

# **The Legend of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick: From Ireland to Dante and Beyond**

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“Yes by Saint Patrick .... Touching this vision here  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you”  
(Hamlet, Act I, Scene 5)

“... A cursory reading of some of the popular medieval accounts of otherworld journeys [...] reveals that Owen's experiences in Saint Patrick's Purgatory conformed to the conventions of a well-worn literary genre...”<sup>1</sup> Before we can talk about the genre of the "journey to the other world", however, it would be useful to discuss certain recurring “themes” and common narrative patterns that characterize the primary models that structure the Irish *Eachtra*; that is, adventure tales such as the *Eachtra Connla*, the *Imram*, or, even better, voluntary travels such as the one taken by *Maeldúin*, the *Ua Chorra*, prototype of the Christian *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, by *Snedgus* and by *Mac Riagla*, which were real and irrefutable visions. Among these we must include the versions of the monks *Fursa*, *Laisrén* and *Adamnán* and those of laymen such as *Tundalo* and the knight *Owain* right up to the Purgatory of Saint Patrick.

While the ancient motif of the descent into Hell and the depiction of the “Other World”<sup>2</sup> has received a great deal of scholarly attention, including its relationship to the *Divine Comedy*<sup>3</sup>, in the Celtic tradition a visit to the other world, the “*Tír Tairgire*” or “*Tír na nÓg*”, was an integral part of the *Eachtra* or adventure tale<sup>4</sup> and it is precisely within this tradition, which quickly became a Christian one, that the legend of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick was born, codified into three different Latin versions, representing “in some way the birth of literature about Purgatory”<sup>5</sup>, even though the identification of a third intermediate realm between Heaven and Hell was already present at the time of the Greeks.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Blochet had noted how the Purgatory of Saint Patrick offered certain points of commonality with the oriental legends of the Ascension: in particular with the *Arda Viraf*<sup>7</sup> and the oriental vision of Hell.<sup>8</sup>

## Saint Patrick

Among the motifs in the oriental ascent to the other world was that of the bridge (the Persian term *cinvat* [bridge] was already present in the *Visio Pauli*), a metaphoric theme that in other texts might be similar to the hebrew-semitic idea of the ladder<sup>9</sup> (also present in the vision of *Adamnán*), taking on a dual nature: on one hand as the infernal element, such as in the *Visio Alberici*: “Post hec vidi scalam ferream . . . Pedes autem per scalam ascendentium et descendentium exurebantur in illis gradibus ignitis”<sup>10</sup>, and on the other, as purgatory, as in the *Visio Pauli* and later in the *Purgatory of Saint Patrick*.

All of this describes only in small part the importance of this legend, whose purpose was to connect the figure of St. Patrick with the other world, had in its spread on the European continent.

The *Purgatory of Saint Patrick* tells the story of the monk Patrick<sup>11</sup>, who had been captured by pirates and transported to Ireland, later becoming an apostle for those peoples who “cum tota Britannia algore incredulitas rigesceret”.<sup>12</sup> The *Chronica Hybernienses* recounts how one day Christ himself had led the monk, who in the *Vita Tertia* has the reputation of being a miracle worker<sup>13</sup>, to a legendary cave, a sort of pit, through which one can enter into the hereafter: “De hoc quoque purgatorio et eius origine quod sequitur tradunt veteres historiae hybernienses”. Tradition locates the pit in *Lough Derg* (“Red Lake”) in county Donegal. The story of the Irish knight, *Owain*, who ventures into that cavern, which Patrick had earlier pointed out to him, is told by *Matthew of Paris* in his *Chronica majora*<sup>14</sup> in the year 1153 and later in the *Tractatus de Purgatorio sancti Patricii*<sup>15</sup> by *Henry of Saltrey* (*Henricus Saltereiensis*) written between the years 1170 and 1185. The legend, which began in Ireland<sup>16</sup>, had various versions in different languages: Middle English, Anglo-Norman, Provençal, old French and Spanish. They all tell the story of the foundation of *Purgatory* and the visit thereto by the knight *Owain*, how he entered into the cavern after the preliminary rituals and repentance and how he had been warned by men dressed in white about the tortures and torments that he would encounter and what punishment he would suffer before arriving in the Heaven on earth from which he was to be excluded. Those who were allowed to enter the mysterious cavern located on an island in *Lough Derg*, north of *Dublin*, were to report back to the others exactly what they

## ALLEGORICA

saw and heard following their return. The narration concludes with the acts of the archives of the abbey<sup>17</sup>; however, not one of the latter texts ever reached Italy.

Kölbing<sup>18</sup> distinguished three Latin versions of the St. Patrick legend: first, a complete unedited version published in the work of Joannes Colganus<sup>19</sup>, second, a version of intermediate length that he identifies as the *Tractatus de Sancti Patrici*<sup>20</sup> by Henry of Saltrey and, finally, a brief version which can be found in the aforementioned *Cronica majora* by Matthew of Paris. Paul Meyer, in revisiting the work of Kölbing discovered that an additional text was overlooked: manuscript Ee. 6 from the Cambridge University Library II, an Anglo-Norman translation of the Latin text by Saltrey, extant only in this manuscript and in the fragment An (called by others F) Lansdowne 383. In 1891, Meyer compiled a comprehensive list of the seven French texts and with reference to the three middle-English translations: pa, OM<sub>1</sub>, and OM<sub>2</sub><sup>21</sup> wrote that “ne parait faite après l'un des poèmes français”.

Mall<sup>22</sup> published two Latin texts drawn from Bamberg E. VII. 59 and Arundel 292 from London that closely follow the original source to which Marie de France made reference. Frati produced the text of the legend contained in the extract by Stephan of Bourbon's *De septem donis Spiritus Sancti* according to the version of the Parisian codicil 15970 in the National Library (f.158<sup>v</sup>-159<sup>v</sup>).<sup>23</sup> According to the latest research, the Latin versions of the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* by Saltrey can be grouped together in two families: a and b. The manuscripts of the a family, namely, Ar British Library MS Arundel 292, B Bamberg, Staatliche Bibliothek MS E. VII. 59, H British Library MS Harley 3846, U Utrecht, University Library, MS 173, contain the edited version of the *Tractatus*; the manuscripts of the b family, L Lambeth Palace Library, MS 51, R British Library MS Royal 13 B VIII and S Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College, MS 50, contain the more extensive version.

Easting believes that the edited version is a later abbreviation of the more extensive one: “I argued that b may represent a closer approximation to the original shape of T [*Tractatus*], as Henry of Saltrey either composed it or revised it, and that the shorter a versions represent a reduction of b rather than that b is an expansion

## Saint Patrick

of a, as Warnke argued”.<sup>24</sup>

A critical edition of the *Tractatus* is in preparation that will consider all the new discoveries along with the existing relationships among the many different forms of the text found in over one hundred fifty manuscripts, compiled by Jean-Michel Picard and Yolande de Pontfarcy<sup>25</sup>.

The best known among the French poetic versions is that of Marie de France<sup>26</sup> who was the most instrumental figure in the spread of the legend of the knight Owain in all of Europe. After her translation, Le Goff reports that there were many editions of the Purgatory of Henry of Saltrey in Latin<sup>27</sup> as well as in the other common languages, particularly in French and in English.

However, writes Frati<sup>28</sup>, “it is not quite true to affirm that only the legend of the knight Owain reached us; since other narratives of actual descents into the cavern of Saint Patrick can be found in manuscripts from the more extensive Italian and foreign libraries, and there is also the testimony of other descents made by writers likewise trustworthy”. In 1328, Raimondo Visconte di Perillos, chamberlain for the King of France, after the death of King John I of Aragon, decided to become a “new Aeneas”, and to venture into the cavern of Saint Patrick.<sup>29</sup> In the year 1358, Malatesta of Rimini, called the Ungaro, completed his descensio into Purgatory, which has been recorded in the *Fons memorabilium universi* by Domenico di Bandino of Arezzo.<sup>30</sup> Cecco di Meletto of Forlì, in a letter honouring Malatesta, himself writes about a “locus ille cavernosus”.<sup>31</sup> Another vision recounts the peregrinatio to the Purgatory of Saint Patrick done in 1358 by a certain Lodoycus de Sur (Lodovico di Sur).<sup>32</sup>

At the beginning of the fifteenth century the Purgatory of Saint Patrick became the subject of a much more original vision than those from the preceding century. The writer William Stranton of Durham tells of being led into the Purgatory by the prior of Saint Matthew on Easter Sunday, 1406 after having been instructed to write the first word of the prayer *Jhesu Criste, fili Dei vivi, miserere mihi peccatori* on his forehead, in order to test any spirits that might appear.<sup>33</sup> In the fifteenth century, the legend by Henry of Saltrey gained greater popularity but did not enjoy much credibility until Pope Alexander VI, having listened to the report of the trip of the

## ALLEGORICA

Dutch monk from the monastery in Eymstadt, ordered the destruction of Saltrey's Purgatory, effective March 17<sup>th</sup>, St. Patrick's Day, in the year 1497.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the legend had become embedded in the literary production of all of Europe: in France<sup>35</sup>, in Spain<sup>36</sup> and in England and it had a widespread, although tardy diffusion even in Italy, where it is possible to find as many as seven different versions. A shorter version of the narrative, according to Bieler<sup>37</sup>, can be found in the *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus de Varagine.<sup>38</sup> A brief Italian text has been published in the *Vite dei Santi Padri* (IV, 88).<sup>39</sup> Other more ample versions were printed by Villari<sup>40</sup> and by Grion.<sup>41</sup> The edition published by Grion, found in a manuscript from the fifteenth century owned by Monga of Verona, is a document written in the Venetian dialect and is derived from the same source as the Tuscan edition, produced by Villari, even though it has been more popularised. "The name of the hero in the Tuscan version is Owain, as in the Irish version. Jacopo da Varaggio in the thirteenth century and Domenico Cavalca in the fourteenth mistook Owain for the hero of Pugliese Nicolò; the Venetian friar gives him the name, very popular in Venice, of Alvise".<sup>42</sup>

Lucia Bertolini edited the Tuscan V version published by Villari, producing a modern edition. The impossibility of demonstrating the existence of an archetypal version has made it necessary to choose between the two texts already considered by Villari, Pal. 93 (P) and the Conv. Soppr. G. 3,676 (M) from the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence and a third manuscript II, IV, 64 (F) from the same library.<sup>43</sup> This last text is preferred to the other two because of its low frequency of error, requiring the intervention of the editor at only a few points.<sup>44</sup> To the texts used by Bertolini, Mario Degli Innocenti has added the ms. Rome, Accademia Nazionale Lincei, Bibl. Corsiniana, Fondo Rossi, 30 (44 C 5) and collated it into Bertolini's edition. His results on "the multiplicity of the versions, the great possibility of contamination, the lack of complete data on the Italian versions, on the Latin manuscripts of the *Tractatus* and . . . on the manuscripts of the French translations" confirm the observations made by Bertolini in relation to the traditional manuscript of the legend.<sup>45</sup>

Professor Degli Innocenti has identified a seventh edition of

## Saint Patrick

the legend to add to the six already cited by Bertolini, derived from at least nine manuscripts; this seventh version is included in the *Vite dei Santi Padri* by Cavalca which Bieler spoke of, popularised by the *Legenda aurea*. Degli Innocenti's most recent research deals with the spread of the French version: the Venetian version based on the manuscript of the Monga family and published by Grion (G) and the Lombard version, attested to by the ms. T 67 sup. of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan (A).<sup>46</sup>

Saltrey's *Tractatus*, a "best seller of the Middle Ages"<sup>47</sup>, has been viewed as a possible source for the *Commedia*<sup>48</sup> and utilised by at least two early commentators to illustrate the poem itself: specifically, Alberico of Rosciate<sup>49</sup>, in his general introduction to the Purgatory, and Benvenuto of Imola. The text of the annotations by Alberico, which is for the most part a translation from a Latin version by another Bolognese jurist Jacobus de la Lana (1324-28), appears in a very limited number of manuscripts: Cod. Bodleianus Canon. Misc. 449 of Oxford (formerly Canonici di Venezia)<sup>50</sup>, Paris cod. ital. 538 (Pa)<sup>51</sup>, Cod. Barb. Lat. 4037 of Rome<sup>52</sup>, Paris Cod. Lat. 8701<sup>53</sup>, Cod. Laurenzianus Pl. 26, sin 2 di Firenze<sup>54</sup>, Paris cod. it. 79<sup>55</sup> and the manuscript by Grumelli in the Biblioteca Angelo Mai of Bergamo, Cassaforte 6, 1.<sup>56</sup>

From this last manuscript, we can reproduce the transcription of the part of the general Preface to the second canticle, which recounts the legend of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick; the interpolation is probably to be ascribed to Alberico himself<sup>57</sup>. In fact he spoke about this in his *Dictionarium Juris*, under the entry *Purgatorium*<sup>58</sup>: "Purgatorium, an sit locus materialis, vide XXV di. s. c. qualis hinc et c. seq. et primo ad Corin. III and in Psalmo: Iubilate Deo ver. Transivimus per ignem et aquam, et deduxit nos in refrigerium et plene in secunda parte comediae Dantis, quam titulavit purgatorium. vide etiam de quodam purgatorio in legenda sancti Patricij, supra purgatio".<sup>59</sup> The interpolation of Alberico follows closely the *Legenda aurea*, where he himself declares to have found it: "in legendis sanctorum in festo sancti Patricij".

Grumelli manuscript, Bibl. Civica Angelo Mai (Cd. Grumelli Cassaforte: 6, 1, formerly δ. 9. 16). [Author's note: I have incorporated the extensive quote into the body of the article in order

## ALLEGORICA

to introduce the critical apparatus in the footnotes.]<sup>60</sup>

Preface cc. 140 r.-v.: Purgatorium.

[P]er correr milglior acque alça le velle. / Omai la navicella del mio  
'n gengno. / Che lascia dietro a se mar si crudelle.

Hic incipit secunda pars Comedie Dantis que intitulatur Purgatorium, de quo purgatorio quantum in scriptis reperii ultra ea que dicit auctor breviter subicio purgare et omnem est innocentiam suam ostendere.

Et ideo scribitur in Iure quod non relacione criminum sed innocencia reus purgatur, ff. de publicis<sup>61</sup> iudiciis<sup>62</sup> lex is qui reus<sup>63</sup> et de requi rei<sup>64</sup> lex ulterius Et ideo preses provincie studere debet suam provinciam purgare malis hominibus ut ff. de officio praesidis<sup>65</sup> lex III et lex congrue. Et inde extra de purgatione vulgari per totum et de purgatione canonica per totum et per hostiensem et Gotofredum in summa ipsorum titullorum.

Et in specullo eisdem titullis et inde etiam cardinalem extravagantes: de foro competenti capitulo Romana libro vi<sup>o</sup>. Et an locus purgatorii de quo tractat auctor sit locus materiallis vide in decretis 25 distinctione capitulo qualis<sup>66</sup> et capitulis sequentibus et qualia peccata ibi purgentur vide ibi in glosa et bene per archidiaconum. Et sicut ibi habetur, pene purgatorij graviores sunt multo magis quam quicquid possit pati homo in hac vitta. De isto purgatorio habetur etiam Ad Corinthios 3<sup>o</sup> capitulo<sup>67</sup>, et in psalmo Jubilate Deo, in versu transivimus per ignem et aquam et deduxisti nos in refrigerium. Et de penis etiam huius purgatorij habetur in Dialogo<sup>68</sup> Beati Gregorij pape et de ipso purgatorio, scilicet generali in quo venalium<sup>69</sup> anime puniuntur. Reperij tamen ex autenticis scripturis quod quedam peccata voluntate divina purgantur in locis spiritualibus huius mundi ubi fuerunt perpetrata et aperuit testimonio fide

## Saint Patrick

dignorum et magnorum religiosorum predicatorum videlicet et minorum et quorundam secularium in quadam civitate que vocatur Alest que est in Provence, de quodam Guilielmo corno defuncto<sup>70</sup>. Qui nocturno tempore molestabat et extrahebat uxorem suam, et tandem vocatis dictis religiosis ut adhiberent remedium dicte sue uxori, lector predicatorum<sup>71</sup> ceteris ignorantibus secum corpus Christi detulit in secreto qui ex parte corporis Christi et in eius virtute coniuravit animam dicti Guillelmi. Qui Guillelmus cunctis audientibus respondit quod ipse erat in purgatorio generali sed eum oportebat purgare quoddam speciale peccatum, quod ibidem commiserat<sup>72</sup>, et in eodem loco voluntate divina, et respondit etiam dicto lectori in multis aliis temporibus pulchris sibi factis quas omitto quia ad propositum non accedunt.

Reperii etiam in Legendis sanctorum in festo sancti Patricii sic scriptum: cum beatus Patricius per Yberniam predicaret fructumque modicum faceret, rogavit Deum quatenus signum aliquod demonstraret per quod ultimo teriti<sup>73</sup> peniterent. Iussu igitur dei in quodam loco circulum magnum cum baccullo designavit. Et ecce terra intra circulum se aperiens, puteus maximus et profundus ibi visus est revelatum quod est beato patricio quod ibi quidam purgatorij locus esset, in quem quicumque vellet descendere sibi alia penitencia non restaret nec aliud pro peccatis purgatorium sentiret, plerique autem inde non redirent. Et qui redirent eos a mane usque ad sequens mane ibidem moram facere oporteret. Multi igitur ingrediebantur qui de cetero non revertebantur post igitur longum tempus mortuo beato Patricio vir quidam nobillis nomine Nicholaus qui peccata multa commiserat<sup>74</sup> cum ipsorum suorum peccatorum peniteret eundem et purgatorium sancti Patricii substinere vellet, cum anima scilicet diebus prout



## ALLEGORICA

alii faciebant se Jeiuniis et vigillijs macerasset, in predictum puteum descendit quoddamque hostium ab uno latere putei reperit in quod ingrediens quoddam oratorium adinvenit. Continuo igitur quidam monachi albi oratorium intraverunt et officium facientes dixerunt dicto Nicholao ut constans esset quoniam multa temptamenta diabolica eum percurrere oporteret. Cum autem ille requireret quod adiutorium contra hec habere posset, dixerunt: cum te penis affligi senseris protinus clama et dic: Iesu Christe filij Dei vivi miserere michi peccatori. Recedentibus autem predictis monachis continuo assunt demones. Et ut eis obediat primo blandiis promissionibus persuadent asserentes quod eum custodient et ad propria incolumen perducent. Sed cum ille nullatenus eis obedire vellet protinus diversarum ferarum terribilles voces audivit ac plantus et mugitus maximos et lamenta. Ad quod cum ille timore oribilli palpitaret Iesu Christe filii Dei vivi miserere michi peccatori<sup>75</sup> dicere cepit. Et statim omnis ferarum illorum tumultus terribillis acquievit<sup>76</sup>, processit ultra ad alium locum. Et ibi adest multitudo demonum dicencium sibi: putas quod evaseris manus nostras nequaquam. Sed nunc pocius torqueri incepis et affligi. Et ecce quidam maximus ignis et teribillis ibidem apparuit, dixeruntque ei demones: nisi nobis assentias in illum ignem te iactabimus conburendum.

Quod cum ille // (c. 140 v.) retineret ipsum capientes in illum ignem teribillem proicerunt. In quo dum cruciaretur exclamavit Iesu Christe filii Dei vivi miserere michi peccatori. Orantique ignis ille extinctus est; ad allium denique procedens locum, vidit quosdam viros vivos in igne cruciari et laminis fereis cadentibus a demonibus, usque ad viscera flagelari. Qui cum eis asentire nollet in eundem ignem deicierunt cum dictis laminis flagellatum. Sed

## Saint Patrick

cum ille Jesu Christe filij Dei vivi miserere michi peccatori exclamasset, a predicta pena fuit protinus liberatus, processit iterum et quendam latissimum puteum innietur, de quo fumus oribillis et fetor intollerabilis exiebat; dixeruntque ei demones: “locus quem conspicias est Infernus in quo dominus noster Belzebub habitat in ipsum igitur puteum te iactabimus si nobis consentire recusas postquam illuc autem iactatus fueris nullum evadendi inde remedium obtinebis”. Quis dum ipse contempneret capientes eundem in predictum puteum iactaverunt. Sed dum ipse Iesu Christe filii dei vivi miserere michi peccatori clamasset, protinus inde illesus exivit. Et omnis multitudo demonum evanuit velut umbra. Cum igitur redire deberet vidit quendam pontem super quem eum transire oporteret. Qui quidem erat strictissimus et ad instar glaciei politus et lubricus, sub quo fluvius igneus defluebat super quem dum se ponere et transire desperaret, tandem recordatus est verbi quod eum de tot periculis eripuit et confidenter accessit ad pontem. Et unum pedem super pontem ponens: Jhesu Christe filii dei vivi miserere michi peccatori dicere cepit, deinde alium pedem ponit. Et eadem verba reiteravit ad quemlibet etiam alium passum, predicta verba protulit et sic securus transivit. **Cum ergo transisset, in quoddam pratum amenissimum devenit ubi diversorum florum mira suavitatis redolebat.** Et ecce duo speciosi iuvenes ei apparuerunt, qui ipsum usque ad quandam civitatem speciosissimam ex auro et gemmis mirabiliter rutilantem perduxerunt, dixeruntque ei predicti iuvenes quod illa civitas paradus erat; in quam cum intrare vellet Nichollaus, dixerunt ei iuvenes quod primo ad suos rediret, et post dies triginta in pace quiesceret, et tunc illam civitatem civis perpetuis introiret. Tunc Nicholaus inde abscedens supra puteum Ybernie se restitutum invenit. Et omnibus

## ALLEGORICA

naratis que sibi contingerant, post triginta dies in domino feliciter requieuit.

Benvenuto of Imola also refers to the legend. We cite from the commentary printed in the year 1374 contained in the electronic data bank of the Dartmouth Dante Project, leaving aside the other two editions with the same commentaries: the *Recollechte* and the text of the *Ashburniensis* 843. Benvenuto, in his comment on the first poem of Purgatory, writes that Hell, is two-fold: essential and moral. Therefore, in the same way, Purgatory is also two-fold: essential and moral. Furthermore, Purgatory, according to an opinion shared by many theologians, is underground and is part of Hell, just as is stated in the fourth book of Gregory the Great; the only punishment that exists is the fire, although the spirit can be purified elsewhere, as Gregory says of Pascasio, who is purified in ice, or through the intercession of some holy man *sicut sanctus Patricius impetravit quod quidam purgaretur in quodam loco subterraneo, ex quo postea fabulose ortum est ibi esse purgatorium.*

Benvenuto 1373: Purg I, 100-108.<sup>77</sup>

Questa. Hic Cato, quia mandaverat novum poetam recingi junco, docet ubi inveniuntur junci, et describit locum ubi abundant; sed ad intelligentiam huius literae est praesciendum, quod poeta noster fingit quod in illo hemisperio inferiori ex opposito inferni est una parva plana insula circularis, in cuius medio est unus mons altissimus usque ad coelum, qui circa medium est muratus et factus ad gradus circulariter; et sicut gradatim descenditur ad centrum inferni, ita gradatim ascenditur ad cacumen istius montis contigui coelo: sicut si quis volens ascendere arenam Veronae incipiat a fundo et tendat ad altum: sed in arena itur ab intra, hic vero itur ab extra in circuitu montis per unam viam excisam, quam poeta cornicem vocat, ut saepe patebit in processu. Nunc ad literam. [...] Et hic nota, lector, quod sicut notavi in principio inferni et postea saepissime per totum, quod infernus est duplex, scilicet essentialis

## Saint Patrick

et moralis, et quod poeta alterutro calle procedens tractavit de utroque, et praecipue de morali maxime in dando poenas omnibus generibus peccatorum; ita a simili purgatorium est duplex, scilicet essenziale et morale. Ideo autor descripturus purgatorium eodem modo nunc tractat de essentiali, nunc de morali, sed principalissime de morali in describendo situm et distinctionem omnium poenarum poenitentium. Unde ut videas clare quod poeta loquitur moraliter in descriptione huius loci, volo te scire aliqua circa purgatorium essenziale. Et primo quidem nota, quod locus purgatorii, secundum communem opinionem theologorum, dicitur esse sub terra, quia talis locus vilis correspondet vilitati foeditatis culpabilis, qui locus creditur esse pars inferni a quibusdam propter verbum Gregorii quarto dialogorum, ubi dicit, quod sub eodem igne electus purgatur, et damnatus crematur. Unde sola poena ignis est in purgatorio. Potest tamen ex divina dispensatione alibi anima purgari, sicut dicit ibidem Gregorius de anima Pascasio qui purgabatur in glacie, quod Deus concedit vel propter velociorem liberationem, ut possit aliis suam indigentiam revelare, sicut patuit in Pascasio praedicto, vel ad instructionem nostram, ut poena evidens nos terreat, sicut de aliquibus audivi a viventibus, vel propter impetrationem alicuius sancti viri, sicut sanctus Patricius impetravit quod quidam purgaretur in quodam loco subterraneo, ex quo postea fabulose ortum est ibi esse purgatorium; sicut etiam a simili in mari siculo insula Vulcani dicitur esse unum ostium inferni, quia ex se emittit tonitrua et incendia, in quem locum anima Theodorici regis gothorum visa est demergi cuidam sancto eremita. Est autem poena purgatorii durissima; nam Augustinus in quodam sermone dicit quod ille ignis est durior quam quicquam poenarum in hoc saeculo quis possit audire, videre, vel cogitare. Ex his ergo evidenter

## ALLEGORICA

apparet quod autor describit hic locum purgatorii moraliter. Et ultimo Cato dat tertium et ultimum documentum optimum, dicens: poscia non sia di qua vostra reddita, quia homo ingressus purgatorium, idest poenitentiam, non debet amplius redire versus infernum, idest, vitia, a quibus recessit. Et respondet quaestioni tacitae, quia posset dicere Virgilius: et quis diriget nos in viam virtutis respondet: lo sol, che surge omai, idest incipit oriri post Luciferum, vi mostrerà prender lo monte, idest, radius divinae gratiae qui oritur in intellectu talium viatorum ostendet vobis arduum iter virtutis. Et dicit: a più lieve salita, idest carpetis montem, ubi inveniatis viam faciliorem.

An important feature of the study pertains to the topographical ambivalence of the Purgatory of Patrick: sometimes the cavern can be found near Lake Derg, other times in the mountains in Connaught. The varying location of the locus purgatorii and its makeup dates back to the Anglo-Norman writers from the twelfth century: Henry of Saltrey (*Tractatus*) and Marie de France talk about a pit (*fossa/une fosse*) located in a desert in no way associated with a lake or an island; Jocelin of Furness in the *Life of Saint Patrick* (1185/86) talks about a mountain in Connaught, known by the name of *Cruachán Aigle*.<sup>78</sup> “From Jocelin and the *Annals of Loch Cé* we learn that *Croagh Patrick* [mountain], like *Lough Derg*, was visited by Irish pilgrims in the twelfth century in imitation of Saint Patrick's visit”.<sup>79</sup>

How important the location of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick is, whether in a crevice or a pit, and how the locus purgatorii preserved its characteristics as an abyss can be deduced from the apocryphal *Charta S. Patricii* in which a relationship between the place pointed out to Patrick and the veneration of Saint Michael the Archangel is established when “*quadam autem nocte*”, as Patrick was sound asleep, Jesus Christ appeared before him and he said: “*Patrici serve meus, scias me elegisse locum istum ad honorem nominis mei, et ut hic honoranter invocent adiutorium archangeli mei Michaelis. Et hoc tibi signum et fratribus tuis, quatenus et ipsi credant: brachium tuum sinistrum arescet, donec quae vidisti annuntiaveris fratribus*

## Saint Patrick

qui in cella sunt inferiori, et denuo hic redieris”(Migne, PL LIII, 830).

The iconography peculiar to Italy reveals the ambivalence of the location of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick and shows a promontory, inside which the Purgatory of Saint Patrick can be found. I refer here to the fresco painted in 1346 and discovered in 1975 in the choir of the Monastery of St. Francis (Borgo Nuovo - Todi), attributed to Iacopo di Mino del Pellicciaio. The fresco, which takes up an entire wall of the monastery, depicts souls who are freed from Purgatory: here one observes a mountain quarry in which seven caverns can be seen, and on the peak there is a pit, the Irish monk and the Knight Niclaus; the passage to Heaven is made possible through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and S. Filippo Benizi.<sup>80</sup> The fresco was probably inspired by the *Legenda Aurea* which describes the entrance into Purgatory as located in the cavern of a mountain, much like a fissure.

The revolution that Dante brings about consists in his definitive removal of Purgatory from underground. He transforms the mountain into a ladder (*escalina*: Purg. XXVI, 146), on which the movement is upwards, a sort of high tower which one can approach only through a door reached by a flight of stairs (Purg. XXI, 48), thus employing a clever play on the duality of the motif. This in no way takes away from the fact that the purgatorial mountain which we find in at least two branches of the tradition of Saint Patrick “is a precise parallel of the mountain in Dante’s poem”.<sup>81</sup>

The idea of the Hell and the Purgatory that visionaries had was rather of underground places<sup>82</sup> and what is left of that concept is the moral organisation of the two realms in Dante that are characterized, first on the basis of a progressive increase in culpability and in punishment, resulting in a gradual downward spiral into the infernal region according to *le tre dispozion che 'l ciel non vole / incontenenza, malizia e la matta / bestialitate*<sup>83</sup> and, subsequently, an ascent up the purgatorial mountain<sup>84</sup>, according to the degree of love possessed by the soul: *malo obietto / o per troppo o per poco di vigore*<sup>85</sup>, *ut sicut in Burcho seu foramine Inferni descendit de gradu in gradum, ita ut de gradu in gradum ascendit predictum montem*. Among the early commentators, Benvenuto of Imola, in addition to

## ALLEGORICA

retaining traces of the legend of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick, also sets out the differences, which date back to Peter of Dante, between the physical Hell and the moral one and in the same way between a physical Purgatory and a moral one: *infernus est duplex, scilicet essentialis et moralis ...ita a simili purgatorium est duplex, scilicet essentiale et morale.*<sup>86</sup>

The revolutionary aspect of the *imago mundi* set out by Dante, in contrast to that of the visionaries, is not to be underestimated; it draws upon the theological reflections of the times; in particular, upon the discussion of the *Confessio culpae* and the evolution of the sacrament of Confession among the Irish monks beginning with Patrick. In that view, confession was an extraordinary event to be made only once in a lifetime; whereas at the time of Dante it was common for one to confess at least once a year. The development of the concept of more frequent confession has contributed to a delineation of the following issue: to the category of “quantity”, as it pertains to the relative seriousness of the sin, whether it is in *corpore vivo* or else *post mortem*, has been added the category of “quality”, that is, the nature of the sin committed and whether it is with or without repentance, whether it is venial or mortal. If the issue is “quantity”, since an increase in culpability is accompanied by an increase in suffering, then it applies to both realms: Hell and Purgatory. If the issue is “quality” then it becomes the distinctive feature of the sin itself. Thus, Alberico of Rosciate continues in the aforementioned preface to the second canticle in c. 140 v. (See endnote 60):

“[P]er corer miglior acqua etc. auctor in hac prima parte tractare intendit de statu animarum divisarum a corpore que sunt libere ab Infernali pena non tamen ex toto a culpa propter quam priusquam consendant ad beatitudinem vitte eterne oportet purgari ab ipsa ne malum aliquod remaneat impunitum. Circa quam culpam notandum est quod culpa sive peccatum comitti potest altero de duobus modis, quorum unum dicitur mortale; aliud veniale.<sup>87</sup> Mortale est quando homo ex toto recedit ab ordine virtuoso et etiam a deo. Et tali peccato debetur pena infernalis de qua habita est

## Saint Patrick

plena mundo in prima parte. Quia peccatum mortalle est contra deum qui est sempiternus et deo pena eius sempiterna et infinita iuxta illud psalmi 21 et Mathei 7 discedite a me omnes qui operamini Iniquitatem etc. Veniale est illud quod quando comittitur adhuc remanet homo in ordine virtuoso et cum remorsu conscientie, nec ex toto recedit a deo. Et talia peccata purgantur in purgatorio commensurando penam pro modo culpe Ysaye 21 in mensura contra mensuram cum abiecta fuisset iudicabo eam”.

Whether Dante did or did not exploit the legend is an issue to be viewed in light of the fact that the early commentators also used it. Grion wrote that “In Venice, Dante found the legend of the cavern of Saint Patrick rather well established”. In Padova, the well in the courtyard of Rinaldo Scrovegni is called Hell. Grion recalls the Latin verses attributed to Dante in the *Vita Dantis* by Boccaccio: “Ultima regna canam fluido contermina mundo, / Spiritibus quae lata patent, quae premia solvunt / Pro meritis cuicumque suis...” and notes that the domains bordering the liquid world could have easily been the island of Brendan and the Purgatory of Saint Patrick.<sup>88</sup> I found it interesting that Dante’s Ulysses could have noticed the mountain of Purgatory once past the Columns of Hercules.<sup>89</sup> That same Ulysses, who is the anti-Owain, or rather the anti-Nicola of the *Legenda aurea*, and the anti-Alvise of the edition written in the Venetian dialect, and the anti-Ugo of the legend of the *Discesa di Ugo D’Alvernia all’Inferno*, who died while submerged in those sacred waters; he is the pagan who does not become the *miles christianus*<sup>90</sup> of Arthur/Patrick/the returning Christ.<sup>91</sup> It is not necessary to prove that in the thirteenth century the voyage to Purgatory was attributed to the hero of Ithaca; one can simply talk about a superimposition of motifs for which the new Aeneas, the Apostle Paul, was little by little replaced by the *miles christianus* Patrick; that is, Owain/Nicola/Alvise/Ugo, who embody Aeneas, Orpheus, Paul, the knights of Arthur, heroes of their own national epics or chansons whose anti-heros within the system of Dante, are perhaps Ulysses and the fallen angel Lucifer, the knight who did not trust in God but only in his own powers.

In Italy, too, the legend had its imitators. Wright points out



## ALLEGORICA

that in the fourteenth century, the Purgatory of Saint Patrick was introduced into Italian fiction through the *Guerin meschino*: “The whole is, in fact, a palpable and poor imitation of Dante, built upon the legend of Henry of Saltrey”.<sup>92</sup> In reality, one would have to say the same of Ugo D’Alvernia, the work of fiction that could have been the archetype of the genre of the traveller’s cycle.<sup>93</sup> The Ugo d’Alvernia, writes Rajna, “is worthy of being carefully considered not only because it contains this imitation, in my opinion the most ancient one, of the *Commedia*, but also for the manner in which it is written.”<sup>94</sup>

Rajna concludes that the style was the same as the so-called *Renardo*, a text that Emmanuele Teza published himself. Another text that offers us the same language is the *Buovo d’Antona*<sup>95</sup>, which I personally discovered. In light of my discovery, I intend in the near future to compare the three versions in order to ascertain what differences exist among them and subsequently between them and the Italic-French of the Venetian texts. In this fashion I hope to be able to resolve some of the problems posed by this literature from Northern Italy”.<sup>96</sup>

The descent of Ugo into the “*Inferno*”,<sup>97</sup> a product of that Franco-Italian literature that Formisano defines as a “no man’s land”, is an important chapter in the spread of the *chanson de geste*, the “point of intersection between the old traditions of the epic and the new tradition of the *cantari*”.<sup>98</sup>

I believe that it is useful at this point to add a few additional comments on the meaning of the Legend of Patrick. Bieler reminds us that “Patrick has left us two rather brief writings, the *Confessione* and an *Epistola*<sup>99</sup>, both generally accepted as authentic”.<sup>100</sup> The first short piece is a defence of the idea that a missionary needed certain moral and intellectual qualities in order to carry out his vocation; the second, the *Epistola*, is directed against Coroticus, governor of a part of Britannia that had slaughtered the disciples of Patrick. Also worth noting for our study is the *Libro di Armagh*<sup>101</sup>, which contains the four *Dicta Patricii* of which, the fourth, *Detti*, “asks the Irish to conform themselves to the Roman rite and to sing the *Kyrie eleison*” at each *hora canonica*.<sup>102</sup> Although the authenticity of the *Detti* is uncertain, it would seem possible that the Cistercian monk Henry of Saltrey took that material into account in his version

## Saint Patrick

of the legend in order to exemplify his *Tractatus*, where the prayer spoken to the knight Owain and the prayer that he had to repeat in the face of danger<sup>103</sup> was “Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”, as it likewise appears in *Marie de France*<sup>104</sup>, in the *Legenda aurea* and in the preface by Alberico who later reproduced it. Proof of the profound Christian ethos of the Irish *Eachtra* is the scream from the sky at Jericho that implores Jesus the healer in the Gospel of Luke<sup>105</sup>, which is also the *Kyrie eleison* of the liturgy.<sup>106</sup> It is the same prayer of Dante the pilgrim, for the first words that he pronounces in the *Commedia* while turning to his guide are: *miserere di me*.<sup>107</sup>

All of the elements connected to the legend of Purgatory that had become fixed *topoi* in the folk-like medieval romà were acquired by Dante and turned into standard components of more elevated epic literature. In contrast to the earlier tradition that placed, for example, the Purgatory of St. Patrick in some sort of cavern. Thanks to Dante’s innovation Purgatory became topically represented as a mountain, a moral and physical space separated from the inferno and oriented skyward – a place of purgation. With Dante, all that the Council of 1254 had established on Purgatory became part of the collective imagination as an authoritative representation of the afterlife and thus had an impact on the figurative arts of the following centuries.

Italy

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Curley, 1993: 15. My previous research on St. Patrick’s purgatory can be viewed at [http://www.disp.let.uniroma1.it/fileservices/filesDISP/053-072\\_DI-FONZO.pdf](http://www.disp.let.uniroma1.it/fileservices/filesDISP/053-072_DI-FONZO.pdf); and at <http://www.princeton.edu/~dante/ebdsa/DiFonzo.html>. [Editor’s Note: due to the volume of citations, the works consulted have been moved to “Bibliography.”]

<sup>2</sup> I have used the famous formula by Segre.

<sup>3</sup> See the bibliography in Rajna, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> See Murray.

<sup>5</sup> Le Goff, 1982: 203-204 and 1988. For a contrary view, see McGuire.

<sup>6</sup> Labitte, 1842 and 1872: 91: “Dans le premier, Platon parle des

## ALLEGORICA

traditions qui couraient de son temps sur le *séjour des morts*. La triple division que le christianisme a faite de l'autre monde s'y trouve déjà marquée: le lac Achérusiade, où les coupables sont temporairement purifiés, c'est le purgatoire; le Tartare, d'où ils ne sortent jamais, c'est l'enfer; enfin ces pures demeures au-dessus de la terre, qui ont elles-mêmes leur degré de beauté selon le degré de vertu de ceux qui les habitent, c'est le paradis. Seulement Platon ajoute prudemment: 'Il n'est pas facile de les décrire.' Peut-être est-ce le mot qui a piqué l'émulation de Dante".

<sup>7</sup> The *Arda Viraz Namag* is one of the principle sources for an understanding of the doctrines concerning the "Otherworld" in ancient Iran. Besides the ancient themes, one finds a description of the *daena* (pehl. *den*), that is, the two possible fates of the soul in the Otherworld, of the judgment of the soul and of the crossing of the bridge. We also find chapter after chapter on the suffering and pain in Hell tied to the law of retaliation. The first part of the book, devoted to Heaven, reflects the ancient concept of compensation for the just, and not merely in a material sense. See Gignoux, Introduction, 6-7: "L'ouvrage a, depuis longtemps, suscité la comparaison avec Dante, mais en dépit des nombreuses études dont on trouvera le titre dans la bibliographie, il reste que l'influence de l'un sur l'autre n'a pu être qu'indirecte, et que par l'intermédiaire des sources juives et arabes Dante a pu connaître certains thèmes de l'eschatologie iranienne".

<sup>8</sup> Blochet, 85.

<sup>9</sup> The ladder, an image born in an oriental environment and explicitly referring to access to heaven, (*Gen* 28: 12), becomes in the West an emblem of the purification of the passions (the visions between the sixth and the twelfth centuries); since then it has been more and more frequently associated with the typology of the *astripeto* kingdom [purgatory], according to the stages skillfully set out by Le Goff: beginning with the vision of Drythelmo, who presents in his account a place "reserved specifically for the purification together with a rigorous definition of the nature of such a place", crossing over to the twelfth century, when fire is meant to punish, just as it is also purgative. As regards the image of the ladder in relation to Dante, see Di Fonzo, 1991.

<sup>10</sup> De Vivo, 17.

## Saint Patrick

<sup>11</sup> The historic Patrick lived approximately 370 - 461 C.E. He first served in Armagh and then travelled to France where he was ordained a bishop. See Bieler, 1971 and Stokes. On the historic mission of Patrick, see Malaspina.

<sup>12</sup> Hogan, 575.

<sup>13</sup> See Baggi, 1928.

<sup>14</sup> On the descent of the knight Owen into Hell that Matthew of Paris calls *Hoenus*, see Luard, 192-203.

<sup>15</sup> See Easting: "Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii," H(enry) of Sawtry" 121-154 for the text and 236-254 for the commentary.

<sup>16</sup> From Ireland we have three of the most important and most popular legends of visions: the one of Brendan, the one of Tundalo and the one of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick. See Bray, in which the allegorical value of this genre of narratives is highlighted with respect to the monastic life of the Irish communities of the eighth and ninth centuries.

<sup>17</sup> Duval, 800.

<sup>18</sup> Kölbing, 1877 and 1884.

<sup>19</sup> Colgan, 273-281.

<sup>20</sup> This version was published for the first time in Messingham, 98-107.

<sup>21</sup> Meyer, 1891. Three translations have survived in Middle English derived from the *Tractatus*. The oldest one introduces the name of Saint Patrick into the English legends from the south of England in the thirteenth century. The other two translations are later, from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and are represented by two manuscripts: 'A' from the National Library of Scotland, Ms Advocates' 19. 2. 1, called The Auchinleck manuscript, and 'C' Cotton Caligula Aii from the British Library. These editions are noted by Easting (xlili) respectively as OM<sub>1</sub> and OM<sub>2</sub>, who maintains that even though OM<sub>1</sub> is derived from the Latin text □□ of the *Tractatus*, the translation took into account the Anglo-Norman text.

<sup>22</sup> See Mall.

<sup>23</sup> "Il Purgatorio di S. Patrizio." In Frati, 1886: 168-171, Appendix III.

<sup>24</sup> Easting, lxxxvi, n. 2.

<sup>25</sup> See Picard.

## ALLEGORICA

<sup>26</sup> See Roquefort, who follows Jenkins. See also Curley, 1995; Warnke and Zanden.

<sup>27</sup> In the thirteenth century the following writers used the legend: Jacques de Vitry in the *Historia orientalis* (cap. XCII), Vincent de Beauvais in the *Speculum historiale* (l. XX, cc. XXIII-XXIV), Stephanus de Bourbone in the *Tractatus de diversis materiis predicabilibus* and Humbert de Romans in the *De dono timoris*. See also Le Goff, 1982: 224.

<sup>28</sup> Frati, 1891: 47.

<sup>29</sup> The version of the visit to Purgatory by Raimondo di Perilhos was written originally in Limoges dialect. There was a Latin translation of this edition published in the work by O'Sullivan. See Mahaffy, which includes a report by Joan de Perilhos (or Perelhos), c. 1397, written originally in Catalan, but extant only in a Provençal version from 1466, and a letter by Francesco Chiericati to Isabella d'Este, dated 1517.

<sup>30</sup> See Bandino, 480-84.

<sup>31</sup> A transcription of the part of the letter pertinent to the legend is offered by Frati, 1891: 49. Some individuals later requested and obtained certification of the pilgrimages undertaken, including Malatesta of Rimini, called the "Ungaro" because he was knighted by Louis I, King of Hungary, in 1347, and Niccolò de' Beccari, brother of the rhymer Antonio de' Beccari.

<sup>32</sup> His vision, written partially in Latin, partially in the vernacular, is recorded in Bibl. Palat. Vindobon. cod. 3160 (c. 259<sup>a</sup> to - 261<sup>b</sup>); see Frati, 1886: 142, n. 1; no text provided. This vision, writes the historian, is derived in large part from the one of the Knight Owain although there are notable parts added and others removed. A detail of the Viennese manuscript states that Ludovico, just as other visionaries, suffers many temptations; these, however are temptations by beautiful women, rather than by demons. The vision concludes with a summary in the vernacular with an enumeration of the seven punishments of Purgatory.

<sup>33</sup> Stranton's vision has been preserved in two manuscripts in the British Library: Additional 34, 193 and Royal 17 B XLIII. See Easting: 78-117 for parallel texts of the two manuscripts and 220-235 for the commentary. His rather detailed account of what and

## Saint Patrick

whom he encountered in the Purgatory has been summarized from the two manuscripts by St. John Seymour. [Nugent, 187-93.] Another pilgrim's account of a visit to the Purgatory can be found in a letter that Antonio Giovanni Mannini wrote to Corso di Giovanni Rustichi on 15 February 1411, telling him of his visit to the Purgatory in the company of a Hungarian knight, Laurentius Ratholdi de Pastóth [see Frati, 1886: 141, n. 1; for the text: 154-162, Appendix I]. Unlike the Stranton account, Mannini writes nothing about his vision once in the Purgatory, but describes the two islands he visited and reports on the buildings there, including the Purgatory. The two men left from Dublin on 25 September and arrived at Lough Derg on 4 November [1411]. "The Purgatory," wrote Mannini, "lies in a lake among high mountains and is like a well, ten miles in circumference, in which there are thirty-four islands, great and small." ". . . the said island of the Purgatory is 129 paces long and 30 paces wide, and is in the very centre of the said lake," one mile from the Saints' Island, with its monastic community. On Saturday, 7 November, after fasting for three days, he set out for the Purgatory in a small boat rowed by a canon. "On the said island of the Purgatory is a very devotional little chapel," 30' x 15' in size. After changing his clothes and praying, he entered the Purgatory, which was about five paces from the chapel and measured three feet wide and nine feet long. Upon entering, he saw a large black spider that disappeared after Mannini prayed "Domine Jesu Christi, etc.;" he then fell asleep. He was later awakened by the canon and estimates that he was in the Purgatory for five hours. He closes the letter to Corso by stating that he had been in the Purgatory on 11 November, the Feast of St. Martin [in contrast to his earlier citation of November 7<sup>th</sup>]. [Nugent: 180-87.]

<sup>34</sup> The *Annals of Ulster* [vol. 3, p. 417 & n. 6] report that in 1497: "The cave of the Purgatory of Patrick on Loch-ghearg[derg, co. Don] was broken this year by the Guardian of Dun-na-Gall and by the representatives of the bishop in the deanery of Loch-erne, by authorization of the Pope [Alexander VI], about the feast of St. Patrick of this year; . . ." on the grounds that it was not authentic. However, the place where the Purgatory was located was transported to another island. Around 1693, a certain Ludovicus Pyrrhus of Brittany attempted to find the Purgatory, conducting a number of

## ALLEGORICA

excavations on Saints' and Station Islands over a period of two summers, until his funds ran out. After re-engaging in trade he spent several more years in the quest but ultimately failed. See *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 5:76-77.

<sup>35</sup> In France, Father Francesco Bouillon published a small volume on the topic.

<sup>36</sup> Calderon de la Barca used material from one of his religious dramas. See Miquel y Planas.

<sup>37</sup> "Purgatorio di San Patrizio," *Enciclopedia Dantesca* vol. IV, Rome, 1973: 750-51.

<sup>38</sup> See Iacopo da Varazze, 368-373.

<sup>39</sup> Del Corno, 1977 and 1978.

<sup>40</sup> See Villari.

<sup>41</sup> See Grion.

<sup>42</sup> *Idem*, 115.

<sup>43</sup> See Bertolini.

<sup>44</sup> In this regard, Bertolini [77] observes that: "The choice of a single manuscript does not mean giving up efforts at approximating the original as closely as possible. Unfortunately, between the families FP and M, there are no great differences in the following sense: in both of the families one sees a conscious manipulation of the text".

<sup>45</sup> Degli Innocenti, 84.

<sup>46</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>47</sup> See Leslie, xvii.

<sup>48</sup> Leslie proposes at least two different points of contact of the legend with Dante: *Inferno* XIV and *Inferno* XXII. Wright [122], on the contrary, affirms: "There are, perhaps, more points of similitude between the poem of Dante and this Italian vision than in any of those which originated in the more western parts of Europe, although they all contain incidents more or less similar to some parts of the details of the *Divina Commedia*. Dante evidently copies incidents from the vision of Owain".

<sup>49</sup> A jurist from Bergamo, circa 1290-1360. His *Quaestiones statutorum* is of great importance in the history of statutory rights and of the exegesis of the *Commentaria* to the *Digestum* and to the *Codex*. We also have a translation by him of the commentary by Jacobus de la Lana into Latin, preserved in various manuscripts but

## Saint Patrick

still unedited. Since “the commentary by della Lana was composed before the year 1330, and perhaps in the period between 1323-1328” the version by Alberico is from the last years in the life of learned jurist. Both of the texts were widely available in the middle of the fourteenth century (see Petrocchi, 79). The version by Alberico is non-literal and contains additions to the commentary by de la Lana that are worthy of being evaluated in a separate study. See also Cremaschi; Fiammazzo, 1895; Prosdocimi; Rosa, 15-22 and Salvioni.

<sup>50</sup> Rocca, n. 71, 156. The Latin commentary to the *Inferno* is the translation by de la Lana, in which only a final caption attributes to Guglielmo Bernardi (1349); the rest is by Rosciate.

<sup>51</sup> Idem, n. 72. Contains the commentary to the first and third canticles. Date: 1351.

<sup>52</sup> Idem, n. 75. Contains the commentary to the *Paradiso*. Date: 4 March 1399.

<sup>53</sup> Auvray, 71. Contains the commentary to the *Inferno*. Date: 1370.

<sup>54</sup> Rocca, n. 69. Contains the entire work but in a concise version. Date of the commentary to the *Inferno* (1356). Final date of the ms.1362.

<sup>55</sup> Auvray, 74. Contains the commentary to the *Purgatorio* with the two general prefaces and through which we have verified some *loci selecti*.

<sup>56</sup> An ample descriptive file of the Grumelli manuscript can be found in Fiammazzo, 1915: XLIII-XLV, Da' *Codici Veneti di Dante*. He transcribes the *explicit* of the manuscript in which there appears the name of Alberico: “Explicit comentus comedie dantis Aligherij de Florentia compositus per magistrum Iacobum de lalana qui dantus compilavit suum librum sub anno dominice incarnationis 1300 . . . Ego Albericus de Roxiate dictus et utroque iure peritus pergamensis, et si quis defectus foret in translatione maxime in astralogicis teologicis et algorismo veniam peto, et aliquialiter excusset deffectus exempli et ignorantia dictarum scentiarum”.

<sup>57</sup> Fiammazzo, 1895: 28.

<sup>58</sup> “Alberici De Rosate Bergomensis iuris consulti celeberrimi,” *Dictionarium Iuris tam Civilis, quam Canonici*. Venice, MDLXXXI.



## ALLEGORICA

<sup>59</sup> The reference is to the entry *purgatio*: “Purgatio est quadruplex scilicet spiritualis, canonica, vulgaris et purgatorij ignis. Spiritualis purgatio quae est a peccatis, fit per fidem”.

<sup>60</sup> The manuscript (Cassaforte 6, 1) was donated to the Library of the city of Bergamo on 24 May 1872 according to the will of Mr. Fermo Pedrocca Grumelli. The paper manuscript, written in a single column, is composed of 407 folia: the cc. 1 r. - 397 v. contain the commentary to the *Commedia*; the cc. 398 r. - 398 v. the chapter on the son of Dante written in two columns: “Questo canto fece il filiolo di Danti / de la predicta Comedia di dante / e mandello a miser Matheo da Pollentia”; following this cc. 398 v. - 399 v.; written in the same handwriting follows the chapter on Bosone da Gubbio: “Questo canto fece miser Busone da Gobio / il quale parla sopra tuta la Comedia di Dante”; the c. 400 r. contains a series of 52 verses directed toward the jurists. Two styles of writing are used consistently throughout: one style for the verses and another one, slightly less elevated, for the commentary. Almost the entire manuscript is composed of erased folia. The italics employed are mine and underscore the citations. The semi-diplomatic transcription respects the format of the manuscript. There are few interventions, only those necessary for understanding the text and these are clearly marked.

<sup>61</sup> Grumelli ms: *praticis Pa: privatis*.

<sup>62</sup> Grumelli ms: *iudicis*.

<sup>63</sup> *Digesta* 48. I. 5.1. See Krueger and Mommsen, 1886.

<sup>64</sup> *Codex* 9. 40.1. See Krueger, 1884.

<sup>65</sup> *Digesta* I. 18. 3. Grumelli Manuscript: *presidi*.

<sup>66</sup> *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, dist. XXV cap. IV. Que sunt venialia peccata, que post hanc vitam purgantur. Item Gregorius [*Dialog*. lib. IV<sup>144</sup> c. 9]: *Qualis hinc quisque egreditur, talis in iudicio presentatur: sed tamen de quibusdam culpis esse ante iudicium purgationis ignis credendus est, pro eo, quod veritas dicit*. See Friedberg, 94.

<sup>67</sup> I *Cor.*, 3: 13-15.

<sup>68</sup> *Dialog*. lib. IV.

<sup>69</sup> Grumelli ms: with *vnm* (*venalum*) written above.

<sup>70</sup> On the right hand margin of the paper there is a margin note: *de Guillelmo corno*.

## Saint Patrick

<sup>71</sup> Ecclesiastic title, the second of the four lesser orders.

<sup>72</sup> Grumelli ms: *commiscerat*.

<sup>73</sup> Ed. Graesse: *territi*.

<sup>74</sup> On the right hand margin of the paper there is a note: *de quodam nicholao qui intravit purgatorium sancti patricij*.

<sup>75</sup> Luke 18: 13, 38.

<sup>76</sup> Grumelli ms: *aquavit*.

<sup>77</sup> Citation from the electronic data bank of the Dartmouth Dante Project.

<sup>78</sup> For the *Life of Saint Patrick* by Jocelin [of Furnes], see *Acta Sanctorum . . . Tomus secundus*; pp. 536-77. See also Stokes, vol 2: 475-77.

<sup>79</sup> Curley, 1993, 13, where he makes reference in the footnotes to the *Annals of Loch Cé*. See Hennessy, 1-103.

<sup>80</sup> Regarding the fresco, see Castrichini. Also, in a later fresco in the Church of St. Mary in Piano by Loreto Aprutino, the bridge called the “capello”, by reason of its progressive narrowing until becoming as slender as a hair and thus a clear representation of the bridge in the legend of Saint Patrick, is portrayed underground. The bridge serves purgative function, while at the same representing Purgatory as “a part for the whole”. It is located immediately before the celestial city. Below the bridge flows the river of bitterness, in which those unable to make the crossing fall and perish. See Di Fonzo, 1997: 33-34; see also Dell'Orso and Torlontano.

<sup>81</sup> Morgan, 144 -165.

<sup>82</sup> Benvenuto of Imola, commentary to *Purg* I, 100-108 (Dartmouth Dante Project): “locus purgatorii, secundum communem opinionem theologorum, dicitur esse sub terra”.

<sup>83</sup> *Inf.* XI, 82-83. See Mazzoni, 167-209.

<sup>84</sup> See the latest (the third, yet unpublished) edition of the so-called *Ottimo commento*: “Et come di grado in grado si scende al centro dello inferno, così di grado in grado per la detta montagna si sale”. This is material from my doctoral thesis that I am currently preparing for publication by Longo Editore (this will be the second volume). On the latest version of the *Ottimo commento*, see Vandelli, as well as Di Fonzo, 2008 and Spring, 2008.

<sup>85</sup> *Purg.* XVII, 95-96.

## ALLEGORICA

<sup>86</sup> Grumelli ms, c. 140 v.

<sup>87</sup> See *Corpus Iuris Canonici, Decreti Pars I*, Dist. XXV, c. 4: *Que sunt venalia peccata, que post hanc vitam purgantur*. See Friedberg.

<sup>88</sup> Grion, 76.

<sup>89</sup> Hercules is the god of the waters and springs. In the village of St. Thomas of Caramanico, where there is evidence of a continuing presence of the cult of Hercules, there is an altar dedicated to him that includes a sacred well. According to popular tradition, one was required to bathe oneself in the running water. The Christian tradition adopted the practice, attributing thaumaturgical and purifying properties to the water.

<sup>90</sup> Spilling, 174.

<sup>91</sup> In Hanning, p. 120, we learn that the activity of Saint Patrick was already recorded in the *Historia Brittonum*, chap. 50-55. In chapter 55, he is compared to Moses in four ways. Hanning further states that “Patrick is more than a holy man; he is a new Moses, a social hero of the Irish nation-*ecclesia*, which he protects from invasion and saves for eternal life.” He goes on to add: “Patrick’s twelve apostolic works are a parallel to the twelve battles of Arthur, who appears in the next chapter [56] as a holy man in combat with his nations’s enemies.”

<sup>92</sup> Wright, 138.

<sup>93</sup> The *Ugo D’Alvernia*, the first Italian chivalrous poem, written in French-Venetian, is derived perhaps from an older version in French, later discovered and identified by Tobler in the manuscript of Berlin Hamilton 337. See my introduction to Rajna, 1998.

<sup>94</sup> Biblioteca Marucelliana de Firenze Carte Rajna XII K. 44, *Le descrizioni dell’Inferno nei [poemi\*] romanzi cavallereschi* [The transcription is the author’s; the asterisk indicates the word deleted in Rajna’s original]; see Borroni Salvadori.

<sup>95</sup> See also Rajna, 1872, 1888 and 1889.

<sup>96</sup> It is not difficult to see how these documents must precede the period in which Rajna studied the literature of Provence: *Lezioni sulla storia della Letteratura Provenzale*, Scholastic year 1875 - 76. These mark the beginning of a cycle of lectures that were repeated in 1876-77, 1884-85, 1885-86 and later. Paging through the titles of the lectures and the conferences we can see the developments

## Saint Patrick

already present in these papers. See my introduction to Rajna, 1998: 30. For a list of Rajna's lectures, see Borroni Salvadori.

<sup>97</sup> Rajna, document XII K. 44, *Le descrizioni dell'Inferno nei romanzi cavallereschi*. In order to identify the author of the book in question, a certain Giovanni Vincenzo Isterliano, where *Isterliano* stands for the historic Ugo, Rajna analysed two Florentine manuscripts by Magliabechi, which are none other than the Tuscan versions of the manuscript from Padua. The version of the story in the Padua manuscript dates back to the fourteenth century and was written by an Italian in alternate rhyme of decasyllables mixed with alexandrine verses and subsequently translated into the Tuscan vernacular by Andrea of Barberino. For the different editions of the story, see also: Crescini, De Bartholomaeis, Graf, Ludovisi, Möhren, Renier, Stengel 1908 and 1911, Vitale-Brovarone and Zambrini.

<sup>98</sup> Formisano, 28.

<sup>99</sup> Two works have been reliably ascribed to Patrick; see Hanson and Howlett. Regarding Patrick's literary formation, see Dronke.

<sup>100</sup> Bieler, 1968, 400.

<sup>101</sup> Manuscript from the ninth century.

<sup>102</sup> Bieler, 1968, 401

<sup>103</sup> One should not forget the symbolic value of the canonical hours for the temporal order of life.

<sup>104</sup> Vv. 773-782: "Quant il vus metrunt en turment, / Ihesucrist reclamez sovent: par l'apel de cel nun puissant / serrez delivres maintenant. / En quel liu que seiz menez / e quel turment que vus sentez, / le nun Ihesucrist apelez: /gardez que vus ne l'obliëz! (Curley, 1993, 84).

<sup>105</sup> *Luke* 18: 13, 38.

<sup>106</sup> It is the monologic prayer in the name of Jesus Christ that will later be spread in the west, whose primitive form is the *Kyrie eleison* of the oriental liturgy and whose constant repetition dates back to the Fathers of the desert. It is not by chance that the captions placed to explain the frescoes that decorate the interior of the ancient church of the Sanctuary of St. Patrick in Colzate (Vertova) highlight the saint's veneration of the name of Jesus. At the bottom of one of the scenes of the pictorial cycle in which Patrick is depicted in the act of resuscitating the dead is written in Gothic characters: "Qome s.

## ALLEGORICA

Patritio col nome di Iesu resusito molti morti”.

<sup>107</sup> *Inferno*. I, 65.

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