

ORLANDO, DONALD, AND DYLAN DOG

TWO COMIC BOOK ADAPTATIONS

OF ARIOSTO'S *ORLANDO FURIOSO*

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The epic poem Orlando furioso (1516-1532) by Ludovico Ariosto is considered a masterpiece of Italian literature. This work has been, and still is, a great source of inspiration for various arts, especially in pop culture. My Leiden Arts in Society Blog post, "A tribute to Ludovico Ariosto: Orlando furioso's legacy in pop culture", highlighted several examples – including fantasy novels, comic books, and movie adaptations – aiming to help a new audience discover (or re-discover) the epic world created by Ludovico Ariosto. This article intends to continue this endeavour by exploring Ariosto's legacy in pop culture with a selection of two comic books: Paperino furioso by Luciano Bottaro (1966) and Il re delle mosche by Giovanni di Gregorio and Luigi Piccatto (2009). I study how they rewrite some episodes of Orlando furioso, especially cantos XXIII and XXXIV which narrate, respectively, the madness and recovery of the poem's protagonist, Orlando.

ORLANDO FURIOSO THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Published for the first time in 1516, and in a revised version in 1532, *Orlando furioso* is an Italian epic poem written by Ludovico Ariosto.¹ It is a continuation of Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (1483-1495),² commissioned by the powerful Este family of Ferrara with the aim of affirming the prowess of their legendary ancestors, the Christian warrior Bradamante and the Saracen knight Ruggiero, and glorifying their family name.³ Composed of 38,736 verses, Ariosto's poem is divided into 46 *cantos* and has a complicated

¹ We will refer here to the following edition: Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 2 vols, ed. Lanfranco Caretti (Turin: Einaudi, 2013).

² Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato*, 2 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1995).

³ Belinda Cannone, "Sublime Roland," in *Figures de Roland*, ed. Belinda Cannone and Michel Orcel (Paris: Klincksieck, 1998), 18.

structure involving many stories and characters. The reader is immersed in the conflict between Charlemagne, King of the Franks, and the Saracen King Agramante. Set onto this background, multiple storylines cross, including two main storylines: first, the plot concerning the love between Bradamante and Ruggiero, and then the story of Charlemagne's nephew Orlando and his doomed and unrequited love for the pagan princess Angelica, with whom he fell in love in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*. In trying to find her after her escape from Charlemagne's camp (*canto* I), he finally discovers that she has fallen in love with the Saracen Medoro and thus begins his descent into madness (*canto* XXIII). Over the course of several *cantos*, Orlando demonstrates his mania through fits of violence, such as rooting out a tree and destroying the place where Angelica and Medoro used to meet (*canto* XXIII), and attacking peasants and fighting bears (*canto* XXIV). Fortunately, Orlando is saved by the knight Astolfo,⁴ who during *canto* XXXIV makes a spiritual journey from Hell to Earthly Paradise, where he meets Saint John. The saint explains to Astolfo that Orlando's madness is God's punishment, because Orlando abandoned his king to chase Angelica, and he tells Astolfo how he can save Orlando: as the madness is a divine punishment, the resolution must also be celestial. Therefore, Saint John leads him to the moon to bring back Orlando's reason. During the sixteenth century, *Orlando furioso* was a bestseller, as of its first version already seventeen editions were published between 1516 and 1531.⁵ Of the definitive version of 1532 we can count no less than 138 Italian editions of the text⁶ published before 1600 by famous printers of the time such as Gabriel Giolito, Valvassori or Vincenzo Valgrisi.⁷

Proof of its success, the lively world described by Ariosto full of knights, magicians, and marvellous creatures became an abundant source of inspiration for later authors and artists. Therefore, since the sixteenth century *Orlando furioso* has been heavily referenced

⁴ English paladin, son of Othon, King of England, Astolfo is Orlando's cousin.

⁵ Maxime Chevalier, *L'Arioste en Espagne 1530-1560; recherches sur l'influence du Roland Furieux*, (Bordeaux, Féret et fils : Institut d'études ibériques et ibéro américaines de l'université de Bordeaux, 1966), 7. Some of these editions are listed by Giuseppe Agnelli and Giuseppe Ravenani, in *Annali delle edizioni Ariostee*, t. I (Bologne, Nicola Zanichelli, 1933), 21-36. Giuseppe Agnelli gave more details about several edition from 1524, 1525, 1526, 1527, 1528 and 1530.

⁶ Maxime Chevalier, *L'Arioste en Espagne 1530-1560*, *op. cit.*, 7.

⁷ Daniel Javitch, *Ariosto Classico, la canonizzazione dell'Orlando Furioso*, (Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 1999), 15.

in literature, even beyond the Italian border, appearing in France in Ronsard's *Franciade* (1572), and in England with Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1623). During the eighteenth century especially, the *Orlando furioso* enjoyed a prolific career in opera. Some episode appear in titles that are still performed today, including Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso* (1727) and Handel's *Ariodante* (1735).

Likewise, Orlando's stories retain a position in popular culture. Already during the sixteenth century, Montaigne described in his travel narrative how he heard an Italian peasant singing a *canto* taken from *Orlando furioso*.⁸ Later, during the nineteenth century, the success among the working classes of the *Opera dei Pupi* (*Opera of the Puppets*) in Sicily demonstrated the vivid tradition surrounding Ariosto's masterpiece.⁹ Although this once-popular puppet performance is played less frequently nowadays, *Orlando furioso*'s legacy is still present in popular media including fantasy novels (Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Ariosto furioso*, 1980), a movie adaptation (Giacomo Battiato's *I Paladini*, 1983), and in comic books. Concerning the latter, *Orlando furioso* was a great source of inspiration, especially in Italy where we can find retellings such as that of Pino Zac (1975), or references to Ariosto's universe as, for example, in "Roncisvalle" (1990) in which the detective Martin Mystère investigates the legend of Orlando.¹⁰

Among multiple adaptations, two caught my attention most: *Paperino furioso* (1966) by Luciano Bottaro, and the episode of Dylan Dog, "*Il re delle mosche*" (2009), written by Giovanni di Gregorio and illustrated by Luigi Piccatto.¹¹ At first, these two comics books seem remarkably dissimilar: *Paperino furioso* is a comedic publication intended for

⁸ Michel de Montaigne, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 1297.

⁹ Inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008, the *Opera dei pupi* is a particular type of puppet theatre originating in Sicily at the beginning of nineteenth century and based on chivalric romances such as the *Song of Roland* (1090), *Orlando furioso*, and the *Storia dei Paladini di Francia* (Giusto Lo Dico and Giuseppe Leggio, 1902). See A. Pasqualino, *L'opera dei pupi*, (Palermo: Sellerio, 2008); Albert T. Serstevens, *Sicile, Éoliennes, Sardaigne* (Paris: Arthaud, 1957), 83-86.

¹⁰ Pino Zac, *Orlando furioso di Ludovico Ariosto* (Milan: Corno, 1975); Alfredo Castelli, Nando Esposito and Denisio Esposito ["Esposito Bros."], "*Roncisvalle*," *Martin Mystère* 94 (Milan: Bonelli, 1990).

¹¹ Luciano Bottaro, "*Paperino furioso*," Topolino 544-545 (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, May 1966); Giovanni di Gregorio and Luigi Piccatto, "*Il re delle mosche*," *Dylan Dog* 270 (Milan: Sergio Bonelli, March 2009).

children, whereas Dylan Dog stories are set in a fantasy or horror context. Despite this, as I demonstrate below, they draw from the same source of inspiration: *Orlando furioso*. While they adapt the original story in different ways, they also show a common handling of specific features taken from the epic poem, such as travel to the moon (*canto* XXXIV) and the particular use of the hippogriff (Fig. 1). Here, I investigate what they share in common and offer a comparative analysis between these new iterations and the original text in order to determine whether the new narratives inspired by Ariosto are only a tribute to him or if they also provide a new reading of his masterpiece.

INTRODUCING DONALD AND DYLAN

“Paperino furioso” is not the first time that Disney’s Paperino, known as Donald Duck in English-speaking countries, wears armour in his adventures. In fact, since “Topolino in Inferno” (1949),¹² which was inspired by Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, Disney has regularly published parodies of literary masterpieces.¹³ One of the most recent was “Metopolis” (2017),¹⁴ based on Fritz Lang’s science-fiction film *Metropolis* (1927). During the 1960s, these parodies were often based on chivalric poems, and more specifically, stories about Charlemagne’s reign. In 1966 and 1967, two of the most important Italian chivalric poems were adapted as comic book parodies: first, Luciano Bottaro wrote and drew “Paperino furioso”, and in the following year, in “Paperopoli liberate”, Guido Martina and Giovan Battista Carpi adapted Torquato Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), an epic poem about the First Crusade.

In “Paperino furioso”, a witch sends Paperino on a journey back through time to the medieval court of Papero Magno (Charlemagne). During his adventure, Paperino must prove his merit by accomplishing several chivalric feats. He saves Angelica from the magician Basilisco but, due to a misunderstanding, Angelica thinks that Paperino’s squire, Ciccio, is instead the one who saved

¹² Guido Martina and Angelo Bioletto, “L’inferno di Topolino,” Topolino 7-12 (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, October 1949-March 1950).

¹³ P. P. Argiolas, et al., *Le grandi parodie Disney. Ovvero i classici fra le nuvole* (Rome: Nicola Pesce, 2013).

¹⁴ Francesco Artibiani and Paolo Mottura, *Metopolis*, Topolino 3189 (Modena: Panini Comics, January 2017).

her, and thus marries him. Like Orlando before him, when Paperino learns of his lost love he becomes mad. Thanks to the technology of Archimedes, however, a solution is found: Gastolfo (Astolfo) must go to the moon to retrieve Paperino's reason. The witch appears one last time during Gastolfo's journey to the moon, where she is supposed to hand over a magic vial to cure Paperino. Instead of his mind, the vial contains a potion that brings him back to the present.



Fig. 1. Dylan Dog, *Il re delle mosche*, Issue 270, March 2009, Milan, vignettes 3-4 p.47,
© Sergio Bonelli Editore, Disegni di Luigi Piccatto.

Forty-three years later, Dylan Dog, a paranormal detective created by Tiziano Sclavi in 1986, meets Ariosto's epic world. Published by Sergio Bonelli Editore, Dylan Dog is one of the most popular comics in Italy and new episodes are still released monthly. Even the author Umberto Eco is a fan of the series: in an interview he declared that Dylan Dog was a key reference for him, just like the Bible or Homer.¹⁵ Some story lines in the series took their inspiration from literary classics like Mary Shelley's horror *Frankenstein*.¹⁶ In "Il re delle mosche" ("Lord of the Flies"), the issue that borrows from *Orlando furioso*, Dylan Dog investigates a crime in the chemistry department of London University in which the

¹⁵ "Umberto Eco and Tiziano Sclavi. Un dialogo," in *Dylan Dog, indocili sentimenti, arcane paure*, ed. Alberto Ostini (Milan: Euresis, 1998), 13-32.

¹⁶ "Frankenstein," *Dylan Dog* 60 (September 1991).

sinister Laurence Skinner, the director of the chemistry department, seems to be involved. During his investigation, Dylan is helped by Rose, a doctoral student. Unlike “Paperino furioso”, this storyline does not explicitly revisit Ariosto’s epic, but there is a clear reference to it nonetheless. In fact, during his investigation, Dylan has a strange dream in which he meets Astor (Skinner’s dog) who has transformed into a hippogriff (Fig. 1). Dylan flies to the moon on its back, in a journey similar to Astolfo’s in *canto XXXIV* of *Orlando furioso*.

TWO DIFFERENT WAYS TO PAY TRIBUTE TO *ORLANDO FURIOSO*

Initially, the two comic books stand apart in the ways in which they incorporate Ariosto’s narrative differently. “Paperino furioso” is a parody rewriting which pays tribute in a comedic way to Ariosto’s masterpiece, while the brief reference in *Dylan Dog* is more an allusion that serves the broader story written by Giovanni di Gregorio.

A good parody requires considerable knowledge of the original plot. To that end, Luciano Bottaro appears to be faithful to his source. In his adaptation, the reader finds some key moments of *Orlando furioso*’s episodes. For example, in the comic, the battle of Sarrazino against Papero Magno refers to the siege of Paris in the sixteenth-century romance,¹⁷ and significant moments of Orlando’s madness, especially when he roots out a tree,¹⁸ and Astolfo’s flight to the moon are captured in the parody. The nature of the main character Orlando is conserved in Paperino: Paperino is mad for a considerable part of the story as is the poem’s protagonist,¹⁹ and moreover describes his state as “una furia devastatrice!!!” (“A devastating fury”) referring explicitly to the title *Orlando furioso*.²⁰ Still, the comic’s subtitle, “Poema poco cavalleresco” (“A Barely Chivalric Poem”) indicates that we are obviously reading a parody. In fact, Luciano Bottaro overturns all the rules and clichés of epic literature. Instead of being the best knight at court, Papero Magno accuses Paperino of being unimpressive.²¹

¹⁷ “Paperino furioso,” 38; *Orlando furioso*, cantos XVI-XVII.

¹⁸ “Paperino furioso,” 45; *Orlando furioso*, canto XXIII, 134.

¹⁹ “Paperino furioso” from page 31 until the end of the story; in *Orlando furioso*, cantos XXIII-XXXIX.

²⁰ “Paperino furioso,” 48, vignette 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

Magic is replaced by technology. There is no magician Atlante in this version but instead an inventor, Archimedes, who creates two machines during the story: one to find Papero, and the other to fly to the moon.²² We also find comical futurisms in the context of the original's medieval setting, such as the magician Basilico watching a TV programme with an advert for a magical filter.²³

Concerning the rewriting of Orlando's madness itself, while Paperino is furious indeed, the violent outburst depicted in Ariosto's epic is replaced by a more comic depiction. In *Orlando furioso*, Orlando's furor gives rise to overt violence, such as the scene in *canto* XXIV in which he savagely slaughters and dismembers peasants.²⁴ In Luciano Bottaro's version, Paperino is depicted as mad on three pages where his mental state is caricatured merely by jumping in the air and grinning without reason.²⁵ Over the remainder of the story, Bottaro draws Paperino more as an angry character than as a mad one. His use of the onomatopoeias "urg" and "krrr"²⁶ contribute to this entertaining depiction of Paperino's madness. Likewise, the introspection of the original version in which Orlando defines himself as a dead man: "I am not — am not what I seem to sight: / What Roland was is dead and under ground, / Slain by that most ungrateful lady's spite / Whose faithlessness inflicted such a wound."²⁷ is replaced by the incongruous interrogation: "I'm so confused! Am I a kangaroo or something else? If I can still remember ...",²⁸ arguably far less tragic than the original version. In short, by rewriting *Orlando furioso* in a parodic way, Luciano Bottaro provides the reader with a new reading of the book, one that is more light-hearted and humorous.

²² Magician and necromancer Atlante was in charge of Ruggiero's education in *Orlando furioso*. He tames the hippogriff discussed later in this article. Ibid., 41-45, 61-62.

²³ Ibid, 27, vignette 4.

²⁴ *Orlando furioso*, *canto* XXIV, 5-11.

²⁵ "Paperino furioso," 32-34.

²⁶ Ibid., 45, vignettes 3 and 4.

²⁷ "Non son, non sonno io quel che paio in viso: / quel ch'era Orlando è morto et è sottera; / la sua donna ingrattissima l'ha ucciso: / sí, mancando di fé, gli ha fatto guerra." *Orlando furioso*, *canto* XXIII, 128, v. 1-4; trans. William Stewart Rose, *Orlando furioso*, vol. 4, (London, J. Murray, 1825), 225.

²⁸ "Che confusione ho in testa ! Sono un canguro o sono qualcosa'altro? Sì, mi pare di ricordare...", "Paperino furioso," 47, vignette 3.

The echoes of *Orlando furioso* are quite different in Dylan Dog's story. If the *Orlando furioso* references in the dream contribute to the usual fantastic and uncanny atmosphere in Dylan Dog's stories, they also serve as a pause in the narration that highlight some peculiar aspects of "Il re delle mosche". As Dylan travels to the moon, the reader travels into the character's mind and sees there what obsesses him. In fact, the dream refers to two important elements of the *Orlando furioso* plot: the vial refers first to Dylan's investigation in the university's chemistry department, but also to the romantic plot with Rose. In *Orlando furioso* the purpose of this moon quest is to cure Orlando of his lovesickness. In fact, the vial found by Astolfo contained Orlando's reason that he lost in his desperate love for Angelica. In "Il re delle mosche", di Gregorio changes the vial's function: instead of the paladin's reason, it supposedly contains "Rose's love" as specified on its tag (Fig. 2). This modification of the original material is a revealing example of Dylan Dog's nature: he does not want to forget his love for Rose but instead conquer her as he attempts to do with ladies in each of his episodes' adventures.



Fig. 2. Dylan Dog, *Il re delle mosche*, Issue 270, March 2009, Milan, vignettes 4-5 p.49, © Sergio Bonelli Editore, Disegni di Luigi Piccatto.

Despite the clear differences between the two comic book stories, their narratives both use the moon journey in a dream sequence to introduce Ariosto's marvellous world to the plot. In "Il re delle mosche", after struggling to fall asleep Dylan goes outside for a walk where he meets the dog who will soon become the hippogriff in his dream. At this moment, the character understands that he is already dreaming: "S-sto sognando vero?" ("I-I'm dreaming, aren't I?") he asks.²⁹ He wakes up just after he retrieves the potion.³⁰ The dream's position in the plot is more ambiguous in Paperino's story: as he naps under a tree, the witch appears and puts him under a spell. Even if the narrative was not a dream, when he returns to his own time, he will interpret it this way: "Non so perchè, ma questa volta il sonno mi ha confuso più che mai le idee!" ("I don't know why, but this time sleep confused me more than ever!").³¹ But, the protagonists' dream-trip to the moon is not the only common point between the two comic books.³² There is also an episode in each in which they encounter the emblematic fantasy creature of *Orlando furioso*: the hippogriff.

THE REIGN OF THE HIPPOGRIFF

The hippogriff finds its roots in the literature of Antiquity with the mythological winged horse Pegasus and in Virgil's *Eclogues* where an unnamed animal born from the union of a mare and a griffin (another fantastic beast) is mentioned.³³ As Pio Rajna demonstrates, although the origin of the hippogriff can be linked to various winged horses of ancient literature, Ariosto was the first to name and describe this creature in any detail.³⁴ The hippogriff appears in *Orlando furioso* for the first time in *canto* II where it is described as a "gran destiero alato" ("a large winged steed").³⁵ It is presented as a rare but real animal

²⁹ "Il re delle mosche," 47.

³⁰ Ibid., 50.

³¹ "Paperino furioso," 48, vignette 5.

³² In another comic book, "Roncisvalle," mentioned above, Martin Mystère travels in a parallel dimension which looks like the moon in the *Orlando furioso*.

³³ Virgil, *Eclogues* VIII, 27.

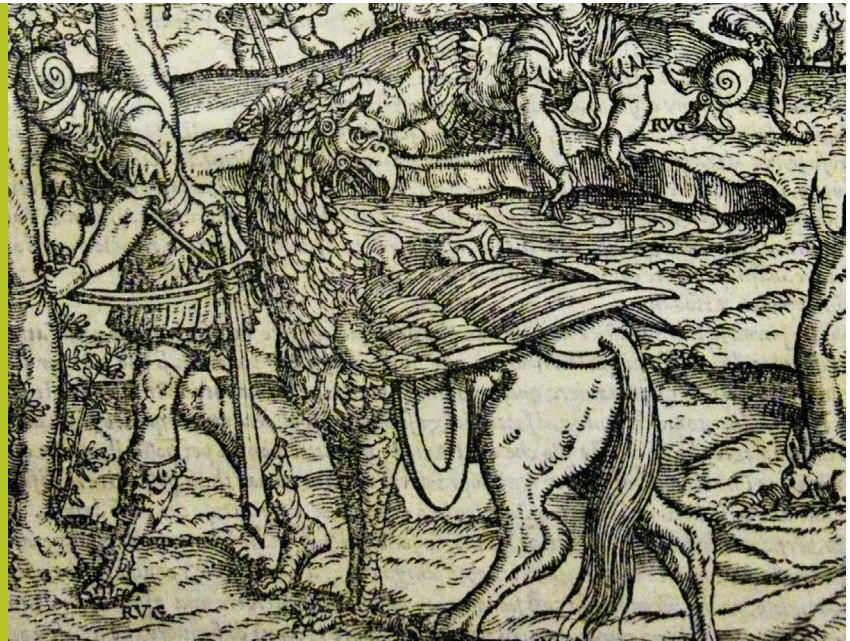
³⁴ Pio Rajna, *Le fonti dell'Orlando furioso* (Florence: Sansoni, 1975), 68-70.

³⁵ *Orlando furioso*, *canto* II, 37, v. 8.

living in the Rhiphaean hills and born, as Virgil says, of a mare and a griffin. According to Ariosto, the front half of the hippogriff's body is that of a griffin, with wings, a beak, and the talons of an eagle on its front legs, while the rest of the body is that of a horse.³⁶

The hippogriff played an important role in the plot of *Orlando furioso*, as is ridden by several important characters: the magician Atlante, the Saracen Ruggiero, and most notably Astolfo, who rides it more than the others, from *canto* XXII to *canto* XLIV when he sets it free. It has been emblematic of *Orlando furioso* since the poem's creation; many artistic renderings of it have been made, especially of Ruggiero with the hippogriff as in the sixteenth-century engraving of *Orlando furioso's* Valgrisi edition (Fig. 3) and the painting of Girolamo da Carpi,³⁷ the eighteenth-century painting by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo,³⁸ and

Fig. 3. Ludovico Arioste, *Orlando furioso*, Venezia, Valgrisi, 1568, illustration canto VI, xylography, 50, details, fonds Agache, A-1084, réserve patrimoniale, Service commun de la documentation de l'université de Lille (Photo Marion Bracq)



³⁶ *Orlando furioso*, *canto* IV, 18.

³⁷ Girolamo da Carpi, *Ruggiero saving Angelica*, c. 1501-1556, tempera on wood panel, El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, Texas, United States.

³⁸ Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, *Ruggiero Mounted on a Hippogriff*, c. 1757, Vicenza, Villa Valmarana, Italy.

the nineteenth-century painting by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (Fig. 4).³⁹ These artists each represent a moment taken from *canto X* of the liberation of Angelica from the sea monster of Ebude by Ruggiero. In addition to the success of this scene, other visual representations of the hippogriff participate in a centuries-long artistic tradition, including the recent comic book illustrations that reinvent his role and characteristics.

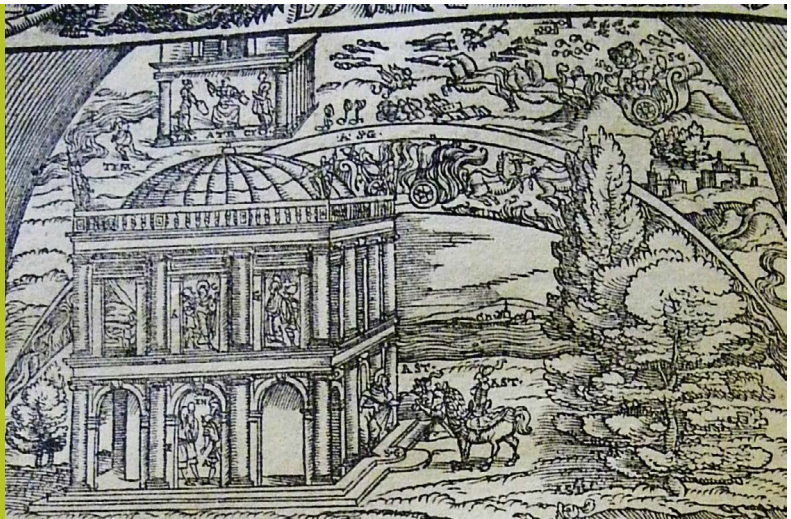


Fig. 4. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Roger délivrant Angélique* (1819) Oil on canvas, 147 x 190, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France
Photo (C) RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux

³⁹ Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Ruggiero saving Angelica*, 1819, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

In “Il re delle mosche”, the hippogriff has a narrative function, since the little dog Astor’s transformation into the winged creature indicates to the reader that Dylan Dog has switched from reality to dream. The hippogriff is also used in a comedic way in both the adventures of Dylan Dog and Paperino. In “Il re delle mosche” the creature speaks directly to Dylan, making fun of him: “Certo che stai sognando! Nella vita reale non è così facile conquistare l’amore di una donna” (“Of course you’re dreaming! It’s not that easy to win the love of a woman in real life”).⁴⁰ In “Paperino furioso”, the majestic hippogriff is degraded to a machine made of iron and wood which Archimedes lands like a rocket.⁴¹

Fig. 5. Ludovico Arioste, *Orlando furioso*, Venezia, Valgrisi, 1568, illustration canto XXXIV, xylography, 383, details, fonds Agache, A-1084, réserve patrimoniale, Service commun de la documentation de l’université de Lille (Photo Marion Bracq)



The most important change is that the hippogriff is used in both stories to travel to the moon despite the fact it never did so in *Orlando furioso*. In *Orlando furioso*, Astolfo goes to the moon with Saint John on the same chariot on which Elijah ascended to heaven.⁴² In an engraving in the Valgrisi edition we can follow Astolfo in the chariot with Saint John on their ascension into the sky (Fig. 5).⁴³ Although Gastolfo and Dylan went to the moon

⁴⁰ “Il re delle mosche,” 47, vignette 5.

⁴¹ “Paperino furioso,” 61.

⁴² *Orlando furioso*, canto XXXIV, 68.

⁴³ *Orlando furioso* (Venice: Valgrisi, 1568), canto XXXIV, detail.

for almost the same reason as Astolfo before them (retrieving the vial that resolves the narrative tension of the respective scenes), there is a significant change in the story's cast of characters: it seems that popular culture forgot Saint John the Evangelist and the religious meaning of this text by focusing on the marvellous travel and replacing the saint's chariot with the hippogriff. We can also assume that removing Saint John serves to simplify the plot in the case of the cartoonish "Paperino furioso" which is more a synthesis of the main events of Orlando's tale than a complete adaptation of the original story. As Astolfo travels primarily atop the hippogriff, in Luciano Bottaro's story the corresponding character (Gastolfo) still rides it, even if it's a 'fake' in his case. Furthermore, we must consider that the strong pictorial tradition of the hippogriff has surely influenced the authors in their choice to highlight the famous winged animal at the expense of Saint John's participation. In fact, the presence of the hippogriff even in an episode where it was not originally found confirms that the animal has become emblematic of Ariosto's poem, signalling it by its very presence. Even in "Il re delle mosche", where Dylan meets the hippogriff on just a few pages, the cover illustration by Angelo Stano represents the particular moment when Dylan and the hippogriff reach the moon (Fig. 6).

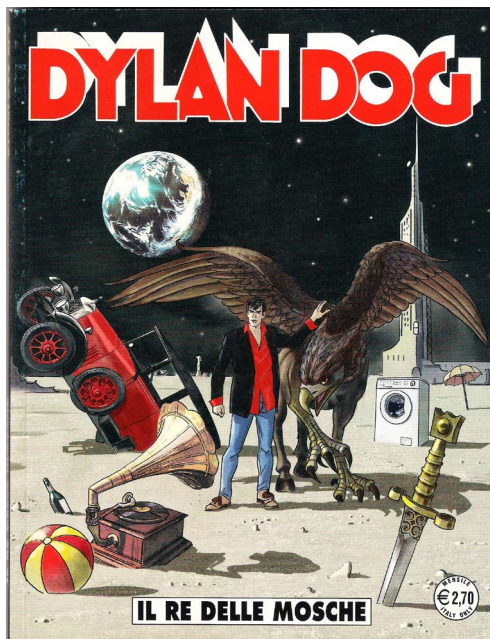


Fig. 6. Dylan Dog, *Il re delle mosche*,
Issue 270, March 2009, Milan,
© Sergio Bonelli Editore, Disegni di Angelo Stano.

In addition to demonstrating that Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* is still very present in popular culture, the study of these two works shows us how comic books have played with the original material as the tradition around this masterpiece epic has slowly evolved. At first sight, the two comics books studied here appropriate the poem differently: "Paperino furioso" offers a parodic reading that pays tribute to the original source and contributes to the transmission of the Ariosto's masterpiece to a new, perhaps younger, audience; whereas *Orlando furioso's* reference in the "Il re delle mosche" episode of *Dylan Dog* highlights some parts of its fantasy plot. At the same time, the common element in both comics of the hippogriff's journey to the moon in place of Saint John shows that the creature became, without a doubt, emblematic of Ariosto's masterpiece in the Italian popular imagination. Made malleable by its appropriation by comic books, the hippogriff is crystallized in the perspectives of two different authors: in "Paperino furioso" it becomes another comedic detail of the narrative, while in *Dylan Dog* it participates in the characteristic fantasy atmosphere of the series.

Marion Bracq is a doctoral researcher at the University of Lille (ALITHILA) and a guest researcher at Leiden University (LUCAS). She first worked on epic literature during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance during her Master's degree. She is now researching the reception of *Orlando furioso* in the French Renaissance and the relationship between science and literature, two central themes in her dissertation, "The treatment of madness and love passions among the French translators and imitators of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1544-1601): The building of a literary tradition. She has taught courses on the history of poetry, Encyclopaedism between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, and on the link between novels and science in the nineteenth century.