

**BRITAIN'S TRIBUTE TO DANTE
IN LITERATURE AND ART:
A CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD
OF 540 YEARS (C. 1380-1920)**

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Britain's tribute to Dante in literature and art: a chronological record of 540 years (c. 1380-1920)
by Paget Toynbee

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PAGET TOYNBEE

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IN LITERATURE AND ART:
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OF 540 YEARS (C. 1380-1920)**

THE BRITISH ACADEMY

(*Dante Commemoration 1921*)

Britain's Tribute to Dante in
Literature and Art

A Chronological Record of 540 Years

(c. 1380—1920)

By

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Amen Corner, E.C.

* He who labours for Dante, labours to serve
Italy, Christianity, the World.'

(W. E. Gladstone to G. B. Giuliani.)

ALL'
ITALIA
NEL SESTO CENTENARIO DELLA MORTE
DELL'
ALTISSIMO POETA
DANTE ALIGHIERI
'DI CUI LA FAMA ANCOR NEL MONDO DURA,
E DURERÀ QUANTO IL MOTO LONTANA'
TRIBUTO
DI
RICONOSCENZA

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS Record is the outcome of notes taken during the last five-and-twenty years, primarily for the purposes of several projected works, of which the following have been published: *Chronological List of English Translations from Dante, from Chaucer to the Present Day* (Boston, U.S.A., 1906); *Dante in English Literature from Chaucer to Cary* (2 vols., London, 1909); and *Dante in English Art: A Chronological Record of Representations by English Artists of Subjects from the Works of Dante, or connected with Dante* (Boston, U.S.A., 1920); besides sundry articles in various English and foreign periodicals. In the preparation of the first two of the above works I availed myself of the admirable *Catalogue of the Cornell Dante Collection* (2 vols., Ithaca, N.Y., 1898-1900), compiled for the late Professor Willard Fiske by Mr. T. W. Koeh; and, to a limited extent, of the work on *Dante and the English Poets from Chaucer to Tennyson* (New York, 1904) by Professor Oscar Kuhns. My obligations to these volumes are hereby once again acknowledged. For information and referenees supplementary to my own resources I have to thank numerous friends and correspondents, among whom should be mentioned Professor H. Littledale, of Cardiff, Professor A. Farinelli, of Turin (in a lengthy review of *Dante in English Literature* in the *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*), Mr. F. G. Stokes, and Mr. H. St. J. Brooks.

Certain of the entries in the Record may perhaps be regarded as trivial; but, as I had occasion to observe in a similar connexion in the preface to my *Dante in English Literature*, such items—trivial though they be—have a value of their own, as indications of the trend of current opinion with regard to Dante—a straw will show which way the wind blows.

English reviews of foreign works upon Dante have as a rule been included, but for reasons of space not reviews of English

works, except in the case of the *Quarterlies*, the articles in which for the most part partake rather of the nature of essays than of reviews proper, and constitute important contributions to Dantesque literature. Partly also from considerations of space, after the year 1844, the year of Cary's death, and of the publication of the first cheap edition of his translation, by which time the name of Dante had become more or less of a household word with Englishmen, only works or articles dealing directly with Dante are registered, incidental allusions or quotations, save in cases of exceptional interest, being disregarded.

A table of leading dates is prefixed to the Record, and an index in two divisions, of authors and artists, is appended. The addition of a few statistics may not be out of place here. Of complete English (exclusive of American¹) translations of the *Commedia* there are twenty-six (the earliest, in 6-line stanzas, by Henry Boyd, 1802). Of independent translations of the *Inferno* there are twenty-one (the earliest, in blank verse, by Charles Rogers, 1782); of the *Purgatorio* there are eight (the earliest, in prose, by W. S. Dugdale, 1883); of the *Paradiso* five (the earliest, in prose, by James MacGregor, 1880, as yet unpublished; the earliest published independent translation is that, also in prose, by P. H. Wicksteed, 1899). This gives a total of forty-seven translations of the *Inferno*, thirty-four of the *Purgatorio*, and thirty-one of the *Paradiso*. From these figures it appears that during the last 118 years (dating from Boyd's translation in 1802) the *Commedia* as a whole has been translated into English on an average once in about every four years. If the independent translations of the several divisions of the poem be included in the reckoning it will be found that an English translation of one or other of the three *cantiche* has been produced on an average once in about every twelve months—a record which, it is believed, cannot be paralleled in the literature of any other country.

Of the 'Ugolino' episode (from *Inf.* xxxiii), as a separate piece, there are twenty-seven translations (the earliest, in 8-line

¹ In the absence of any means of distinguishing them, it is possible that a few American writers and artists have inadvertently been included in the Record.

stanzas, by Chaucer, *c.* 1386); of the 'Paolo and Francesca' (*Inf.* v), twenty-two (the earliest, in heroic couplets, by William Parsons, 1785); of the 'Ulysses' (*Inf.* xxvi), five (the earliest, in prose, by Leigh Hunt, 1819).

Dante's minor works, as might be expected, have attracted a comparatively small number of translators. Of the *Vita Nuova* there are seven English versions (the earliest by Joseph Garrow, published at Florence in 1846); of the *Convivio*, five (the earliest by Elizabeth P. Sayer, 1887); of the *Canzoniere*, three (the earliest by Charles Lyell, 1835); of the *De Monarchia*, two (the earliest by F. J. Church, 1879); of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, two (the earliest by A. G. Ferrers Howell, 1890); of the *Epistolae*, two (the earliest by P. H. Wicksted, 1904); of the *Eclogae*, three (the earliest, in blank verse, by E. H. Plumptre, 1887); of the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*, four (the earliest by C. H. Bromby, 1897).

In the domain of art, the representations of the episode of 'Paolo and Francesca' have been by far the most numerous, there being more than fifty of this subject in one or other of its phases, of which nine are by sculptors. The earliest is a drawing by Fuseli (1777), who also executed the earliest oil painting (1786); the earliest sculptured representation is an alto-relievo by R. Westmacott (1838). Of the 'Ugolino' episode there are eight representations, two of which are by sculptors; the earliest painting being the Academy picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds (1773), which is believed to be the first easel picture by any artist of a subject from Dante; the earliest sculpture is that by J. Gallagher (1835). Of Beatrice (assuming all the representations to be of Dante's Beatrice¹) there are between thirty and forty; while of portraits, statues, or busts of Dante himself there are more than twenty. Of 'illustrators' of the *Commedia* the most famous are Flaxman, with 111 outline 'compositions' (1793); and Blake, with 98 coloured, or partly coloured, designs (1824-7), of which seven (from the *Inferno*) were engraved by him and published in 1827, the year of his death. Of

¹ One or two, which have no distinguishing motto in the Catalogues, may possibly be of the Shakespearean Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing*.