

Summary – Hyperbole, Imagination and Tradition in Luigi Pulci's *Morgante*

The epic *Morgante*, compiled at the end of the 15th century by the poet Luigi Pulci, stands at the turn of two historical eras. It is a meeting point of the Middle Ages and Renaissance with their literary influences and ideas. Also, it reflects the change in the development stages of the genre: from the period when the heroic narrative was declaimed by minstrels (*joglars*) on squares, this subject matter was gradually introduced into royal courts, where it was influenced by a more elevated culture.

The main elements of this epic include the adoption of several literary traditions, the comic in many of its forms, and religion, all of which is underlined with the special imagination of the author together with allusions to his own life situation. Luigi Pulci adopted not only the tradition of the heroic matter full of typical medieval patterns (*topoi*) very popular in Italy at that time, but also the comic-realistic literary tradition of Tuscany, which provides his narrative with a different tone in many ways, and thus incorporates *Morgante* in a literary field different from the one which its predecessors were part of. *Orlando* is the most significant of these; it is a text that was used by Pulci as a direct inspiration for his work and most of which was adopted into his text. However, he modified these verses, and thus created a work of a new, much higher literary quality. The element of comic is further developed into the subfields of irony and parody, to which all characters are subjected, divided into two types, heroes and antiheroes. The author also frequently uses hyperbole, which is most significant in the epic and makes it less serious. Pulci's language puns – the comic of words – is given some space, as well as the occurrence of fantastic or surrealistic images, which are also included in the field of comic. *Morgante* is also confronted with the area of the culture of laughter, as defined by M. M. Bakhtin. Particularly thanks to the occurrence of the so-called gastronomic metaphors, in which the author relates scenes from a battle to various Tuscan meals, *Morgante* is considered part of this specific word of laughter. Religion is treated not only in the light of Pulci's work but also his life in general. The greatest emphasis is put on the author's dispute with the well-known theologian and philosopher Marsilio Ficino: there are several heretic statements in *Morgante* in response to his doctrines.

Despite the contradictory perception of Pulci's work among his contemporaries and part of Italian literary critics, *Morgante* is not viewed in this study as a mere predecessor of the great epics *Orlando Innamorato* and *Orlando Furioso*; it is considered a fully-fledged work, one of

the 'big three' alongside these two epics, representing one of the most remarkable manifestations of culture and thinking in the 15th-century Italy.