American Dante Bibliography for 1954

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This bibliography is intended to include the Dante translations published in this country in 1954, and all Dante studies and reviews published in 1954 that are in any sense American.

Translations


Done in prose, but conveniently retaining the original tercet division. Essential notes, much abbreviated, are subtly incorporated, in brackets, in the text; and explanatory summaries are interpolated immediately before passages forming natural units within cantos. The translation comes further equipped with a short introduction on Dante’s life and works, a bibliographical note listing selected works in English on Dante, a general diagram and an outline chart of each canticle, and a glossary of proper names.


Translated in English iambic pentameter divided into tercets with rhyme, or approximate rhyme, between the first and third lines. Supplementary features include a translator’s preface, an historical introduction by A. T. MacAllister, summaries before, and explicatory notes after, each canto, and five diagrams. Reviewed by Richmond Lattimore in The Nation, CLXXIX, 175, and by A. T. MacAllister in Yale Review, XLIV, 155-159.


Very faithful translations of (1) Io son venuto, following approximately the original rhyme-scheme; (2) Al poco giorno, preserving the sestina form and the original rhyme-words (translated); (3) Amor, tu vedi ben, with the original rhyme-scheme and rhyme-words (translated); (4) Così nel mio parlar, with some rhyme and retaining the pattern of long and short lines; and (5) Amor, da che convien, with approximately the original rhyme-scheme.

Reproduces, with the Italian text on opposite pages, the following translations of Dante’s poems, numbered according to E. Moore (Tutte le opere di Dante Alighieri, Oxford, 1897): Sonnet to Guido Cavalcanti, translated by Shelley; from the Vita Nuova, Sonnets 1, 11, 15, 24, and 25, and Canzoni 1 and 3, by D. G. Rossetti, and Canzone 2, w. 156-183, in Scottish, by Douglas Young; Ballata 9, Canzone 17, and Sestina 1, also by Rossetti; from the Convivio, Canzone 1, by Howard Nemerov; and Sestina 2, by John Heath-Stubbs. Reviewed by A. T. MacAllister in Yale Review, XLIV, 155-159.


The De Monarchia is translated by Nicholl; the three Epistolae (V-VII, according to the Moore-Toynbee numbering) are translated by Hardie. There are footnotes to the texts, a chronological table of relevant historical events, and a short bibliography.

Studies


Culls from Stendhal’s writings evidence of his developing enthusiasm for Dante’s Commedia, particularly the Ugolino episode. This enthusiasm went hand in hand with his maturing views on artistic genius and the achievement of the sublime.


Stressing their dramatic and pedagogical character, the author shows that Dante’s addresses to the reader, differing from ancient and medieval examples, constitute an original development of the classical apostrophe and indicate a new relationship of the poet to his reader, that of a prophet reporting the truth to a disciple.


Barbi’s classic covers the life, the minor works, the Divine Comedy, and the reputation and study of Dante. A preface and notes accompany the translation, and an up-to-date comprehensive selection of works in English has been substituted for Barbi’s bibliography. The Italian original appeared first in the Enciclopedia italiana (Rome,


Contains very favorable mention of Dante’s linguistic ideas.


Examines how Homer (*Ilia* VI, 145-150), Virgil (*Aen.* VI,305-310), and Dante (*Inf.* III, 112-116) employ the figure of the mortality of leaves and men, and shows how each successive poet adapted the figure with his own originality, citing the greater particularity and narrative coordination in the case of Virgil and the closer correspondence in the two terms of the simile in the case of Dante (who further elaborates on the leaves figure in the *Paradiso*). This series reflects an aspect of the Mediterranean philosophical thinking, more particularly the artist’s attention to the real, including the reality of previous works of art. The centrality of Dante is stressed for understanding the classical tradition, which, combining art and philosophy, is seen to contribute to personal style and original achievement.


Contains a short section on Dante and frequent mention *passim* indicating, from a comparatist viewpoint, Dante’s importance and influence in the subsequent course of Western literature. (University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature, 11)

**Francesco Gabrieli.** “New Light on Dante and Islam.” *Diogenes*, No. 6 (Spring 1954): 61-73.

Considers that Asin Palacios’ theory of Arabic influence on Dante’s *Comedy* now has documentary support in the thirteenth-century Latin and French translations of the Islamic eschatological work, *al-Miraq*: the *Liber Scalae Machometi* and *Livre de Eschewal Mahomet*, which two scholars, working independently, have recently discovered and published simultaneously. However, the author continues, Dante evinces no special familiarity with the Arabo-Islamic world and the questions still remain as to whether Dante knew the *al-Miraq* in one of these translations directly and to what degree he actually used the Arab element in his poem. The editions, reproducing the Latin and French texts in parallel fashion, are: (1) *La Escala de Mahoma*. Traducción del arabe al castellano, latín y francés, ordenada por Alfonso X el Sabio. Edición, introducción y notas por José Muñoz Sendino. Madrid, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1949; and (2)


A short presentation of basic facts and critical observations useful to one approaching Dante for the first time.


Surveys the interest in Dante evidenced in the works of contemporary American poet, e.g., Pound, Eliot, Sarah Teasdale, Robert Lowell, Kenneth Rexroth; traces the historical tradition of this interest principally from Longfellow down; and accounts for the congeniality of Dante in America in terms of his sustained energy, virility, high moral sense, and realistic poetic vision. (For reviews, see below.)


Proposes an aesthetic revaluation of the sonnet in Chapter XXXIV of the *Vita Nuova,* studies the sense of the poem in its prose context, and poses and resolves several questions of probable chronology, contextual suitability, and comparative merits of the two cominciamenti. Appended is a brief excursus on the “angel”-motif used by dolce stil novo and later poets.


Most of Book I and Chapters 4 and 16 of Book III of the *De Monarchia,* translated by the author, are included among the selected source materials topically arranged. In the introductory essays to the texts, ample space is given to Dante’s political ideas on authority, natural beatitude, universal empire, church and state, etc. There is also a brief note on Dante’s life.


Reviews the references to the Virgin Mary in Dante’s poetry and claims the major
role for her, rather than Beatrice, as the poet’s guide to God in the *Commedia*.


Emphasizes the importance of Dante’s *Comedy* in a World Literature course, because of its transitional place in Western cultural history, and offers many suggestive questions on the poem methodologically designed to lead the reader into its cultural matrix. (The University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature, 9.)


Contains an essay on “Dante and His Circle,” relating the poet and his works to the Italy of his time, and considerable further reference to Dante throughout the book in various connections, e.g., Dante’s influence on art and Italian culture generally, Dante and Italian political thought, Petrarch and Dante. This is a reissue of Olschki’s book, originally published in 1949 (New York, Oxford University Press).


With brief analyses.


“Hell” (pp. 201-213), originally published in *The Criterion* (April, 1934), is a discursive review of *Dante’s Inferno Translated into English Triple Rhyme*, by Laurence Binyon (London, 1933). There is also considerable reference to Dante in other chapters, particularly those on “Arnaut Daniel” and “Cavalcanti.”


Suggests a Dantean source, *Paradiso* IV, 37-48, as more likely than those proposed by Jerry T. Williams or Julian Ziegler for the curious passage at the end of Book II of Chaucer’s *Hous of Fame*, in which the eagle states that, although no real bodies are there, the words spoken on earth will accommodate to Geffrey’s sight by assuming the form of their utterer. Though differing in their use of the device, both poets apply it effectively at the same narrative turn—on the threshold, respectively, of *Paradiso* and the realm of Fame.

In these eight papers, originally given as lectures, from 1947 o 1949, to non-specialists, the author treats the Comedy comprehensively, striving to make the poem as meaningful as possible to the modern reader. She deals specifically with the following: Dante’s imagery in its symbolic, allegorical, and pictorial relations; the meaning of the three separate realms; the fourfold interpretation of the Comedy; the City of Dis in its moral significance at the level of the individual soul and of human society in general; the “comedy” of the Comedy; and a number of troublesome “paradoxes” of Dante’s work, e.g., the poet’s treatment of the dual nature of Christ and the theology of atonement, the ambivalence between Dante-the-poet and Dante-the-man, the Vita nuova-Convivio relationship respecting Lady Philosophy, the reconciliation of the Dominican and Franciscan orders and the presence of Sigier of Brabant in the Paradiso. There is also an introduction by the author and a complete index. (For reviews, see below.)


Refutes the charge of homosexuality laid on Dante by Gilson and also the imputation of licentiousness originating with Boccaccio, for no real evidence in support of such claims can be found in the poetic sources usually cited—Cantos XXIII, XXX, XXXI of the Purgatorio, the sonnets exchanged by Dante and Forese, the rime petrose; indeed, a more favorable opinion is indicated by the whole pattern of Dante’s literary activity.


Refuting the interpretations of Beatrice favored by Williams, Gilson, Sinclair, Singleton, and Fergusson, the author cites new evidence from Dante’s Epistola VIII (to the Italian cardinals) in support of the interpretation originally set forth by Scartazzini, viz., that Beatrice represents the Roman Pontiff in the pageant at the top of Purgatory.


An abstract of a Columbia University dissertation. Studies the background of the rose symbol in contemporary English poetry, dwelling on its use by Dante in the Middle Ages and Yeats, Joyce, and Eliot in the twentieth century.


Discusses, in a short section on “Dante and Ronsard” (pp. 162-165), the possibility of Dante’s influence on Ronsard and the present state of scholarship on the subject.

Contains four closely interrelated studies and an appendix focussing on various dimensions of the *Commedia*. The items previously published have been somewhat modified and all are now provided with notes. (1) “Allegory” (originally published in *Kenyon Review, XIV*) considers this dimension in Dante’s poem as an imitation of God’s allegory in His book of Scripture, where the first, or literal, meaning is given as true even as it may point to a second, or other, meaning. (2) “Symbolism” (a new study) differentiates this dimension of the poem, residing in what is objectively seen there, from the allegory, which is contained in the subjective process of seeing on the journey. The symbolism is conceived in imitation of the reality of God’s Book of the Universe, where things are signs as well as things. (3) “The Pattern at the Center” (originally published in *Romanic Review, XLII*) demonstrates the analogy of the poem’s structure to Christian history: at the top of Purgatory, the conceptual center of the *Commedia*, a Beatrice-Christ analogy is established with reference to her coming in triumph to judge Dante, and His future coming to judge all men at the Resurrection; and with further reference to Beatrice’s earlier role in the *Vita Nuova* as an analogy of the first Advent of Christ. (4) “The Substance of Things Seen” (originally published in *Journal of the History of Ideas, X*) re-emphasizes the literal reality of Dante’s fictive journey, supported by the Incarnation and modeled on Scriptural writing, and suggests a formula to describe the quality of such writing: *fides quaerens visionem: praecedit fides, sequitur visio*. An appendix, “Two Kinds of Allegory” (originally published in *Speculum, XXV*) examines more fully the distinction made by Dante between the allegory of poets and the allegory of theologians and insists that Dante’s is the latter and therefore, for the sake of the poem, the first sense must be accepted as literally true. In the course of the studies, notable exegetical interpretations are given, viz., of the Prologue, with special reference to *Inferno*, I, 19-29, in (1); of the Casella episode (*Purgatorio, II*) and the figure of Satan (*Inferno, XXXIV*) in (2); and the coming of Beatrice (*Purgatorio, XXX*) in (3). Reviewed by Francis Fergusson in *Comparative Literature*, VII, 79-80, and by Edward Williamson in *Romanic Review, XLV*, 280-284.


Original justice was given to, then lost forever by, mankind in Adam; but the individual may still attain justice in the soul, which is perfectible by Sanctifying Grace and the infused virtues through the process called *justification*. On this pattern of thought, attested especially in Bernard and Thomas Aquinas, the author has based his interpretation of the figure of Matelda and the coming of Beatrice at the top of Purgatory. There, Beatrice’s coming is seen to reflect the second advent of Christ: when Dante has, under Virgil’s guidance, attained justice in the soul (even as conceived by, and possible to, the Ancients), Beatrice comes to him bearing the Perfection of that justice in analogically the same way that Christ comes, *in mentem*, to the just man as Sanctifying Grace. Furthermore, at this same point the living Beatrice first known to Dante on earth is recalled in memory; while she has come, plainly, to sit in judgment of the poet-lover. Thus, the Beatrice-Christ analogy is seen to obtain with respect to all three advents of Christ, in the three dimensions of time past, present, and future. It is further maintained that Matelda has no historical identity but must, in her first appearance where she is
unnamed and comes just as Beatrice is expected (Purgatorio, XXVIII), be taken purely allegorically, as a fleeting vision of original justice that once was.


Glosses the etymology of *caribo* (Purgatorio, XXXI, 132)—”ballo o canzone a ballo” in the original Arabic (*garib*), and in Catalan, Provencal and Italian.


Shows, in a short chapter on Dante (pp. 54-61), that the poet recognized the pre-Christian wisdom of ancient Rome as a Providential preparation for the Truth of Revelation, necessary not only in the history of mankind but also in that of the individual. Further references to Dante occur *passim*. The original Italian work first appeared in 1933, was reprinted in 1940 and 1943, and was last republished in 1950 as the second volume, L’umanesimo italiano (dal XIV al XVI secolo), of the trilogy, Storia dell’umanesimo (Bologna, Zanichelli).


British edition published in the same year as the original American edition. (See 73rd Report, 62. Extensively reviewed: see especially the 73rd, 74th, and 75th Reports, and see below, under *Reviews*, respectively.)


Reproduces two drawings by William Blake, a watercolor of “Jacob’s Ladder” and, from among his illustrations of the Commedia, a pencil sketch inscribed “Par Canto 19,” and concludes that the latter is an adaptation of the former and is therefore actually a representation of Dante’s *scaleo* in Paradiso, XXI-XXII, Blake’s inscription being erroneous.

In an essay entitled “Against the Weather: a Study of the Artist” (pp. 196-218), reprinted from *Twice a Year*, No. 2 (1939), 53-78, the *Divine Comedy*, in comparison with the *Libro de Buen Amor*, figures prominently in the author’s argument, which is concerned with the definition of art in its universality and constant applicability and the mission of the artist in his specific time or environment (“weather”). Distinguishing between art and content, Williams says that Dante the artist, not the dogmatist, gives life today, and it is specifically in terms of art as sensual portrayal that Dante triumphs. Furthermore, conceiving liberty as a necessity of art, he sees in the *Comedy* the artist’s usual struggle with the restrictiveness of his time. (For reviews, see below.)


Woodford’s introduction and many notes reveal Imperial’s close imitation and adaptation of Dante’s *Commedia. Purgatorio*, XXXIII, 40-45 provided the leitmotiv; Dante himself is cast as the poet’s guide from the Earthly Paradise to the Empyrean.


Points out that in *Le Lys Rouge* France translated a famous verse from the *Vita Nuova*, XX: “Amour et gentil coeur sont une même chose.”

**Reviews**


**J. P. Bowden.** *An Analysis of Pietro Alighieri’s Commentary on the “Divine Comedy.”* New York, 1951. Reviewed by:


**Francis Fergusson.** *Dante’s Drama of the Mind: a Modern Reading of the Purgatorio*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953. Reviewed by:

**Charles Davis**, *Studi Danteschi*, XXXII (1954): Fasc. 1, 134-139;
W. E. G[arrison], in *Christian Century*, LXXI (1954): 337;


R. A. Hall Jr. *A Short History of Italian Literature*. Ithaca, 1951. Reviewed by:


[Hall’s *History* contains a chapter on Dante, as well as frequent mention of Dante *passim* in various connections.]


*Literary Masterpieces of the Western World*. Edited by F. H. Horn. (Contains an essay on Dante by Edward Williamson. See 68th-72nd *Reports*, 48-49.) Reviewed by:


H. R. Patch. *The Other World according to Descriptions in Medieval Literature*. Cambridge, 1950. Reviewed by:


J. E. Shaw. *Guido Cavalcanti’s Theory of Love: the “Canzone d’Amore” and Other Related Problems*. Toronto, 1949. Reviewed by:


[Shaw’s book contains a chapter on the concept of love in Guinizelli, Cavalcanti, and Dante.]


Aldo Vallone. *La “cortesia” dai provenzali a Dante*. Palermo, 1950. Reviewed by:

