

THE DANTE SOCIETY OF AMERICA
Boylston Hall
Harvard University
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

NEWSLETTER # 4

From the West Coast, Professor Charles Speroni reports:

"I have already contacted Professor Aldo Scaglione on the Berkeley campus, and he has assured me that . . . in 1965 they will put on some sort of a program in commemoration of Dante. Also, I am having a letter mimeographed which I will send to various universities on the West Coast, and to all the schools where Italian is taught.

"Last week I saw our Chancellor and he has promised me all the help--including financial--that I may need to put on a good program here at U.C.L.A. I have written to Charles Singleton and he has accepted to come and speak to us.

". . . I am sure we will publish one number of Italian Quarterly in honor of Dante. Further, our Librarian has assured me that we will put on an exhibition in the rotunda of the library."

From the Middle West, Professor Fucilla reports:

". . . I have been in touch with the chairman of the NW Alumni Funds Lecture committee and have received a very favorable reply to my suggestion that the university sponsor a big public lecture, but no action can be taken until the committee meets in the spring.

"I am counting on imposing exhibits of Danteana at the Newberry Library, Chicago Public Library, University of Chicago and Northwestern. . . . I saw one of the librarians of Newberry Library and took up the Dante celebrations with him. He has agreed to put up an exhibit and to give us a room for a public lecture.

"I have also written to Lake Erie College (Falbo) and to Wisconsin (Galpin) on all-university lectures on Dante."

Professor Clements reports:

"The best news I can report so far is that I have convinced New York University Press to issue a volume of essays on Dante by American scholars."

Note: Correcting a statement made in Newsletter #2, Professor Clements represents the Associazione per gli Studi della Lingua e Letterature Italiane.

Professor Urban T. Holmes reports:

". . . Here at Chapel Hill we have some speakers who are ready to be invited for lectures on the subject. These are Gino Rizzo, Di Sua, Friedrich, and Howard Huse. (I have no objection to doing my own bit as a speaker, if required.)

In North Carolina there is the North Carolina Symphony which has its headquarters on our campus and which does considerable traveling over the State. We can give some special attention to Dante at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association which meets every November. In Raleigh there is a very fine Art Museum--which has a goodly supply of early Italians, among many similar things, and they too will doubtless be willing to set up some special exhibits through borrowing, etc. The Ackland Art Gallery in Chapel Hill also can arrange a loan exhibition that may have some rapport with the subject. Certainly there must be similar facilities in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina--particularly in Atlanta."

From Yale University Professor Bergin reports:

"Finally a real breakthrough!"--He has received the following letter from Congressman Robert N. Giaimo of Connecticut. We have acknowledged the letter and voiced the unanimous endorsement and encouragement of the Council.

"Thank you for your recent letter suggesting a commemorative stamp on the occasion of the 700th Anniversary of the birth of Dante. I am delighted at the opportunity to work with you on this extremely worthwhile project.

"I have been in touch with several people at the Post Office Department. I believe that the Advisory Committee on special stamps will consider this request, but I am going to introduce a bill as an added spur.

"The legislation will be ready on the 28th or 29th of this month, and I shall make a speech on the Floor of the House. After the bill has been introduced, I believe that we can stimulate a great deal of interest, both Congressionally and academically, in this special issue.

"I shall be in touch with you before I introduce the legislation to check language, references, etc.

"Again, thank you for writing. It was a pleasure to hear from you. It is an honor to cooperate with you on this project."

From the Società Dantesca Italiana we have been informed that Professor Francesco Mazzoni has persuaded G. C. Sansoni to undertake the publication of the very important Commentary of Guida da Pisa, the edition of which is being prepared jointly by Francesco Mazzoni for the Società Dantesca and Vincenzo Cioffari for the Dante Society. Mazzoni is preparing cantos 1 through 18 and Cioffari cantos 19 through 34. As soon as arrangements for publication are completed, they will be announced.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Professor Alfred F. Alberico, of San Francisco State College, reports the following plans:

1) The Divine Comedy as a "book-of-the-year" project. Such a project would propose the Divine Comedy as the text which everyone--students, faculty,

staff--would read privately and meet to discuss, with proper leadership, in large and small groups.

2) *Lecturae Dantis*, some in English, some in Italian, by members of our college faculty.

3) An exhibition of editions of Dante's works in the De Bellis collection recently donated to our college by Frank V. De Bellis.

From the Catholic University of America, Professor Crisafulli writes:

"We have recently organized a committee for the Dante Centenary Celebration at Catholic University. (The Chairman of the Committee is Rocco Montano, the other members, as of now, are myself, Dr. Hatzfeld and Giovanni Giovannini.)

"We have decided that the celebrations would consist of a series of lectures dealing with at least three aspects of Dante: the theologian, the philosopher, the poet."

PUBLICATIONS IN PROCESS

Giovanni Previtali: The Divine Comedy in Plain English (An Interpretation of the Anthology of the Allegory of Dante Alighieri)

The work is being prepared for publication in three parts, namely Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. Hell is planned to be ready for the 1965 Centenary. The other parts are expected to appear in the two succeeding years.

Gino Rizzo: Dante's Three Dreams in the Purgatorio

This writer proposes to re-examine Dante's three dreams in the Purgatorio (Cantos IX, XIX, and XXVII, not only as "prophetic" morning dreams, but also as turning points in the process of moral purification undergone by Dante the pilgrim. Thus each dream will be seen in the context of both the preceding and the following day, and the three dreams will emerge as a unified and organically structural theme.

William J. De Sua: Dante into English

This is an historico-critical survey of translations of the Divina Commedia into the English language from 1782, the date of the first English Inferno, to the present. Representative versions from four literary periods--the Neoclassical, the Romantic, the Victorian, and the modern--are examined within their historical contexts by bringing into consideration influences such as Dante's reputation in Britain and America at the time, contemporary criticism of the Divine Comedy, current standards of poetic style and literary taste, and the prevailing theories of poetry and the art of translation. Special problems of Dante translation, like that of rendering terza rima in English, are analyzed against this complex background of factors, resulting in a study of interest not only to Dantists but also to students of English, comparative literature, and literary criticism. University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature. Forthcoming, Fall 1964.

Vincenzo Cioffari, National Chairman

Anthony J. De Vito, Secretary

George H. Gifford, President of the Dante Society