bod. 257–258<sup>17</sup> • Saluzzo, Biblioteca Civica, XXXVII c36 1–2<sup>18</sup> • Uppsala, University Library (Erik Kempe Collection), Sign. Bodoni 563<sup>19</sup>

Bodoni’s ambitious project to print luxurious editions of the Italian poets was ultimately a commercial disappointment: the next work to appear in the series, Dante’s *Divina commedia*, was published in 1795–1796, also in four editions (Brooks nos. 588, 653–654; Giani p.53); Petrarch’s *Rime*, published in 1799, appeared however in two editions only (Brooks nos. 733–734; Giani p.61); and Ariosto never proceeded to press.

Our copy contains the engraved ticket of the bookbinder Philipp Selenka (1803–1850) of Wiesbaden, brother of Johann Jacob Selenka (1801–1871), Hofbuchbinder in Braunschweig.<sup>20</sup>

REFERENCES Giuseppe De Lama, *Vita del Cavaliere Giambattista Bodoni* (Parma 1816), II, pp.100–101; Bartolomeo Gamba, *Serie dei testi di lingua e di altre opere importanti nella italiana letteratura scritte dal secolo XIV al XIX* (fourth edition, Venice 1839), p.286 no. 949; Richard Hadl, *Druckwerke des Giambattista Bodoni und der Parmenser Staatsdruckerei gesammelt von R. Hadl* (Leipzig 1926), p.33; Hugh Cecil Brooks, *Compendiosa bibliografia di edizioni bodoniane* (Florence 1927), no. 563 (‘fra i capolavori di Bodoni’); Giampiero Giani, *Catalogo delle autentiche edizioni bodoniane* (Milan 1948), pp.51–52 no. 62

<sup>13</sup> Weiss und Co. Antiquariat (Munich), *Giambattista Bodoni: Opera typographica, MDCCCLXIX–MDCCXXXIX* (Munich [1926]), p.53 no. 216.

<sup>14</sup> Catalogue des livres rares, précieux, et très-bien conditionnés, provenant du cabinet de M. F[irmin]. D[idot] (Paris 1808), p.78 lot 792: ‘L’on trouve sur un feuillet imprimé en tête du premier volume qu’il n’a été tiré que 130 exemplaires de cette édition; celui-ci porte le n° 40, avec le nom de la biblioth. de Magliabechi de Florence’.

<sup>15</sup> La Raccolta Tassiana della Biblioteca Civica “A. Mai” di Bergamo (Bergamo 1960), p.92 no. 310.

<sup>16</sup> Mostra antologica di G. B. Bodoni, catalogue of an exhibition held at Biblioteca Braidense, 18–31 January 1973, edited by Sergio Samek Ludovici (Milan 1972), pp.51–52 no. 52 (note).

<sup>17</sup> La collezione Bodoniana: catalogo, compiled by Annamaria Palaia and Loana Moscatelli (Roma 1987), p.61 no. 203: ‘L’esemplare angelicano è privo della carta con il nome dell’“associato” e la giustificazione della tiratura’.

<sup>18</sup> La Collezione bodoniana della Biblioteca Civica di Saluzzo, *op. cit.*, p.144 no. 73.

<sup>19</sup> Gösta Johnsen, ‘The Uppsala Bodoni collection: Concordance and checklist of Bodoni prints in Uppsala University Library’ in *Giambattista Bodonis liv & verk: en utställning i Uppsala universitetsbibliotek 1 februari–30 maj 1991* (Uppsala 1991), p.63.

<sup>20</sup> Two bindings by Philipp Selenka in the Fürstlich Waldecksche Hofbibliothek, Arolsen, are described by Rudolf-Alexander Schütte and Konrad Wiedemann, *Einbandkunst vom Frühmittelalter bis Jugendstil aus den Bibliotheken in Kassel und Arolsen*, Universitätsbibliothek Kassel (Kassel 2002), p.54 no. 68 and Abb. 51 (on R.W. Plumer, *Tremaine, or the man of refinement*, London 1835) and no. 70 (on Eduard und Kunigunde, Frankfurt am Main: Frebs, c. 1840). He was a specialist ‘Portefeuillebinder’; see Hektor Rössler, *Ausführlicher Bericht über die von dem Gewerbeverein für das Großherzogthum Hessen im Jahre 1842 veranstaltete Allgemeine deutsche Industrie-Ausstellung zu Mainz* (Darmstadt 1843), p.240.