American Dante Bibliography for 1959

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This bibliography is intended to include the Dante translations published in this country in 1959, and all Dante studies and reviews published in 1959 that are in any sense American. The latter criterion is construed to include foreign reviews of Dante publications by Americans.

Translations


Essentially a re-issue, omitting the color plates, of the original edition published in 1946 under the imprint of Doubleday and Company. The illustrations retained are line drawings. There is a section of notes to the text, which, though not actually identified, is the translation by Henry F. Cary.


This is a paperback edition identical to the hard-cover edition of 1948. The translation, in prose, with the original Italian on opposite pages, is based on the critical text of the Società Dantesca Italiana; “the few departures . . . from that text are limited to readings adopted either in Moore’s or Casella’s texts.” Each canto is very briefly annotated and followed by a “Note,” or commentary. In a preface, Mr. Sinclair acknowledges his indebtedness to major recent commentaries and studies, from Scartazzini to Croce, from which he has quoted freely. There is a short note on Dante’s Hell and a diagram of the punitive system.


Pre-printing of another portion of Mr. Ciardi’s translation of the Purgatorio now in progress. (See 76th Report, 39-40.) This canto is prefaced by a short summary and followed by brief annotations.


This canto is prefaced by a short summary, without annotations. (See preceding item.)


Contains three canzoni, three sonnets, and a sonetto rinterzato in translations by Rossetti, Shelley, and Howard Nemerov. Each section, by language, of the anthology is introduced by a brief historical note.

Studies

Contends it is wrong to try to read Dante’s *Comedy* as George P. Elliott proposes in his “Getting to Dante” (*Hudson Review,* XI, 597-611. See 77th Report, 45.), and rejects the necessity of taking the poem literally or of bringing to it a sense of sin. Professor Adams insists one simply read aesthetically, exercising the literary imagination, and not seek in the poem a moral order to simplify modern problems. (A rebuttal by Mr. Elliott follows. See below.)


Contains Professor Auerbach’s well-known study, “Figura,” which includes an illustration of the “figural” principle as applied to the *Divina Commedia,* and “Saint Francis of Assisi in Dante’s *Commedia,*” which focuses on Dante’s allegorical *vita,* in *Paradiso* XI, of the saint as an imitation of Christ, with an explication of the supporting image of Lady Poverty as his bride. The two essays are translated from the original German text in Professor Auerbach’s *Neue Dantestudien* (Istanbul, 1944). The English version of the second essay first appeared in *Italica,* XXII (1945).


Contains a section on “The Poetic Composition of the *Divina Commedia*” (pp. 269-280) as the individual achievement of a great poet who went far beyond the limitations of medieval poetic by ignoring the latter. Dante’s own poetic may be defined as “vividness of charged simplicity in expression carried forward in a composition of progressive movement.” This work is reprinted from the original edition published by the Macmillan Company (New York) in 1928.

edited by Siro A. Chimenz.)

This is a detailed explication of the prophecy-laden canto, which is found to be one of Dante’s less successful, but nevertheless very interesting. Professor Bergin clarifies the many historical and other references and examines further aspects of the canto, such as its structural symmetry, linguistic artifices, including neologisms and flossy phrasing, mediaeval rhetoric, and display of erudition. (This “lectura” is adapted from an unpublished essay of Professor Bergin’s and translated into Italian by Professor Chimenz.)


Contains a final chapter on “The Last Phase: Jerusalem, The Book of Job, and Dante,” including a brief commentary (pp. 87-91) on Blake’s illustrations to the *Divine Comedy.* The author points out the conflict between Blake’s enthusiasm for Dante and his disapproval of Dante’s doctrines. There are eleven Dantean illustrations (including two by Flaxman for comparison) reproduced in black-and-white plates.

**William Bowsky.** “Dante’s Italy: A Political Dissection.” *Historian,* XXI (1959): 82-100.

Describes the political situation in Italy in Dante’s time, with particular reference to the city-states and their relations with the papacy and the empire.
Outlines briefly the strong Dantean influence in the Polish romantics, especially Mickiewicz, Sowacki, Krasinski and Norwid, and also the recent contemporary Jean Lecho, who, as political exiles and expatriates, in varying degree identified with the Florentine poet-exile as a type of romantic hero.

Contains a study (pp. 98-112) on “Marguerite de Navarre and Dante,” slightly revised from its original form in Italica, XVIII (1941), 37-50. The author demonstrates that the ascendancy of Dante over the thought of Marguerite was not considerable, as previously claimed by scholars. While her principal poems contain elements of Dantean inspiration, the evidence shows that, far from understanding Dante, she had only a distorted opinion of him, knowing only the first few cantos of the Inferno and perhaps the end of the Paradiso, and very likely even learned her modified terza rima from a French source. Acquaintance with Dante’s masterpiece may have contributed to her taste for and technique of visions, but this Italianizing poetess of the French Renaissance must have thought of Dante rarely.

Contends that just as T. S. Eliot’s The Waste Land and Four Quartets are modeled on Dante’s Inferno and Paradiso, respectively, Ash Wednesday parallels the Purgatorio in tone and spiritual structure. All elements in the composition unite to dramatize modern man’s excessive hesitation to renounce the world for the regeneration of his soul.

As a contribution to the still inadequate analysis of the contemporary philosophical and theological atmosphere that Dante breathed, the author examines the ideas on peace and related political matters of Remigio de’ Girolami, one of the first writers to apply Aristotelian conceptions to the problems of the Italian city-state, and points out the close parallels in Dante, who applied them to the problem of the Empire. The study is followed by the text of Remigio’s De bono pacis, reproduced from the Cod. Conv. Soppressi C. 4.940, ff. 106v-109r, Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence.

In this rebuttal to Professor Adams’ contentions (Ibid. See above.), Mr. Elliott expresses agreement on the suspension of disbelief in reading Dante’s Comedy and on the possibility of reading it aesthetically, without heed to its non-literary meanings; but he reaffirms his own conviction that one’s appreciation of the poem is enhanced by a general agreement with Dante’s moral order.
Holding Dante’s *Comedy* allegorically as an embodied vision of an *itinerarium mentis ad Deum*, Professor Freccero examines the prologue scene, focusing particularly on the wayfarer’s *piè fermo* (*Inferno* I, 30) and his thwarted efforts to proceed up the *piaggia diserta*. An examination of patristic and scholastic writings reveals that, according to traditional Aristotelian physiology, the left foot, considered less agile than the right, was known as the “firm foot.” In his attempt to drag himself up the slope with his right foot leading and his left foot, or *piè fermo*, lagging behind, Dante-wayfarer is seen to reflect a defective will, since allegorically this “firm foot” represents the left foot of the soul, to which, by analogy, thirteenth-century theologians attributed feet, corresponding to the soul’s twin powers of movement, the *intellectus* and the *affectus*, or the apprehensive and appetitive faculties. When Dante-wayfarer sees the light at the top of the mount, the intellective power of his soul has undergone a conversion from ignorance and sin; but he is still lame in the soul’s other “foot,” the *affectus*, or appetite, in its triple aspect of the concupiscent, irascible, and rational, reflected in the three areas of the wolf, lion, and leopard. To set straight the soul’s lame left foot and effect progress beyond these three symbolical beasts to the summit and salvation, the wayfarer must have divine assistance with guidance over the longer journey representing the justification of the will.


Contains a substantial list of selected Dante studies published both here and abroad (pp. 216-218).


Discusses the translation of verse in general and of Dante’s *Comedy* in particular, with special reference to the examples of Longfellow and Dorothy L. Sayers. The author observes that for reproducing content, the prose version, free of metrical strictures, offers maximum value, though verse translations are often better because given more labor. To reproduce Dante in verse, the English verse must equal Dante’s; but any translation has some value when prompted by love of the poet.


Studies, in reproduction, a number of Trecento illustrated manuscripts of the *Divina Commedia*, grouping them according to the primary schools of illumination, which also largely coincide with areas of Dante’s influence in Italy, viz., Florence, Bologna, Naples, Lombardy. The author discusses especially the following manuscripts: Palatino 313, Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence; Vaticano 4776, Rome; Codice Filippino, Bibl. Oratoriana, Naples; Add. 19587, British Museum; Trivulziano 1076, Milan; and Marciano, Class IX, 276, Venice. She concludes (1) that despite the secondary importance of miniature painting in Florence, the influence of Florentine illustrators seems to predominate in the development of early Dante iconography, and (2) that the
latter reveals two tendencies, one toward literal interpretation and another toward illustration of
scenes interpolated from the text.

H. H. Golden and S. O. Simches. Modern Italian Language and Literature: A Bibliography of
 Registers a number of Dante studies that might otherwise go unnoticed.

 On a parallel with his reading of humilem, as “lying low on the horizon,” in Virgil’s
Aeneid, III, 521-524, recalled here by Dante, the author submits a similar interpretation of
Dante’s phrase quell’ umile Italia, understanding the “horizon” as temporal rather than
d geographical. Thus, Dante would be referring to the future imperial Italy of his political hopes,
fulfilment of which required, as with the Trojans and Rome, time and further struggle.

1959.
 Contains considerable reference, passim, to Dante in the general context of the book,
which “explores the methods and ideas that go into the making of literary allegory.” Indexed.

 Contains several references passim to Chapman’s interest in Dante and to his translations
from the Comedy, and in particular, surveys the critics’ favorable reception of Chapman’s

R. S. Loomis, Editor. Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative
 The chapter on “Arthurian Influences on Italian Literature,” by Antonio Viscardi,
contains a short discussion (pp. 422-424) of the Arthurian elements in Dante’s works, consisting
primarily of the prose Lancelot tale, on the basis of which, evidently, “Dante assigned to
the langue d’oil the primacy as the language of prose narrative.” Further passing references to

 While acknowledging the Dantean echo in Eliot’s poem noticed by Eugene Arden (Notes
and Queries, N. S., V [1958], 363-364 [See 77th Report, 42]), the author rejects Professor
Arden’s implication of salvation for Prufrock, since the latter’s situation is pathetic, not tragic,
according to Eliot’s ironic method, and, unlike Dante, he has not achieved humility with his self-
doubt.

 Assesses and documents in detail Lowell’s interest in, and knowledge of, Dante’s works
and also in the literary background of Dante. Professor Mathews summarizes Lowell’s famous
essay on Dante, which was his “longest and most ambitious essay in criticism”; indexes the
many allusions to Dante in Lowell’s own writings; and concludes with a brief review of Dante’s
quite limited influence on Lowell’s poetry.

Chapter on Eliot’s later work by C. L. Barber. Paperback edition, identical to the hardcover edition of 1958. (See 77th Report, 48.)

J. A. Mazzeo. “*Convivio IV, xxi and Paradiso XIII: Another of Dante’s Self-Corrections.*” *Philological Quarterly,* XXXVIII (1959): 30-36.

Shows, in context of the philosophical background, how Dante’s thought changed with respect to the conditions necessary for the creation of the perfect human being. In the *Convivio* Dante held that whenever natural conditions were perfect, the Holy Spirit conferred its gifts on the recipient and a perfect, God-like human being resulted; but in the *Paradiso* he held that nature always operates defectively and can never of itself create the perfect conditions to induce the Holy Spirit to give the maximum of its gifts. Only the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, in short, can create the perfect human being, as in the cases of Adam and Christ, which were unique.


This entire issue of *Delta* is devoted to a pre-printing of the second part of a general volume being prepared by Professor Montano on Dante’s thought and work.


Without attempting to indicate any influence of Dante on Clemens, but appealing to the universality of both, the author traces a provocative parallel between the progressive experience of evil in Huck’s adventures and that of Dante’s journey through Hell.


Examines a number of imperfect verses in the *Divina Commedia,* without attempting to minimize or rationalize them away. Professor Natali finds an explanation for these defects in the “abuse of art”: alongside the poet in Dante stood also the medieval rhetorician, who, in striving for the beautiful, was bound to fall occasionally into artifice, extravagance, and even ugliness.


A composition of 29 verses inspired by Dante’s *Comedy,* ending on the note: “from this poem we learned / the possibilities of praise” [of God].


With brief analyses.


Finds support for the early commentators’ identification of Dante’s Matelda (*Purgatorio* XXVIII), symbol of the perfect active life, with the Countess Mathilde of Canossa (*†1155*) in a reexamination of the documentary evidence, particularly in the *Vita Metrica Sancti*
Anselmi by Rangerius, who regarded Mathilde a “Lady of Peace,” and in the Vita Mathildis by Domnizio, who regarded her a “custodian of justice,” and also in the continuing fame she enjoyed as a legendary figure in Dante’s time, when she was even recognized by certain jurists as a supreme arbitrator. (This article is a condensed version of the author’s paper originally delivered as a “Vassar Scholar’s Lecture” at Vassar College in the fall of 1958.)


Italian edition of Pound’s well-known work, originally published in 1910 as The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe (London, Dent and Sons) and re-issued in a “revised edition” in 1952 under the short title (Norfolk, Conn., New Directions Books; and London, Peter Owen). The book contains a general essay on “Dante,” written from Pound’s particular standpoint of a non-philologist holding to the contemporaneity of all masterworks of art. There is further reference to Dante, passim, especially in connection with Arnaut Daniel. Indexed.


“The purpose of this essay is to consider something of the significance and interrelationship of a number of words and images which appear to be very important in Dante’s presentation of Paradise.” The author focuses especially on Dante’s words and imagery for expressing the movement to, and enjoyment of, blessedness; the function of the Son and the Holy Spirit in making and perfecting the created order; the process of growth in vision, and consequently in love, on the way to Paradise; and Paradise as a participating in the Divine nature by the gift of the spirit. The four short chapters are: I. “L’intenzione dell’arte”; II. ”Il pan delli angeli”; III. Lumen gloriae; and IV. Etterno spiro. Original edition: Manchester (England), Manchester University Press, 1959. (“Publications of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Manchester, No. 10.”)


This close reading of Inferno X, with considerable reference to the commentaries of Benvenuto da Imola, De Sanctis, Barbi, and Casella, contains provocative interpretations of several long-debated points, for example, the poet’s treatment of heresy in the canto, Cavalcanti’s love for his son, the latter’s disdain for Virgil, and the matter of prescience and ignorance in the lost souls. The author concludes that the canto can indeed be named after its strong central character, Farinata, but that his dramatic portrayal is achieved only by the presence of Dante himself posing as a political opponent and by the enhancing stage effect of the Cavalcanti episode. He sees Farinata not only as representing his own past glorious self, but also as reflecting important qualities of Dante’s character.


Summarizes the Vita Nuova as prelude to the Divine Comedy, with general observations setting the author’s thought and work in historico-literary context and emphasizing the perpetual inspiration that Beatrice was for Dante. (A booklet of 20 pages.)

British paperback edition identical to the American edition, Harvard University Press, 1958. (See 77th Report, 52-53, and see below, under Reviews.)


Analyzing the character of Camilla in the *Aeneid,* the author finds a clear explanation for Dante’s associating her with Turnus, Euryalus and Nisus (*Inferno* I, 106-108): because of their vainglorious, bloodthirsty and self-assertive character, all four, two Italians and two Trojans, had to die to make possible the new and lowly Italy.


Contends that critics have been unfair in judging Milton’s masterpiece inferior to Dante’s. For the two works represent quite different approaches to the concept of God and different poetic treatments, each superbly suited to its own context. Milton’s anthropomorphic and “theologizing” divinity was perfectly appropriate in a heroic poem treating the fall of man and emphasizing God’s Providence; while Dante’s veiled representation of the deity was perfectly in keeping with the logical conclusion of the “Comedy,” viz., the Beatific Vision. Professor Steadman therefore insists the contrast in Dante’s and Milton’s representations of deity merely provides a basis for discussing their respective techniques, not for rating one poet superior to the other.


Examines Samuel Beckett’s obsession with the figure of Dante’s Ante-Purgatory, particularly the phenomenon of helplessness and expectancy in Belacqua, and their influence in his works from *Murphy* and *Molloy* to the play *En attendant Godot,* in which man’s fate of hopeless expectancy in the universe is poignantly staged. But there is a radical difference between Dante’s and Beckett’s conception of the purgatorial experience: where Belacqua’s waiting will eventually end with entry into Purgatory proper and ultimate spiritual fulfilment, Beckett’s abysmal despair conceives the world as a purgatory of “vegetation,” in which man’s fate is to wait eternally in unresolved expectation.


Presents a biographical sketch of Thomas W. Parsons (1819-1892), New England poet and lifelong student and translator of Dante, who in his Anglophilism, Anglo-catholicism and devotion to Dante lived alienated and withdrawn from his time. Charles Norton considered Parsons, along with Longfellow and Lowell, one of the “three most eminent lovers and disciples of Dante in America.”

Attacks two articles on techniques for forecasting land use, by comparing a city planned on a land use model, or “LUMP city,” with Dante’s Inferno: both have the form of concentric circles and the residents of both have lost choice.


Contains eleven Dante studies (Chapters III-XIII), of which the following were previously published, as indicated by the author in each instance: “Dante and the Mosaics of His Bel San Giovanni”; ”Dante’s Scheme of Human Life” (here considerably revised); “The Prologue of the Divine Comedy”; ”Reminiscence and Anticipation in the Divine Comedy”; ”Guinizelli Praised and Corrected”; “Salutation and Revelation” (first published as “The Literal Meaning of the Unveiling of Beatrice” and here much revised); “Dante’s Celestial Scaleo: Stairway or Ladder?”; “Blake’s Drawing of Dante’s Celestial Scaleo”; and “The Jackson Dante.” The two remaining Dante studies are new: “Gradual Approach in the Divine Comedy,” which points out, as a derivation from memories of real-life observation, Dante’s very effective technique of gradual approach to new sights, sounds, and experiences at strategic points of his poetic journey, where perceptions at first imperfect or mistaken are succeeded by perceptions of greater, and finally perfect, clarity; and “Cantos, Regions, and Transitions in the Divine Comedy,” in which is analyzed, with a diagram, Dante’s artistically effective technique of varying his canto structure in the poem after having begun by fitting an entire episode within each single canto in Inferno III-VI—a procedure that would soon have proved monotonous.


Examines the river of light in the Anticlaudianus and in Paradiso XXX with reference to the tradition of mediaeval light metaphysics and to the distinction between the referential or analogical and the intuitive types of mediaeval symbology; and concludes that the two light images, while evincing some similarity, are essentially different, in that Alanus’ river of light, symbolizing the Trinity, belongs to the first type of symbol and Dante’s river of light, symbolizing the courts of heaven, belongs to the second.

Reviews


Michele De Filippis, Italica, XXXVI (1959): 230-231;


Ulrich Leo. *Sehen und Wirklichkeit bei Dante, mit einem Nachtrag über das Problem der Literaturgeschichte.* Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1957. Reviewed by:


Augustin Renaudet. *Humanisme et Renaissance*. Geneva: Droz, 1958. (Contains critical pieces on G. Vinay’s edition of Dante’s *Monarchia* and on A. Pézard’s *Dante sous la pluie de feu*.) Reviewed by:


**Benvenuto Terracini.** *Pagine e appunti di linguistica storica.* Florence: Le Monnier, 1957. (Contains five chapters dealing with Dante problems: one with the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, two with the *Vita Nuova*, and two with the *Convivio.*) Reviewed by:

   **T. G. Bergin,** *Italian Quarterly*, III (Spring 1959): 59-68;
   **Morris Bishop,** *N. Y. Times Book Review* (1 March 1959): 12;
   **T. C. Chubb,** *Speculum*, XXXIV (1959): 694-695;
   **Grace Frank,** *Modern Philology*, LVI (1959): 277-278;
   **R. A. Fraser,** *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LVIII (1959): 619-621;
   **Louis Martz,** *Yale Review*, XLVIII (1959): 442-444;

**Aldo Vallone.** *La Critica dantesca nell’Ottocento.* Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1958. Reviewed by:

**Domenico Vittorini.** *The Age of Dante: A Concise History of Italian Culture in the Years of the Early Renaissance.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1957. Reviewed by:

**Domenico Vittorini.** *High Points in the History of Italian Literature.* New York: David McKay Company, 1958. Reviewed by:

**E. H. Wilkins.** *The Invention of the Sonnet and Other Studies in Italian Literature.* Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1959. Reviewed by: