

# Representation of the Damned and the Infernal Guardians in Codex Italicus 1

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## Introduction

The Codex Italicus 1<sup>1</sup>, held at the University Library in Budapest, is one of the oldest Dante codices. The large, folio-sized, handwritten parchments contain a fragmented version of the three *canticas* of the *Commedia* with the omission of more than two thousand verses. It is exceptional for textual as well as visual reasons. Firstly, it contains a unique version of the *Commedia* written in an early Northern Italian dialect that still remains largely unexamined, and that hasn't been placed in the textual tradition of the *Commedia*. The reason for this is that Giorgio Petrocchi, probably without taking a look at the codex<sup>2</sup>, dated the manuscript to a later period, around the 1380s, hence excluding it from the line of the oldest codices that enable textological reconstruction<sup>3</sup>. However, by dating the manuscript forty years earlier, it can be interpreted in a totally new aspect<sup>4</sup>. Secondly,

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<sup>1</sup> The facsimile version of this manuscript was published through the co-operation of the University of Szeged and Verona in 2006: D. ALIGHIERI, *Commedia. Biblioteca Universitaria di Budapest. Codex Italicus 1* [henceforth: *Codex Italicus 1*], 2 vols., I: *Riproduzione fotografica*, II: *Studi e ricerche*, a cura di G.P. Marchi, J. Pál, Verona 2006. Digital version: <https://edit.elte.hu/xmlui/handle/10831/9820?noflip> (Retrieved: April 27, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> N. MÁTYUS, *A budapesti Dante-kódex hasonmás kiadásáról*, «Buksz», 20/3, 2008, pp. 211-5: 215.

<sup>3</sup> D. ALIGHIERI, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, a cura di G. Petrocchi, 4 vols., Milano 1966-67, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> I. BERKOVITS, *A Budapesti Egyetemi Könyvtár Dante-kódexe s a XIII. és XIV. századi velencei miniaturafestészet története*, Budapest 1928, p. 7.

the text is enriched by a series of contemporary illustrations by an unknown master. After analysing the illustrations, I am proposing a new hypothesis of the codex's origins. I also compare the illustrations with the text to identify at which points the illustrator followed the actual text, the postillator's instructions, or traditional medieval iconography.

### 1. *The history of the Codex: hypotheses and debates*

The only certain date in the history of the codex is 1877. In that year, Sultan Abdul Hamid II granted 35 codices to Hungary<sup>5</sup>. The books had presumably belonged to the Corvinian Library of King Matthias and were transported to Constantinople after the Turkish occupation of Buda in the 16th century. The sultan's grant included an illuminated codex of Dante's *Commedia*. However, because the Turks removed the original binding of the volume, it is difficult to say whether the codex really belonged to the Corvinian Library.

It was Ilona Berkovits who first identified the coat of arms on the title page (fig. 11). According to her, the red shield with diagonal silver stripes represents the Venetian Emo family<sup>6</sup>. Berkovits suggests that the manuscript may have arrived to Hungary in 1379, during the war between Genoa and Venice, a conflict in which Louis I, King of Hungary, was also involved. Berkovits assumes that the codex was part of the ransom or was simply looted, when a Hungarian nobleman, Gerardo de Nathlor, imprisoned Pietro Emo di Maffio.

Giorgio Fossaluzza questions Berkovits's version of the volume's arrival to Hungary by challenging key elements of the hypothesis<sup>7</sup>. Fossaluzza points out that the correct reading of the nobleman's name is not Gerardo de Nathlor but Girardo da Manteloro, and that he was German, not Hungarian. At the same time, Fossaluzza accepts the

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<sup>5</sup> The sultan's donation was an acknowledgement for the sympathy of the Hungarian college students for Turkey during the Crimean war. The delivery of the codices in Vienna and the reception of the Turkish delegation is commemorated in a bilingual volume: BÉLA ERŐDI, *Csok Jása! A Török küldöttség látogatásának emlékkönyve / Çok Yaşa! Türk heyetinin ziyareti'nden hatıra kitabı*, Budapest 2001.

<sup>6</sup> BERKOVITS, *A Budapesti*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> G. FOSSALUZZA, *Provenienza del codice, fortuna critica, stile e carattere illustrativo delle miniature*, in *Codex Italicus* 1, II, pp. 51-83.

theory of the Emo coat of arms and the Corvinian origins of the codex. Based on these two findings, he proposes an alternative hypothesis of the book's arrival to Hungary. According to Fossaluzza, a member of the Emo family did have Hungarian royal connections: Giovanni Emo visited the Kingdom of Hungary several times as a Venetian ambassador (which is also documented in Antonio Bonfini's chronicles). Fossaluzza believes that Giovanni, during his visits, sent a copy of Dante's *Commedia* «directly into the hands of Matthias Corvinus, perhaps as a tribute»<sup>8</sup>. Mátyus opposes Fossaluzza by pointing out that it is unlikely that the ambassador would give one of the greatest sovereigns of the time a manuscript that, although precious and beautiful, was still incomplete and *mutilus*<sup>9</sup>.

Prokopp<sup>10</sup> challenges Berkovits's hypothesis by assuming that the coat of arms of the first owner was probably lost with the original binding of the codex. Prokopp concludes that since the coat of arms was inserted later in the front-page ornamentation, it was not the Emo family that commissioned the codex<sup>11</sup>. Prokopp argues this point by highlighting the connections between the Hungarian Angevin court and Dante. In fact, Dante nurtured «decidedly negative feelings about the House of Anjou», of which «the only exception was Charles Martel (son of Maria of Hungary and titular king of Hungary) and his descendants»<sup>12</sup>. This is a convincing argument, even if it implies giving up the only trace we thought was indicating the commissioner of Codex Italicus 1.

The two Angevin kings, Charles I of Hungary (also known as Charles Robert or Caroberto in Italian) and Louis I the Great, respectively son and grandson of Charles Martel, rulers of Hungary and legitimate heirs to the throne of the Kingdom of Naples, were ruling sovereigns of the time. Their kingdom was envisioned by Dante in these words: «Oh beata Ungheria se non si lascia / più malmenare» (*Pd.* XIX 142-3). Some of the most valuable illuminated codices of fourteenth-century Hungary can be traced back to the courts of Charles Robert and

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> MÁTYUS, *A budapesti*, p. 215.

<sup>10</sup> M. PROKOPP, *Il codice trecentesco della Commedia nella Biblioteca Universitaria di Budapest. Storia e fortuna critica*, in *Codex Italicus 1, II*, pp. 41-8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> J. PÁL, *L'Ungheria in Dante e la fortuna di Dante in Ungheria*, in *Codex Italicus 1, II*, p. 5.

Louis I the Great. Examples include the *Hungarian Anjou Legendary* (probably assembled in 1330 in the royal workshop, illustrated by a Bolognese master<sup>13</sup>, today found mostly at the Vatican Apostolic Library<sup>14</sup>); the *Chronicon Pictum* (dated to the 1360s, today found at the Széchényi National Library in Budapest); and the Bible of Hungarian nobleman Demeter Néksej-Lipócz.

Prokopp proposes that «the text of the *Commedia* in Venetian dialect may have been Venice's gift to the Angevin king of Hungary and its miniatures may have been painted in the royal workshop of Hungary in the 1330s»<sup>15</sup>. Dating the illustrations of the codex to the 1330s goes against the findings of other scholars. The influence of the 1345 *Pala Feriale* by Paolo Veneziano, supported by Mariani Canova<sup>16</sup>, and some other works attributed to the same master by Berkovits, Katzenstein<sup>17</sup> and Fossaluzza, suggest the 1340s as the date of creation for the illustrations. We do not know much of the royal workshop of Hungary in those years, while the miniatures of Codex Italicus 1 – although their anonymous master cannot be connected to a specific workshop – reveal a strong influence by miniaturists operating in Bologna, Venice and Padua.

Consequently, it is reasonable to assume a connection between Codex Italicus 1 and the Angevin court in Hungary. It is especially likely if we consider the court's other commissions of illuminated codices and their probable interest in Dante based on the poet's favourable opinion with this branch of the dynasty.

Two precious examples of the Angevin-related commissions are *Constitutiones Clementis V* (Bibl. Cap. di Padova, ms. A 25) and

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<sup>13</sup> S. L'ENGLE, s.v. *Maestro del Leggendario Angioino Ungherese*, in *Dizionario biografico dei miniatori italiani. Secoli IX-XVI*, a cura di M. Bollati, prefazione di M. Boskovits, Milano 2004, pp. 429-32.

<sup>14</sup> The original codex is now held in various locations: Rome, BAV, Vat. Lat. 8541; New York, Pierp. Morgan Lib., 360 a-c; St. Petersburg, Hermitage, Dep. of the drawings, 16930-4.

<sup>15</sup> M. PROKOPP, *Le illustrazioni del codice di Dante di Budapest*, in «*Ritrar parlando il bel*». *Tanulmányok Király Erzsébet tiszteletére*, szerk. E. Szegedi, D. Falvay, Budapest 2011, p. 265.

<sup>16</sup> G. MARIANI CANOVA, *La miniatura veneta del Trecento tra Padova e Venezia*, in *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Trecento*, a cura di M. Lucco, Milano 1992, p. 406.

<sup>17</sup> R. KATZENSTEIN, *Three Liturgical Manuscripts from San Marco. Art and Patronage in Mid-Trecento Venice*, PhD diss., Harvard University 1987.

*Liber sextus Decretalium Bonifacii VIII* (Bibl. Cap. di Padova, ms. A 24). Illuminated by the same artist, the so called *Illustrator*<sup>18</sup>, both volumes were commissioned by Miklós Vásári in 1343, then provost at Esztergom (Strigonium), and companion of Elizabeth of Poland (Queen consort of Hungary as Charles Robert's wife) on her visit to Naples. Vásári was an eminent politician and advisor in the Angevin courts, and often a delegate representing royal interests on various occasions with the pope. Vásári was also entrusted with the preparations for the Italian military campaign of Louis I the Great.

Another notable member of the Elizabethan entourage of 1343 was Miklós Dörögdi, bishop of Eger, who, during his studies, became rector of the *ultramontani* students at the University of Bologna<sup>19</sup>. It is very likely that he was involved in the commission of Demeter Nekcsei-Lipócz's Bible, an ornate volume illustrated by a Bolognese workshop before 1338 and produced for the chancellor of Charles Robert.

We are therefore acquainted with two great cultural figures linked to the Hungarian Angevin court, who, after having studied in Northern Italy, were delegated by the kings, and took part in commissioning valuable illustrated codices in these places. However, the incompleteness of Codex Italicus 1 makes it unlikely that it was given to the royal library as a gift or was a result of a completed commission. Prokopp<sup>20</sup> assumes that the illuminator's work was interrupted by the death of Charles Robert in 1342 or the murder of Charles' son, Andrew, in Antwerp in 1345, or with the wars in the following years between Hungary and Naples. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that the codex was taken as spoils of war by the Hungarians during the first military campaign by Louis I the Great against Naples, which crossed the Veneto from Udine to Padua<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> *Bibliotheca Hungarica. Kódexek és nyomtatott könyvek Magyarországon 1526 előtt*, ed. Cs. Csapodi, K. Csapodiné Gárdonyi, Budapest 1993, pp. 135-6.

<sup>19</sup> As recorded in a fourteenth-century codex containing the statutes of the University of Bologna, now held in Bratislava (*Bibliotheca Hungarica*, 2401).

<sup>20</sup> PROKOPP, *Il codice*, p. 47.

<sup>21</sup> This opinion was mentioned earlier by I. BERKOVITS, *Un codice dantesco nella Biblioteca della R. università di Budapest*, «Corvina», 19-20, 1930, p. 86.

2. *The geographical and chronological location of the miniatures (hypotheses and doubts) and other works attributed to the same master*

It was Berkovits who identified the style, the date, and the birth-place of the miniatures<sup>22</sup>. She traced them back to the Venetian court of Doge Andrea Dandolo around 1345, based on significant stylistic similarities between the decoration of the opening pages of the cantos and the ones found in two 1343 codices of the Doge (*Promissione dogale di Andrea Dandolo e Capitolare dei consiglieri ducali*, preserved in Venice, Archivio di Stato, Sala Diplomatica, no 4<sup>23</sup> and the *Promissione del doge Andrea Dandolo*, held in Venice, Museo Correr, mss. III, no 326). Berkovits notes that the master's style in the Codex Italicus 1 is «closely connected to the Bolognese school», adding that «he must have been trained at the workshop of a Bolognese miniaturist who had moved to Venice». An examination of the illustrator's style, apart from some individual traits, demonstrates «its direct descent from Bolognese miniatures»<sup>24</sup>.

Berkovits' arguments are still almost unanimously accepted by art historians today. However, the objections of Mária Prokopp are also legitimate. As she points out, the discussion about the framing of the miniatures of the Dante codex should be resumed. Prokopp<sup>25</sup> states that the similarity between the ornamental motifs that frame the title pages of the Dante codex and the ones in the codices of Doge Andrea Dandolo is insufficient for the attribution of the miniatures. She also proposes an extensive investigation of the figurative styles.

Katzenstein, in her work on three early fourteenth-century Venetian liturgical codices, attributes the *Epistolary* of the Basilica Marciana to the same miniaturist due to the similarities of the ornamental motifs. Katzenstein also includes into the same *corpus* four miniatures and a fragment representing the *Life of St. John the Baptist* in the Wildenstein Collection and the codex *Vita gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae* of the Bodleian Library of Oxford<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, Mariani

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<sup>22</sup> BERKOVITS, *A Budapesti*, pp. 44-7.

<sup>23</sup> BERKOVITS, *Un codice*, pp. 91-2, 96.

<sup>24</sup> The *Promissione dogale di Andrea Dandolo* and the *Capitolare dei consiglieri ducali*: exhibited in the Margherita Hall of the State Archives were lost during World War II (after 1940).

<sup>25</sup> PROKOPP, *Le illustrazioni*, p. 264.

<sup>26</sup> KATZENSTEIN, *Three Liturgical*, pp. 131-2, 182.

Canova<sup>27</sup> attributes to this same master the *Capitulare nauticum* of Doge Andrea Dandolo, dated *post*-1346.

Fossaluzza accepts that the codex was made in a Venetian workshop and discusses its relations with Bolognese and Paduan miniatures, especially the works of three masters: the Master of 1328, the Illustrator, and the Master of the Corals A, B, and M in the Antoniana Library of Padua<sup>28</sup>. Analysing the colorization and the figurative patterns in the miniatures of this *corpus* of codices, Fossaluzza<sup>29</sup> distinguishes several groups. He concludes that the Dante codex of Budapest constitutes a nucleus, together with Dandolo's *Epistolary*, the lost *Promission* and the miniatures of the Wildenstein Collection, in which «one can confirm the identity of a *manus* (or workshop)». The initial ornaments and miniatures of these volumes are characterized by the Bolognese style and are less influenced by the works of Paolo Veneziano than the other miniatures of the *corpus*. As Fossaluzza points out, the artist in the Codex Italicus «clearly betrays his dependence on the Bolognese school, in particular his connection to the Master of 1328, the Illustrator, and their Paduan activity, as well as to the master who distils their teaching into the miniatures of the Paduan Antiphony»<sup>30</sup>.

We can follow Prokopp's proposition<sup>31</sup> to further analyze the framing of the miniatures in the Codex Italicus 1 if we assume that the miniaturist was closer to these Bolognese and Paduan masters. The linguistic features of the Codex Italicus 1 hint at a Venetian *scriptorium*. The decorations and the miniatures, apparently by the same hand that illustrated some of the codices from the court of Doge Andrea Dandolo, suggest that the miniaturist was active in the City of Canals in this period. They do not prove however, that he came from that city, nor that he worked there for a longer period of time. The activity of the master of the Codex Italicus 1 does not fit organically into the pattern of fourteenth-century Venetian miniatures, but the evolution of the manuscript becomes evident by a comparison with the codices of Bologna and Padua. The miniatures of a contemporary

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<sup>27</sup> G. MARIANI CANOVA, *La miniatura a Venezia dal Medioevo al Rinascimento*, in *Storia di Venezia. Temi. L'Arte*, a cura di R. Pallucchini, Roma 1995, pp. 769-843.

<sup>28</sup> This influence was revealed also by PALLUCCHINI, *La pittura veneziana del Trecento*, Venezia-Roma 1964, p. 85 and KATZENSTEIN, *Three Liturgical*, pp. 165-6.

<sup>29</sup> FOSSALUZZA, *Provenienza del codice*, pp. 64-5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>31</sup> PROKOPP, *Le illustrazioni*, p. 264.

codex (Bartolomeo di San Concordio, *Summa de Casibus conscentiae*, Ms. 618 of the University Library of Padova<sup>32</sup>) deserve careful scientific examination as they bear great resemblance to the ornamentation and figural patterns in Codex Italicus 1 (especially the initial with the hanged thief on the folio 128r).

The Illustrator probably started his career at the workshop of the Master of 1328, and both worked on Dante codices. The Master of the Paduan Antiphonary, active in Padua and Bologna in the first half of the fourteenth century, is credited with the British Library's *Commedia*, coming from a north-eastern tradition of scribes and miniaturists in Bologna or Padua. While we can assume that the skillset of these miniaturists included the illumination of Dante codices, we are not aware of any *Commedia* codices that were illustrated in Venice in the first half of the fourteenth century. Moreover, the Codex Italicus 1 has much in common stylistically with Ms. Egerton 943<sup>33</sup>, especially when it comes to the representations of Dante and Virgil. The colour of Dante's garment and cap in the two codices is identical, although in the Budapest codex the garment's pink varies between a lighter and a darker tone. Virgil's collar and the ermine fur of his cap are also remarkably similar in the two volumes.

The incomplete state of the codex informs us about the workshops' methods and workflow in that time: some instructions for the illustrator are still readable above the vignettes and in the spaces left for them. However, the role and the identity of the *postillator* is still unclear. Was he the same person as the miniaturist, and these instructions demonstrate his knowledge of Dante's text, as Berkovits<sup>34</sup> thinks? Or did somebody else include them to guide the illustrator who was not familiar with the text, as Volkmann and Meiss suggest<sup>35</sup>? The

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<sup>32</sup> About the codex see: *La bellezza nei libri. Cultura e devozione nei codici miniati della Biblioteca Universitaria di Padova*, [Catalogo della mostra] a cura di C. Ponchia, Padova, 2017, pp. 160-4.

<sup>33</sup> Already noticed in P. BRIEGER, *Pictorial Commentaries to the Commedia*, in P. BRIEGER, M. MEISS, C.S. SINGLETON, *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy*, 2 vols., Princeton 1969, I, p. 92 and A. PEGORETTI, *Indagine su un codice dantesco. La Commedia Egerton 943 della British Library*, Pisa 2014, p. 151.

<sup>34</sup> BERKOVITS, *A Budapesti*, p. 36.

<sup>35</sup> L. VOLKMANN, *Iconografia dantesca. Die bildlichen Darstellungen zur Göttliche Komödie*, Leipzig 1897, p. 17; M. MEISS, *The Smiling Pages*, in *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy*, I, p. 45.



instructions' dialectal characteristics, revealed by Pellegrini, indicate the Veneto as the geographical area – without defining a more precise location. Pellegrini lists some clues he could trace back to the Paduan area, and also points out the metathetic form *aille*, dominantly present in Emilia, but also “found in some Venetian neighbourhoods”<sup>36</sup>. Since the miniatures represent a much deeper knowledge of the text than the little knowledge that we can deduce from the instructions, we have reason to reject the theory of Volkmann and Meiss. Still, we cannot fully reject Mátyus<sup>37</sup> who thinks the illustrator could have also used the help of verbal explanation for his work.

### 3. *Representation of the Damned and the Infernal Guardians in Codex Italicus 1*

All the miniatures in the Dante codex of Budapest are roughly the same size, except the images of Lucifer, which are two and a half times larger than the others. The background is always dark blue with white lines, a typical feature of Bolognese miniatures of the time, also found in the illumination of the Dante Egerton. The frames are red, with the exception of the first two miniatures that have a green frame at the top and the sides. At the bottom, however, the vignette is always smudged by a yellowish-ochre rocky terrain. Some stereotypical solutions – such as the representation of the sleeping Dante in the *incipit* of the *Inferno*, which we find depicted in the exact same way at the beginning of the Holkham manuscript<sup>38</sup> – let us to conclude that «there was a clear knowledge of the first iconographic tradition of the *Commedia*»<sup>39</sup>.

There is a peculiar feature that distinguishes the Budapest codex from the other illuminated Dante codices. The artist painted the souls in Hell in red which, as Forte<sup>40</sup> claims, «bears a symbolic reference to

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<sup>36</sup> P. PELLEGRINI, *Le istruzioni per il miniatore. Annotazioni linguistiche*, in *Codex Italicus 1*, II, p. 88.

<sup>37</sup> MÁTYUS, *A budapesti*, p. 215.

<sup>38</sup> Holkham Hall, misc. 48. Oxford, Bodleian Library, c. 1r.

<sup>39</sup> L. BATTAGLIA RICCI, *Testo e immagini in alcuni manoscritti illustrati della Commedia: le pagine d'apertura*, in *Studi offerti a Luigi Blasucci*, a cura di L. Lugnani, M. Santagata, A. Stussi, Lucca 1996, pp. 23-49.

<sup>40</sup> A. FORTE, *Miniature come glosse. I guardiani di Inf. XII nei codici trecenteschi della Commedia*, relazione orale tenuta in occasione di *Alma Dante. Seminario dan-*

their condition of being damned souls». This is remarkable because souls are traditionally painted in flesh colour, with the exception of the suspended souls, the souls trapped in the ice of the Cocytus, the characters of earthly scenes, and Farinata, represented here as a grey skeleton.

While the unbaptised but worthy heathens are often depicted as clothed in the miniatures, the representation of Farinata is strangely unique. By painting Farinata as a skeleton, the illustrator is closely following the text and attempts to be realistic: a character emerging from the grave must bear the marks of decomposition.

### 3.1. *Charon and Minos*

Dante's representation of Charon in Canto III of *Inferno* is contradictory: reading only line 83 («un vechio bianco per antico pelo», Cod. It. 1, c. 3r), one would imagine a respectable, elderly Cato-like character, only to find out in line 109 that he is a «dimonio» and in line 99 his fiery eyes («intorno ali-ochi avea di fiamme rote», c. 3v) reinforce his demonic outlook again. Thus, it is hardly surprising that in fourteenth-century Dante codices – with the exceptions of the Yates-Thompson 36<sup>41</sup>, the Egerton 943, c. 7v, Altona<sup>42</sup> and the Dante Marciana<sup>43</sup> – Charon is never represented in accordance with the text: some illustrators (including the artists of the Chantilly manuscript) depict him as a half human, half diabolic freak, whereas the rest, including Codex Italicus 1, favour his traditional devilish depiction. The Budapest Codex shows Charon twice, and not only do the two representations show a departure from Dante's text, but are also remarkably different from each other. One may even doubt whether the miniaturist actually knew he was supposed to depict the same character. In the miniature on 3v, Charon is tall, winged and without ears (fig. 12), while on the other side of the leaf there is a short figure without wings, with large ears and a small flame in the loin area (fig. 13).

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*tesco 2015* (Alma Mater Studiorum-Università degli studi di Bologna, 3-4 giugno 2015).

<sup>41</sup> London, B.M. Yates-Thompson 36, 3r.

<sup>42</sup> Schulbibliothek des Christianeums, ms. N.2. On Dante's Charon and Flegias see Alessandra Forte's article: «A l'altra riva». *I traghettatori infernali da Virgilio alla ricezione scritta e figurata della Commedia*, in *La letteratura italiana e le arti*, Atti del XX congresso dell'Adi (Napoli, 7-10 settembre 2016), a cura di L. Battistini *et al.*, [consulabile online: http://www.italianisti.it/upload/userfiles/files/Forte.pdf](http://www.italianisti.it/upload/userfiles/files/Forte.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Venice, National Marciana Library, ms. It. IX, 276, c. 2v.

In the Codex Italicus 1 Minos' representation differs from the description found in Dante's text and from the representations in other early codices as well. (fig. 14) According to the *Inferno*, Minos is not just one demon among many, but a terrifying judge too. Apart from a tail, the poet did not provide him with other animalistic features. In the early codices as a rule, Minos sits enthroned, and although he is represented as a devil, «he always maintains something of the dignity of the impartial judge, and the tail is usually coiled around his body»<sup>44</sup>.

In the Codex Italicus 1, Minos becomes one among all the other, virtually identical, typical, black diabolic figures, forfeiting all his royal and even human traits. The only distinctive feature suggesting some familiarity with the text is his long black twisting tail. His behaviour however – poking sinners with a fork – evokes a hellish scene without any justification from the text. The miniature is most closely linked to the Egerton's Minos<sup>45</sup>: the particularity of this codex is that, in Charon's case, it is a classic depiction of Minos as a bird-legged hairy devil.

### 3.2. *The avaricious and the prodigal: exceptional imagery*

Unparalleled in other illuminated codices, scholars still cannot explain unanimously the miniature that represents the torments of the avaricious and the prodigal in Canto VII of *Inferno*. (fig. 15). As a clear departure from the text, the damned are assembled around a table on which irregular rows of circles are arranged, which, according to Berkovits<sup>46</sup>, are gold coins, whereas in Brieger<sup>47</sup>, pebble stones. «Rather than a hellish punishment, the scene makes us think of a backgammon game among friends», Ponchia<sup>48</sup> observes, claiming that these circles may be regarded as weights on a pair of scales, in reference to the lack of balance in the management of wealth, a common characteristic of the avaricious and the prodigal. This representation demonstrates unfamiliarity with the text, or at least with the traditional interpretation of verse 27 in the Canto: «uoltando pesi per forza di pop(p)» (c. 6v). Instead of considering the miniature as an illustration of the

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<sup>44</sup> P. BRIEGER, *Analysis of the Illustrations by Canto*, in *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy*, I, p. 122.

<sup>45</sup> London, B.M.Egerton 943, c. 10r.

<sup>46</sup> BERKOVITS, *A Budapesti*, p. 36.

<sup>47</sup> BRIEGER, *Analysis of the Illustrations*, p. 124.

<sup>48</sup> C. PONCHIA, *Frammenti dell'aldilà. Miniature trecentesche della Divina Commedia*, Padova 2015, p. 114.

punishment, I suggest interpreting it as a depiction of sin: on the left there may be the (few) prodigal with serene faces, while on the right we see the avaricious, more frustrated and numerous.

### 3.3. *The Depiction of Minotaur and the Centaurs*

*Canto* XII of the *Inferno* in the Codex Italicus 1, the last *canto* containing Dante's text without gaps, is illustrated with four vignettes. This is an unusually high number, considering that usually two or three vignettes illustrate the other cantos of the codex. Two of these four are particularly interesting from an iconographical aspect. The Budapest Minotaur is the only representation of the mythological monster with a human body and a taurine head in the fourteenth to fifteenth century illuminated manuscripts of the *Commedia*. (fig. 16) All the other miniaturists of that time – inspired, as Mazzucchi surmises, «perhaps by the presence of the centaurs in the same *Canto*, whose morphology did not leave any doubt»<sup>49</sup> – chose to depict him with a human torso and the lower body of a beast. While «classic iconography represents the Minotaur almost exclusively with the head of a bull and the body of a man»<sup>50</sup>, in the Middle Ages this mythological creature was known both from Ovid's description in the *Ars amatoria* («semibovemque virum semivirumque bovem» II, 24) and from Isidore's (*Etym.* XI, iii, 9), whence we also learn which part he was human and which taurine. The text of the *Canto* does not reveal Dante's conception of the Minotaur, nor do the fourteenth-century commentaries to the *Commedia* propose a unanimous interpretation that would allow for its reconstruction. Our miniaturist, unlike those who prepared the other Dante codices, chose a surprising solution especially in light of the fact that the Budapest codex «does not stand out at all for its greater adherence to classical sources. In the case of the other mythological-infernal guardians, it prefers a 'medieval' solution, essentially depicting them as devils, rather than philologically more correct creatures»<sup>51</sup> as Ponchia noted. The indication of the

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<sup>49</sup> A. MAZZUCCHI, «*Quegli che si lascion condurre dai loro sfrenati e bestiali appetiti a usare violenza [...] diventon monstri*». *Lettura del canto XII dell'Inferno*, «*Rivista di studi danteschi*», 4/2, 2004, p. 309.

<sup>50</sup> A. FORTE, *La rappresentazione del Minotauro dantesco nei manoscritti trecenteschi della Commedia tra commento scritto e commento figurato*, «*L'Alighieri*», 44, 2014, p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> PONCHIA, *Frammenti*, p. 122.

anonymous postillator left on the outline of the vignette – which could clarify whether it was the miniaturist's choice – is now unreadable.

Centaur, the other mythological creatures of the *Canto*, were well-known in the Middle Ages and the codex illustrators could simply copy them from bestiaries. As Brieger<sup>52</sup> stated, only the master of the Chantilly codex followed classical examples; all the other Dante illustrators in the fourteenth century followed medieval types. Strangely enough, the miniaturist of the Hungarian Dante codex – just like those of the manuscript Egerton 943 and of the Filippino Codex of the Biblioteca Oratoriana dei Girolamini in Naples – does not follow standard iconography; instead, he draws the centaurs as naked human souls, without any sign of a hybrid nature. (fig. 17) This is due to the mythographers' way of rationalizing the myth of centaurs, which is also attested (as Mazzucchi<sup>53</sup> pointed out) by a gloss of the *Ottimo Commento* speaking of «cento cavalieri [...] li quali come prima furono veduti dalla gente grossa essere a cavallo, stimarono che fusse uno animale l'uomo e il cavallo». In the Codex Italicus 1, this solution undoubtedly reflects the will of the postillator who wrote on the vignette: «tri uomini nudi cu(m) iii c(or)one [...] cadau(n) [...] tira un arco» (c. 11r), thus depicting the centaurs as simple archers. Following his instructions, the miniaturist of the Budapest manuscript depicted the centaurs with crowns, probably confusing them with the tyrants, a group of damned souls who suffer in boiling blood in the Phlegethon.

The last two vignettes of the *Canto* also imply a lack of knowledge of the text: the place where centaurs are supposed to punish damned souls is filled with black devils tormenting sinners in furnaces.

#### 3.4. *The illustrations to Cantos XXIV-XXV and XXIX-XXX of the Inferno*

The landscape of the seventh *bolgia* (the circular ditch full of snakes and reptiles and evocative of the Libyan desert), as well as the punishment of thieves – that is, the meticulously described metamorphoses constituting the main narrative stages of *Cantos XXIV-XXV* – inspired detailed representations, faithful to the text in almost every single manuscript of the *Commedia*. The illustrator of the Budapest codex, however, keeps only certain elements of Dante's text and replaces the rest with the usual *topoi* of medieval imagery of hell. In

<sup>52</sup> BRIEGER, *Pictorial Commentaries to the Commedia*, p. 95.

<sup>53</sup> MAZZUCCHI, «*Quegli che si lascion condurre*», pp. 318-9.

the only vignette that decorates the *Cantos* of the thieves, one immediately notices the absence of a characteristic feature of the *bolgia*, namely, the heaps of innumerable snakes that incited fear in Dante the traveller. The reader is perplexed by seeing flames licking the two souls. The element of the flame is present in most of the miniatures of the *Inferno* in the Codex Italicus 1, based on other medieval representations of hell. This would be justified in the case of Vanni Fucci, since he is pierced by a snake, catches fire and when he falls to the ground, becomes entirely ash (*Inf.* XXIV, 97-105). However, the text does not explain why another soul is also tormented by fire.

We can recognize Vanni Fucci with his obscene gesture of «figs» («fiche») at Dante, depicted by our illustrator with his right hand raised, instead of both hands, pointing to the sky with his index finger. Generally, however, as early as in thirteenth-century miniatures, the gesture of the «figs» was represented as a clenched fist with the thumb placed between the index and the middle fingers<sup>54</sup>.

Certain surprising characteristics of the imagery can be attributed to the version of Dante's text in Codex Italicus 1. The copyist decided to omit verses 79-90 of *Canto* XXIV containing the description of the *bolgia* which, according to Dante, even exceeds the Libyan desert by number and variety of snakes. *Canto* XXV is even less complete in the Budapest version: almost half of Dante's text is missing. The metamorphosis narratives are also omitted, which were superbly represented in other codices<sup>55</sup>. Verses 38-79 are also missing. In this part, Dante describes how the body of Agnello dei Brunelleschi merges with the body of a six-foot lizard to form a single hybrid face, which looks like two entities and none at the same time. The twenty tercets describing the third metamorphosis – a double metamorphosis caused by a burning serpent piercing the navel of Buoso Donati<sup>56</sup> – are also missing.

The key elements of these two *Cantos* – snakes and transformations – cannot be deciphered from the incomplete version of Codex

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<sup>54</sup> E.g. Cod. Pal. 313, c. 59r, the manuscript Filippino c. 60v, London Additional 19587, c. 42r, Holkham misc. 48, p. 38. See: A. MAZZUCCHI, *Le «fiche» di Vanni Fucci* (*Inf.* XXV 1-3). *Il contributo dell'iconografia a una disputa recente*, «Rivista di studi danteschi», 1/2, 2001, pp. 302-15.

<sup>55</sup> Chantilly, Musée Condé 597, c. 169v and Vatican Library, ms. Urb. Lat. 365, c. 66v.

<sup>56</sup> Which would render speechless the poets of ancient metamorphoses, Lucan and Ovid.

Italicus 1. Therefore, the miniature only shows the metamorphosis of the only character named here: Vanni Fucci's metamorphosis.

When illustrating the falsifiers suffering from leprosy and/or scabies – scratching, taking off «la scabia» that is, the desquamation of the skin, with their nails – while Capocchio is called «l'altro leproso» the illustrator of the Codex Italicus seems to simplify or misunderstand their punishment by omitting the signs of the disease on the skin. Instead, while all the other thirteenth to fourteenth-century codices depict the stains generally caused by leprosy<sup>57</sup>, which are not mentioned in the text, the illustrator of our manuscript is perfectly in line with *Canto XXIX* of the *Inferno*, depicting the souls scratching, as described in verses 79-81 of the codex version «ciascu(n) menava presto-l morso / de-l-u(n)ghie sopra se dila-gra(n) rabia / del picichor, che-non-a piu socorso» (c. 23v). In addition, the figure on the right is represented in the act of «dismagliarsi» (shedding his skin) aimed to remove the scab with his nails, as described in the following verse: «Chosi traeva(n) çiu l'o(n)ghie la scabia». Although Dante's text is largely missing, the Codex's text is remarkably consistent and makes clear the author's idea of the pain suffered by the falsifiers.

The illustrations to *Cantos XXIV* and *XXIX* of the *Inferno*, belying the statements of Volkmann and Meiss about a supposedly ignorant illustrator, demonstrate the familiarity of the artist with the text – obviously not with the one established by Petrocchi, but the version present in the Codex Italicus 1.

### 3.5. *The two miniatures of Lucifer*

Dante's description of Lucifer is rather detailed and leaves almost nothing to the reader's imagination. The first part of the *Canto* lists his visual features, which occupies no less than ten tercets: two about his exceptional size and one about his ugliness; three about his three faces; two about his wings; one about the way he cries; and finally, the last tercet describes his mouth as he is chewing sinners. The second part of the *Canto* describes the two poets' movement about Lucifer's body from the centre of the Earth to Purgatory.

In the Codex Italicus 1, these scenes are visualized by the two unusually large miniatures. This way the artist expresses the objective greatness of Satan, described in two tercets of the *Canto* (verses 28-33), and

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<sup>57</sup> London, B.M. Yates Thompson 36, c. 53r, Chantilly, Musée Condé 597, c. 199v, Holkham misc. 48, p. 4.

this way he also hints at the importance of this figure compared to the other guardians and characters of hell. The remarkably larger size of these illustrations may as well be the product of an editorial error. Apparently at the end of the *Cantica*, the empty space is larger than a folio, while between *Purgatory* and *Paradise* there is only a single blank page. There is, however, no representation of the three colours of Lucifer's three heads, which is due to the decision of the copyist to shorten the description of this tercet.

Apart from a hairy body and bat-like wings, Dante's description of Lucifer lacks animalistic features. Lucifer and the minor devils are traditionally horned, have forked tails and sometimes even forked feet, claws, and beaks – as they are seen in almost all frescoes and mosaics of the time. The brutish attributes of Lucifer are very vivid in Dante's codices and have adopted several traditional patterns or drawn on the personal imagination of the illustrators. Lucifer is frequently depicted with horns in the Dante codices. In the Lombardian codex B.R. 39 of the B. Nazionale of Firenze<sup>58</sup>, he sports bird claws too. In the Chantilly manuscript<sup>59</sup>, however, a snake tail is rolling in front of him. The depiction of Lucifer in the Vatican 4776, reminds us of Cerberus: two dogheads that look in opposite directions. The Neapolitan codex (c. 119r), which dates back to about 1370, represents the feet of Lucifer in a unique way: they have the shape of a fish tail divided into two, ending in curved claws.

The illustrator of our codex, on the other hand, drawing on the artistic representations of the time, depicts Lucifer with only a single additional, animal-like attribute compared to his description in the text, namely, the heads of a dragon. (fig. 18) Two of Lucifer's three faces in both miniatures were smudged and thus blurred, probably by a pious reader. It is a departure from the text that, in the Budapest codex, it is Dante and not Virgil who first gets out of hell, thus granting Dante the role of the leader. The illustrator also introduces another element missing in Dante's description, namely, a large crown that covers all three heads, probably upon the influence of the first verse of the *Canto*: («<V>Esila regis prodeu(n)t inferni», and of the verse: «lo imperador dil doloroso regno», c. 26v).

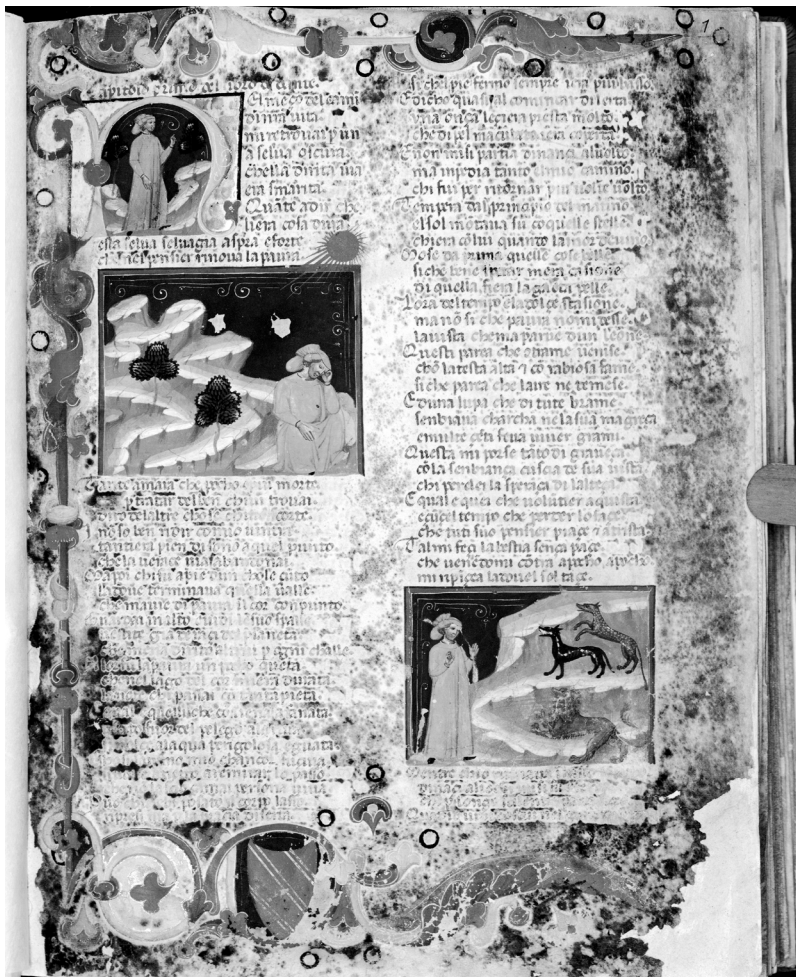
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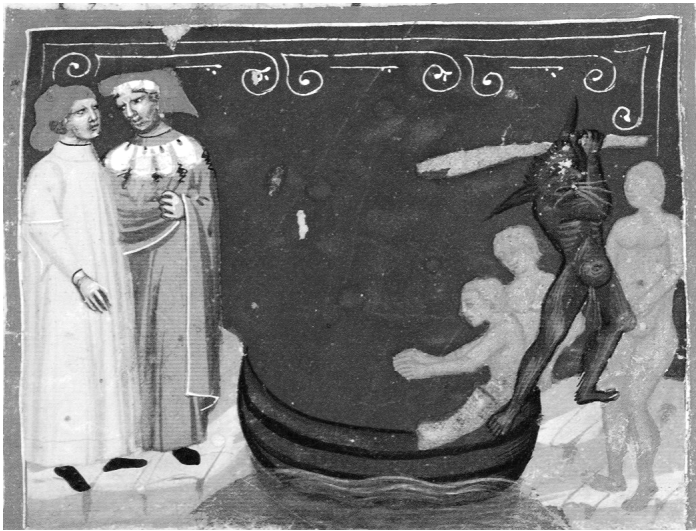
<sup>58</sup> F. 141r. Dating back to around 1400.

<sup>59</sup> Musée Condé 597, c. 231r.



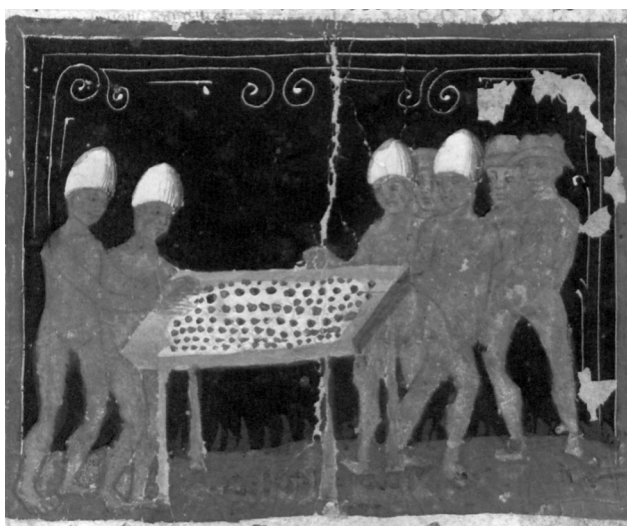
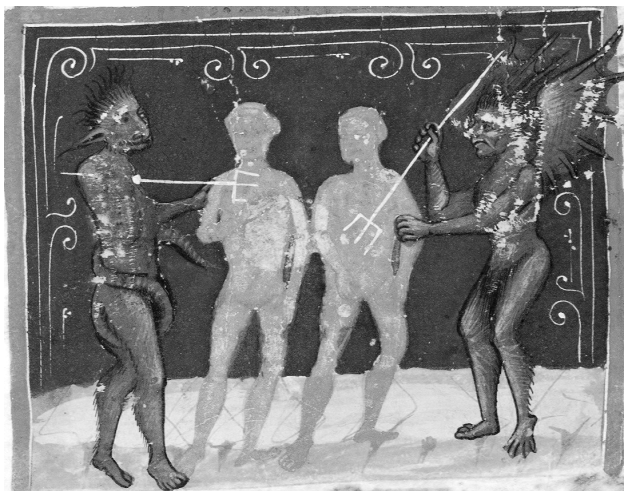


11. Budapest, ELTE University Library, ms. Cod. It. 1, f. 1r (If1).



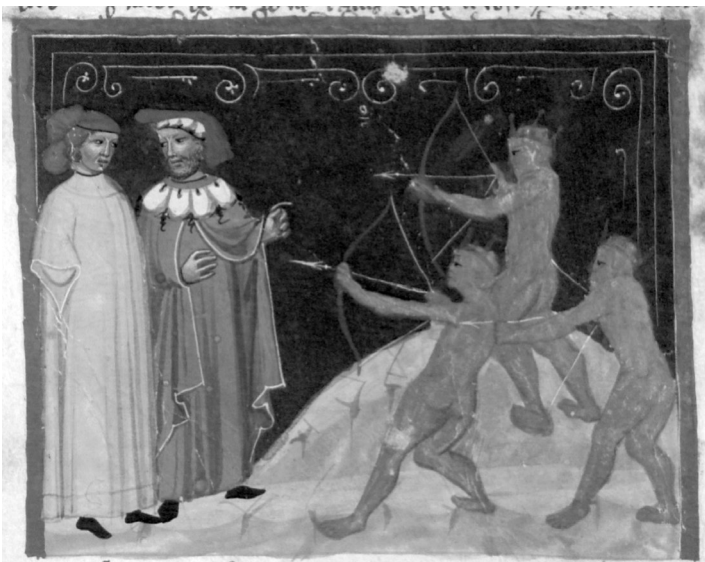
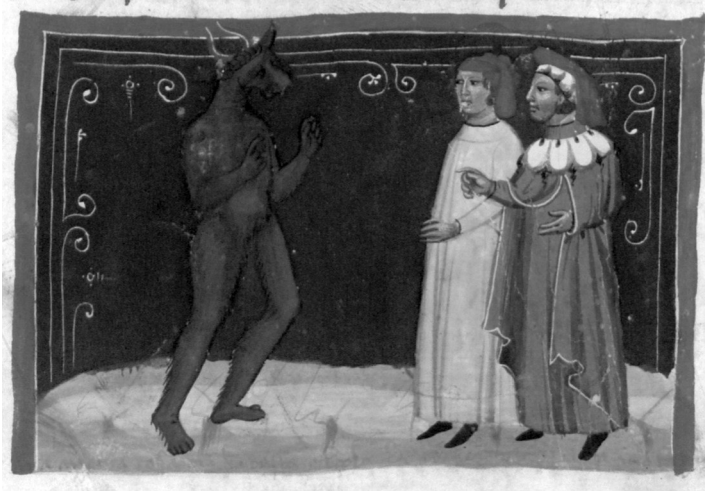
12. Budapest, ELTE University Library, ms. Cod. It. 1, f. 3r (*If* III).

13. Budapest, ELTE University Library, ms. Cod. It. 1, f. 3v (*If* III).



14. Budapest, ELTE University Library, ms. Cod. It. 1, f. 4v (*If*V).

15. Budapest, ELTE University Library, ms. Cod. It. 1, f. 6v (*If*VII).



16. Budapest, ELTE University Library, ms. Cod. It. 1, f. 10v (*If* XII).

17. Budapest, ELTE University Library, ms. Cod. It. 1, f. 11r (*If* XII).





18. Budapest, ELTE University Library, ms. Cod. It. 1, f. 27r (*If* XXXIV).