American Dante Bibliography for 1955

Anthony L. Pellegrini

This bibliography is intended to include the Dante translations published in this country in 1955, and all Dante studies and reviews published in 1955 that are in any sense American.

Translations


This is a de luxe, limited, folio edition, with very accurate reproductions of thirty-seven of Botticelli’s silverpoint drawings.


Done in blank verse, except for occasional passages merely summarized in prose, and provided with footnotes, a brief general introduction, a note on Italian pronunciation, a list of significant dates of Dante’s life, a diagram of each of the three realms, a chart of the celestial orders and correspondences, and a short selective bibliography. Also, an excerpt on Dante’s life is cited in English from Villani’s chronicle. The pagination is discontinuous by cantiche, which are also published separately. Bergin’s Inferno first appeared in 1948; Purgatory, in 1953; Paradise, in 1954.


Done in iambic pentameter with terza rima (frequently only approximate or imperfect), and arranged in tercet divisions. Editorial aids include an introduction, with special sections on the doctrine and Dante’s arrangement of Purgatory; brief summaries preceding, and commentaries (“The Images” and “Notes”) following, each canto; five diagrams; a special, cut-out universal clock; five appendixes on particular problems of interpretation (The Needle’s Eye, Tithonus’ Leman, The Sacra Fame Riddle, Derivation of Law, The Identity of Matilda); a full glossary of proper names; and a selected list of “Books to Read.” (For reviews see below.) Miss Sayers’ version of the Inferno appeared in 1949.


The Carlyle-Wicksteed version of the Paradiso (pp. 320-443), reprinted from the


Translation, preserving the sonnet form, of *Oltre la spera che più larga gira* (*Vita nuova*, XLI).

**Studies**


Culls from Sainte-Beuve’s works evidence of his extensive acquaintance with Italian literature and finds that his interest in Dante was long considerable but eventually cooled: Sainte-Beuve was too much a son of the eighteenth century to appreciate Dante properly.


The attitude around 1400 toward Dante’s poetry and political thought enters importantly in the author’s argument, as is indicated by such self-defining section headings as “Republicanism versus Dante’s Glorification of Caesar” (pp. 38-43), “Salutati’s Dilemma: Dante’s Caesarism and Florentine Liberty” (pp. 132-139), and “Cino Rinuccini’s *Invettiva* against Certain Slanderers of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio” (pp. 260-265) and also by further references to Dante, *passim*, registered in the index.


Discusses problems the translator of Dante must face—what to do about rhyme, the kind of English to use, the treatment of individual lines, passages, or whole cantos. Many samples are cited from representative translations, including the author’s own, to illustrate relative advantages and disadvantages of various approaches.


From a close analysis of Petrarch’s only two references to Dante (in two letters to Boccaccio), his first Eclogue and its accompanying letter to Gerardo, and from a comparison of the *Triumphs* with the *Divine Comedy*, the author shows that Petrarch’s coolness to Dante’s masterpiece is attributable less to scorn of the vernacular or to envy than to a misunderstanding of Dante’s art due to their divergent views of poetry. Petrarch disliked Dante’s poetry for what he considered its primitiveness, its “popularity,” and its vulgarization of theology. Furthermore, although both poets subscribed to the general medieval requirements of didacticism and allegory
in poetry, their works reveal irreconcilable differences of poetic conception. Whereas Dante in the *Comedy* produces an allegory proceeding from the concrete to the abstract and focuses on the World Beyond, Petrarch in the *Triumphs* goes from the abstract to the concrete by means of personifications and centers the interest on man in this life. Also, in contrast to Dante, who was interested chiefly in the moral content of his poem, Petrarch, imbued with Classical literary ideals, while retaining the moral purpose, sought variety, artistic polish, and human values in poetry.


In an essay on “Dante’s Ten Terms for the Treatment of the Treatise,” previously published in *Kenyon Review*, XIV (1952), 286-300, the author discusses the statement of the ten terms in the Letter to Can Grande in the light of Dante’s poetic theory and practice in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and the *Condivio*, and attempts to explain these otherwise unglossed terms, observing that the first five—poetic, fictive, descriptive, digressive, transumptive—pertain to the creative process and therefore belong to poetics and rhetoric, while the remaining five—definition, division, proof, refutation, setting forth of examples—have to do with arrangement and the management of words and so belong to logic. The ten terms, and combinations of them, seem to have provided the poet with ready modes for making full use of his inspiration. (For reviews see below.)


In a chapter on “Dante and Arnaut Daniel,” originally published in *Speculum*, XXVII (1952), 459-474, the author studies the references to Arnaut in Dante’s works and finds enough in common between them to justify Dante’s preference for Arnaut among the troubadours, e.g., certain conceptual parallels with respect to love’s ennobling and inspiring influence in the *Vita nuova* and some of Arnaut’s lyrics; a common predilection for the *trobar ric*; and Dante’s recognition that certain poetical problems bothersome to him had been faced and solved by Arnaut. Occasional references to Dante in other chapters are registered in the index. (For reviews see below.)


Notes marked parallels of general setting, broad sequence of events, and spiritual orientation between *Purgatorio*, I-II and part of III, and the Perceval portion of the *Queste del Saint Graal*.


Publishes a letter received from Binyon in 1943, in which the translator of Dante in *terza rima* airs his interesting views of translating in general, on the versions of the *Comedy* by Cary
an Longfellow, and on the importance of preserving Dante’s rhythm as well as the rhyme-scheme.


Examines the various meanings proposed for femmine da conio, and on analogy with the double sense of pungenti salse—basically “sauses” (metaphorical) and secondarily “Salse” (the ravine near Bologna)—submits that da conio bears multiple meanings, suggesting primarily selling and secondarily—perhaps also with over tones of inganno—the coarse metaphor based on conio as “wedge” or “die for stamping coins.” Hence da conio would best be renderer as “to be minted,” “to be stamped into coin.”


Contains a general chapter on “Dante’s Commedia” as an epitome of medieval thought and in its broad historical context, a well as extensive further reference to Dante passim. (Medieval Panorama was originally published in 1938 by Cambridge University Press.)


Contains a brief general introduction, a preliminary note to each realm, and a summary of each cantica. Originally appeared in 1950 in mimeographed form.


Professor Del Vecchio (University of Rome) emphasizes that in the Monarchia Dante envisioned, beyond particularist entities of city and country, a divinely predicated universalis civilitas of all mankind. Necessary for safeguarding the essential bond of brotherhood and peace would be a supreme, unitary authority, or Imperio, dedicated to justice and liberty for all.


Notices a “small but exceptionally interesting” Dante collection (160 volumes) recently acquired by Princeton. Included are the Venice edition of 1477, with the first appearance of Boccaccio’s Vita di Dante, and the first Florence edition (1481), the only Florentine edition with the Landino commentary.


Contains a chapter on “The Early Italian Renaissance Style (pp. 301-335), in terms of “naturalism” and “Franciscan humanism,” with a brief, general section on Dante (pp. 325-328) in this context. There are also references, passim, to Dante’s influence on nineteenth-century
writers, artists, and composers, particularly during the Gothic Revival.


Utilizes an interpretation by A. Pézard (Dante sons la pluie de feu: Enfer, chant XV, Paris, 1950) to the effect that Brunetto is in Dante’s Hell for writing in a tongue not his own (French, in the Tresor), a blasphemous act equivalent to sodomy according to medieval tradition, to support, in part, his contention that, contrary to general opinion, La Concorde des deux langages by Jean Lemaire de Belges does contain a basic unity in its two parts devoted, respectively, to Venus and Minerva.


Transcription of a critical discussion, as originally broadcast by the Columbia Broadcasting System, May 1, 1955.

**W. L. Grant.** “Petrarch’s Africa, I, 4-6.” Philological Quarterly, XXXIV (155): 76-81.

Points out briefly that in contrast to some Renaissance Latin writers who consider Dante the great reviver of poetry and humane letters, others, like Cristoforo Landino, honor Petrarch without mentioning Dante. Citing Petrarch’s chilly attitude toward Dante, the author goes on to show the former’s own self-esteem, with particular reference to the passage indicated in the Africa.


Discusses the close relationship of Dante and Shakespeare as representatives of two great stages of a single cultural epoch, that hypostatized by the Christian humanism which was the orthodoxy of European culture from the twelfth through the seventeenth centuries. With faith in the dignity and reason of man, the interest of both poets is in the drama of human action, conceived on a cosmic stage, morally articulated, and governed by rationally intelligible laws. (The essay is reprinted from the Bulletin of The General Theological Seminary, New York, and was originally delivered as a Commencement address at the Seminary.)


This is a new paperback edition. [Dante Studies 73 (1955): 65-66.]

Brief report of research.


Considering the articulation of the Divine Comedy in terms of the correlates of love and beauty, manifested as light and through vision, the author examines some meanings of these concepts in Dante’s work and finds that, without knowing the Phaedrus directly, Dante reconstituted, in medieval form, the Phaedrus doctrine of “salvation,” love, and poetic inspiration. Particular parallels are drawn between Dante and Plato, for whom love of beauty and love of wisdom lead to the same supernatural end of supreme reality. One difference noted is that, whereas in the Phaedrus the poet’s ascent is distinguished from the lover’s, in the Comedy the poet and lover rise as one: here can be seen a triumphant affirmation by Dante, against his time, of the nobility of poetry and the poet. The author pays special attention to Dante’s ladder of light, material and spiritual, in its various significances as the great chain of being, the ladder of truth, and the ladder of beauty with its correlate of love, and he considers light, in its several roles, as the key to Dante’s amorous journey through higher and higher levels of reality and awareness.


Reviewing the Dante literature in Arabic, Prof. Osman (Cairo University) cites briefly several articles and a book published since 1927, which deal primarily with the possible influence of Al Maari’s Treatise of Pardon on Dante’s poem, and the few Arabic translations of the Comedy, wholly or in part, published since 1911, including his own recent version of the Inferno in Arabic prose.


With brief analyses.


Relates the experience of discovering an apparent parallel between the title and topography of Eliot’s poem, “The Waste Land,” and the paese guasto of Inferno XIV, 94-99, and, despite much supporting evidence, of ultimately having to yield to the incontrovertible testimony of Eliot himself, indicating a different source of inspiration. Professor Poggioli must conclude the parallel to be a case of pure coincidence, constituting moreover a confirmation of the archetypal myth.

Summarizes critically the literature on the Vivaldi expedition (1291) and, against the possibility of its having inspired Dante’s Ulysses canto, submits that more likely reminiscence of the latter romanticized the edition in the minds of historians.


Analyzes Benvenuto’s commentary from the standpoint of his preoccupation with certain literary themes—Dante the Modern as opposed to the Ancients, the stark and language of the *Commedia*, and the problem of literary creation faced by Dante—and concludes that, although Benvenuto’s exegetical apparatus remains medieval, based upon theological values, this, along with his ingenious allegorical method, subserves his primarily literary interest in a quite humanistic manner.


Includes an account of Dante’s influence during the period covered. The book is well indexed.


Studies the symbolism of Dante’s rose image and finds that it combines all meanings associated with the flower by tradition: as earthly woman (Beatrice for Dante, and hence the key for reconciling mortal and immortal love); then, on the four levels of interpretation outlined in the Letter to Can Grande, as the literal image of Paradise; as the allegorical representation of Christ’s mission to humanity; as Mary’s flower, the moral symbol of spiritual love, which brings salvation; and as God’s flower, the anagogical symbol of the created universe.


Re-studying Dante’s addresses to the reader, the author rejects Auerbach’s interpretation of the poet’s relationship to his reader as prophet to disciple (*Romance Philology*, VII, 268-278), and submits that the relationship is, rather, one of friendly companionship in a common endeavor to understand what is experienced on the poetic journey.

Italian version of an article originally published in English as “Speech and Language in Inferno XIII,” Italica, XIX (1942): 81-104. Professor Spitzer shows that in this canto, apart from employing traditional rhetorical devices usually pointed out by previous commentators, Dante exhibits great artistic skill in fitting style to content, both in the language of the narrative, where he makes skillful use of brau lengage of Provençal tradition, in keeping with the harsh subject-matter, and in the speech (or language-production) of the sinner here, in keeping with his infernal condition as a uomo-pianta and with the general concept of contrapasso.


Shows that, although working from different suppositions, Dante, in his theoretic definition of the vulgare illustre on which he based his morphological classification of the Italian dialects, anticipated the modern concept of Ideal Type as worked out by Max Weber and other recent sociologists. To Dante the concept came through the idea of God as the Ideal Type of all creatures. Dante failed, however, to distinguish this topology from that based upon abstractive logic. In contrast to his abstractive hierarchy of Italian dialects, he actually had in mind, for the vulgare illustre, a concrete Gestalt, viz., Florentine as ennobled by Cino and himself. But for artistic reasons—manifest even in the imagery employed, yet generally missed by students of the De Vulgari Eloquentia—Dante did not declare openly his intended identity of the vulgare illustre with Florentine.


Contains a thoughtful discussion (pp.178-183) of Dante’s as “the first great vernacular portrait of Ulysses the wanderer,” and also numerous references (not all recorded in the index) to Dante, passim, especially as the latter’s hero is reflected in, or contrasted with, the Ulysses of subsequent poets down to the present.


Submits that criticism and scholarship on the relation between these two works must be reoriented in light of Milton’s awareness of their generic differences, under the influence of Italian Renaissance literary theory, according to which the Commedia belonged to the comic genre and Paradise Lost to the heroic.

Takes issue with the opinion that Mena owed nothing to Dante. By considering the 
*Laberinto* and *Coronaçion* together alongside the *Comedy*, the author finds that, despite the 
fifteenth century aversion to vernacular sources, Mena’s work does reveal some reminiscences of 
Dante’s poem both in certain details and in general configuration, e.g., the pattern of concentric 
circles, the symbolic geography of a gloomy river of sin, a mountaintop to represent the 
maximum of human achievement, and the contrasting visions of Heaven and Hell.

**Wylie Sypher.** *Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature, 1400-

Contains a chapter on “The Gothic System: Problems,” focusing considerably on the 
*Divine Comedy* in the context of the author’s thesis based on the analogical relationship between 
literature and art as two of the major forms of cultural expression. Dante’s poem is seen to reflect 
Gothic art and thought, e.g., by the double vision of reality, a strong current of empiricism and 
humanization, the logic of interrelation and articulation found in medieval architecture as well as 
in scholastic thought, pictorial episodes, dramatic environment, and a linear time-space 
perspective.


In an essay on “The Symbolic Imagination: The Mirrors of Dante,” previously published in 
*Kenyon Review*, XIV (1952), 256-277, the author distinguishes the symbolic imagination in its 
effect of bringing together various meanings at a single moment of action (illustration: Beatrice’s 
appearance to Dante in *Purgatorio*, XXX-XXXI), and emphasizes the poetic necessity of its 
being grounded in concrete experience. He considers the symbolic problem in the *Comedy* to lie 
in the progression, literally and allegorically, from the Dark Wood, the negation of light, to the 
anagogical transfiguration of vision in the Triune Circles of pure light. Mr. Tate’s discussion of 
Dante’s light imagery dwells, in particular, upon the reflections and their dramatic implications 
in the poet’s cosmic two-way analogy (heaven like the world, the world like heaven). A key to 
the process is found in Dante’s mirror figure, which, already discernible in essence in Beatrice’s 
eyes (*Purgatorio*, XXXI), may be seen in its full analogical development from the literal mirrors 
of Paradiso, II, to the climactic God-man reflection and final vision in. Another essay, on 
“Tension in Poetry,” previously published in *Southern Review*, IV (1938-1939), 101-115, 
contains an interpretation (pp. 76-77) of *Inferno* V, 97-99, according to which the tributaries 
pursuing the Po and the sibilant verses themselves constitute a visual and auditory image, 
echoing the *bufera infernal*, of Francesca’s sin of lust.


Touches substantially on Dante in two chapters: “Roses and Calipers” (p. 28 ff.), in 
which Dante serves as an example for distinguishing symbolism and allegory as used by recent 
writers; and “Strange Relations” (p. 191 ff.), in which the author illustrates the importance of the 
*Divine Comedy* as one of the principal parallels for James Joyce’s *Ulysses.*

In a chapter on “Renaissance, the Word and the Underlying, Concept” (pp. 11-25), reprinted from *Studies in Philology*, XLIX (1952), 105-118, the new humanism is considered to have in origins in Dante’s time. The author cites early Renaissance testimony (e.g., Boccaccio, Salutati, Villani, and Polenton) honoring Dante as the reviver of the Muses. Further occasional mention of Dante, *passim*, is recorded in the index.


Contains ample reference to Dante, *passim*, in relation to the history of literary criticism and taste. Well indexed.


Studies the question of just what Dante visualized in the *scaleo* of *Paradiso*, XXI-XXII, and finding the available evidence inconclusive in the *Comedy* itself, in Genesis 18:12, and in certain medieval references to it submits, both on the basis of greater majesty of concept cult on the obvious parallelism with the stairways of the *Purgatorio*, that most probably Dante had in mind a stairway.


Contains very detailed summaries which may be valuable for anyone desiring a complete view of the Society’s history, since many of these early *Reports* are now either scarce or unavailable.


Demonstrates that Gide, in his works, reveals significant influences from Dante, in whom he found considerable intellectual affinity.

**Reviews**


**Dante Alighieri. The Purgatorio from the Divine Comedy**, translated by S. F. Wright (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1954). Reviewed by:


**A. J. George, Symposium**, IX (1955): 152-154;

**R. M. Grant, Anglican Theological Review**, XXXVII (1955): 229-231;


J. G. Fucilla. *Studies and Notes (Literary and Historical)* (Naples and Rome: Istituto Editoriale del Mezzogiorno, 1953). Reviewed by:


by Francis Fergusson. (Essays by Auerbach, Blackmur, Eliot, Fergusson, Fitzgerald, Maritain, Singleton, and Tate.) Reviewed by:


A somewhat longer version in Italian of the author’s “Dante and Our Lady.” (See 73rd Report, 57-58.)


Serge Hughes, *Commonweal*, LXII (1955): 452-453;


F[ancis] F[ergusson], *Comparative Literature*, VII (1955): 79-80;


Wylie Sypher. *Four Stages of Renaissance Style* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955). Reviewed by:


[Anon.], *Times Literary Supplement* (London), LIV (1955): 84;

W. P. Friederich, *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, IV (1955): 76-78;


F. W. Locke, *Catholic Historical Review*, XLI (1955): 239-240;


